

CLASSIC DRIVER

[How about a... Ferrari 456](#)

Lead

If you find the likely £200k+ price of the latest F12berlinetta a little out of your range, why not consider an older Ferrari V12? Stephan Arensmeier considers the merits of the 1990s 456 GT.

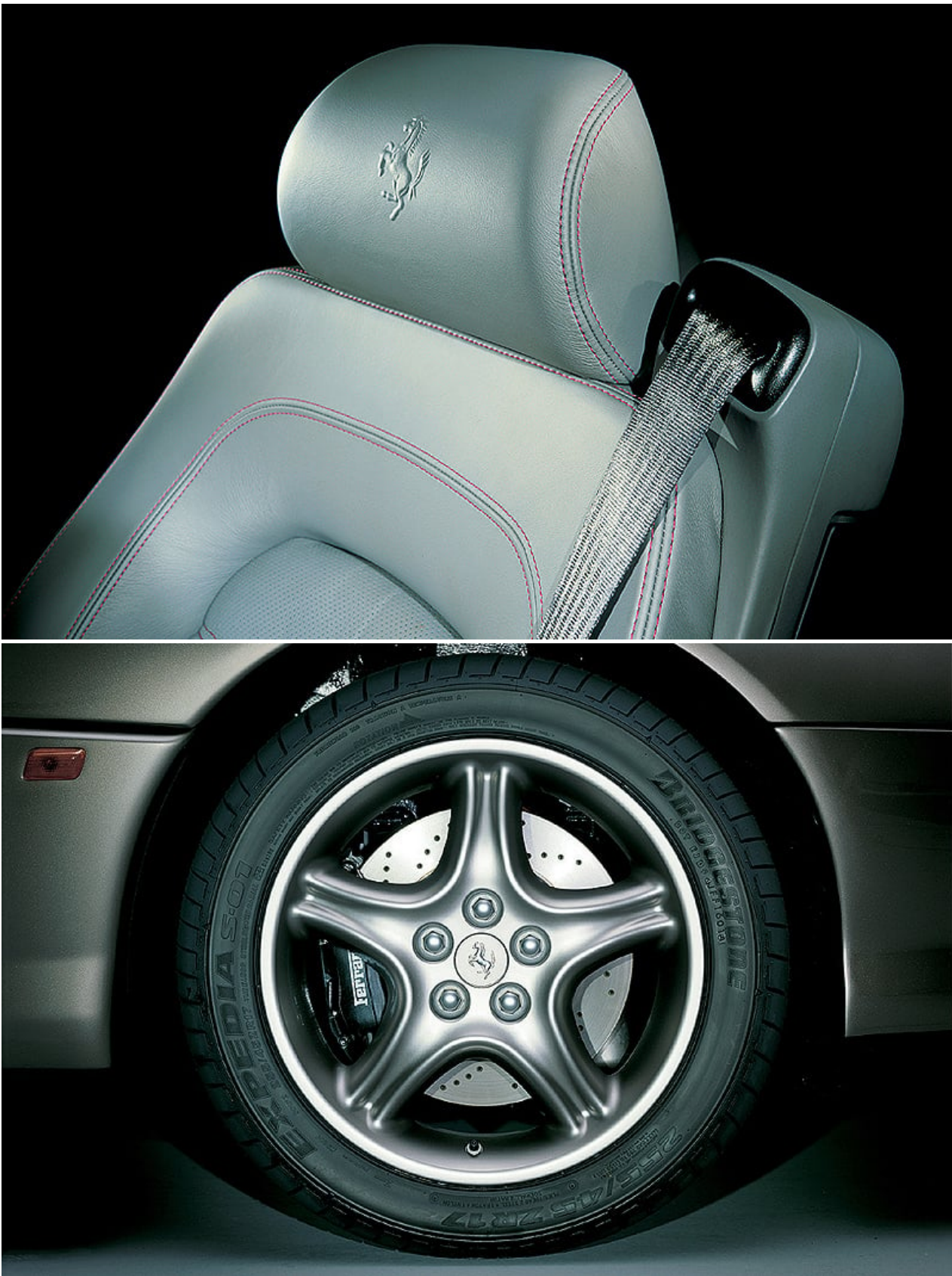
It's extraordinary to see that the 456 dates back to 1996, the year of its launch at the Paris Motor Show. A successor to the timeless 400 series, the 456's understated styling now brings it into the category of 'modern classics'.

After its introduction, an automatic 'GTA' version was offered. And if you (or the Sultan of Brunei, who commissioned several one-offs) wanted a shooting brake or convertible, the special projects departments at Pininfarina and Ferrari were only too happy to oblige.

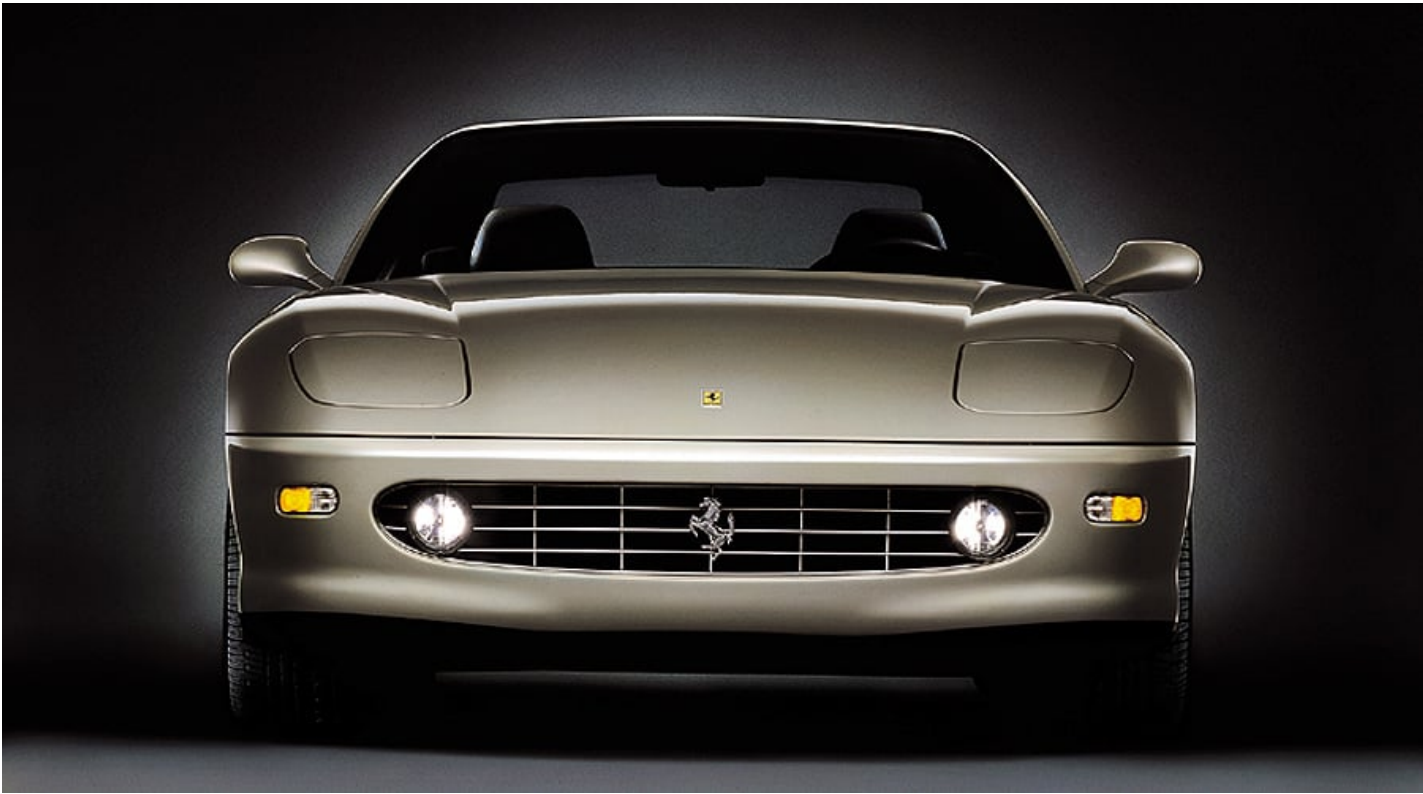




With a 442HP, 5.5-litre V12 and transaxle, the new car was state-of-the-art; handling well and sprinting from zero to 100km/h (62mph) in 5.5 seconds. Top speed was a useful 300km/h or so and a variety of modern electronics that included an electrically controlled rear spoiler made the car not only a supercar, but also a showcase for the future of high-tech, Montezemolo-era Ferraris.



In 1998 the company introduced a 'Mark II', if you like: the 456 M (for 'Modificata'). This had a new grille and headlamp treatment, a carbonfibre bonnet and fresher, redesigned interior. With these revisions came a small increase in price.





Some 3300 examples of the 456 in all its forms were built – approximately two thirds specified with the classic, six-speed Ferrari ‘gate’ transmission. Available today at a fraction of its price when new – say 35,000 euros and upwards – the Ferrari 456 offers modern-looking styling, practical 2+2 seating, strong performance and, best of all, a V12 engine and THAT yellow and black badge on the nose.

Photos: Ferrari

Gallery

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