



BY TIM BARNES-CLAY,
MOTORING WRITER

It is not every day that you get people stopping and staring at you when you go for a quick drive into town. But that is exactly what happens if you happen to be sitting behind the wheel of Maserati's GranTurismo S. And you can blame kids and adults alike wanting to take in the sleek, shark-like looks of this car?

It's not all about appearance though. It is probably more to do with the noise the muscle car makes. It is loud. Very loud. In fact it is so raucous that when the S was delivered to me I heard the deep throaty V8 rumble before I saw it. And you don't just hear it. You feel it. Yes, honestly, the vibrations the engine gives out remind me of the sensations that hammered through my teenage ears at a Motorhead gig in 1987. It is a great sound – a wild noise – an almost addictive racket. All I know is that I never wanted to turn the music system on; I just wanted to drive...and drive...and listen to the crackling, thundering tune played out by the Italian monster. But I am getting carried away. Let me tell you some facts about the Maserati on test here.

The GranTurismo S features a 4.7 V8 engine which develops 434bhp at 7000 rpm. The car is immediately recognisable as something special; on the outside the Maserati is distinguished by a number of aesthetic nips and tucks that, although discrete, are highly effective and serve to make the car body appear even sportier without abandoning



the sleekness of the lines masterfully designed by Pininfarina. The integrated spoiler in the boot lid and side skirts help to improve the flows around the car. On top of that, the S boasts specially designed 20" rims, which resemble the Trident, Maserati's symbol. The sporty look is complemented by the generously proportioned oval-section exhaust tailpipes. The radiator grille and headlight casings are black, while the Trident on the grille and the oval badge below the hood are embossed in red, in true Maserati racing tradition.

Looking through the spokes of the 20" rims you can see the high-performance brake technology developed in collaboration with Brembo. The system features front brake discs made with a dual casting of cast iron and aluminium, paired with aluminium mono-bloc six-piston brake callipers. This equipment, introduced for the first time in the automotive field on the Maserati Quattroporte Sport GT S, optimises the braking system's performance, by emphasising pedal feel and increasing fatigue-resistance in the most extreme conditions.

Inside, the S is upholstered in Poltrona Frau leather and Alcantara (used for the steering wheel and



MASERATI GRAN TURISMO S

centre of the seat with the option to extend to the whole of the headlining) to reflect the sporty flair of the Maserati. Of course, if you want to share the plush cabin with some passengers you can, because the GranTurismo is a genuine four-seat coupe. The front seats glide forward automatically, allowing easy access to the back. On the entertainment side of things first-class equipment increases the on board pleasure for the driver and the passengers,



thanks to the Bluetooth® Technology, offered as standard, and the iPod® interface, available upon request, which completes the Maserati Multi Media System.

Behind the wheel of the GranTurismo S is a very special place to be indeed. Gun the engine and the car emits a sound reminiscent of a caged lion. Once you push the first gear button, or select it using the steering wheel paddles, there are no worrying jerky movements – the Maserati moves away slickly and confidently. But it is in Sport mode that the drive really gets interesting. Shifting to this more athletic style of driving not only allows extra power, it enables special valves to open up in the exhaust – and that is when all the truly wild noise happens. It is wonderful. The pace of the car is also very stirring - a 0-62mph sprint of 4.9 seconds is a mighty feat for such a monstrous machine, as is a top speed of 183mph.

The GranTurismo S is rigid and compact, thanks to the suspension layout developed specifically to support its weight distribution. It certainly feels a big car, but it offers such contentment that munching up the motorway miles or traversing twisty rural roads is easy. The steering is light

and the car goes where it is pointed. One slight weakness is that the steering is a tad low on feel - it doesn't always communicate what is happening on the road surface, but it does not detract from the overall driving pleasure that the Maserati gives.

Vehicle roll is barely noticeable as a result of Maserati's modified springs, bars and dampers, and this has benefited handling and performance. But that is no surprise because the racetrack is where the name Maserati first became enduring and where the brand became known for producing well balanced cars capable of great feedback to the driver. That is why, focusing on its racing vocation, Maserati decided to develop a special series of customisation options named "MC Sport Line". The name sums up the experience acquired on the track by the Maserati Corse department, which was, according to Maserati, 'invaluable' in helping the designers when it came to styling options. The extensive use of carbon fibre, very popular among racing enthusiasts, thanks to its direct connection with racing competitions, is the obvious way to spot a Maserati with the MC Sport Line touch. My test car came with all the trimmings, including a carbon fibre rear spoiler which, to me, was the cherry on the cake of an already very stunning machine.

FAST FACTS

Max speed: 183mph

0-62 mph: 4.9secs

Combined mpg: 17.2

Engine: 4691cc, V8, 32v, petrol

Max. power (bhp): 434 at 7000rpm

Max. torque (lb/ft): 362 at 4750

CO2: 385g/km

Price: £92,360 OTR