

CLASSIC DRIVER

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Lead

Winner of some of the hardest endurance races ever conceived, this 1972 Ferrari 312 PB is as raw as racing machinery gets. Now, it can be enjoyed once more as it heads to RM Sotheby's Villa Erba sale on May 20th.

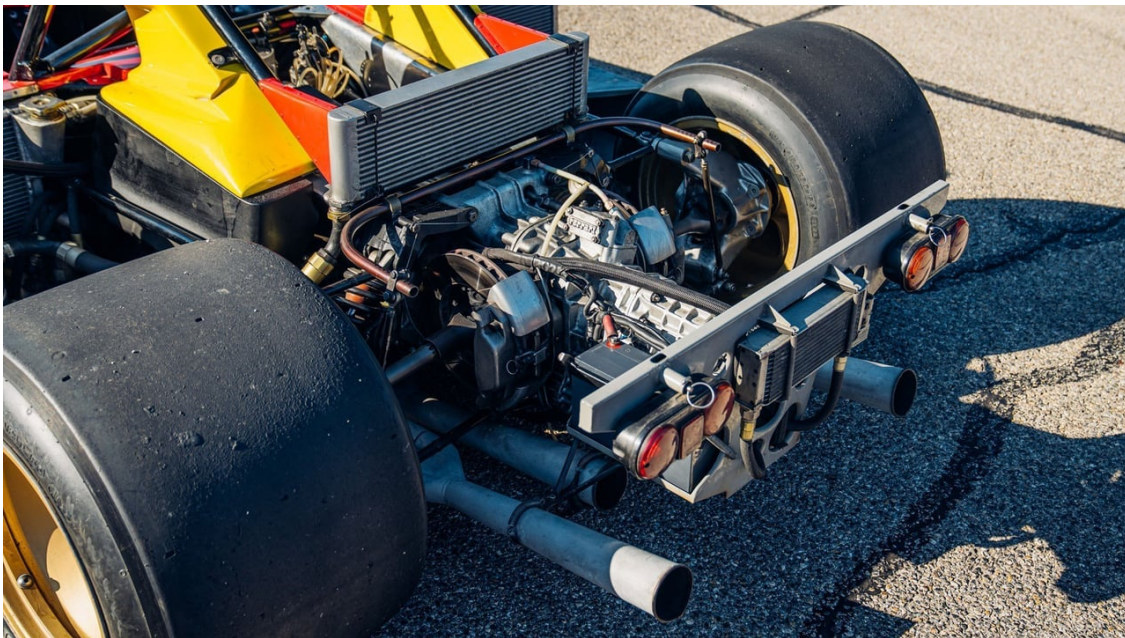


The letter 'P', when placed just after the word Ferrari, may just be the most significant letter in Italian motorsport history. The sports racing prototypes created in the decade from 1963 to 1973 were some of the most iconic and successful racers of Maranello's entire legacy, claiming back-to-back victories at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1963 and 1964 as just one example.

First labelled as the 312 PB after involvement from both Ferrari and Fiat, the new prototype made its debut at Brands Hatch in mid-1971. Fitted with a 3-litre flat-12 developing 460 horsepower at an ear-splitting 10,800 rpm, this low-slung missile was set to dominate the tracks from the get-go. The longer gear ratios and high revving engine were part of the ideal tuning setup for the 1,000-kilometre races which, combined with a weight of less than 650 kilograms, meant that all the right ingredients were in place for the 312 PB to be a monstrously fast competitor.



This fine example, known chassis 0886, was assigned as one of the six Scuderia Ferrari Works cars to run the 1972 Group 6 sports prototype racing season. During its first ever outing at the Buenos Aires 1,000 Kilometres in January 1972, Works drivers Ronnie Peterson and Tim Schenken drove this very car to its first of three pole positions that season. Wearing race number 30, the car was unbeatable on the unforgiving circuits, while the other two PBs experienced their share of mechanical challenges during the race.



What followed was a string of victories for this example, including utter domination at the Nürburgring 1,000 Kilometres in 1972. After its racing service was completed in 1975, the car would pass through several lucky owners, one of whom being one of the world's most renowned Ferrari collectors, S. Robson Walton, the long-time Chairman of Walmart. Walton would enter the 312 PB into several historic race events over the years.



Out of the few surviving 312 PBs, chassis 0886 retains its correct matching-numbers engine and gearbox as installed when it was sold by the Factory in 1975, with its original engine, numbered 001/1 N34, accompanying the car as a spare. For lovers of the prancing horse, and in particular their remarkable racing endeavours, this 312 PB is perhaps one of the most significant of their entire heritage and will go under the hammer at [RM Sotheby's upcoming Villa Erba sale on May 20th](#).

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