


1958 Ferrari 250 GT Tour de France Berlinetta

- Lot sold
USD 6 500 000 - 7 500 000
Year of manufacture 1958
- **Lot number** 053
- **Drive** LHD
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Exterior colour** Other
- **Car type** Other
-

Description

PROVENANCE

Cartiere del Timavo, Trieste, Italy (acquired new in 1958)

Michele Vernola, Milan, Italy (acquired by 1962)

William Theodore Ribbs Sr., San Jose, California (acquired circa mid-1960s)

Dr. Hamilton Kelly, San Marino, California (acquired by 1966)

Fred Peters, Orange, California (acquired from the above in 1966 via Charles Betz)

EXHIBITED

Mille Miglia Storica, Italy, May 1990

FCA International Concours d'Elegance, Monterey, California, August 1994

Skeets and Sharon Dunn's Picnic at Osuna Ranch, Rancho Santa Fe, California, April 1995

Rosso Rodeo Concours d'Elegance, Beverly Hills, California, June 1995

Newport Beach Concours d'Elegance, Newport Beach, California, October 1995 (Honored Marque Award)

Skeets and Sharon Dunn's Picnic at Osuna Ranch, Rancho Santa Fe, California, May 1996

Colorado Grand, Participated Four Times Between 1997 and 2014

Concorso Italiano, Carmel, California, August 2000

FCA National Meet and Concours d'Elegance, Los Angeles, California, May 2002

Monterey Historic Automobile Races, Monterey, California, August 2002

Monterey Historic Automobile Races, Monterey, California, August 2004

FCA National Meet, Monterey, California, August 2004

Shell Historic Ferrari-Maserati Challenge, Fontana, California, April 2005 (1st in Class)

The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering, Carmel, California, August 2006

Concours on the Avenue, Carmel-by-the-Sea, California, August 2009

Rodeo Drive Concours d'Elegance, Beverly Hills, California, June 2011

Concorso Ferrari, Pasadena, California, May 2013

Jet Aviation Pre-Cavallino Party, Palm Beach, Florida, January 2016 (Coppa Bella Macchina Award)

Cavallino Classic, Palm Beach, Florida, January 2016

Concours on the Avenue, Carmel-by-the-Sea, California, August 2017 (Best of Show)

RACE HISTORY

Targa Florio, May 1958, Ferraro/Crivellari, No. 52 (DNF)

Trieste-Opicina Hillclimb, October 1958, Ferraro, No. 148 (3rd in Class)

THIS CAR

In 1956, Ferrari responded to the FIA's new GT Class championship with a dual-purpose road-racing model based on the 250 GT production platform. With alloy coachwork by Scaglietti and a competition-tuned version of the Colombo short-block V-12, the new 250 GT Berlinetta became a potent force in sports car racing through the late 1950s.

The model was particularly dominant at the multi-stage Tour de France, which it won four consecutive years from 1956–59. Appropriately nicknamed the 250 GT Tour de France (TdF), 78 examples of the berlinetta were built in four different body styles before the model was succeeded by the 250 GT Interim. In the years since, the Tour de France has evolved into one of the marque's most desirable models, embodying rarity, advanced engineering, competition pedigree, and breathtaking design aesthetics.

This extremely desirable TdF benefits from 52 years of care by one of America's best-known Ferrari collectors, the late Mr. Fred Peters. Chassis 0905 GT was dispatched to Scaglietti for coachwork in late February 1958, and after mechanical testing, the car was officially completed in early May. As completed, it is the fifth of 36 examples built by Scaglietti in the attractive single-louvre body style and one of fewer finished with the most desirable covered headlight arrangement.

The Berlinetta was prepared for racing use with unusual competition features such as a rally-style passenger seat with adjustable rake and a headrest, sliding lightweight Perspex windows, bare interior door panels with simple pull-cable releases, and cabin-cooling fender vents. Finished in (Medium Gray Metallic) paint with light gray interior upholstery, the 250 GT was sold new on May 5 to the company Cartiere del Timavo in Trieste on behalf of its president, Pietro Ferraro.

On May 11, Ferraro entered the TdF in the Targa Florio with Eros Crivellari serving as his co-driver. Interestingly, the lead scrutineering seal marked "T-F" remains affixed to the steering column to this day. At some point during the race the Ferrari veered off the road toward an olive grove below, and a dramatic period photograph shows it hanging from a roadside wall. Six months later, at the Trieste-Opicina Hillclimb, Ferraro drove the repaired Berlinetta to a 3rd in Class finish, and this marks the end of the car's known competition history.

It is believed that in the early 1960s, while still in Italy, 0905 GT's original engine block (internal no. 0186 C) was replaced with a later 128 D block (internal no. 092 D). This new block is understood to have come from a 250 GT Coupe that had been built for the Agnelli family and that the replacement may have been carried out by Milanese Ferrari dealer Crepaldi or by the Ferrari factory. This 128 D block is stamped 0905 GT in a correct font and the engine features the lightweight magnesium components and other special competition equipment that are believed to have been fitted to this car when new.

The 250 GT was exported to the US in June 1962 by Italian dealer Michele Vernola of Milan, and within the next few years the car passed to William Ribbs Sr., father of the well-known driver Willy T. Ribbs (the first African-American to compete in the Indianapolis 500). By early 1966, the 250 GT was purchased by Dr. Hamilton Kelly, a Ferrari collector residing in San Marino, California.

The well-known and highly respected Southern California collector Charles Betz was instrumental in the transaction, and at this point he was barely beginning his decades-long foray into Ferrari collecting. Betz retrieved the Berlinetta from a Hollywood garage on Dr. Kelly's behalf. When the doctor learned how much work would be required to maintain the TdF in good operating order, he chose to sell it instead.

At the time, Betz had recently been introduced to a fellow enthusiast who, like himself, was a college professor. This like-minded Southern California collector, Fred Peters of Orange, had fallen in love with the TdF model after seeing one belonging to the Nethercutt family. When 0905 GT became available he jumped at the opportunity to purchase the car.

Betz and Peters went on to become lifelong business partners and friends as their interest in Ferrari collecting evolved, and 0905 GT is the car that essentially catalyzed their relationship. They are known today as perhaps the most important pair of early Ferrari-focused collectors in Southern California, trailblazers in the preservation of these important cars.

They earmarked 0905 GT as a project, and parts were gradually assembled for an engine rebuild. Over the next few years, the gearbox and differential were rebuilt, and in the early 1970s, the exterior was refinished in a deep shade of red. By the late 1980s, Betz and Peters identified a machinist capable of tackling a correct rebuild of the engine, and a mechanical restoration was completed in spring 1990. Betz and Ed Domanskis then ran the car in the Mille Miglia Storica.

The TdF subsequently embarked on a distinguished show career that included many concours d'elegance over the following 25 years. The Berlinetta was presented at Skeets and Sharon Dunn's Picnic at Osuna Ranch in Rancho Santa Fe, California, and at the Rodeo Drive Concours d'Elegance in Beverly Hills. It also won the honored marque award at the 1995 Newport Beach Concours d'Elegance, and it has been exhibited twice at the Concours on the Avenue at Carmel-by-the-Sea. Additional prestigious events attended included the 2000 Concorso Italiano, and the 2006 The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering, where the TdF was shown as part of the Targa Florio centenary celebration.

In addition to its distinguished show career, 0905 GT was also enjoyed on the road and track as Ferrari intended. In September 1997, the Ferrari was driven by Fred Peters and Brooke Betz (Charles' son, a respected Ferrari mechanic in his own right) on the Colorado Grand, the first of four appearances on the tour. The TdF also ran at the Monterey Historics at Laguna Seca, California, in 2002 and 2004, and placed 1st in Class at the Shell Historic Ferrari-Maserati Challenge at the California Speedway in Fontana in April 2005.

Having enjoyed the car for years, Peters decided in early 2014 to restore 0905 GT to its original factory appearance. Upon disassembly, the original paint color was discovered, and the coachwork was treated to a bare-metal refinish by Beckman Metal Works in Costa Mesa, California. New aluminum bumpers were fabricated, and the original chrome headlamp bezels (which had been stored in the trunk at the time of the 1966 purchase) were replated and reinstalled. Westminster Auto Upholstery trimmed the interior in proper gray leather, and Brooke Betz supervised the stripping, body preparation, and complete reassembly with quality control for fit and finish.

Completed in 2015, the restored Berlinetta debuted at the Cavallino Classic in January 2016, earning the popular vote for the Coppa Bella Macchina award for Best of Show at the pre-event Jet Party at Palm Beach airport. The car was then warmly admired at the Breakers on Saturday as a display-only entry. Later that year, 0905 GT was the subject of a full feature in the December 2016 issue of Forza magazine. The Berlinetta was last shown in August 2017 at the Concours on the Avenue in Carmel-by-the-Sea, earning Best of Show. Sadly, in early 2018, the great Ferrari collector Fred Peters passed away, and this car, one of his legacies, now awaits a new custodian to assume the mantle of its care.

Documented with copies of factory build sheets, a history report produced by Marcel Massini, and period photos, this breathtaking Tour de France should command the attention of dedicated Ferrari collectors worldwide. The superlative and rare car is well known in the Ferrari community, and displays the considerable benefits of 52 years of care by one of America's premier marque collectors. Chassis 0905 GT offers the next caretaker a ticket to the world's most prestigious automotive events, and it may also be enjoyed for its peerless driving and design characteristics.

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