

## My Favorite Ferrari(s) or How Can You Pick Only One?

By Jim Weed

One of the questions people often ask me “What is your favorite Ferrari?” My answer is usually “What era?”

Ferrari has made many beautiful cars during its short 75 years in business. Trying to choose just one is an impossible task.

The earliest Ferraris were made in such small numbers it would be difficult to get an all-round experience of what it must be like to drive and enjoy the feel of these early cars.

As more cars were produced there are more examples. And then there is the individuality of each model to consider.

How can you compare a 250 GT Boano to a Daytona? Or a Daytona to a 488 GTB? Is it possible to choose which one is better? What are the parameters to use as a guide to determine which one is better?

What does better mean? Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Performance is somewhat subjective also.

Can you really compare the performance of the aforementioned Boano to a Daytona? I think not.

But put into the context of other cars from the same era, it must be recognized the performance of the Boano is far and away better than anything else on the highway at that time.

My 1958 Edsel could not hold a candle to the 250 GT Boano of 1957. The Edsel wallows through the turns whereas the 250 GT is firm.

The Edsel has drum brakes on all four corners; the Boano also has drums, but are much larger with finned aluminum drums to dissipate the heat quicker.

Let's not forget about the differences in the engines. While the Edsel has a V-8 with 352 cubic inches, that's roughly 5.7 liters; to keep things in perspective, the 250 GT is a 3-liter V-12 with only 187 cubic inches. Almost half the size.

The performance between the two cars is night and day. The Boano around a track like Road Atlanta inspires confidence; the Edsel is downright scary (I've done it!).

Now if we compare the Boano to a Daytona around the same track, the Boano becomes the scary one. Performance is subjective to era.

Beauty also is subjective. Can you really compare the shape, style, and looks of a Boano to a Daytona? They really come from different points of view.

The Boano with its rounded fenders and large eggcrate grille cannot compare to the sleek aerodynamic lines of the Daytona. Both were designed by Pininfarina, just at different times. Tastes change, styling changes, form and function change.

Is it even possible to have a favorite Ferrari? Or, the best Ferrari? The greatest? The best looking, most elegant or even fastest? That Ferrari hasn't been made yet. As Enzo Ferrari once said in answer to the same question. “What is the greatest Ferrari?” “The next one.”

With all these limitations and various parameters how do we choose what Ferrari makes the list. I have my list of favorite Ferraris. Some may be on yours and other's list of great Ferraris. You may not agree with my choices but that is what makes this kind of fun.

I will explain why each is on my list and what they mean to me. You have your own experiences, and I would love to hear about the Ferraris on your personal favorites list.

My choices all have personal meaning to me. They may be cars I lust after, but unobtainable. They may be cars I think are beautiful. They may be cars that provide an experience, unique to the eyes, ears and heart.

First, a little background on Jim Weed. I bought my first Ferrari in 1982 and parted it out. My second Ferrari I bought from the insurance company as a theft recovery and fixed it.

Later I was service manager at FAF Motorcars which allowed me to sample every car that came into the shop. I test drove most of them before we serviced them. Certainly, I test drove them before I delivered them back to the owner.

Many cars I took home overnight to start cold in the morning to verify proper running. I had a regular set of roads I ran every Ferrari on. It was a mix of surface streets, freeway with on-ramp, a freeway interchange with a variety of ramps depending on condition and some twisty surface street back to the shop. The entire course was about six miles.

I drove every car around the same track whether it was a Boano, Daytona or Testarossa; they all got the same workout. The consistency made for comparisons between each model and even comparisons within each model.

I can assure you every Ferrari made before the 328 and Testarossa series carries its own personality. After that the production quality became so consistent nearly every 328, Testarossa and beyond felt the same.

You could drive two Daytonas or Boxers back-to-back and they could be very different automobiles. Earlier Ferraris, even more so.

So, with this background I present my favorite Ferraris.

Enjoy the ride and feel free to disagree with my choices. Everyone has different experiences and definition of beauty.

**250 GT PF Coupe:** The first real foray into series production was with the Boano/Ellena 250 GT. Because Pininfarina was building a new factory, production was handed over to Boano and later to Ellena.

The 250 GT PF Coupe was the first model to be designed and produced in quantity by Pininfarina in their new factory. Three hundred and fifty cars were made between 1958 and 1960.

Early cars had drum brakes and an inside plug engine. Later cars came with disc brakes and the outside plug engine.

I like the long hood and short cockpit styling. The roof line reminds me of the 1957 Thunderbird, without the portholes. The elegant little light on the side adds class.

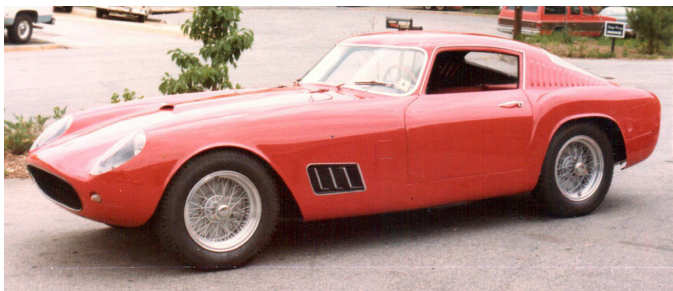
The way the brake drums fill the wire wheels is a cleaner look than the disc brakes, although we know the discs stop better.

I like the look overall of the coupe better than the Series II cabriolet. Although they are nearly identical cars, the roof line makes the car.

Driving one is like what you would expect from a 1950s pickup truck. Heavy steering and marginal brakes. The engine sound and power make up for any other shortcomings.

The interior is well appointed and comfortable. It is well designed for public outings.

It was one of the first Ferraris I experienced and remains one of my all-time favorites.



**250 GT LWB Berlinetta:** Ah, the TdF. What a wonderful car. Basically it has the exact same drivetrain as the PF Coupe. V-12 engine, drum brakes, same chassis; for all intents and purposes the same car.

However, these were built by Scaglietti with aluminum bodies and the weight difference improves performance.

I have spent many miles driving S/N 0703 GT, a 14-louver car, around various racetracks in the south. It was owned by John Apen, who vintage raced it often. I test drove it and gave rides at FCA events in it.

The smells and sounds it made were intoxicating. With little insulation and fewer creature comforts everything that happened while driving was transmitted directly to the driver. It was a wonderful experience.

**250 GT PF Cabriolet SI:** Generally, I'm not a convertible fan but there is something about the Series I cabriolet that ticks that box.

The body was designed and built by Pininfarina with classic flowing lines ending with subtle fins holding little red taillights at the top.

Luxurious interior appointments prove you are rid-

ing in a vehicle that exudes class. My favorite had covered headlights and was not red.

Similar to the previous Ferraris with drum brakes, inside plug engine and chassis, this one gave a much more refined ride and experience.

These are my 1950s era choices. While each one of these three cars carry the same mechanical components, they each offer completely different driving experiences. Is it possible to narrow down one of the three to the best? Depends on your own personal desires. I can't; they each perform a task within their own box.

The 1960s offer more difficult choices. The transition of flowing lines from a designer to aerodynamic lines, created to offer less wind resistance, defines the beginning and the end of the decade.



**275 GTB or 275 GTB/4:** There are few iconic shapes that define what a Ferrari should look like as the 275 GTB body. Designed by Pininfarina it also has that long hood line with short cockpit look I like so well.

The way the rear fenders bulge and flow upward in haunches to the short tail is a look few have mastered. It also must be long nose. The delicate grille of the longer snout looks better than the earlier versions wide grin.

Two-cam or four-cam? Both have their good points. I personally prefer the four-cam version. But I'm a mechanical guy through and through so the added complexity appeals to that side of me.

The 275 engine is the last iteration of the original Colombo V-12 and represents the pinnacle of design. With four-cams, six carburetors and dry-sump it carries all the design developments of every 250 GT, 250 TR and 250 GTO that came before it.

The independent suspension and rear-mounted transaxle make for great handling. The disc brakes are robust enough for most driving. Fast, smooth, civilized, comfortable and fast. Yes, I said fast twice. Those are the attributes for a nice all-day high-speed cruise.

**365 GTC:** The 365 GTC is my choice of sedan. The Pininfarina designed 330 GTC is very pretty. There is not a bad line anywhere on the car. When you can add an additional 40HP with no additional weight penalty it is a no-brainer to pick the 365 GTC.

In the evolution of Ferrari models, the 365 carries all the latest developments learned from the 330 GTC. C/V jointed rear axles, cable-controlled clutch, and even better brakes; all add up to a more potent platform.

When driving the 365 GTC it becomes clear these are much different from its earlier brother. It is even more noticeable when it is pushed hard near the limit. Clearly these are head and shoulders above the 330 GTC.

**365 GTB/4:** The Daytona as it is known was also designed by Pininfarina but built by Scaglietti. This



body has that look. The one I like, long hood and short cockpit.

A brutish car not made for in-town cruising. The steering is heavy, the clutch is heavy, but what an engine. It has all the same attributes as the 275 GTB/4 but with more displacement.

The Daytona looks fast while sitting still. The sleek nose slopes down to either a Plexiglass cover or pop-up headlights. Either way it has a nice, uncluttered look at the front.

Maneuvering this car through parking lots or on surface streets takes a bit of muscle, once at speed it becomes a joy to drive. Like a thoroughbred horse, this one likes to gallop. Zero to 40 is worth the effort when 40 to 100 and beyond is worth every bit of it.

**Dino:** 206, 246, GT or GTS doesn't matter. How can anyone not place the look of a Dino on a list of desirable Ferraris? The sexy curves designed by Pininfarina and built by Scaglietti just call out "drive me".

The first Ferrari I ever saw was a yellow Dino. It grabbed me then even if I hadn't a clue to what it was.

Driving a Dino is way up on the fun factor. They feel light to the touch and the engine is flexible. You can throw a Dino around the corners like a go-cart. While not as powerful as the V-12, the V-6 engine is no slouch.

It is a little tight for my height but once you strap it on, the fun begins. The GTS with the top off offers more headroom and the sounds coming from the three Webers right behind your head makes the spine tingle.

It's been said, it's more fun to drive a slow car fast than a fast car slow. The Dino favors that. Find a twisty road and go for it. The predictable handling allows you to enjoy the curves and not get into unpredictable territory.

Those are my 1960s era cars. All are iconic in style and technologically advanced for their time. Any one of them provides a great experience in design, power, and handling. Again, these cars must be compared to others from the same era.

The 1970s really encompass the 365 GTB/4 and the Dino but since they were introduced in the late 1960s I kinda feel they should be included in that era. The mid-1970s saw a major change in design. Ferrari was moving toward more mid-engine designs.



**365 GT4/BB:** Or Berlinetta Boxers in general. The first-generation boxer has a pure look to it. The three small round taillights carry the theme from the front-engine era into the mid. Gone was the long front hood and short cockpit, now the rear became bulky and the cockpit moved forward.

The 365 Boxer and its later brother the 512 BB are my favorites. Anything with carburetors right behind your head makes all the right sounds and the flat

12-cylinder engine provides a lot of power.

While the Boxer can be a bit heavy on the steering and clutch, it was an improvement over the Daytona. The power and acceleration is quick and passing others is a breeze.

**365 GT/4 2+2:** And the 400 GT, 400i and 412. This series is a true GT car. The Pininfarina design is more sedan than sportscar. I've written about this model before, and I currently own a 400 GT. They have a surprising amount of power, and the interior is designed for an all-day drive at high speed.

Automatic or manual the performance is more than adequate. These may not be the ultimate Ferrari, but Ferrari still built it, and the V-12 engine up front is all Ferrari.

The 1980s covers quite a number of exciting Ferraris. It would be easy to claim a late QV 308 or 328 as one of my favorites. The Testarossa is an awesome package for the money, but there is one Ferrari that, if I had the means, or even close to the means, I would buy in a heartbeat.



**288 GTO:** I don't think there is another Ferrari that can define the 1980s like the 288.

Magnum P.I. ignited a generation of future Ferrari dreamers with the 308 GTS. That body style became, and still is, timeless.

The wedge shape with rounded corners, the air intake scoops and louvered grille covering a V-8 engine in the back. Perfection in motion. The 288 GTO to uninitiated looks like a modified 308. It is the ultimate sleeper in disguise.

Theoretically the 288 was the first supercar but you would have to discount nearly every berlinetta Ferrari previously made. Ferrari has always provided a supercar, think 250 GT LWB TdF, 250 GTO, 275 GTB/4, Daytona and Boxer. Each one was the supercar of its day.

The 288 GTO sent Ferrari in a new direction. It cemented the longitudinal V-8 into every V-8 Ferrari made since. Tractable and calm during cruise and as wild as you need when the turbos spool up. Now that's what I like!

I will admit I have not had the pleasure to truly experience more modern Ferraris so if my list seems like a walk down memory lane, it is. Style and beauty are subjective so I can say there are few modern Ferraris that I think are beautiful.

The 488, F8 and others today look like a bunch of gills and fins stuck all over the body. Style has given way to aerodynamics and downforce. Will we ever get back to clean lines? Probably not, but until then we can still enjoy the thrill of a perfect drive. Be safe out there.

# FULL CIRCLE: A HANDS-ON AFFAIR WITH THE FIRST FERRARI 250 GTO

By LARRY PERKINS & PETRA PERKINS

Review by Jim Weed

I have a sign in my basement bar. Alcohol, because no good story ever began with a salad.

Larry Perkins and friends were sitting around after a day's work at NASA having a few beers. This is what happens when you get a bunch of rocket scientists together. Nothing is impossible.

Put a man on the moon? No problem. All you have to do is solve several million problems and develop the technology to solve those problems.

Enter a car for the upcoming 1964 Daytona Continental 2000 km race? No problem. There must be fewer problems to solve to accomplish that goal.

What kind of car should we use? How about a Ferrari GTO?

The 250 GTO Perkins found was a two-year-old, well-raced and worn car, that just happened to be for sale at a barely affordable price. Bob Grossman sold the car to Perkins sight unseen.

After some refurbishment, Perkins and co-driver Bill Eve drove the GTO to Daytona Raceway from NASA central in Cocoa Beach. There was no better way to break in the rebuilt engine.

Could a privateer do well against factory Ferrari and Cobra teams? When your team has rocket scientists on it, and you have a GTO as your weapon, anything is possible.

Perkins went on to drive the GTO at Sebring and again at Daytona. After a couple years it was truly a used-up racecar and was sold.

Perkins life moved onto other pursuits. Automobile racing was put into the background.

Years later Perkins, at Monterey, found his car. 250 GTO S/N 3223. The car was being sold and disappeared from the scene.

Many years after that he was contacted by the new owner and invited to Neenah, Wisconsin, to recall details on the GTO when it raced at Daytona. Wayne Obry was restoring the car to match that particular date and time.

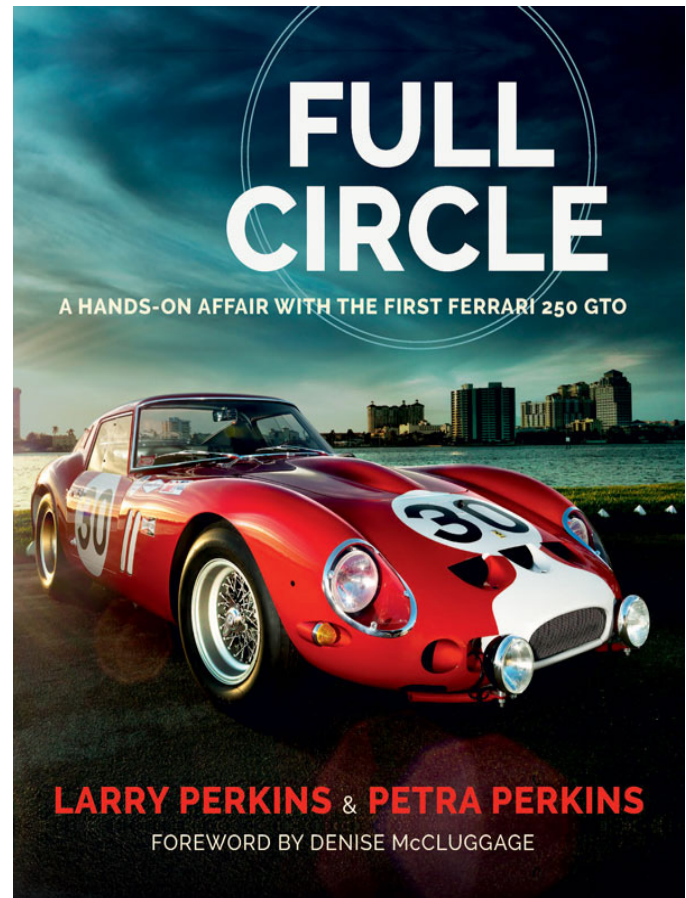
Perfection requires research and there was no better source than the owner and driver of that race. It was to be displayed at Pebble Beach 2011 with many other GTOs. A GTO reunion.

Forty-seven years after first racing S/N 3223, Perkins was reunited with "his" car at Pebble Beach. It was to be a fantastic day.

Life often is full of unusual circumstances, serendipity and coincidences. Larry Perkins' story of his days racing, his time at NASA, IBM, sailing and love is one you should read.

*Full Circle, A Hands-on Affair with the First Ferrari 250 GTO* is well written with interesting stories by others involved.

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