

CLASSIC DRIVER

Embark on a grand tour with this Ferrari 250 GT Lusso

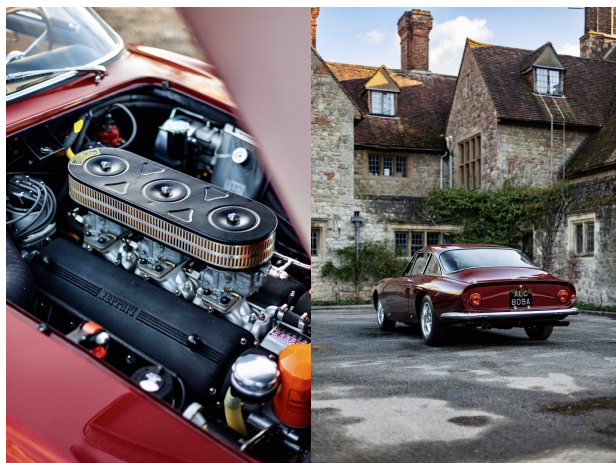
Lead

Arguably the most beautiful grand tourer ever built in Maranello, the Ferrari 250 GT Lusso would be our first choice for a springtime cross-continental jaunt. Luckily, this stunning car is just waiting for a new owner to take the keys and drive into the sunset.



Everyone has their own idea about what the most beautiful car in the world is, but few would argue against the Ferrari 250GT Lusso being somewhere near the top of the shortlist. If you disagree, just look at the images of [this pristine example being offered for sale by German dealer Bastian Voigt](#) – and prepare to be converted.

Although no longer wearing the same 'argento' paintwork and 'rosso' leather that it left the factory with, in February 1964, the car is in essentially 'as-new' condition, fully matching numbers and Ferrari Classiche certified. It has been the subject of a truly meticulous six-figure restoration by Kent-based Ferrari specialist Barkaways that took the best part of 20 months and is still outlined on the firm's website, step by painstaking step.



After the completion of this work and whilst under the command of its previous owner, the Lusso received the ultimate seals of approval when it scooped a class win at the Salon Prive and was given the once over at the national gathering of the UK Ferrari Owners' Club by marque guru Keith Bluemel. It left the event awarded 'Best in Show' with a coveted 'Platinum Certificate'.

The current owner (for whom Bastian sourced the car and on whose behalf he is now selling it) has used it for the kind of journey the 250GT Lusso was surely intended for: a time-honoured drive from the UK to the south of France, destination Monaco.



As already alluded to, the luscious Lusso was never built for sitting around on grass, going nowhere. Launched at the Paris Salon in October 1962, it marked the end of the line for Ferrari's illustrious '250' series and was intended from the outset to be a tourer, not a racer.

Its predecessor, the 250GT Berlinetta short wheelbase, was designed to perform equally well on road and track, with roadgoing versions being softly sprung and fully trimmed, while the racers were stripped out and clad in aluminium.



The new 250GT's 'Lusso' designation instantly marked out its role as a luxurious and elegant continent-crosser. The graceful lines of its Pininfarina-designed, Scaglietti-built steel and alloy body gave it an air of effortless superiority that made it a must for the type of sporting gentleman who was more interested in a car's ability to facilitate a late breakfast at the Hotel de Crillon, followed by an early dinner at La Colombe d'Or, than its potential to win Le Mans.

Beneath the shark-like snout nestles Colombo's light and compact 3.0-litre, twin-cam V12. Softly tuned and fed by a mere three Weber carburettors (as opposed to the six of racier 'rraris), it endows the Lusso with a useful 240bhp at 7,500rpm. That's enough for a claimed top speed of 150mph – and, more importantly, enables this consummate GT to lope at a fast and effortless cruise for mile upon mile.



Although the boot is small and rendered virtually useless by the presence of the spare wheel and internal fuel filler (it would have been wrong to spoil those lines with an external effort), the platform of artistically quilted leather behind the seats holds all the luggage required for an interesting weekend away. The light-filled interior also offers sufficient leg and headroom to allay discomfort for however long 31 gallons of petrol can be made to last.

The dashboard, meanwhile, displays all the crucial gauges (water temperature, oil pressure, fuel level) directly behind the standard-issue Nardi steering wheel, while the rev counter and speedometer are centrally mounted and sportingly offset in their own angled pods. Beneath these is arranged a line of identical switches that control everything from the windscreen wipers to the fuel pumps – all, helpfully, unlabelled.

But even if the Lusso hadn't been capable of going the distance while cossetting its occupants, it would likely have been a success on looks alone. The Pininfarina styling is a masterclass in minimalism, all the way from the single rear lights to the discreetly integrated front bumper. Even the one superfluous item on the car – that chromed intake on the bonnet bulge does nothing – somehow needs to be there.



Indeed, Battista 'Pinin' Farina, the very man who styled the 250GT Lusso, found his work so pleasing that he owned one himself (he may even have bought it with his own money). But perhaps the ultimate seal of approval came from Steve McQueen, whose claret-coloured Lusso is said to have been one of his favourite cars. Gifted to him on his 34th birthday by first wife Neile, it cost \$23,988 new, was driven regularly by the actor for four years.

It may not have McQueen appeal, but according to its documents, its provenance is pretty tidy all the same. Delivered direct from the factory to Italian buyer Franco Pecoraro, it was shipped to America in 1966 and acquired by Ferrari fan George Murtha of Connecticut.



The car remained in Murtha's hands for a remarkable 38 years before ending up with local dealer Bill Pollard of Sport Auto, eventually arriving in the UK, where it was sold in 2011 through a renowned UK dealer to the previous owner. After a restoration at Barkaways the car was sold in 2016 to the current US based owner who kept it in Europe. The car is now with available in Germany with European taxes paid. Fully restored, beautifully maintained and accompanied by its Ferrari Classiche 'Red Book' certification, Massini Report, Andreas Birner report and FIVA card, it wants for precisely nothing.

Save for the world to open up again so it can be allowed to 'tour' once more. Wouldn't that be grand?

Photos: Kevin van Campenhout © 2021

Gallery

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