



**ROAD  
TEST**

# Ferrari Testarossa

It may not be the most exotic Maranello marvel, but this side of £100,000, there isn't a better top-league sports car

**Price** £91,195 **Top Speed** 171mph **0-60** 5.2secs **MPG** 16.6  
**For** Phenomenal engine, driveability, presence  
**Against** Edgy on the limit, steering kickback



THERE ARE FASTER CARS THAN THE Ferrari Testarossa, but not many. One is Porsche's extraordinary 959, the other is Ferrari's own road-going racer, the F40. Both are said to be capable of 200mph.

What we know for sure is this: the Testarossa tested here lapped Millbrook's high-speed bowl at an average speed of 171mph. On the straight that means more than 180mph. Far from being yesterday's Ferrari, the Testarossa is still a mighty force in the Ferrari hierarchy. Indeed, the great company's real world reputation continues to ride on it.

In recent years, the Testarossa (or red-head) has lived in the shadows cast first by the 190-mph GTO and then the controversial F40. But it is far from overshadowed. Demand for the Pininfarina-styled mid-engined two seater is greater than ever and, even before the death of Enzo Ferrari in August, its stock had started to soar beyond its £91,195 list price. ▶

**Testarossa styling splits opinion. Rear aspect is best (above) but straked cooling slats are most distinctive feature**





ANDREW YEADON

◀ Sleeker, lighter and more powerful than the BB512 it replaced, the Testarossa is powered by Ferrari's classic 5-litre, quad-cam flat-12. The mid-mounted radiators on either side of the engine contribute to the car's considerable width — at 78ins (1.98m), it is some 5.7ins wider than a Porsche 928. And the finned bodywork which runs from the front of the doors to mid-way down the flanks and directs cooling air to the radiators, is easily the car's most distinctive styling feature.

#### PERFORMANCE AND ECONOMY

The Testarossa's handbook warns that 118mph shouldn't be exceeded during initial running-in but that the process of working up the pace is relatively brief: after 2000 miles, 180mph at 6800rpm in fifth is permissible.

Regrettably we were unable to put the claim to the test on a suitably flat stretch of *autobahn* but, judging by the 171mph the Ferrari achieved round Millbrook's high speed bowl, we see no reason to dispute it. The Ferrari's spectacular effort beats our previous highest top speed in the UK, the 160mph clocked up by Porsche's 928SE, hands down.

Speed-sapping tyre scrub reaches dramatic proportions on the banking at speeds over 160mph and the Testarossa communicated the strain through its steering which not only became very heavy but twitched and writhed continuously in the driver's hands. Hard work, maybe, but the high-g cornering experienced on the bowl at the 174mph peak is a severely artificial condition; the important thing was that the Ferrari felt secure and stable on the banking and concluded the trial unbowed.

That top speed — and its Continent-shrinking potential — makes the Testarossa one of the fastest production supercars made. Ferrari's fabulous F40 and the Porsche 959 beat it by 15-20mph, but this side of a £100,000 list price there's little to touch it.

For all its power and aggression, the Lamborghini Countach QV can't crack 180mph on the level. The Testarossa also has huge reserves of acceleration, though using it effectively from a standstill requires a demanding blend of delicacy and conviction. Too few revs and the Testarossa judders off the line in a fit of violent wheel tramp. Snap in too much power and the rear wheels all but vanish in an expensive pall of vapourised Michelin rubber and wasted energy.

Getting it right requires around 4500rpm on the rev counter, a deftly dropped clutch and just a little luck snicking between first and second gears. Then the big Ferrari sits down hard and lunges for the horizon, recording 0-60mph in 5.2secs and 0-100mph in 11.4secs on the way. Both these figures trail the 4.9secs and 10.6secs of the Countach but are good enough to eclipse those of the Porsche 928 SE (5.5secs/12.9secs) and De Tomaso Pantera (5.4secs/13.1secs).

The fourth and fifth gear times consolidate the Testarossa's status as a senior league star. It's the sheer breadth of the flat-12's power band that's so startling. In fourth, for instance, all of the 20mph increments between 20 and 100mph are despatched in around five seconds apiece and this is a gear that's good for 140mph. In fifth, the Ferrari sprints both between 50-70 and 60-80mph in 7.4secs — somewhat less

stunning but remember that, at 80mph, the Testarossa still has 100mph in hand. Perhaps the 8.3secs 100-120mph time is a more appropriate guide to what this astounding car is capable of.

Satisfyingly solid and precise when you get it right, the Testarossa's traditional open gate gearchange is nevertheless both heavy and awkward. It takes a firm hand and unflinching conviction to safe-slot every time.

At least the clutch doesn't compound the effort. Although heavy by normal standards, its action is beautifully smooth and well-cushioned. Given the engine's fabulously wide power band, it's hard to think how the ratios could be better. They're long but ideally-spaced, giving intermediate maxima of 50, ▶

#### TECHNICAL FOCUS

*Red-painted cam covers give the Testarossa its name. Its 4942cc flat-12 has four camshafts and four valves per cylinder. The engine is fuelled by Bosch K-Jetronic injection and managed by Marelli Microplex electronic ignition. Maximum power is 390bhp at 6300rpm with 3621lb ft of torque at 4500rpm.*

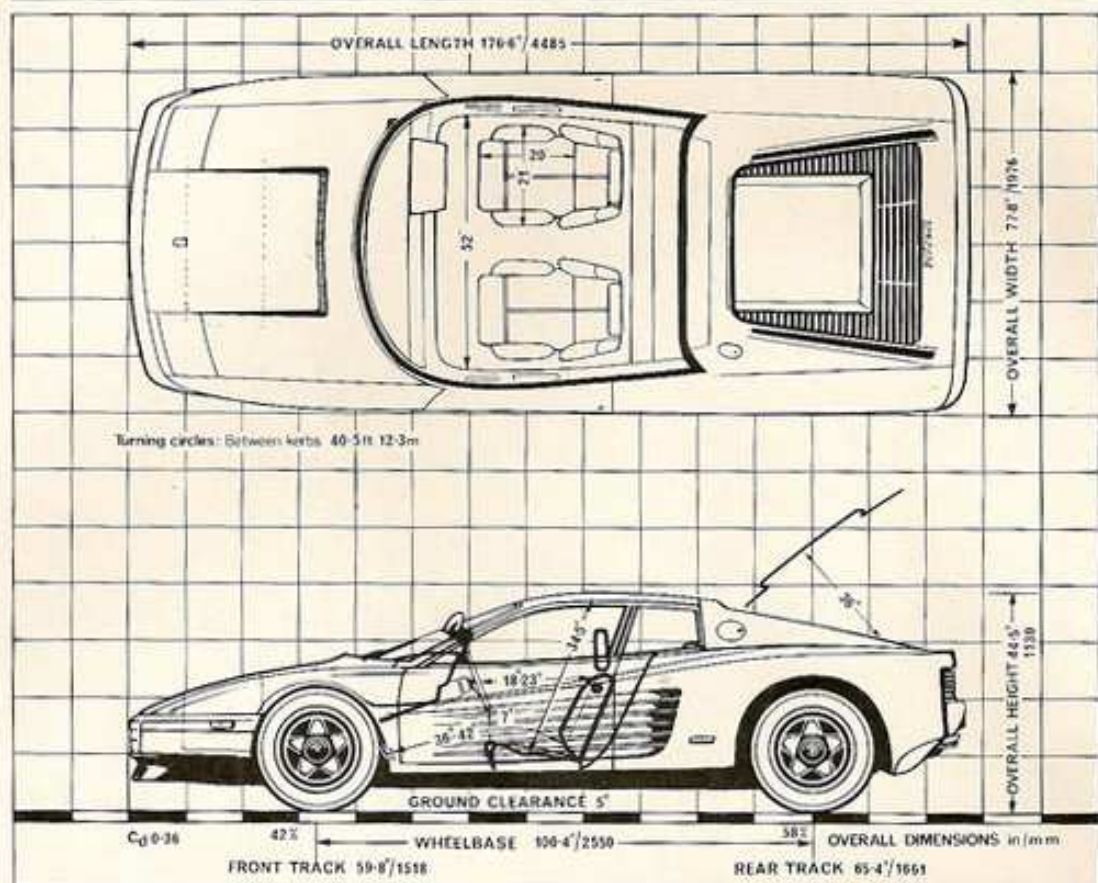
*A separate subframe cradles the engine and allows easy detachment from the car for 'major rectification'. The mixed construction chassis uses side-frame trellis tubes reinforced by sheet steel. Suspension is all-independent by double wishbones, coil spring/damper units and anti-roll bars.*

*The clutch is controlled hydraulically with the operating cylinder embodied in the thrust bearing, as in Ferrari F1 cars.*



**Wide-hipped shape more beautiful in the flesh than on film. Massive girth gives cabin spacious feel. Driving position surprisingly good; eschews the typical Italian design. Facia pack contains clearly marked important gauges, others housed in centre console. Minor switchgear scattered, stalks clearly of Fiat origin. High-mounted boxer engine pumps out a solid 390bhp**

# FERRARI TESTAROSSA



## PERFORMANCE

### MAXIMUM SPEEDS

Gear	mph	km/h	rpm
Top (Mean)	171	275	6500
(Best)	174	280	6600
4th	135	217	6800
3rd	103	166	6800
2nd	78	126	6800
1st	50	81	6800

Standing 1/4-mile 13.5secs 107mph

Standing km 23.8secs 137mph

### ACCELERATION FROM REST

True mph	Time (secs)	Speedo mph
30	2.3	34
40	3.1	44
50	4.1	55
60	5.2	65
70	6.4	76
80	7.9	89
90	9.6	98
100	11.4	109
110	14.0	119
120	16.7	130
130	19.8	140
140	24.6	150

### ACCELERATION IN EACH GEAR

mph	Top	4th	3rd	2nd
10-30	8.7	5.8	4.2	3.0
20-40	7.7	5.3	3.8	2.8
30-50	7.4	5.1	3.6	2.6
40-60	7.3	5.0	3.5	2.4
50-70	7.4	5.0	3.3	2.3
60-80	7.4	4.9	3.2	2.7
70-90	7.8	4.7	3.3	—
80-100	8.2	4.7	3.6	—
90-110	8.3	5.0	—	—
100-120	8.3	5.2	—	—
110-130	8.5	—	—	—
120-140	9.4	—	—	—

### FUEL CONSUMPTION

Overall mpg: 16.6

Touring mpg\* 16.3 (17.3 litres/100km)

Govt tests 11.9 (urban)

28.5 (56mph)

23.9 (75mph)

Grade of fuel: Premium, 4-star (97 RM)

Fuel tank: 25 Imp galls (115 litres)

Mileage recorder: 0.5% short

Max range\* 408 miles

\*Based on Government fuel economy figures: 50 per cent of urban cycle, 25 per cent each of 56/75mph consumptions.

### BRAKING

Fade (from 107mph in neutral)

Pedal load for 0.5g stops in 1b

start/end start/end

1 15-25 6 30-45

2 15-25 7 40-50

3 10-30 8 30-55

4 20-30 9 40-55

5 20-40 10 30-50

Response (from 30mph in neutral)

Load g Distance

10lb 0.20 151ft

20lb 0.45 67ft

30lb 0.65 46ft

40lb 0.85 35ft

50lb 0.95 32ft

Parking brake 0.4 75ft

### WEIGHT

Kerb 3675lb/1669kg

Distribution % F/R 42/58

Test 4065lb/2524kg

### TEST CONDITIONS

Wind 10mph

Temperature 6deg C (43deg F)

Barometer 1002mbar

Surface dry asphalt/concrete

Test distance 1400 miles

Figures taken at 5900 miles by our own staff at the Lotus Group proving ground at Millbrook.

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## SPECIFICATION

### ENGINE

Longways, mid, rear-wheel drive.

Capacity 4942cc, 12 cylinders horizontally opposed.

Bore 82mm, stroke 78mm.

Head/block aluminium alloy.

Valve gear 2ohc, 4 valves per cylinder.

Compression ratio 9.3 to 1.

Ignition and fuel system Electronic ignition, Bosch KE-Jetronic fuel injection.

Max power 390bhp (PS-DIN) (291kW ISO) at 6300rpm. Max torque 362lb ft (492 Nm) at 4500rpm.

### TRANSMISSION

5-speed manual

Gear	Ratio	mph/1000rpm
Top	0.875	26.5
4th	1.167	19.8
3rd	1.526	15.2
2nd	2.014	11.5
1st	3.139	7.4

Final drive ratio 3.21; limited slip differential.

### SUSPENSION

Front, independent, double wishbones, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar.

Rear, independent, double wishbones, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar.

### STEERING

Rack and pinion, 3.4 turns lock to lock.

### BRAKES

Front 12.2ins (309mm) dia ventilated discs. Rear 12.2ins (309mm) dia ventilated discs. Vacuum servo.

### WHEELS/TYRES

Alloy rims. 8in front, 10in rear, Michelin MXX tyres, 225/50ZR16 front, 255/50VR16 rear.

## COSTS

### Prices

Total (In GB) £91,195.00

Road tax, delivery, no plates £485.00

Total on the Road £91,580.00

Insurance group OA

EXTRAS (fitted to test car)

Sony CD player/radio/cassette: £1800.00

Total as tested £93,380.00

### SERVICE & PARTS

Interval (miles)

Change 6,000 12,000 18,000

Engine oil Yes Yes Yes

Oil filter Yes Yes Yes

Gearbox oil No Yes No

Spark plugs No Yes No

Air cleaner Yes Yes Yes

Total cost £438.15 £443.20 £623.99

(Assuming labour at £34.50 per hour, inc VAT)

### PARTS COST (inc VAT)

Brake pads (2 wheels) front £57.18

Brake pads (2 wheels) rear £40.85

Exhaust complete £1735.35

Tyre — each (typical) £253.00

Windscreen £686.77

Headlamp unit £52.65

Front wing £587.73

Rear bumper £529.23

### WARRANTY

12 months/unlimited mileage

### EQUIPMENT

Five speed

Limited slip differential

Steering rake adjustment

Head restraints F

Height adjustment

Seat cushion tilt

Door mirror remote control RH/LH

Electric windows

Tinted glass

Central locking

Fog lamps

Internal bonnet, engine cover release

Radio/cassette

● Standard DO Dealer option

### PRODUCED BY:

Ferrari Automobili SpA

Modena, Italy

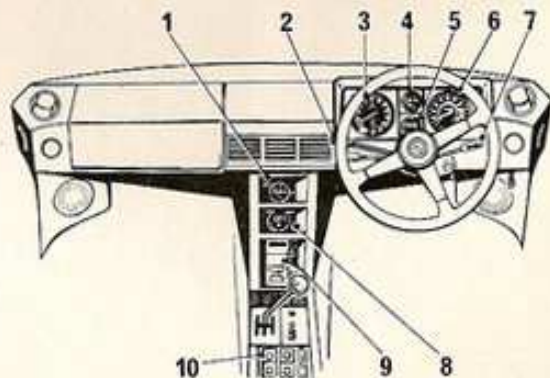
### SOLD IN THE UK BY:

Maranello Concessionaires Ltd

Thorpe Industrial Estate

Egham, Surrey TW20 8RJ

Tel: (0784) 36222



1 Oil temperature gauge, 2 Lights/indicators 3 Speedometer 4 Oil pressure gauge 5 Coolant temperature gauge 6 Rev counter 7 Wash/wipe 8 Fuel gauge 9 Clock, trip meter 10 Heating/ventilation

478, 103 and 135mph at 6800rpm.

Subjectively, the Testarossa sounds and feels very much like a smoother, more muscular Porsche 911 Carrera, but with a seductively crisper cry. Its power delivery is more flexible and surprisingly quieter, but there are Ferrari family traits which are unmistakable; the super-clean throttle response, the sublime effortlessness with which the 12 cylinders spin to the 7000 rev limiter and, despite the engine's awesome flexibility, the mild camminess which favours the upper half of the rev band.

Our time spent with the Testarossa included a lot of gentle motorway cruising but, even so, the big-hearted Ferrari managed to consume four-star at the really quite reasonable rate of 16.6mpg. Most owners can look forward to 15-17mpg in normal driving but probably little more — and who would expect it considering the Ferrari's size, weight and performance? The car's range, however, isn't compromised by its thirst. A massive 25-gallon tank ensures around 400 miles between refills.

## HANDLING AND RIDE

The Testarossa's chassis doesn't subscribe to the 'ultimate grip and response' school of design. For one thing, its tyres are comparatively modest (the 255 section rears seem skinny compared with the 345s of the Countach) and, for another, its boxer engine sits relatively high with the obvious penalty for the centre of gravity. So, like lesser cars, the Testarossa understeers and oversteers.

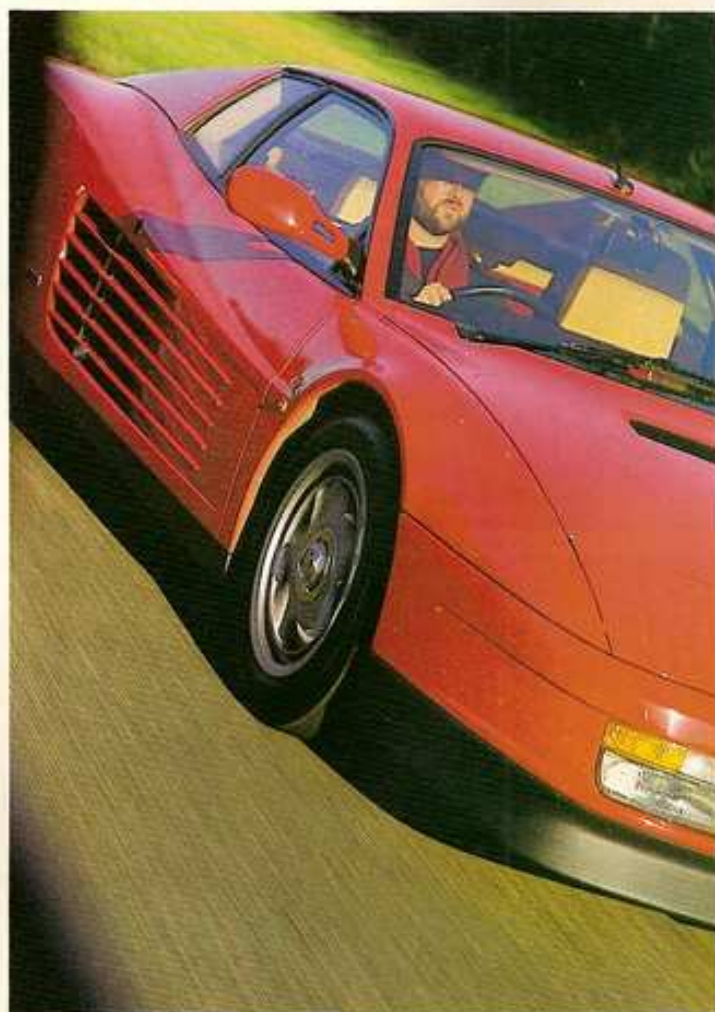
Enter a tight bend a shade too enthusiastically and the nose will run wide with surprising ease, while a vigorous application of throttle in second gear on the same bend can push the tail into the sort of oversteering slide that demands swift and precise correction. The Testarossa responds faithfully to most inputs, but can feel a little edgy on the limit.

The good news is that, although approachable adhesion levels are high enough for the Testarossa to be hustled along at a respectable pace with great ease, it feels rock solid on fast sweepers where the power can be fed in progressively — this Ferrari sticks resolutely to its line, with just a hint of stabilising understeer.

Most appealing of all is a sense of easy handling which almost defies belief in a car that measures over 6ft 6ins in width and weighs in at some 3700lb. Changes of direction can be accurately accomplished with a mere flexing of the wrists. That said, the steering is a little lower-g geared than you would expect and suffers from excessive kickback, especially when the front wheels encounter transverse ridges or ruts. The compensation is superb feel and stability but without the finesse, say, of a 328 GTB.

Perhaps even more impressive is the way the chassis copes with mid-bend bumps: neither cornering line nor composure are in any way compromised. In short, the big Ferrari handles with fine security and assurance as long as its limits aren't recklessly breached. Then you had better know what you're doing.

It also rides very well, with surprisingly good small-bump suppleness. The Testarossa's suspension is supremely well controlled, but always exhibits an underlying firmness. Braking, as you would expect, is very powerful and proved completely resistant to fade during repeated hard use from speeds over 140mph. The pedal is firm and progressive. ▶



**Getting the Testarossa off the line (top) requires tempered brutality and a deftly-slipped clutch if severe wheel tramp is to be avoided. On the open road (right and above) fine visibility combines with superb stability to provide big rewards. Car is too wide for narrow lanes**



**Distinctive side strakes admit cooling air to radiators and oil cooler. Drag coefficient is a middling Cd 0.36 but 390bhp is sufficient to push the car to 171mph (a mile every 21secs) — the highest speed we have ever recorded for a production car on the Millbrook two-mile bowl**

#### AT THE WHEEL

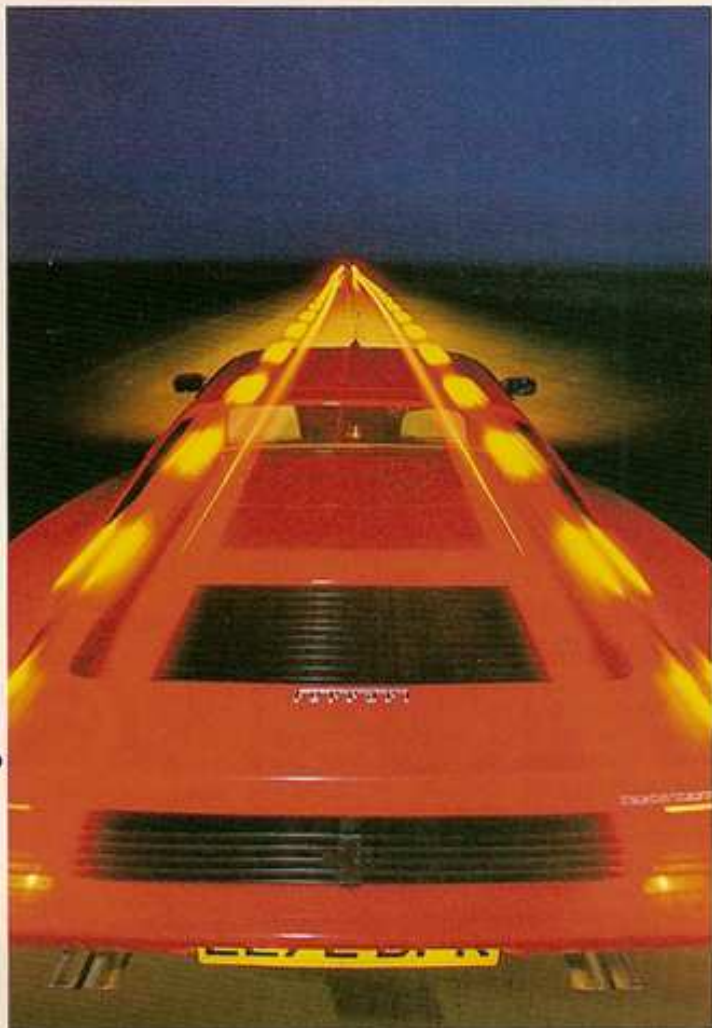
◀ The good thing about the Testarossa's two-seater cabin is that, with its notably slim A pillars, it's remarkably easy to see out of. There is decent legroom and acceptable headroom for most, but drivers over 6ft 2ins will find their heads brushing the roof lining.

The relationship between the rake-adjustable steering wheel, the seat and the big but slightly offset pedals is nevertheless good. Less satisfactory are the tilt-adjustable seats which really need to provide more lateral support and are both slippery and slab-cushioned. Nor is the backrest long enough to offer proper support to the shoulders. And it's all too easy for drivers to jam their hand between the seat and the door casing when attempting to use the right-mounted handbrake.

#### COMFORT AND SPACE

Opening up the front bonnet reveals a small but adequate boot which is deep enough to swallow a suitcase as well as few squashable holdalls. There's room for more of the same on a substantial ledge inside the cabin behind the seats. Alternatively, the discerning owner might prefer to invest in Ferrari's custom-made six-piece luggage set which, of course, fits perfectly, and costs a not inconsequential £1909.48p plus VAT.

On the whole, the Testarossa's refinement is excellent for a mid-engined design. Despite its closeness, the engine never becomes intolerably loud, and wind noise is generally well suppressed. The only obvious flaw is excessive road roar on coarse surfaces, though this is nothing like as bad as in a Porsche 928SE.



#### FINISH AND EQUIPMENT

Full leather trim is standard and it's superbly applied to the Ferrari's cleanly designed cabin which boasts clear instrumentation; comprehensive (if complicated) heating, ventilation and air-conditioning; sound switchgear ergonomics and respectable visibility (enhanced by the two conventionally-sited door mirrors which have replaced the single, high-mounted item of early cars).

Standard equipment includes air conditioning and electric windows and mirrors. Both the build and finish of our test car were remarkably good, though not beyond criticism: some of the leather coverings on the centre console had untidy corner seams but this didn't detract from the overall aura of quality.

#### VERDICT

The Testarossa may not be the fastest or best handling of its breed but it emphatically remains one of the world's truly great cars, powered by a mighty and charismatic engine likely to be remembered as one of the finest.

It's the key to the Testarossa's enduring appeal — there's nothing quite like a flat-12, either in feel or sound. It combines smoothness and refinement with a diamond-hard edge, pulls harder for longer than any turbocharged rival, and possesses a generosity of character that is completely seductive.

Five years on, the Testarossa's looks are just as arresting with that unique mixture of drama and subtlety and, for a Ferrari, both refinement and practicality are good. The F40 may be the ultimate road-going Ferrari, but the Testarossa is the real classic. ■