

CLASSIC DRIVER



Readers' Cars - Italian collection in Northern Germany

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Dr Dirk Hoffman is the typical 'Classic Driver'. With his garage filled with a new Alfa Romeo 156 GTA, a 1971 Ferrari 246 'Dino' and a 1968 Alfa Romeo Spider 1750, you can see the Hamburg-based dentist is a true fan of Italian sports cars.



With the Ferrari there is a unique stamp on the registration documents; Ferrari SPA has been listed as the original owner so it may have occasionally been driven by Enzo Ferrari himself. Dr Hoffman

bought the car, with its original 'Giallo Fly' paintwork, in 1999. The condition? A1. The paint is like new, the leather upholstery smells as if it's just come from the trim-shop, no rust, no scratches - just perfect, original condition. Originality is important, like the very correct turn-indicators positioned on the *inside* position of the tail lamps - only very few cars carry this arrangement, most export versions had their lights moved to the *outside*. There's also the boot-release in its original place.

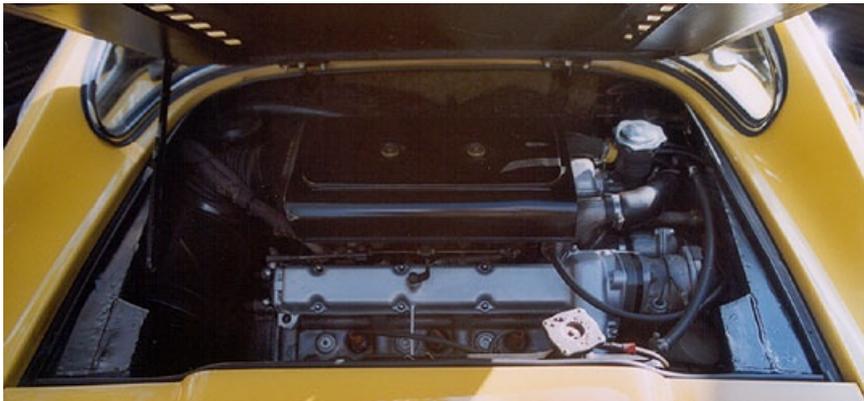


Only 71 models of the 200+ 'M' Series that were originally built still survive. Of all Ferrari's cars in the '70s, the Dino has (unusually) been universally praised. At a time when 12-cylinder cars from Maranello were the norm, the agile V6 Dino was an oddity, and it was also unusual in having its 2,400cc engine mounted amidships like the company's sports-racing cars. It was small, it was pretty, it was the most inexpensive car the company had ever made, and the early examples were not even labelled Ferrari; the legend 'Dino' (after Enzo's son who died aged 24) was the only badge on the car.

Alain Bertraut of the newspaper 'Moteurs' said at the time, after an extensive test of the car, that "The Dino is without a doubt a sports car, even a very beautiful sports car. The Dino is characterised by clear driving fun and exceeds all expectations."



Dr Hoffman's car has been tested by none other than well-known writer and racing driver Paul Frere. It's also been the subject of reports in numerous books and motoring magazines. Behind the German licence plate beats the heart of Italy, which shows itself on the autobahn at the 240 Km/h maximum speed.



The second car from the collection is no less attractive - a 1968 Alfa Romeo Spider 1750. The successor to the 1600cc 'Duetto', this car is as original and well-maintained as the Ferrari. A1 condition and looking as if it had just come from the factory in Milan.

Dr Hoffman drove a similar, but 2.0 litre, car when he was a student and his love for the open model has remained. He bought this white car in 2002, a three-owner vehicle that had been completely restored in 1993 and is complete in its original colour and with the important '1750' badge on the bootlid.



With the 1750cc engine the car reaches a maximum speed of nearly 190 km/h. Beautiful details, like the steering wheel finished with yacht varnish, finish-off this 'Italian dream'.



Surely this Spider is one of the most beautiful and well-maintained we have ever seen. But both it and the Ferrari are not 'over-restored', they just reflect the concept of 'out-of-the-factory' condition.

For everyday use Dr Hoffman owns something more suitable; a brand new Alfa Romeo 156 GTA. The new car matches the philosophy of the 1960s' version of the Giulia Sprint and its contemporary advertising slogan; "The car that you drive to work is a champion".



Looking at the facts this makes sense today. Powered by a 3.2 litre, 250 bhp V6 engine, the car accelerates from 0 - 100 km/h in 6.3 seconds. It's no super-sports car but it's a very fast saloon.

Modern GTA-owners will know the repeated problems with the car's rear-axle, but Dr Hoffmann has other things to think about; like the expansion of his Italian car collection.

First on the wish-list is that mid-sixties product of the famous Italian tractor manufacturer, a Lamborghini Miura, it just *has* to be...

Editor's note - since this article was originally written Dr Hoffmann has found a Miura and is just waiting for its delivery.

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