



Turning Another Page, Looking Back

By Jim Weed

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Well, today is a special day for me as I turn another page with another trip around the sun. Like most, I don't remember, maybe, the first five years of my life. The next ten years are a pretty good blur. School was not my favorite thing and all I wanted to do was to pass and get out.

The next five years meant a number of different jobs, some college and lots of hunger. I lived off my wits and learned all I could from the world around me.

Then I started working at a relatively new Ferrari dealer, FAF Motorcars, in Tucker, GA. A couple friends I knew had been hired and I wanted in, believing this job would have more future than anything else I was doing.

That was 49-years ago. Today most of the folks I worked with have gone on. I think only Steve Ahlgrim and I are the last ones left. I was there when Ahlgrim was hired. Shortly after he came to work, his 1962 Mercury Comet brake pedal went to the floor. I bought the car for \$50.00 that day. I fixed it and drove it for another two years or so. Aah, those were the days...

Not surprisingly, I remember most of the intervening fifty years. I sold Ferrari parts, was a Ferrari service manager, ran my own shop and then got hooked up with the Ferrari Market Letter. My Ferrari history and knowledge is pretty wide and deep.

Early in my career at FAF I was told "One day, there will be Ferraris lined up on a lot with a large building and people will be able to walk in to purchase a Ferrari" Far-fetched at the time, but look around today and see how the small local dealerships have become commercialized.

Time moves on for sure. There was a time, like when Chinetti in New York was the center of Ferrari in America. FAF Motorcars also filled a place in Ferrari's American history by offering parts through its catalog supporting owners and shops all across the country and many times, the world.

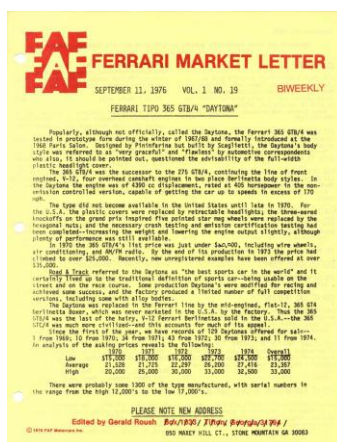
FAF was friendly and knowledgeable, willing to help many through the various models and changes made within each model. Any particular model could have had many changes during the production run. Unlike today, a

296 GTS is a 296 GTS with only the colors and interior appointments customized for personal taste. Mechanically, they all share the same components. Hand built is not the same as Taylor Made.

But, let's face it, Ferraris are not used like they were fifty years ago. Today, low mileage is a plus. Special cars hardly get driven because of value loss. It would appear Ferrari has become a jewelry company that makes pretty things to be seen in a garage instead of on a pretty girl's arm.

As one of my many projects I have been scanning back issues of the *Ferrari Market Letter* so we may have the entire archives available for you. Currently, under the Resources tab you can find the last four or five years of the paper version available to read informative articles or the look back on ads with prices to see where the market was at that time.

As I scan issues that go back to our beginning, I ran across this one issue from fifty years ago that shows how things have changed. Volume 1, Number 19, dated September 11, 1976. The front cover article was about the 365 GTB/4 Daytona written by Gerald Roush.



“Popularly, although not officially, called the Daytona, the Ferrari 365 GTB/4 was tested in prototype form during the winter of 1967/68 and formally introduced at the 1968 Paris Salon. Designed by Pininfarina but built by Scaglietti, the Daytona’s body style was referred to as “very graceful” and “flawless” by automotive correspondents who also, it should be pointed out, questioned the advisability of the full-width plastic headlight cover.”

“The 365 GTB/4 was the successor to the 275 GTB/4, continuing the line of front engined, V-12, four overhead camshaft engines in two place Berlinetta body styles. In the Daytona the engine was of 4390 cc displacement, rated at 405 horsepower in the non-emission controlled version, capable of getting the car up to speeds in excess of 170 mph.”

“The type did not become available in the United States until late 1970. For the U.S.A. the plastic covers were replaced by retractable headlights; the three-eared knockoffs on the grand prix inspired five pointed star mag wheels were replaced by the hexagonal nuts; and the necessary crash testing and emission

certification testing had been completed—increasing the weight and lowering engine output slightly, although plenty of performance was still available.”

“In 1970 the 365 GTB/4’s list price was just under \$20,000, including wire wheels, air conditioning, and AM/FM radio. By the end of its production in 1973 the price had climbed to over \$25,000. Recently, new unregistered examples have been offered at over \$35,000.”

“Road & Track referred to the Daytona as “the best sports car in the world” and it certainly lived up to the traditional definition of sports car—being usable on the street and on the race course. Some production Daytona’s were modified for racing and achieved some success, and the factory produced a limited number of full competition versions, including some with alloy bodies.”

“The Daytona was replaced in the Ferrari line by the mid-engined, flat-12, 365 GT4 Berlinetta Boxer, which was never marketed in the U.S.A. by the factory. Thus the 365 GTB/4 was the last of the hairy, V-12 Ferrari Berlinettas sold in the U.S.A.—the 365 GTC/4 was much more civilized—and this accounts for much of its appeal.”

“Since the first of the year, we have records of 129 Daytonas offered for sale—1 from 1969; 10 from 1970; 34 from 1971, 43 from 1972; 30 from 1973; and 11 from 1974.”

The article breaks down prices from each year into low, average and high values which overall were \$15,000, \$23,357 and \$33,000 respectively. The last sentence in the article is interesting. *“There were probably some 1300 of the type manufactured, with serial numbers in the range from the high 12,000’s to the low 17,000’s.”*

As we break down this article fifty years later it is interesting to realize that at least three years after this model went out of production there were still unsold/unregistered Daytonas still available. Our serial number database shows only a handful of 1974 cars at it would appear production stopped in July 1973. Maybe the final cars were completed after the August break?

Our database also has total production of the Berlinetta at 1,286, not including prototype cars, and 122 Daytona Spyders making total production at 1,408.

Within this issue there were twenty-two Daytona’s offered. Prices ranged from a low of 16,000 (needing a rear clip) to \$40,000 (brand new). Since this was before required asking prices there are a number of ads that do not state a price, ranging from ‘best offer’ to ‘expensive’.

Twelve of the ads are for cars not red, with only six ads identifying the car as red. The mileage in the ads is what really caught my attention. Among several ads stating ‘low mileage’ there were many ads with well used miles, 30,000 miles, 25,000 miles, 14,500 miles, 16,000 miles, 26,000 miles, 20,000 miles, and the ever-present 15,000 mostly freeway miles. Clearly these three- to four-year-old cars were used and enjoyed by their owners. How many of these cars today can say they have racked up this mileage in the last ten, or even twenty years?

Which brings me back to Ferrari jewelry. Ferraris were meant to be driven and enjoyed. The challenge of getting to know a vehicle inside and out, to know how it feels and what it is communicating to the driver can only be learned by spending time in the seat, driving and using it as the maker intended. Yes, Ferraris are beautiful, their shape and style can stir emotions deep within the soul, but learning how to tame the beast, to feel the power, smell

the gasoline, to hear the carburetors open up with a surge of RPM can only add to the joy of ownership. Miles be damned. The reward is worth so much more.

So, new Ferrari, or old Ferrari go forth and enjoy what Ferrari has built. Your car was not meant to be a static piece of art it was meant to be driven. Learn how to become one with your Ferrari.

My seventy-one years on this planet have been filled with experiences that I would not trade for anything. The Ferraris I have driven, the people I've met and the places I've gone would not be the same if I had not taken that job with FAF Motorcars.

FAF was sold and became Ferrari of Atlanta and as that sale comes up on the thirty-year mark most do not remember how much FAF changed the landscape of Ferrari in America. Chinetti certainly owns a place in history for bringing Ferrari to America, but I believe it was FAF Motorcars that helped bring Ferrari out of the shadows and into a viable Marque to own and enjoy. The parts supply, the service knowledge and the honest sales FAF brought to the table, set the stage for creating Ferrari North America and the organization Ferrari has since built in America.

Would we have all this without FAF? I don't know. I would like to think either way, my small part did help. Now, tomorrow is another day, back to work....