

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Ferrari 612 Scaglietti. A driving report.



**At the beginning of the Hollywood movie *Vanilla Sky*, Tom Cruise drives a black Ferrari 250GTO through the deserted blocks of New York City. Autumnal multicoloured leaves litter Central Park, and the glass facades of the banks reflect the darkly painted silhouette of the classic racing car, before it stops in the middle of an abandoned Times Square. The driver awakes from his dream and realises, as do the filmgoers: A Ferrari must be black, not red!**



My senses are heightened when I arrive at the Hamburg address of the luxury dealer Tamsen and see the test car sitting between two Lamborghinis, one yellow and one orange. It's a piano-lacquer Black Ferrari 612 Scaglietti, the brand-new 12-cylinder car from Maranello. I greet my new friend with a "Comme stai?" But without waiting for an answer the door opens and I slide into the black leather driver's seat. It soon becomes clear that this Ferrari does not have anything in common with the spartan Italian cars of the 1980s, into whose cockpit one could gain access only with help and aerobic training. In my head I go through again the impressive data of the Scaglietti: 5.7 litres of front-engine V12, 540 bhp, 589 Nm (433 lb/ft) of torque, 315 km/h (195 mph) maximum, 0 to 100 km/h (62 mph) in 4.2 seconds.



Slide in the key and turn - the thoroughbred motor springs to life with a roar. With my right hand I pull the silver paddle behind the steering wheel easily towards me in order to select first gear, and step with caution on the gas. On the drag strip that is the Hamburg urban motorway system I felt as if I was in charge of a Lear Jet (or something), but the tachometer is still far from the red-range that is over 7,000 rpm. I continue to shift up and am soon travelling around the 230 km/h mark without seriously noticing the acceleration. Despite the wintry colour, the front of the Ferrari 612 is soon noticed by the average Hamburg BMW, Mercedes and Porsche driver and they soon make way for me as the speed increases to 270, before I brake and drive off to the centre of town.



In sight of the Außenalster - Hamburg's famous central city lake and park - I must painfully realise that a Wednesday morning in Hamburg city centre is not the ideal test conditions for 540 bhp sports car. But Ferrari insists that the cars are suitable for everyday driving, so I try to use the endless red traffic light periods to get a feeling for the interior. The seats are comfortable, classically cut in black leather to match the outside. In comparison with its predecessor, the Ferrari 456 GT, the overall length and wheelbase has been considerably increased, which makes itself felt by increased freedom of movement for the driver and seriously viable legroom in the rear. At last the Scaglietti is a genuine 2+2 touring GT coupé. The combination of black leather and aluminium is visually pleasant. The Ferrari 612 works. Despite comfortable upholstery, dual air conditioning and Bose audio system, it's still quite minimalistic and sporty. Slowly the cars start moving around me again and I try to feel my way to the old port and Seaport-Terminal.





At the Seaport terminal I have the opportunity to examine the new Ferrari more closely. The 612's appearance - despite an overall length of nearly five metres - is smoother, more supple and less aggressive than its predecessors. The Pininfarina design team has created a classic GT car that is not inferior to its understated Northern European competition in any respect. The Turin designer took as his inspiration the legendary 1950s Ferrari 375 MM special built for Roberto Rossellini, and much driven by Ingrid Bergmann. With the remote control in the ignition key I open the luggage compartment (which was increased in comparison to its predecessor by 25%), in order to be able to compare it with other luxury sports coupés such as the roomy Bentley Continental GT. One seems to be actually well prepared with the Ferrari 612 Scaglietti, even for longer journeys. The indicated 240 litres capacity can either carry the five-piece Ferrari luggage set or two golfing bags.



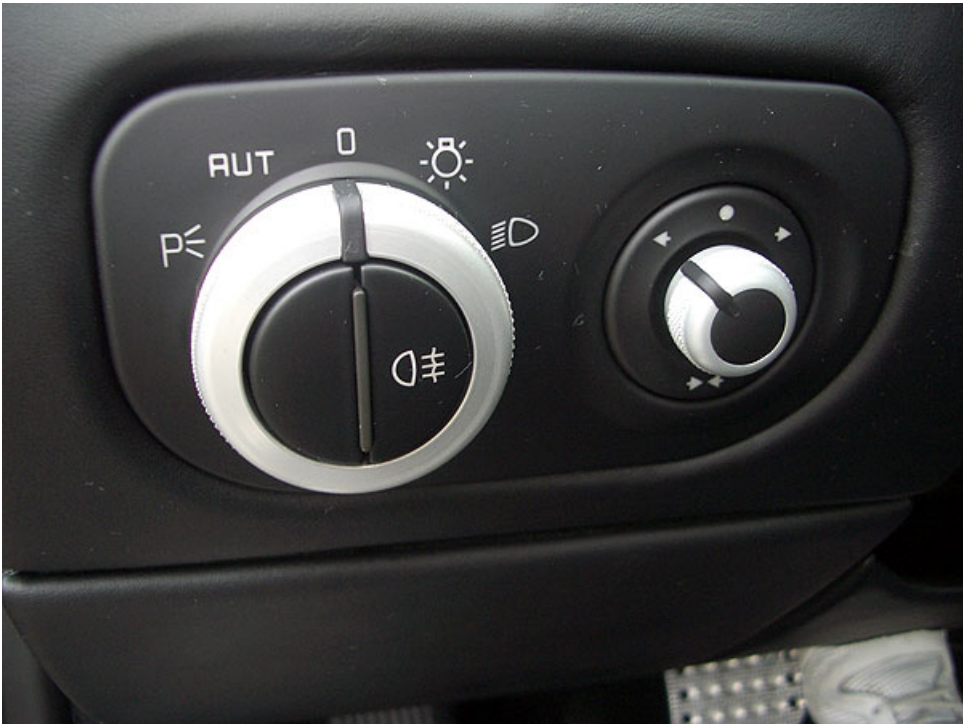


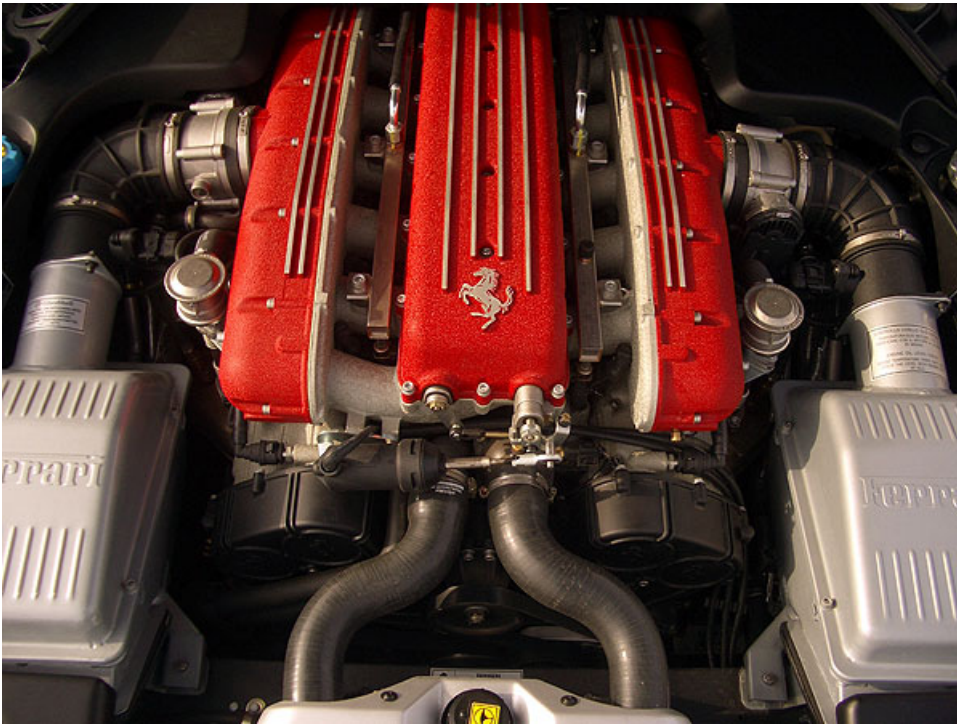
So much for the fascination of the luggage compartment - I'm more interested in the driver's seat. With so little time available, a long high-speed test over the marvellously un-limited motorways of Northern Germany must be postponed. But the suspension can be tested around town and minor roads. It proves to be sporty and yet comfortable enough to soak up the bumps and strains of a long distance journey. After a short stop in front of the famous Hotel Atlantic, where there immediately gathers a small cluster of expert 'Ferraristi' around the black sports car, I return back to the urban motorway towards Tamsen's showroom where the car will soon be handed over to a new owner paying its approximately 210,000 euro price tag.

The price for the Ferrari 612 is high, but fair. One will not find a better, more comfortable and powerful car in the 'High-Luxury' segment. The multiple Formula 1 World Championships and technical prowess, together with Pininfarina styling, do not guarantee a perfect car. The fact that the car has these virtues, as well as generous interior space and a comprehensive specification, leaves the competition standing by the side of the road.









The Ferrari 612 Scaglietti is available at Tamsen for test drives. For further information please visit [www.tamsen.de](http://www.tamsen.de).

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