

FORD FFIESTA XR2

PAST GLORY

By Jim Mc Cauley



Ford were well represented at the recent Cholmondeley Pageant of Power in Cheshire which provided a second opportunity to drive the new Fiesta ST on track, a car I rate as one of the best performance models that Ford has produced, bearing in mind their history of producing some great hot derivatives of their main range production cars.

But Cholmondeley is also about heritage, and Ford had a very nice example of a 1988 Fiesta XR2 to contrast against its modern stable-mate. The first high performance XR2s were introduced in 1982, and soon after the entire range received its mid-term facelift. A much revised XR2 went on sale in

1984 powered by the company's 1.6 litre overhead cam CVH engine, used to power Fiesta and Escort models into the 1990s.

The model from the Ford Heritage Collection is an original car and on road the 1.6 litre engine is surprisingly responsive. Power delivery is extremely smooth with quick uptake



from low revs accompanied by a great exhaust note. The car is also astonishingly quiet at speed. The supporting chassis would do justice to many modern cars of this size, and the only downside, limiting enthusiastic driving, is the virtually non-existent brakes, introducing an element of respect for the throttle pedal.

Interior in this time honoured model contrasts with the user friendly demands of today's cars with manual door locking, manual windows and manual mirror adjustments. A period radio features an integral joystick to balance the sound around the four corner-mounted speakers.

A quarter of a century on, and it is interesting to be reacquainted with a car that remains testament to just how good it was in its heyday – brakes apart. If you are looking for a prime example today, be prepared to pay a little more than the car's launch price of £5,713 in 1982.