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Say ciao to the Ferrari prototype that gave us the Daytona

Lead

Sparking a genesis of an era for Ferrari, this 1967 Ferrari 365 GTB/4 Daytona Prototype is arguably one of the most important prancing horses in history. Now, after over 20 years of single ownership, it is available via RM Sotheby's sealed bids from the 22nd to 26th May.



Believe it or not, towards the tail-end of the 1960s, Ferrari were in a bit of a pickle. Not because their current line-up, a star-studded stable that included the 330 GTC, it was the fact that the 275 GTB/4 was so spectacular, its replacement needed to be utterly mind-blowing. That, and the fact Lamborghini had just launched the P400 Miura, a car that quite simply reinvented the supercar market at the time, meant Ferrari had to move quickly to bring the fight to their rivals.

Sticking to the front-engine, V12 platform from the 275, as opposed to following from their competitors down the road were doing, the new vehicle had to build on its predecessor's success, but also take Ferrari to another level dynamically.



Penned by Pininfarina, the car you see before you seems to dance between a 275 GTB/4 and a 365 GTB/4 Daytona, both achingly-beautiful in their own right. The visual cues from both cars are certainly there to be admired, but this car was far more than a design study to determine Ferrari's future.

A total of six 365 GTB/4 prototypes would be built, but this example, being the first of those six, remains the pick of the bunch. At its heart, a completely unique 'Colombo' engine design with 3 valves per cylinder, a motor that hadn't been seen in another Ferrari road car at the time. The block itself is based on that of a 330 GT, but has been bored out to 4,380 cc, ensuring the performance figures weren't left behind as Ferrari developed. Incredibly, this engine is actually closer to that once found in the iconic 330 P4 race car, proving just how far Maranello wanted their new supercar to dominate the market.



Design wise, it's hard to ignore just how much it looks like the 275 GTB/4 in some angles, albeit with a slightly stretched and flattened nose. As you move along the side and towards the rear of the Ferrari, the Daytona styling we know and adore becomes ever clearer, including that full-width rear chrome bumper.

Once completed in early 1967, this example saw extensive factory testing at the Modena Autodrome over the course of that year. The car then passed multiple owners and was enjoyed to the fullest by each and every one of them, before heading to the Netherlands in 2003, in a reportedly sorry state. After taking it to a Ferrari Club Meeting in 2003, where the car was barely running and looking less than pretty, the owner recalls some of the older club members asking, "Do you have any idea what this car is?", his response being, "Well, it is something that needs an awful lot of work!"



From there the car was given an impeccable restoration, and now looks better than it most likely did back when it was first created. This rarer-than-rare piece of Ferrari history is an absolute must for any prancing horse fanatic, and is now with RM Sotheby's sealed bid auction from the 22nd to 26th May.

Gallery

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