



Ferrari Unveils the 458 Spider

Excitement surrounding the 2012 Ferrari 458 Spider at the 64th Frankfurt Auto Show in mid-September gave no indication that the new Prancing Horse had already made an Internet debut more than two weeks prior.

Ferrari Chairman Luca di Montezemolo presented the world's first mid-engine sports car with a retractable hardtop roof to an audience that, though it had been anticipating the car for months, was nevertheless eager to see it in the metal. Enthusiasm and admiration made up for any lack of surprise, and Ferrari's artistic integration of the new, patented roof technology impressed all that saw it.

"Ferrari's 458 Spider was one of the most eagerly awaited vehicles at Frankfurt, and it didn't disappoint. In fact, we think it might be car of the show," wrote Dan Trent for MSN Autos.

Ferrari drivers the world over have greatly embraced the retractable hardtop design on the California model, and now Ferrari has opened a new era in its Spider tradition with a new version of this convertible technology. The 2012 Ferrari 458 Spider's retractable hardtop offers coupe-like comfort and security while adding alfresco driving pleasure to the road-and-track talents of its coupe sibling. The 458 Spider preserves the sensuous lines of the 458 Italia, along with the aerodynamics and performance of the berlinetta version.

With the top up, the slightly altered side window profile and crease line in the new roof are tip-offs that this is the open model. The clear glass engine covering of the 458 Italia is replaced with the solid panel that opens to house the stowed roof. Inside, the 458 Spider offers a rear bench behind the seats to hold luggage.

At the touch of a button, the 458 Spider raises the rear tonneau cover and lowers its hardtop in just 14 seconds. The roof does not "fold" but rather separates into two panels as it rises and pivots rearward; the roof panels then stack in a compartment and the rear tonneau cover closes. Remarkably, the 458 Spider's innovative aluminum roof system weighs 55 lbs. less than a comparable soft-top system would have weighed.

With the roof lowered, the 458 Spider strikes an especially racy profile with the flying-buttress styling reminiscent of the limited-production SA Aperta. On the 458 Spider, the buttresses help to optimize airflow to the engine intakes, as well as to the clutch and transmission oil coolers. A special power-adjustable wind stop diffuses wind turbulence in the cockpit, keeping the driver and passenger comfortable and enabling normal conversation even at higher speeds.

The 458 Spider inherits all the performance credentials that have made the 458 Italia the benchmark for its class. The direct-injection 4.5-liter V8 produces a stunning 562 horsepower, which is channeled to the wheels through the seven-speed dual-clutch F1 transmission. All of the racing-derived performance technology proven in the 458 Italia continues in the Spider, including the E-Diff integrated with F1-Trac traction control and high-performance ABS.

Ferrari tuned the 458 Spider's suspension damping to provide optimal handling and comfort for both top-up and top-down driving. The final touch is the one that appeals to the ears: Ferrari specially tuned the 458 Spider's exhaust sound to please the passengers when the roof is lowered – a new note in the Ferrari engine music canon.

Source **Ferrari North America, Inc. 2011**