

Tested: Lamborghini LM002, Saleen Mustang,  
BMW 325i Convertible, Ferrari Mondial 3.2

# CAR AND DRIVER

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## Ferrari Mondial 3.2



PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVID FRANKLIN

*The flashy red one that doesn't star on "Miami Vice" or "Magnum, P.I."*

• We all know that a red Ferrari will get you dates, speeding tickets, and the best parking spot at the club, but can you actually depend on one for regular day-to-day transportation? Nasty rumors concerning the prancing-horse cars abound: that a capable mechanic should be consulted prior to out-of-town flings, that their cockpits are not practical for long trips, that any luggage in their trunks will melt. So the question is, are Ferraris truly usable cars, or just flashy toys suitable only for local trolling?

To find out for once and for all, we mapped out a Memorial Day weekend with a Ferrari as the centerpiece of activities. The car: a 1987 Ferrari Mondial 3.2, racy-red sheetmetal on the outside, butterscotch-tan leather on the inside. The trip: Ann Arbor to Indianapolis and back for the Indy 500. The mission: to see what fun could be had in a \$73,200, mid-engined steed from the Maranello stud farm.

Saddled as it is with two-plus-two seating, a 104.3-inch wheelbase, and closed coachwork, the Mondial coupe is the least desirable Ferrari currently on the American market. Its proportions are not as beguiling as those of other Ferraris, and its power-to-weight ratio falls shy of both the little-brother 328's and the brawny-beast

Testarossa's. Its steel roof stays resolutely fixed in place, no matter how balmy the tropical breeze or how blond and beautiful the occupants.

Nevertheless, the Mondial is a member in fine standing of the Ferrari family. It wears the right badges and makes the right sounds, and it's powered by the same four-cam, 32-valve V-8 that the 328GTB and GTS models use. It just happens to be a slightly more practical four-seater. And, true to Ferrari form, the Mondial is fast: its speedometer will swing to 60 mph in a mere 6.3 seconds (as quick as a Mustang GT's) and read an honest 144 mph if you keep a foot on the throttle long enough. Its V-rated Goodyear Eagle tires supply entertaining levels of cornering and braking traction.

The Mondial is also a great car to be seen in. Decked out in *rossa corsa* red paint, it screams "Look at me!" every minute and every mile. Most folks comply with that not-so-subtle request. Kids point, teens swoon, young adults murmur "Whawazzat?" And fortunately, when the drivers ahead of you see the tiny, intensely red speck swelling rapidly in their mirrors, they realize the Mondial means business. On the Indy run, we found the M machine very effective at clearing the left lane for

express passage. We clicked off the 250-mile down leg in an easy four hours, despite occasional stops en route.

The Mondial's cockpit is full to the gunwales with switches, instruments, and warning lamps. There is a blizzard of electric buttons—even one to open the glove-box door—so it pays to have the detailed owner's manual at the ready. The magnificent instruments have orange and yellow markings on black dials, but you'll have to tilt the Momo steering wheel well up from its ideal position to see them properly. Similarly, the leather-clad seats look like a million bucks, but they don't feel that way. The front buckets provide nearly no lumbar or thigh support, and their bottom cushions are poorly contoured for long-haul comfort. After finding ourselves fidgeting at the end of the first hour on the road, we dipped deeply into the throttle to shorten the mileage between fuel stops so we'd get a chance to restore circulation. Rear-seat legroom is sacrificed when normal-sized front passengers are accommodated, so don't plan to bring adult friends on a long trip in this car. We did, however, succeed at packing in a couple of close pals for a quick joy ride with no permanent loss of health or well-being.

Like practically every Ferrari, the





Mondial has a shift linkage that's not exactly a thing of great mechanical poise. It takes a stiff wrist and a hefty throw of the shoulder to coax the spindly lever through its gate. The gears never seem to want to go where they're nudged, and it's a common experience to discover that the transmission is still in neutral even though the lever is at the end of a slot. When you finally get your feet and hands properly coordinated for running through the gears, the lever-against-gate clanking at your right knee sounds like first-degree automotive abuse.

We liked the Mondial most on the open road, with the engine singing, the gear lever locked in fifth, and the dawdlers flashing backward on our right flank. At speed, the steering is sensitive enough to give the driver the feeling that he's shaking hands with the front tires. Set your course as if taking aim with a long-barreled rifle and the Mondial tracks with ballistic accuracy.

We racked up 600 or 700 miles during our Memorial Day weekend and became quite attached to this Ferrari, foibles and all. It won us 1001 compliments about our fine taste in automobiles. It transported us from door to door far more efficiently than a plane or train could have. And it uplifted our opinion of the usefulness of made-in-Maranello machinery. Even though the Mondial isn't as comfortable as it should be, you needn't hesitate to take one out to stretch its legs. After our journey, we felt as if we had just stepped off an all-day roller-coaster ride—tired, yet too pleased with the experience to complain about a minor crick in the back.

In several thousand miles of testing and tripping, we logged but two minor breakdowns: a blown fuse and a rear-view mirror that wouldn't stay stuck to the windshield. Our luggage was warm to the touch but not overheated (the trunk is behind the engine bay and above the exhaust system). All things considered, our trip by Ferrari was more entertaining than the race we went to see. And we didn't get any tickets.

—Don Sherman

Vehicle type: mid-engine, rear-wheel-drive, 2+2-passenger, 2-door coupe

Price as tested: \$73,200

Options on test car: base Ferrari Mondial 3.2, \$70,200; AM/FM-stereo radio/cassette, \$600; gas-guzzler tax, \$1500; freight, \$900

Standard accessories: power windows, locks, and sunroof, A/C, tilt steering, rear defroster

Sound system: Clarion 9200 AM/FM-stereo radio/cassette, 4 speakers

#### ENGINE

Type ..... V-8, aluminum block and heads  
Bore x stroke ..... 3.27 x 2.90 in, 83.0 x 73.6mm  
Displacement ..... 194 cu in, 3186cc  
Compression ratio ..... 9.2:1  
Fuel system ..... Bosch K-Jetronic fuel injection  
Emissions controls ..... 3-way catalytic converter, feedback fuel-air-ratio control  
Valve gear ..... belt-driven double overhead cams, 4 valves per cylinder  
Power (SAE net) ..... 260 bhp @ 7000 rpm  
Torque (SAE net) ..... 213 lb-ft @ 5500 rpm

#### DRIVETRAIN

Transmission ..... 5-speed  
Primary-drive ratio ..... 1.11:1  
Final-drive ratio ..... 4.06:1, limited slip  
Gear Ratio Mph/1000 rpm Max. test speed  
I 3.08 5.3 41 mph (7700 rpm)  
II 2.12 7.7 60 mph (7700 rpm)  
III 1.52 10.8 83 mph (7700 rpm)  
IV 1.12 14.6 113 mph (7700 rpm)  
V 0.83 19.8 144 mph (7300 rpm)

#### DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Wheelbase ..... 104.3 in  
Track, F/R ..... 59.8/59.4 in  
Length ..... 178.5 in  
Width ..... 70.7 in

Height ..... 48.6 in  
Ground clearance ..... 4.9 in  
Curb weight ..... 3426 lb  
Weight distribution, F/R ..... 43.1/56.9%  
Fuel capacity ..... 18.5 gal  
Oil capacity ..... 10.6 qt  
Water capacity ..... 25.4 qt

#### CHASSIS/BODY

Type ..... unit construction  
Body material ..... welded steel and aluminum stampings

#### INTERIOR

SAE volume, front seat ..... 48 cu ft  
rear seat ..... 27 cu ft  
trunk space ..... 3 cu ft  
Front seats ..... bucket  
Seat adjustments ..... fore and aft, seatback angle  
General comfort ..... poor fair good excellent  
Fore-and-aft support ..... poor fair good excellent  
Lateral support ..... poor fair good excellent

#### SUSPENSION

F ..... ind, unequal-length control arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar  
R ..... ind, unequal-length control arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar

#### STEERING

Type ..... rack-and-pinion  
Turns lock-to-lock ..... 3.5  
Turning circle curb-to-curb ..... 38.9 ft

#### BRAKES

F ..... 11.1 x 0.9-in vented disc  
R ..... 11.7 x 0.8-in vented disc  
Power assist ..... vacuum

#### WHEELS AND TIRES

Wheel size ..... F: 7.0 x 16 in; R: 8.0 x 16 in  
Wheel type ..... cast aluminum  
Tires ..... Goodyear Eagle VR55, F: 205/55VR-16; R: 225/55VR-16  
Test inflation pressures, F/R ..... 37/38 psi

## CAR AND DRIVER TEST RESULTS

#### ACCELERATION

Seconds  
Zero to 30 mph ..... 2.1  
40 mph ..... 3.1  
50 mph ..... 4.7  
60 mph ..... 6.3  
70 mph ..... 8.2  
80 mph ..... 10.5  
90 mph ..... 13.7  
100 mph ..... 17.4  
110 mph ..... 22.4  
Top-gear passing time, 30-50 mph ..... 8.2  
50-70 mph ..... 8.4  
Standing 1/4-mile ..... 14.6 sec @ 94 mph  
Top speed ..... 144 mph

#### BRAKING

70-0 mph @ impending lockup ..... 195 ft  
Modulation ..... poor fair good excellent  
Fade ..... none moderate heavy  
Front-rear balance ..... poor fair good

#### HANDLING

Roadholding, 300-ft-dia skidpad ..... 0.82 g  
Understeer ..... minimal moderate excessive

#### COAST-DOWN MEASUREMENTS

Road horsepower @ 30 mph ..... 6 hp  
50 mph ..... 15 hp  
70 mph ..... 33 hp

#### FUEL ECONOMY

EPA city driving ..... 13 mpg  
EPA highway driving ..... 18 mpg  
C/D observed fuel economy ..... 14 mpg

#### INTERIOR SOUND LEVEL

Idle ..... 40 dBA  
Full-throttle acceleration ..... 89 dBA  
70-mph cruising ..... 76 dBA  
70-mph coasting ..... 74 dBA