

Five Best Ferraris For Daily Driving

by Michael Sheehan

Very few Ferraris are bought only for the concours circuit. While most of the market attention is focused on the multi-million-dollar 250 SWBs and 250 LMs, you can have a prancing horse in your driveway for less than \$25,000. True, you won't ever get to drive a 308 onto the lawn at Pebble Beach, but you're sure to be a hit at the local show-and-shine. More important, driving every Ferrari, from the most humble 250 GTE to the latest 360 Modena, is a unique experience, one not matched by any other car.

If you're going to drive your Ferrari on a regular basis, which I highly recommend, here are the five I suggest you consider.

Up to \$25,000



The choice is unquestionably the 1974-79 308 GT4, or for those who are gluttons for mechanical tinkering, the 1980-84 400i. Both have four seats (sort of), both are Ferraris, and both are available under \$25,000. The 8-cylinder 308 GT4 is nimble, has a great engine sound, and is as low maintenance

a Ferrari as you could hope to buy. The 400i is bigger, more powerful, more sedate, a businessman's express. With 12 cylinders, and often botched DOT/EPA certification work (all 400s are gray market), the 400i can be much more expensive to maintain.

These cars are twenty years old or more, and most have been used hard and put away wet. Before you buy, have the car of your choice inspected by a mechanic and good body man. The cost of an engine and transmission rebuild on either car can quickly exceed the purchase price of the car and put you financially very deep underwater. Having a body man look at the car will help ensure that you're not buying six cars pieced together into one, or that the dreaded rust god hasn't built a chapel in the rocker panels under some well-painted Bondo.

\$25,000-50,000



In this range, the choice is easy—any of the 1977-79 308 GTS or 1986-89 328 GT series cars. They are comfortable, instantly recognizable as a Ferrari, and very user friendly. Adequate

performance (given their age) and a great engine sound all add up to a great driver. The same caveat applies; have your potential purchase inspected by a qualified mechanic and body man. Major mechanical problems can easily run up half the purchase price of the car in a nano-second. While the world might not recognize a 400i as a Ferrari, every kid in the world knows what a 308 is.

\$50,000-100,000



There are three choices in this price bracket, a 1982-84 512 BBi "Boxer," 1990-92 348, or 1995-current 355. The Boxer was the top of the line when new and is easily the fastest of these three, in case you happen to spend a lot of time on the Autobahn. The 348 is cheaper and attractive, but can be high maintenance.

The 355 is by far the best city car of the group, and the most refined. The choice is very subjective. Test-drive all three before you choose and then vote with your wallet for the car of your choice.

\$100,000-200,000

Pick from the 1968-73 Daytona coupe, 1965-66 275 GTS, or 1966-68 330 GTS. While I'm a Daytona fan, I'd opt for the 330 GTS simply because it's lighter, shorter geared, and more user-friendly for around-town driving.



It offers the ultimate joy of a Ferrari owner: putting the top down. Remember, the older the car, the greater the need for the inspection. Why commit financial suicide when buying a car?

\$200,000 and up



My choice would be a 1972-73 Daytona Spyder. The Daytona Spyder offers the best combination of features in any Ferrari, with stunning good looks, a top that goes down, an engine sound to die for, and acres of horsepower. Driving doesn't get any better. It is interesting to look back at the prices of these same cars in 1989 and smile, knowing that they can be bought today for approximately 25% of the 1989 price.

While they don't have the tremendous upside offered in the late '80s, they also don't have the tremendous downside risk associated with insanely high prices.

Buy one of these cars. Drive it. Enjoy it. Ferraris were meant to be driven. ♦