LAMBORGHINI
the collection

Source: Lamborghini 2011

To understand a Lamborghini, you must understand the land that generated it. You need to think of a tree and examine its roots. And in this case, they are firmly embedded in the land that, more than any other place in the world, has an instinctive love for high-class, spirited engines. This is a stretch of the Po valley that is shaped like the perfect 'golden triangle', touching Sant'Agata, Modena and Maranello, and it is where the finest cars in the world are made. It's a matter of blood, experience and sensitivity, or perhaps it's pure and simple passion. It is no accident that revolutionary concepts in style and form were spawned here, and they are concepts that elsewhere, even within enormous companies, were never even imagined.

Everything stems from the hot-blooded nature of these people, from this grassy, fertile terrain and the long secondary roads that cut through farmland. In the silence of hot summer days, these engines rend the air of the lower Po valley like sirens, and everyone turns around to see what's passing through. These roads, these long, straight secondary roads that shoot like arrows across the Emilia plains, are what have formed the DNA of these formidable engines. For these cars seem to have been crafted simply to entice you to floor the accelerator and delight in the sound of the loveliest, most musical twelve cylinders in the world: the ones from Sant'Agata Bolognese.

The Lamborghini Museum is a natural expression of this love. Established by the new owners of this glorious make, the German Audi Group, it was built in a matter of months. It is distinguished by a daring architectural design that nevertheless respects the building that houses the museum, the historic first block where the great adventure of the bold little automotive company began.

The itinerary that winds its way through the two floors of this museum fully illustrates the complex, sometimes intricate and often extraordinary story of Lamborghini. All the main models are here, neatly lined up and in perfect condition. Above all, this is a very rich and modern museum. When you consider the number of models produced at Sant'Agata and the number of cars exhibited in the museum, it dawns on you that this is truly one of the most representative and complete factory museums in the world. All the cars that have made Lamborghini great are here, either permanently or on a rotating basis, but there are also many other important aspects, alongside a large number of the secondary or lesser-known ones. Everything that is significant to the devotees of the 'Lamborghini world' is exquisitely represented here. The passion that inspired those who set up the museum is meaningfully reflected by the number of illustrative panels, photographs, engines, small-scale models and even historic shop equipment. Directly or indirectly, all of this testifies to the long path that Lamborghini has travelled in these forty difficult, glorious years.

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.

In reality, Lamborghini had already done his homework and, as usual, he had done it quite well. He had taken apart his own prestigious cars and discovered that some of the spare parts on these cars were exactly the same ones he used for his tractors, except for the fact that when they were mounted on those cars they tripled in price. The manufacturer's mark-up was obviously enormous. While Ferruccio – the man – was stubborn enough to argue with Ferrari, Lamborghini – the industrialist – was already pondering these enormous profit margins and what could be earned with this business, aside from pure and simple prestige.

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-lit 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. Their combined age was barely fifty at the time, but they were talented and enthusiastic, and they had a natural instinct when it came to thoroughbred cars. They needed it, because their boss was a man who was almost brutally honest, and from the very start he clearly detailed exactly what he expected from his new car. In a 1963 statement given to Italian journalist Athos Evangelisti, he observed: "… in the past, I bought some of the most famous Gran Turismo cars, and found several flaws. Too hot, not very comfortable or not fast enough, or not finished to perfection. Now I want to make a flawless GT. Not a technical marvel. A very normal, very conventional but perfect car."

This was a considerable endeavour and time was short. Nevertheless, when the 350 GTV was presented it was already a masterpiece. It responded perfectly to what the company founder had declared, at least as far as the mechanical side was concerned. From a practical standpoint, however, the body by Franco Scaglione, a widely admired designer who had also worked for Carrozzeria Bertone, was not as well conceived. The line was indubitably dramatic, but it was more worthy of a Batmobile than a GT, flaunting an incredible pointed snout, enormous glassarea, the very long rear window, which was one of the trademarks of this designer but that illogically reduced the opening of the boot, and an overall surface treatment and detailing more appropriate for a show prototype than a car to be put into production. On the testbench, however, the 3.5-litre engine proved it could easily put out 360 hp, with a roar worthy of the top racing V12. The independent suspensions of the GTV were an innovation for the GTs of the era, and all the components, from the gearbox to the brakes, were selected from outside suppliers with the sole intention of obtaining the very best on the market.

The debut of the Lamborghini in a narrow but fiercely competitive market – shared until then by Ferrari, Maserati, Aston Martin, Jaguar and just a handful of others – certainly created a stir. Sceptics seriously doubted Lamborghini's ability to go ahead with this project without any specific experience in this difficult field. But those who knew him well simply commented: wait and see, because Lamborghini knows what he's doing.

In retrospect, 1964 was an extraordinary year. As soon as he realised that the body designed by Scaglione had been received rather coldly, Lamborghini's first move was to have the design redone completely to make it more attractive to the public, and he thus turned to the famous Milan-based Carrozzeria Touring. The changes that Felice Bianchi Anderloni made to the original design created a line that became a classic: original but without being extreme. The 350 GT was born, and the Lamborghini Museum has an absolutely perfect specimen on exhibit.

This speedy two-seater Berlinetta had everything it took to attract customers, although sales were naturally rather modest at first. Not everyone was bold enough to abandon the better-known established makes like Ferrari and Maserati to hand a substantial sum of money over to a constructor who, until then, had been famous only for his excellent tractors. Word had to get around, a few of the models had to be seen in circulation, and Lamborghini, the tireless promoter of his own company, did not hesitate to go about with his creation to show it off to the world. Several journalists immediately understood its worth and readily expressed their enthusiasm about the new car. In the July 1965 issue of "Car", Henry Manney III, one of the leading American journalists, stated in no uncertain terms that "this car will be a headache for Ferrari and that the Lamborghini is the most desirable sports car I've ever driven". This was a considerable compliment, considering that Manney, who wrote for a number of prestigious American and English periodicals at the time, was a Ferrari customer

himself and owned a 250 GTO. The immediate and almost inevitable offshoot of the 350 GT, of which 135 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.

Thus, by early 1965 the coupes from Sant'Agata were starting to be noticed. Moreover, several aficionados also began to realise that under the rather extravagant chassis, which broke from the classic standards of famous coachwork companies, there was outstanding mechanical quality: in short, this was a fast car that also offered comfort on long trips. Sales gradually started to increase, although these figures were obviously small, given the elite target.

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, a concept that was well represented by an automobile that would also become a legend: the Ford GT40. This car had completely broken with the tradition of the Fifties, represented by Jaguar, Maserati, Ferrari and Aston Martin, with their big engines mounted in front of the car in a tubular chassis finished with a lightweight aluminium body. All this was revolutionised by the arrival of cars with a mid-rear engine, assembled on a chassis made of bent and welded sheet metal. This achieved excellent weight distribution, outstanding structural rigidity, and the possibility of highly sophisticated integrations between the various chassis components and the mechanical parts.

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, provisional zly 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. Unfortunately, at the beginning of 1965 all this seemed to be little more than a project, without any hope for practical application. Lamborghini himself had continuously repeated and emphasised that he was not interested in futuristic or extravagant projects: he simply wanted to make a normal, ultra-fast and flawless car. His engineers instead found the courage to propose a car that, at least in appearance, went in the opposite direction. It was potentially a very fast car, but by the same token it was bound to be a noisy one – one that had to be tested and would almost certainly not be fault-free – and yet it was an exciting and ultra-modern car.

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. As was always the case with Lamborghini items during that period, it was viewed with a mixture of curiosity, interest, incredulity and, in some cases, even outright diffidence. Many reiterated that, once again, Lamborghini had indeed put normal cars into production, but that chassis! The mechanics! No: that odd-looking chassis drilled like an aeroplane, with that engine set behind the cockpit, would never, ever go into production.

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. The head of Bertone's design department, Giorgetto Giugiaro, had just left the company to establish his own firm, Ital Design, and his position had been filled by a young designer the age of Dallara and Stanzani,

Marcello Gandini. Thus, it was up to 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. However, Lamborghini had never met Don Antonio Miura, and this heightened the mystery surrounding the choice of this name. Be that as it may, Miura himself, who initially voiced his disapproval over the use of this name for an Italian car without his permission, was later very pleased about the choice, hosting Lamborghini a number of times at his magnificent ranch near Seville.

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. In this case, the enormous and inevitable problems involved in constructing any prototype were magnified by the fact that the car then had to go into production immediately. Therefore, any solutions that could not be applied immediately for the road model had to be abandoned. It was a colossal struggle and yet, because of that juncture of positive energy that blesses men's work every so often and elevates it to a level far above everyday routine, everything fell into place. The line of the Miura came out perfectly from the very outset, the prototype was assembled virtually without any problems, the testing pointed to the need for just a few minor changes. 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. Fewer and fewer claimed that such an advanced car would never go into production, and they had to veil their scepticism, muttering under their breath, because everyone who saw the Miura was simply ecstatic. The orders started to flood into the offices of Ferruccio and his sales director, Ubaldo Sgarzi. 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 attracted so many oglers that they completely jammed the square in front the Casino, arousing even more enthusiasm, interest and orders. It was, quite simply, a runaway success.

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 350 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 this was its swansong: the original Flying Star II, based on the front-engined chassis of the 400 GT, was the company's last car before it went bankrupt. Thus, one of the most prestigious Italian firms disappeared and a part of its extraordinary historic heritage was lost, at least in part.

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 or 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 gullwing 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. In order to stay within the predefined dimensions, its mechanical features differed from the high-power and ultra-sophisticated kind to which Lamborghini had already accustomed its clients. Mounted behind the rear axle was an engine that was just half the size of the company's classic V12. It thus had a 2-litre straight-six cylinder engine with a power rating of about 180 hp – clearly not up to the performance expectations for a car bearing this logo. 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.

After all this uproar, however, it was time to get to work and reap the fruits of these image-making coups. The year 1967 was also one marked by the beginning of real production of the Miura, sacrifices and the tough commitment to transform this brilliant concept into a real automobile. Not surprisingly, these first specimens showed their teething troubles. It took a number of modifications to turn the first Miura into a satisfactory car, although the customers themselves were unconcerned. This remarkable car immediately became a symbol of wealth, first and foremost. Very expensive cars – like today's Murciélago but requiring far more maintenance and attention. And then it was also an expression of youth, or at least of a truly young spirit: the Miura was very low, so that getting in and out of it essentially required the agility of a gymnast, and only an all-out sports car enthusiast would willing undergo a workout like this.

Above all, however, it was the most fashionable car of its day, essentially equivalent to the Mini, albeit at the other end of the price scale. It was a car that the very wealthy simply had to have, because it was a symbol, for it was a car that – like no other – expressed the audacity, gusto for living and freedom to travel that characterised the era. The motorways that had just been constructed were perfect: straight, empty and without any speed limits. The Miura could clock 280 km/hour, an amazing speed in a country like Italy that was still populated by a handful of cars such as the Fiat 500 and 600 and, for wealthier car owners, the 1100 and the Giulietta. These were the years the miniskirt burst onto the fashion scene, expressing a new *joie de vivre*. The explosive and carnal personality of the Miura perfectly reflected this revolution in how people dressed and thought, and like its bold colours – ultra-modern, absolutely new and matchless – it became part of an era. An orange or acid-green Miura darting through the sparse grey-coloured traffic of the era was akin to a shark in a goldfish tank: it made any other car invisible. Almost inevitably, overnight it became the favourite among playboys, film stars, industrialists, musicians and royalty around the world: anyone who really counted drove a Miura, or at least had one on order. The Shah of Persia, Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin were just a few of the loyal customers who bought this car, and Lamborghini became a familiar name to them.

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 Jslero 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. Constructed by men who had also worked for Touring, like Mario Marazzi, the Jslero 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 stylistic touches of the Miura and as a result, Jslero 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 2650 mm 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 to 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 and the concept of the Espada was decidedly convincing.

This time, however, Ferruccio seemed to have bitten off more than he could chew. The in-house technical team and the company's suppliers, workers and employees could barely keep up with this explosion of activity, for which everything virtually had to be made from scratch. Until the Miura phenomenon exploded in the first half of 1966, the firm was working as any as hard engineering company in the area. Subsequently, however, the company had to work at a dizzying pace and everyone had to double their efforts, while also dividing their attention among several models. This inevitably triggered a series of problems that was reflected in the longer time it took to produce these cars and in the growing impatience of customers, who – now that they had seen the future of sports cars – did not want to wait too long for the Lamborghini they had ordered.

The bottleneck created by the transformation of prototypes into road cars undoubtedly represented the main obstacle to the company's financial success. In 1968, Lamborghini managed to deliver a total of 37 Espadas and 187 Miuras, plus a few Jsleros – and that was it. Certainly not much to back the financial efforts of the company founder, who was nevertheless quite confident, and rightly so: in less than five years, the automotive company he had founded was already a legend.

Despite the logistical and organisational problems of the period, no one could stand idle. The production lines of the three models (Jslero, 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.

But Miura S wasn't the only Lamborghini novelty. Ferruccio had never concealed his admiration for the comfort offered by Citroën cars. As a result, on the Espada he offered an option that was unheard of at the time, namely a hydropneumatic suspension system, inspired by the one made by the French automaker, named Lancomatic. This was indubitably a bold initiative, because it strived to offer a truly superior level of comfort for the company's four-seater. Naturally, this option was destined to have very little success, as was the case with the automatic transmission, which was also offered as an option on this car. Nevertheless, this detail underscores the quest for excellence underlying the research done on the various models. The Jslero was subsequently elaborated, boosted in terms of power and refinished, and as a result, the GTS version was brought out on 31 May 1969. Despite its performance features, the 350-hp engine, the car's overall comfort and its alluring lines, the Jslero was overshadowed by the Espada and, above all, by the Miura, and it was too close to them in price not to suffer because of this.

The year 1970 was marked by the temporary stabilisation of the Lamborghini model range. The Jslero thus left the stage quietly, though only a relatively small number had been produced (225 between Jslero and Jslero 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.

However, not everything turns out as it should. 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 Jslero, 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. It was a powerful, distinctive and well-finished car, but perhaps it lacked that touch of daring, the spectacular lines of a true masterprice. In a certain sense, the Jarama was the perfect child of the Seventies: a bit angular with a straight and clear-cut roof panel, it gave the overall impression of a certain lack of balance between the front and rear forms. The influence of some of Pininfarina's projects is evident nonetheless, particularly in the tail, giving the car an air of overall elegance. Like the Jslero, though, it did not achieve the hoped-for success. 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, once again, a transverse-mounted rear engine, once again an extremely sporty line with a powerful visual impact. This time, however, the target was a broader market and a vaster clientele. In fact, the Urraco featured a 2.5-litre engine specially designed by Stanzani, with single overhead camshaft distribution. 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. As was the case with the Miura, the public was highly enthusiastic over the new Lamborghini and this time, there was no perplexity over a somewhat obscure make or an overly high price that would discourage potential buyers. Sales immediately went well.

In the meantime, luck continued to smile on the Miura. The clear improvement in its overall quality, which came about with the S version, bolstered its market position. While Lamborghini continued to produce as fast as possible, it simply couldn't keep up with the orders – in the hundreds – received from around the world. The prototype of the open Miura, the Roadster, was sold to an American company specialising in zinc (ILZRO), and parts made of zinc replaced all the components deemed suitable for this treatment. As a result, the ILZRO Roadster could be used as a travelling ad for this company. Incidentally, this car still exists. However, the year 1970 also brought in several innovations that could easily be considered minor and yet were very important. In October, a special VIP version of the Espada was presented, with a range of luxury finishes that were unusual for the period, such as air conditioning, a bar and a television.

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! Moreover, its road holding was improved by stiffening the chassis, using racing type suspensions, widening the wheelbase and fitting racing tyres on special Campagnolo wheels. 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. Once its experimental factory use was over, the only specimen that was built was sold to a dealer in northern Italy, who in a matter of hours managed to demolish it in a spectacular crash. Thus, one of the most exciting elements from the early years of Lamborghini's history was lost forever.

In 1971, Lamborghini was at the peak of its success. In less than eight years, Ferruccio had accomplished his goal: from nothing, he had created a car factory that was not only famous around the world, but had also become nothing short of a legend. His cars, and particularly the Miura, had achieved such enormous status that they had outshone all their most famous rivals, first and foremost the ones from Maranello – and without investing a penny in racing. Lamborghini didn't believe that racing helped improve sports cars or increase sales, and so far the facts had certainly proven him right.

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. Lower and broader, with wider tyres and an engine tuned up to 385 hp, the SV was as fast as it was beautiful. The use of heavier gauge sheet metal for the chassis – which was thus sturdier – the fine-tuned suspensions, and the long-awaited separation of the engine oil and the gearbox lubricant, made this version the most successful, fastest and best-performing car of the entire series.

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 supercar 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. It went against everything that had been done until then, proceeding along its own course that was completely removed from what others were doing. Indeed, others found themselves breathlessly following the little Bologna company, yet at the same time they were increasingly left out of the limelight.

The Geneva Countach was still a prototype, but everyone knew it would go into production. There was no doubt about it this time, even though its five-litre V12 engine, perhaps an overly optimistic expansion of the classic 4-litre model, subsequently had to be scaled back. And then there was the difficulty of the optimum development of this intricate new transmission: the gearbox was mounted longitudinally in front of the engine, and from gearbox the propshaft reached the differential through the engine block. No matter: the Countach was a breathtaking, dazzling car. Customers tussled to get the first or second ones being made and Lamborghini left Geneva with a portfolio full of orders.

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 profer organisation became increasing 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.

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 hand a 365-hp engine and was dubbed the Jarama S. Nevertheless, not even this new version, characterised by new alloy wheels as well as a series of improvements to the interior, could change the commercial fate of an excellent but unlucky model that, in all likelihood, was overshadowed by the striking appearance of its rear-engined sisters.

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. Little had changed with respect to the prototype displayed two years before: the characteristic air intakes were placed just behind the cockpit, accentuating its aggressive lines and giving the Countach an even more futuristic look. In the meantime, at Sant'Agata the new owners decided to let Bob Wallace build a few cars that were conceptually similar to the Jota, based on both the Jarama and the Urraco. These models, declaredly designed for the racetrack, also remained sole specimens, but at least they were not demolished, and both the Jarama and the Urraco Bob are now in private collections.

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. Delivery of the first Countachs began and, starting in March, Jarama and Espada customers could request an automatic transmission for their cars. Needless to say, very few took advantage of this option.

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. Traffic restrictions were enacted, cars were banned on Sundays, the US introduced taxes on cars that consumed too much fuel and oil supplies were limited. Moreover, new and very strict speed limits were introduced. The immediate effect was devastating, particularly for the sports car companies. Given its market position at the top end of the supercar 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 distribution 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. It was also the first car to feature the distinctive five-hole wheels that would later become the hallmark of all the most powerful Lamborghinis. There was no follow-up to this prototype, despite the fact that many fans had requested one: the situation was too difficult to devote any attention to versions that would entail heavy investments.

However, the company continued to look ahead, attempting to satisfy market requirements. The success that Porsche, long one of the reference constructors in the field of high-class sports cars, achieved with its Targa (1965) had demonstrated that there were always plenty of car buffs around the world who were willing to spend substantial sums of money on a high-performance convertible. And while legislation worldwide was moving towards a progressive ban of canvas-topped convertibles, the expedient used by the German car – a wide roll-bar and solid rear window, with only a removable mid-roof section – was welcomed widely.

Inspired by this concept and using the excellent mechanical basis of the now-perfected Urraco P300, 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 due above all to the widened front and rear wheel housings featuring an unusual 'squared' configuration rather than the more traditional one seen on the first prototypes, which followed the curve of the tyre. 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. Although this made the car rather heavy, its overall quality was very high – as was its price. The Silhouette was presented in Italy on 26 February 1976 at a list price of nearly 15 million lire, not much lower than the cost of the far more powerful and extravagant Countach, which sold for less than 18 million lire. Obviously, this steep price tag ended up sharply limiting its circulation. The overall production of this rare model came to just 54 units over a three-year period, making it one of the rarest and most exclusive Lamborghinis.

These 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. Its engine was to be the straight-six made by the Munich company. The contract was extremely lucrative and would ensure the peaceful survival of the Bologna company for a few years, and this made it a worthwhile opportunity in those difficult years.

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, whose technical specifications were dictated by the American company down to the smallest details, was designed with a very distinctive configuration. Since it was intended strictly for military use in extremely tough environments with little possibility for maintenance servicing, a large American engine had to be mounted instead of an engine made by Lamborghini, as usually done.

Unfortunately, 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. The combination created confusion, enormous complications and a period of stagnation that paralysed the company. Fortunately, Lamborghini's customers were more farsighted than the parties managing it at the time, as demonstrated by the superb reinterpretation of the Countach by a flamboyant and very wealthy customer who was one of the leaders on the automotive scene of the late Seventies, Walter Wolf. In fact, he was the first one to realise that the Countach, which had already become the definitive symbol of the 'exotic' sports car around the world, could be restyled, developed and, above all, made even more aggressive and brazen from an aesthetic standpoint. Whereas Gandini had attempted to maintain a generally sleek line and the company hesitantly added just the bare minimum in terms of aerodynamic features and air intakes, Wolf went overboard, following the stylistic configuration of the Silhouette: he mounted ultra-wide Pirelli P7 tyres on special five-hole alloy wheels and also widened the wheel housings. In a sensational coup, he also invented the enormous rear wing, an addition that was more theatrical than functional. Nevertheless, combined with particularly aggressive colour schemes, this made the Countach a veritable cultural icon because of its spectacular appearance and visual impact, making it the dream of sports car aficionados.

This did not stave off tougher years, however, and the company went into temporary receivership. 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. Due to the disastrous financial situation, other important opportunities were lost: in 1978 Frua presented the Faena, an interesting four-seater coupe constructed on a chassis from the 1974 Espada Series II, lengthened by 178 mm for a roomier interior. Naturally, the Faena also ended up being a one-off, like Bertone's interesting proposal to build a four-door Espada with the same general configuration as the two-door model. The company slid toward bankruptcy and then liquidation. By 1980, Lamborghini was considered finished.

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. Some of the proposals made to Judge Mirone were merely flights of fancy, while others simply wanted to take over the factory, quickly sell off the existing stock of spare parts and the few finished cars, and then close the company for good. However, others arrived with the right ideas to save this prestigious make and, in the end, 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. The emblem of Maserati's golden age, Alfieri had clashed with Alejandro De Tomaso, the new owner of the Modena car company. As a result, he was delighted to tackle the endeavour to help rebuild Lamborghini.

With this celebrated designer at the helm of the company and loyal staff members, like Ubaldo Sgarzi, who had been with the company since the outset, Lamborghini went to the Geneva Motor Show in March 1981 with a new stand that, first of all, displayed the new company name. 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 001. However, the most tangible and reassuring sign of the new path undertaken by Lamborghini came with the first appearance of the Jalpa, a mature and well-finished evolution of the rare Silhouette, whose V8 engine was expanded to 3.5 litres to produce 255 hp, and an overall updating in terms of styling and ergonomics. The Jalpa (P350) was not an entirely new product, but it was a well-made and convincing car. The renaissance of the new Lamborghini came about not only through the production of the Countach, still in great demand among connoisseurs, but also through this model.

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. This was a providential model and the Sant'Agata company, no longer oppressed by the heavy financial burden of several years before, could finally produce all the cars its customers ordered. Thus, in just three years a total of 321 Countach 5000s were made.

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’. In any event, this engine was no longer an American V8 but the Bologna-built 12-cylinder unit, restoring dignity to Lamborghini’s off-road project.

It seemed that, finally, Lamborghini’s luck had turned. The two cars in production at the time, the Jalpa and the Countach 5000 S, kept customers satisfied and growing numbers were sold around the world. Every so often, minor changes were made but the auto designs were on target and, from a commercial standpoint, the situation had improved substantially. 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.

Then suddenly, there came a bolt out of the blue. On 23 April 1987, ‘Nuova Automobili Lamborghini SpA’ was taken over by the US Chrysler company, which just a few years before had also been on the brink of closing and was now in fine form, mainly through the efforts of Italian-American CEO Lee A. Iacocca. The Mimran brothers exited, thanked warmly by those who celebrated them for having saved the small Bologna company from disappearing. 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, an enormous four-seat, four-door coupe on a lengthened Jalpa chassis, left everyone perplexed and reflected an unacceptable deviation from the spirit of the Lamborghini. This was actually a line conceived for an American car (Chrysler’s 1986 Navajo prototype), with an Italian engine, logo and name hastily attached to it. Luckily, there was no follow-up to this project, but unfortunately the Americans would never produce either the interesting ‘baby Lamborghini’ designed during this period, fitted with a V10 engine and codenamed L140, nor Bertone’s stroke of genius, the Genesis. The latter, exhibited at the 1988 Turin Auto Show, was an extremely spacious MPV with a very appealing look, fitted with the 455-hp V12 engine from the Countach Quattrovalvole. It was a magnificent car that was far ahead of its time, given that the market would soon start to demand more luxurious and faster MPVs. But Chrysler did not believe in it and the Genesis remained just a magnificent study.

Instead, there was a follow-up to the Project 132, albeit a troubled one. Due to one of the cyclical reversals that has long characterised the market of top-performing supercars, in the late Eighties there was a sudden general interest in these cars. As a result, there was a full-fledged boom in the market for exotics, and prices started to climb not only for the older collector models but also for normal production. Some time before, Lamborghini had again commissioned Marcello Gandini to design the successor to the Countach, and the Turin-born designer created another stunning car, characterised by an intentional, clever imbalance between the streamlined front and the far more massive rear, which symbolised the enormous power contained behind the cockpit in the engine compartment. The 132 was a beauty, but the development time, which had always been quite rapid under the Mimran management, suddenly ballooned due to the interference of too many aspiring designers during the Chrysler era. What should have been ready in 1988 or at most 1989, thus taking full advantage

of the sudden and generalised bullish market, was instead subjected to continuous changes. The line was altered several times and the start of production naturally had to be postponed. This was more than a mere waste of time, as it squandered the opportunity to have the new product available at the most favourable moment. By the time the 132 was ready, enthusiasm for supercars had waned to some extent, as the market was more saturated and thus less receptive.

As it waited for the new car to arrive, Lamborghini continued to produce the Countach, still in enthusiastic demand around the world. 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. Likewise, the special 'asymmetrical' Countach designed by Alfieri between 1987 and 1988 as an alternative to constructing a completely new car, was also destined to remain a prototype, albeit for other reasons. This car was particularly interesting because of its in-depth research into the placement of the mechanical parts, the fuel tank and other components. Air intakes for the engine were set on the sides, permitting greater aerodynamic efficiency.

Until then, the history of Lamborghini had been distinguished by the construction of extraordinary sports cars that had no need to draw on the experience – intriguing but also very expensive – of a Racing Department. From the very beginning, Ferruccio had made it clear that he had no intention of funding these expensive adventures and that was how the company had always operated.

The arrival of Chrysler, and of various executives who were hypnotised by the glamour of auto racing, changed this attitude as well. 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. A new parallel structure, separate from Lamborghini and named Lamborghini Engineering, was established in Modena specifically for this engine. The speed of the designer from Modena and of the organisations with which he worked was renowned. Ready within a matter of months, the new engine was officially demonstrated to the public in April 1988.

Naturally, the news was sensational. The debut in Formula 1 racing of a company like Lamborghini – long the master at producing high-quality, top-performing twelve-cylinder engines – was a major event, and one that could cause plenty of headaches for Lamborghini's direct rivals. Moreover, the commitment and risk for the company were still rather limited, given that Lamborghini was simply supplying engines to the Larrousse team, which obviously pledged to pay for them. The 1989 season was rather disappointing, but the fault for these poor results lay above all with the French team, which did not have the money and organisation required to compete at the highest levels. Nevertheless, the engine showed excellent potential that deserved to be exploited. 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.

The finale of the 1990 season – definitely on the rise, with 14 points racked up by the teams with a Lamborghini engine – understandably fuelled the excitement in both Sant'Agata and Detroit. Thus, a wealthy Mexican businessman decided that, in the wake of this success, he would place an order with Lamborghini not only for a F1 racing engine, but for an entire car. The opportunity was obviously too good to pass up, and once the customer's ample finances were confirmed, Forghieri and his team briskly went to work on the entire project. The single-seater was a relatively conventional one, but its design showed great attention to detail and it brought together all the experience gained by the Modena designer throughout his long career. In particular, it made the most of the data collected over two years of working with the teams using this engine. The new car was entered into the 1991 world championship season, but suddenly the Mexican backer mysteriously

disappeared (he was never heard from again) and, at this point, there arose the serious problem of financing the team. An Italian industrialist came forward, offering to make up the shortfall to race the car, which was thus able to participate in the world championship that year as the 'Modena Team'.

That season, Lotus and Larrousse decided to forgo the Lamborghini engines, which were requested instead by Ligier. But the effort involved in following an entire racing team and outsourcing engines – and with decidedly inadequate funding for this purpose – aggravated the already known problems, and the season of Lamborghini's single-seater was not a thrilling one. If greater financial resources had been available, it would probably have been possible to find better solutions to the various problems that arose during the season. However, Chrysler inexplicably refused to support this activity in any way, even when it became evident that the economic problems faced by Lamborghini Engineering would trigger a drop in the performance of the F1 car and thus a problem in terms of brand image. Despite Forghieri's commitment, the American company's insensitivity to this 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.

The 1992 season saw the return of Lamborghini as the engine supplier for the Larrousse and Minardi teams, the latter coming out of a difficult season with Ferrari engines. In 1993, the Modena company supplied V12 engines only to Larrousse. In both seasons, enormous engine problems arose, reflecting the lack of funds available for the technical development of the engine. The fact that it was fundamentally a well-designed engine is proven by Ayrton Senna's interest in it, and the Senna tested a Lamborghini engine on the McLaren he was driving at the time. The agreement was in place and ready to be signed when Peugeot, which wanted to return to Formula 1 racing by supplying one of its engines to a high-profile team, stepped in and the deal fell apart, thereby ending Lamborghini's adventure in the world of Formula 1 racing. The firm continued, with good overall results, to compete in the field of marine engines, an area that was completely foreign to the original philosophy of Lamborghini cars but allowed it to achieve important results in specialised championships like powerboat racing.

In the meantime, Lamborghini managed to make significant progress in renewing its model range of road vehicles. Based on the initial plans, the Countach's successor, i.e. the 132, was scheduled to come out in 1988, for the ideal celebration of the company's Silver Anniversary. However, because of the ongoing interference from the American company, the presentation of this model was continuously postponed. Thus, in order to celebrate the company's twenty-fifth anniversary, a commemorative version of the Countach was produced. This involved extensive modification – particularly in terms of look – of the well-known Quattrovalvole, incorporating all the benefits gained from the most recent studies of composite materials and engine management systems. 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. At this point, many people started to wonder if the new car would be a worthy replacement of this great classic.

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. From a technical standpoint, it represented a significant development of the Countach. Its designer, Luigi Marmiroli, attempted to overcome the less positive aspects of the previous project and prepared a truly modern and up-to-date car. Despite the numerous stylistic incursions from the American side, its line nevertheless maintained an appreciable overall style. But the Diablo was not only attractive. It was also extremely powerful and boasted of solid technical foundations: with its twelve-cylinder engine, it clocked a speed of over 327 km/hour. 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. This was an important and delicate moment, as the world market for supercars had narrowed once again and there were signs of an imminent new crisis for the entire sector.

The Diablo convinced customers, however, and its production continued with good commercial results. In the meantime, the production of the LM 002 off-road vehicle came to an end, for a total production of 301 units.
The Mimran brothers' decision to sell Lamborghini to Chrysler, while rather unexpected, nevertheless had a certain logic to it. It was natural that a major company that mass-produced cars should be interested in purchasing a jewel like Lamborghini for its product range. Instead, 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. The new owners recruited a number of English and American executives who gradually proved to be less and less suitable for their positions. The oddest ideas started to pile up during the months that followed, calling to mind – for those who had already lived through the history of Lamborghini – the years of great psychological confusion between 1974 and 1980. One of the first decisions made by the new chairman was to put the LM back into production, although it was abundantly clear that Lamborghini could not afford the steep development costs that would be required to make this car appealing. At the same time, however, production of the 'baby Lamborghini', codenamed the L140, was frozen and put off time and again, even though it would have allowed the prestigious firm to place a product in a more inviting sector for its customers. Luckily, the LM project was never effectively restarted.
Despite these problems and the progressively deteriorating human relations within the company, 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, and during that critical moment it was conceived above all as a way of selling another handful of Diablos, 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 such as the Porsche Carrera Cup. 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 late 1996 Vittorio Di Capua was at the helm of the company. 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. The first idea was to attempt extensive restyling, essentially changing the entire body of the Diablo but maintaining its excellent mechanical base. To do this, the company contacted an Italian studio that had previously made an interesting prototype using the same mechanical base, dubbed the Raptor. However, the version proposed for production, and thus modified to meet international legislative requirements, was unconvincing. This too proved to be a blind alley.
At the same time, 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.
At this time, Ferdinand Piëch, the grandson of the legendary Professor Ferdinand Porsche – the inventor of the famous Beetle – and the nephew of Porsche founder Ferry, was the chairman of the Volkswagen Group, whose revival he had masterminded. Piech was immediately interested: Lamborghini had fascinated him years before during his first visits to Italy as a young automotive engineer, and now that he had carefully examined the situation of the Bologna company, he decided to move ahead as quickly as possible. 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. Within a few months, the Board of Directors had changed completed. Managers carefully chosen by the Audi Group stepped into the various positions, from Giuseppe Greco to Werner Mischke, from Rodolfo Rocchio to Hans Peter Rottländer, to designer Luc Donckerwolke and others.

More importantly, however, this marked the beginning of a completely new life for Lamborghini. For too long, there had been doubts, a lack of funds, world economic troubles and problems with the corporate organisation. For too long, the company had had to fall back on constant updates of classic products without being able to make true major steps forward. This was a situation that Lamborghini had already experienced and had overcome brilliantly. And once again, the stormy second half of the Nineties rapidly became a dim memory. The firm in Sant'Agata Bolognese looked ahead to the new millennium and entered it with the confidence that it was finally in excellent hands. The Audi Group is not only a rich and famous company: the very fact of being under this kind of umbrella also means counting on the assistance of a leading automotive company, one that is known for its high technical profile. And it is a company that can provide Lamborghini with all the advantages of large production numbers and of the technology developed for these figures, but without taking one iota away from Lamborghini's legendary personality.

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, or the new 'baby Lamborghini'.

Calling the Gallardo the 'baby' may sound amusing. It is, of course, when compared to the large, even more powerful flagship, the Murciélago. But this adjective doesn't sound so appropriate for a car with a 500-hp 50-valves V10 engine, permanent four-wheel drive and a top speed of well over 300 km/h. Of course, the concept of 'small' is relative, and people in Sant'Agata may well apply the term to any car with less than 12 cylinders. In any event, it is clear that the Gallardo presents itself as a splendid second Lamborghini, the perfect baby sister to the potent Murciélago. Side by side, these two represent the perfect backbone for the small company that has returned to its former splendour and that can confidently look ahead, knowing that it can do even more in the near future.

It is not always easy to determine the precise number of cars that a small, exclusive manufacturer of exotic sports cars has built during its history. Several changes of ownership may have dislocated some records, several cars have been upgraded or rebuilt by the factory itself, the prototypes might be included in one model's production list or not, and so on.

On the occasion of the celebrations for its 40th anniversary, Automobili Lamborghini has therefore decided, as a small additional gift to all its loyal customers and enthusiasts, to put things right once and for all. A true Historical Archive has

therefore been painstakingly created – in addition to the Registro Lamborghini – to collect production sheets of all 'series' Lamborghinis produced since 1963 (prototypes and one-offs excluded for obvious reasons), and trace the full production history.
The following database shows what is therefore to be considered the 'definitive' list of the cars produced in Sant'Agata since 1963, as officially verified and deliberated by Automobili Lamborghini.

MODELLO	UNITÀ PRODOTTE
350 GTV	1
350 GT	135
3500 GTZ	2
350 GTS	2
400 GT 2+2	250
400 GT 2p.	23
Miura P400	275
Miura P400S	338
Miura SV	150
Jslero	155
Jslero S	70
Espada 400 GT Serie I	176
Espada 400 GTE Serie II	578
Espada 400 GTS Serie III	472
Jarama 400 GT	177
Jarama 400 GTS	150
Silhouette	54
Urraco P300	203
Urraco P200	71
Urraco P250	275
Urraco P250S	246
Jalpa 350	420
Countach LP 400	152
Countach LP 400S	235
Countach 25	658
Countach 4V	631
Countach LP 5000S	323
LM 002	301
Diablo	873
Diablo VT	529
Diablo SE	157

Diablo VT Roadster	468
Diablo SV	346
Diablo SVR	34
Diablo GT	83
Diablo GTR	32
Diablo 6.0	337
Diablo 6.0 SE	44