

The Pantera Specials

by Adams Hudson

From time to time, this editor (what a lofty title for someone who garbs on about interesting cars) sorts through subscriber mail and decides it's time to respond. I was recently posed a question by David W. Tibbetts of Stamford, Connecticut that should have been answered long ago. In four years of PMM, I've yet to address what makes a Pantera a GR3, a GT4, an L, or a GTS.

In order, the GR3, for Group 3, as in the racing division, was a mildly modified street Pantera that appeared more often in the DeTomaso brochure than it did in racing.

The GT4 was not a terribly serious competitor in the race circuits either, but came with many useful enhancements: huge fenders, wide wheels, lightened body and interior, plus a hotter engine that was topped with a quartet of downdraft Webers.

The Pantera "L" was known in Europe as "Lusso" denoting "luxury", but in the U.S., the letter can be construed to stand for "Lower"

as in compression ratio. The performance for the U.S. "L" model was not quite in step with its looks (or its immediate predecessor) with 0-60 mph taking 7.8 seconds and 100 mph coming in at 17.5 seconds. The car was admittedly more refined in chassis, cooling, and comfort areas.

The GTS version also came in U.S. and European forms. The U.S. car was quite a different story from what you see pictured here, which features a host of performance items that would have been highly illegal for our market. Alas, the 97 GTS's officially imported to the U.S. were primarily cosmetic packages. Definitely more valuable than the plain-clothes counterpart, which makes counterfeiting a real problem. The letters "GT" should appear in the VIN with the numerical sequence thereafter. Look closely for tampering, because I've seen a lot more than 97 U.S. cars advertised.

