

fore wheel drive

There are few better places than Sydney to play golf. Enjoying it all in the company of the latest Italian supercar is the cherry on top

Words: Richard Asher Photos: Ben Hosking

打高尔夫球,很少有比悉尼更好的地方了。在最新款的意大利超级跑车的陪伴下,享受打高尔夫球的所有乐趣,真可谓是锦上添花。

从前,这里住着一个烦恼的绅士。他经常去风景优美的海边高尔夫球场,那儿距悉尼金斯福德·史密斯国际机场只有几分钟路程。停车场足够停得下他心爱的跑车,但他的车却没有足够的空间搁下一个高尔夫球袋。每当去打高尔夫球时,他只好屈尊驾驶那并不令他十分钟爱的SUV,而那让他花了一生的时间才拥有的宝车,却闲在车库里。不过现在,再也不会出现这样的情况了。那些醉心于法拉利和玛莎拉蒂最新产品的少数幸运儿们,可能已经知道有一段时间了。法拉利FF和玛莎拉蒂GRAN敞篷跑车运动版,可以在去高尔夫球场时使用,携带高尔夫球棒等装备也无妨。这两款跑车不会对精心修剪的球道造成任何损坏,特别是来自法拉利Maranello车厂的第一款四轮驱动FF跑车。这两款车在仪表盘上的“冰”按钮功能,在滨海的新南威尔士州基本上是多余的,然而这种极其轻柔的功能设置,在你试图减小对球道的损坏时,却非常有用。在高尔夫球场常发生车轮打滑,我们要确保尽量减少此类情况。很显然的,Gran敞篷车运动版可以装得下玛莎拉蒂的品牌高尔夫球袋,还容得下你想再塞进去一双鞋的贪心。而对于法拉利FF跑车来说,想要多大或多小的空间,都可以尽随您愿。后排座位可折叠,给您多达800立升容积的空间,装得下多件套的高尔夫球棒,滑雪板和冲浪板,但其凸出的油箱则在不断地提醒我们,这不是一辆普通的车。也许这并不是

一件坏事,因为法拉利的FF走的是一条安全路线。与如今法拉利车主们所呈现的驾驶更多里程的趋势相吻合,该款车型背后是实用性的概念:它应当成为您携带家人外出度假当仁不让之首选。如果是某些有点艰难的地形,那么它必须能够驾轻就熟——因此,它是四轮驱动的。尽管如此,它还是法拉利,还是一部超级跑车。法拉利不想让FF款车为获得某些性能而妥协——这是四轮驱动车往往会面临的挑战,也是让工程师们耗时数年试图解决的难题。



Marvellous Maserati THIS CONVERTIBLE WILL STEAL THE ATTENTION OF EVERY GOLFER AND HIS CADDY



Two of the greats MASERATI AND FERRARI ARE KNOWN FOR PRODUCING THE HIGHEST QUALITY SPORTS CARS

Once upon a time, there lived a frustrated gentleman. He was a regular at a scenic oceanside golf course, just minutes away from Sydney's Kingsford Smith Airport. The parking lot had all the room in the world for his beloved sports car, but his car just didn't have room for a golf bag. He was reduced to turning up for golf in his unloved SUV, while the car he'd waited a lifetime to own sat in the garage.

But it doesn't have to be this way any more. Those lucky few who've been tempted by Ferrari and Maserati's latest offerings to the Australian market have known that for a while now. The Ferrari

FF and the Maserati GranCabrio Sport can go to golf courses. They can do so with or without the clubs in the boot. Not only will they make the car park sparkle, but should you wish to resign your membership in the brashest way possible, they even have enough capability to drive across the course itself. Trust us. We've just done it.

A manicured fairway is barely a sweat for these cars, especially the FF, the first four-wheel drive offering from Maranello. The 'ice' button that both cars feature on their dashboards is largely redundant in coastal New South Wales, but this softly, softly setting is actually pretty useful when you're trying to limit damage to the fairways. Wheelspin and golf courses

are not the best of friends, and we made sure to keep them well apart.

Quite sensibly, the GranCabrio's boot can take Maserati's branded golf bag, although you'd struggle to squeeze so much as a pair of shoes alongside it. As for the FF, well, you can really have as much or as little space as you want. The back seats fold down to give you up to 800 litres for multiple sets of clubs, skis and surfboards, although the protruding fuel tank is a constant reminder that this is no ordinary car.

And maybe that's not a bad thing, because Ferrari is walking a fine line with the FF. In keeping with the fact that Ferrari owners are showing a tendency to rack up more miles these



days, the concept behind the car is one of practicality: it needed to be something you could take the family on holiday in. And if that meant a bit of tough terrain, well, it would have to handle that too – hence the four-wheel drive. That said, it had to remain a Ferrari and still be a supercar. Ferrari did not want the FF to come across as the performance compromise that four-wheel drive vehicles often are – a challenge that kept the engineers very busy during a several-year development process.

Ferrari wanted a system that would be light and still mid-front-engined. Its solution was to use power from both ends of the engine, which drives the

front and rear wheels independently – the key feature in its patented new 4RM system. In effect, the front and rear wheels are driven independently, which means the car has the capability to be rear-wheel drive only. Phew! The arrangement has also kept the car way lighter than you'd expect, and allowed Ferrari to retain the traditional rearward weight distribution.

As if to underline that this is a Ferrari and still sporty thoroughbred, the 'Manettino' dial on the steering wheel, allows you to switch between the various levels of electronic help. Such details are great, especially as they help to avert the eye from the actual look of the FF.



SYDNEY'S GOLF COAST

When it comes to delivering stunning seaside holes, The Coast Golf Club is arguably the pick of any course in Sydney. It's one of four adjacent coastal tracks that sit on a peninsula just south-east of the city centre, and even closer to the airport. Each of the New South Wales GC, St Michael's GC, The Coast GC and Randwick GC offer different experiences, and playing all four would be to tick an important box on the Australian golfing bucket list.

The area, which has a holiday vibe about it, also boasts an interesting history. There was a time when tourist attractions were limited to a hospital for infectious diseases, a cemetery for the victims, plus a nearby prison and sewage plant. But

the hospital has closed, the prison and plant modernised, and the only infectious disease you're likely to catch in these parts is the golf bug.

One of the great things about golf in Sydney is that you'll do more driving off the tee boxes than you will on the road. The four aforementioned courses are almost next-door neighbours, and Sydney's famous 'inland' venues such as The Lakes and The Australian are just up the road. Even Royal Sydney is on the same side of town, so you can go straight from your flight to a week's worth of tee times, and back to the airport, without the need to pick your way through the city centre – which isn't much fun unless you've got an Italian supercar to show off.



A class above
THE SLEEK
EXTERIOR IS JUST
THE BEGINNING
OF THIS FOUR-
SEATER, FOUR-
WHEEL DRIVE

Despite Pininfarina's best styling efforts, the FF was never going to be Ferrari's most elegant, sleek sports car. However, on the bright side, the performance figures from the V12-powered, dual-clutch car are unlikely to disappoint the expectations of the average Ferrari aficionado: 0-100km/h in 3.7 seconds and a top speed of 335km/h. The Launch Control button is also a good toy, allowing you to help yourself to one of those computer-controlled, wheelspin-free starts we're used to seeing from Fernando Alonso and Felipe Massa.

The Maserati GranCabrio Sport is not as expensive or exclusive, nor quite so absolute a performer, but that's speaking very much relatively.

Driving it to the golf club and back was still a well-above-average experience. The rasp of the engine, particularly in sport mode, gets heads turning pronto. Even more satisfying for us, somehow, was the unmistakable *whump* when we came off the power. And one thing it does way better than the Ferrari is – as the name suggests – getting its top off. Even on a wintry day in Sydney, it's difficult to resist driving roofless. And the 20-second



Practicality is key A MORE ROOMY BOOT SPACE AND FOUR SEATS MAKES THE VERSATILE GRAN CABRIO SPORT MORE OF AN "EVERYDAY" VEHICLE

roof-drop process can be activated from outside the car, which is a good feature if the vehicle's been stewing outdoors for a few hours. The top-down approach does make the driver more conspicuous, though, so keep the lid on if you struggle to suppress that smug 'I'm driving a Maserati' look.

The Sport was unveiled in 2011, offering extra power over the GranCabrio coupe thanks to an upgraded 4.7-litre V8. It does 0-100km/h in 5.2 seconds and can stretch its legs to 285km/h. Leave the gear changes to the automatic system, or use the steering wheel paddles – the choice is yours. Even the audio system will look after itself if you let it, adjusting the volume and equalisation levels as it measures cabin noise. This is a particularly useful feature on a convertible, in which you've got the wind rushing about your ears half the time.

But getting some wind in your sails is just what these cars are about. They're not meant to languish in showrooms and garages; they're meant to put the Grand back into Touring. When it comes to exploring Sydney and its surrounds, there are few better combinations of style and practicality on the market. ♦



SUPERCARS IN CHINA

It's been exactly 20 years since Ferrari made its first sale in China. The republic was a very different place when the importer handed over the keys to that 348TS in 1992, and it would have been hard to foresee just how big a brand Ferrari has become in China. Today, the marque's dealer network covers 15 cities, and by the end of 2012 that figure will be 20.

Nothing says more about how this booming car market has come onto the Ferrari/Maserati radar than the fact that Ferrari's Corso Pilota program is now seven years old in China. More than 400 Ferrari owners have attended these advanced driving courses since they were first offered in 2005. This is a big

deal in a country where luxury car owners have often tended to let chauffeurs do the driving. The courses, which serve to show owners just how much pleasure they can get behind the wheel, are typically full.

Maserati, too, has just got on the driving course bandwagon, and has been putting its Chinese clients out on track since 2011. Maserati sold almost 800 units in China last year, with the Quattroporte range leading sales. The country is now its second-largest market after North America.

The growth of motorsport in China has no doubt played its part in all these supercar sales. Aside from the construction of new

circuits and visits from international and sports car series, the fact that Ferrari won three of the first four Chinese Grand Prix from 2004-07 must have had an effect. When you consider that 2004 was the year the first Chinese Ferrari/Maserati dealership opened, a lot of things start to add up.

What is also noteworthy is how different the buyer profile is in China. It has been reported that 20% of Ferraris in China are sold to women, when that figure remains in single digits everywhere else in the world. But the one thing that doesn't vary from country to country is the pull and legacy of these famous Italian names.

超级跑车在中国

自法拉利首次在中国销售以来，到现在已经整整20年了。1992年当进口商把348TS型法拉利车的钥匙交过来时，中国还是一个与现今相当不同的地方。那时，很难预见在今天的中国，法拉利已经变成了如此响亮的一个品牌。今天，这个品牌的经销商网络覆盖了15个城市，而且到2012年年底，这一数字将达到20个。法拉利的试点项目在中国已经有7年历史了，没有什么能比这个更能说明法拉利/玛莎拉蒂车的市场是多么蓬勃发展的了。自2005年高

级驾驶课程被首次提供之后，已经有400多名法拉利车主参加了这个课程。这是件很了不起的事，因为在中国，豪华车的车主往往是让他们的司机来开车的。这个课程主要是向车主们说明驾驶这些豪华车是有着怎样的乐趣，该课程总是爆满的。玛莎拉蒂去年在中国售出近800辆车，其中 Quattroporte 总裁系列精英版的销量稳居前列。现在，中国已是其仅次于北美的第二大市场。赛车运动在中国的增长毫无疑问地在所有这些超级跑车的销售中发挥了作用。此外，

法拉利赢得了2004至2007年期间四次中国大奖赛的三个冠军的事实，也对销量上升有一定的影响。如果考虑到中国第一家法拉利/玛莎拉蒂车行开业是在2004年，很多事情就都说得通了。还值得一提的是，中国买家的结构是如此的非同寻常——有报道称，在中国销售的法拉利，20%是卖给妇女的，相比之下在世界的其他地方，这个数字始终还是保持在个位数。但有一件事，是不因国家而异，那就是这些著名的意大利品牌吸引人的魅力和传统。

