

CLASSIC DRIVER

This Magnificent Seven defined 70 years of Ferrari

Lead

Next year, Ferrari will celebrate the 70th anniversary of its very first road car – an occasion it's marking in fine style with 70 liveries inspired by key cars in its illustrious history. Ahead of the anniversary, we look back at what we consider to be Ferrari's greatest hits, or rather horses...

From the 1940s



Things were simpler way back when. This Ferrari 166 MM – one of the marque's earliest creations – represents design efficiency at its purest: just a small-capacity V12, ultra-light Touring Superleggera bodywork, and a driver. Finished in a harmonious two-tone colour scheme, this example (which [originally belonged to a certain Giovanni Agnelli](#), we hasten to add) is a masterpiece of simple style.

From the 1950s...



Head to the glistening shores of Lake Como during the Villa d'Este Concorso d'Eleganza, the rolling lawns of Pebble Beach during Monterey Car Week or the streets of Monte-Carlo on virtually any day in the summer season, and you're bound to see a Ferrari 250 GT California Spider or 'SWB' prowling around. You're unlikely to spy the genesis of this legendary line of 3.0-litre V12 Gran Turismo models, however – the 250 Mille Miglia. Just 17 of the dainty, egg-crate-grilled berlinettas were built, and are today, understandably, sought after by the most discerning of Ferrari collectors.

From the 1960s...



The frenzy and furore that has surrounded the Ferrari 250 GTO in recent years – predominantly spearheaded by hushed whispers about value rather than, sadly, its sultry curves – has pushed its successor, the 250 LM, somewhat into the shadows. The mid-engined prototype claimed Ferrari’s final Le Mans victory in 1965, and its Pininfarina-designed, Scaglietti-built body is, in our eyes, even better proportioned than that of its front-engined forerunner.

From the 1970s...



Enzo’s firm belief in front-engined cars – that the horse should pull the cart, so to speak – could only hold out for so long. In 1971, Ferrari revealed its first mid-engined road car, the 365 GT4 Berlinetta Boxer. Its arrow-like body was influenced by Pininfarina’s stunning P6 Berlinetta Speciale concept, and was radically different to the positively old-fashioned (and then-out-dated) front-engined Gran Turismos it succeeded. And we think it’s only got better with age – those triple exhaust tips, for instance, are a perfect example of 1970s exuberance realised in a timeless manner.

From the 1980s...





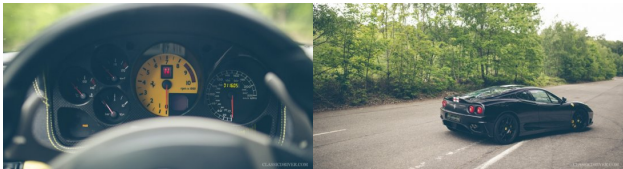
Not even Ferrari could ignore the phenomenon of turbocharging that swept the 1980s. After reluctantly switching to forced induction in its Formula 1 activities, Ferrari used the resultant expertise for its 288 GTO, which was intended for use in the Group B sports-car racing series. Alas, the formula was canned, not that that stopped people lusting after the exotic GTO, a car that, if treated with respect, can still keep up with almost any modern sports car. Whether you see it as a spiritual successor to the immortal 250 GTO, or the start of the line of the marque's flagship supercars, the 288 GTO is one of *the* great Ferraris.

From the 1990s...



Lots of manufacturers claim to implement Formula 1-derived technology into their road cars, but rarely do those claims carry any genuine weight (other than lack thereof). The Ferrari F50 was different. It actually did have an engine based on that found in Alain Prost's 1990 Ferrari Formula 1 car bolted directly to its rear bulkhead. The styling might have been lambasted, and it might not have reached the dizzying heights of popularity enjoyed by its predecessor, the F40, but the F50 represents the ultimate in analogue performance – a car whose construction was cutting edge, but whose philosophy was rooted in tradition. Enzo would have been proud.

From the New Millenium...



We could go on about how the Ferrari 360 Challenge Stradale – the pared-back, track-focused variant of the regular 360 Modena – played an instrumental role in the popularisation of the [high-end 'track-day special' concept](#). But if you've ever had the fortune of witnessing a Stradale at maximum attack, you'll know that its soul-stirring V8 howl is its defining characteristic.

Photos: Tom Shaxson and Rémi Dargen for Classic Driver, RM Sotheby's.

Gallery

Source URL: <https://www.classicdriver.com/en/article/cars/magnificent-seven-defined-70-years-ferrari>
© Classic Driver. All rights reserved.