

CLASSIC DRIVER

Maserati Quattroporte

Four-door performance



Text: Classic Driver

Photos: Gruppo Ferrari Maserati

Maserati UK have announced the cost of Quattroporte ownership in Britain. £69,995 will bring you the new, 170 mph four-door supercar 'on the road' - and for all those interested in driving one of the 150 or so cars the British importers forecast making available this year, we can bring you the full UK specification of this exciting car from the legendary Modenese manufacturer.

The new Quattroporte is the first Maserati that Pininfarina has designed in 50 years; the well-known 1963 car being from Frua's drawing-board, Giugiaro responsible for the 1976 version. Having penned the 1953 A6GCS Berlinetta Sport, Pininfarina then concentrated on models for Maserati's great rival Ferrari. Now of course under the same Fiat umbrella, the two companies can freely share facilities that include those of design and engineering, and Ferrari's peerless testing procedure.

The five-metre long, four-door design is an elegant extension of the styling cues of the current coupé with the radiator treatment echoing that of the 1960's 3500 GT by Vignale. This front grille, with the three scalloped air intakes below it, protrudes slightly ahead of the headlamps, another hint from the 3500GT, and in plan the slightly pointed treatment is designed, when coupled with the three oval air-outlets on the front wings, to give a shark-like, almost predatory attitude. In a category where image and road presence is so important, the new Quattroporte will be more than a match for BMW, Audi and Mercedes on the Autostrada in looks; as well as performance.

At the rear the car has just the slightest hint of a bootlid upturned for aerodynamic effect while the exhausts, two pairs of two, are of oval section and jut aggressively from the lower valence. It's an elegant yet powerful treatment that summarises the whole car.



The exciting Maserati Quattroporte is brought to you by Meridien Modena;

"Meridien Modena are the UK's longest established official Maserati Agent with more than a dozen years experience with the famous Italian marque. Based on the south coast of England our recently constructed base provides a modern showroom within our listed premises whilst also providing full maintenance facilities on site. Maserati, with the new Quattroporte now sitting alongside the existing Coupe and Spyder, is entering an exciting new era in it's illustrious history. We are pleased to invite both existing and new clients to the Maserati world."

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Under the skin

Mechanically the car borrows heavily from its two-door sibling, but with motive power provided by the Coupé and Spyder's normally aspirated, 400 bhp, 4244 cc 90° V8 who could complain about that? The car's 47% front /53% rear weight distribution is down to the lightness and efficiency of the engine coupled with a rear-mounted transaxle – a feature more commonly found in high-performance coupés and unique in this sector.

The transmission, an electro-hydraulic six-speed Maserati DuoSelect (MDS) system, is an electro-hydraulic gearbox - i.e. no torque-converter - that is claimed to combine the very best of both worlds; offering the convenience of a fully automatic with the sporting nature, speed and consistent uphill acceleration of a paddle-operated manual. Maserati have incorporated clever features like a 'Hill Holder'. A useful tool for hill starts, it keeps the Quattroporte still for a couple of seconds to give the driver time to move his foot from the brake to the accelerator without the car rolling backwards. This and the switch on the central tunnel that selects either reverse or forward gear (Drive in automatic mode or first gear in manual) without any need to touch the paddles, means the car should be able as at home on the busy streets of London or Milan as it is driving flat-out from Frankfurt to Hamburg.

Suspension is via all-round double-wishbones, with Maserati's unique electronic Skyhook multi-mode damping control, another feature from the Coupé. With Skyhook, acceleration sensors monitor the movements of the wheels and the car's body, instantly adapting the calibration of the dampers to suit – the company claim it is a staggering 10 times faster than conventional systems, and results in a comfortable ride that combines well with the sportier nature of the car.

Also featuring the Maserati Stability Program, the Quattroporte offers drivers extra support in difficult situations. Developed by Maserati, it integrates with the ABS, EBD and ASR functions, acting on the brakes and engine – guaranteeing total control of the car in exceptional conditions. Braking 1,860 kgs (dry weight) of bespoke performance saloon from a potential maximum speed of 171 mph (275 km/h) is achieved by way of four cross drilled ventilated disks, the fronts some 13" in diameter.

Passive safety is achieved by the usual airbags and seat-belt pre-tensioners, and the car also has twin xenon headlights, cruise control, light and rain sensors and a light-sensitive rear view mirror as standard equipment.



Luxury unlimited

Inside the car, the four passengers (there's an option coming to make the rear-seats optimised for two passengers only) will be safely tucked up in one of the most luxurious cabins possible. A combination of leather and wood (rosewood, mahogany and walnut veneers are available) or a titanium-coloured finish means the car should score well over its more functional-looking German competitors. As standard fitment the dashboard includes a 'Multi Media System' (developed by Bosch-Blaupunkt) that includes the onboard computer functions, a satellite navigation system, a Bose Sound System and a single CD player. As an option customers can also add a GSM phone, CD changer, a front TV module and the Rear Seat Entertainment System which offers a central screen, TV tuner, DVD player, auxiliary input for a video game console or other external equipment (video camera, for example), and a choice of listening through headphones or the main audio system.

Configuring 'your' Quattroporte is what the car is really all about. Described as 'the ultimate expression of the Italian concept of bespoke automotive tailoring', Maserati's personalisation programme will allow owners to tailor a car to their needs and by allowing variations in cabin components (the seats and door panels, steering wheel, dashboard, woods, stitching, roof lining, and mats) millions of possible combinations can be

selected. From the 'standard' catalogue the company offers a choice of 15 exterior paint finishes and 10 leather interior colours, surely enough for most people.

But of course the *raison d'être* of the car is that it's not for 'most people'. The Quattroporte is a proper, grown-up car for those seeking performance with style and comfort – and unwilling to choose another 'out-of-the-box' German super saloon, however beautifully engineered.

With fine market positioning the Fiat Group has managed to slot the Quattroporte above its traditional big Lancia saloons, complementing and not threatening its superb Maserati Coupé and Spyder, and yet leaving Ferrari (with its wonderful 612 Scaglietti) as the Group's flagship marque.

Finely specified, from the extraordinary selection available of woods, leathers and exterior colours, it should be the car of choice for a discerning clientele worldwide wanting a classic Italian cocktail of grace, pace and sophistication.

The facts

Engine: 4,244cc 90° V8
Bore x stroke; 92 mm x 79,8 mm
Four overhead cams per bank, and four valves per cylinder. Continuous valve timing control chain on aspirated camshafts.
Integrated Bosch Motronic ME7 ignition-injection system. "Drive by wire" electronic acceleration control.

Maximum Power: 400bhp @ 7.000rpm

Maximum Torque: 333 lb ft @ 4.500rpm

Transmission: Transaxle architecture with longitudinal Maserati gearbox rigidly connected to the engine. Segmented self-locking differential. Maserati DuoSelect six-speed mechanical gearbox with electronically controlled electro-hydraulic operation.

Brakes: Brembo braking system with four cross drilled ventilated disks; front 330 x 32 mm, rear 316 x 28 mm (12.99 x 1.26 in; 12.44 x 1.10 in).

Dimensions: Length: 5.052 mm
Width: 1.895 mm
Height: 1.438 mm
Wheelbase: 3.064 mm
Weight (dry): 1,860 kgs. Distribution - 47% Front/53% Rear.

Performance: 0 - 62 mph (100 km/h) in 5,2 seconds
Maximum speed 171 mph (275 km/h)

Price and delivery: From £69,995 including three-year service package. RHD deliveries to start in May 2004 in the UK.



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UK Specification

Maserati's new Quattroporte will cost £69,995 on-the-road when it goes on sale in January. Right-hand drive production of the new flagship model for Maserati begins in March 2004 with UK deliveries of this Italian luxury saloon expected in late spring.

The on-the-road price of a Quattroporte includes a comprehensive standard specification, a three-year full 'peace of mind' service package that is unique to Maserati, and a Navtrak vehicle tracking system.

As standard, the Quattroporte specification includes: Bi-xenon headlamps, automatic headlamp and windscreen wiper operation, 18 inch alloy wheels, Poltrona Frau leather interior, six airbags, laminated glass in all windows, powered front and rear seats, Blaupunkt Info Centre with satellite navigation, high power Bose sound system, dual-zone climate control, cruise control and a high-spec anti-theft alarm.

Two options packages will be available - Sport and Executive - and a range of 25 individual options range from metallic paint (£505), coloured brake callipers (£388), rear parking sensor (£447) and powered sunroof (£1,163), to a tailor-made five-piece leather luggage set (£2,468) designed to make maximum use of the 450 litre boot.

Customers will be offered a choice of 15 exterior paint finishes and 10 leather interior colours. Like other models in the Maserati range, Quattroporte will enjoy a 3-year warranty and it is expected to be classified in insurance group 20. Maserati UK anticipates the availability of between 100 and 150 cars during the year.

The service package includes:

- 1st Service at 6,250 miles (10,000 km), technical inspections, oil and oil filter replacement and road test
- 2nd Service at 18,750 miles (30,000 km), as the first service, but with the addition of air and pollen filter replacements and suspension and tracking alignment checks
- 3rd Service at 31,250 miles (50,000 km), as the second service, but with addition of new spark plugs, and replacement of the gearbox, differential and compressor oil, power steering and cooling system liquids, and the climate filter

Exterior Colour Range available at launch:

Grigio Palladio (*new*)

Grigio Touring

Grigio Alfieri

Grigio Nuvolari

Argento Luna (*new*)

Acquamarina (*new*)

Blu Nettuno

Blu Sebring

Blu Malago'

Nero

Nero Carbonio

Verde Goodwood

Bordeaux Pontevecchio (*new*)

Bronzo Montecarlo (*new*)

Bianco Eldorado

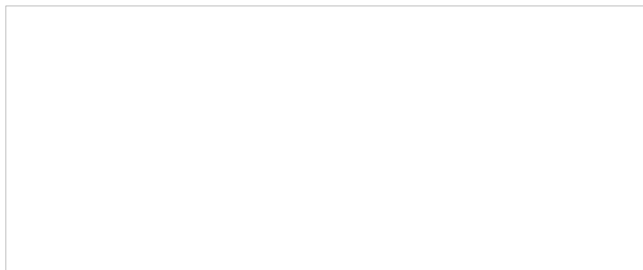
Leather Colour Range available at launch:

Nero

Blu Navy
Blu Medio *(new)*
Grigio Medio
Grigio Chiaro *(new)*
Bordeaux
Avorio
Beige
Cuoio
Cuoio Sella *(new)*

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