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Hemmings

# SPORTS & EXOTIC CAR

THE FINEST COLLECTOR CARS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

# RAGING BULL

WE DRIVE **LAMBORGHINI'S** FIRST MID-ENGINE SUPERCAR!



January, 2008    Hemmings Sports & Exotic Car #29    \$4.99



**RACING AT MOSPORT:**  
1963-1964 pg. 42





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**On The Cover:** Jeff Koch turned this mean Lamborghini Miura SV into a beacon on the El Mirage dry lakebed in California.



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# The **Running** of the **Bull**

We drive Lamborghini's Miura P400SV;  
owner manages not to have a cow.  
Would we steer you wrong?





**T**here are few cars out there that have singlehandedly created a genre, fewer still that continue to define it decades later. Lamborghini's legendary Miura does both of these things, with power and style to spare.

It seems hard to believe, but the mid-engined sports car for street use wasn't always a given. The Miura launched at the Geneva show in 1966, just months after a bare chassis stunned showgoers at the '65 Turin show. Giotto Bizzarrini's 350hp 4.0L V-12 engine mounted transversely, with the gearbox an integral part of the engine (even sharing oil). (Later iterations, like our '71 SV, were rated at 385hp.)

Granted, others had attempted mid-engined street cars previously (we're looking at you, De Tomaso Vallelunga), but unlike

that machine, the Miura was an instant critical success. And it was put together by kids! Chief engineers Gianpaolo Dallara and Paolo Stanzini were in their 20s.

It caught Ferrari so completely off guard that Miura's replacement, Countach, was unveiled (in 1971!) before Ferrari could officially react to Lamborghini's epochal shift with its 365GT4BB. Miura was a sports car so far beyond other sports cars of the day, Lamborghini managed to create an entirely new breed of car; it gave rise to the term supercar, a name given to the Miura

by none other than the late LJK Setright, writing in *CAR Magazine* (U.K.) in 1966 after a cross-continental blast. That term still stands today, and the Miura continues to define it, 40 years on.

As if this wasn't enough, the Miura is widely considered to be among the world's most beautiful cars. We're a shallow lot, us collector-car people; the Miura could corner like a stir-crazy puppy on freshly mopped linoleum, and with lines like these, we'd still give it a pass. Reportedly influenced by Ford's race-proven GT40,





the sheetmetal (generally credited to Gandini, though allegedly begun by Giugiaro during his short time at Bertone) manages to be simultaneously voluptuous and phallic, all delicate details and brute force in one dead-sexy package. Some may complain that the wider rear wheel openings of the SV spoil the original, uncluttered look; just as many might see the removal of the headlamp “eyelashes” to be an evolutionary smoothing that should have come years earlier. The roof, in whatever iteration you choose, is just 41.5 inches off the ground.

The head-spinning disconnect of a company that steadfastly refused to go racing turning around and creating a sports car inspired by a racing car (and then, to make its point, didn't race it either) is almost beside the point: with any other car, more than likely the word “poseur” would cross your lips. Yet you don't dare level such criticism at the Miura; you're simply grateful that it exists. Even if it wasn't really meant for you.

Make no mistake, it wasn't meant for me, either. After all, with just 760-odd Miuras of any variety built from 1966 to 1973, priced more or less on par with a newly built Midwestern split-level home, they were built for movie stars, rock moguls, residents of Monaco and Beverly Hills, with frames (and wallets) considerably more up to the task.

Rather than be hurt by Lamborghini's exclusionary tactics, instead, I take them as

a challenge. Owner Bill Rice of Westlake Village, California, fits rather better behind the wheel, and offers a guided tour of the car he bought and had restored before the current market “rediscovered” the Miura and drove it to lofty new financial heights. “I really wanted something beastly,” he says, and bought this clean, recently serviced driver in 1997 to replace his 512 BBi. Then he met Miura specialist Jeff Stephan, and next thing you know, it had turned into a concours-quality restoration.

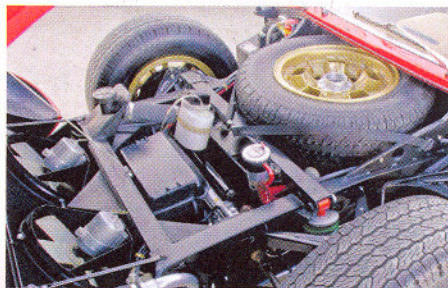
Jeff knew what to expect, but once they got the car apart, though, the true hand-built nature of the SV came through loud and clear to admitted Miura neophyte Bill. “It was extraordinary to see all of the original factory hammer marks on the body panels and the variety of different quality of welds and workmanship on different parts of the car. Truly, these were hand-made cars, each one slightly different from the next...each with a personality to reflect the talent, mood and temperament of the men who built them. It was so imperfect that it was just beautifully perfect.” Among the corrected factory imperfections: The single engine compartment light (actually a trunk light) was replaced, and an NOS pair of fiberglass headlamp bucket shrouds wouldn't match up to the (factory-installed) Fiat 850 buckets as holes had never been drilled for them.

There is no graceful way for someone

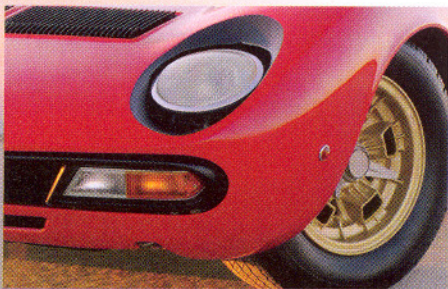
of American proportions to slip into the driver's seat; with the chairs and steering wheel both fixed, you are forced to manipulate your bones into the tight leather-clad confines. (Better empty your pockets first. Also, develop a relationship with Jenny Craig, stat.)

Once nestled inside, a big, spongy dead pedal greets the left foot; secretly you hope it's the clutch since the low wheel blocks your left leg's ability to move right. The chunky wheel is a nice place to hold onto—not cartoonishly fat, but leather-wrapped and not so weedy that you wonder if it's going to bend if you put any arm strength into it.

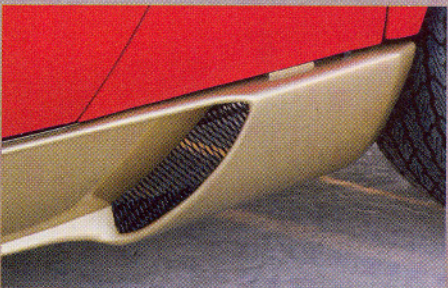
There are other things that will require mental adjustment. No side mirrors, for one, on this European-spec car; legend has it that back in the day, the Miura was fast enough that it didn't require anything to see what was going on behind it. Hardee-har-har. The speedometer doesn't start until 40km/h



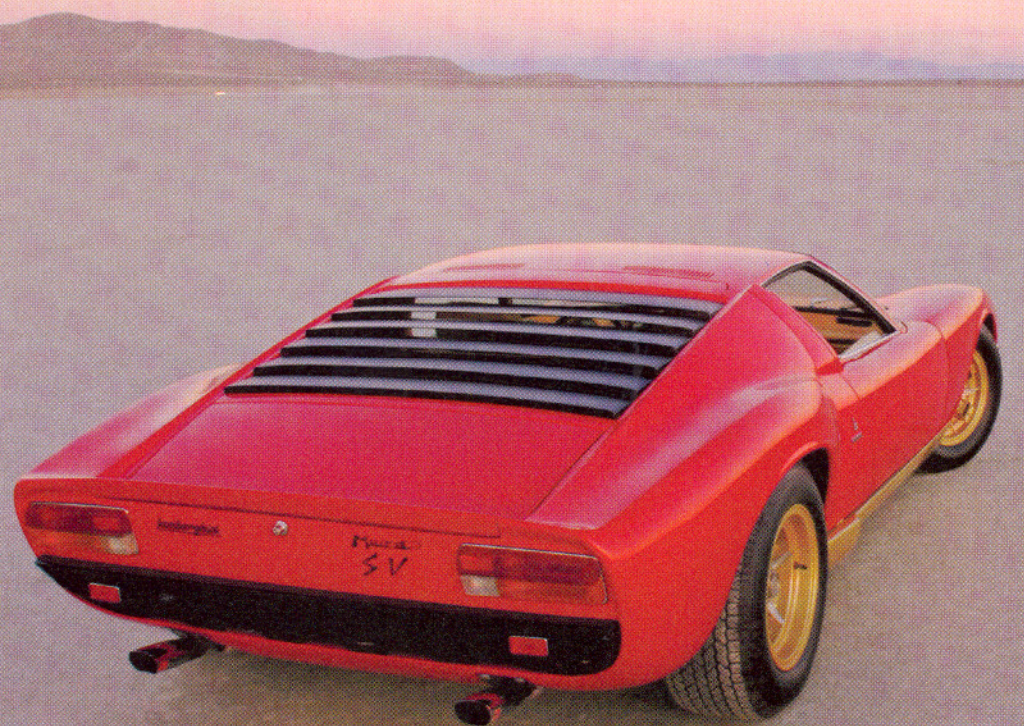
Radiator, suspension, spare, and little else lives here. Good thing there's a trunk, then.



SVs did without the “eyelash” headlamp trim that other (dare we say lesser?) Miuras got.



Heat quickly soaks the back end. Rocker-mounted vents conspire to cool things a bit.







320km/h? 10,000rpm? Neither is that far off the mark. Steering wheel is a delight; pity we can't get our legs in under it.



Passengers get room to stretch inside, but despite the steering wheel cramping our legs, we'd still rather be on the left. Leather throughout.



This iteration of the 4.0L Lamborghini V-12 was rated at 385 horsepower, thanks to revised cam profiles. Rear Pirellis made of unobtainium.

numerically (and the needle doesn't move until you're well and truly up to that speed). The tach is numbered up to 10,000 rpm, with no indication of a redline anywhere on its face. Shifting up, at least through the first couple of gears, requires a blip of the throttle between shifts so that the straight-cut cogs can agree; indeed, we forgot once and were faced with a sickening graunch of metal on metal that filled the cabin. Ugh.

Because this car is concours-spec, the rubber is period, and is not reproduced; the tires you see, the tires we drove on, are more than 35 years old. Pirelli's 255-wide 60-series Cinturatos (mounted on magnesium nine-inch deep-dish Campagnolo wheels—one of the few wheels where the overused "mag wheel" descriptor could be truly accurate) were made in limited quantities only for the SV; you can appreciate that even the spare sets got used up. Or did they? "I was told that correct rear tires didn't exist, which I thought was ridiculous. Soon I noticed that virtually every SV either needed rear tires or had been replaced with other brands."

The rigors of concours rules demand that

only the correct Pirellis would do. "It was like a scavenger hunt, one clue leading to another. We followed every lead. Eventually, someone told us a legend about a small tire store in Colorado that had an old set of Lamborghini tires sitting in the back of the store. We found the store, and sure enough, he had a set of near-new Miura SV Pirellis sitting there on the shelf! The story I was told was that, in 1972, the owner of a then-new SV wanted to swap out his Campagnolo wheels for a new set of BBS. He also opted for new tires, and he just left them at the shop! Nearly three decades later, the rubber was still soft and uncracked." Soft is a relative term: 30 years of disuse have hardened them up considerably.

Thanks to a hot-start issue, we are already idling as we wedge ourselves into the cockpit. The V-12, snorting through its Webers, thrums with an eagerness, even at these low revs. Lift the clutch. And we're off.

Loafing off idle invites stalling, so we're encouraged to get on it. You don't need to tell us twice. Yet there's little to be had low in the revs. Three thousand rpm is the magic number when you're really pushed back in

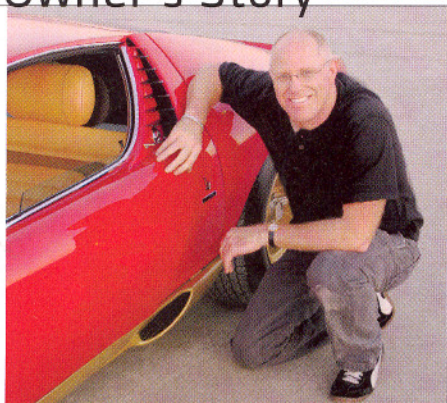
your seat, the transverse 12 comes on cam, and the tach and speedo needles race each other to the far end of the dials. The engine's tenor deepens and richens with every hundred revs.

Shifts ought to come somewhere north of 5,000 rpm—not just to feel peak torque, but you'll still be in the meat of the power band once you switch up. Shift up too soon, or take too much time with your double-clutching do-si-do, and the Miura will slow down soon enough that the whole point of swapping cogs is rendered pointless. The clutch is modern-car light, easily feathered and not the stiff race-based monster you'd expect given the era it was built and the power on tap, but the gated shifter threatens to put your back out, so stiff is the action, and the bottom of the steering wheel fights you for access to the pedals. Until the Miura, Lamborghinis had been aggressive yet genteel GTs, operable with fingertips instead of clenched fists, but nothing in the Miura's driveline is meant to reward the tepid, the hesitant or the light of touch.

As a bonus, while you're in second gear and above, your right leg actually has the



# 1971 Lamborghini Owner's Story



I am fortunate that I stumbled onto this car and pulled the trigger to buy it when I did. Interest in these cars has increased steadily over the last decade or more, and prices have gotten a bit heady.

Everything was challenging and painstaking because these cars are so peculiar. Even among Miuras, each one is different. Each part on the car is numbered, exclusively shaped and fitted to that car; a door off one Miura won't fit on another.

I would absolutely do things differently had I the chance to relive it. Instead of restoring the car from the get go, I would have just cleaned it up and driven the hell out of it for several years. Then perhaps after owning the thing for 10 years, I'd take the time to restore it. I was fortunate to have the chance to work with Jeff Stephan and do much of the cosmetic restoration myself; we had put three years of heart and soul into this project. It was so hard to get in and drive a car that was so perfect. The car has been restored for seven years now, but has probably covered less than 200 miles during that time! It's a shame.

If you own a Miura, I can't emphasize enough how important it is to get a true expert to work on the car. There are so very few in the world. The great thing about Jeff Stephan is that he works on only one Miura at a time, and he treats it like it's his own. Jeff owns two Miuras himself, a concours-condition SV and an original "time capsule" Miura S. People send him cars from all over the world, and for good reason.

The sheer beauty of the lines is probably what I love the most about my Miura. In addition, there is simply nothing quite like the screaming cacophony of machine that roars three inches behind your head when you accelerate hard in a Miura. When I bought the car, I asked the previous owner how he liked it. He told me, "I have never driven anything that delivers such a sense of urgency." I would have to agree wholeheartedly.

—William Rice



Miura's combination door latch/vent decoration is a clever and subtle styling solution.



So much supercar goodness, and Lamborghini actually saw fit to include a trunk, to boot!

necessary room to stomp on the gas and do what you're itching to. By 5,000 rpm, it's as if a sunbeam direct from heaven is burning a hole in your brain, and a chorus of angels is sustaining its note to underline the epiphany. Unlike the V-12's song, though, the gearbox remains shrill and piercing throughout, as though someone had hung an aftermarket supercharger off the front of the engine. The whine of those straight-cut gears keeps up with the engine's song for sheer volume—even making itself more pronounced than the V-12 lower in the rev band. And since the engine and transaxle are both about five inches from your ears, even a layer of Visarm glass doesn't let the audio portion of our program get lost in translation.

At speed on the open road, you're secure and surefooted—nothing wobbly or untoward happening. The steering bordered on the telepathic, and the ride quality was a

## What to Pay

### 1971 Lamborghini Miura

Low	\$125,000
Average	\$250,000
High	\$400,000

## Club Scene

### Lamborghini Club America

P. O. BOX 649  
Orinda, California 94563  
925-253-9399  
Fax 925-253-9397  
www.lamborghiniclub.com  
Dues: \$65 (U.S. and Canada)

## Pros & Cons

### Pros

- Unassailable history
- Legendary beauty
- Monstrous power

### Cons

- Fitting inside
- Hmmm...Miura, or a house?
- Impossible-to-find stock tires

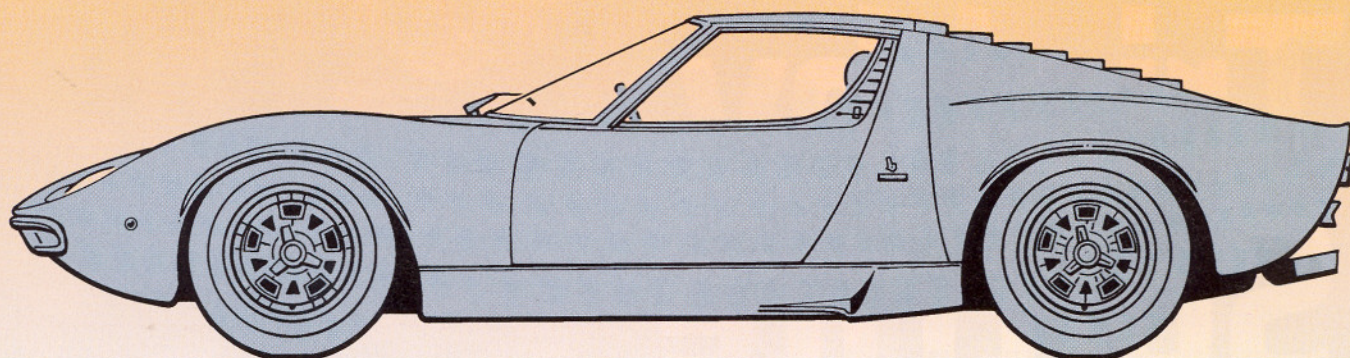
touch on the rough side, but not quite the spinebuster we were led to anticipate. We can't fairly judge our Miura's behavior in corners, since the desert roads we tried it out on were all drawn with straight edges, not French curves.

Exhilarating? No doubt. A workout, by modern standards? Absolutely. It doesn't matter that normal people can't fit in it. The gear whine that competes with the four-liter V-12's song in your cochleas matters not a whit. The legendarily indifferent build quality hasn't hurt its rep one bit. The hit or miss electrics? All part of the charm. "It's the history of this company that makes the Miura so interesting to me. These guys made amazing things happen without the boundaries of a huge corporate culture to temper their efforts. And what evolved was the Miura, which inspires unadulterated passion, even today." And it ain't bad to drive, either. 🌐



0-60 mph 6.5 sec.

Top Speed 186 mph



## SPECIFICATIONS

### ENGINE

Type.....	60-degree DOHC V-12, aluminum-alloy block and heads, two valves/cylinder
Displacement.....	3,939cc (240.4-cu.in.)
Bore x stroke.....	82 x 62mm
Compression ratio.....	10.7:1
Horsepower @ rpm.....	385 @ 7,850
Torque @ rpm.....	294-lbs.ft. @ 5,750
Main bearings.....	7
Fuel system.....	Single electric Bendix fuel pump, 4 triple-choke Weber 40 IDL 3C carburetors
Ignition system.....	Twin Marelli distributors, two coils
Lubrication system.....	Wet sump, common engine-transmission lubricant, dry sump on SVJ cars, internal pressure
Electrical system.....	12-volt

### TRANSMISSION

Type.....	Lamborghini five-speed manual trans-axle, all-synchromesh, dry single-plate 10.5-inch clutch
Ratios: 1st.....	2.520:1
2nd.....	1.735:1
3rd.....	1.225:1
4th.....	1.100:1
5th.....	0.815:1
Reverse.....	2.765:1
Final drive ratio ..	4.09:1

### STEERING

Type.....	Unassisted rack-and-pinion
Turns, lock-to-lock.....	3.4
Turning circle.....	34.5 feet

### BRAKES

Type.....	Girling four-wheel disc brakes, two vacuum servo units with independent circuits front and rear
Front.....	10.5 inches
Rear.....	10.5 inches

### CHASSIS & BODY

Construction.....	Monocoque steel construction with aluminium front and rear sections; sheet-steel unitized body, lightened welded box sections
Body style.....	Two-passenger, two-door sports coupe
Layout.....	Mid-engined, rear-wheel-drive

### SUSPENSION

Front/rear.....	All independent, double transverse wishbones with coil springs, tubular shock absorbers and anti-roll bars
Wheels.....	Campagnolo cast magnesium wheels with knock-offs
Front/rear.....	15 x 7 inches/15 x 9 inches
Tires.....	Pirelli Cinturato
Front/rear.....	225/60VR15/255/60VR15

### WEIGHTS & MEASURES

Wheelbase.....	98.6 inches
Overall length.....	172.8 inches
Overall width.....	70 inches
Overall height.....	41.3 inches
Front track.....	55.6 inches
Rear track.....	60.7 inches
Shipping weight.....	2,744 pounds

### CAPACITIES

Crankcase.....	3.7 gallons
Cooling system.....	3.7 gallons
Fuel tank.....	23.7 gallons

### CALCULATED DATA

Bhp per cc.....	0.098
Weight per bhp.....	7.127 pounds
Weight per c.i.d.....	11.43 pounds

### PERFORMANCE

0-60 mph.....	6.5 seconds
Top speed.....	186 mph (estimated)
Source:	www.lambocars.com

### PRICE

Base price.....	\$22,000
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