

CLASSIC DRIVER

Fiorano Ferrari

The following is an extract from Roberto Giordanelli's feature in Auto Italia magazine, Issue 113 2005. For access to the full feature, plus articles on the De Tomaso Vallelunga, Lamborghini 400GT Monza, and much more, see www.auto-italia.co.uk



It's no secret that car manufacturers like to impress the Press. Motoring journalists have Ferraris thrust upon them at race tracks. They get invited into the Ferrari pits on Grand Prix weekends. They enjoy Ferrari's best hospitality. All this royal treatment can now be yours.

Buy a new Ferrari from an authorised concessionaire and you automatically become a member of UK-based Fiorano Ferrari. This is your passport to all the above-mentioned international activities and much more. Ferrari is opening the doors to its inner sanctum. Fiorano Ferrari membership also gives you access to a Performance Driving Experience. You receive a half-day one-to-one instruction course in your Ferrari at Silverstone or Goodwood. You will receive VIP invitations to private Ferrari events and the social side of Ferrari and access to the restricted Fiorano Ferrari website where you can be kept updated with privileged information (www.fioranoferrari.com). You will receive a gift pack and a chipped membership card that will give you access to exclusive places.

You can also upgrade to Fiorano Ferrari Corse level where, in your first year, your welcome pack includes a complete set of race kit: personalised Ferrari overalls, helmet, race boots and a driver's log to keep a record of the top tuition you'll receive from the best race instructors at the best UK and European race circuits. In the best cars. Circuits include: Estoril, Goodwood, Monza, Mugello, Jerez, Magny Cours, Oulton Park, Silverstone and Spa-Francorchamps. Current 'Corse' cars that you can drive are the 360 Challenge race cars and the new F430, with the 1225kg F430 Challenge cars coming sometime in the future. Corse membership is open to all Ferrari owners. There is even an option for Corporate Days. A very small number of days are made available to corporate clients with a Ferrari connection. These are the most prestigious and professional track experiences imaginable.



DAY 1: THE PRESS LAUNCH

Let me take you on the two-day Press Launch of Fiorano Ferrari. A group of 23 journalists meet at Farnborough Airport early one morning. A private jet flies us to Bologna where a fleet of black Lancia Thesis is waiting. The scene is straight from *The Italian Job* (the proper one) where the Mafia has black Fiat Dino Coupes. Our cool black convoy takes us to the Montana Restaurant for lunch. In Italy nothing gets in the way of lunch or dinner. While in the Anglo-Saxon world real business is done on the golf course, in Italy it is done in restaurants. The Montana is a favourite of the F1 team and Ferrari in general. Ferrari memorabilia is everywhere; on the wall is a big picture of Michael Schumacher helping to prepare our lunch with Rossella.

THE FERRARI FACTORY

Our impressive convoy sweeps through the factory gates. A presentation is given

by Ferrari personnel where we hear some interesting statistics. Ferrari is the only manufacturer to compete in modern GPs ever since its 1950 inception. Ferrari never advertises. It has made 100,000 cars and 80,000 are still running.

We tour the Maranello works, watching the cars being assembled. The current rate is 5000 per annum. Currently daily production stands at 18 V8 cars and six V12 cars. The V12s comprise three 612 Scagliettis and three Superamericas. The tour continues and takes us past some old cars that are here for storage, should the nearby Galleria Ferrari Museum need to shuffle some cars around.



HELICOPTER TO THE PALACE

Across the road from the factory is the Fiorano test track. A heavily disguised matt-black car is circulating in the rain. Although this future model is disguised, the sound track is unmistakably Ferrari. It is 5.00pm on Day 1 and we need to get to our night-stop which is near Monza and four hours away by car. But this is Ferrari, so a fleet of helicopters is standing by. With the weather closing in, our eight whirlybirds make their exit carrying us up, up and away. Well, sort of; up to just 500ft for the low cloud ceiling and at 125 knots (144mph), heading due north. At this altitude and speed you can see everything just like in the olden days of flying but without the goggles and white scarf. What a great way to travel.

We over-fly Milan's horrendous traffic to land like a swarm of bees in the grounds of a stunning palace – the Villa San Carlo Borromeo (top photo). The Villa houses a five-star luxury hotel, a restaurant and a café.

DAY 2: MONZA

Our fleet of black Lancias forces its way through the traffic to Monza. Like a G8 convoy we claim priority at all road junctions. As we arrive at the historic track, it starts to rain. Then it really rains. Then it buckets down. "It can't rain this hard for very long," I say. But it does. One or two cars venture out onto the flooded track, myself included, but high-speed aquaplaning forces us back into the pits. We wait. We watch. We lunch. Then Enrico Bertaggia our chief instructor and ex-F1 driver announces, "You will all get your drives, rain or no rain - my responsibility." He thumps his chest.

In the late afternoon, the rain-gods run out of water. We never get a dry run but at least the rivers and lakes across the Monza track have dispersed. Our long line of track Ferraris comprises 360 Challenge race cars and the new F430 in road trim, and we try both.

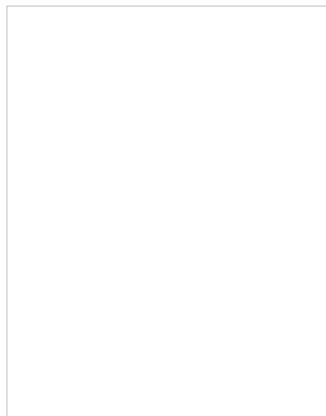
HOME JAMES

At 5.00pm our suit-wearing, shade-wearing chauffeurs with black Lancias are ready to take us to Bergamo Airport for our return flight. The Autostrada is flooded and blocked with crashed cars. We are nearly three hours late for our flight. But when you have your own jet, lateness is not quite the same. We land at Farnborough Airport a whisker before the 10pm curfew. Like a Royal jet, our Dornier taxis right up to our parked cars and 20 minutes later I am home. Air travel as it used to be, and a taste of Ferrari's *dolce vita*.

For more information on Fiorano Ferrari visit www.ferrari.co.uk

Editor's Note: I too have suffered for my craft. Having been the guest of Fiorano Ferrari for the wonderful [Ferrari Enzo Tour in October](#), I can agree completely with Roberto's conclusions above - it's the only way to go Ferrari motoring, and really does give you access to the 'unobtainable' areas of the world's most exclusive

and desirable motor car manufacturer.



*Words by Roberto Giordanelli and pictures
courtesy of Ferrari GB, and Auto Italia magazine.*

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