

1977

Lauda wins his second world title with the 312 T2

The 1976 season left a very bad taste in Ferrari's mouth because of how it ended, after Niki Lauda decided to retire on the second lap of the rain-drenched Japanese GP. As a result, the title went to James Hunt in the McLaren, so the Austrian's incredibly fast return to the track after his horrific accident at the Nürburgring had been in vein.

Lauda, however, arrived at the start of the new championship in fighting form, even though victory in the first round in Argentina went to newcomer Wolf and South African driver Jody Scheckter. The second grand prix of the season, in Brazil, was won by the Prancing Horse's other driver, Argentinian Carlos Reutemann. Lauda took his first win of 1977 in the tragic South African Grand Prix, which was rocked by the death of Tom Pryce. The British driver was killed instantly when he was struck by a heavy fire extinguisher being carried by a marshal, as he rushed across the track to deal with a fire in Renzo Zorzi's Shadow. Unfortunately, after the incident, Pryce's car continued down the straight and hit the Ligier of Lafitte who was braking into the first corner. Fortunately, the French driver emerged unscathed from the collision.

Mario Andretti drove the Lotus to victory at Long Beach, while Lauda racked up good points by delivering three second-place finishes in four races. In France, despite finishing a modest fifth, he took the lead in the championship and held onto it for the rest of the season. Thanks to the latest modifications, the 312 T2 was an almost-perfect car and the very determined Austrian did not put a foot wrong. Car number 11, in fact, won at Hockenheim in Germany in what felt like an exorcism of the accident at the Nürburgring 12 months previously, and then did so again in Holland. It also took secured second-place finishes in Great Britain, Austria and Italy.

Thanks to Lauda's podium position at Monza, Ferrari sealed the Constructors' Cup with three races remaining in the season. The Italian crowd went wild, in part because the top step was occupied by a former, and still-much loved Ferrari driver, Mario Andretti, who was then with Lotus. All that remained was for Lauda to clinch the Drivers' title. His mission was simple as he required just a single point.

The race at Watkins Glen on October 2 was a challenging affair as the track was treacherous because of heavy rain. Lauda took a cautious approach which paid off handsomely in the end. The race was won by reigning World Champion Hunt in the McLaren, but the Ferrari driver's fourth was enough to bring the Englishman's reign to an end and take the Drivers' crown back to Austria.

However, once the battle for the world title was over, Lauda and Enzo Ferrari's very different perspectives came to the fore. The Austrian felt that much of the credit for the victory was due to his skills and asked for a substantial raise, something Ferrari would not grant. This ultimately led to the two men going their separate ways, with the situation coming to a head on a race weekend. Lauda went to Canada but refused to take part to the race weekend, declaring that the car didn't have the potential to win at Mosport Park. He then packed his bags and returned to Austria, throwing down the gauntlet to Ferrari in controversial fashion. Speaking of his own merits during the 1977 season. Lauda declared: "We'll see where I'll be in two years' time and where Ferrari will be!" In response, Enzo Ferrari replaced the champion with an unknown Canadian with just one GP to his credit: Gilles Villeneuve.

Two years later, the Maranello Scuderia celebrated Scheckter winning the Drivers' title and the second position delivered by Villeneuve, whose style thrilled the Prancing Horse tifosi like no other. Disappointed by the performance of his Brabham, Lauda, on the other hand, announced his first retirement from racing. Enzo Ferrari had won that particular bet to.

1978

Gilles Villeneuve wins his first GP, that of Canada, with the 312 T3

It was Friday 6 October 1978. 28 Formula 1 drivers took to the track for the tests of the first Canadian Grand Prix on the new circuit, created on the side roads of the island of Notre-Dame, in Montreal, Quebec. The track replaced the one at Mosport Park, famous for its ups and downs, but that was too dangerous.

It was the final race of the 1978 season - the two championships had been decided, with Lotus taking the Constructors' title with its '79 model, and Mario Andretti the Drivers'. However, the British team was highly motivated because it wanted to dedicate a victory to Ronnie Peterson, who died following an accident at the Monza Grand Prix. There were many driver changes to come in 1979 - it was Carlos Reutemann's last race for the Scuderia before he joined Lotus, while for Wolf, Jody Scheckter was on his way out. His future was at Ferrari, where he would partner Gilles Villeneuve.

The Canadian stayed on despite being outclassed by Reutemann. The Argentinian fought with the Brabham of Niki Lauda for third place in the world championship, winning in Brazil, Long Beach, the UK and Watkins Glen. Villeneuve however collected just eight points, with a third in Austria, a fourth in Belgium and sixth in the Netherlands. But Enzo Ferrari believed in him and decided to give him another chance.

The Ferraris led in the first sessions, held in the pouring rain, although Jean-Pierre Jarier, who had replaced Peterson at Lotus, got the better of them in qualifying. Scheckter was second, followed by Villeneuve. On race day, the track was wet and the mercury below zero. Jarier led, followed by Jones, who shot from fifth to second, then Scheckter and Villeneuve. The leading Lotus was very fast and pulled away, while Jones increasingly struggled to keep behind the Scuderia pair for 1979. On the 18th lap Scheckter found a way through to overtake the Williams, but Villeneuve didn't hang around and took third position on the next lap. The Canadian easily made up the gap with the Wolf and on lap 25 did what the 130,000 fans were expecting - Villeneuve overtook Scheckter and then immediately put his foot down.

There were 20 laps to go when the cameras showed Jarier struggling to pull away from the Ligier of Jacques Laffite, having just lapped him. The race leader was forced to slow down noticeably earlier than usual. The Frenchman still led for a while despite the death throws of the Lotus braking system, but he was eventually forced to make a sad return to the pits. Villeneuve, watched by Canadian prime minister Pierre Trudeau, led the Canadian Grand Prix - a first.

Gilles was out in front for the fourth time in his career. The first was at Long Beach, when he came off track in a misguided attempt to lap Clay Regazzoni. He had been in the lead for a few laps in Austria and many more in the tragic Italian Grand Prix, where he was penalised a minute for jumping the start. Villeneuve feared that something would go wrong again and after the race spoke about those moments and said, "Those last laps were torture. I could hear all kinds of noises in the car. [...] I was having to drive like an old woman, shifting at 10,000rpm instead of 11,500 and I just kept saying to myself: Ferrari is the best. It doesn't break. It never breaks!" The first Canadian Grand Prix held in Quebec concluded half an hour later and it was the Ferrari of Gilles first past the chequered flag.

It was a race of firsts: the first in Montreal, the first by a Canadian in Canada, the first by Gilles, the first to be broadcast live by the BBC and the first, and only, where the podium was celebrated by a magnum bottle of beer and not champagne. Labatt was the main sponsor of the Grand Prix but it was also the personal sponsor of Gilles, who, on that occasion, silenced his critics in Italy and abroad.

1979

Jody Scheckter is world champion with the Ferrari 312 T4

This remained Ferrari's final Formula 1 Championship victory until the start of the Schumacher era. We are referring, of course, to the 1979 title won by Jody Scheckter at the end of a triumphant year which initially did not bode well at all for victory. But come it did, thanks to the South African's consistent performance, the reliability of the 312 T4 and the pivotal contribution of Gilles Villeneuve, who also pulled off some of his most astonishing feats that season.

The Championship started in Argentina on January 21 and continued two weeks later in Brazil, still too early to field the new car so both Villeneuve and new arrival Scheckter continued to drive the old 312 T3. Everyone was expecting Lotus to dominate after Mario Andretti and Ronnie Peterson's impressive showing the previous year but, in the end, the big surprise came from Ligier as driver Jacques Laffite won the first two races of the season and jumped to the top of the standings. A month later the Formula 1 Championship moved to Scheckter's home territory, and this time Ferrari introduced the new 312 T4. Jean-Pierre Jabouille took pole in qualifying at Kyalami but the Renault proved fragile, and both he and René Arnoux were forced to retire, opening the way for a Ferrari one-two finish. Villeneuve beat Scheckter to the line by just over three seconds and then repeated that feat at Long Beach to bounce to the top of the standings. Back in Europe, Ligier triumphed in Spain but while Scheckter finished in fourth place, Villeneuve didn't get any points. The same thing happened again in Belgium where Scheckter won to join Laffite at the top of the standings. Two weeks later, the South African got the upper hand in the drivers' rankings, thanks to his win at Monaco, also putting Ferrari at the top of the Constructors' points.

On July 1, Villeneuve and Arnoux wrote one of the most brilliant pages in Formula 1 history with a sparkling duel between the Ferrari and Renault cars in the final laps of the French GP. In the end, the French constructor won its first Grand Prix with Jabouille, but all eyes were on the battle for second place as Gilles and René continually swapped positions, delivering one brilliant pass after another and going wheel to wheel to the very last second. It was a very fair fight and, in the end, the Canadian held sway.

Scheckter did not bring home any points from that race but, unlike Villeneuve, finished in the top six in both the British and German Grands Prix, and took a vital second position in Holland behind a surprise win by Alan Jones in the Williams. Once again, Villeneuve was one of the stars of the Dutch Grand Prix but he was also extremely unlucky. In a manoeuvre that no other driver would even have attempted he passed Jones on the outside at the Tarzan Corner on lap 11, but picked up a puncture and had to drive a full lap on three wheels before being forced to pull off the track.

The South African arrived at the Italian Grand Prix at Monza with an eight-point lead over Laffite, and 10 points ahead of Villeneuve. Laffite had to finish at least second to have any hope of being able to catch him at that point. The Brianza circuit was bursting with Ferrari tifosi eager for a memorable day to start. The front row was dominated by the Renaults but Scheckter was fastest off the line and shot into the lead. Arnoux quickly retaliated to move back in front but his engine failed on lap 13, eliciting a huge roar from the crowd. The Ford 8-cylinder engine powering the Ligier of Laffite also gave up on lap 40, and the Ferrari fans went wild.

There were now just 10 laps remaining. If Scheckter won the race, he would be World Champion two Grand Prix before the end of the season. Only Villeneuve could potentially throw a spanner in the works. In the final laps, the Canadian caught his team-mate and eventually ended up in his slipstream. However, out of both loyalty and friendship, he held back from attacking. Villeneuve was also convinced

that Scheckter deserved the title and that he personally would get another chance. As happened in 1975, when Niki Lauda won his first world title, the Ferraris crossed the line in close formation as the tifosi exploded with joy. Jody Scheckter was World Champion on his first season with Ferrari, a feat only previously achieved by Fangio in 1956 and not matched again until 2007 by Kimi Räikkönen. It was celebration time once again in Maranello.

1980

Unveiling of the Mondial 8, a four-seater with a V8 engine

In 1980 Ferrari consolidated the structure of its range with two well-defined product lines linked to V12 and V8 engines. The Mondial 8 was unveiled in Geneva as a replacement for the Dino 308 GT4, again in four-seat configuration and with a mid-engine, mounted in front of the rear wheel axle.

After the experiment with Bertone and the GT4, Maranello returned permanently to Pininfarina, continuing the theme of the wedge line with radiator grille under the front bumper.

The wheelbase of the Mondial 8 was 10cm longer than the car it replaced and with a wider track, giving more passenger room. The interior was very smart, with a wealth of standard features. It was larger in line with the sizes of 12-cylinder models. The car had big bumpers, two striking air inlets on the side panels, pop-up headlamps and even an optional sunroof.

Because of its content, and in terms of ergonomics, reduced fuel consumption and emissions, the Mondial was defined as Ferrari's first "world car", or even as a "democratic supercar", given it was much cheaper than the V12s. Indeed, the name itself might suggest that, but it actually had another double meaning: a tribute to the F1 World Championship won a year earlier and the 500 Mondial barchetta of 1953, named in honour of Ascari's world championship triumph. Scaglietti made the first copy of the Sport 500 Mondial on the Dino Ferrari design, starting with a 166.

In fact, this car marked the end of the Dino adventure, also given that the latest GT4s sported a Ferrari badge.

The engine of the Mondial 8 was the same as the Dino 308 GT4, but the first ever adoption of injection instead of carburettors on a production Ferrari, made the power delivery more fluid. The 214 hp delivers a maximum speed of 230 km/h. With this model the Ferrari went back on permanent sale in the United States. In 1982 it released an update with the birth of the Mondial 8 Quattrovalvole, which used the new 240 hp 3000 cc V8 engine with four valves per cylinder. Aesthetically, the vehicle was the same as the first series. Along with the Cabriolet, in production since 1983, it is one of the longest lived models in Ferrari history and was restyled again in 1985 and 1989.

1981

Gilles Villeneuve drives turbocharged F1 126 Ck to first win at Monaco

“Rien ne va plus, les jeux sont faits!!” 27 red proved the winner in the Monaco roulette of May 31 1981. By which we mean, of course, the Ferrari of Gilles Villeneuve. A car powered by a turbo engine. This was the first time in history that such a technical gamble paid off so astonishingly in Monte Carlo. Ferrari’s technical gamble centred not so much around the performance guaranteed by the turbocharged engines but the fact that the car’s acceleration and handling were so ill-suited to the torturous Monegasque circuit. Nonetheless, the Canadian and his Ferrari 126 CK went on to write a whole new chapter in Formula 1 history on the city circuit. This was the first Monaco Grand Prix to be won by a turbo engine, the first victory for a Ferrari turbo-engined car, the first win too after a gap of year and a half. All in all, it broke the hex, and put both Gilles and the Ferrari car back at centre stage. Of all the victories Gilles delivered in the course of his career, Monaco was probably the least spectacular or memorable. That said, there was still something special about it because just before the weekend, Ferrari announced that its partnership with Villeneuve would continue for a further two seasons. Qualifying went very well for the Canadian whose driving seemed inspired from the outset. He even started from the first row alongside Piquet on pole who’d qualified just 78 thousandths faster in the Brabham.

The race started an hour late because water used by the fire services to put out a blaze in the kitchens of the Loews Hotel flooded the tunnel. Once it did begin, however, Nelson Piquet quickly broke away from the pack along the torturous 3.312 km track. The 1981 Monaco Grand Prix proved something of an elimination race. In the course of the 76 scheduled laps, many of the drivers came to grief, including the Brazilian who crashed out as he attempted to lap Cheever and Tambay. Reigning World Champion Alan Jones took the lead and looked set for a comfortable victory as he held a 30-second-plus lead over his nearest rival, Villeneuve. But then, just seven laps from the finish, the Williams driver had to pit because of a fuel feed problem. When he returned to the race, he was still in the lead but now had to deal with pressure from Villeneuve who had scented victory and began delivering one race fastest lap after another. The Canadian pushed his Ferrari nearer and nearer the limit corner after corner, driving near and nearer the guardrails every lap. But the driver who’d earned himself the nickname “the Aviator” for his many spectacular accidents, never put a foot wrong. He had fun with the rolling Monegasque circuit, unleashing his car’s power through the tunnel and all the way to the Tabac before waltzing it through audacious race lines between the Mirabeau and the Loews Hairpin.

Four laps from the finish, Villeneuve had the tail of Jones’ William firmly in his sights. His pass came in flash. Gilles tucked in behind the Australian who was just coming of the Anthony Noghes, the final corner that leads into the start straight. It was there that Jones’ saw the outline of Gilles’ car in his right-hand wing mirror. By the time, he’d moved to block him, it was too late. The number 27 on the rear of the Ferrari’s flanks were the last thing the World Champion saw before the Canadian roared off ahead of him.

With 23 laps remaining, just seven of the 20 drivers that started the race were still in the running with Gilles in the lead. The Ferrari driver continued to press on and, thanks to the fact that his rival developed a fuel pump problem, shot across the finish-line to victory more than 40 seconds ahead of the rest of the field. Villeneuve was visibly exhausted on the podium but photographs of his beaming face as he was sprayed with champagne, went around the world like wildfire. Villeneuve was now officially a winner and became only the second F1 driver to make the cover of Time Magazine after Jim Clark in 1965.

1982

The Ferrari 308 GTB of Tognana De Antoni wins the 1982 Italian Rally Championship

Ferrari has amassed thousands of victories on tracks around the world, writing many pages in motorsport history. However not everyone knows that the Maranello based company has also won rallies with the 308 Gr4. The idea of preparing a car for this type of competition emerged at the end of the 1970s, when the workshops at Michelotto, in Padua, produced a vehicle that could compete with the top models of the era. Requests came from a number of Italian teams as well as Ferrari France, always very active thanks to the importer Charles Pozzi.

The weight of the 308 GTB was reduced by the use of aluminium and fibreglass in its construction instead of steel. The first model, with the chassis no. 8380, left the Padua workshop in 1978. Eleven were built up to 1984 while one was put together by a craftsman in the UK. Its first victory came in 1979 at the Monza Rally, with Raffaele "Lele" Pinto and Claudio Penariol.

Two years later, the Ferrari 308 Gr4 won the first of two victories in the Tour de France Automobile, with Jean-Claude Andruet driving it for Charles Pozzi's team, for which the versatile Frenchman had also won the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1972 with the 365 GTB/4. Chantal Bouchetal was his navigator in the Tour de France. Andruet repeated the feat in 1982, a great year for the 308 Gr4. He had another woman at his side, known as "Biche", but whose real name was Michele Espinosi-Petit. Pioneer's sponsorship brought a change of colour from red to blue and the car was so beautiful that in 2016 a customer wanted his Ferrari 488 in the same colours. The car, produced by Tailor Made Ferrari, was unveiled to the public at the Grand Palais, at the annual re-enactment of the French race.

The 308 Gr4 also won the constructors' and drivers' titles of the 1982 Italian Rally Championship, with Tonino Tognana and Massimo De Antoni in the Jolly Club team car. The season was very hard fought, opening with a win at the Targa Florio in March. It was actually a double victory, because Andruet and "Biche" finished second. Tognana and De Antoni triumphed again in the Ciocco Rally, while at Collina Romagna they secured an important second place, behind the Lancia of Fabrizio Tabaton and Luciano Tedeschini.

The third victory of the season came in September, this time in the Piancavallo Rally in the province of Pordenone. Tognana, De Antoni and the 308 Gr4 beat the Opel of Miki Biasion and Tiziano Siviero along with the Talbot of Federico Ormezzano and Claudio Berro. This was quickly followed by the Sanremo Rally, a World Championship round: Ferrari took the top positions in the overall standings, also winning Special Stage no. 27. Tognana and De Antoni took part in the last two races of the season with a Lancia 037, but the second place won by Nicola Busseni and Daniele Ciocca in the Aosta Rally helped seal the constructors' title for Ferrari. The 308 Gr4 also notched up a number of triumphs in 1983, but then had to surrender to the dominance of four-wheel drives. But Maranello had no intention of abandoning rallies and indeed started work on the GTO for 1985. However, the change of regulations announced by the International Automobile Federation (IAF) killed off the new car project.

1983

Launch of the Mondial Cabriolet GT

The redesign of the Mondial 8 in 1982 – and the adoption of the new V8 engine with four valves per cylinder – laid the basis for the Cabriolet version. As usual, the announcement was strongly supported by the North American market.

Not many Ferraris are convertibles, given that Maranello more commonly produces spiders – two-seater cars designed from the start as open-top. In contrast, convertibles derive from coupés and come with four seats.

The convertible version of the Mondial Quattrovalvole – or QV – was unveiled to the press in September 1983 at the Military Academy of Modena in Palazzo Ducale, during a conference held, as usual, by Enzo Ferrari himself.

The car made its official debut at the Brussels Motor Show the following January. Priority was given to customers on the West Coast of the US, especially California, where the very first vehicles in the series were sent. After that, production began for the European market.

Pininfarina masterfully succeeded in giving the soft-top car the same silhouette as the coupé version. The soft-top model was anchored at the base of the two uprights of the rear window, folding into a concealed compartment behind the rear seats separated by an armrest, despite that area also housing the engine.

At that time, the technology for manual soft-tops was yet to be developed. That is why the roof was rather complex and delicate to handle, in order to avoid causing damage when folding. That said, from an aesthetic point of view the Mondial Cabriolet was a success.

Like the coupé, the Cabriolet was restyled twice, in 1985 and 1989, giving rise to the Mondial 3.2 and Mondial T. In June 1988, Pope John Paul II visited Ferrari before going to Modena. Piero Ferrari drove him around the Fiorano circuit in a Mondial Cabriolet to bless the faithful.

1984

Ferrari surprises the Geneva Motor Show with a GTO

It was the first of its kind. An extreme car, which broke the mould, introducing new construction concepts and methodologies and that fully deserved it the title of supercar symbol of the 1980s. We are talking about the Ferrari GTO.

When the FISA – Fédération Internationale du Sport Automobile – announced that it was to launch a new championship for GT cars under Group B rules, Enzo Ferrari enthusiastically embraced the challenge and began development of the GTO. The project was headed by a heavy design hitter Mauro Forghieri. After leaving Ferrari's GES division to devote himself to advanced research, the designer used the 308 GTB's running gear as his starting point, bestowing it with some very surprising solutions derived directly from Formula 1.

A very successful attempt to meld the mid-rear-engined sports car concept with the very finest technology of the day, the GTO turned out to be extreme on every level. In fact, it was the first car to be built using innovative composites - Kevlar, for example, was used for the bodyshell. It is also the first production car with Formula 1-derived electronic fuel injection which boosted the delivery of the 400 hp generated by its V8 engine. Its displacement was also cut to 2,855cc, to comply with Group B rules, and sported twin IHI turbochargers and intercoolers, one per cylinder bank, just like the Formula 1 single-seaters. The GTO also unleashed a spectacular top speed of 305 km/h, making it quite literally uncatchable by any other production car of the day. Because of its close links to Formula 1, Ferrari also involved its two Scuderia drivers for the 1984 season, René Arnoux and Michele Alboreto, in its development. In fact, Enzo Ferrari frequently appeared more interested in how the GTO's development was progressing rather than that year's Formula 1 car, the Ferrari 126 C4.

The GTO was something of a throwback to the glorious competition Gran Turismos of the past, even though the FISA abolished Group B before the car could race. The car's name also references the 250 GTO, probably the most iconic car in Prancing Horse history. Its Pininfarina styling was inspired by the lines of the 308 GTB and the aerodynamic study for the 308 GTB Speciale, better known as the "Millechiodi". However, it pushed those lines and forms to new extremes to make them as aerodynamically efficient as they were aggressive.

The GTO was also the very first limited edition car in Ferrari history. The planned 200 examples all sold well before its unveiling at the 1984 Geneva Motor Show. As a result, the decision was made to build a further 72 which, unsurprisingly, very quickly found buyers.

1984

The Ferrari Testarossa is presented at the Paris Show

Few cars in automotive history marked an era and defined new stylistic concepts like the Ferrari Testarossa. A remarkable example of form at the service of aerodynamics, a revolution in how to design and create a Ferrari, a supercar with no equal on the market, and the return to a glorious name of “Testarossa” even if, for the first time it wasn’t not accompanied by a number: unique ingredients for a perfect recipe unveiled at the 1984 Paris Motor Show.

The first people to see this new Ferrari stood spellbound for ages before the beautiful body that Pininfarina had crafted around mechanical excellence. The designer himself termed the lines of this car “absolute”, and indeed there is no more fitting definition.

The style of the heir to the 512 BBi is unmistakable, with its wedge-shaped forms that transfix the eye and is the result of many hours in the wind tunnel. This design stands out for its original stylistic solutions, such as different width between the front and rear track, or the repetition of the grilling of the side air intakes on the fascia covering the rear lights, but now rectangular rather than round. Although the Testarossa played with the concept of different volumes at the front and rear of the car, the final result is particularly harmonious and indeed unique. This choice was purely technical and showed once again how Ferrari puts style at the service of mechanical solutions. The designers of the Testarossa created an “unbalanced” layout on the rear, placing the radiators there in order to eliminate the hot water pipes. Pininfarina transformed a potential limitation into an opportunity and created a shape that could convey the flow along the sides where the radiators were positioned. To hide them from view, the designer came up with the car’s iconic stretch of horizontal spoilers that fit harmoniously into the three-dimensional shapes of the tail.

However, it was not just the style that left people speechless. The mechanics were equally breathtaking. The engine, the most powerful installed on a standard sports car, is a 12-cylinder boxer derived directly from Formula 1: it delivers 390 hp pushing the Testarossa to over 290 kilometres per hour. For the first time, there were four valves per cylinder. This car also represents excellence in terms of its chassis, with a molybdenum-chrome frame to ensure torsional strength and rigidity at the top. To launch this car in style, on the eve of the Paris Motor Show French dealer Charles Pozzi rented the famous Lido nightclub on the Champs-Élysées. Guests could only enter the event by showing a magnetic card with the logo of the new model and the Prancing Horse marque. The only one still in existence is the 0001, reserved for Enzo Ferrari, who never used it.

1985

Geneva presents the 328 GTS

The 328 GTS, along with 328 GTB coupé with fixed roof, was the last step in the development of the two-seater series with an aspirated transverse V8 engine, which began with the 308. The figures 328 refer to the 3.2-litre total displacement and the number of cylinders.

The new car was introduced at the 1985 Frankfurt Motor Show, together with the Mondial 3.2.

The spider version of the 328 GTB shares the V8 engine with four valves per cylinder. In fact it was more a Targa than a spider, with its removable roof rather than a soft top. Like on the Berlinetta, Pininfarina paid great attention to the aesthetic details that influence the aerodynamic coefficients, achieving excellent results. The interior was made more ergonomic and the seat better suited to sports driving, a special characteristic of this type of car. Upon request, low profile tyres were available on all versions along with 16-inch molten alloy wheels.

In essence, this new model was a revised and updated version of the 308 GTS, which had been on the market for nearly a decade without radical changes to the body, while the three-litre engine had been repeatedly updated. The 328 model presented a softening of the wedge shape of its predecessor, less sloping and with a redesigned less rectangular nose; the same can be said for the rear axle. The revised nose and tail sections featured body colour bumpers, just like the Mondial 3.2, with which the 328 shares a similar grille and shape of the front headlights. So all the eight-cylinder cars now in the range had a similar appearance in the front and tail, a kind of family feeling, giving the marque a consistent image.

The V8 engine was essentially of the same design as that used in the 308 Quattrovalvole model. The capacity increased to 3185 cc with an output of 270 hp.

1986

Ferrari presents the 637, a single-seater destined for the CART championship that never happened

Some cars have fuelled speculation and legend more than others. The Ferrari 637, named after its design number, is one such vehicle. Built in absolute secrecy in Maranello, the single-seater was designed not for Formula 1 but to send out a very clear message to the FIA which, at the time, was introducing radical rule changes, particularly with regard to engines. Essentially, the FIA had decided to focus on 8-cylinder engines and Enzo Ferrari was opposed to this move. The message he sent out was unequivocal: he was prepared to quit Formula 1 for the American CART championship. In fact, he issued the following statement: "The news regarding our abandoning F1 in favour of the US does have a basis in fact. For quite some time now, Ferrari has been researching a programme that would allow it to participate in the CART championship and the Indy500. If F1 does not guarantee technical and sporting rules covering the next three years, the Scuderia Ferrari will implement this programme in agreement with its partners". Regardless of whether or not it was designed to put pressure on the FIA, the project was tackled with absolute seriousness in Maranello. The Scuderia's sporting director Marco Piccinini travelled to the US to watch several races and had talks with the organisers of the series. In Maranello, a work group headed by young Austrian engineer Gustav Brunner was set up specifically for it. From the outset, however, it was clear that the project would only be successful if Ferrari collaborated with teams that regularly competed in the CART championship. Leo Mehl, a motor racing executive at Goodyear, which manufactured Ferrari's F1 tyres and was also the sole supplier for the US series, recommended the Truesport team. It had turned its 1985 CART season around in the final six races which Bobby Rahal won in the March 85C. The latter was a successful driver in the US but had also competed in two F1 Grands Prix at the end of the 1970s for Wolf. This was also the single-seater that was used as the starting point for the development of the new Ferrari. After a secret test carried out by Michele Alboreto at Fiorano, Brunner's team which included, amongst others, Harvey Postlethwaite and Antonio Bellentani, threw itself into developing the car and, in doing so, came up with original and entirely innovative takes on certain technical concepts then in vogue in the US championships. Brunner studied, researched, experimented and spent endless hours in the wind tunnel, honing the forms and aerodynamics of the single-seater. He also made many trips to the US and watched both CART races and tests, not least the Indy500. The results of the research conducted back in Maranello were promising too and the project ploughed ahead at full steam.

A year later, in September 1986, the 637 was ready for the track and Alboreto was, once again, selected to do the testing. The single-seater instantly proved competitive and, above all, was radically different from the other cars in the series. Its nosecone in particular featured lines and solutions that would not be seen elsewhere for many years to come. A member of the international press was also invited to the tests as Ferrari wanted to be sure his message to the FIA arrived loud and clear. The ploy worked and negotiations were soon underway with the Federation, marking a political victory for Ferrari who confirmed that the Scuderia was committed to continuing in Formula 1. An announcement that, however, also brought the very real Ferrari 637 project to a premature end.