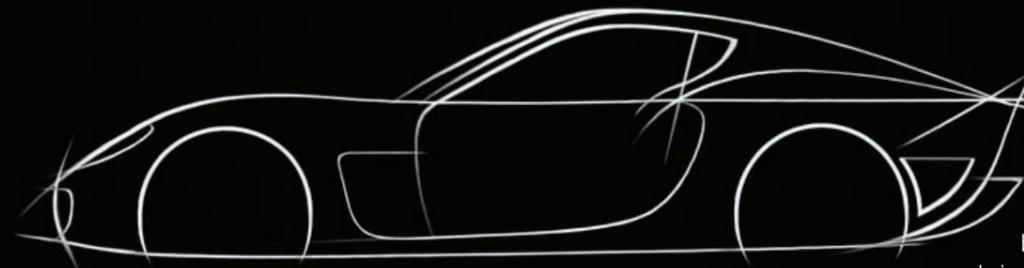


WELCOME TO THE MODERN DAY GTO

The renaissance in coach building continues unabated. Recently we have featured the latest offerings from Zagato and Fisker, and this time it's a little known Dutch company's homage to a Ferrari great that has drawn our attention.



Ferrari are rightly pleased with their latest offering; the 599. The car is some achievement, with that supremely quick and smooth gear box being powered by the glorious Enzo based 6 litre V12, providing massive grunt, and handling which is nothing short of remarkable given its weight and size. Styling has however, been a little 'Marmite' for some people's tastes, with most loving it, whilst a small percentage finding it not quite what they were hoping for. Of that small percentage, some perhaps will be tempted by the first production model to come out of this Dutch design house, Vandenbrink.

Vandenbrink Design is the brain child of industrial and automotive designer Michiel van den Brink and automotive and aerospace engineer Robert Koumans, and their first foray into the coach building world is shown here, and is Michiel's modern day homage to the most revered model to wear the legendary 'omologato' badge, 250 GTO. That is immediately clear from the 599 GTO's styling, with Vandenbrink reinterpreting the classic 1960s racer's style with its signature truncated Kamm tail, bold rear wheel arches, large front grille topped by three additional air inlets and gills located aft of the front wheel. Equally amazing is that van den Brink is only 28 years old, the age that most automotive designers are toiling over door handle and wing mirror designs in the darkest corner of some conglomerate's styling department.

This however should not be seen as some idealistic design study, they are very serious, and the first delivery of the 'Vandenbrink 599 GTO' is expected in early 2009. The well known and respected Dutch Ferrari specialists and coachbuilder Hietbrink will be doing much of the leg work, and with what will essentially be an unaltered 599 underneath the body, it will be a very serious car. There will also be a 'high performance' version, called the 630 GTO, with increase power up to massive 750bhp. The interior's can be completely customised to client's requirements, although should you like, they can leave it the same as when it left Modena. ►



“essentially an unaltered 599 underneath the body, it will be a very serious car”



VANDENBRINK DESIGN

Now, we all know that custom coach built vehicles have always been expensive, exclusivity is never cheap, but it is a little eye watering when you read the bottom line of the 630 GTO. All these alterations are done to your already purchased 599 (this enables them to comply with coach building regulations, as apposed to those required by the EU for new cars), so once you have paid over £200k for your 599, Vandenbrink will lighten your wallet to the tune of a further €933,000. However, whilst Ferrari will produce in the region of 3000 cars this year, Lamborghini totalling circa 2500 per year and Aston Martin topping an amazing 7000, only five of the 630 GTO's will ever make it into production. With 3 orders taken, and Vandenbrink's confident assertion that the remaining two will find homes, their prediction (as you would expect) is that these vehicles will appreciate.

The next project for the team is the Vandenbrink GT convertible, similarly based on the 599, but this time with a folding carbon fibre hard top roof, and their ambitions don't stop there. They have plans to turn their pens to other marques, including Bentley, Aston Martin and the Audi R8.

Sometimes the past deserves to remain in the past, but once in a while the automotive industry reaches into history to resurrect something worthwhile whose demise was regrettable and whose return is welcome. The return of coachbuilding is one example of an industry trend we're glad is making a comeback, especially in the form of this beautiful modern day GTO.

