

THE COMPLETE STORY

One evening in 2001, my son spotted some taillights about a quarter mile ahead and immediately recognized them as early Ferrari. He followed the gentlemen, made a note about where he lived and went home to call me. It was only a mile and a half from my house! I had never seen the car in all the years I lived in the area.

About a week later, I knocked on his door and asked if I could see the car. We went to the garage and there it was underneath a pile of stuff looking a bit tired—exactly what I was hoping to see. I had always wanted an old Ferrari and gave him a real low-ball offer. Sadly he said, “No, I’ve had it since 1969, and I still enjoy driving it.”

I went back about every six months for 5 years getting nowhere. One time, talking to his wife, I upped my offer. About six months later in April 2006, I got a call at my store saying he was ready to sell at a slightly higher offer. I tried to contain my excitement and asked if I could get a mechanical inspection done including a compression check and a leak test. The results were good with some relatively minor things to attend to, so the deal was made.

The car is a 1962 Ferrari GTE, late Series 2, #4049 in mostly original condition with lots of patina. According to the 250 GTE Register, Jacques Swaters of Garage Francorchamps in Brussels, Belgium sold this car new. The paint was Avorio (Ivory) and the interior Rosso (Red) leather.

The history of the car from 1962 to 1969 is unknown. In April 1969, the gentlemen that I bought the car from purchased it from an Italian garage near the Broadway tunnel in San Francisco. He kept it for 37 years before selling it to me.

He had the matching number engine rebuilt by Dan Marvin of the Griswold Company in Berkeley, CA, in 1973 at 78,000 miles. The odometer now reads 96,000 miles and it runs great and doesn’t smoke. It was repainted in 1970 in the original color and in the correct original lacquer. The 41-year-old paint is somewhat dull and cracked with some chips through to the metal. The chrome is all-original and is partially pitted. The front bumper has a Department of Defense, McClellan AFB sticker with the last date of 1999. The previous owner was an engineer and sometimes drove the car to work. The rear bumper has an apartment parking permit sticker that allowed him to park outdoors under a carport! The wheels and knockoffs were re-chromed in 1971 and are now rusty and pitted.

A black 1963 California license plate is on the trunk lid with a quarter inch thick stack of year stickers. The windshield is pitted. In 1973, the previous owner had an upholstery shop install cloth inserts in the middle of the two front seats and larger heel pads on the floor. The rest of the interior is all original, including the carpets, door panels, rear seats, and headliner. The rear parcel shelf was replaced in 2007. The previous owner had green astroturf in there!

The headlights were replaced years ago. I have purchased a pair of original Marchal lights that need to be installed. The previous owner preferred the Series 3 taillights so he installed a pair from Bill Harrah's Modern Classic Motors in Reno, NV.

Coming home from the Monterey Historic Races in 2007, I blew a tire that was bought as a set in 1975. The car now rides on a new set of classic tires. The rear bumper is slightly askew. Years ago the teenage daughter of the previous owner drove up the driveway too fast, crashed into the garage door and pushed it into the Ferrari.

Since I have owned the car, the overdrive solenoid has been replaced, generator rebuilt, driveline donut replaced, new wheel bearings, new brake cylinders, and a major tune up have kept the glorious V-12 running flawlessly.

I drive my car often including Euro Sunday meetings, the big Monterey Historic weeks, All Italian Car Day in Alameda, CA, and local car shows. I can park it anywhere and not worry about it. I like the style and connected driving feel of vintage cars. Old things like cars, antiques, and paintings should have the patina that comes with age. They should be worn, faded, and used. Mine certainly is!

Jim Bonney