

DREAM MACHINES

The latest and greatest crafts
to grace land, sea and air.

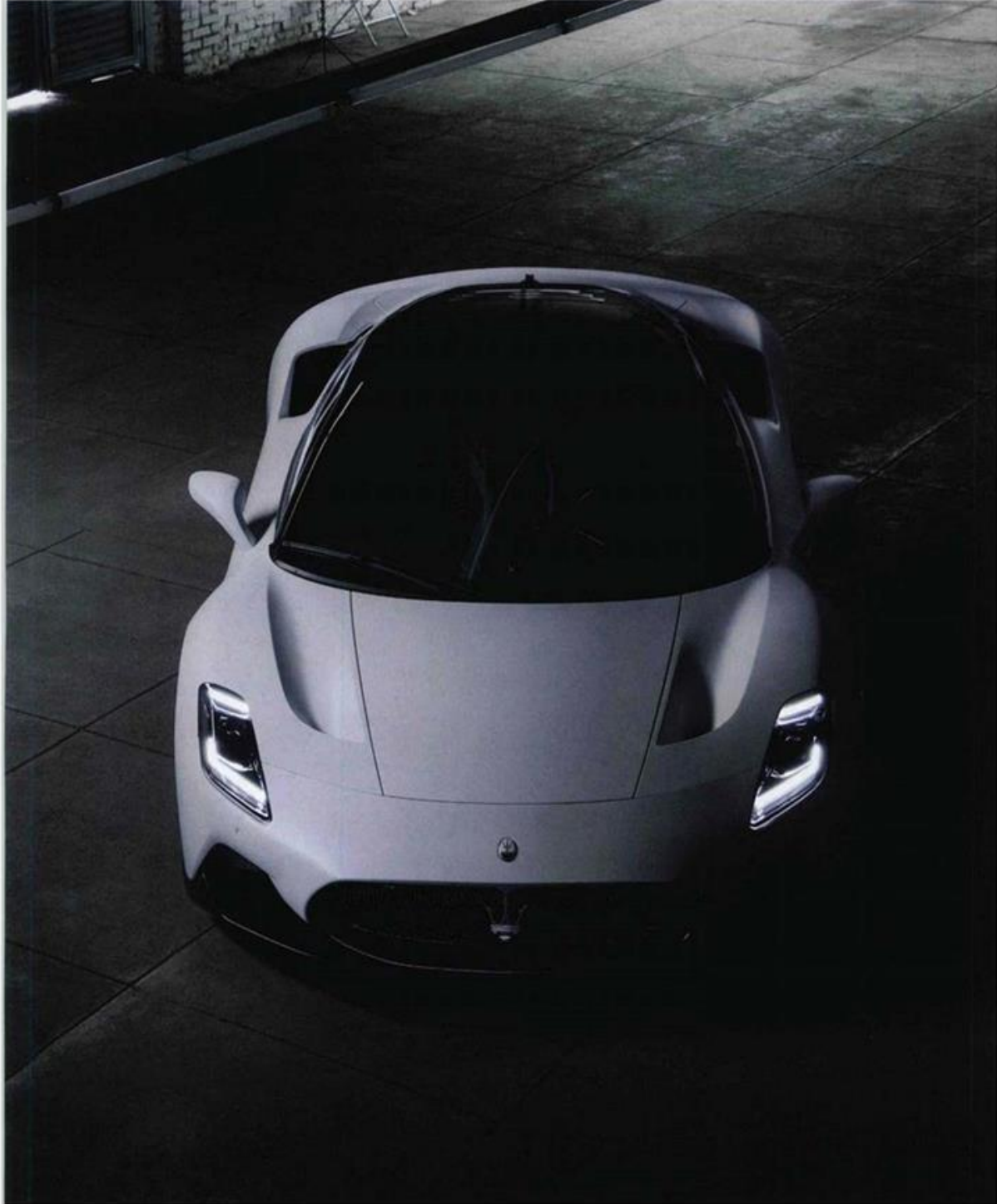


THE TIP OF THE TRIDENT



Maserati's first supercar in a generation looks to burst the bubble of its Italian rivals—and perhaps take some chequered flags along the way.

Words Viju Mathew Photography Ben Sager



Founded just months after the start of World War I in 1914, Maserati has spent decades gamely battling relative latecomers Ferrari (1947) and Lamborghini (1963) for Italian sports-luxury prominence, despite several lost decades of mismanagement and financial hardship. But the Bologna-based brand still has plenty of fight. Witness the launch of the 462 kW MC20, its first supercar in almost two decades, while the pandemic was in full swing—inexplicable circumstances that actually allowed gearheads more opportunity to obsess.

The mid-engine MC20 takes up the mantle from the MC12, one of the most sought-after Maseratis of the modern era, which returned the marque to racing in 2004—the “MC” stands for “Maserati Corse” the brand’s motorsport division—and its carbon-fibre monocoque chassis was built in collaboration with race-car specialist Dallara. With a sleek aesthetic born from over 2,000 hours of wind-tunnel testing and more than 1,000 fluid-dynamic simulations, the bodywork suggests a stone sculpted by the flow of the elements. The subtle styling continues with the vents on both hood and flanks, which nearly disappear depending on your line of sight.

Head of design Klaus Busse says his team was after “pure design, not cars designed around the air intakes”. The interior presents a similarly clean edit, with a streamlined cockpit that places a majority of driver functions on the steering wheel. Only a handful of controls, including the selector for drive modes—Wet, GT, Sport and Corsa—and the dual 10-inch



The MC20’s streamlined aesthetic carries over into the cockpit, where primary controls are accessed from the steering wheel.

touchscreen infotainment system, are located on the centre console.

The coupe’s edgier side is reflected along the bottom of the exterior, with more pronounced angles and aero elements such as the channeled diffuser for increased downforce—and, of course, those butterfly doors. Most noteworthy, though, is the new Nettuno 3.0-litre, twin-turbo V-6, with 729 Nm of torque. Its Formula 1-derived twin-spark-plug, pre-chamber combustion system delivers a faster, cleaner burn, and is touted as a first for a street-legal car. The engine, developed in-house, is mated to an eight-speed dual-clutch transmission.

That potent, high-tech mill, and the vehicle’s kerb weight of 1,500 kilograms, allow the rear-wheel-drive machine to hit 100 km/h in 2.9 seconds, on its way to a top speed of 325 km/h. Those stats put the MC20 alongside some of the latest offerings from its rivals in Maranello and Sant’Agata Bolognese, as does its £189,520 starting price.

And if you’re going after some of the biggest names in the category, such impressive figures aren’t just nice—they’re necessary. Andy Love, director of brand and sales for Maserati North America, thinks the MC20 “will re-establish Maserati in the mid-engine super-sports-car segment” and calls the car “an important, fundamental step in creating the future of our brand”.

That’s setting a big stage, but at least the lean and sculpted lightweight beast looks more than ready to square off. Prancing Horses and Raging Bulls, be warned.

