

COMPETIZIONE DAYTONAS, FROM \$300,000 to \$2,000,000

By Michael Sheehan



The first 365GTB/4 to be entered in competition was this example, s/n 12547, which was unsuccessfully campaigned by Luigi Chinetti's North American Racing Team in 1969 and 1970.

It may seem that the Ferrari Daytona was always destined for a racing career. Its fabled name came from the internal designation for the new 365 GTB/4 coupe, a tribute to the 1-2-3 victory of the Ferrari 330 P4s at the 1967 Daytona 24 hours. Yet checkered flags couldn't have been further from the factory's plan for the 365 GTB/4.

When it entered production in 1969, Ferrari was already overcommitted to both its Formula 1 program and the 512 M Sports Prototype program. With 1970 FIA regulations requiring 500 examples be built to be eligible to race in Group 4 for Special Grand Touring cars, it seemed unlikely that a Daytona would ever run in its namesake race. To top it all off, in a fit of pique over the leak of the name to the public, Enzo Ferrari dictated that "Daytona" was never to be used by the factory.

ENTER NART

With no factory interest or support, North American Ferrari importer Luigi Chinetti and his North American Racing Team took matters into their own hands.

They were the first to race a Daytona, an early production car, S/N 12547. Delivered by Scaglietti with an alloy body, a token roll cage and an outside fuel filler, Chinetti entered it in the 1969 Le Mans 24 hours. Unfortunately, it crashed in practice. The car then failed to finish at Daytona in 1970, and didn't start the race at Sebring in 1970.

Ferrari did prep a 365 GTB/4 for the 1971 Sebring 12-hour race. A quickie job, S/N 14107 finished fifth in the prototype class and twelfth overall—not bad for a dead-stock Euro-spec model with slightly wider rear wheels.

Chinetti was back at Le Mans in 1972, this time with 365 GTB/4 S/N 12467, which had been modified in Maranello. It finished fifth overall and ahead of all the Group 4 cars, but since Ferrari had not sought homologation, it was not given the class victory.

But thanks to Chinetti's pressure, by this time the factory had been convinced to build and support a lightweight competition Daytona.

FIFTEEN FROM THE FACTORY

Just 15 Competition Daytonas in three distinct groups of five cars were built in 1971, 1972 and 1973.

The first five Series I cars were focused on reducing weight, with alloy bodies, fiberglass hoods and Plexiglas windows. This resulted in a curb weight that dipped to 2,700 pounds from the stock 3,600. Output of the 4.4-liter V12 rose by 30 hp, to 380 hp at 7,700 rpm. Against much superior Sports Prototype cars, the Filipinetti 365 GTB/4 C, S/N 14437, finished fourth at the 1971 Tour de France, while the Pozzi 365 GTB/4 C, S/N 14407, finished ninth.

By the time the Daytona was homologated into Group 4 in 1972, a second batch of five much more serious GTB/4Cs were well underway. These Series II cars had much more radical engines, making 402 hp at 8,300 rpm. As per the Group 4 rules at the time, these had steel bodies (weighing in at 3,200 pounds), and were fitted with extended wheel arches to cover the nine-inch wide front and eleven-inch wide rear Campagnolo wheels.

Highly successful, the Series II 365 GTB/4Cs finished first through fifth in their class, and fifth through ninth overall, at Le Mans in 1972, then took the top two podium spots at the 1972 Tour de France. Five Series III 365 GTB/4Cs were built and individually delivered during the 1973 season. These featured even more radical engines, giving a (perhaps wishful) 450 hp, along with improved brakes and a roll cage for the driver. Also successful, GTB/4C S/N 16363 finished first in its class at Le Mans in 1973. Competition Daytonas continued to race competitively up to 1979, with 365 GTB/4C S/N 16407 finishing second overall at the 1979 24 hours of Daytona.



The author is currently running his 365 GTB/4 Competizione conversion, s/n 12681, in the Ferrari Maserati Historic Challenge series.

NEED ONE, BUILD ONE

With only 15 factory cars built, demand exceed supply, so about a dozen additional Daytonas were prepared to Competizione specification by a variety of speed shops, starting with Chinetti's S/N 12547 in 1969, S/N

14107 that ran at Sebring in 1971, and Chinetti's S/N 12467 that raced at Le Mans in 1972.

Another ten or so cars were prepared after 1972, built by NART, Sport Auto of Modena, Traco in California, and by Ecurie Francorchamps in Belgium for club racing both in Europe and in the SCCA in the U.S.

An even newer batch of Comp Daytonas has come on the scene in the past decade. With the revival of events such as the Tour de France, Piet Roelofs in Holland and some others in Europe have built another six or so cars to compete in these events, with S/N 13463 winning the 1993 Tour de France and finishing second overall the following year. These cars have been fashioned after the five Series III cars in bodywork and mechanical specifications.

A GRADUATED LADDER

When a new production 365 GTB/4 sold for about \$19,500 (rising to about \$25,350 by the end of production in early 1974), the factory-built race cars started at about \$36,000. Today, we're talking \$2 million for a factory Comp Daytona, which stands at the top of the food chain.

S/N 14889 is the most recent factory-built car to sell, bringing \$1,980,000 at RM's Amelia Island auction on March 12. This same car was offered for sale in 1983 for \$145,000, it sold in 1995 for about \$550,000, then changed hands in early 2005 for about \$1,650,000 before appearing at the Florida auction.

But you don't have to spend \$2 million to get behind the wheel of a Comp Daytona. Further down the 365 GTB/4C food chain are the non-factory cars with period racing history. I've had a fair amount of experience with these cars, when at the height of the first gas crisis in 1974, as a mere lad of 25, I bought S/N 12547.

This was the 1969 Le Mans and 1970 Daytona and Sebring entrant, and I paid all of \$14,000 for it. I resold it in 1979, raced and in pieces, for \$35,000. Its value today would probably be closer to \$1,000,000.

I also once owned S/N 14107, the 1971 Sebring 12-hour entrant, purchased in 1989 for \$440,000 and resold for \$495,000. This car changed hands last year, going to Europe for a number around \$700,000, though it would probably bring \$800,000 today.

If that's still too steep a price for you, there are always those Daytonas built in the late 1970s up through today. These cars have no real racing history, and as such, even a well built and race prepared example will only sell for about \$300,000. Or Roelofs will supply the base Daytona and build one for about €300,000.

I own one of these today, and I can say that it's every bit as fun as a real Competition Daytona on the track, for a fraction of the price. Of course, it's never going to be worth as much as a real one, and the distance between the two is likely to grow. But I'm not really thinking about that while I'm power sliding the car through a second-gear turn in the Ferrari Maserati Historic Challenge.