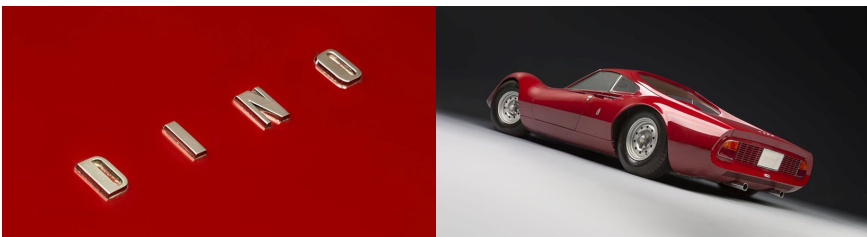


# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Even Enzo Ferrari adored this unique Pininfarina Dino prototype

### Lead

Pininfarina's small and seductive Dino Berlinetta Speciale prototype — Ferrari's first mid-engined design study — is not only one of the most extraordinarily pretty cars to grace the planet, but it also spawned a number of the best-loved models in Ferrari's illustrious back-catalogue...



It's fitting that Artcurial should choose its Rétromobile sale at the Porte de Versailles exhibition centre to publicly offer the 1965 Dino Berlinetta Speciale for the very first time. It was at this very venue that, during the Paris Motor Show in October 1965, Pininfarina revealed the sultry mid-engined prototype and knocked both show-goers and the world's automotive press for six.

The Dino Berlinetta Speciale is, ahem, special for myriad reasons, not least because its overwhelmingly positive reaction convinced Enzo Ferrari to build his first mid-engined production sports cars: the V6-powered Dino 206 GT and 246 GT/GTS. They were cars that not only lent the company a much-needed financial lifeline but also spawned an illustrious model line that's still thriving today, in the shape of the turbocharged 488 GTB.





From its conception as a series of drawings by Aldo Brovarone to its debut in Paris, the Berlinetta Speciale took fewer than six months to come to fruition. It was built around a competition Dino 206S spaceframe chassis — stamped with the number 0840 — that had been sourced from SEFAC, Enzo's factory racing outfit. The car is also notable in the rich history of Pininfarina, being the last Ferrari with input from the design house's founder, Battista 'Pinin' Farina, before his death in 1966 and among the first overseen by his son Sergio, who would succeed his father as company chairman.

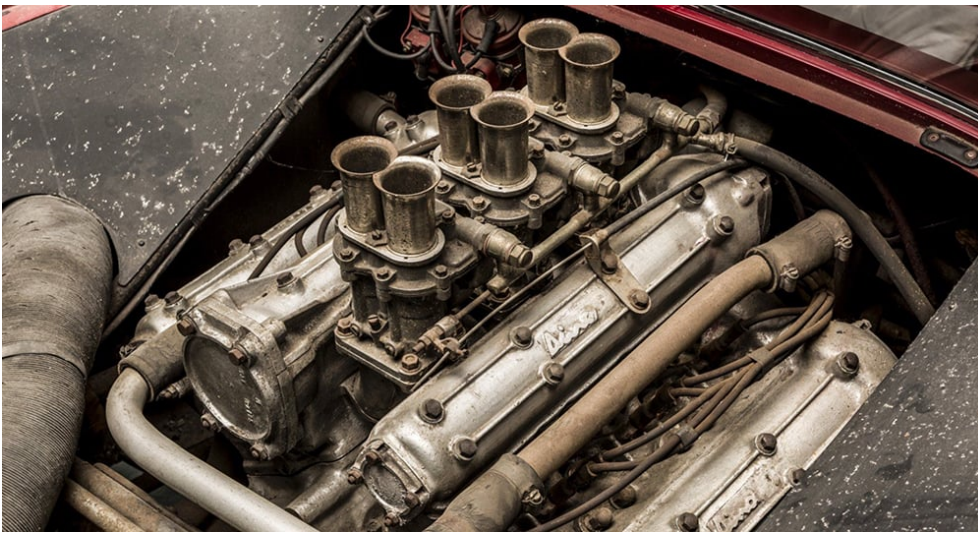
Sensuously shaped, specifically around its wheels, the Berlinetta Speciale is as diminutive as it is delectable — to say this car is low would be an understatement, and its size is something you can only really comprehend in the flesh. In fact, it makes a 'Chairs and Flares'-less Dino 246 look portly, and there aren't many other cars about which we could say the same.



Beyond the obvious aesthetic cues that made it onto the production cars, such as the elongated concave side air-vents, curved rear windscreen, and tall and curvaceous front arches, we think the truncated rear lends an undeniable air to the legendary Ferrari 'P' cars, while the quad headlights housed behind a Plexiglas shroud are a bold stray from the then-norm — something we'd have loved to have seen on the production 206 GT.

'Il Commendatore' reputedly lamented the Dino's dimensions, but that was hardly surprising given the great's man's stature. Any regular-sized person would struggle to contort himself or herself over the wide lateral competition fuel tanks and into the car's snug interior. But they'd be rewarded for their efforts. Inside, the Speciale is a model in purposefulness, elegance, and restraint, with fixed seats upholstered in cream leather, fantastic all-round visibility, and a simple instrument binnacle, visible through a beautifully simple three-spoke steering wheel. It certainly nods to the car's competition underpinnings, but at least it's a valid connection, unlike the countless modern special-edition sports cars that cling to a tenuous link to the racetrack.





Following Pinin Farina's death in 1966, the Automobile Club de l'Ouest (the French governing body responsible for holding the Le Mans 24 Hours) chose to name the square in front of its museum in Le Mans after the great man, and in response, Sergio Pininfarina — with the blessing of Enzo Ferrari — gifted the Berlinetta Speciale to the museum. La Sarthe has been its home ever since. The ACO vowed never to sell the car but, alas, vital funds are now needed to sustain the museum, and after all, the car bears no direct link to the legendary endurance race it concerns.



The ACO's loss, though, is one very lucky collector's gain, and the prototype will return to Paris to cross the block at [Artcurial's Rétromobile sale on 10 February](#), with an attached pre-sale estimate of 4–8m euros. Artcurial notes that the car is not running — the engine and gearbox casing appear to be empty, with what is a dummy gear level fixed in the gate — and we wonder the ease (and expense) of getting the thing moving again. Regardless, this is a car that truly heralded a new era of aesthetic for Ferrari, is desperately pretty, and deserves a home that, like its last long-term dwelling, allows people to appreciate what is one of the most striking and important design studies ever realised.

*Photos courtesy of Artcurial © 2017*

## Gallery

























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