

CLASSIC DRIVER

Book Review: 'Ferrari 250 GTO, The History of a Legend'



A Google search reveals 1010 results for “Ferrari 250 GTO book”. Frankly, I’m surprised it wasn’t more – does the world really need another volume on one of the most written-about cars ever built?

Yes... and no. Veteran motoring writer Anthony Pritchard’s latest tome on the immortal GTO certainly brings something to the party. However, chassis-number buffs will tut-tut at the variable quality of information on their pet subject and, while it might take a GTO aficionado to spot these anomalies, *any* self-respecting motor racing enthusiast will know it was Aston Martin’s Project car which fought Ferrari’s GT at the 1963 Goodwood Tourist Trophy, rather than a DB4 GT Zagato. Tsk, tsk.

And yet... the book is liberally illustrated with fine b/w and colour period photographs (primarily from LAT), and Pritchard’s readable style includes entertaining interviews with GTO pilots such as David Piper, Michael Salmon and Peter Sutcliffe.

The story starts with the evolution of the 250 GT series of cars which developed, via the LWB Tour de France model, into the devastatingly effective, race- and rally-winning 'Short Wheelbase'. The stubby, irresistibly sexy SWB became the more aerodynamic, homologation-special GTO and, from 1962 to end-1964, there’s wasn’t much (apart from a Cobra on short-circuit sprints or in ‘Daytona’ coupé form at Le Mans) that could beat it.





Each year's racing is analysed in detail, with contemporary competitors (the lightweight E-type, Project and Zagato Aston Martins and AC's Cobra) given some examination. After 1964, the GTO was a spent force in international racing but begat the 275 GTB, and this is allowed a little space of its own. A full listing of chassis numbers follows, with relevant period race results and a slightly haphazard stab at current ownership records. There's also a section on 'GTO wannabes', such as the 'Breadvan' and other efforts by Carrozzeria Drogo, which completes the book.



So, to summarise: great, often rare photos (125 colour, 225 b/w); readable copy; interesting interviews and a good summary of racing in the early 1960s. All for a reasonable price of £50.00 + P&P. Does it improve on my very battered copy of Jess Pourret's classic 'Ferrari 250GT Competition Cars'? No, but it is one for the Ferrari book collectors, and all fans of sportscar racing in the period.

For further information, visit www.haynes.co.uk.

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