

FERRARI 488 GTB / SPIDER

PRE-PURCHASE PROTOCOL · BUYER CHECKS · SPECIALIST PPI · RED FLAGS

Compiled from public sources, Ferrari 488 GTB / Spider, its Model File and specialist review · Personal use only · v2.1

WHAT THIS CHECKLIST IS, AND WHAT IT IS NOT

This checklist is written for enthusiasts who want a base of knowledge: enough context to follow what a PPI specialist tells them, to read an inspection report a dealer hands over, and to understand what is being discussed in videos and forums. It does not replace the diagnosis or judgement of a qualified specialist or workshop, and it is not a tool for saving the cost of one. If you are not deeply familiar with these cars technically and are unsure about a vehicle's condition, our standing recommendation is simple: commission and pay a qualified PPI specialist of your choice, whether an official dealership, a marque specialist, or an experienced supercar specialist who knows the brand. The checklist gives you context; the specialist gives you the verdict.

A · BUYER CHECK · PROVENANCE & PAPERWORK

- ☐ Owner chronology should be coherent. Multiple short-term ownership changes require explanation; long-term ownership with documented maintenance is a positive indicator.
- ☐ Documented Ferrari dealer or recognised marque-specialist history; continuity matters more than the letterhead.
- ☐ Recall paperwork by VIN: brake-system recall 21V833 / Campaign 60 (488 GTB/Spider 2016–19, reservoir cap and software); airbag campaigns 19V006 (Takata inflator) and 19V411 (airbag ECU). Written dealer confirmation for each applicable campaign.
- ☐ Modification history in writing: ECU software status, exhaust, downpipes, suspension. Disclosure is the test; evidence of prior tuning matters even if the car is now back to stock.
- ☐ Ex-rental or commercial history: a major provenance and resale-value penalty. Establish it with documents, not geography; proceed only with exceptional documentation, a specialist PPI and substantial price recognition.
- ☐ Import status: wheels, exhaust, lights and tint homologated for the destination market. Carbon wheels on imports: verify homologation for the destination market before pricing; replacement value is substantial.
- ☐ Every major repair or major service claim supported by invoices; judge the file as a whole.
- ☐ Accident history: structural damage is the only binary question. Documented cosmetic repairs are a price adjustment, not a defect.
- ☐ Market positioning completed: body style and specification weighted, comparables known, this car placed before any inspection visit.

B · BUYER CHECK · AT THE CAR

- ☐ Turbochargers: listen for unusual shaft noise, watch for smoke after extended idle, note any boost-deviation or limp-mode history. Cold-start and under-load behaviour observed.
- ☐ DCT in depth: clutch/adaptation data where available, cold and hot engagement behaviour, temperature-related faults, fluid condition and service history, leakage.
- ☐ Cooling and charge air: check side intakes for debris, look for leakage traces around intercoolers and hoses.
- ☐ Dampers and front lift: fluid traces at each corner, damping consistency on the drive, lift cycling correctly where fitted.
- ☐ Sticky interior: note the extent of soft-touch degradation; cosmetic, refinishable, priced.
- ☐ Engine health: genuine cold start (coolant temperature recorded) and hot restart after the road test; watch for blue smoke on cold start.
- ☐ Spider roof: cycle hot AND cold, at least one full cycle each; watch for pauses, uneven folding and warning messages; check seals and drainage.
- ☐ Road test: full warm-up, stop-start traffic, hard acceleration under load (note any boost cut or hesitation), braking from speed, every gear, all Manettino positions, then a post-test glance for fresh leaks and warnings. A short dealership loop is not a PPI.

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C · SPECIALIST PPI SCOPE (MINIMUM)

- ☐ Diagnostics: engine including boost and turbo-related parameters, DCT, E-Diff, ABS/ASR, suspension and body systems; roof control on Spider. Printout of all stored faults; recently cleared memories are themselves a finding.
- ☐ Turbo / wastegate assessment: visual, acoustic and diagnostic; freeze-frame data for any stored boost-related fault.
- ☐ ECU / software status: verify factory software where possible; investigate evidence of prior tuning even if the car has subsequently been returned to stock.
- ☐ DCT in depth: clutch wear and adaptation data, temperature behaviour, fluid condition and service history, leakage.
- ☐ Cooling system: pressure test, intercooler and hose inspection, charge-air integrity under load.
- ☐ Suspension on the lift: dampers and lift for leakage and function, ball joints, bushes, tie-rod ends, mounts. Condition-based judgement, no interval claims.
- ☐ Brakes as actually fitted: measured wear data; CCM by surface, edges, heat damage and workshop-level assessment.
- ☐ Structure: aluminium chassis and body inspection, paint-depth mapping, rails, pick-up points, sills, undertray.
- ☐ Typical full specialist PPI cost, rounded orientation by market (2026): ≈€600–1,100 / ≈£520–950 / ≈\$650–1,200. Indications, not conversions at a fixed rate; obtain current local quotes.

"The 488 refined away many of the previous generation's punishments. Inspect the turbos, verify the software, confirm the campaigns, and treat quiet modifications with caution."

Deep dive: Supercar Models Paper 04 · Model File 04 · Owner's Intelligence series.

D · PRICE & INVESTIGATION ITEMS

Not every defect makes a bad car: the question is whether a problem is known, quantifiable and priced in. These are costs and questions, not verdicts.

- ☐ Stored boost-deviation faults with a diagnostic path: a diagnosis job, not automatically a dead turbo; quote official and specialist routes before pricing.
- ☐ DCT faults with a clear diagnostic path: quantifiable, sometimes labour-heavy; price the repair, then decide.
- ☐ Damper or lift leakage, sticky interior, aged tyres, cosmetic blemishes: documented wear and reconditioning items with known costs.
- ☐ An applicable recall not yet completed: have it resolved before purchase, with Ferrari confirming applicability and remedy in writing.
- ☐ Disclosed, documented modifications: a value and warranty question, priced openly. It is the undisclosed kind that escalates.
- ☐ Thin documentation on an otherwise sound car: acceptable only when the price reflects it and the specialist quantifies the required investment. Without both, escalate.
- ☐ Negotiate from market position and quantified defects, not assumed dealer margin; condition items and warranty coverage offer more realistic leverage than an arbitrary percentage.

E · RED FLAGS · WALK-AWAY OR ESCALATION

- Boost or turbo faults explained only verbally, no diagnostic path offered.
- Evidence of undisclosed ECU tuning or undocumented modifications.
- Undocumented structural accident or questionable structural repair.
- Evidence of serious overheating.
- Unexplained mileage discrepancies or diagnostics cleared immediately before viewing.
- Non-verifiable specification claims on a car carrying a premium.
- A car whose problems cannot be named, quantified and priced: the one category that cannot be negotiated.

F · FIRST WEEK OF OWNERSHIP

- ☐ Battery tender connected from night one; low voltage breeds phantom faults.
- ☐ Insurance and storage confirmed before delivery; purchase file, PPI report and photographs archived. Spiders: exercise the roof regularly.
- ☐ Options, not requirements: a tracker appropriate to value and insurer expectations, and a dash cam for your own drives.