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Ferrari 275 GTB/4: Straight off the track

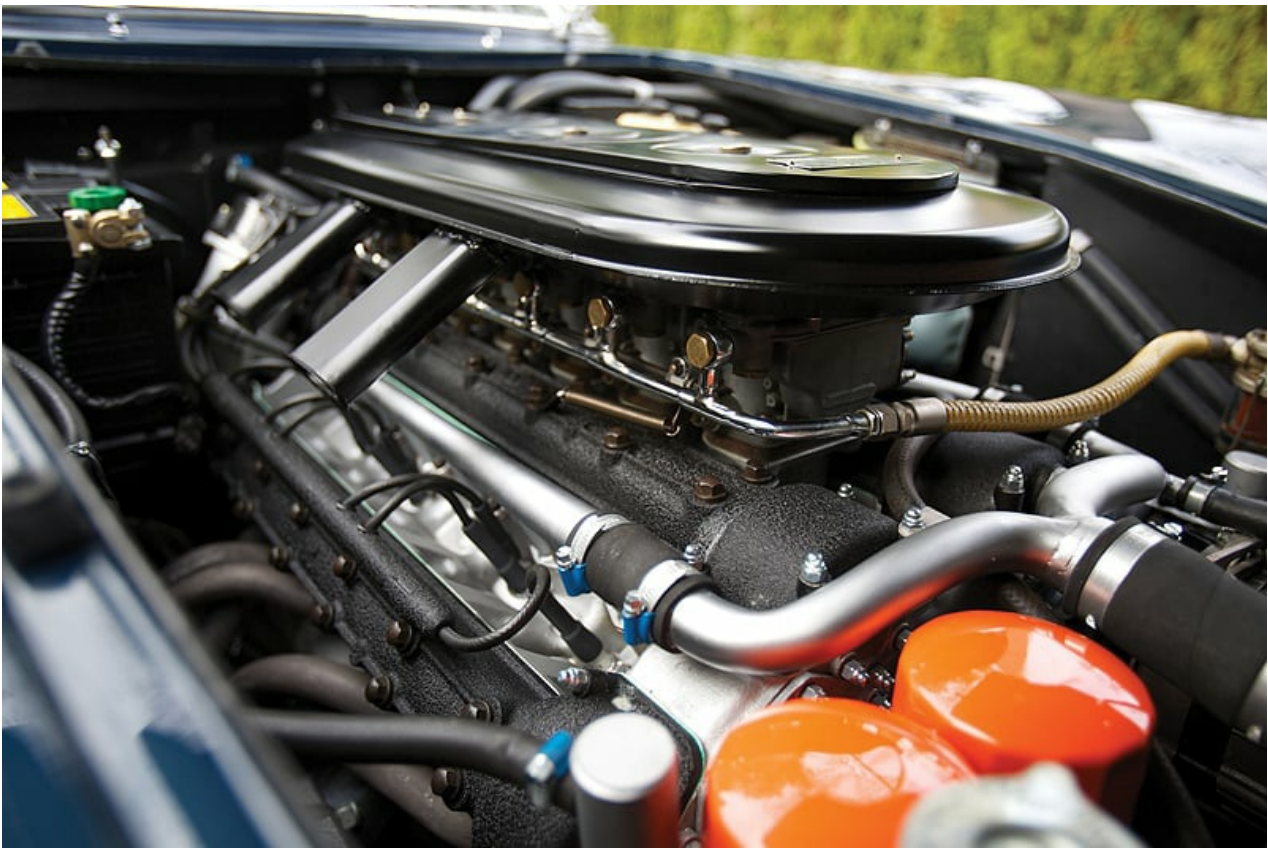
Lead

How does this sound to you: 0-100mph in under 15 seconds, 91.3bhp/litre from a race-derived 3286cc V12 with four cams; and a 165mph top speed? It's impressive today, and that's 46 years after the magnificent Ferrari 275 GTB/4 was introduced.

Imagine the reaction Ferrari achieved when it launched its latest high-performance *berlinetta* at the 1966 Paris Motor Show. Only a year before, the factory racing team was entering P2 prototypes with the same capacity of engine and twin-cam cylinder heads. That's how motor racing 'improves the breed', as they say – never more so than with cars from Maranello.

The original 275 GTB was revealed to the world in Paris in 1964. Taking many design and engineering features from the racing GTs that culminated in the 250 GTO, it was notable as the first production Ferrari with a transaxle. The Pininfarina styling was executed by Scaglietti and is among both companies' finest works. Shame about the 14" wheels, though – not only do they compromise the proportions in this writer's eyes, they also limit the diameter of brake disc that can be fitted.





The car went through several versions, with short-nose, long-nose, alloy bodywork and three-and six-carb versions being made. A relatively early engineering improvement was the fitment of a 'torque tube' that made a rigid connection between engine and transaxle, the propshaft running through the middle.

Racing-wise, apart from a couple of extremely radical, long-nose semi-prototype *Competizione Speciales* (one finished third at Le Mans in 1965), many 275 GTBs ran in straitened levels of tune, thanks to an organising body familiar with Ferrari's ideas of 'homologation'.



When the four-cam version of the 275 GTB was released, however impressive the previous model might have been, it raised the bar to another level. More power, that was certain, but the engine also gained a lot more torque further down the rev range.

Anyone who has driven a 275 GTB/4 would agree that it is one of the very best cars ever built, and prices today reflect that fact.

Photos: Corey Silvia ©2012 Courtesy of RM Auctions

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