

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Buying this Formula 1 Ferrari is the easy part! Here's how to own and drive it...](#)

Lead

As this exceptional Ferrari 643 F1 racecar is coming up for sale with RM Sotheby's, we asked ourselves what it would take to actually own and drive it. Luckily, we knew who to call to find out...



"If you won the lottery tomorrow, what would you spend it on first?" It's a question that's been asked a euromillion times before, always with varying answers that can be personal to the individual. Some would first ensure their family and friends are financially stable, others may donate it all to charity, and then there's the spenders, the ones who seek to acquire everything they've ever dreamt of. If you happen to be that type of lottery winner, or if you've earned your fortune with hard work and determination, we can think of few better purchases than your very own Formula One car.

Of course, there are some rather large restrictions and difficulties you may run into along the way, but we wanted to find out exactly what it takes to find, acquire, service, and race your period Formula One car, using this exceptional Ferrari 643 as an ideal example. Designed by Steve Nichols and Jean-Claude Migeot for the fast French pairing of Alain Prost and Jean Alesi, the 643 has been regarded as one of the most striking grand prix cars of its generation, with this very example claiming 4th position at Magny-Cours in 1991.



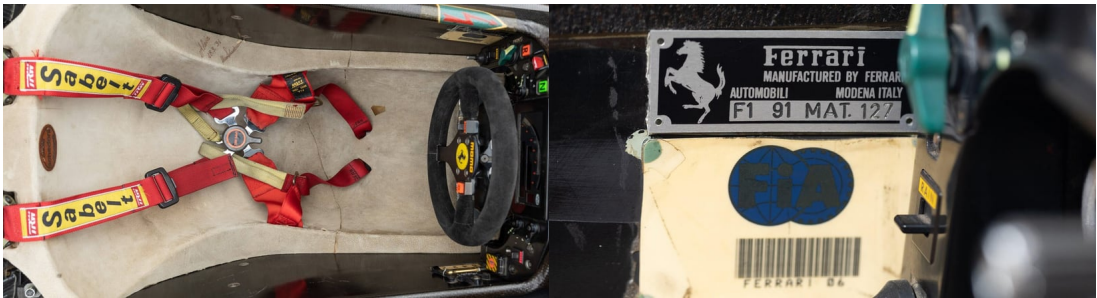
To delve a little deeper into the ownership and maintenance of such a highly-strung, 13,800rpm revving monster, we sat down with the gentleman who, along with his team at Modena Motorsport, have personally cared for this very car, ensuring it is not only running as it should, but that it's also competitive in historic races. Uwe Meissner is a man that truly has Ferrari in his blood. He founded [Modena Motorsport when he was just 23 years old](#) and has worked on almost every Formula One car that Ferrari raced from the 1970s, right up to the 2000s.



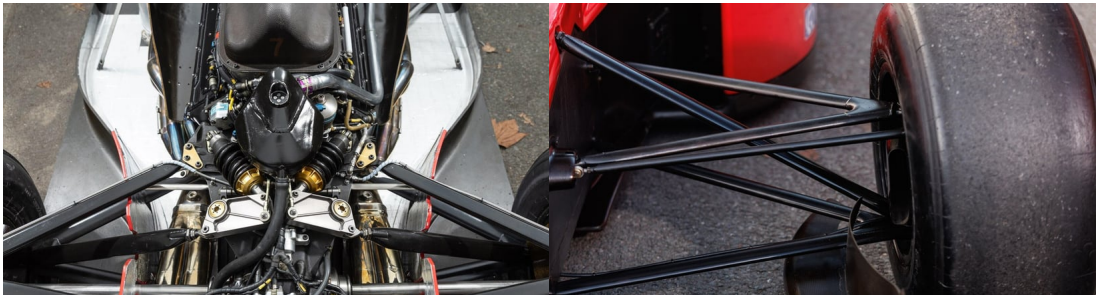
We spoke a little on how the process of owning a car such as 643 starts, considering how rare it is for these kinds of machines to even be found for sale on the market. Thankfully for us, (and the lucky new owners), RM Sotheby's have been at the forefront of this golden era of modern Formula One car acquisitions and have seen immense popularity in them. Uwe explains just how these exceptionally rare cars can be acquired, "Limited production numbers make these cars really rare, and are mainly found in ownerships of large Ferrari collectors, where they are undoubtedly the crown of a collection. From time to time, these rare items do come up for sale via the Factory, well-known dealers or auction houses such as this one."



Finding a Formula One car is one thing, but being able to physically drive it is an entirely separate can of worms. With its 3,499cc screaming V12 and fully carbon fibre monocoque, the 643 isn't exactly a daily driver, but that's where the enjoyment in owning such a unique machine can really be found. Uwe tells us more about what goes into maintaining a Ferrari such as this one, "Thanks to constant commitment from Ferrari's F1 team and our own staff at Modena Motorsport in Germany, the Official Ferrari F1 Clienti Workshop Status was founded by Jean Todt in 2000. This close cooperation has enabled us to consolidate our knowledge in the past two decades. Of course, you need mechanics with passion, intelligence and dedication to the complex techniques to keep the cars running. But, perhaps most importantly, it is also imperative to drive the cars from time to time!"



Finding parts and spares is actually a lot simpler than you'd imagine, with Ferrari being at the forefront of ensuring these unique cars are able to keep driving. Uwe explains more, "Ferrari is always keen to keep this part of History alive with their workshop and spare parts department. Of course, we at Modena Motorsport have built up a spare part warehouse too in recent years for our clients, where if a part is no longer available, it will be remanufactured. F1 cars up until 1995 are the easiest to maintain, as the early 2000s cars contained far more electronics which can become confusing and time consuming to fix."



From speaking with Uwe, it's clear that a Ferrari such as this one is purchased from a place of pure passion. Sure, you could get your kicks out on the open road in the latest 296 GTB, or no doubt lap Spa-Francorchamps quicker in a 488 GTE car, but it's the rawness and simplicity that makes driving the 643 a truly unforgettable experience. Despite Formula One cars of this era dabbling in intelligent technology, the driver was still very much as the helm, and a combination of physical strength and mechanical knowledge is needed to drive one on the limit. Uwe confirms this, "Driving a Ferrari F1 car is a symphony of the purest Ferrari gene, together with every single story of each chassis number, it is a very emotional feeling to own such a technical work of art, especially from the most successful racing team in the world."



All this talk of driving had us looking at original race footage from the 1991 season, some would argue the greatest era of Formula One. Senna, Prost, Schumacher, Mansell all lined up on the start line in a sponsor-crammed, high stakes game of 200mph chess. Many would argue racing was better back then, and thankfully there has been a resurgence of owners, teams and organisers who have created several historic events, all determined to relive the magic of Formula One in the 1990s. Uwe explains a little more about how this network seems to be expanding as each year passes, “The Ferrari F1 Clienti Programme offers an impressive amount of support all over the world, entering events such as the Dubai Historic GP, Formula Legends 3.5L and Ignition GP. In this Field of activities you have a lot of opportunities to take the car anywhere, with a network that helps with logistics and renting tracks, or participating into other events.”

This exceptional machine is set to take centre stage at the upcoming [Paris auction by RM Sotheby's on 1st February 2023](#), and we eagerly await to see the result of the lot. With an estimate of €2,900,000 - €3,400,000, we think that for the passionate owner and keen competitor, there are few cars that hold as much significance and driving excitement as this one.

Gallery

