



## Auto Italia - April 2007

MIDNIGHT BLUE by Ian Kuah

Another concours-winning restoration by Lynx Motors....



There is something magical about a classic 1960s Ferrari V12 motor with six twin-choke carburetors. The sound it makes when you fire up the engine is a significant part of the ownership experience. In fact, the experience starts even before that. With the ignition live, you pump the accelerator pedal a couple of times and then hold it halfway to the floor while turning the key. The pre-engaged starter whirs into life, and if everything is fine, the motor will catch with a roar and a few splutters before settling down to a throaty tickover. From the moment you put the car in gear and move off however, the driving experience will differ significantly depending on which classic V12 Ferrari you are behind the wheel of.

In chronological order, the 250GT SWB came first in 1959, followed by the 275GTB/4 in 1966 and then the 365GTB/4 Daytona in 1968. However, my own experience with this trio of seminal Ferraris was completely out of synch as I drove the Daytona first, then the 250GT SWB and finally the 275GTB/4.

First impressions of the 275GTB/4 were as profound as they were logical. Within minutes, I came to the conclusion that its driving characteristics were almost exactly halfway between the other two.

Where the gearshift of the 4-speed 250GT SWB was sweet as a nut thanks to the conventional position of its gearbox, the 275GTB/4, the first road Ferrari to have its 5-speed transmission mounted aft with the rear axle, had the same dogleg gearbox with a baulky shift when cold. It gets much better then warm, but never comes close to the ease of shifting of the 4-speeder, which is more like a modern box.



Missing out second gear to help the synchros when the gearbox oil is stone cold is no real hardship in the Daytona, as its 4390cc four-cam motor and hefty 1603kg kerb weight means that there is plenty of grunt to cover the missing ratio. A healthy 352bhp at 7500rpm with 318lb ft of torque at 5500rpm was as good as it got in 1968.

Blessed with 240bhp at 7000rpm and 183lb ft of torque at 5500rpm, the 250GT SWB's lower output is offset by its significantly lower kerb weight of 1179kg. However, even when warm, its mere 2953cc capacity means that it is not such a happy slogger at low revs in a high gear.



Although by no means as lusty as the Daytona, with just 3.3-litres, the 275GTB/4 motor is a big improvement in grunt over its predecessor, and it has enough torque to help you along until the gearbox oil has warmed through. Its 300bhp at 8000rpm and 202lb ft of torque at 5500rpm come on strong, and while this car weighs 152kg more than the 250, it is also a hefty 272kg lighter than the Daytona.

If the transmission of the 1967 car is more akin to its more powerful successor, the steering certainly is not. The Daytona steers like a truck at parking speeds, requiring strong muscles to manoeuvre. However, at speed it lightens up dramatically and is a real pleasure to use on track in particular.



The steering of the 250GT SWB is light and precise at all speeds and really is one of the most delightful and communicative helms of any car ever. It is easy to see why, coupled to terrific chassis balance and adequate power, it was such a successful competition machine.

The 275GTB/4 falls between the two, but is more akin to the 250's. While a tad heavier than the earlier cars, it still has a lightness to it that makes it easy to drive and manoeuvre in all conditions. However the chassis, especially the back end, is not as delicate in information transfer as the 250's. In this respect, it feels more road car, less race car.





The Daytona is the one that is the biggest handful when you are going quickly because it gets up to a given speed that much faster and is a heavier car that needs more deliberate manhandling. Its steering writhes in your hands the most on a bumpy country road, although when you get all three on a smooth race track, the Daytona is simply amazing.

However it is also the scariest of the three when you need to stop quickly because the great leap in performance was also slightly out of proportion to the improvement brought by the move from a solid to a vented disc brake system. State of the art for 1968 they may have been, but the brakes of a 40-year vintage behind mere 15-inch diameter alloy wheels barely hold a candle to the anchors on one of today's good hot hatches with half the power.



If the twin cam 250 motor is all sweetness and light when you rev it through the gears, the larger four-cam 275GTB4 power unit makes a deeper, more throaty noise and pulls harder too. With one whole litre and a bit on top, the beefier Daytona is simply in a different league and not only impresses more deeply with its raw power and boundless torque, but also the lusty way it pulls towards its 7500rpm redline in the gears. However, as a balancing act between the other two generations, the 275GTB/4 is arguably the best of the three as a road car. With more torque than the 250GT, it is more usable in today's traffic, yet does not require anything like the muscle required to heft the Daytona around. While driving the Daytona well may be a challenge for some, and infinitely rewarding if you can do it well, it is also quite tiring. As the owner of one for four years, I am speaking from first hand experience! While it was no surprise to find that the driving qualities of the 275GTB/4 were almost exactly halfway between the 250 and the 365GTB/4 in most respects, it was most interesting to make the comparison. The extra commitment required to get the best from the Daytona narrows its audience considerably and in some ways was a backward step for a road car. The 250 is the sweetest of the three and the 275GTB/4 seems to hit the nail on the head as the ideal combination for most people.

Ironically, the race to come up with the fastest and best car of the era meant that the 275GTB/4 had the shortest lifespan of these three brilliant Ferraris. Just 350 were made in the years 1966-68, while 165 250GT SWB cars were made in the years 1959-62 and 1400 Daytonas from 1968-74.

## The Lynx Effect

Although renowned for their Jaguar C-Type, D-Type and XKSS reproductions that use many original factory parts, the Lynx team have also built up a name for themselves as gurus of classic Ferrari restoration. More than that, their work has stood up to the closest scrutiny of the world's foremost experts and come through with flying colours.

From zero to hero is how we would best describe the meticulous work that wowed the judges of the 2004 Louis Vuitton Concours d' Elegance in Paris so much that they awarded the Prix de L'Elegance to the Lynx Ferrari 250GT Lusso, the very first Ferrari restoration this classic Jaguar specialist had ever undertaken.

Soon after the win in Paris, the car went to an American collector and Lynx boss John Mayston-Taylor began his search for another classic Ferrari project. The opportunity to acquire a matching number 275GTB/4 with a good history in need of some TLC soon arose, and John went to see the car.



"It was painted in 'resell red' as we have come to regard red Ferraris," said John. "But when we examined the car more carefully, we found that it had started life in dark blue, was resprayed yellow and then finally red. Its registration history also read like a travel agent's folder as the car had gone from Italy to the US, then Canada and Japan before ending up in England."

Once in the UK, it was sold to Eric Fellner CBE, co-founder of Working Title Films, and the man behind some of the Hugh Grant movies. Eric loves cars but living in Central London, the Ferrari proved impractical and he only covered 500 miles in it.

When Mayston-Taylor took the car over, it was red with a black interior. "I researched the history of the car with help from Ferrari and we found out that the interior was originally a colour called Pelle Orancia (orange)," he said. "In fact, when we stripped the car down, we found a patch of the original leather trapped in the frame of a seat base and used this as a guide for the restoration."

"In the course of dismantling the seat frame, we were happy to see that the original webbing was intact and bore the build number 074," said John. "This confirmed that our car was No 74 of the 350 275GTB/4s built. Its chassis number is 10017, and engine number 225/10017."

The interior was re-trimmed by the same man who did the Lynx Lusso so expertly two years before. Once again, this was carried out using the correct specification and colour of hides that were supplied for the car by Jonathan Connolly of the family business who originally supplied Ferrari in the 1960s. The correct dark blue carpets were also sourced to match the bodywork.





For more information on restorations by Lynx visit [www.lynxmotors.co.uk](http://www.lynxmotors.co.uk)