

LAMBORGHINI MIURA

The car that invented the supercar concept,
and set its standard forever

There are no Lamborghinis without the Miura, and there are no supercars without Lamborghini. The first Lamborghini, the 350 GT was Ferruccio Lamborghini's ideal of grand touring, and a fine car—but it could have as easily been a “flash in the pan” for the company, much like the fate of many small Italian sports car builders. Visionaries behind these companies included racing drivers dissatisfied with the cars they drove, disgruntled ex-employees—such as those involved in the Ferrari “palace revolution” of 1961—and tuning shops that grew too ambitious, too quickly. Ferruccio Lamborghini carried a hefty chip on his shoulder, because at heart he was a combination of all three.

In the process of creating the successor to the 350 GT, Lamborghini recognized a chance for marketing. At the 1965 Turin Auto Show, it brought nothing more than a four-wheeled chassis and engine, sans bodywork. It was a naked glimpse of the future. Lamborghini's engineers had mounted the 12-cylinder engine in the middle of the chassis, and mounted transversely. It was a groundbreaking effort and it worked: showgoers placed orders on the spot.

For the upcoming Lamborghini P400, Ferruccio had assembled a team of top talents: Franco Scaglione, who had designed the Alfa Romeo B.A.T. design studies; Gian Paolo Dallara, who had designed engines for Ferrari and Maserati; and Paolo Stanzani, who led the engineering of Lamborghini tractors. Marcello Gandini at Bertone was the final component. He crafted graceful, minimalist contours that flowed smoothly over the wheels and

curved downward into rounded fenders, evoking the supple nature of soft clay in an almost organic manner.

Going into the 1966 Geneva Motor Show, Marcello Gandini's bodywork signified the end of an era. It was an end to curves, and avant-garde Italian design would soon usher in a “folded paper” aesthetic that smacked of a hopeful future—of spacecraft and moon colonies that ultimately spoke more optimistically than the 1970s realistically offered.

When it was introduced, Lamborghini's Miura proudly claimed the title of the world's fastest production car, taking the lead over all rivals, but especially the Ferrari 365 GTB/4 Daytona which launched the next year. Having been personally and famously scorned by Enzo Ferrari, Ferruccio Lamborghini appreciated how motoring journalists who had experienced the Miura coined a new word to describe it: supercar.

The Miura defined Lamborghini, in terms of extreme and sometimes otherworldly designs, and it would be a hard effort to follow up—but not impossible, as Gandini proved with the Countach. It also defined today's layout of the supercar: typically a dozen or more cylinders, mounted behind the driver for optimal weight distribution, with a perfunctory nod to practicality.

Last, the Miura spoke to Ferruccio's love of bullfighting: the first Lamborghini named after Spanish fighting bull breeds, the swords used to vanquish them, or bulls that triumphed over the sword. In 1962, Ferruccio was aware of the renowned *Ganadería Miura* of Seville, a particularly legendary breed. After all, he was born a Taurus.

