



250 GTO

THE MOST EXCLUSIVE CLUB IN THE WORLD

Owning one of the 36 existing icons is the holy grail of auto collecting

What happens when arguably the greatest automobile ever crafted goes up for auction? The world's elite take notice. There's an obvious reason: The 1962 250 GTO is widely considered among the most beautiful designs ever put on the road, and combined with its Ferrari performance, it has been an intimidating presence on both track and road. With a V-12 powerplant putting out an impressive-for-the-time 300 bhp, paired with a five-speed synchromesh gearbox, it was the performance machine of its day.

Another obvious reason for the inescapable draw of the 250 GTO is the cost. The most recent model to be sold publicly was put up for auction by RM Sotheby's at its Monterey auto auction back in August. The holy grail for collectors started at an unprecedented opening price of \$35 million and just kept climbing as three different bidders

competed to obtain the legendary vehicle. After nearly 10 minutes of high drama and million-dollar bid raises, the gavel came down at a final price of \$48,405,000. The GTO had not only set the record for the most valuable vehicle ever sold at auction but smashed the previous record by more than \$10 million. Clearly, collectors were willing to pay exorbitantly for one of these exalted vehicles.



But the most interesting aspect of the car, the auction, and the recent spike in prices for cars purchased as much as an investment as for a source of transportation is the scarcity. The rarity of the 1962 250 GTO makes it not only an iconic car, and possibly a wise investment, but also ensures the owner membership in one of the most exclusive clubs in the world. Only 36 of the models were ever made, meaning there are a mere few dozen

INSET: COURTESY OF FERRARI MEDIA CENTER



Photographed by PETER VANN

millionaires or billionaires who can claim to own one. Of course, it has become a status statement to get into such a limited—and never-expanding—club. No, there are no meetings, clubhouses, or official roster, but unlike the supercars of today, which often come in production batches in the hundreds or thousands, the GTO has what it takes to set one CEO apart from another when it comes to bragging rights in the garage, providing a level of extravagance that even other beautiful (and expensive) classic cars just can't match.

Sure, Ferrari has made a business out of creating smaller and smaller circles of elite buyers who are offered the chance to purchase special models, one-off creations, or an FXX model that can only be driven on a track. In fact, Ferrari takes the allocation of its cars, and the public image and purchase history of its potential clients, extremely seriously, choosing who is deserving of the right to put down sometimes a million dollars or more on a special Ferrari offering. But the 1962 250 GTO is unique not only because of its cost and its possession by a rarefied brotherhood of owners but because the ability to join that club comes down only to one's passion and one's bank account—not whether the people back in Maranello, Italy, decide one is worthy. Simply put, it's the greatest car of all time, and the entrance key to one of the most exclusive groups of collectors in the world. —*Keith Gordon*

INSET: COURTESY OF FERRARI MEDIA CENTER



Ferrari's 250 GTO, built between 1962 and 1964, is considered by many the most coveted collectible in the automotive world. With a mere three dozen ever produced, they are highly sought after and therefore highly priced (a recent auction topped \$48 million). The Swiss-born Peter Vann, who took the photograph at top, has specialised in automotive photography for more than four decades, publishing numerous photography books and even his own magazine.



ERIC CLAPTON ONE OF ONE

The musician's Ferrari collaboration rocks

His nickname might be “Slowhand,” but when it comes to cars, legendary rock guitarist Eric Clapton seems to be all about speed. He is an avid Ferrari collector, and one of the lucky few to have purchased a one-off custom supercar from the iconic brand. Clapton has owned multiple 512 Berlinetta Boxers, so it wasn't a surprise when he asked Ferrari's Centro Stile and Pininfarina to use those classic cars as the inspiration for his \$4.7 million creation, the SP12 E.C. Built on the foundation of a 458 Italia, the project was closely followed by Clapton, who claims it was “one of the most satisfying things I've ever done.” While Ferrari and Pininfarina's partnership has produced countless historic designs, Clapton's bespoke one-off might just be among the most stunning. —KG

A WINNING PARTNERSHIP

Mexican racing driver Martin Fuentes wins the Pirelli World Challenge again



Beyond the friendly demeanor and passion for speed that has led to a long list of motor sports successes, racing driver Martin Fuentes has worked his way up the ranks one race at a time, climbing from competitions such as the LATAM Challenge Series and Formula Abarth to the pinnacle of grand touring, the Pirelli World Challenge, in 2015—and winning it in 2016 and 2018.

Competing in the series's GTA category as part of the Squadra Corse Garage Italia team, Fuentes

dominated his rivals and took home the championship, racing a *Maxim*-sponsored Ferrari 488 GT3. It was a successful return for Fuentes. After his most recent victory, Fuentes spoke with *Maxim* about the road he's traveled, what this year has meant to him, and the projects that lie ahead.

How did you get your start with racing?

I started with go-karting. The way I moved into car racing was due to an accident. I was the national champion of motorcycles in Mexico. The last year that I raced, I had a big accident. After doing the rehab and everything, the doctors said that I couldn't do more motorcycle racing because next time one of the vertebrae would be really badly hurt. The previous year all the motorcycle champions were racing in a charity race. I was able to win second place among all the national champions of street racing, motorcycle racing, and enduro racing. I felt like a king. A Formula 2000 team was interested and told me I have an ability with cars, and I told them that the trajectories of racing motorcycles and cars is very similar.

I had to learn the process of going from two wheels to four, and just the weight transfer. I was racing in South America and Mexico, and a couple of races in America, with Formula 2000. I raced there for some eight years, winning the championship, before I decided to change to prototype racing and raced for Porsche.

How did you end up with a seat at Ferrari?

My road to representing Ferrari has been quite up and down, like every driver in the world. I was racing a championship of prototypes in the U.S. They needed a Latin image of a Spanish driver, a Mexi-

can driver, a Brazilian driver. Anything that would bring them into the Latin market. So they talked to a couple of drivers, and I was among them. They saw my C.V., and they thought that I was the best fit for their project. I started racing for them in 2015, and I got third place in the championship without knowing any of the racetracks, and without knowing the car: it was a new car. Then, in 2016, we won the championship.

What makes a Ferrari racing team special?

The best thing for me with Ferrari is the professionalism. I've raced for so many teams, and I have never seen so many professional members. Because, for example, we have a psychologist, we have a nutritionist, we have a personal trainer. And they're always present. They're always there. They're always checking up. They're always making sure that the drivers are in top shape mentally and physically. And another thing that I've encountered with Ferrari is that they're always pushing and bringing the limits out of you.

Racing for Ferrari is quite a journey, because they're always asking the best of you. They're very strict, and they're very focused on how they do, and they have racing in their blood. So they're never, ever going to let the drivers down or the fans. They always bring out the best people. If there's anything that the team or driver needs, they'll definitely bring the top engineer in the world, and if there's any issue with the car, of course, they're always trying to improve and get more speed out of the car. So if there's an issue with the brakes and we need to try a new material, we will. They're not afraid of trying anything, and that's one of the things that makes me happy to be a part of this brand.

What's next?

Now, I'm very fortunate to have been hired by Ferrari, but my contract finishes next year and I don't know. I think they're very happy with the results—winning the championship in 2016 and winning a championship in 2018 again. Beyond that, next year I'd like to try—I think I'm already on the list—the 24 Hours of Le Mans. And possibly rallycross of some kind: that global racing inside of a stadium. It looks like fun. —KG

