



Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. – The History

1963-1964

The history of 'Lamborghini Automobili' officially starts in 1963. Nevertheless, we must consider the far-off roots of this event, and they are the roots of Ferruccio Lamborghini. Born in 1916, this capable, impetuous, strong-willed Taurus was the leading character in the foundation of the company and the early phases of its extraordinary history.

By the time he decided to build a factory of luxury sports cars, Ferruccio was already a very wealthy man. In the period following World War II, he founded his tractor factory, which he launched with energy and determination, creating a major point of reference in this industry. Other businesses followed, and he amassed his fortune at the perfect time, before his fiftieth birthday. By the early Sixties, Lamborghini was a powerful and successful man who knew exactly what he wanted, but when he said he would build a super sports car to compete with Ferrari, many people thought he was mad. Constructing that kind of car was viewed as an unexplainable extravagance, a hazardous leap in the dark, and something that would squander his fortune without ever turning a profit.

He started working on this project in late 1962, and by May 1963 he had already founded 'Automobili Ferruccio Lamborghini', buying a large plot of land in Sant'Agata Bolognese, about 25 kilometres from Bologna, to build a new large and ultramodern factory. Because of the experience he had gained with his other companies, he was in a position to set up the best facilities for his purpose: a very functional structure that, at the time, was unrivalled in its field. The enormous and well-let central building was adjacent to the office building, so that the management could constantly monitor the production situation. This was ideal for Lamborghini, who would often roll up his shirtsleeves and go to work on the cars personally when he saw something that wasn't done just the way he wanted.

The first model was naturally put out quickly, given that Lamborghini had only a few months between the time he decided to build the factory and the date set for its official presentation. The event that was chosen for this was the era's traditional rendezvous, the Turin Auto Show scheduled for the beginning of November 1963. Since Lamborghini had a very clear idea of what he wanted, he didn't waste any time looking for the right people. For the engine, which had to be the best V12 made in the area -



and thus in the world - he immediately turned to Giotto Bizzarrini, who had designed some of Ferrari's most recent engines. For the rest of the car and to start up production, he hired two promising young engineers, Giampaolo Dallara and Giampaolo Stanzani. This was a considerable endeavour and time was short Nevertheless, when the 350 GTV, was presented it was already a masterpiece.

In retrospect, 1964 was an extraordinary year. The 350 GT was born. The immediate and almost inevitable offshoot of the 350 GT, of which 120 were built, was the 400 GT. Its engine was increased to a four-litre model and it featured the first gearbox designed in-house by Lamborghini. Based initially on the two-seater body, which was later developed into the 400 GT 2+2 with two occasional seats behind the two regular ones, the 400 GT reached the respectable overall production figure of 273 units.

1965-1966

Thus, by early 1965 the coupes from Sant'Agata were starting to be noticed. This was the first, great phase of the Lamborghini company, and one of its most prolific and creative periods. Between October 1965 and June 1966, the company presented an astonishing number of new models. Although cars like the 3500 GTZ (with a Zagato body), 350 Spyder by Touring and the Monza 400 by Neri and Bonacini were essentially prototypes, the seemingly extravagant chassis presented at the Lamborghini stand during the 1965 Turin Auto Show was destined to have a profound impact on the history of the company and on the entire automotive industry. The design of this chassis can be traced to the enormous enthusiasm of the two young engineers hired by Ferruccio to head the technical department of his factory. Both Dallara and Stanzani were young, passionate and enthusiastic. The trust that Lamborghini placed in them by putting them at the head of this new and extraordinary operation quickly spawned new and more advanced ideas in the minds of the two engineers. These ideas were based on the state of the art in race cars during this period, namely the two-seater sports car. This was indeed the concept of the two young engineers from Bologna: to put a barely tamed version of a full-fledged race car on the road, rather than a reinterpretation of the classic traditional GT. Their project, provisionally codenamed 400 TP, thus had the 4-litre 12 cylinder engine of the 400 GT transversely mounted behind the cockpit, with the gearbox and the differential united to the engine base in a single casting. The chassis was made of bent, welded sheet metal that was drilled to make it more lightweight.

As the story goes, when Lamborghini saw the project he approved it immediately, probably shocking the two very surprised designers, who certainly didn't dare hope for such a happy ending to their proposal. For once, however, Lamborghini was wrong in his



forecast: he declared that a car like that should be built because it would be good advertising for the make, even though it would clearly never sell more than fifty worldwide. Every so often, even the best make mistakes. The chassis was completed rather quickly, and it was exhibited at the Turin Auto Show in October 1965. One person who believed in that chassis, and above all in Lamborghini's capabilities was Nuccio Bertone. The Turin-based coach-builder was an expert on cars and engines, and as soon as he saw the chassis he approached Lamborghini and said, "I'm the one who can make the shoe to fit your foot". The two shook hands, and this marked the beginning of an extraordinary adventure.

It was up to Marcello Gandini to interpret Bertone's ideas, creating a unique and sensational body for the Bologna-built chassis, something that - in its blend of aggressiveness, elegance, originality and class - was to prove unrepeatable: the Miura was born.

No one actually knows why it was given this name. Above all, Ferruccio never wanted to disclose why he came up with the analogy to this breed of extraordinary and powerful bulls, a Spanish bullfighting legend. For someone like him, a man who was born under the sign of Taurus and had used this symbol for the proud logo of all his industrial activities, naming one of his cars after a fighting bull must have come naturally. If anything what is surprising is the fact that, in choosing the first name for his first car that would have enormous international impact, he instinctively chose the best and most appropriate name. According to experts, Miura bulls are by no means ordinary animals. They are the strongest of all fighting bulls but, above all, they are the most intelligent and fiercest ones, in the military sense of the word. In their books, bullfighters often talk about the unmistakable gaze of the Miura bull: the gaze of a true fighter, shrewd and powerful. The name was particularly apt and, with just five letters, it was also very immediate.

Work to ready the Miura immediately proceeded at a feverish pace. Gandini later recounted that from October to February, everyone worked around the clock, seven days a week, like madmen. A major event was coming up and no one wanted to miss the opportunity to present this new model: the 1966 Geneva Motor Show. And therein lay the miracle: that the chassis presented as a completely experimental prototype in the autumn of 1965 had become the most stunning road car in the world - in just four months. The Miura reigned supreme at the Motor Show in Geneva.

Enthusiasm was sky-high and, in a sensational coup, Lamborghini managed to raise it even higher by bringing the Miura to the Monte Carlo Grand Prix, the most exciting weekend for sports cars in general and for top-level Italian ones in particular. The orange Miura he parked in front of the Hotel de Paris that Saturday



afternoon attract so many oglers that they completely jammed the square in front of the Casino, arousing even more enthusiasm, interest and orders. It was, quite simply, a runaway success.

1967-1972

In October 1967, just three years after its hesitant debut in Turin, Lamborghini arrived at the Italian Auto Show with an extraordinary line-up. By this time, the range of cars was truly impressive. Officially, the 250 GT was still available, but it was actually out of production by this time. The golden duo of the 400 GT 2+2 coupe and the Miura galvanised experts, attracting them to the stand of the young Bologna company that, overnight, had become the darling of all car magazines. The prestigious Touring coachwork firm also presented one of its creations at this show, but it was its swansong: the original Flying Star, based on the front-engine chassis of the 400 GT.

The year was 1967, and Lamborghini could now look towards the future far more optimistically. The flood of orders for the Miura pumped new cash into his company, but above all it generated unparalleled interest and publicity. At least in this, Lamborghini had been right on target: a model like this was destined to overwhelm the minds and souls of all car buffs. Lamborghini thus became a symbolic name in the auto world, the emblem of excess, of going 'further' at all costs, of always doing more and better than any rival without preconceptions of conventional limitations. This configuration did not prevent numerous aficionados from buying and appreciating the 400 GT, a serious and mature model by this time, but the Miura gave the company unique prestige.

Once again, the year opened with an extraordinary appearance, and this time the theme - the brainchild of Bertone and Gandini - was an amazing four-seater with a rear engine mounted transversally behind the axle and sensational gull wing doors. The concept of vertically opening doors appeared for the very first time on this exotic vehicle dubbed the Marzal, and in the future this would gradually become the distinctive feature of the top-range Lamborghinis. The Marzal was not destined for production. This did not keep the Marzal from becoming the star of many auto shows and being celebrated on the covers of international magazines. And it was even chosen by Prince Rainier of Monaco, with Princess Grace at his side, to open the Monte Carlo Grand Prix that year. Once again, Ferruccio Lamborghini's flair for publicity proved to be exceptional.

While Dallara and Stanzani worked with the help of New Zealand test driver Bob Wallace to improve the car in production, Ferruccio - ever full of ideas - was pushing to show the world new models. It was not simply a matter of vanity: the presentation of the Miura Roadster at the Brussels Car Show in 1968 also helped test customer reactions to the possibility of introducing a



convertible to the range. Despite the professed enthusiasm, however, this model received relatively few orders and as a result, it remained in the glorious stage of the show prototype without any production follow-up. More importantly, however, the Islero GT was introduced in March of the same year. Officially presented to the press on 16 February 1968, at 6,450,000 lire it had a rather steep price tag. Nevertheless, its 300-hp engine made it an automobile that was worthy of its prestigious name, with an increasingly comfortable and well-finished interior. This was the GT that Lamborghini had dreamed of, the natural successor to the 400 GT that had gone out of production after the Touring coachwork company closed. The Islero GT was an impressive-looking, elegant 2+2 coupe featuring the same mechanics as the 400 it was replacing. However, Lamborghini's clientele had become accustomed to the stylish touches of the Miura and as a result, Islero GT sales were somewhat modest.

Instead, a far different kind of success was in store for the other important novelty presented at the Lamborghini stand at the Geneva Motor Show that year. The Espada, remotely derived from the Marzal line, was an extraordinary two-door model with a front-mounted engine and four very comfortable seats. Featuring a 2650mm wheelbase, it flaunted an utterly original and truly innovative style. It marked the fullest expression of what was probably Marcello Gandini's most successful period in terms of creativity. The Espada was nothing short of revolutionary and it was completely new and original, from the balance of the two main volumes to the large rear window, which was actually the hatch of the boot, and on the large flat bonnet that opened up as a single unit, the low and tapered waistline, the rear wheel housing that partially covered the wheels and the NACA ducts on the bonnet. Once again, countless orders were placed, because the Lamborghini name was now firmly established in the concept of the Espada was decidedly convincing.

Despite the logistical and organisational problems of the period, no one could stand idle. The production lines of the three models (Islero, Espada and Miura) had barely been started up in 1969 when improvements began to be considered. The most important operation undoubtedly involved approving an entire series of modifications, which were effectively required for the Miura, and incorporating them into a single new version. The outcome was the S version, created in November 1968. Its presentation was naturally a must at the Turin Auto Show that year, and the new Miura offered customers a 370-hp engine, i.e. 20 more than the previous version. It also featured electric windows, the whole interior was more luxurious by finished and options included air conditioning (an innovation bordering on the extravagant, at least in Europe) and natural leather upholstery. Only the chrome finish on a few minor exterior parts and a small metal S shaped like a lightning bolt, mounted on the tail panel of the car, distinguished the new version of the Miura from the old one, which therefore ended its career. The



Islero GT was subsequently elaborated, boosted in terms of power and refinished, and as a result the GTS version was brought out on 31 May 1969. The year 1979 was marked by the temporary stabilisation of the Lamborghini model range.

The Islero GT thus left the stage quietly, though only a relatively small number had been produced (225 between Islero GT and Islero GTS version). What remained were the Miura S and the Espada, restyled and updated in a Series II that was presented at the 1970 Brussels Motor Show, and their production gradually increased. This new series was much improved, was fitted with the 350-hp engine, more powerful ventilated brakes and a more conventional dashboard. It was a glorious year for this model, which represented an ideal winning post not only for the company but also for Ferruccio and the objectives he had set for himself at the start of this adventure. In 1970 alone, 228 Espadas were sold, an outstanding figure for such an expensive and important car.

Lamborghini insisted that it was essential to complement the four-seat Espada and the two-seat Miura with an 'in-between' model, a 2+2 that would represent the finest in the arena of the Italian Gran Turismo. Bertone responded with a model that was essentially the stylistic evolution of the Islero, taking up many elements from the Espada and thus - theoretically - a model that would incarnate its ideals. This was the Jarama. Despite its chic launch at the 1970 Geneva Motor Show, however, it failed to make the right impression on car buffs.

By this time, around the world Lamborghini was considered the symbol of excess, of something that went beyond the philosophy and designs of other automotive companies. When it built reasonable, rational cars that were almost normal, it did not respond to these criteria and thus did not achieve the expected success. The other great project that announced and presented in 1970 was another Lamborghini, but a radically new and 'different' one. It was the P250 Urraco once again, the name of a fighting bull. The Urraco featured a 2.5-litre engine specially designed by Stanzani, with single overhead camshaft timing system. It was built to criteria that would permit large scale production (by Italian sports car standards), it had a lovely line designed by Bertone, and - at least on paper - it offered excellent performance at a much lower price than the Miura.

To make this car, Lamborghini expanded the Sant'Agata factory, constructing a spacious new building behind the one already being used, thus adding nearly 500 square metres of new factory space. The basic assumptions couldn't have been better: the car, presented on time at the Turin Auto Show in October 1970, aroused enormous excitement and the orders poured in.

For the history of Lamborghini and for its devotees, the creation



of a racing Miura marked a very important moment, and this came about mainly through the commitment of New Zealand test driver Bob Wallace: the Jota. For once, the name of this car did not come from the world of bullfighting, but it had a Spanish flavour nonetheless, since the Jota is a typical dance in that country. The name change was highly significant: in fact, Wallace's work was not merely cosmetic, as was the case with many other designers. He instead created a race car that borrowed only the mechanical configuration from the Miura, particularly the engine transversely mounted in the mid-rear position, and the general lines of the body. Instead, the chassis was completely new, made of tubular elements and bent metal sheets, which were welded and glued for improved rigidity. The body was made of aluminium, the entire chassis had been significantly improved, and the engine power, substantially increased, could crank out 440 hp at 8500 rpm.

The car, thus modified and lightened to weigh just 890 kilograms offered outstanding performance, with acceleration from zero to 100 km/hour in just 3.6 seconds! Externally, the Jota could be recognised immediately because of its streamlined headlamps under Plexiglas covers, the broader wheel housings, particularly the rear ones, the elimination of the grilles on the front hood, the small sliding side windows and the distinctive magnesium alloy wheels. It was an unmistakable, ultra-fast and brutal car, the ideal prelude to Lamborghini's entry to the world of racing. Unfortunately, the Jota had no follow-up. Nevertheless, the Bologna entrepreneur, who in the meantime inaugurated other industrial activities in the sectors of hydraulics and other components, was not one to rest on his laurels. He continued to spur on his technical staff, who - truth be told - needed no encouragement, in order to introduce a complete range of modifications for the Miura (in part derived from the carmaker's experience with the Jota), thus creating the definitive and absolute version of this legendary model: the SV, presented at the Geneva Motor Show in 1971.

Despite this successful evolution, the SV exhibited at the 1971 Geneva Show virtually went unnoticed, and very few credited it with the importance that, over the years, this nearly perfect version of Lamborghini's super car would acquire. The reason was quite simple: everyone was distracted by an even more spectacular and extraordinary car that proved to be the true star, not only at the Lamborghini stand but throughout the entire show. It was a car created through a stroke of combined genius by Lamborghini and Bertone, which the company's trusty deputies Stanzani and Gandini brought to life in record time, as usual. This utterly spectacular model was the LP 500, better known as the 'Countach'.

This was a truly revolutionary car, starting with its line, which was the first thing that left all those who saw it at that Motor Show speechless with admiration. Its sleek and aggressive snout,



the flat windscreen connected seamlessly to the front bonnet on one end and the roof on the other, the roof that - in turn - continued over the engine hood, forming a single gradual curve that went from the front fenders to the tail panel of the body. This marked an innovative, astonishing and completely new stylistic concept. Once again, Lamborghini upset preconceived notions.

The changes that were taking place around Lamborghini, however, reflected the social situation around the world, particularly in Italy. Labour unions' unrest in that period created a difficult situation in all factories, particularly at engineering companies in northern Italy, in which the owner's control was openly contested and proper organisation became increasingly difficult. For Lamborghini, long accustomed to the direct, sometimes rough, somewhat paternalistic but attentive control of his factories, this new situation became intolerable. In 1972 he sold his majority stake to the Swiss Georges-Henri Rossetti, and the following year he sold his remaining shares to a friend, René Leimer. Thus, the company founder - the man who had been the driving force behind its extraordinary, vital explosion during the first eight years - left the scene for good.

1972-1980

The company continued to work at its regular pace. In 1972, the P250 Urraco, the 400 GT Jarama, the 400 GT Espada and the P400 Miura SV were in full production. That year, in an attempt to improve sales that were frankly quite disappointing until then, the Jarama had a 365-hp engine and was dubbed the Jarama S.

In 1972, the Urraco, which had experienced several initial slowdowns, was finally put into production. Almost inevitably, the S version also arrived in October of that year. In this case, the goal was not to enhance the car's performance but to improve its overall quality, which had been neglected in the haste to start production.

The following year, while waiting for the Countach prototype to be developed to a stage that would enable its production, the Espada was further modified and perfected, and the new series was presented in October 1972. New wheels as well as perfected detailing of the entire body, the dashboard, the central instrument panel and various components characterised this well-made Series III. This last series essentially represented the decisive peak in the evolution of this outstanding four-seater, which is still in great demand among Lamborghini fans around the world. Its production would reach the respectable figure of 1226 units, quite a large number for a carmaker of this size selling at top-level list prices.



The production model of the Countach was codenamed LP 400 because its V12 - positioned longitudinally behind the cockpit - was increased to an ideal displacement of 4 litres (3929 cc). This model debuted at the 1973 Geneva Motor Show.

Standard production of the Countach began at the end of 1973 with the bright-green model exhibited at the Paris Motor Show, which is now part of the permanent collection of the Lamborghini Museum. This was the first Countach featuring the large single front windscreen wiper. The model range for 1974 thus included the Countach, the Espada Series III, the Jarama S and the Urraco S.

In the meantime, the world was changing. The oil crisis sparked by the 1973 Arab-Israeli War created a climate of fear about petrol supplies. As a result, the big, fuel-guzzling super sports cars rapidly became passé. They were considered the expression of unjustifiable luxury, whose exploitation of too much of our planet's natural resources was no longer acceptable. These were extremist stances that were destined to pass, but at the time they created enormous difficulties for all the makers of this type of car. Given its market position at the top end of the super car segment, Lamborghini was dealt a particularly harsh blow and the company did its best to react. In an attempt to overcome these problems, two new Urraco models were presented. In effect, they were spin-offs of the P250 range: a two-litre model (P200), again with a single camshaft but this time with a lower engine displacement in deference to tax restrictions, and a more powerful and mature 3-litre model (P300), with double overhead camshaft timing system and the power raised to 250 hp. The gradually deteriorating social situation and the drop in sales made it necessary to streamline the production range.

The Jarama essentially went out of production, and at the 1974 Motor Show in Turin Bertone proposed an intriguing study based on the mechanics of the P300. The Bravo was a wedge-shaped coup with an unusual treatment of the front and rear hood, and the front and side windows were jointed without any visible posts. Lamborghini decided to work alongside Bertone to develop a Urraco model with a removable roof panel. Presented at the Geneva Motor Show in 1976, the Silhouette was an aggressive model with an unmistakable appearance. The Silhouette had the 3-litre 260 hp V8 engine of the Urraco P300, mid-mounted transversally behind the cockpit, and the body and chassis were made completely of steel.

The commercial and production difficulties were complicating the life of the company, leading the head of Lamborghini to seek outside collaboration in order to make better use of the equipment that, due to dropping sales, largely remained idle. The most significant cooperative effort came in 1976 with BMW Motorsport, which was headed by Jochen Neerpasch at the time. The contract



envisaged the design and subsequent production of a super sports car with the engine mounted behind the cockpit, based on concepts for which Lamborghini had more experience and a better image than anyone in the world.

Unfortunately, another event intervened, further complicating things. Following contacts made with military suppliers of off-road vehicles, and particularly with 'MTI' (Mobility Technologies International), the company owners decided to design and construct a vehicle that was completely different from the ones that had been designed at Sant'Agata until then: a full-fledged high-performance off-road vehicle offering maximum mobility on the roughest terrain, the Cheetah. Various technical and legal problems ultimately made it impossible to produce the Cheetah, as it required too much of an investment for the small Italian company. The project never got off the ground and, at the same time, the collaboration with BMW evaporated.

Production of the Espada ended in 1978, followed by the Urraco and, lastly, also the Silhouette in 1979. Thus, only the S version of the Countach - the one invented by Wolf - was still in production. There was nothing left to be done except to continue with this extraordinary model, which allowed the company to survive despite the fact that business was shrinking. In fact, between 1978 and 1982, a total of 237 units were delivered. For the purposes of comparison, 158 'normal' Countach LP400s were produced between 1973 and 1977.

Bertone still believed in the company, and in 1980 he presented an intriguing study for a completely open car based on the P300: the Athon. The name was intended as a 'hymn to the sun', as the car was completely open and had no roof whatsoever, but there was no follow-up to it. The company slid toward bankruptcy and then liquidation. By 1980, Lamborghini was considered finished.

1981-1987

Fortunately, the allure of these cars, flaunting a name that had now become a legend, coupled above all with the absolutely unrivalled aura of the Countach, aroused enormous interest in the company. As soon as it was put up for liquidation, it had a number of admirers lined up to take it over. The judge entrusted the company to two brothers, Jean-Claude and Patrick Mimran, the wealthy owners of a sugar empire in Senegal and, naturally, sports car lovers. The two brothers, assisted by their plenipotentiary in Sant'Agata, Emil Novaro, immediately set out to reconstruct the company. The 'Nuova Automobili Ferruccio Lamborghini SpA' company was thus formed in January 1981 and from that moment on, work was seriously underway again. One of the first decisions - an exquisitely technical one - was to hire engineer Giulio Alfieri as the company's technical director.



With this celebrated designer at the helm of the company and loyal staff members Lamborghini went to the Geneva Motor Show in March 1981. It exhibited a Miura, restyled by a Swiss company with debatable results, and the Countach S with its large rear wing. Also on display was the initial attempt to reinterpret the hefty off-road Cheetah, which had been modified extensively to avoid legal action threatened by FMC and was thus dubbed the LM. However, the most tangible and reassuring sign of the new path undertaken by Lamborghini came with the first appearance of the Jalpa. The injection of capital by the Mimran family finally made it possible to resume serious development work on the Countach, which had essentially remained the same since 1973, with the exception of wider mudguards and tyres for the S version. Alfieri increased the displacement of the classic 12-cylinder engine, bringing it to 4.7 litres to crank out 375 hp and thus recuperate the outstanding performance that had been sacrificed to some extent by the tyres and aerodynamic additions. This was the Countach 5000, whose look was virtually indistinguishable from the 4-litre S version.

The Mimran brothers also decided to insist in the direction - certainly innovative for the period - of large high-performance off-road vehicles. Also in 1982, the engine was judiciously moved in front of the cockpit, culminating in the prototype known as the LMA, an acronym that, according to different interpretations, may mean 'Lamborghini Motore Anteriore' or 'Lamborghini Militare Anteriore'.

Although it was costly, work continued to develop the off-road model, which became the LM 004. By this time, it had a colossal 7-litre front-mounted V12 engine and, for the first time, its top speed broke the barrier of 200 km/hour. Pirelli collaborated with Lamborghini to develop a new top-performing tyre that could be used on any terrain, from asphalt to the sands of the great African deserts. This would become the Pirelli Scorpion.

At the same time, work also proceeded on an in-depth technical update of the cars. In 1985, the Lamborghini stand at the Geneva Motor Show presented the new version of the Countach, the Quattrovalvole. Alfieri extensively redesigned the entire classic Lamborghini engine, which had first been put out nearly 22 years earlier. He further increased its displacement to add power, and by using heads with four valves per cylinder, the 5167-cc engine climbed to 455 hp at 7000 rpm, a power level that put the Countach well ahead of all its traditional rivals. After years of problems, evolutions, redesigns and modifications, Lamborghini's hefty off-road vehicle finally went into production: the year was 1986. The LM 002 mounted a V12 engine that was essentially the same one used for the Countach, giving up the idea of mounting the enormous 7-litre of the previous prototype.

Through the shrewd reconstruction work spearheaded by the Mimran brothers and Emil Novaro, the revival of Lamborghini was firmly



established by this time. The year 1987 was a positive one, with good sales of both the Countach and the Jalpa. In the meantime, orders started to roll in for the LM and development work continued on the whole line-up. The early prototypes of the Tipo 132, destined to become the successor to the Countach, began to circulate. In 1987, work was also undertaken to develop a car derived from the Jalpa, but with a canvas top: this was the Jalpa Spyder, also known as the Speedster. A prototype was built but the car never went into production, due to technical difficulties.

1987-1994

On 23 April 1987, 'Nuova Automobili Lamborghini SpA' was taken over by the US Chrysler company.

The American owners quickly settled in at Sant'Agata and a period of intense activity began, this time in close collaboration with a major automotive industry. The premises were good, although there were a few false steps at the beginning: the prototype of the Portofino. Production of the Quattrovalvole series stopped in 1988, with a total of 631 units. In the meantime, the company gained experience with composite materials and a special Countach, the Evoluzione, demonstrated the full potential of this project. Weight reduction permitted by these new materials, coupled with a more powerful engine achieved above all using new engine technologies management, offered extraordinary performance. Unfortunately, however, the Evoluzione never went into production.

Towards the end of 1987, the French Formula 1 team Larrousse asked Mauro Forghieri, the celebrated designer of Ferrari's finest models from the Sixties and Seventies, to create a new engine, and he turned to his good friends at Lamborghini with the proposal of embarking on the project together. After obtaining Chrysler's approval, Forghieri designed his engine, a V12 with a 3.5-litre capacity, the maximum displacement allowed by regulations. Ready within a matter of months, the new engine was officially demonstrated to the public in April 1988.

As a result, even a titled team like Lotus requested Lamborghini engines for the following season. Thanks also to this double supply of engines to two teams, the results for 1990 were nothing short of brilliant. At the end of the British Grand Prix, Bernard won an extraordinary fourth place and Suzuki placed sixth. The Hungarian Grand Prix was even more rewarding for the Lamborghini engines, which placed fifth, sixth and seventh, respectively with Warwick (Lotus), Bernard (Larrousse) and Donnelly (Lotus). Nevertheless, the best placement of the whole season came from Suzuki on his home turf at the Grand Prix in Japan, as he placed third and gave the company its first podium finish. This was the best placement ever achieved by a Lamborghini engine in all its seasons of activity.



Despite Forghieri's commitment, the American company's insensitivity to the financial problem led to a progressive decline in automotive performance and the 1991 season ended negatively, with the definitive withdrawal of the Modena F1 Team from the world championship. Now this lovely single-seater can also be admired at the Sant'Agata museum, and it represents one of the most important missed opportunities in the history of Lamborghini.

In the meantime, Lamborghini managed to make significant progress in renewing its model range of road vehicles. In order to celebrate the company's twenty-fifth anniversary, a commemorative version of the Countach was produced. The Anniversary was the praiseworthy final version of this glorious car, and needless to say, it was welcomed enthusiastically by customers, who purchased no less than 657 units. The Countach's successor was presented in 1990. The 132 was dubbed the Diablo, the name of a particularly fierce fighting bull of the nineteenth century, and it proved to be up to expectations. The Countach's follower could not be a conventional car, of course, and it had to be extreme, spectacular, forceful and uncommon: the Diablo, with its 492 hp generated by a 5.7-litre V12, was all this - and more.

Its designer is Luigi Marmiroli. In 1990, the Diablo was presented in the two-wheel drive version, but a four-wheel drive version was already in the wings, and from that point on this would become a distinctive feature of the top Lamborghinis. This version, named the Diablo VT for 'Viscous Traction', given the presence of a viscous coupling between the front and rear axles, was presented at the Geneva Motor Show in March 1993.

1994-1998

Chrysler's subsequent sudden decision to sell the Bologna company to a group of unknown Indonesian investors seems far more difficult to explain. This change of hands became official on 21 January 1994, destabilising the company management.

Despite these problems, the Diablo was developed and many collateral models were derived from it, some of which would prove to be very popular with certain consumer ranges. Some of the most interesting were the 1995 SV, a lighter and more powerful model that placed a premium on driving pleasure over comfort, and the VT Roadster with a Targa-style removable roof, which was instantly a hit, particularly in the United States. Other special editions, such as the SE, Jota, Monterey, Alpine and many others, were derived from these models. Also in 1995, Giorgetto Giugiaro demonstrated the Calà to the trade press, and this was another car with a V10 engine designed to replace the Jalpa. Interesting as it may have been, however, it never left the prototype stage. In 1996,



a single-make championship was also inaugurated thanks to the organisation of a series of races to be held in Europe, with regulations similar to the ones followed by established international championships. A circuit version of the Diablo - the SVR - was made for this championship. In 1999, its on-road evolution was announced (the GT an ultra-sporty road version produced in a limited series of 83 units) as well as the circuit model for the new cycle of races for this trophy GTR, with a 6-litre 590-hp engine, produced in a limited series of 32 units).

In the meantime, Luigi Marmiroli left Lamborghini for personal reasons and Massimo Ceccarani took his place. The need to develop new models and thus to make major investments along these lines was evident. By this time, the Diablo was more than seven years old, a very long time in this difficult market.

Lamborghini turned to several top-level carmakers, including Audi, to request their technical collaboration. The initial idea was to ask for the 8-cylinder engine of the 'A8' flagship to power the future 'baby Lamborghini', but Audi's technical staff went back to company headquarters in Germany with very positive reports on the status of the company, its newfound good management and the professional level of the development work being done on its cars.

The first letter of intents between Audi and Lamborghini was signed on 12 June 1998, and the contract for the complete and definitive transfer of all the shares from the last Indonesian shareholder to the German company was completed on 27 July of the same year, just 50 days later.

1998-Nowadays

The first major innovation came in 2001 with the successor to the Diablo: the Murciélago. It is almost superfluous to point out that this new model was also named after a famous, fierce fighting bull. The fact that this Spanish word actually means 'bat' only serves to augment the dark, almost nocturnal magnetism of this magnificent new car. Its power has also been boosted to 580 hp, and this obviously increases its speed, muscle and acceleration. What has been augmented above all is the sensation of the overall quality of the car, with a level of finishing touches that is even better than the already excellent results of the last Diablos. Sales have immediately gone well, and Lamborghini can count on selling each one it makes, as these cars are reserved by customers well in advance.

The Murciélago is not destined to be alone, but during the wait for its companion in the Sant'Agata model range, several variants have been studied. The first one - and indubitably the most spectacular - is a concept car, a 'Barchetta' version presented at the 2003 Detroit Auto Show. It is not simply a Murciélago without the roof, but is essentially a new car, with its beguiling



treatment of the rear bonnet and lateral posts. For the time being it is a concept model, but a modified version will go into production.

The other brand-new item is also being unveiled in 2003, but in this case at the Geneva Motor Show: the Gallardo. It is equipped with a 500-hp 50-valves V10 engine, permanent four-wheel drive and a top speed of well over 300 km/h. Automobili Lamborghini have decided to baptize their latest model with the name of a fighting bull's breed: the Gallardo (pron.: ga:yàrdo). Designed to redefine its segment as the best high performance sports car and driving behaviour that fits its driver in every situation. The Gallardo is the synthesis of a true sports car that can be used on an every day basis. While matching these two apparently conflicting objectives, the guideline for Lamborghini engineers has been to fulfil the necessary comfort requirements without any compromise in the performances expected of a true Lamborghini car. The choices for engine, transmission, space frame and body, suspensions, brakes and electronics are then all in line with such an objective. The result is a compact (length 4.3 m) 2-seater high performance car (maximum speed well over 300 km/h), that can be driven with pleasure both on race tracks and on long distance journeys on country and city roads.

On the occasion of the celebrations for its 40th anniversary, the House of the Raging Bull offers a special, limited edition series of its supercar Murciélago: the Murciélago 40th Anniversary Edition. A limited amount of 50 numbered cars in the exclusive Verde Artemis (jade green) colour is produced in 2003 and sold predominantly in Europe, the United States and Japan.

Presented as a concept car in 2003 in Detroit - where it generated significant interest among Italian supercar enthusiasts - the production version of the Murciélago Roadster makes its official debut at the Geneva Show 2004. The Murciélago Roadster version builds on the extreme and exclusive features of the Coupé thus confirming it as a real "icon" of the Lamborghini brand. In creating the Roadster, the designer Luc Donckerwolke did not restrict himself to "cutting off" the roof of the Coupé. He bestowed it with its own sensational appearance, making the Murciélago Roadster a truly unique model. A model which in series production has retained all the emotional impact of the initial concept itself.

The engine is obviously the Lamborghini 12 cylinder 60° V, with a displacement of 6192 cc, producing 580 hp (426 kW) at 7500 rpm and a maximum torque of 650 Nm at 5400 rpm. The engine features the Lamborghini L.I.E. electronic engine management system. The standard gearbox is a 6-speed manual, like the Coupé. As an optional feature, a 6-speed "e-Gear" automatic version is available. There is also Lamborghini permanent four-wheel drive on



the Roadster, with a central viscous coupling and limited slip rear and front differentials (45% rear, 25% front).

On the occasion of the 2003 Motor Show in Frankfurt Lamborghini shows for the first time a race version of its highly acclaimed super sports car, the Lamborghini Murciélago. Named Murciélago R-GT, Lamborghini is developing the competition car jointly with race experts Reiter Engineering and mother company Audi's sports division, Audi Sport. The new Murciélago R-GT will offer Lamborghini clients a highly competitive car to participate in professional motorsport events on an international level. With the Lamborghini Murciélago R-GT clients can compete in national and international race events such as the European FIA GT Championship or the American LeMans Series in the United States.

In July 2005 it is presented the Special Edition of the Gallardo, the Gallardo SE which is limited to 250 units and is characterized by a two-tone body paint, an even more sporty interior and technical improvement.

The House of the Raging Bull showed the first driveable prototype of the Lamborghini "Concept S" at the Monterey Concorso Italiano and at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance in the USA in August 2005. The Lamborghini "Concept S" design study premiered at the previous' Geneva Motorshow as an extreme and spectacular expression of the Lamborghini brand. It was created at the Centro Stile Lamborghini in Sant'Agata Bolognese by Luc Donckerwolke, who drew inspiration from the classic single-seater racing cars of the past. The astonishing amount of public interest at the Geneva Motor Show prompted the decision to build a driveable prototype in order to further gauge potential customer demand.

Two years after the launch of the Coupé version of the Gallardo, Automobili Lamborghini presents the new Lamborghini Gallardo Spyder at the Frankfurt Motor Show in September 2005. This latest addition brings the marque's range of supercars to four models. The Gallardo Spyder is not just an open-top version of the Coupé, but is a completely new model. It has an attractive new design and a unique system for opening and closing the fabric roof that utilises the engine compartment to store the folded roof. The Lamborghini Centro Stile and engineers from the Research and Development team have worked in close partnership to develop this new design and to bring these clean and sharp lines on the road. The new Lamborghini Gallardo Spyder is powered by the 90° V-engine familiar from the 2006model- year Lamborghini Gallardo and the Lamborghini Gallardo SE. It is a ten-cylinder unit with a displacement of 4,961 cc and a maximum output of 520 bhp (382 kW) at 8000 rpm. At more than 100 bhp per litre, its specific output is on a par with that of racing cars. The new six-speed gearbox has shorter ratios. More specifically, compared to the original version, first gear is 27% lower, second gear is 13%. Third, fourth and fifth gears are all 6% lower, while sixth gear is 3.5%



lower. The six-speed gearbox operates with the latest double- and triple-cone synchromesh.

The optimized gearshift linkage is user-friendly and permits precise, rapid gear shifts. The Lamborghini Gallardo Spyder can also be specified with 'e.gear', an electronically controlled, sequential gear shift.

As with every Lamborghini, the Gallardo Spyder adopts the stylistic principles of purity, athleticism and sharpness. The Spyder is not just an open-top version of the Coupé, it sets forth the tradition as seen with Murcielago Coupé and Roadster creating a self standing model.

January 2006: the House of the Raging Bull brings back a legendary name from the company's past with the breathtaking "Lamborghini Miura Concept".

The "Lamborghini Miura Concept" will be the first Lamborghini vehicle to be conjured from the talented pen of Walter de' Silva, Head of Lamborghini Design. de' Silva's other design responsibilities include serving as Head of Design of Audi Group. Automobili Lamborghini anxiously begins the New Year with the highly anticipated unveiling of the "Lamborghini Miura Concept," a modern interpretation of the Lamborghini Miura, currently celebrating its 40th Anniversary.

The new concept model, which as of now, is strictly a concept with no firm date set for its production launch, is the inspired creation of de' Silva, the world-famous Italian designer. He has redesigned every aspect of the car while remaining absolutely faithful to the original form. The new car retains the extraordinary purity of line characteristic of the original Miura: the designer's intervention has been defined by refining the contours and eliminating any superfluous detail in order to enhance the clean, simple lines and perfectly-balanced proportions of the original that so impassioned enthusiasts. The restyling of the lower part of the body takes the car's structural strength and aerodynamic performance to new heights, without disturbing the delicate aesthetic equilibrium.

In 2011 the new model V12 was released: the Aventador LP 700-4. It is the successor of the Murciélago and with its unique design and innovative technology package represents a benchmark in the world of super sports cars. In the same year three special series were introduced: Gallardo Bicolor, Gallardo Tricolor, dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy, the Super Trofeo Stradale, inspired by the Super Trofeo participating in the Lamborghini Blancpain Super Trofeo championship, and the Gallardo LP 550-2 coupé and spyder, with rear wheel drive.



In 1986 Lamborghini launched the first luxury SUV with the legendary LM 002 and in April 2012 the new version of a big high-performance SUV was introduced. The Urus concept was presented at the Beijing Motor Show and fascinated for its power and elegance. Moreover, in November 2012 the roadster version of the Aventador was announced. This makes fans' hearts beat and confirms the charm of the cars that have been produced since 1963 in Sant'Agata Bolognese.