

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Nifty shades: Will the Ferrari Testarossa catch the Countach?](#)

Lead

Lauded by Pininfarina as “an exaggeration of flamboyance”, the Ferrari Testarossa captivated the world and epitomised an era. So why are values lagging far behind its closest rival, the Lamborghini Countach? Classic Driver investigates...

Complying with stringent global safety laws – hence the side strakes, perhaps designed to stop small children being swallowed by the deep air ducts – the Testarossa was Ferrari’s first ‘world’ car, addressing the 512BB’s shortcomings and successfully turning Ferrari into a household name. Talking of names, it had a real one, not just a number, and while the legend of the celestial 50s and 60s Testa Rossa racers would never be equalled, the new ‘red head’ would forge its own, radically different path to iconic status.

Eighties excess



There are few cars that scream Eighties excess as powerfully as the opinion-polarising Ferrari Testarossa. Along with the [Lamborghini Countach](#), it was *the* car of choice for the [Wolves of Wall Street](#) and sock-less yuppies, featured as the world’s most overt covert police car in [Miami Vice](#) and the star of the cult classic Sega video game, Outrun. Heck, it was even unveiled in a Parisian nightclub.

But beneath that unconventional, wedged body – with its comically wide rear track and signature ‘cheesegrater’ strakes – was a capable and comfortable chassis, said to be more civilised Grand Tourer than red-blooded supercar (though we wouldn’t recommend taking any foolish liberties). So was the Testarossa all bark and no bite? Allegedly, if you really wanted your heart (and underwear) set on fire, the notoriously intimidating raging bull was the preferred weapon of choice. But that was the Eighties; this is now.

Borrowed time



Let’s face it; any time spent with your pride and joy is rare. To truly enjoy and make the most of that time, you don’t want to have to sit on the door sill (à la Countach) every time you want to reverse, or feel like you’ve just worked out with Arnie after every journey. The Testarossa’s got the head-turning image to make you feel like a schoolboy again, while still proving the perfect partner to accompany you on a Continental weekend away. Plus it’s an excuse to dig out that pastel linen suit from the back of the wardrobe (admit it, it’s still there somewhere).

The simple fact is that the Countach is a *much* rarer car than the Testarossa, and as Lamborghini’s production was nearing an end when the Ferrari was introduced, technologically, the two are hard to compare. But that’s not to say the Ferrari won’t have its day. RM senior car specialist Augustin Sabatié-Garat thinks that it’s only a matter of time, although he encourages patience. “Only the QV and 25th Anniversary models really competed with the Ferrari, but just 1,300 cars were made of both [Lamborghini] models, compared with 7,177 Testarossas,” he explains. “As a result, the Testarossa has good potential, but will have a slow evolution. [512BB’s](#) are only just starting to show a considerable increase, so there’s some time to wait.”

A darker red head



[This striking Rosso Metallizzato car](#) (think more Susan Sarandon than Toyah Willcox) has covered just 16,000km and is reputedly in fantastic condition. It will be offered by RM Auctions at its [London sale on 8 September 2014](#). The phones might be smaller, the suits darker and the hairstyles significantly less feathered, but the Testarossa remains one of the coolest, most iconic cars ever produced. And like most ageing cars with a prancing pony on the grille, prices can seemingly only go one way.

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Gallery

