



A pair of Rosso Corsa 308s. Both have added Cavallino shields on the quarter panel, which were not a factory option. The bumper on the car above has been modified to Euro spec, U.S. models protrude out farther from the hood.

Ferrari 308 Buyer's Guide



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Model Information

How successful was the 308? Thirty years after its launch, it is still the model that first comes to mind when most people think of a Ferrari. The launch of the 308 at the Paris Auto Show in 1975 marked a dramatic permanent shift in the Ferrari philosophy. It was the first production car to carry the Ferrari badge at launch that was not powered by a 12 cylinder engine. Initial press reaction to the 308 was very positive.

The 308 was the first Ferrari road car to sport a fiberglass body. It is commonly believed that fiberglass was used in order to get the new model to market quickly as the 308 GT4 was not selling well. It was quicker to make the moulds for fiberglass than the dies needed for the metal panels. The first 712 units were made this way before the switch back to steel bodies in 1976. The change to steel might also have been influenced by a perceived negative reaction to a "plastic" Ferrari in the US market.

The 308 marked the return, after the brief foray to Bertone for the 308 GT4, to Pininfarina for the design. Pininfarina did a masterful job incorporating elements of both the Dino 246 and the 512 Berlinetta Boxer. The end result is a design which clearly fits into the Ferrari line both as an evolution of the Dino 246 and as a junior stable mate for the Boxers. The wedge nose is a clear adaptation from the Boxer while the wrap around rear window, wheel arches, and recessed air intakes running along the doors, are clearly evolutions from the Dino. Overall the 308 is a wonderful design which flows smoothly as the eye moves across the car. With the exception of minor updating with the launch of the 328 in 1985, the basic design remained unchanged for a remarkable 15 years. By the end

of the production run in 1985, the 308 was by far the most successful Ferrari to date with close to 14,000 cars produced. As a reference less than 2,500 Boxers were produced in its 10 year production run.

The 308 went through several major changes during its long run. These will be covered in detail in the next section. The most significant changes were the move from fiberglass to steel bodies in 1976, the launch of the GTS with a removable roof panel in 1977, the adoption of fuel injection in 1980 on the 308 GTBi/GTSi, and the move from a 2 to a 4 valve engine with the Quattrovalvole in 1983. In general US 308 models can be identified by their heavy protruding bumpers, rectangular side markers, and the exhaust shield.

The basic mechanicals of the 308 are a mid-engine configuration using a quad cam 90 degree V8 sitting transversally behind the cabin mated to a 5-speed manual gearbox. Camshafts were belt-driven, and power was taken by a dry plate clutch mounted on the flywheel and delivered through all synchromesh indirect gears. A front-mounted radiator with twin fans vented engine cooling air though the bonnet louvres while side intakes just rear of the doors provided for engine and oil-cooler airflows. For the first five years, four twin throat Weber carburetors feed the 3 liter engine. Fuel injection was adopted in 1980 to meet ever increasing US emission standards.

The chassis is welded tubular steel and this created a stiff and robust vehicle. The floor pan and inner wheel arches are fiberglass. Suspension is independent unequal length A arms with tubular shock absorbers and anti-roll bars. Steering was via direct rack-and-pinion and brakes were all-wheel disks with power assistance. The gear change can be stiff

and requires focus to slot properly. Windows on all 308 are electric and seats are trimmed in leather, adjustable fore and aft, with tilt-able back rests and head rests. The wheel base was 8 inches shorter than the 308 GT4 and identical to the Dino 246. Luggage space was provided in the rear of the car behind the engine. A zippered cover protected contents from the engine. A spare tire was fitted in the front of the car behind the radiators. The fuel cap is mounted on the left rear quarter panel and feeds twin 37 liter tanks. It is the last Ferrari designed for drivers under six feet tall.

Model Information

308 GTB/GTS (1975-1980)

The first 308's launched in 1975 shared the 3 liter engine with the 308 GT4. It was feed by four twin throat Weber carburetors and produced 255 bhp at 7700 rpm. The first 712 cars were produced with Fiberglass bodies and weighed in at a svelte 2745 lbs. European models had dry sump lubrication with US models being supplied with wet sump systems. US models were 200 lbs heavier and lost 20 bhp to emissions requirements. As of 1976 steel bodies were supplied with US cars with all European models switching to steel in 1977. The steel bodies were not rust proofed until 1984. 1977 also saw the introduction of the GTS with a fiberglass, vinyl covered, removable roof panel. The panel was attached via two center catches and stowed behind the seats. The GTS also had vertically slatted hinged covers on the rear quarter windows. European models had a single tail exhaust pipe while all US cars had a pair.



A Rosso Corsa 308 GTS (left) and a Blu Chiaro 308 GTB (right). The 308 has a timeless design

308 GTBi/GTSi (1980-1983)

The "i" series introduced several major changes to the 308. Most significantly, the Weber carbs were dropped in favor of Bosch K Jetronic fuel injection. Marelli electronic ignition was also adopted and an air pump added. Together these changes delivered a much smoother and cleaner running engine which more easily meets ever increasing emission standards. On the negative, the "i" series lost 30 bhp, with US cars delivering a non-Ferrari like 205 bhp at 6600 rpm. All "i" series cars used a wet sump lubrication system and had a reputation for consuming large amounts of oil. Twin exhaust pipes were fitted to both US and European models at this point. A redesigned, lighter clutch was also fitted. With the addition of fuel injection and the lighter clutch, the "i" series was a less demanding car

than the original. Several changes were made to the instrument panel with the gauges being rearranged to provide better visibility. The seats were also modified to increase lateral support and larger metric wheels were fitted.

Vehicle performance under emission constraints was clearly an issue recognized by Ferrari and significant advancements were made to address this through the remainder of the model series.

308 GTB QV/GTS QV (1983-1985)

The first major power boost was made through the introduction of the "quattrovalvole" 4-valve per cylinder engine in 1983. The "QV" retained the 3 litre block of the 308 "i" but added 2 valves and moved from iron to Nikasil faced cylinder liners. All this resulted in increased output to a more Ferrari like 240 bhp at 7000 rpm. The ignition was upgraded to Marelli

Digiplex.

Although in appearance the QV resembled the previous model, Ferrari incorporated numerous improvements to systems and interior. These included a reworked console, and a new Momo steering wheel design. Apart from the badging, the model is identified by the prominent red-finished alloy intake plenum with emblazoned "Quattrovalvole", driving lights mounted in the front grill, and a small spoiler mounted between the two sail panels behind the roof, like the 12 cylinder Boxers. Twin side mirrors were also now standard and sported the Ferrari shield on the front cone. Late QV's also received rust proofing for the first time. The GTS outsold the GTB by 4 to 1.

The Special Italian Market Cars – 208 GTB, 208 GTS, 208 GTB Turbo, 208 GTS Turbo

In 1980 Ferrari introduced a special line of cars for the Italian market to circumvent punitive taxes on all cars with engines over 2 liters. These cars were identical to the contemporary 308 line with the exception that the engines were bored out to only 1990 cc. The first two models in this line were badged the 208 GTB and 208 GTS. These were the last Ferrari's to be produced with Weber Carburetors and delivered 155 bhp at 6800 rpm. Top speed was a 215 kph. A total of 300 208s were produced

To increase performance, Ferrari added a single exhaust drive KKK turbo charger to the 208's in 1982. These cars also received Bosch K Jetronic fuel injection. Performance increased to 220 bhp at 7000 rpm which delivered a top speed of 242 kph. 687 208 Turbos were produced between 1982 and 1986.

In general the Italian market cars can be differentiated vs the 308 by the NACA scoop in front of the rear tires, raised center section on the engine lid, and slotted rear bumpers. All Turbo cars had the rear roof spoiler. A few of these cars can now be found in other European markets and it is believed

a couple have made it into North America. The driving experience on the Turbos is a bit more raw vs the base 308's. Managing the Turbo boost presents an additional challenge for the driver.

Driving Impressions

Driving a 308 GTB followed by a 308 QV is an adventure in Ferrari evolution. The former represents the twilight years of the Carburetor era while the latter is firmly routed in the modern fuel injected era. Despite this, the driving experience is remarkably similar. All 308s handle exceptionally well and go immediately where pointed. It is a pure driving experience, as enjoyable today as it was 30 years ago.

At start up, the 308 is a bit cranky until it warms up properly. The steering is heavy at low speeds but lightens up and becomes much more responsive as you accelerate. The short wheel base, coupled with the stiff chassis, results in excellent handling and feedback. A 308 is much happier on smooth road surfaces and does not react well to bumps and potholes.

However it is exceptionally well balanced with very high limits. A 308 is a car that looks for mountain roads so it can show off

its talents. The engine is flexible and power delivery is impressively linear up to the 7700 rpm redline. Give the accelerator a push, and you receive a return shove into the seat back. The more you push it, the better it gets and the better it sounds. The sound track on the initial 308's is probably the most impressive, but the 308 QV's song will still get the neighbor's attention.

The clutch on the carbureted 308's is heavy and takes experience to master. However the carb cars are fitted with a shorter stick which does help with quick throws around the gate. With the switch to fuel injection with the 308i a lighter clutch was fitted and this makes running the gearbox on the later models a joy. In both cases a rewarding clank signals a successful transition through the open steel gate. The 5 speed gearbox is set up in a racing pattern with 1st gear down and to the left.

A slight understeer is designed into the car to offset the weight and placement of the engine. The suspension is highly competent, keeping the car flat when cornering. The brakes are impressive at shedding speed rapidly and provide instant response and solid feedback. The switch gear on the 308 series is vintage 1970's with a multitude of



toggle switches and sliding arms. With the 308i & QV, minor updates were made to the interior, steering wheel, and seats.

Inside, the driving position is classic Italian; long arms and short legs with the pedals offset towards the center of the car. The cabin itself is snug but the lack of a

transmission tunnel does provide a feeling of greater space. The seats move horizontally and the back rest angle is adjustable. It is a comfortable car for short to medium journeys, but over longer trips, the seats can become unforgiving. It is also not a quiet cabin and large investments in stereo equipment

are wasted.

Of the three 308's, the 308 is the most raw and requires the greatest amount of skill on the part of the driver. The 308 QV addresses many of the issues found in the 308i while maintaining its strengths and appeal. It is also the most livable for everyday driving.

Units

308 GTB Fiberglass	712
308 GTB Steel	2185
308 GTS	3219
308 GTBi	494
308 GTSi	1749
308 GTB QV	748
308 GTS QV	3042

308

Engine	Rear-mounted 90° V8
Timing gear	2 valves per cylinder, twin overhead camshafts per cylinder bank
Bore and Stroke	81 x 71 mm
Displacement	2927 cc
Compression ratio	8. 8:1
Engine Lubrication	Dry Sump (Europe) Wet Sump (US)
Maximum power	255 bhp (235 bhp US) at 7,700 rpm
Max engine speed	7700 rpm
Transmission	Single dry-plate clutch, 5-speed gearbox + reverse, limited-slip differential
Chassis	Tubular Steel
Front & Rear suspension	Independent, unequal length A arms, coil springs
Wheelbase, front and rear track	2,340/1,460/1,460 mm
Kerb weight	1,300 kg (GTB)
Top Speed	252 km/h

i (changes from 308)

Maximum power	214 bhp (205 bhp US) at 6,600 rpm
Max engine speed	6600 rpm
Engine Lubrication	Wet Sump
Kerb weight	1320 kg (GTB)
Top Speed	240 kph

QV (where different from i)

Compression ratio	9.2:1
Timing gear	4 valves per cylinder, twin overhead camshafts per cylinder bank
Maximum power	240 bhp (230 US) at 7,000 rpm
Kerb weight	1265 kg
Top Speed	246 km/h

Maintenance & Reliability

Common issues are few for the 308/328's as most of the early "new car" problems would have been sorted out long ago. Several areas of weakness that seem to be fairly widespread are:

- Clutches can wear rapidly, due to the tall gearing.
- Second gear will not engage when the engine is cold (typical all Ferraris of this era)
- Air conditioning systems need regular attention
- Camshaft oil seals leaks, must be checked from under the car
- Paint work is fragile and chips easily
- Electrical / fuse box / relay problems on early models, very slow windows can be an indication of more serious issues
- Coolant expansion tank corrosion
- Fragile ignition-key/turn-indicator assembly
- Rust on the lower rocker panels, door sills and around the wheel arches
- Air pumps get disconnected and rust internally

Other potential issues:

- Tires for all the 308 models are rare and can be expensive to replace
- Exhaust systems can suffer corrosion
- Coolant system hoses can become frayed on fittings, etc.
- Oil Pressure/Temp sender failures
- Burned out catalytic converters on 308's and 308i's
- Electrical switch problems (boot/bonnet/engine/glovebox/windows/aerial/etc)
- Headlights are prone to freezing if not used regularly
- Cold start smoke, piston sealing problems
- Accident damage and improper repair
- Suspension degrades and can seize if not used regularly
- Broken door handles on 308s
- Window motors freezing
- Speedometer sending unit failures
- Marelli electronic ignition failure. Replacement is difficult as it is no longer produced.

As a rough guideline, plan an annual budget of \$1,000 for service and minor issue recertification.





An early 308 GTS with aftermarket wheels. The Cavallino shield was added by the owner and was not an option

Pros & Cons

PROS

- One of the best values in the Ferrari world
- All models fully depreciated and fairly price-stable
- A real useable Ferrari, with proper maintenance, still can be used as a daily driver.
- Great visibility for all driving conditions
- Stability at speed and under brakes
- Useable luggage space
- A great driver's car
- The *Ferrari* in most peoples minds
- Still well supported by official and independent dealers. Most parts are still easliy available.

CONS

- Off-line performance on the "i"
- No power steering, heavy at low speeds and around town
- Clutch and gearbox on early 308's require significant leg and arm strength
- Large glass area requires good air-conditioned performance
- Unlikely to appreciate in value

General Buying Tips

1. Demand to see the Service book and Maintenance History file. Make sure you have solid answers to any major holes in the history. If not, move on. Look specifically for missed cambelt changes. Many owners could afford to buy but not properly service the cars.
2. Get the car inspected by a Ferrari trained mechanic. He will find things you miss. Given the age of all 308's this is absolutely critical.
3. If the asking price is very low, there is a reason for it. Major work on a 308 can easily exceed the purchase price of the car.
4. Carefully check the mileage against the history file. It is easy to disconnect the speedometer on a 308 and many low mileage cars are not what they appear.
5. Check the car carefully for rust. Rust proofing was not provided by the factory until 1984 and almost all 308's produced before this time will have some rust. On early Fiberglass 308's, check the body carefully for signs of accident damage and poor repair jobs.
6. Never buy the first car you see, look and test drive several. If possible drive at least several different versions (recommendation is a 308 or a 308i, and then a 308 QV). Preference among the three variants is highly subjective.
7. Make sure the car has all the original Books, Tools, and Records. These are very expensive to replace later.
8. Talk to other owners, join the Ferrari Forum.
9. Talk to the Mechanics that have historically serviced the car. If possible also contact prior owners.

Expectations

When you purchase a Ferrari, you are not buying a car but rather a work of engineering art and a piece of history. A Ferrari has a soul and character unique in the automotive world. A Ferrari comes filled with Italian passion, for both better and occasionally worse. Driving a Ferrari is never boring. It is engaging. You are always involved and interacting with the car across a multitude of senses. While driving, this includes the constantly changing sound track as the engine moves through the rpm range, the heavy but exact clutch, and the metallic click with every gear change. There really is nothing else on the road that sounds like a Ferrari.

Until you have driven one, it is impossible to appreciate the totality of the experience. It is this emotional link between car and owner that sets Ferrari's apart from other sports cars

Two other cars that many first time Ferrari owners consider are Lamborghini and Porsche. Lamborghini has similar roots in the Modena area. It however does not have the racing heritage or, for the majority of its life, the single minded guidance of a brilliant owner. Lamborghini's ownership history has included everyone from Chrysler, an Indonesian Conglomerate, to Audi. This is reflected in the history of the models. Lamborghinis tend to be overly flamboyant, difficult to drive, and highly temperamental. Porsche, on the other hand, is efficient, reliable,

and an engineering masterpiece. It is also highly predictable and after a time, can be construed as boring. A Porsche does everything with extreme competence, to the extent that you begin to wonder if you, the driver, are really needed.

The fact is Ferrari's are expensive to maintain and less reliable than many other cars. This is simply a small part of the deal that comes with being a member of the small and special club of Ferrari owners. The Porsche is a cold rationale machine, a Lamborghini is pure emotion, and a Ferrari gives you both.

Purchasing Options

In general most Ferrari Buyers purchase their cars at one of four channels:

- Official Ferrari Dealers
- Independent Specialist Dealers
- Private Sellers
- Auctions

each has its own strengths and weaknesses. In summary:

Official Ferrari Dealers

Purchasing through an official dealer will provide the most piece of mind when making the rather considerable investment in a Prancing Horse badged automobile. In almost all cases the car will come with some sort of warrantee, a comprehensive service history, and a clean bill of health. All of this comes with a cost and you will likely pay a 10-20% premium vs. other options. One other limitation is that dealers normally only stock the current, plus 1-2 generations of prior models. As a result, dealers are really only an option for the modern (1990's -) model enthusiast.

Independent Specialist

Independent Specialist dealers can provide both outstanding service and a wide range of models to choose from, covering all price ranges. Reputation is critical and so is doing your research on an Independent Specialist dealer before writing out a check. Information and insights on different Specialists can be obtained both through your local Ferrari Owners Club members and via posts on the Ferrari Forum. Like official dealers, many specialist can

provide warrantees (via 3rd parties) and on-going maintenance facilities. The quality of the maintenance for modern models can be on par with the official dealers as many independents employ Ferrari trained mechanics. For modern models though it is critical to confirm that the service center has the necessary diagnostic equipment and software (SD1 or SD2) for your model. For Classic and Vintage Ferrari's, independents may be your only, or best (for more recent models) option. Prices at Independent's should be 5-20% less than Official Dealers.

In most countries, purchasing from either an Official Ferrari Dealer or an Independent Specialist will provide you with the strongest legal rights should anything go wrong.

Private Sellers

Caveat Emptor. Buying from a private seller is both the lowest cost and highest risk option. In all Ferrari purchases, a Pre Purchase Inspection (PPI) by a specialist is recommended, in the case of a private purchase, it is critical. Purchasing well privately is both a matter of form and substance. First the form which is mostly related to general appearance and presentation:

- check the condition of the interior, is the leather conditioned and cleaned
- pull up the mats, check the condition of the under carpet
- spray water on the car, make sure it beads up immediately
- look in the engine bay

- is the owner a member of the local Ferrari Owner's Club

positives on the above are an initial indication of a careful owner, but could also be the result of a pre-sale clean up. Then move onto the substance:

- review the service records, a comprehensive file is always a good sign
- check the history of the car, make sure it has always been well cared for
- always check that the mileage on the odometer matches the other records
- confirm that the seller is the car's owner and that the title is clear
- spend time both test driving the car and talking to the owner. No car is perfect, does the owner point out both the good points of the car and the issues needing attention ?

Buying from a private seller will provide both the lowest cost of acquisition and the highest risk should any major undisclosed issue emerge post purchase. Doing your homework properly is critical and in many cases it is a rewarding and enjoyable experience for both parties.

Ferrari Forum Buyers Guides are available for the following models:

<i>Dino 246</i>	<i>365/512 Boxer</i>
<i>308</i>	<i>348</i>
<i>F355</i>	<i>360</i>
<i>456 GT</i>	<i>Mondial</i>
<i>Testarossa</i>	<i>550/575</i>

328 Coming Soon !

Dino 308 GT4 Coming Soon !

365/400/412i Coming Soon !