



Hugues Vanhoolandt photo

## A Very “Speciale” Ferrari

November 26, 2019 By [pete](#) — [Leave a Comment](#)



By **Pete Vack**

It took fifty seven years for Jose Fernandez to see his dream come true. But unlike most of us who share similar dreams, he had the staying power, tenacity and the money to see it through. The result is this devastatingly beautiful rebirth of one of Giovanni Michelotti's greatest Ferraris.



Michelotti's 340 AM, serial number 0082, on a recent Mille Miglia. Photo by Hugues Vanhoolandt

His vision was inspired by a photo of the 340 AM Vignale Ferrari similar to the one that won the Mille Miglia on 1951. It was one of Michelotti's smoother designs, free from the frills he would add to road cars. This was a mean and lean competition car. Over the years, Fernandez made sketches, obtained more photos, and with all due respects to Giovanni Michelotti, refined the design, eventually adopting it to the chassis dimensions of a "modern" Ferrari 330 GT 2+2.

The photo of the 340 Ferrari which inspired Jose Ferandez in 1961.



Later, he built a balsa wood model, which he has kept to this day.

He then found a good deal on a car which would become the donor vehicle, a 1966 Ferrari 330 GT (Serial #7877). Fernandez and his wife traveled to Scaglietti in Italy to learn about constructing a body for the car, then found a mechanic to rebuild the engine and alter the 330 chassis as necessary, and a shop to create the Vignale-like body. But after 10 years, Mr. Fernandez became disenchanted with the work done and began a search for someone who could complete his dream project.



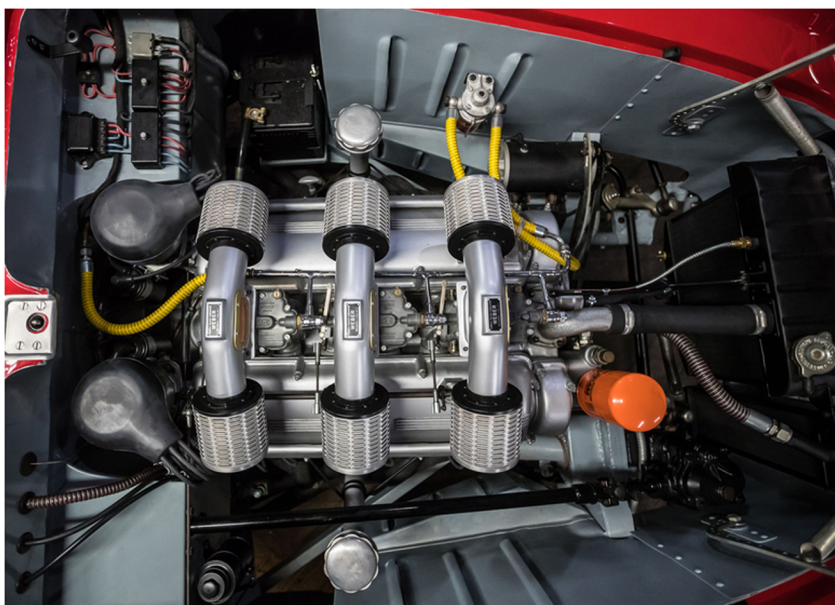
If not a perfect twin, the Fernandez Ferrari most certainly captures the essence of the original, an if anything, is even better looking.

In 2015, Mr. Fernandez contracted with the noted restoration and coachbuilding firm, [The Creative Workshop](http://www.TheCreativeWorkshop.com) (www.TheCreativeWorkshop.com) which is a nationally recognized, full-service car restoration business dedicated to historic antique, vintage, post-war and classic, European and American cars, located in Dania Beach, Florida, just south of the Ft. Lauderdale Airport. The workshop is housed in a unique, 80+ year-old historic building that has been fully converted into a comprehensive restoration & coachbuilding facility.



The body in the paint shop.

Recalls proprietor Jason Wenig, “Jose and his son walked into my facility one day out of the blue – and said ‘...this is what we have, this is what was done – we need help.’ When I agreed to look at the car and evaluate what we were up against – it was a tough day for all of us. I had to explain to Jose that we pretty much had to go many steps backwards before we could start going forward. But true to Mr. Fernandez’s character, drive and passion – he just was thrilled we knew what we were doing and kept charging forward. I know for a fact that for Jose the journey is as important as the destination, which is why we have become such good friends. For him to work with us – and for us to have such an eager, enthusiastic client – it was really fantastic.”



Not a 4.1 but a 330, and yet very much a Ferrari.

According to Wenig, what is now referred to as the 330 GT Speciale was all “...hand formed aluminum over an original Ferrari chassis. Our shop has a great deal of experience restoring original Ferraris, Stanguellinis, and other Etceterinis, so we were quite familiar with the Superleggera construction process needed to properly complete this project.”

The chassis, engine and drivetrain remain essentially original, other than certain modifications to fit a shortened wheel base, engine and intake/carburetion modifications and converting the car to right hand drive (all utilizing original Ferrari and/or period correct parts). In addition, the brightwork, grill, dash, seats, and fittings are all hand made by the shop, as well as every stitch of leather.



Hand crafting a proper Italian dashboard is a complex task.

The interior is hand trimmed in authentically produced leather. Components on the car are all period correct – from original Marchal lamps to the Nardi steering wheel, Jaeger gauges and Borrani wire wheels to the Magneti Marelli switches (right down to the “nail” ignition key).



All trim items were also hand built at The Creative Workshop.

The finished dream car drives like a dream. Wenig remarked that it has all of the power of a 330, with significantly less weight. “The steering is light and responsive, braking is very strong – acceleration is incredible, and of course the sound! There is not much that separates you from the sucking Webers or the tuned exhaust note – you feel like you are in a 50’s sport/racing Ferrari. But the car is trimmed like a Lusso, so while on one hand you are holding on to a firecracker of a Ferrari, it is also a rather sophisticated, “luxurious” interior which makes the entire experience very enjoyable.”

The car was finished in the summer of 2018 and unveiled at the 2018 Quail Motorsports Gathering (during Monterey car week). It was met with a steady stream of admirers as people obsessed over the “correct, authentic” details and beauty of the car. Interestingly, the Ferrari was one of two featured cars in the *Motor Trend* documentary/TV show *Long Road to Monterey* where a film crew was embedded with The Creative Workshop – and followed the completion of this car and its showing at the Quail.

Early that Friday of the Quail, after all this time, living the ups and downs, Joe Fernandez was in his car for the first time ever, being driven by his son to the incredible event at the Quail. On the dash was the balsa wood model of the Vignale 340 Berlinetta Ferrari that had stayed with him for over forty years. It was quite a moment.



**First time on the road for Jose Fernandez.**

Since its unveiling in 2018, the car has been shown at Cavallino, the Boca Raton Concours d'Elegance and several local events in support of various charities – being presented as a “star attraction”. The car will be on display at the December 15th Orlando Festivals of Speed.



**In your dreams, for real.**