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Lead

First came the La Ferrari, then the SF90, and now this, the Ferrari 296 GTB. Not only is this Ferrari's first 'mainstream' hybrid, but it is also their first V6 since the Dino, and it's here to steal the limelight from the McLaren Artura.



We've all seen the photos of development mules lurking around Maranello, disguised under so much plastic cladding and psychedelic vinyl that they could've been Fiat Multiplas and we would have been none the wiser. Now shorn of camouflage, this is the Ferrari 296 GTB — isn't she a looker? If La Ferrari had been Maranello dipping its toes into the frigid pools of hybridisation, and the SF90 was waist deep, then this is the full swan dive representing Ferrari's first crack at a proper consumer hybrid. If you're like us, while the loss of the V8 is certainly lamentable, the fact that a combustion engine remains, and a V6 at that, is truly something to appreciate in 2021, especially as it seems the new Maserati GranTurismo may go EV-only.



Designed to take on the McLaren Artura, the Ferrari 296 GTB produces 819 bhp from its hybridised midengine powertrain, comprised of that shiny new V6 mated to an electric motor driving the rear wheels. This is the culmination of everything Ferrari learnt from its previous two hybrid entries, and if the devastatingly quick SF90 is anything to go by, the McLaren Artura should be shaking its wheel lugs loose at this stage. Clearly the visual links to the SF90 are there, but while that car was focused on global domination through outright pace, the 296 GTB is determined to reintroduce some of the driver engagement that has been largely lost in the hybrid era. There's no doubt the 296 GTB will still be obscenely quick, as it's 0-60 time of 2.9 seconds probably underplays, but in an era where 1000hp cars are as common as dairy free milk alternatives, there isn't much novelty in pursuing ever-loftier horsepower figures. Therefore, Ferrari's new approach could signify a welcome shift in the direction of supercar development: away from spec-sheet bragging rights and towards pure driving fun. We always liked the sound of a V6 anyway.

Photos: Ferrari

Gallery

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