

1997

Launch of the 355 F1, the first GT with electrohydraulic gearbox with F1-type steering wheel control

Some cars, more than others, mark a great technological leap forward, drawing liberally from the best possible research and performance lab: Formula 1. This was the case with the Ferrari 355 F1 Berlinetta. The car, unveiled at the 1997 Frankfurt Motor Show, was directly derived from the F355 Berlinetta, a small sedan - introduced in 1994 - driven by an 8-cylinder rear longitudinal engine and marked by a soft and compact line, continuing the tradition that had garnered so much success with the previous 308, 328 and 348 models. However, the technological content of the 355 F1 was vastly more advanced than its predecessors, having been tried and tested in Formula 1.

We only have to consider the aerodynamics, the subject of detailed studies by Pininfarina, which not only determined the style and shape of the aluminium and steel body, but also the design of the flat bottom to achieve a perfect balance of vertical loads. Indeed, the F355 Berlinetta was the first car with a shape that optimised the disposal and control of the air flows in the underbody, ensuring a constant interaction between the vehicle and the ground to the advantage of road holding.

The engine itself was the subject of study and transfer of technology from the track, providing the F355 with extremely high performance: 109 hp/litre. Specific power and torque were the result of the adoption of a head with five valves per cylinder and electronic fuel injection.

On top of this already superb base, Ferrari decided to introduce a revolutionary element from Formula 1: a semi-automatic gearbox with steering wheel controls. This technological innovation was developed for single-seaters as early as 1979, thanks to Mauro Forghieri's intuition, but was only brought to the track in 1989 when Nigel Mansell and his 640 F1 won in Brazil, in its debut season.

Eight years passed from its victorious debut in F1 to its use in a Prancing Horse road car, and the vehicle chosen was an evolution of the F355 Berlinetta that, for this reason, changed its name to 355 F1 Berlinetta. The 355 F1 Berlinetta, unlike the F355, had an F1-type drivetrain management system. This solution, like in single-seaters, used an electro-hydraulic system and sophisticated software. The gearshift control is on the steering wheel with two levers, allowing the driver to change without taking their hands off the wheel.

1998

Opening of Scuderia Ferrari's new wind tunnel, designed by Renzo Piano

Following the crisis of the early nineties from 1996 Ferrari applied even more energy to the restructuring of the Formula 1 team. Michael Schumacher had joined the team as a driver and in July of that year work began on the construction of the Scuderia's new wind tunnel. The wind tunnel was an increasingly important tool in modern Formula 1, and indeed today, with track tests reduced to a minimum, it has actually become essential.

The wind tunnel is needed to simulate how a car handles on a road in every way. One limit of the installations back then, was size. Indeed, it was often necessary to work with car models of just a third of actual size. However, Ferrari wasn't going to cut corners and wanted a facility that could work with 1:2 scale models, 50% of actual size, but also 1:1, with full-size single-seaters and road cars.

The work took a year and a half and while obviously the primary aim of a wind tunnel is efficiency, it is equally true that Ferrari, the icon of style, would hardly settle for a conventional and inelegant structure. So the project thus came to involve one of the world's most famous architects, an Italian and native of Genoa, Renzo Piano. The giant simulator stands on undulating ground in the area where the new Ferrari citadel was to be constructed, with beautifully designed and highly efficient buildings. Piano decided to leave the structure exposed to bring out its technical components, such as the engines required to generate the airflow, conceiving the tunnel as a giant tubular duct closed at each end by a C-section, 80 by 70 metres...

As already said, the new wind tunnel can handle 1:2 models, simulating speeds approaching 250 km/h, or it can accommodate the real car itself (1:1 model) at speeds of up to 150 km/h. The electrical substation that feeds the system contains 6000 kW installations, enough power to light about 2000 apartments. The fan is about five metres in diameter and is equipped with a 2200 kW turbine, the equivalent of five Formula 1 engines. The instrumentation has a maximum margin of error of 0.04%, and it cost more than 16 billion lire, about 8 million euros.

The facility opened in 1998 and is mainly used for the development of Formula 1 cars. The F300 of that year only partially took advantage of that system, while the first car to make full use of the new wind tunnel was the F399 that, in 1999, won the Constructors' title. Over the following years, the Renzo Piano wind tunnel proved to be one of the key components of Scuderia Ferrari's golden era in Formula 1.

1999

Ferrari wins F1 World constructors' title and introduces the 360 Modena, the first aluminium model

An unpredictable season, fought down to the wire even if, in the end, it was not to see the much-awaited Drivers' title return to Ferrari. But 1999 was a year that saw the Scuderia take the Constructors' title for the first time in 16 years, since it was last won by René Arnoux and Patrick Tambay in the 126 C3.

Over the winter Ferrari finalised the F399 with the help of the now fully operational new wind tunnel in Maranello designed by Renzo Piano. The season opened in Melbourne, Australia, where reigning champions McLaren monopolised the front row. Unfortunately Michael Schumacher's championship began in the same way that 1998 had concluded. Clutch trouble caused his engine to stall on the grid meaning he had to start from the back. The McLarens surged ahead, only to break down one after the other within a few laps. The race was won by Ferrari's Eddie Irvine – the first in his career.

What everyone was eagerly anticipating, however, was the duel between Mika Hakkinen and Michael Schumacher who were back in the mix from the next race. The Finnish McLaren driver won in Brazil, but the German triumphed at Imola, in front of ecstatic fans, and Monaco, where Ferrari pulled off a one-two. Hakkinen took victory in Spain and again in Canada where Schumacher ended his race after colliding with the 'Wall of Champions'. The rain-soaked French GP instead saw an outsider, Heinz-Harald Frentzen, take the flag in the Jordan.

The British Grand Prix took place on 11 July, at Silverstone. The two McLarens led at the start, pursued by Irvine and Schumacher. Jacques Villeneuve and Alex Zanardi were stuck on the grid so the race was red flagged. However, the front-runners were now at Stowe corner, where Schumacher tried an attack on Irvine. But Schumacher had a brake problem, which caused him to crash into the tyre wall at high speed. He immediately tried to pull himself out of the cockpit, but he quickly realised his right leg was injured and let himself drop back into the car. The impact had broken his tibia and fibula. His season finished there, at least as far as the title fight was concerned. Coulthard won the race ahead of Irvine who became the Scuderia's lead driver. At that point Hakkinen led the championship standings on 40 points with Schumacher and Irvine following on 32 each.

Irvine's promotion seemed to spur him on. He won in Austria and Germany with a bit of help from the lack of team play by the two McLaren drivers, while in contrast Schumacher's replacement, the Finn Mika Salo, made a vital contribution. In Hungary Hakkinen won again while Irvine made a mistake and came off the track with eight laps to go, thus surrendering second position to the other McLaren of Coulthard. Eddie still led though, two points ahead of Hakkinen. In the next three races Salo and Irvine collected a miserly eight and four points respectively, but that was enough for the McLaren driver to regain the championship lead with only two races to go.

Schumacher made his big come-back in Malaysia, and after taking pole position acted as the perfect team driver by letting Irvine pass at the start while slowing Hakkinen down and forcing him into third place. Irvine arrived for the finale in Japan, two weeks later, with a four-point lead, the same that Ferrari held over McLaren in the Constructors' championship. Eddie's weekend immediately became complicated. He left the track disastrously during qualifying, dropping him down on the grid. Schumacher took pole but Hakkinen overtook him at the start. Schumacher managed to keep to within just a few seconds of the Finn, but was unable to pull off an attack that would have made Irvine's third place count. Hakkinen won the world championship, with Irvine just two points behind. Ferrari could at least count on the Constructors' title, its first in many years. It was the Scuderia's ninth but many more were going to come their way over the next few years...

2000

Michael Schumacher is F1 world champion and the F1 2000 wins the constructors world championship

Ferrari was raring to go at the start of the 2000 Formula 1 season, fully aware of its highly competitive package. Eddie Irvine had joined Jaguar, and the Brazilian Rubens Barrichello was set to race alongside Michael Schumacher. The team made a blistering start: Schumacher won the first three races of the season, with McLaren coming back into the picture with victories in Britain and Spain and Ferrari triumphing again in the European and Canadian Grand Prix. The lead was remarkable: Schumacher was on 56 points, followed by Coulthard with 34 and Hakkinen 32.

It was a very busy July, with the French, Austrian and German Grand Prix. Schumacher had a very unlucky month: at Magny-Cours, Michael led for two thirds of the race before his F1-2000's V10 engine broke down. It was even worse in Austria and Germany. At the A1 Ring he was bumped by the BAR of Ricardo Zonta sending him into a spin and into the path of the Jordan of Jarno Trulli who he couldn't avoid, while in Germany the Benetton of Giancarlo Fisichella collided with him. With zero points from three races Coulthard and Hakkinen were just two points behind the Ferrari driver. The Scuderia was kept afloat by Barrichello who at Hockenheim, after starting in 18th, won his first victory in Formula 1 racing with dry tyres despite the rain falling on half the almost seven kilometres of track.

Hakkinen won at the Hungaroring beating Michael and taking two-point lead on him in the standings. The next race was at Spa-Francorchamps. The Finn dominated in qualifying and took command at the start of the race on a drying track. On lap 13 Hakkinen spun after his wheels slid on a wet white stripe: Schumacher took advantage to move into the lead. At that point, the McLaren driver launched a furious comeback and was right on the tail of the Ferrari with eight laps to go. Hakkinen attacked a couple of times, but Schumacher held him off, helped by the Ferrari's top speed. On the 40th lap the pair were about to lap the BAR of Zonta: Schumacher chose the fastest path down the Kimm straight and attacked on the outside. But Hakkinen went for broke down the other side. Zonta saw a red sliver shoot by to his left and a silver lightning overtake on the right. Hakkinen pulled off the best overtake of his career to cross the finish line first and establish a six-point lead in the standings.

The McLaren driver sought to seal the deal at Monza, while the Ferrari had to get a result. Schumacher won pole position, victory and the fastest lap in a sad race marred by the death of the CEA fire fighter, Paolo Gislimberti, hit on the head by a wheel of the Jordan of Heinz-Harald Frentzen. It was Michael's 41st career-win and the German was moved when he realised he had equalled Ayrton Senna's record. The World Championship was still open: two points separated the Ferrari from McLaren's two-time world champion.

The first US Grand Prix on the new circuit in the Indianapolis basin raised great hopes for Ferrari. With a one-two and the withdrawal of Hakkinen, Schumacher moved into an eight-point lead. Michael took pole on 8 October in Japan, but Hakkinen pulled ahead at the start. He needed to remedy the situation with strategy because it is nigh on impossible to overtake on the track. Ross Brawn put in extra fuel at the first pit stop to give Schumacher three laps of clear track before the second stop. The McLaren went into the pits and Michael drove at a frenetic pace. When the Ferrari left the pits after the break, Hakkinen was just starting out on the straight and the deal was done! Fans worldwide spent the last 13 laps with their hearts in their mouths. In Italy it was 6:59 am: it marked the end of a 21-year barren spell dating back to Jody Scheckter's victory in 1979. In Maranello,

the bells rang and everyone was celebrating in the streets: it was dawn but the traffic outside the Scuderia headquarters was like rush hour. Two weeks later, in Malaysia, Schumacher and Barrichello, first and third, confirmed Ferrari's win in the Constructors' World Championship.

2001

Ferrari and Michael Schumacher repeat the double F1 world title

Unsurprisingly, the Scuderia Ferrari began the 2001 season as a clear favourite. The Maranello team had won both titles the previous year, and had reconfirmed its drivers and engineers. The fact that there were no huge changes to the rules also provided further reason to believe that Ferrari would once again be the team to beat. The F2001 incorporated the modifications required under FIA rules, including a front wing assembly height 10 cm above ground level to limit downforce. Otherwise, it featured the same successful concepts offered by the 2000 car as well as additional tweaks that made it even lighter with more freedom in ballast allocation.

Michael Schumacher dominated the first two races in Australia and Malaysia, but David Coulthard took the honours in Brazil in the McLaren. The British driver would prove to be Schumacher's only real rival that season as he turned consistency into his greatest strength. Michael was forced to retire from the race at Imola but then won both the Spanish Grand Prix and the European GP at the Nürburgring. Often that year he found himself doing battle with his younger brother, Ralf, who himself had become one of the top drivers in the sport, racing for Williams. His team-mate, Columbian Juan Pablo Montoya, would engage the Ferrari driver in some spectacular duels too in the course of the season.

Michael Schumacher, however, took a definitive lead in the title race at the French Grand Prix which he won ahead of Coulthard who finished third. At that point in the season, the German had a 31-point lead over his rival – the equivalent of three grands prix. The results in the Constructors' standings looked even more promising. Thanks to Barrichello who, although he wasn't winning, often featured on the podium, Ferrari had racked up 108 points compared to McLaren's 56.

On August 19, holidaymakers everywhere clustered around TVs showing the Formula 1 action. The Hungarian Grand Prix looked set to seal the deal in both Championships. Schumacher dominated qualifying, beating the track record set in 1993 by Alain Prost. He was 801 milliseconds faster than Coulthard and 894 ahead of Barrichello. Everyone else was over a second behind. In the race itself, Schumacher dominated 71 of the 77 laps, handing over command to his team-mate and McLaren rival only when he pitted. The most interesting sparring match was going on behind him for second position. In the end, Barrichello got ahead at the very last and his second-place finish saw Ferrari sweep the boards to win both the Drivers' and Constructors' titles on points.

Schumacher had now taken his second World title with Ferrari and equalled Prost's tally of four. The German also matched the French champion's total of 51 grand prix wins. He immediately set his sights firmly on equalling iconic 1950s driver Juan Manuel Fangio's five titles.

Before the end of the season, however, came a very surreal grand prix at Monza. The motor sport world was reeling from a double tragedy: the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York and on Washington had taken place on September 11, while the day before the race, a very dear friend of many in the paddock, Alessandro Zanardi was left in a coma after a horrific accident at the Lausitzring. Many of the drivers felt that the grand prix should not go ahead, particularly as both titles had already been won, but the FOM insisted they all race.

As a mark of respect and mourning, Ferrari removed all sponsor logos from its cars and uniforms, and painted the single-seaters' nosecones black. The Benetton, BAR and Arrows team principals, however, objected to Schumacher's suggestion to accelerate only after the second chicane, the Roggia, on the first lap in memory of the accident there the previous year which had cost CEA firefighter, Paolo Gislimberti, his life. The race played out without any major incidents and was won by Montoya in the Williams, in his first career victory, ahead of Barrichello. Nobody, however, felt much like celebrating.

2002

The Enzo is presented in Paris and Ferrari wins two world titles for the third consecutive year

There have been many periods in Formula 1 when one team has dominated the action. At the start of the new millennium, Ferrari completely ruled the roost, reiterating the supremacy of its team, drivers and technology season after season. The team of mechanics that assisted Michael Schumacher and Rubens Barrichello most definitely added more than a few extra horsepower too, endlessly sending the cars back out on the track ahead of their rivals after blisteringly fast tyre changes and refuelling stops.

However, if there was one perfect season from that perfect period, it has to be 2002 when Schumacher sealed the deal in July, a feat never before achieved in Formula 1 history. Ferrari was so ahead of the game, in fact, that the Scuderia fielded the previous year's F2001 in the first round of the season in Australian. At that point, the team was still lapping the F2002 back at Fiorano to improve its reliability. But on the performance front there was no issue at all. It was already delivering. And how...

Schumacher won the Australian Grand Prix and was second in Malaysia in the F2001 before debuting the new car which proceeded to win its maiden race at the demanding Interlagos Circuit. At Imola, Barrichello, who'd had a very unlucky season thus far, was also given an F2002, and he and Schumacher immediately delivered their first one-two finish of the season. The German champion then went on to win in Spain, Austria, Canada and Great Britain, while his rivals took turns standing beside him on the podium, nabbing points from each other in the process. Barrichello, for his part, won the European Grand Prix at the Nürburgring.

By the time the French Grand Prix came around, Michael had a 54-point lead over Juan Pablo Montoya of Williams. The race started out as a three-pronged sparring match between Montoya, Schumacher and a young McLaren driver called Kimi Räikkönen. Michael attacked Montoya but the Finn passed him at the Adelaide hairpin. Räikkönen looked set for victory when, five laps from the finish, he locked up and went wide after hitting oil from Olivier Panis' Toyota. Schumacher took very shrewd advantage and shot past the McLaren to be first over the line. That victory combined with his rivals' results, gave him his fifth World Drivers' title, equalling the record set by 1950s racing hero Juan Manuel Fangio. It was still only July 21 but the game was over. Ferrari had to wait until the Hungarian GP on August 18 to secure the Constructors' title. At the end of the season, Ferrari had tallied 15 wins, 10 pole positions and 27 podiums, giving it a total of 221 points, which was exactly the sum of the points clocked by all the other constructors in the championship.

In October of the year the Scuderia dominated the circuits, Maranello unveiled the Enzo Ferrari at the Paris Motor Show. A car that, very fittingly, had benefitted enormously from the Prancing Horse's Formula 1 experience in many of the solutions adopted. Just 399 Enzos were built, all sporting a 6-litre V12 that unleashed 660 horse power at 7,800 rpm. Its strong links with the F1 single-seater were instantly

obvious from its nose section. But the connection went well beyond the merely aesthetic with the racing department providing much technical input. Both chassis and bodyshell were made from carbon-fibre, the model was Ferrari's first with complete integration of the electronic vehicle dynamic controls with an innovative and advanced Human-Machine Interface, the suspension was push-rod all round and the car was fitted with F1-derived carbon-ceramic brakes for the first time. Then, in 2005, a 400th example was built as a gift for Pope John Paul II. That particular Enzo Ferrari was auctioned for charity by the company and the proceeds, \$1.1 million, were donated to the Vatican for humanitarian relief. The Enzo also inspired Ferrari to produce the FXX, the first car in the XX Programme which sees a strictly limited run of extremely powerful, high-tech laboratory cars built exclusively for track use.

2003

Ferrari is still the world constructors' and drivers' champion in the F2003-GA, dedicated to Giovanni Agnelli

The 2003 Formula 1 season will be remembered as one of the most hard-fought in the history of the sport. Although Michael Schumacher and Ferrari once again took both Drivers' and Constructors' titles, they had to battle until the very last race of the season to secure victory – a very different story from the previous two years.

A shadow was cast over preparations for the F1 Championship by the death of a key individual in Ferrari's history, Gianni Agnelli, who passed away on January 24, a little over a month short of his 82nd birthday. It was decided to name the new single-seater the F2003-GA in celebration of his life. Both five-time World Champion Michael Schumacher and Rubens Barrichello remained with the team.

Once again in 2003, Ferrari took the single-seater that had dominated the last championship -the F2002 - to Australia. However, unlike 12 months previously, the early races were short on satisfaction. McLaren's Kimi Räikkönen sprang to the fore, proving extremely consistent and winning the Malaysian GP. The European season opened at Imola at Easter with the San Marino GP. The front row on the grid that Sunday was taken up by the Schumacher brothers who were competing with heavy hearts as their mother, Elisabeth, had passed away the same morning. Michael delivered his first victory of the season and took his place on the podium wearing a black armband as a sign of mourning before he and Ralf set off for Germany together.

Two weeks later, the F2003-GA made a spectacular track debut. Schumacher dominated the Spanish GP and also won in Austria, climbing back to just behind Räikkönen in the Championship standings. The Finn was leading on 40 points and the German now had 38. Ferrari too moved to the top of the Constructors' points for the first time that season. After Juan Pablo Montoya won the Monaco GP, however, Williams also joined in the battle between Ferrari and McLaren.

Schumacher returned to the number one spot in the standings on June 15 when he won the Canadian GP in which Räikkönen couldn't manage better than sixth. Ferrari was now also back in the lead in the Constructors' Championship but, after Ralf Schumacher won two races in a row, it had to reckon with Williams which was now just three points behind. In Hungary, victory went to the young Fernando Alonso who became the eighth driver to win a race that season. The standings could not have been tighter: Schumacher was leading just a point ahead of Montoya and two ahead of Räikkönen. Williams had also replaced Ferrari at the top of the Constructors' rankings.

At this point, the Italian, US and Japanese Grands Prix were still left to go. There were massive celebrations at Monza after Schumacher not only took pole

and the race fastest lap but also victory. Montoya, however, was second and lost only two points, so he was still nipping at the German's heels. Two weeks later at Indianapolis, Michael delivered another pivotal victory which, combined with Montoya's sixth-place finish, meant the Ferrari driver was now best placed to win the title: he was holding a nine-point lead over Räikkönen and 10 over Montoya, who was thus out of the running altogether. The team was also celebrating as the Scuderia jumped back to the top of the Constructors' standings after the same race. 2003 did not prove a great season for Barrichello, who all-too often finished well behind the leaders. He did, however, make a vital contribution in Japan to Schumacher's title victory. After Montoya retired, in fact, he held Räikkönen in the McLaren at bay for the entire race. The Finn eventually just took eight points - not enough to win him the title. Schumacher, on the other hand, was particularly nervous. He only qualified 14th and, in the race itself, struck local Japanese driver Takuma Sato's car, thereafter struggling to take even the single point available to the eighth-place finisher. But in the end, he did it and was World Drivers' Champion by two points, outdoing Fangio with his sixth title. Montoya's retirement also saw Ferrari clinch the Constructors' Cup, the 13th of its career and its fourth in a row.

2004

Ferrari sets the record of six world constructors' titles and five consecutive world drivers' titles in F1

While in 2003 Michael Schumacher and Ferrari had to sweat until the very last race of the season before victory was theirs, 2004 was a different story altogether as the German driver and the Maranello team returned to runaway success. Their performance even surpassed the 2002 season when they clinched the title in July. In 2004, they had to wait a little longer but the result was the same: another record-breaking year.

Schumacher nailed five early season wins, for a start: Australia, Malaysia, the new Bahrain round, San Marino and Spain. Going into the Monaco GP, Michael had racked up 50 points, 18 more than his team-mate team Rubens Barrichello and more than double the tally of his only real rival, Jensen Button in the surprisingly impressive BAR. Victory seemed assured in the Monaco Grand Prix but then the Monte-Carlo roulette wheel spun and stopped instead on number seven, Jarno Trulli. In fact, a paradoxical incident put Schumacher out of the race while the Safety Car was deployed. The Ferrari driver was in the lead, but alternating between accelerating and braking to keep the brakes of his F2004 warm. Inside, the tunnel there was a misunderstanding with Juan Pablo Montoya. To avoid hitting the Ferrari, the Williams driver hung a sharp right. Schumacher, who had not noticed him, also swung right. A collision was inevitable and the German's car ended up against the barrier, wrecking his front suspension.

It was, however, just a blip as Michael immediately returned to obliterating the competition from the next race, the European Grand Prix, at the Nürburgring on May 30. His victory in the Eiffel Mountains marked the start of a string of seven triumphs, ending at the Hungarian Grand Prix in mid-August. The most memorable of these included the French Grand Prix on July 4. At this point, Ferrari's strategists had blind faith in Michael's ability to beat the Renault of Fernando Alonso, and decided on a four-stop strategy. To win, Schumacher would have to drive almost 70 laps as hard as if he were in qualifying. Needless to say, the German did his job to perfection, beating his Spanish rival by almost nine seconds and his team-mate Barrichello by more than 31.

Ferrari took its 14th Constructors' title on points at the Hungaroring. However, Schumacher had to wait until the following GP in Belgium, for his seventh title,

an achievement that no other driver has ever even come close to equalling. The legendary German driver was second behind the McLaren of Kimi Räikkönen on the day, but it mattered not a whit: he had clinched the title a full five races before the end of the season.

Schumacher and Barrichello, who won in Italy and also took the very first GP ever staged in China, triumphed in 15 out of 18 races that season, absolutely obliterating the competition and setting a slew of new records. Michael took 82% of the available points. He finished the season 34 points ahead of Barrichello and a massive 63 in front of Button. Ferrari was the undisputed king of Formula 1. It had won every Constructors' Cup since 1999, while Schumacher had delivered five consecutive Drivers' titles since 2000, a feat that made him far and away the most successful driver not just in Ferrari, but also Formula 1 history. He was, quite simply, a legend, who would never be replaced in the affections of the Tifosi - not even when he returned to Formula 1 in 2010 at the wheel of a Mercedes after a three-year retirement.

2005

Launch of the Superamerica GT

"I am always astonishing myself. It's the only thing that makes life worth living," said Oscar Wilde. However, it isn't easy to amaze, especially in an industry such as the automotive one. Yet, presenting the Superamerica, Ferrari did manage to astonish - and once more surprise - by creating a car that was highly original and innovative, combining the excellent performance of a 12-cylinder berlinetta with the versatility of a convertible.

The Superamerica used a highly advanced roof solution, being the first car in the world with a "Revochromic" roof. The main surface of the roof was made of an electrochemical glass panel allowing the driver to operate a dashboard control that could adjust the amount of light inside the car from 4 to 40%. The roof had another special feature too - designed by Fioravanti - using a rolling mechanism for its opening. Made out of carbon fibre, it was very light, causing minimal variance in the centre of gravity between its closed and open configurations.

The new roof concept, integrated with electrochromic glass technology applied to large glass surfaces, enabled the car to morph in seconds from coupè to convertible, adding the functional advantages of the coupè to the traditional advantages of open-top models. Ferrari first used the name Superamerica between 1956 and 1961. It marked a number of models, all strictly 12-cylinder and produced in limited series. This model was no exception.

Built on the base of the 575M Maranello, the Superamerica used what was then the latest development of the Ferrari 12-cylinder engine, boosted to 540 hp. The full integration of the roof opening system and the electrically actuated kinematics made the Superamerica the world's fastest convertible, with a top speed of 320 km/h.

The styling of the Ferrari Superamerica, entrusted to Pininfarina, made it possible to respect the balance of volumes typical of a Maranello 12-cylinder engine, while at the same time providing an original integration of the car's most distinctive function: the "Revochromic" roof. This innovative component connected to the car body thanks to its two side fins that refer to Ferraris of the past and that, in the Superamerica, also serve the roll-bar function in synergy with the roof and windscreen.

The front view stood out thanks to the new look of the headlight covers and the air intake on the bonnet, both were aluminium in colour. The rear of the vehicle, with its new boot carrying an embossed Ferrari shield, was instead designed to highlight the muscular curves and lines, which were at the same time graceful and fascinating.

The Superamerica's exclusivity was also clear in the interior, with its detailed leatherwork and the use of carbon fibre for the roof controls, radio frame and the instrument panel.

The entire interior was also visually redefined due to the brightness of the glass roof, which was achieved without compromising habitability and space.

2006

Start of the exclusive XX Programme, extreme performance for the best customers

Always keen to listen to client feedback, in 2004, Ferrari spotted the potential for a programme that would first deliver owners a very extreme, leading-edge car and then allow them to make an active contribution to developing both the car itself and those that came later.

This was an ambitious gamble indeed but Ferrari has turned what it dubbed the XX Programme into a real success story. The laboratory car it decided to build was the FXX, which was inspired by the 2002 Enzo Ferrari, a model that itself already drew to a massive extent on the Scuderia's Formula 1 experience and had been given the design name of FX. As this new car was to have an even more extreme, track-specific vocation, the design team referred to it as the FXX. The name proved popular and it stuck. The car sported a 6.2-litre V12 that punched out over 800 hp. Its aero package was meticulously crafted, so that it delivered 40% more downforce than the Enzo. The cockpit was also customised to each Client-Test Driver's requirements. Developed to be absolutely uncompromising, the FXX, however, could only be used on the track but not in competition.

A total of 29 were built and sold to clients that had proved particularly dedicated. With the support of qualified instructors and professional drivers, these individuals became, to all intents and purposes, test-drivers for Maranello, with a constant flow of information between them and the Prancing Horse's engineers. During every track session, the technicians used the cars' sophisticated telemetry system to gather invaluable data which not only helped improve the FXX itself but also test out solutions for use on other Ferraris. At the time of its launch, the FXX was the world's most expensive car, outdoing even the record held by the Schuppan 962CR since 1994. A calendar of track events was organised to which programme participants were invited. That said, one unique feature of the programme is that owners can also ask for their car to be made available to them at any FIA-approved track.

The FXX was previewed on August 17 2005 at the Ferrari Day organised during Pebble Beach week, although it didn't make its debut proper until the Finali Mondiali at Mugello in October. Thereafter it was sent to the Bologna Motor Show at the start of December and then the Detroit Auto Show in January where it won the Eyeson Design Award.

The FXX Programme activities got underway in 2006. The car made its track debut in April 2006 at Homestead in the US. In the same year, the thirtieth example, clothed in an all-black livery and sporting the number 30, was presented to the Scuderia Ferrari driver Michael Schumacher when he returned from the Turkish Grand Prix. The Kerpen champion was amongst the team of special Client-Test Drivers that gathered in early September at the Nürburgring. Schumacher's suggestions were also used in the development of the Evo kit that allowed the programme to be extended into the 2008 and 2009 seasons.

As the first XX Programme car, the FXX still makes appearances at the events organised by Corse Clienti, Ferrari's client racing division, on the world's most spectacular circuits. Two further cars have since been added to the programme: the 599XX, presented in 2009 and later upgraded with an Evo kit in 2012, and the FXX K, unveiled at the Abu Dhabi Finali Mondiali at the end of 2014 and on the track since 2015.