



ESSENTIAL GOODWOOD REVIVAL PREVIEW



The world's best-selling
classic car magazine

September 2013 £4.70

FERRARI 288GTO

Why this 400bhp hero is the classic world's hottest property

PLUS How to get
GTO performance
for under £20k!



Mighty Lagonda Rapide
Perfect pre-war tourer



Jaguar XJ-SC vs Merc SL
Bargain drop-top battle



Chapman's jewel reborn
Driving a box-fresh Elite



GTO

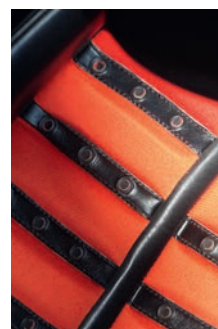
The 288, the racer with no series to race in that became Ferrari's fastest road car, is now a seven-figure dream machine. **Alastair Clements** has already started saving...

PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES MANN





Quartet of driving lights and huge wheelarch extensions add to GTO's aggressive look. Top right: red-insert option lifts the black gloom inside



Below: Michelotto twin trumpets were a factory option in place of quad pipes; steering is meaty but wonderfully precise; five-spoke Speedline rims



FERRARI 288GTO

Sold/number built 1984-'86/272

Construction tubular steel chassis, with glassfibre, aluminium and Kevlar body

Engine all-alloy, dohc-per-bank, 32-valve 2855cc V8, with twin IHI turbochargers, intercoolers and Weber-Marelli electronic fuel injection

Max power 400bhp @ 7000rpm

Max torque 366lb ft @ 3800rpm

Transmission five-speed manual transaxle, driving rear wheels

Suspension independent, by double wishbones, coil springs, co-axial dampers and anti-roll bar

Steering rack and pinion

Brakes ventilated discs, with servo

Length 14ft 1in (4290mm)

Width 6ft 3in (1910mm)

Height 3ft 8in (1120mm)

Wheelbase 8ft 1/2in (2450mm)

Weight 2557lb (1160kg)

0-60mph 4.9 secs

Top speed 189mph

Price new £72,999

Throughout the history of the automobile there have been cars that mark watershed moments. The Ferrari F40 isn't one of them, but the 288GTO is.

Why, you may ask – protest, even – when the F40 is generally acknowledged to be the most exciting supercar of all? Well, because it's not unfair to suggest that without the 288 there would be no F40 – and arguably no F1, no Veyron. You're looking at the original *hypercar* – and yes, there is a distinction. When the 288 took a bow at the Geneva Salon in March 1984 – incidentally, that was after Porsche's Gruppe B concept, but two years before the 959 road car it spawned – about the fastest and most outrageous car around was the Lamborghini Countach, perhaps the very definition of a supercar. Yet the 288 blew that car – not to mention Ferrari's own Testarossa, launched the same year – into the weeds.

So it was a pioneer, but, just as importantly, has there ever been a better-looking high-performance middle? Prettier ones, perhaps – the Miura springs to mind here – but never one so perfectly proportioned, so perfectly melding pure aggression with beauty, so... 'right'. Taking

the lead from its own 1977 308GTB Speciale, Pininfarina created a car that from some angles retains an air of 308, but only in so far as you can see remnants of Bruce Banner's trousers around the Incredible Hulk's waist. Squat and four-square on the road, the 288 pulses with muscular purpose. Perhaps you could question those mirrors – do they need to be so big? – but they suit the overall sense of form following function. You've got to love any car that swaggers around with its gearbox casing hanging out the back, with the arrogance of a half-mast pair of gangster jeans. Likewise the trio of gills in the rear wings, which give a nod to the original '62 GTO yet avoid any sense of cliché or retro-naff by having a clear job to do.

In a quiet moment during the shoot, as the exhausts tinkle gently and the photographer's shutter chatters away, I find myself counting up the profusion of vents, scoops, intakes and louvers that criss-cross the composite bodywork: 140, in case you're interested, all sucking in air or spitting it out in an effort to keep the V8 cool and keep the tyres in contact with the deck.

For me, it warrants inclusion in a list of Pininfarina's greatest designs, alongside 250 SWB, 275GTB and Daytona. Oh, and F40 fans look

away now, because to my eyes it also avoids the pseudo-racer look that means I've never taken to its successor in the same way. There's an irony here: the F40 was designed to look like a race car but built purely as a road car; the 288 appears as a steroid-injected 308, yet was created to homologate a spectacular new race car – hence the revival (for the first time) of that most evocative of monikers, *Gran Turismo Omologato*.

The series in which it was designed to race was Group B, the circuit-based arm of rallying's most outrageous formula. This demanded 200 production cars – though just over 270 would be built, all sold long before launch to selected 'special' customers – featuring the bulk of the racers' technology. More affordable than a pure prototype, it tempted Enzo to re-enter the sports-racing fray with a works effort for the first time in over a decade. The fact that the world was in the midst of the '80s supercar boom, so the roadgoing examples would likely be snapped up, made it a win-win for Maranello.

Sadly, however, Group B was far slower to take off on track than on the stages. Before Ferrari got ready to go head-to-head with the 959, Henri Toivonen was dead and Group B was shelved for being too fast; too dangerous.



We should all be grateful that its star burned so brightly – however briefly – because without it Ferrari would never have taken the mild-mannered 308 and from it created a monster. Not that there's a lot of 308 left in there.

Yes, their alloy engine blocks are related, but the 288's V8 motor owes more to Lancia's sports-racing programme than it does to its junior supercar cousin. With a 1mm shorter stroke reducing capacity from 2967 to 2855cc, this allowed for the FIA's 1.4 equivalency formula for turbocharging and still snuck in beneath the 4000cc class limit. Moreover, in a 288 it isn't even transversely mounted, but turned through 90° to lie longitudinally, with a transaxle gearbox and integral locking differential where the 308's boot would be, flanked by a pair of intercooled IHI turbochargers. Chuck in twin overhead cams, four valves per cylinder, a dry sump and Weber-Marelli electronic fuel injection and you have a pretty exotic cocktail, one potent enough to yield a whopping 140bhp per litre – not to mention neatly lowering the centre of gravity and ensuring perfect 50:50 weight distribution.

A crash diet to stay beneath the 1100kg weight limit for Group B – a fully trimmed road car is a little over – led to the use of Kevlar for the panels and in the composite bulkheads. And yet, for all of that, there's something delightfully traditional about the GTO: it still uses a tubular-steel chassis and the doors are a product of good old aluminium and hand-craftsmanship.

Despite the 110mm-longer wheelbase, that new engine layout pushes the cabin forward, something you notice after pulling the delicate door latch and tumbling gracefully in, almost braining yourself on the steeply raked A-pillar.

'SQUAT AND FOUR-SQUARE ON THE ROAD, THE 288 PULSES WITH MUSCULAR PURPOSE'



Hypercar inflation



Jeremy Cottingham and brother James have all but cornered the market for the 288 plus its F40, F50 and Enzo offspring. At the time of our

shoot, there were an amazing seven GTOs on-site at their DK Engineering premises (01923 287687; www.dkeng.co.uk). "Collectors are going for the full set," says Jeremy, "and the 288 is the rarest and the most difficult of the lot to come by. I don't think you'd find one now for less than £750,000 and the very best low-mileage example would probably be a £1m car today. That makes it nearly twice the price of an equivalent F40 – which would be around £550k – yet they were tit-for-tat a decade ago at £150-200,000. It's mainly down to rarity, but it's also an important car – it was the testbed for the F40. Plus they were supplied to all of the important guys when they were new – Alain Prost, René Arnoux and Niki Lauda all had them."



completely straight, then feeding that power back in. I'm not sure whether it's the car's value or its reputation for biting back that worries me more, but they are both valid.

In a world where you can buy a production hatchback with 355bhp, the idea of a supercar with 'only' 400bhp seems odd, yet in 1984 this was Ferrari's most powerful road car engine, and in race trim it was capable of up to 650bhp. And that hot hatch is 320kg heavier than the flyweight GTO, which has a terrifyingly small contact patch with which to deliver that power – to the rear wheels only, remember. The centre-lock Speedline split-rims are wrapped with 225/50 front, 255/50 rear ZR16s – doughnuts in comparison to modern rubber-band tyres.

The steering, though, is a delight. Packed with feel, it's perfectly weighted and perfectly geared: not so sharp that a sneeze would have you in the bushes, but beautifully accurate, so the 288 is intuitive to place despite its width and the difficulty of seeing the plunging nose. Not that it's light. There's no assistance and in tighter bends it soon loads up, yet that need to muscle the car along only adds to your faith in it, feeling for the grip as if rubbing your palms along the tarmac. The famed Hill Route of Millbrook

Proving Ground is like an Alpine pass in miniature, physical and hugely involving – even if you find yourself yearning for the straights to be a little bit longer, for a chance to stretch the car properly before diving back on to the brakes.

When you do, be wary because it weaves around, seeking out fissures in the surface and following them. Yet the braking is monstrous – and from cold, too: none of this 'getting heat into the rotors' that the ceramic composites of modern supercars suffer. Here you just have metal with a bit of ventilation, and the result is huge initial bite and fantastic pedal feel.

That the 288GTO is still so outrageous, a year before it celebrates its 30th birthday, just highlights what a phenomenal creation this was. When it combines all of that with such significance in Maranello history, plus the all-important rarity, it shouldn't be a surprise to learn that owning one of these cars, in this kind of fettle, requires a near-£1m investment.

In 1984, two of the most revered names from Ferrari's past were revived: Testarossa and GTO. The former seemed an incongruous moniker for a car that bore so little relation to its forebear; the latter was perfectly fitting. And surely there can be no greater compliment than that.



Once inside, you feel as if you are virtually sitting over the front wheels. Before shutting the door, DK's Jeremy Cottingham has a final word of caution: this car has caught out more than one motoring hack. "It's far trickier than an F40," says Cottingham. "It's very important to have good tyres on these or they drive like dogs."

Oh come off it Jeremy, surely this is nothing more than a warmed-up 308? Which means that we already know how this test is going to go, don't we? Orange-on-black Veglia dials; three-spoke Momo wheel; open gearlever gate; curiously unappealing blare from the flat-plane-crank V8; notchy into second until the 'box warms up; sublime balance without the pace to fully exploit the chassis... So far, so standard 1980s Ferrari – apart from the push-starter, *de rigueur* in the noughties but unusual for this era. Lovely, but nothing groundbreaking.

Besides, it seems to be a real pussycat at first. The steering has barely any kickback, the ride soaks up bumps – testament to the use of conventional rubber bushing – and at lower rpm the V8 is smooth and refined, even docile. The interior is comfortable, the gearbox simple to learn, plus you can see out of the windows. Chassis 57491

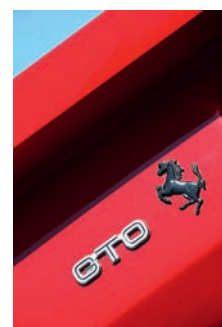


even has rare factory air-con, not that its wheezing fan does much good on a day like today.

But for goodness' sake don't let it think you're getting complacent. Don't let it lull you into believing you have it mastered. Clunk the chromed lever left and back into the dogleg first; release the abrupt but not too sharp clutch to pull away; short-shift to second, out on to the first straight bit of road and level the throttle. Like all 288s it's a left-hooker, and the pedals are mounted way over towards the centre-line of the car, so far away that the clutch is almost in line with the steering wheel. Past 2000rpm, 3000 – what's that whistling, whooshing noise? – 4000rpm... holy cow! What happened there? Don't panic, back off, regroup, try again. Up to 4000rpm, the little boost needle in the gauge that nestles between the rev counter (redlined at 7750rpm) and 320kph speedo flicks around to 0.8bar pressure; pass 5000rpm and the rear tyres are squirming, the steering wheel is twitching, the performance is utterly bewitching.

More than in any other car I've driven, I find myself being fastidious in getting all braking and gearchanging done before turning in, holding the throttle steady until the wheels are

From top: following Ferrari tradition, '288' means a 2.8-litre, 8-cylinder motor; luxurious cabin; thrusting profile, with trio of slashes in rear a nod to '62 GTO



288GTO has incredible presence and remarkable amounts of grip, despite relatively narrow tyres by modern standards. Top: classic open gear gate