

**SPECIAL PREMIER COLLECTORS ISSUE**

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# **SPORTS CAR ILLUSTRATED**



## **SCI TESTS:**

**FERRARI MONDIAL CABRIOLET**

**BMW 735i!**

**CORVETTE (Point/Counterpoint)**

**TOYOTA SUPRA**

**JAGUAR VANDEN PLAS**

**MERCEDES 380SL**



## **INTERVIEWS:**

**Bob Strange on Tire Testing**

**Bob Tullius Profile**



**COLLECTORS CORNER**  
**Rare, Alvis Speed 25 Model**

**An Affordable Ferrari**  
**(SCI shows you how)**



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# FERRARI MONDIAL QUATTROVALVOLE

Open air motoring a la Ferrari--  
a gourmet delicacy made even more tasty  
by four valves per cylinder.



By Dave Emanuel



**T**

he early morning dew clings to the ground. Its life this day will be extended several hours by a low lying cloud cover that ricochets the rays of a newly risen sun back through the stratosphere. The sun's warmth blotted out, a damp chill hangs in the air. Yet it is not totally distasteful, for as day collides with night, the countryside is as it should be. Cool, serene and inviting. It won't endure. Two hours hence, the serenity will be shattered by the thunderous cacophony of hundreds of vehicles making their daily pilgrimage from suburbia to downtown business centers.

As the starter coaxes the V-8 engine through the revolutions that will bring it to life, the Ferrari seems to sense the impending frenzy that will soon seize the highways. The engine starts quickly, as if it were anxious to get under way before the onslaught of morning travellers clogs the roads. A true thoroughbred, the Ferrari is as eager to set tire to uncongested road as a race horse is to set hoof to track.

The seductive sound of dual overhead cams playing against each cylinder's four valves, the shift lever is snapped into 1st gear position and the Ferrari inches forward, a race horse being held at tight rein. Travelling through the sleeping community, it strains against the bit, not at all pleased with the slow progress dictated by the surroundings. But once into the open countryside, reins let out, the Quattrovalvole engine purrs with contentment as the driver aggressively operates throttle and shift lever while darting from one apex to another.





**I**n a lesser vehicle on such a morning, the windows would be rolled up, welcome barriers against the onrush of chilled air. But inside a Mondial Cabriolet, windows and top both tucked away, the driver perceives the cold but needn't acknowledge it; exhilaration derived from commanding such a machine delivers an insulating adrenalin rush that envelopes with warmth.

It is an intimate experience, a man/machine relationship that is savored to the fullest sans interlopers. Yet, with a Mondial Cabriolet, solitary experiences are rare, requiring careful planning; as with any Ferrari, the car simply draws so much attention that one is never alone for long.

However, in spite of a 2 + 2 seating arrangement, the Mondial is actually a two seater. Passengers can be carried in the rear seats, but a ride of more than a few miles is more torture than treat; even children will find the rear quarters too cramped for comfort, so the rear seat backs are best left folded down to hold luggage. Front seating is infinitely more accommodating but the intrusion of the wheelhouses into the cockpit (a consequence of situating a midship engine, two rows of seats and top storage space between axles positioned 104" apart) limits lateral foot position options. On a lengthy trip it can be somewhat disconcerting as the narrow confines of the foot box produces a sensation akin to the feeling of having one's legs shackled.

Whatever problems the claustrophobic foot box may cause become objectionable only when boredom sets

in, as when driving along a freeway at steady speed. On other occasions, delightful mechanical sounds emanating from the engine compartment coupled with brisk acceleration and highly responsive suspension, cause pedestrian considerations to vaporize. Certainly, the exotic four-valve engine is the Mondial's centerpiece.

Prior to 1984, Ferrari's V-8 was the object of considerable, and justified criticism. While blinding acceleration has never been a Ferrari trademark, one did have a difficult time coming to terms with the lethargic performance of the two-valve engine; it is simply unconscionable for a Ferrari to act like an Oldsmobile. With the improved efficiency of the four-valve cylinder head, horsepower jumped from 205 to 235 and sloth-like performance was relegated to history. Being a few hundred pounds heavier, a Mondial records 0-60 times that are somewhat slower than those of a Corvette or Porsche 928. But testimony to the engine's proficiency lies with the lighter 308GTBi which, with the same Quattrovalvole engine, sprints to 60 faster than either the American or German sports car.

Although peak power is achieved at a relatively high 6800 rpm, the Quattrovalvole engine flexes its muscles impressively at virtually any speed. At idle, 7500 rpm or anywhere in between, response to accelerator pedal input is both dramatic and immediate. The true beauty of the Quattrovalvole cylinder head is in its capability of improving power and responsiveness at virtually every point along the horsepower curve.

Making the four-valve engine even more seductive is its sound. Four gear-driven overhead camshafts, 32 valves and the attendant hardware, play a mechanical symphony that is music even to untrained ears. It isn't the sweet sound of the old Ferrari V-12, but it's damn close.

Complimenting the engine is a five-speed transmission with judiciously selected gear ratios. Torque multiplication in the lower gears is quite ample yet excessive rpm drops--of the type that leave the driver constantly feeling his gear selection isn't quite right--have been avoided. Juxtaposed with comparatively light clutch pedal pressure, the shift lever









requires an aggressive right hand. There's no room for hesitancy; shifts must be made with the resolve of a boxer going for the knock-out punch. But once one comes to terms with the mechanism, gear selection is direct and positive.

Those characteristics may also be found in the steering gear. But with 3.5 turns lock-to-lock, cornering *con gusto*, at slower speeds, requires a good deal more steering wheel input than might be expected. A subtle statement of the car's orientation toward travel in fast forward mode,



the ratio is perfectly mated to driving for apexes at higher speeds. With definite understeer characteristics, the Mondial Cabriolet inspires confidence, a feeling that is amplified by the firm yet supple suspension, which handles road surface irregularities with aplomb. The suspension's only faux pas is objectionable bump steer; larger paving strips and the like are capable of altering the direction of travel, calling for immediate steering wheel correction.

Those actions are made through a thick, padded wheel rim covered in high quality leather. The contoured bucket-type seats are also fitted with leather wrapping but are tan, rather than black. To a degree, the interior although tastefully designed and finished, is out of place, a rhinestone in a 24-carat gold necklace. Given the rakish appearance of Pininfarina's body styling and the exotic underhood mechanicals, the interior should be a captivating blend of sybaritic materials and avant garde design.

Another minor annoyance is operation of the folding top. An able-

bodied person should be able to raise or lower it unassisted, but operation of the folding top is no solo event. Not quite as cumbersome as on previous editions, the transformation from closed to open motoring is nonetheless an affair de deux. As with any open air automobile, top down cruising is noisy and while most enjoyable in short bursts, can become tiresome over a long distance. A Mondial Cabriolet owner might well desire travel under cover while on the freeway but wish to arrive topless. But unless he or she stops for "traveler's aid", (ill advised because seeking help from a stranger in-

variably leads to a time-consuming "20 Questions") such a plan is simply not viable.

Aside from these few minor vexations, a Mondial Cabriolet is a pleasurable automobile capable of rocketing along at obscene speeds or, with minor reluctance, cruising slowly along a boulevard. It accords one every dividend expected from ownership of a Ferrari and that message has obviously been well communicated—Mondial Cabriolet production is sold out, for the second consecutive year.







## SPECIFICATIONS

**Year Model:** 1985 Mondial Cabriolet  
**Manufacturer/Importer:** Ferrari of North America, Hasbrouck Heights, N.J.

### GENERAL DATA

**Vehicle Type:** Cabriolet, Mid-engine/  
 Rear Drive  
**List Price:** \$65,000  
**Body/Chassis:** Unitized Steel  
**EPA Fuel Economy (mpg):** 20 highway  
 11 combined

### ENGINE

**Type:** 90° V-8  
**Displacement:** 2927cc 179 cu. in.  
**Bore Stroke:** 81mm x 71mm: 3.19" x 2.80"  
**Horsepower (SAE net):** 235 @ 6800 RPM  
**Torque:** 188 lbs./ft. @ 5500 RPM  
**Compression Ratio:** 8.6:1  
**Fuel System:** Bosch K-Jetronic Fuel  
 Injection  
**Fuel Required:** Unleaded 91-Octane

### DRIVETRAIN

**Transmission:** Five-speed Manual  
**Gear Ratios:** 1st: 3.41:1 / 2nd: 2.35:1  
 3rd: 1.69:1 / 4th: 1.24:1 / 5th: .92:1  
**Final Drive Ratio:** 4.06:1

### DIMENSIONS/CAPACITIES

**Wheelbase:** 104.3  
**Overall Length:** 182.7  
**Overall Width:** 70.5  
**Overall Height:** 49.6  
**Ground Clearance:** 4.9"  
**Curb Weight:** 3440  
**Fuel Capacity:** 18.5 U.S. gallons

### CHASSIS

**Suspension:** F: Unequal length A-arm, coil  
 springs, tubular shocks, anti-roll bar  
 R: Unequal length A-arm, coil  
 springs, tubular shocks, anti-roll bar  
**Steering:** Type: Rack & Pinion  
 Turning Circle: 41 ft.  
 Lock-to-Lock Turns: 3.5  
**Brakes:** F: 11.4" Vented Discs  
 R: 11.4" Vented Discs  
**Wheels:** Alloy 180TR390  
**Tires:** Michelin TRX 240/55VR-390