
1958 Ferrari 250 - GT LWB Berlinetta 'Tour de France'

GT LWB Berlinetta 'Tour de France'

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|---------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------|
| Lot sold | USD 0 | Condition | Used |
| Year of manufacture | 1958 | Location | |
| Lot number | 331 | Exterior colour | Blue |
| | | Car type | Other |

Description

- The 52nd of 72 Berlinettas "Tour de France" built; "single-louver" example
- Several one-off features specified by the original owner, French industrialist and racer Jacques Peron
- 4th overall at the 1958 Tour de France
- Formerly the prized possession of David and Mary Love for nearly 40 years
- Retains its original covered-headlamp alloy coachwork, chassis, engine, and gearbox
- Meticulously restored to exacting standards, with mechanical restoration by Patrick Ottis
- Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance award-winner
- A superlative example of one of the ultimate Ferraris of its era

Please note that this lot is titled as a 1959.

CHASSIS NUMBER 1031 GT

The 52nd alloy-bodied 250 GT LWB Berlinetta "Tour de France" of 72 built, chassis number 1031 GT was originally finished in an Alfa Romeo color known as "Giulietta Blue" with a red stripe and Havana brown upholstery. These were but the least of the requests of its original owner: French industrialist and accomplished racing driver Jacques Peron, a skilled rallyist (having co-driven to overall victory at the 1951 and 1953 runnings of the Rally Morocco), circuit racer, and multi-year 24 Hours of Le Mans entrant.

Peron requested a 250 TR-specification engine, a hinged engine cover to enable easy roadside

repairs as a solo driver, a transmission tunnel-mounted hand brake for standing starts on hill climbs, room for two spare wheels for endurance racing, an ammeter in place of a clock, and an altimeter to determine when to change carburetor jets. He also requested that the car be completed no less than three weeks prior to the 1958 running of the Tour de France, in which he wished to take part, so that he would have time to test it, become comfortable behind the wheel, and, if necessary, trouble-shoot any ills. Copies of correspondence between Mr. Peron and Ferrari are included in the file.

The Ferrari factory proceeded to deliver the car with no time to spare, having declined or ignored a number of Peron's requests, including the 250 TR-spec engine and tunnel-mounted hand brake; they did, however, offer to install the altimeter—if he would be so kind as to bring it with him upon delivery. Having already been required to present the factory with his racing resume before they would sell him the car in the first place, Mr. Peron was, shall we say, not pleased. Such was his rage that not even a highly respectable 4th Overall finish in the Tour, co-driving with the noted American sportsman Harry Schell and overcoming damage to the right front fender, could quell it; he sent Ferrari a strongly worded letter thereafter, noting sale of the car to another Frenchman, René Cotton, in 1958.

Mr. Cotton soon entered the car in the Coupe de Paris at Montlhéry, where it was a DNF driven by Jean-Marc Beudin. Cotton then finished 6th Overall in the Lottery Grand Prix at Monza on 28 June 1959, then, co-driving with Beudin, DNF'd in the Tour de France of 1959. In 1960 the car was brought into the factory Assistenza Clienti at Modena for service and maintenance, still in Cotton's ownership.

By October 1963 the car was owned by G. Tettamanti, then it passed in early 1967 to Ingegnere Beneteau of Agrate. Within months it had moved to the U.S. via the SS President Arthur, arriving in San Francisco in the hands of a new American caretaker, Robert Magnani. Mr. Magnani refinished the car in red and had it regularly serviced in his ownership by Steve Griswold's now-legendary service facility, maintaining a detailed book of service records which still accompanies the Ferrari, while also driving the car some 15,000 kilometers.

In 1972, chassis number 1031 GT was sold to David and Mary Love. The Loves were great enthusiasts known for the loving long-term stewardship of their automobiles, which in addition to chassis number 1031 GT also included a 250 Testa Rossa and an Alfa Romeo 6C 1750 by Zagato. Mr. Love—fondly remembered for his pioneering, tireless support for historic racing and his decades of on-track exploits in his Testa Rossa—was a fastidious caretaker who researched the car's history carefully and maintained it with the same precision, taking pride in maintaining it mechanically himself. After it was refinished in grey with a black racing stripe, Mary Love, an accomplished vintage racing driver, drove the car at the Monterey Historics in 1973 and 1974, finishing 1st and 2nd in Class, respectively. Later that decade the engine and gearbox were rebuilt by Mr. Love.

The car attended and completed six consecutive Colorado Grands between 1990 and 1995—with the Loves driving their mount to and from the event! The couple also completed the inaugural Copperstate 1000 in 1991 and the La Carrera Real in 1992. In the Tour de Marin in 2002, a ghost of the car's past seems to have visited, when it sustained minor damage on the same right front fender that had been damaged in the 1958 Tour de France! This was corrected by 2004, with the body refinished to medium red, and the car continued to be enjoyed. During the Loves' ownership the car was pictured in John Starkey's respected tome on the model, *The Ferrari 250 GT Story: Tour de France*, and was generally considered one of the best-kept and most well-preserved examples of its kind.

Only following David Love's passing in 2014 did the prized 1031 GT become available, and was then acquired by the present owner—accompanied by the collection of documentation that had been meticulously kept over the years. This information helped enable a restoration undertaken with great sensitivity towards the originality of components throughout. Mechanical restoration was undertaken by the respected Patrick Ottis, with attention to detail that included confirming the original engine and gearbox numbers to still be present, properly restoring the wiring, and fitting such priceless pieces as original 1958 Marchal headlamps, a period battery, and an authentic washer bottle. Ottis's superior workmanship is well-recognized and is evident in every nut and bolt of the finished product here.

As the Loves had intended the previous cosmetic restorations to be “temporary,” they had carefully preserved a spot of original Giulietta Blue paint, to which the new finish was carefully matched by Charlie Potts in the course of coachwork restoration—a process aided by rare original Scaglietti paint samples possessed by Ottis. Period photos allowed the interior to be meticulously refinished to the original standard, including the black vinyl rear storage area, sized to accommodate two spare tires, and a passenger seat headrest, two of Mr. Peron’s many requests. Such was the sympathetic nature of the restoration that an etching in the door sills from the original construction was preserved. The painted Borrani wire wheels retain triple-ear knock-offs, which are seen in the earliest photos of the car. In sum, no stone was left unturned to ensure that the Ferrari would be presented exactly as it had appeared when Mr. Peron arrived at scrutineering for the 1958 Tour de France.

The car was debuted at the 2016 Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance, completing the Tour d’Elegance and being judged 3rd in Class amidst very strong competition. It has been only selectively driven since and exhibited only more at Pebble Beach, this time at Casa Ferrari as part of the concours celebrations in 2019.

Accompanied by the considerable trove of documentation and meticulous maintenance records kept since the 1970s, as well as copies of the correspondence between its original owner and Ferrari, this is almost certainly among the finest Berlinettas “Tour de France” to be found—a car of unimpeachable quality, provenance, and distinction. To view this car and others currently consigned to this auction, please visit the RM website at rmsothebys.com/en/auctions/mo21.

RM Auctions Ltd

Title Mr

First name Augustin

Last name Sabatie-Garat

5 Heron Square

Richmond

TW9 1EL

United Kingdom

Phone +1 (519) 352-4575

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