

CLASSIC DRIVER

The 1978 Lancia Sibilo concept was Gandini's Golden Brown

Lead

By 1978, a decade of wedge-shaped wonders had been brought to a close. Rather than turning to illegal substances, Bertone's Marcello Gandini – one of the phenomenon's patriarchs – instead chose to create a wacky final hurrah: the Lancia Sibilo...

If the early 70s was a peak in terms of automotive design, then the following half-decade was certainly a trough. By this time, the effects of skyrocketing oil prices and over-sensitive safety laws had handicapped the creative pensmiths, hence the slump into an era of rubber bumpers, cheap plastics and uninspired aesthetics. But clearly, no one had informed Gandini: he was still in Bertone's small Turin studio drawing up impossible, wedgy concepts. Brown ones.

A good place to start



Beginning with [Lancia Stratos Stradale](#) underpinnings and the accompanying Dino-sourced V6, Gandini first set about lengthening the chassis by 100mm. Then came the drama: a hand-beaten steel body with raised, squared-off wheelarches and the nose of a platypus. The windscreens and polycarbonate side windows were fitted flush with the bodywork, as were the pop-up headlights and bumpers – the latter defined by an orange pin-stripe. Other quirks included circular side windows that retreated within, and then slid forward on runners; the single windscreen wiper also moved horizontally, rather than with the usual arcing motion. For its reveal at the 1978 Turin motor show it was painted gold 'n' brown – perhaps the Sibilo was the *true* inspiration behind [The Strangers' 1980 hit record?](#)

Soundtrack by Maranello



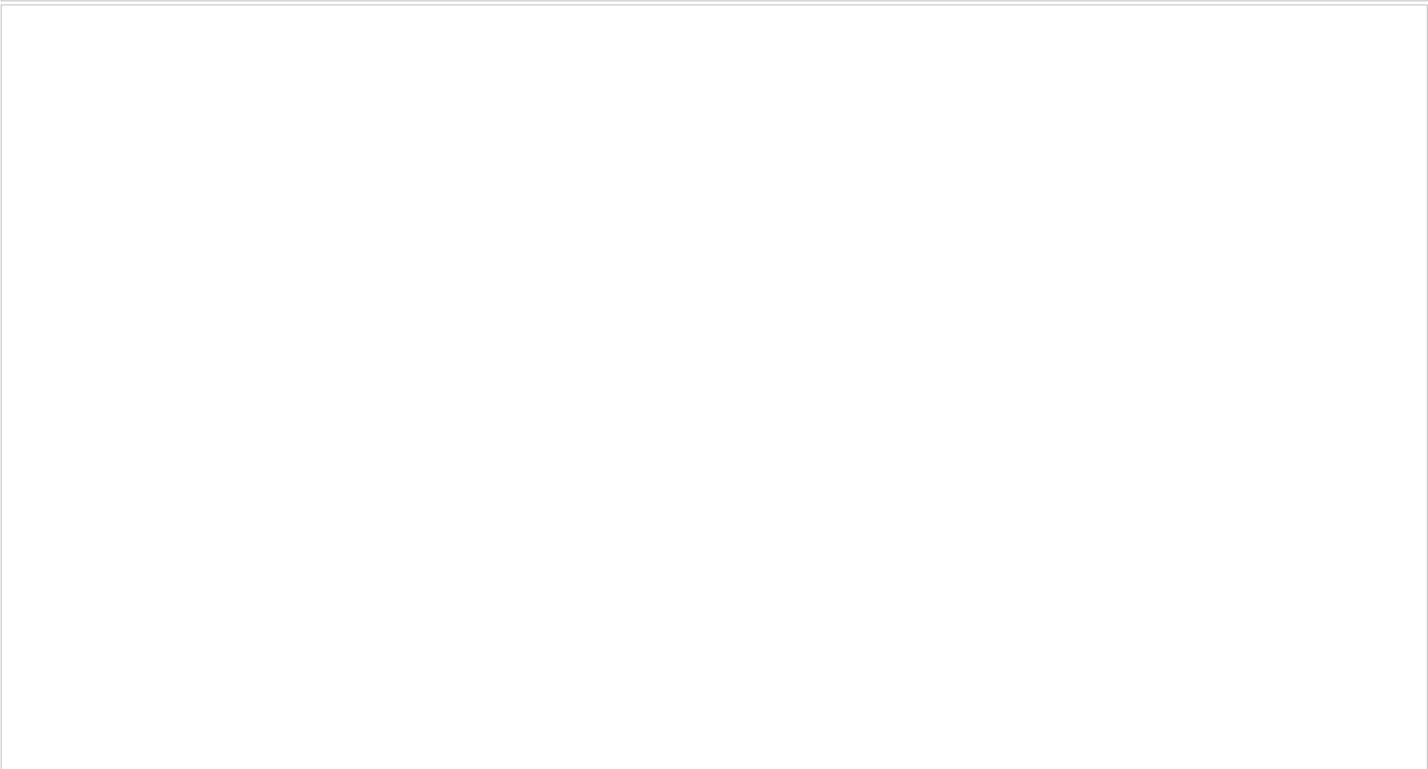
Even if it was, the Lancia had no chance to boast about it, as the minimalist interior didn't even include a cassette player. Only the most necessary auxiliary controls were included, three of which were asymmetrically integrated as buttons into the fixed-hub steering wheel.

The Sibilo remained in Bertone's custody until 2011, when much of the coachbuilder's dearly prized collection was auctioned off in response to the financial struggles that ultimately sealed the company's fate last year. It now forms part of Corrado Lopresto's gathering of super-rare Italian machinery – which we'll feature in depth, tomorrow.

Photos: Lopresto Collection / Carr Studio

Gallery

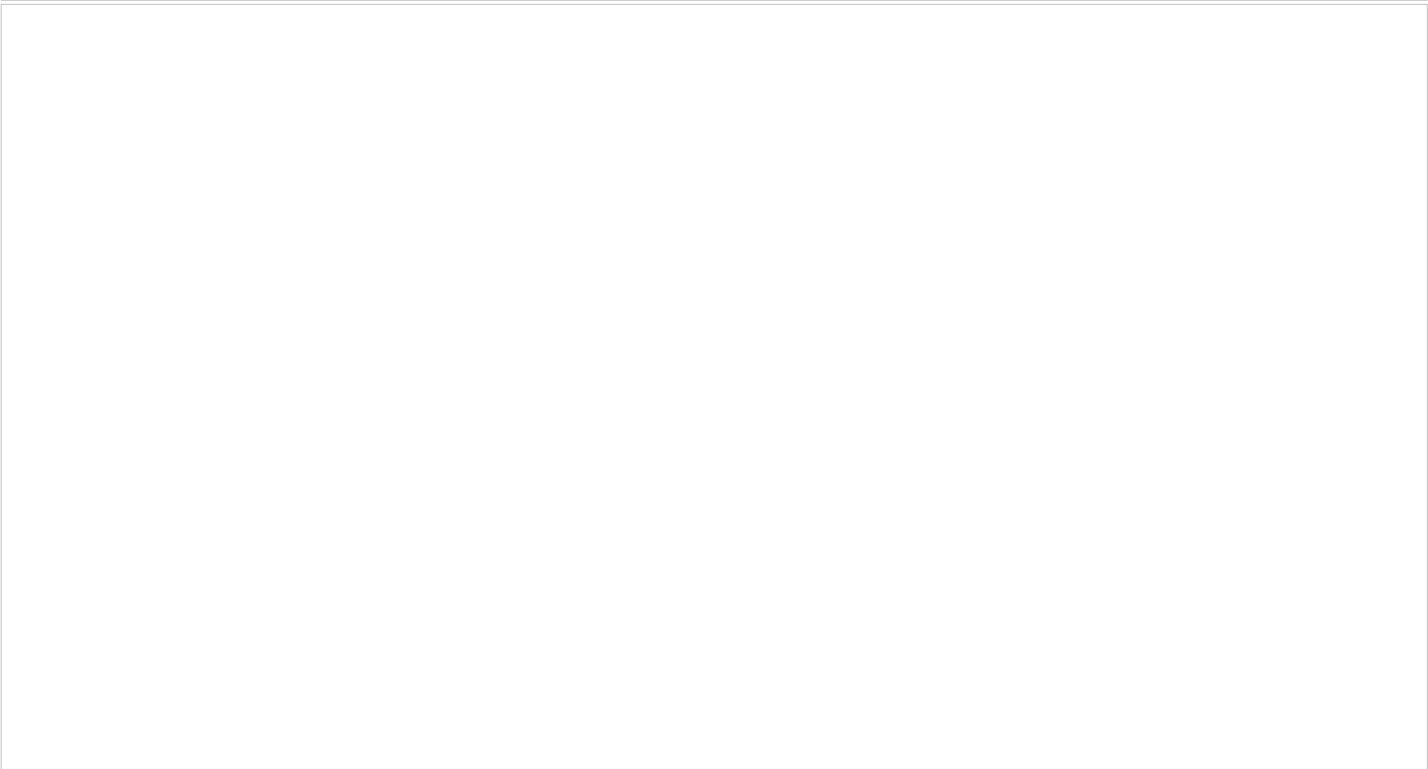






















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