

# **Sports Car World**

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JUNE, 1973

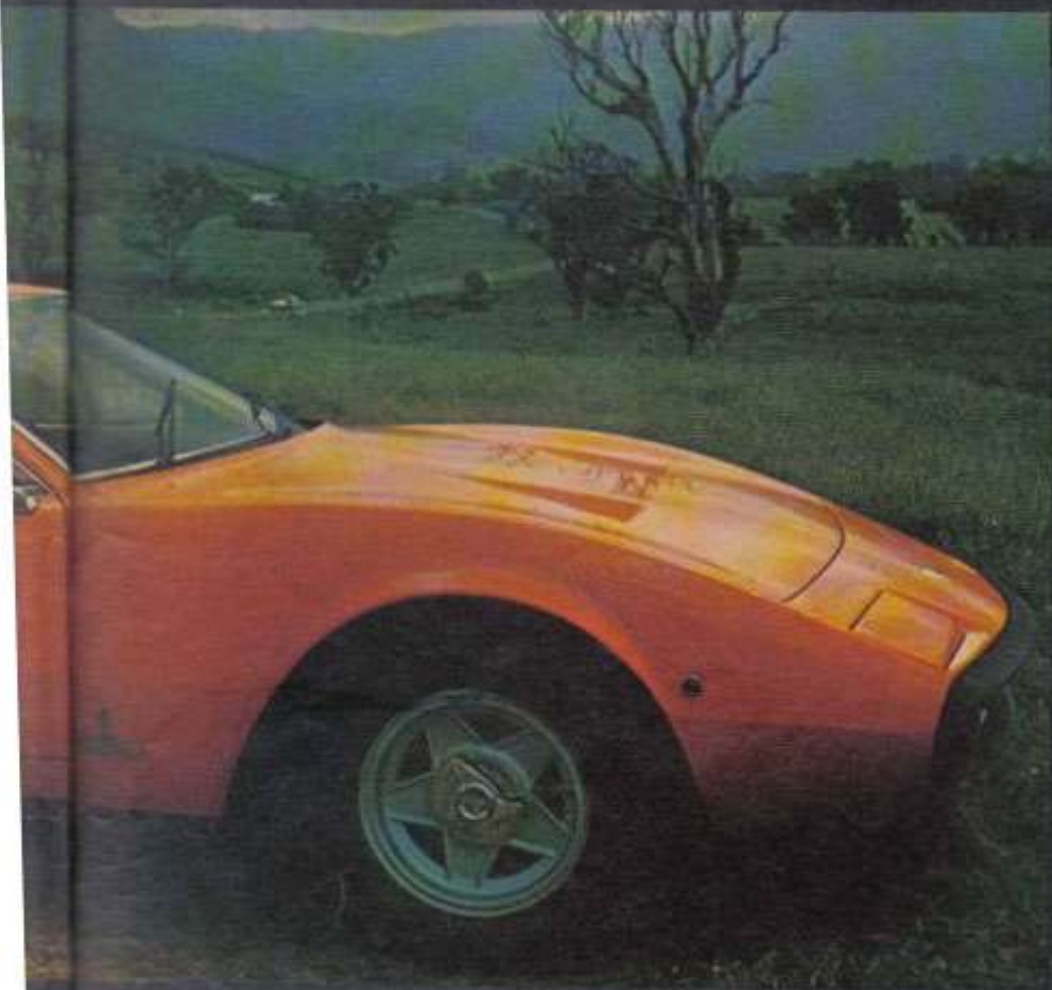
AUSTRALIA'S MAGAZINE OF ROAD AND TRACK

## **FERRARI SPECIAL**

### **...driving the GTC/4**



### **HOLDEN GTS/4 versus FALCON GT CHARGER 265: HOW GOOD?**



The Ferrari 365 GTC/4 is now on sale in Australia — a V12 with 340 bhp and 155 mph. Imagine you were buying one . . . would you know how to drive it correctly? David Bean, who came out with us for a day in the Ferrari, is the general manager of the Doug Chivas Advanced Driving School. In this story he explains in detail how to drive a high-performance car, how to drive correctly and quickly on the road.

IMAGINE IT: you win the lottery or they strike oil on your land or you marry a millionaire's daughter, and you're gonna buy yourself a Ferrari. ☐ You pick a 365 GTC/4. The low, mean lines get you. The arches kicked out to cover fat Michelin XWXs . . . the sparring, growling nose . . . the sleeting swoop of the back window. ☐ costs you \$32,000 but it's all there waiting for you.

All 150 mph of it. ☐ You pop the under-dash lever and lift up the bannet, baring 4.4 litres of V12 fed by six side-draught 45 mm Webers and topped by four chain-driven cams. The power is 340 bhp at 5600 rpm with just under 300 lb/ft of torque at 4000 rpm. ☐ You remember the Alfa guy at a party a few weeks back. He was bragging about passing a car at 100 mph and then changing up a cog. You play with the stubby slick of the GTC's five-speed box and ponder that at that same 100 mph you can change up twice more and accelerate, hard, away to a tiny dot in the distance. If the road is right, you'll be able to see something like 155 mph on the speedo when the V12 is full out. It will be genuine, too. ☐ And then it starts to dawn on you. This isn't someone else's car where the game ends when you get out. It's yours and you're going to have to drive it and your last car had a mere 180 bhp and a top speed of 110 mph. ☐ So how do you drive it? Or a Lamborghini, or a Maserati or any one of the super cars for that matter? ☐ From the outside, the car looks small and neat. But inside, you soon see that it's not. It's big—none of your flimsy two-seater stuff here. It weighs 35 hundredweight and it's a tight fit in just



about any garage you're likely to have.

Will it, then, be a brute to drive? A muscle needing men of muscle behind the wheel? No, the ZF power steering and the exquisite breeding of the car will take care of that. IUB all be fingertips and toes, but because of the size and weight and speed (and cost) you will need to learn new standards of placement on the road, new levels of judgment, new concentration and awareness.

The unrestricted all-round viability becomes very reassuring now.

Your hands drop onto the wheel, ready to drive away. They can't hold it in any haphazard fashion. That might have been okay before; it's not now.

This power steering is so sensitive that a sudden jolt at 50 mph will move you half-way across the road. Firmness is the message, and to achieve it calls for a system.

Check your position behind the wheel. Can you depress the clutch fully? Are you comfortable to heel-and-toe?

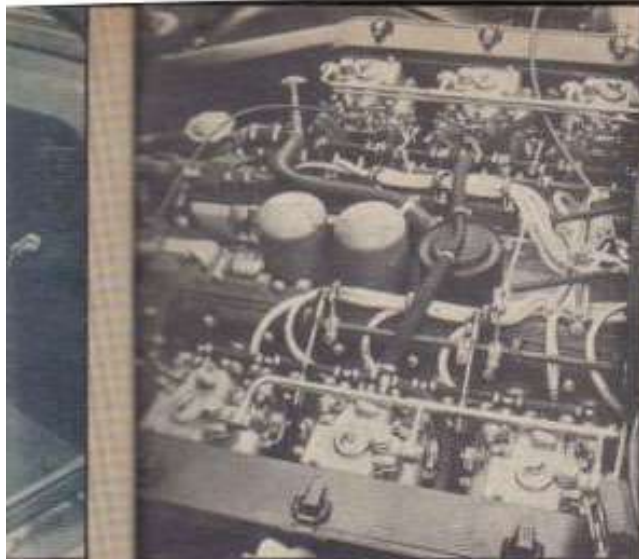
Your arms should be slightly bent at the elbows with the palms resting lightly on the rim just above the spokes. Now you can reach anywhere on the rim without stretching or dipping your elbows into your stomach.

Now let's look at the system of steering—the photos show it all clearly.

There's a right-hand turn coming up; raise the right or leading hand a quarter of a turn or so. Relax the grip of the left hand. Start your turn by pulling the rim through the left hand until the hands are opposite each other and the leading hand is going down into the lower half. Now the left or pushing hand takes over to apply steering effort and steady the rim through the bend.

All steering is done in the top or top-half of the wheel where the hand moves in the direction you are turning. This gives you positive feel and a constant physical reference to how far you have turned the wheel. By grabbing that extra lock with the leading hand you have enough movement to cope with all but





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leaping without getting your arms crossed up.

To straighten up, let the wheel feed back through the left hand, steady it with the right, and then bring the left hand up just above the spokes.

In a hairpin turn where you need more lock yet, turn the wheel hand-over-hand until the left hand can steady the car with a pushing movement in the top half. You're going very slowly here, the object is to make it as effortless as possible.

So that's the steering system. It takes about half the effort of any other method and gives you positive adherence to front wheel attitude at all times. With responses as lively as on the Ferrari's it feels like magic.

Now for the take-off. The five gears are quite conventional and arranged like an Alfa's with fifth over to the right and forward.

No. No. No. Don't give it a big full of revs and let out the clutch to smother off the line. This car weighs 25 hundredweight. It has well over 300 horsepower, so much in the drive line and a very very grippy independent rear end. Try that taper too often and you'll stain the clutch. The bill? About \$144 a time.

If the guy in the Falcone GT alongside wants to turn you off from a start let him. He'll get his 100 yards later and spend the rest of the day wondering which way you went.

You must have the clutch fully engaged before giving the Ferrari full throttle. Pop it in at a little over 2000 rpm. Now you can apply all the power you like. Ferrari clutches will take anything fully engaged. But slip them and you've been warned.

Gear changes couldn't be simpler. The box is superb, the synchro unbeatable. The real magic, however, lies in the incredible range in every gear. Second is great for nearly 90, third for 110, fourth for 130 mph and fifth you'll probably never know. The V-12 will rev out effortlessly to 7500 yet it can pull strongly from under 20 mph in fifth.

It's not just that you have a gear for every occasion. You have a choice to match your mood. You can accelerate out of a hairpin in second, hit 90 and cut off for next one without shifting.

Changing down, you must watch your revs to your road speed. Don't ask the clutch to do it for you. Dab on the throttle (I prefer to double-de-clutch but I guess I'm old-fashioned) and it's simply down into the next gear with finger tip pressure.

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## THE CORRECT DRIVING SYSTEM



The correct basic posture — arms relaxed, palms of hands just above the spokes



Give a right hand hold — raise the right hand to pull the wheel around



Pull the wheel through the left hand



which then takes over and steadies the car through the corner with a pushing movement

## FRANCING HORSE ON YOUR PROWL

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Coming into a slow corner, heel-and-toe-braking is a must in a car this fast. You haven't time to get on and off the brakes to change gears. Keep the ball of the foot on the brake. Jab the accelerator with the heel to match revs to road speed. It's the smoothest way... the only way.

You're changing down for the corner to be in the right gear to drive out of it, not to aid the brakes. These four-wheel discs are quite capable of locking after that. So the sequence is: brake, then change down with a toe-and-heel. Go into the lower gear at the lowest possible speed before the corner. This way you use fewer revs and put less strain on the drive train.

But first a word on space cushion driving. This means simply keeping as much air space around your car as possible. Air is beast stuff. It can't bump or scratch and you can move around in it freely.

Keep your distance from other road users and solid objects. With proper planning ahead there is no possible excuse for being involved in other people's problems. And in this car you don't want to be.

And watch that rear view mirror! At 120 mph you're travelling 60 yards a second — three average suburban blocks — and distant scenery starts to arrive awfully quickly.

And you must be ready at all times to take an alternative route in case your chosen line is suddenly blocked. If there is no alternative, slow down.

So what is a safe speed? A good rule of thumb for the open road is that you should be able to stop safely within your clear range of vision.

Stopping, if should be simple — you've got some of the most powerful brakes available for the road, so if you have to use them hard make sure there's nobody close behind. If there is, try and give him warning by flashing your stop lights early.

Braking is a much misunderstood art. What traps most drivers is that they keep the foot hard on the pedal until they lock up. Think of it this way: it takes a lot more energy to slow you from 100 mph to 80 than it does from 80 mph to a standstill.

So the trick is to brake hard at first and gradually ease the pressure as the car slows. This way you can hold maximum retardation just short of lockup (at which point the car goes out of control). This is especially important going into a corner to stop the car nosediving hard. This way it will recover its balance more readily before you change direction. This graduation of braking effort is absolutely vital if the surface is wet or bumpy.

Overtaking calls for careful thought. Other motorists are usually quite unprepared for your speed differential. Give them plenty of warning of your approach — blow the horn, flash your lights. They may think you're arrogant (although in Europe these measures are required by law).

The Ferrari makes it very tempting to start passing anywhere and everywhere. So bear in mind that the rusty old overloaded station wagon 300 yards ahead which you're closing on at a rate of 80 mph may not think it worth signalling a sudden turn.

Remember your space cushion! Remember your escape route! Check for it as you approach the commitment point.

So now you're streaming along in near silence (wind noise is almost totally absent at even two miles a minute) and there's a sharpish-looking left hander coming up. It looks good for about 80.

That calls for third gear — but not yet. You want a good range of acceleration out of the corner. Second would be on peak revs and call for two extra gear changes.

So you set the car up. Get out wide to the centre of the road on your approach so you can see as far round the bend as possible. Keep your eyes fixed across on the inside of the bend and watch to see where the road straightens out.

A dab of brakes as you get close and a heel-and-toe shift into third as your speed drops to about 85. Raise the left hand on the wheel. Let the GTC steady for a car's length to sit flat on its springs before you start to turn.

Now pull with the left hand then push with the right as you guide it in to the apex, the inside point across which you could see which way the road went on the exit.

Light throttle holds you in so that just before the clipping point you begin to accelerate hard. The car starts to widen its turn and straightens up as the weight is thrown onto the back wheels.

The steering wheel straightens up in your hands and the corner is over as you pour it on and change up into fourth at 110 mph. It's been smooth, balanced and safe. And it feels great. But start the corner too early, get over to the inside too soon and you'll find yourself running wide on the exit still trying to change direction after the corner. Understeer.

What if the corner is tighter than you thought? Bring in artificial oversteer — simply give a dab on the throttle then lift off. The weight will be thrown onto the front wheels, the rear end will go light and the nose will tuck in. Power on restores the balance again. This way you make all your directional adjustments with the throttle, using natural balance. Much easier than sawing on the wheel, which disturbs the balance.

If the curve is sharper yet, a smooth, soft squeeze on the brakes just before the apex will bring the nose in even tighter. (This is very useful in a strongly understeering car like a Torana XU-1.)

That entry line to the corner is all-important. You must head deep into the bend, staying out wide before you turn. You don't commit yourself until you see where the road goes and what your line will be. If the bend is a long tight one, with banks or a row of trees so that you can't see around it, steady the car with a mildly trailing and then steady throttle, and turn back on yourself when you can see the exit, opening out only when you do.

This way you can maintain tremendous, safe averages along roads you've never seen before. You're always studying the road, watching for the exit, looking for your correct line.

And always remember that the steering is there to set the car up into the corner, but from then on it's all done with the throttle.

If you find yourself in a bend of decreasing radius, lifting the throttle will bring you in as the tail edges into oversteer. You can accelerate hard enough to cause the rear end to break away, get oversteer, and then hold it in a slide. But this wastes rubber and is best reserved for the track.

You're going to find that long sweepers are the Ferrari's real forte. Here the car's brilliant balance and sensitivity to the throttle come to the fore. It is even possible to four-wheel drift this car — that is, to come through curves with the front wheels pointing straight ahead and balancing the centrifugal force of the turn with the throttle. But you will need to be our expert ever to attempt it.

The Ferrari is essentially an understeerer. In an oversteering car like a Porsche you tend to toss the car into a turn and then hold the tail out on throttle with perhaps a touch of opposite lock to counteract the oversteering tendency which makes the car tighten up on the turn. Next, you would accelerate to throw the weight onto the rear and induce understeer to take you out onto the straight.

Oversteering cars are much easier to make change

direction, but call for good reflexes to hold on a chosen line. They respond very quickly to the throttle and are generally much more nimble in tight conditions.

What if you do overcook it and lock as though you're heading for a big one?

First, let's analyse the problem. You have accelerated too hard in a bend and the tail has broken away badly. Solution? Remove the cause of the trouble. Get off the throttle, but not too abruptly or you'll get an over-reaction. Let the rear wheels regain their grip. Keep the front wheels pointed in your intended direction of travel (remember your steering system!) and then gently reapply power.

It's wet. There's a corner coming up and you've turned the wheel too suddenly and the front end has broken loose. You're pulling on more lock and nothing is happening. Drastic understeer.

Straighten the wheels. Then apply brakes gently. Wash off speed, then turn. It's usually untidy because front-end breakaways are never simple. You've been forcibly reminded of the racing adage — slow is the fast way out. Never forget that.

It's still wet. You've braked too hard and everything has locked up. You're in a four-wheel skid. You can't steer... you can't stop.

A locked wheel is unsteerable, uncontrollable. So get off the brakes and get the wheels rolling. Now reapply the brakes gently, on and off as you feel out the grip. If your wheels are turned and you get off the brakes the car will regain steering instantaneously and turn very suddenly, so watch it. You could be carried out into oncoming traffic.

Finally you're on a wet curve and you get a fright so you jump on the brakes. The car is suddenly spearing off the road sideways. Unless you get off those brakes you won't regain control.

Wet road driving calls for great care in a car of this power (or a Falcon GT, Holden GTE, Torana or Charger). Those Michelin XWxs are fabulous and their drainage powers are phenomenal, but with the power of the Ferrari whoskipia is all too easy to induce. Very delicate throttle control is the order of the day. Always.

Actually, the wipers are your real limiting factor. In the GTC they start to flutter badly at 80 and sweep a rather limited arc on the huge windshield. They aren't as good as a Falcon GTHO's here. Its wipers lift off at 120 mph.

But always you must be careful, smooth in your movements and super attentive when it is raining.

It's not that the Ferrari isn't good in the wet. It's balance makes it magnificent, but it can achieve speeds on bad conditions that call for a Moss or a Lindt to handle them. Thirty-five hundredweight is a lot of car, and if it lets go it takes a lot of handling.

So, that's the drill; the way you drive a high-performance car like the GTC. Which brings up the inevitable question. Is the car over-rated? Is it worth the money?

Not so simple to answer as it might seem.

Frankly, the finish of the GTC's coachwork is not up to Mercedes or Porsche standards. There are too many rough finishing touches. And the air conditioning (which is essential with all that glass) is a sad joke.

But, get behind the wheel, fire it up and head for the hills and the magic of the Prancing Horse starts to work on you.

It's not so much what the car does. Of course it's shatteringly fast. Of course it's spectacular.

It is how it does everything that justifies the price. It has breeding, and if you can drive it without imagining yourself forging to victory in the Targa Florio then you have no soul.

It is a millionaire's plaything rightly enough. Let's just hope that one day you can pull off that lottery win or business deal that will give you one too.

## GOSSY! Continued from page 27

"We had a few road-holding problems. I lost control of the braking area and bounced off a bank and sped on two wheels across the road and into the bank on the other side.

"I just didn't believe it.

But with the exception of a monster roll through Katoomba's downhill Bosch sweeper in a little Corolla, he's kept basically to his early premise.

Goss was probably the last Australian to use an FJ as a stepping stone to bigger things — and it was probably only because he was racing in Tasmania that it was possible. He ran a couple of FJs and then a red Customline in which his exuberant style at a Longford meeting captured the attention of SCW's columnist Romney Quinto who wrote a few pans on it in a race report. They were to be quite significant later.

As his last motor racing set in Tassie Goss built up a beautiful sports car with a six cylinder 2.8-litre Falcon donk. He brought it to the mainland to run a round of the Australian sports car championship at Winton and he was lying second on the last lap (there'd been some noticeable retirements) when the diff broke and it wax over. He didn't return to Tasmania, however, but rather followed the classic Hollywood line to success.

A qualified mechanic, he won a job with Repco, lost the toss in a retrenchment and went to work for Frank Match whom he'd met at Repco.

A little while later he drove into a Concord, Sydney, garage for petrol one day and met its sometime proprietor, journalist Bill Tuckey who has an association with Quinto ("He's my cousin who subs on the Mirror"). A job followed a quarter hour discussion on the relative merits of red Cozco and at last Goss had the chance to campaign the Tornado which had faithfully been following him like a dog on a leash behind the Falcon Wagon.

In the next year it won 48 NSW races from 53 starts.

Which led to his association with Max McLeod.

And was later followed by a chance meeting with L. C. O'Neil, motoring enthusiast: "His vintage Bentley was out of petrol on South Head Road and I stopped to help."

J.G. is 28 now. He rents the right duplex in the right area. He can get up in the morning and look at his 24-footer on the bay — but it's a levelling experience to see how small it looks compared to American Eagle, the 12-metre nearby. He's single and with the right set of planning he manages to fit in a few dates with a few specials in between his motor racing.

He's a professional driver in as much as he no longer sells cars for Max McLeod but is instead retained full time to work on his racing program. He has a two-door Falcon which he's fast developing, and he has a sore arm from the needles for his big trip when he picks up the Porsche.

He has an entry in for Spa which is his sort of circuit and while he thinks he might do all right he's not man-dog confident of a win.

And with all that happening he's not blasé enough not to spend some spare, secret, moments pouring over magazine reports of the European races and having the odd daydream of his name up there in lights beside Jochen Mass, Dieter Ghemser and John Fitzpatrick.

To be frank, Gossy will probably never be Australia's great white hope in the world championship circus.

But he is unique in Australia.

In the incredible hub-bub of the touring and sports/sedan scene he's without doubt the only consistently aggressive, front running contender who seems to have found true contentment.