

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Ferrari 612 Scaglietti on Tour](#)



A unique event requires the services of something special to transport journalist, photographer and factory staff as 'course car' for the recent [Enzo Tour of Tuscany](#). Step forward a RHD 612 Scaglietti, specially shipped over from the UK with the seven British entries on the Tour.

If a £177,500 car has to play second fiddle, then it can only be to an Italian masterpiece from Stradivari or Guarneri (and all highly tuned no doubt). Ferrari's big four-seater was up to the task, and doubled as lead photographer's car as well as taxi for the British team.

We first [experienced the 612](#) in the summer, as part of the triple-car drive back from Maranello to the UK, just a few days before the Goodwood Festival. The idea then was to test the car to its limits on the twisting Alpes Maritime as well as kilometre upon kilometre of French and Italian motorway. In short an introduction to the car, its manners and typical usage. This time it was a matter of grab the keys, load up with passengers and photographer's gear and "Follow that Enzo..."



We were handed the keys appropriately enough at Fiorano, just a short drive from the factory, and by the track that is used so much in developing current Ferrari road cars. A timed 'special stage' there kicked off the Enzo Tour and as the last car left Fiorano we were on its tail, commencing the journey three-up with a long stretch of speed-restricted Autostrada. As we said in June, this is what the car's made for and it was (with no reflection on our back-seat map reader's skills...) a difficult decision to turn off the motorway and head towards the twisty way to Florence rather than blasting down to Rome, Naples and beyond.

The car is a big one, a touch wider but some 20cms longer than the [DB9 we tested last week](#), but doesn't really feel it, and the extra length (and some clever internal packaging) gives space that is remarkable for a GT car. Compared to a Bentley Continental GT I would say the headroom is much better - but knee room not so. On the frequent stops for photography it was easy for all to quickly get out and back in again before the

next section of mist-laden passes and hilltops.



And it's good fun on these twisty bits too. Ferrari have introduced the GTC handling pack as an option for 2006 MY cars (as well as an upgraded sat-nav system) but given the damp conditions, the coupé we drove will hold its own at a brisk pace with the best of them. With the Sport setting activated the 612 is a tight performer, its active suspension components stiffened up and the F1_A gearbox changing faster, utilising more revs from the 540 bhp, 5,748 cc V12. If the styling is more avant-garde than the DB9, the motor is more supple and fluid - and despite its smaller capacity/heavier weight produces another 90 HP or 30 HP/tonne. Although to be fair to the British car, at a much higher price.



The interior is classic Ferrari with leather and alloy mixing with small touches of satin-black high-quality synthetics. The 'Carrozzeria Scaglietti Personalisation Programme' will allow a customer to make his car truly

bespoke, but really the standard item's good enough for me. Our car was equipped with the optional modular 5-spoke split-rim wheels with titanium screws, as well as the integrated CD player/sat-nav and rear parking sensors.

Criticisms would include the fact that the car is not equipped with the hill-start device that prevents rolling back without the hand-brake on, and perhaps it's my eyes but the bi-xenon headlamps did not seem very effective - and this is something I felt when pulling into Monaco at midnight in the summer. Let's put it down to grime on the headlamp cover this time as the autumnal weather was pretty dirty on occasions.



But these apart, it really is a truly complete package that can hold its own in exalted company, provide run-around practicality for three adults and clutter, and with the click of the gearbox paddle give blistering acceleration in any gear, allowing for colossal trans-continent trips at the drop of a hat - remember Ferrari have only recently completed 24,000 kilometres in two relatively standard cars in China. And extensive exposure to the centre of Florence's fiendishly fierce traffic revealed excellent visibility and manners under duress.

The final handover to Fiorano Ferrari personnel (who were handling the trip for the British Enzo owners, as just one of the events they put on each year) at Mugello was a sad one. As a well-known Ferrari collector in the 1970s said to a fresh-faced and innocent SW, "Do you drive a Ferrari? You really ought to get one you know."

A statement that's as true in 2005 as it was thirty years ago.



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