



### **Espada 400 GT: the legendary V12 Lamborghini**

#### **In a year full of V12 celebrations, find out about the first four-seat Lamborghini**

*Sant'Agata Bolognese, 27 June 2022* - In 2022 Lamborghini is celebrating the V12: the legendary 12-cylinder engine that has powered its most iconic cars for almost 60 years. They include the Espada 400 GT, which was the first four-seat vehicle by Lamborghini and was its biggest selling model for years. Encapsulating an exceptional approach to technical innovation, thanks to the front-mounted 4-liter Lamborghini V12 engine it was always an extremely fast grand tourer despite the step up in size.

The "pure" V12 combustion engine in its final form will go out of production before the end of 2022, when the last Aventador Ultimae<sup>1</sup> is made. From next year, the heir to the Aventador will be fitted with a new plug-in hybrid version of the V12 engine.

#### **Ferruccio Lamborghini aimed to produce the fastest, most luxurious and comfortable grand tourer**

Ever since the start of his venture into automobile manufacturing, company founder Ferruccio Lamborghini stated his objective very clearly. He wanted to make the best grand tourer around: a sports car that was not only fast but also comfortable and luxuriously finished. Presented at the Geneva Motor Show in March 1968, the Espada 400 GT perfectly embodied this idea for over a decade. The Espada could comfortably seat four adults and had more space for both luggage and passengers than the 400 GT 2+2 (its predecessor) and the Islero 400 GT 2+2. In addition, the Espada featured truly outstanding finishing, with generous amounts of leather and other refined materials, as well as the option of fitting air conditioning. Power steering was introduced as an option in 1969 and it was included as standard from 1972 onwards. A version with automatic transmission was available from 1974.

#### **Taking the V12 engine to 4 liters**

The technical cornerstone of the Espada was the 60° V12 engine that was first produced in 1963 with a displacement of 3.5 liters, which had already been increased to 4 liters (3929 cc) in 1964. It is a remarkable example of engine development technologies, and it was capable of delivering 325 hp at 7200 rpm when it was first fitted in the Espada. This increased to 350 hp at 7500 rpm in the Espada Series II, which was presented in 1970.

Fed by six Weber 40 DCOE side-draft carburetors, the V12 had a compression ratio of 9.5:1 (which increased to 10.7:1 from the Series II onwards) and two chain-driven overhead camshafts per bank. It weighed just 232 kg thanks to substantial use of aluminum to make not only the cylinder head but also the crankcase and the pistons. It was front-mounted in a position that was slightly further

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<sup>1</sup> Aventador LP780 Ultimae Coupé and Ultimae Roadster Fuel consumption combined: 18.0 l/100km ; CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions combined: 442 g/km (WLTP)



## Story-Heritage

forward compared to the previous Lamborghini 350/400 GT engines, in order to make the interior roomier. Thanks to the large opening below the aluminum hood, it was easily accessible.

The chassis was based on that of the 400 GT but it was lengthened so that the wheelbase reached 2650 mm and it was also widened, with the wheel track increasing to 149 cm. It had four-wheel independent suspension, with double wishbones and coil springs. In November 1968, an Espada "Lancomat" with hydropneumatic suspension went on display at the Turin Motor Show. The system was made available on demand, but in the end it was chosen by very few owners.

The Espada was an extremely fast grand tourer that was capable of reaching a top speed of between 245 and 260 km/h and keeping up with the sportier Miura in most conditions.

### **The Espada's commercial success**

When it was first unveiled, the Espada was the fastest four-seat car in the world. Featuring boxy shapes as part of a highly innovative design by Carrozzeria Bertone, it proved to be a long-lasting commercial success. Its versatility and roomy interiors - despite a height of just 119 cm - meant that it was suitable for much more frequent use, thus significantly expanding the customer base. A total of 1226 cars were produced across the three series: 176 of the Espada 400 GT Series I between 1968 and 1969, 578 of the Espada 400 GTE Series II between 1970 and 1972, and 472 of the Espada 400 GTS Series III between 1972 and 1978.

### **The Espada VIP with a mini-bar and a Brionvega television**

The Espada VIP was presented in 1971. It was based on the Espada 400 GTE Series II and just 12 of the vehicles were made. The first models in this special series of cars came in a special orange hue and had orange and black leather upholstery. Later vehicles were made in other color combinations. Inside, the Espada VIP had a mini-bar and a refrigerator in the rear side panels and a Brionvega Algol 11 television on top of the transmission tunnel to keep the passengers in the rear seats entertained. The VIP is one of the most sought-after models among Espada collectors today.

### **Paul McCartney's Espada made a splash**

One of the most famous Lamborghini Espada owners is Sir Paul McCartney. The former Beatle was a Lamborghini enthusiast and he bought a right-hand-drive 1972 Espada Series III with manual transmission, red paintwork and a red leather interior. His wife Linda often drove the car, but one time it rolled into a nearby pond after she left it in neutral and forgot to put on the handbrake. It was hauled out of the water after three days and later sold to new owners, who went on to use it for a number of years. Subsequently, it ended up being part of the "decor" in an English pub. It was sold to an unknown enthusiast in 2005 and it is thought that it may now be in Austria.

### **From VIP owners to the silver screen**



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Many celebrities have expressed their fondness for the Espada over the years. For example, since 1986 the famous American television host Jay Leno - who has always been a car enthusiast - has owned one of the very first Espada Series 2 models, which was made in 1969. EVO magazine founder Harry Metcalfe has also owned an Espada for many years. It is a right-hand-drive 1970 Series II and he took part with it in the Espada and Islero 50th Anniversary initiative organized by Automobili Lamborghini Polo Storico in 2018.

There have been numerous films featuring an Espada, including around 50 significant titles. The most famous among fans of the model is the 1973 Italian movie "Flatfoot" starring Carlo Pedersoli, who was better known as Bud Spencer. Largely filmed in Naples and the surrounding area, it sees the protagonist pursuing an Espada uphill around a series of hairpin bends in a long chase sequence that ends outside the Church of Sant'Antonio a Posillipo.

Photos and videos: [media.lamborghini.com](https://media.lamborghini.com)

Information on Automobili Lamborghini: [www.lamborghini.com](https://www.lamborghini.com)



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