

CLASSIC DRIVER

Driven: 1950 Ferrari 166 MM



The B4068 Salperton to Naunton road is not *exactly* the Futa Pass. I was, however, sitting behind the wheel of the same car that works Ferrari driver-to-be, Eugenio Castellotti, steered to sixth in class on the 1951 Mille Miglia.

The suffix 'MM' celebrates Ferrari's first **Mille Miglia** win in 1948. In that year, veteran **Clemente Biondetti** scored his third win, driving a factory-entered **Ferrari Type 166** with **Allemano** fixed-head coupé bodywork. The following year, the great Italian won the combined **Tour of Sicily/Targa Florio** and the **Mille Miglia** again – this time in a Touring-bodied *barchetta* **166 MM**. Oh, and **Luigi Chinetti/Lord Peter Selsdon** were first overall in the **Le Mans 24 Hours** that year, too.



The **Ferrari 166 MM Touring** *barchetta* is one of **the** definitive post-War racing cars and started **Ferrari's** magnificent record in long-distance events that included multiple wins at **Le Mans**, **Sebring**, **Daytona**, the **Nürburgring** and the **Targa Florio**. Come 1950, the type was a 'production sports car' and therefore eligible for more events and individual class victories.



The car you see here is a matching-numbers **Ferrari 166 MM** from 1950, chassis number 0058M. A young **Eugenio Castellotti** used it that year, competing in the **Giro Toscana**. In 1951, **Castellotti** was very active with a sixth in class in the **Mille Miglia**, a DNF at the **Coppa d'Oro delle Dolomiti** and seventh in the **Portuguese Grand Prix**. The following year – proving how effective these small cars were, even three years on from introduction – he was 12th in the **Prix de Monte Carlo** and won the **Portuguese Grand Prix**.

From then onwards the car was raced mainly in the USA, before long-term residence there where it was shown at **Pebble Beach** and other top-flight events. In fact, the car was no stranger to **Pebble** – it was second in class at the **1954 Pebble Beach Road Races (Robert Craycroft)**.





I like old Ferraris, and this **Ferrari Classiche**-certified car does not disappoint.

Its **Colombo**-designed, 1995cc V12 produced around 140bhp in period, maybe more with the three-carburettor set-up of our car. The *Superleggera* body, a **Touring** trademark, greatly aids the performance and the smooth, remarkably torquey, classic 12-cylinder pulls the car along well at speed. The British magazine **Motor Sport** cited the 'convincing superiority' of the 2-litre **166 MM**s when up against British opposition at Silverstone in August 1950.

Placing **Alberto Ascari** in one of them certainly helped Ferrari's cause...







The driving position is comfortable with the wheel not too close and the pedal area tight - but not requiring driving shoes. The seats are suitable for a day out for two behind the wheel on the **Colorado Grand** or the **Mille Miglia** retrospective (and this car can do **any** of the top events). There's useful luggage space, too. I would, though, drop the driver's seat just a touch to allow a little more knee room under the wheel and keep my left leg away from the gearlever.

The light clutch, coupled with a very positive gearchange (after a good period of warming-up) makes the little *barchetta* easy to drive in traffic. As with all cars of this era the steering is heavy on full lock but, as my passenger, **Martin Chisholm**, helpfully explained: "**Castellotti** would have taken that second gear turn-off in a big slide."

Yes, Martin, I expect he would.



I did not want to test the brakes too much but the drums worked well enough in the wet. And I didn't hit anything. Seriously, they would be fine for a two- or three-day fast tour once you'd mastered the limits, and the feel of the pedal is perfect.

We'd taken the car out for a run around the **Cotswolds** in a brief, brighter moment in between spells of dire November weather. It is in fantastic, concours-level condition but, as we splashed carefree through puddles and mud, we considered that this is just what **Biondetti**, **Castellotti**, **Marzotto** and **Ascari** would have contended with in any one of the 100s of events tackled in-period by 166 MM.

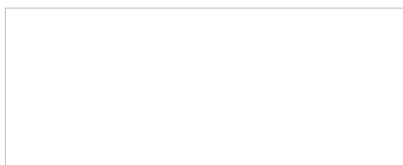


It is a remarkable car and most certainly one of Ferrari's best, right up there with the **GTO** and **TR 250**. A fine car that carries a fine price, no doubt. Give **Martin Chisholm** a call to find out just how much.

For further information please see [Ferrari 166 MM Touring Barchetta](#) or www.martinchisholm.com. Click [HERE](#) to see all the **Martin Chisholm Collectors Cars Ltd** cars for sale in the **Classic Driver** car database.







**Martin Chisholm Collectors Cars
Ltd**

Brockhampton

Cheltenham

Gloucs. GL54 5TH

Phone: +44 (0)1242 821600

Fax: +44 (0)1242 821555

Email: cars@martinchisholm.com

Website: www.martinchisholm.com

Text: Steve Wakefield

Photos: Classic Driver

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