

The Femme Ferrari



THE FERRARI California is a convertible GT with a retractable hard top and a mid-front 8 cylinder engine, making it a vehicle that cleverly combines sportiness with versatility. Rumour has it that the California has also swerved away from the traditionally male market, incorporating elements designed to appeal to women as well as men. We took it for a test drive to see whether it really catered for the female audience.

There is no denying this is a beautiful looking car. In traditional Ferrari style, the California is a sleek machine, with angled planes that give it a slightly retro look from the front. The colour range encompasses sixteen different colours, with our vote going to the two-tone livery. The deep blue body colour with metallic silver hardtop and carbon fibre trim lends true class to the exterior view, although if you are looking for flashiness, the natural choice would be one of the several shades of red available.

The rear view of the California is where opinion is divided. Ferrari describes the styling as '...convex and concave surfaces follow each other with pleasing fluidity'. Translated, the car has rounded hips,

the curves giving it a more feminine aspect. We found that this softened the styling, making it slightly less muscular and masculine.

Before we move into the interior, let's take a look in the boot. Given that the California is designed for versatility and for a broader audience, baggage space is a consideration. Not only is the boot space of the California reasonably

generous, albeit smaller with the roof folded down, but it also connects directly to the rear seats or bench via a folding seat back. This allows for oversized items such as golf clubs or skis. Even folded down, the roof only takes up less than a third of the luggage compartment and while the back seat is not big enough to be functional for adult passengers, it does provide a perfect space for handbags and jackets.





Luggage loaded, it is time to sink in to the stitched leather bucket seats that flow into the leather trim dash and interior with couture precision. The seats can be adjusted in every conceivable way to give any driver a comfortable position, even those more vertically challenged. The seats can also be programmed to remember driving positions, making co-driving adjustments happen at the touch of a button. Optional aluminium driver and passenger foot rests also lend themselves to the comfort factor, making driving in heels a comfortable prospect. We are also huge fans of the dual zone climate control, allowing for different preferences in temperature. This extends to the in-seat heating also.

Perhaps the most important factor for a female driver is the ease of driving and this is where the California excels. Driving can be as interactive as you want it to be. The choice of fully automatic or manual gearing means slipping behind the steering wheel is not intimidating, despite a dual clutch transmission with seven gears. If and when you do decide

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to go manual, the F1 paddle gears are easy to use, although the reverse button on the centre console takes some getting used to.

The California is perfectly balanced, in part due to the mid-front positioning of the engine. According to the California specifications manual, 'Torque and power are distributed in optimum fashion to maximise drivability...a new chassis and new suspensions, an innovative traction control system, a braking system with disks in ceramic carbon material... combine to give the car exceptional handing and performance.' Fundamentally this means the car drives smoothly under all circumstances and is exceptionally responsive. While the throaty roar of the engine starting was a little overwhelming to start with, after a short time this became significantly appealing and in fact a point of pride for our female driver.

The optional front sensor and rear camera making parking a doddle, despite the car's surprising width and the iPod connectivity made cruising music easy to programme. Bluetooth is also incorporated and there is the option of playing DVD's through the high-level audio system, but we're not sure of the circumstances when this would be useful. The instrument panel features both analogue and digital indicators, reducing distraction, and a new generation TFT display can be customised for the driver's preferences.

The retractable hard top differs from most in that several movements take place simultaneously rather than sequentially, optimising the length of time it takes to complete the entire opening or closing cycle. Both the cover and folded roof move at the same time for a total

cycle time of a few seconds. Once down, the rear screen and aerodynamic styling mean minimal wind resistance. In plain terms, this means you will not arrive at your destination with a windswept look.

The California is also the first Ferrari to sport the Stop&Start system which automatically shuts down the engine when the car comes to a halt and cuts in again when the driver releases the brake pedal. The system is cleverly designed to recognise roundabouts and give ways and starts in 230 milliseconds, so there is no knock on effect to the driving style. This function reduces fuel consumption by around 10% in most urban driving situations. The downside is that observers may wonder if you've stalled the car, but this is outweighed by the reduction in CO₂ emissions.

In fact, we only found two minor negative points with the car. Firstly, the Sat Nav seems to default to Great Britain every time, useful only if you happen to be driving in Great Britain. A better default would be if it used the current location of the car. It's not like it doesn't know. Secondly, the California failed the age-old gender design test for cars. You can tell which gender a car is designed for by which visors have mirrors on the inside. The driver side visor in the California does not have a mirror.

We could talk about the power of the car and the technical aspects, but women tend to be less concerned with this. What we can confirm is that the Ferrari California draws both curious and envious stares wherever it may go, and perhaps even more so with a female driver. This is definitely a car that can appeal to both genders, and it may be the ideal accessory for the attention-seeking single girl.

FACTS

Dimensions and weights

Length 4563 mm; Width 1902 mm; Height 1308 mm; Wheelbase 2670 mm; Front track 1630 mm; Rear track 1605 mm; Dry weight 1630 kg; Kerb weight 1735 kg; Weight distribution 47% Front - 53% Rear; Fuel tank capacity 78 l; Boot capacity 340 l 240 l (with roof retracted)

Engine

90°V8 Direct Injection
Bore and stroke 94 x 77.37 cc
Overall displacement 4297 cc
Compression ratio 12.2:1
Maximum power output** 338 kW (460 CV) at 7750 rpm
Maximum torque 485 Nm (49 kgm) at 5000 rpm

Performance

Maximum speed 310 km/h
0-100 km/h under 4.0 sec
0-400 m 12.2 sec
0-1000 m 22.1 sec
GEARBOX
F1, dual-clutch, 7-speed plus reverse
Manual 6-speed + REV

Suspension

Front: Double wishbone
Rear: Multilink

Fuel consumption

ECE Combined* 13.1 l/100 km

CO₂ Emissions

ECE Combined* 299 g/km

Ferrari California base price: £143,870.00

Carrozzeria Scaglietti Personalisation Programme

The Carrozzeria Scaglietti Programme allows all Ferrari clients to personalise their car to suit their own tastes and requirements. There are four main areas covered by the Programme: Racing and Track, Exteriors and Colours, Interior and Materials, Equipment and Travel.

* European version

** For reasons of homogeneity, engine power in this brochure is expressed in kW, in accordance with the International System of Units (SI). The brake horse power (bhp) can be calculated as follows 1kW= 1.34 hp

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