



Classics

Maserati 5000 GT – The Pinnacle

The current issue of ai (3/22) features some fine classic Maseratis. And now here's the Maserati 5000 GT as well.

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Reza Pahlavi, once the Shah of Persia and not exactly beyond reproach when it came to human rights, had a penchant for fast, Italian cars (and beautiful women). He had his eye on a Maserati 3500 GT, but after test-driving a few, he set his sights on the engine from the magnificent, powerhouse 450S race car.



The Shah must have left a little extra cash on the table, because the team in Modena immediately granted his wish, reinforced the 3500 GT's frame, installed the wicked, wicked 4.9-liter V8 with dual ignition—and the Maserati 5000 GT was born. It was actually supposed to remain a one-off, but after the media reported on the car, several orders came in right away.



Starting in 1959, Maserati built the 5000 GT in small series, always on a made-to-order basis. The Shah's car featured a body by Touring; the design drawn by Carlo Bianchi Anderloni was used for two (or three) additional examples, all of which differed in minor details. A total of 22 examples were produced by Allemano, four by Frua, and there were also one-off examples by Michelotti, Bertone, Ghia, Monterosa, and even Pininfarina (though that particular vehicle has a very peculiar history). A collection of nearly all the models can be found at www.radical-mag.com.



Starting in 1960, a slightly more refined version of the eight-cylinder engine was installed (4,941 ccm instead of 4,937 ccm, 325 PS instead of 340 PS; from 1961 onward, Lucas fuel injection was available upon request; the last 5000 GT with a Frua body was then equipped with the 4.7-liter eight-cylinder engine). Among the owners of the 5000 GT were the Shah of Persia, the Aga Khan, Fernandino Innocenti, Gianni Agnelli, actor Stuart Granger, and the then-President of Mexico, Adolfo López Mateos.



The Maserati 5000 GTs were very, very rugged machines, easily capable of speeds well over 250 km/h—with a rigid rear axle and disc brakes introduced only in 1963. Here we present the car with chassis number 103.026, formerly owned by a Swiss collector, winner of the ai Special Prize in the beauty contest at Ascona last year (which we'll cover in detail later). It features an Allemano body—and unfortunately, you can't hear it here. But in Maranello, people would flinch every time a 5000 GT was started: Ferrari had nothing to counter the Maserati.



As already mentioned, the current issue of **auto-illustrierte** features several beautiful Maseratis to admire, including an exclusive test drive report on the new MC20, a wonderful story about the magnificent 450S, and a feature on the stunning A6GCS/53 Berlinetta by Pininfarina.



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