

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## The World's Fastest Police Car...and now they have two

The following is an extract from Roberto Giordanelli's feature in *Auto Italia* magazine, Issue 108 2005. For access to the full feature, plus articles on driving the Maserati GranSport, the 2005 Villa d'Este Concours, the 2005 Pau Historic meeting, and much more, see [www.auto-italia.co.uk](http://www.auto-italia.co.uk)



**The Italian Polizia Stradale has scored a major PR triumph with the fabulous Lamborghini Gallardo. Stop Press - a second Gallardo has joined the force. Both cars are donations: the first from the Lamborghini factory and the second from an independent organisation.**

Before you dismiss this PR *coup d'état* as a media stunt, these patrols have teeth so watch out. The officers are the best of the best and go through a rigorous training schedule, while the cars are kitted out with the very latest high-tech equipment. Police forces worldwide are always keen to improve their relationship with the public. Getting people on-side is the key factor in efficient policing. The Italians are doing just that.

At the Rome HQ of the Polizia Stradale we found two of the nicest guys you could ever meet - two of the specially-trained police officers qualified for the Lamborghinis - AS, Massimiliano Finore and ASS, Giancarlo Bravo:

Q. You now have two Gallardos. How did the second Gallardo come about?

A. It was donated to the Polizia Stradale by the Peretti Foundation of API Industries at the recent 152nd anniversary celebrations of this police force.

Q. The law enforcement work of the Polizia and the Carabinieri are different. Are the Carabinieri jealous that you have Lamborghinis?

A. No. There is great friendship and a great rapport between the two forces. Anyway, they had Ferraris in the 1960s.

Q. Who drives the Gallardos?

A. There are eight officers qualified to drive this car. And there will probably be another eight for the second Gallardo.

Q. What will the second Lamborghini do?

A. The same duty as ours but we shall patrol the centre and the south of the country, while the new car will patrol the centre and the north of Italy.

Q. How does policing the north compare with policing the south of Italy?

A. This is a generalisation but let us say that the further south you go, the looser the interpretation of the law.

Q. What are the Gallardo's duties?

A. Medical activities, some escort duties, PR work, traffic duties and crime-fighting. The automatic number plate recognition system automatically flags up any nearby suspects.

Q. How did you get the job?

A. The Ministry of the Interior selects the officers by examining their driving record.

Q. So only the best are chosen?

A. No (with a modest shrug). There are many fine officers in the force who could do this job.



Q. What does it take to be a traffic cop?

A. Assuming you have met the requirements for police duty and successfully qualified, you then need a further one-year training for traffic duties.

Q. How did you train to drive the Lamborghini?

A. We did a one-week course with the car at the Vallelunga race circuit with Lamborghini's chief test driver Giorgio Sanna.

Q. Have you ever been in a car with Lamborghini's legendary test driver Valentino Balboni?

A. No, but I have heard stories that make your hair stand on end from those who have. I believe that Lamborghini is building its own test track to solve the problems associated with high-speed road testing.

Q. Are the Gallardos used every day?

A. Most days yes, but not every day. When not in use they are on standby for immediate action should the need arise.

Q. Is there such a thing as a typical day for this car?

A. No; every day is different.

Q. Has this Lamborghini been reliable?

A. Yes. Extremely reliable. We have covered 34,000km since Lamborghini gave us the car last year.

Q. What is the public reaction?

A. Very enthusiastic. It creates lots of attention and lots of questions from people of all types. The police motto is 'Get close to the people'. These cars certainly help us achieve a closer collaboration with the community.



Q. What crimes in Italy are on the increase?

A. There has been an increase in crime committed by armed criminal elements in the immigrant community, mainly from Eastern Europe, but that is the concern of the Carabinieri. Our job is that of traffic cops. Drink-driving is common, also driving without insurance or on false papers. All of which need cops on the ground, not cameras.

Q. Why bother to stop speeders instead of just sending them the fine and penalty points?

A. A car owner can choose not to declare who was driving his or her car at the time of the offence. This incurs an extra 300 euros fine on top of the speeding fine but does not affect the penalty points.

Q. In the two years since the introduction of penalty points and tougher enforcement of motoring laws in Italy, have you seen any improvements in the accident statistics?

A. Yes. Fatalities and injury statistics are steadily falling but we still have a long way to go.

Q. You have many accidents at weekends involving young drivers. What is being done to address this?

A. If a young driver commits an offence, he receives double points for the first three years of driving. Where permitted, his maximum speed limit is 100km/h instead of 130km/h.

Q. What is the reaction of drivers who are stopped?

A. Amazement. We have to be careful as sometimes in heavy motorway traffic, issuing a ticket can cause jams as onlookers slow down for a look.

Q. Do you ever take the car to its 200mph top speed?

A. No. There is no need, and the speed differential would be dangerous for other traffic. We do sometimes travel at very high speed, and this is where the Lamborghini scores. Other police vehicles at their top speeds are less stable and less safe than the Gallardo. Being four-wheel drive, it is extremely sure-footed in the wet. We have also used it to good effect in snow with the appropriate tyres.



Q. Recently in the UK a British traffic cop was caught testing a car at 160mph. The magistrate let him off but the press made a meal of it. What would have happened in Italy?

A. The same. The Italian press would have eaten him alive.

Q. You have little room left for any extra equipment. How do you manage?

A. If we need back-up it soon arrives.

Q. What part of your job do you like most, and like least?

A. The job varies so much and there are no bad parts.

Q. Where are you both from?

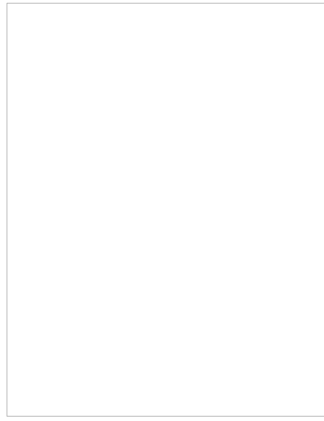
A. We are both Romans.

Q. What do you drive off-duty?

A. A Ford Ka and a Peugeot 206. Both are suited to everyday battle in Roman traffic.

Q. This Lamborghini caused quite a stir when it went to New York for the Columbus Day celebrations. Did you go to the USA with it?

A. Unfortunately not, two other officers went. But we would like to come to London if you would like to organise an invitation!



*Words by Roberto Giordanelli and pictures  
courtesy of Michael Ward, and Auto Italia  
magazine.*

See [www.auto-italia.co.uk](http://www.auto-italia.co.uk) or call +44(0)1858  
438817 for back issues and subscriptions.

---

***ClassicInside - The Classic Driver Newsletter***  
[\*Free Subscription!\*](#)

## **Gallery**

**Hide gallery**

Hide gallery

**Source URL:** <https://www.classicdriver.com/en/article/world-s-fastest-police-carand-now-they-have-two>

© Classic Driver. All rights reserved.