



## **50 fantastic years**

Automobili Lamborghini is in great shape as it prepares for the company's fiftieth anniversary. The car manufacturer based in Sant'Agata Bolognese has come a long way since May 1963, when it was established in Emilia Romagna's "golden triangle" of automotive companies by its visionary and enthusiastic founder Ferruccio, who wanted to build "a perfect automobile" and went on to create what can only be described as a "technological bomb".

In an at times tortuous story, the models produced by the House of the Bull have asserted themselves over the last five decades as the most extreme sports cars ever to go on sale. It is a story in which a group of young designers and test drivers - guided by the infallible intuition of the company's founder - produced one of those economic miracles which punctuated Italian economic history in the 1960s and made crown heads, businessmen and Hollywood stars all lose their heads. But the picture hasn't always been this rosy. During the same period, the Sant'Agata Bolognese car producer also felt the effects of the autumn of discontent orchestrated by the trade unions and the oil crisis of the 1970s, but the strength of the original idea, which over the years has taken on ever more legendary proportions, has ensured its continuity, despite the company being led by six different shareholders in the period until the end of the 1990s.

In July 1998, Automobili Lamborghini became part of the Audi AG universe. The acquisition was completed after a long period of collaboration which gave the German manufacturer the opportunity to recognise both the company's good management and the serious development work performed on the Emilia Romagna based sports cars. This Italo-German marriage has continued for more than fourteen years now, which is the longest period with the same owner since the company was established.

Fourteen years which have made sure the "House of the Bull" finally has the tranquility and resources it needs to grow and focus on developing what has always been imprinted in the company's DNA.



Since 2005, Automobili Lamborghini has been led by Chairman and CEO Stephan Winkelmann. Today, as has always been the case, the factory that manufactures the company's supercars is one of the most advanced in terms of both technology and the environment, and continues to expand. It contains a museum of vintage cars that is visited by more than 30,000 enthusiasts a year and its current offering includes two models in two different market segments - the Gallardo and the Aventador - with a third on the drawing board.

Although Automobili Lamborghini has not come through the economic crisis of recent years unscathed, since 2000 the company has doubled its workforce (which now numbers more than 900) and continues to hire fifty or so new professionals a year; it has tripled the number of dealers worldwide to the current 125; it has increased the number of cars sold five-fold (more than 2,000 today) and has doubled its R&D investments, which now represent 20% of turnover. In this area the company employs over 250 super qualified engineers who, alongside other projects, have "concluded" thirty years of research work into carbon fibre applications and, with a recently opened, dedicated industrial plant covering over 5,000 sq m and through collaboration with Boeing's laboratories in Seattle, can now handle the complex process of manufacturing a carbon monocoque entirely in-house (the only company in the sector able to do so).

The Research & Development department - of which the Style Centre also forms part - represents the origin and point of departure for all super sports car designs created by the House of the Bull. But this wouldn't be possible were it not for the other corporate functions, which are all in place despite the company's small size when compared with the giants of the automotive world. And it is this across the board presence in the automotive business that makes Lamborghini such a gem of a company. From design to planning, from purchasing to production, from sales to technical assistance: all aspects of



Lamborghini, everywhere in the world, are managed from Sant'Agata Bolognese.

We also need to add a couple of firsts to this snapshot of the company: its ever greater focus on limiting environmental impact which - in part as a result of the recent official opening of an entirely class A production facility - has been recognised by the Italian Ministry of the Environment; and unprecedented good relations with the workforce and trade union representatives (it is rumoured that friction between the two sides was the reason behind the founder's departure in the 1970s), which have culminated in the renewal of the collective employment contract, to the acclaim of all the trade unions represented in the company.

When presenting the celebrations to mark the company's 50th anniversary, Stephan Winkelmann said *"In the last 50 years, Lamborghini has represented the dream, the legend and the symbol of Emilia Romagna, a unique and extraordinary region whose proud and determined population has given the world some unique cars. Even today, although we are now an international business, these deep ties with our history and the local culture are still strong. The 50th anniversary of Lamborghini is an event that lets us relive the emotions of the past and savour expectations of a future we are sure will be rich in novelties"*.

The Italo-German marriage seems to have given the Sant'Agata based company back the serenity that is fitting for a gutsy middle-aged lady: extreme, uncompromising and Italian.