

CLASSIC DRIVER

Modern Classic: Lancia Hyena by Zagato

Lead

With barely two dozen built, the Zagato-styled Lancia Hyena remains a rarity. RM Auctions will offer one at its forthcoming 11-12 May Monaco sale, so let's have a look at one of the great 'might-have-beens' of the mid-1990s.

The idea of building a special version of the Lancia integrale came from the Dutch classic car dealer and restorer Paul Koot.

Coming from the pen of Zagato designer Marco Pedracini, the project had been commissioned in 1990 and was launched to the public at the January 1992 Brussels Motor Show. The styling immediately says 'Zagato' and recalls both the SZ Alfas and Lancia's own, early 70s Fulvia Sport Zagato.

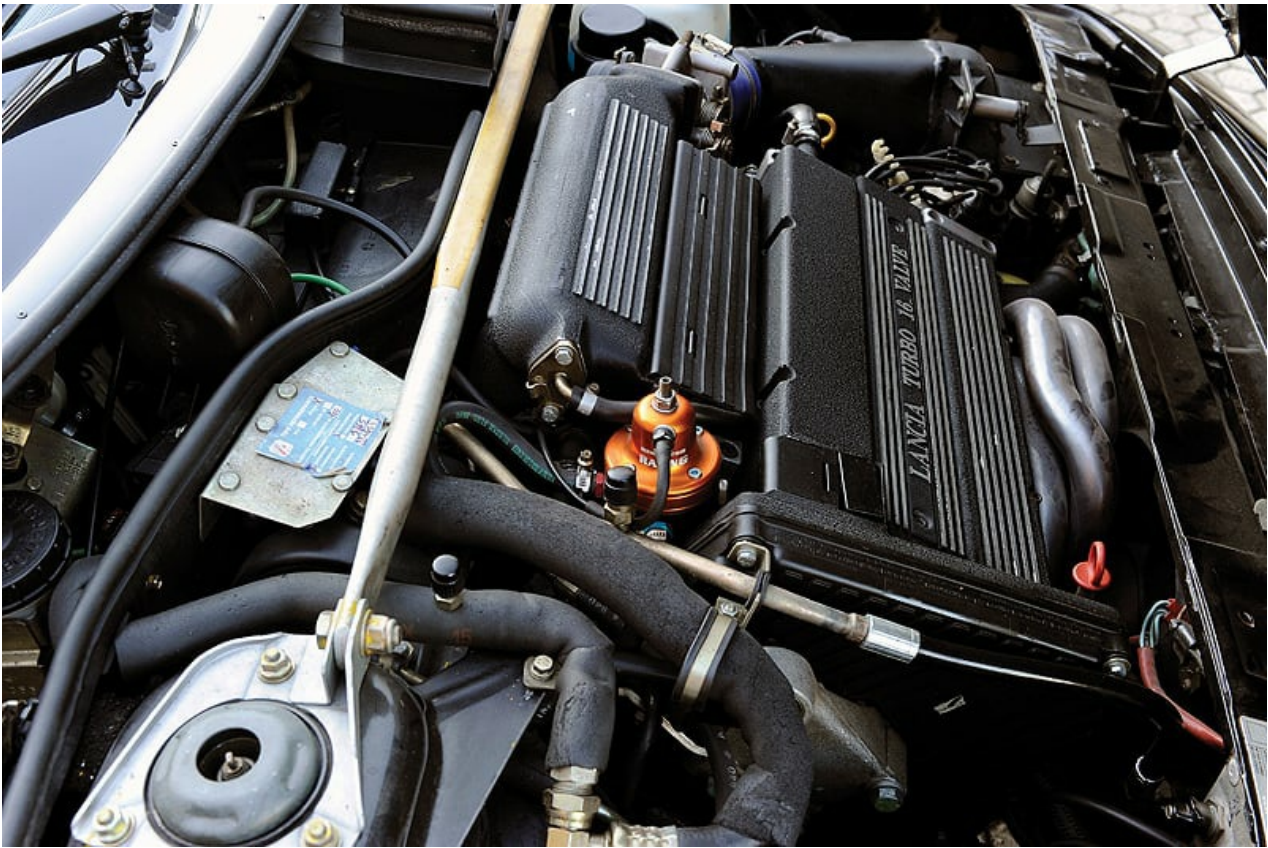
It proved once again that the sometimes controversial coachbuilder is at its best with small, compact designs.





Despite plans to build as many as 500 examples, a lack of cooperation from the Fiat Group and a complicated production process (whereby stripped-down road integrales were sent from Holland to Italy for the composite/alloy body to be fitted and the cars' final assembly completed), meant just a handful of Hyenas took to the roads.

An original price way in excess of the standard car's (Porsche 911 Carrera territory, more or less) did not help sales, either.





Of lower weight than the hatchback original, the Hyena was appreciably faster and could cover the 0-62mph sprint in 5.4 seconds.

This particular car, ordered new from Walkers Garage, the official factory-appointed Lancia importer in the UK, has several additional modifications specified by its first owner (a banker eager to use the car for brisk Continental motoring, between houses in the UK and Italy).





It has a larger, competition-specification fuel tank (for greater range), power boosted to 300bhp, the rear-seat option, and cross-drilled and grooved brake-discs complete with Ferodo racing pads.

To these options were added new, dual-layer black paintwork, a host of engineering improvements and an extensive programme of sound-deadening and heat-insulation when the car went back to Italy in 2004 for a complete restoration.





This example could well be, then - finally - the car the creators of the project always intended: an individually designed small coupé with potent performance, yet capable of touring in comfort in all weathers.

The 1995 Lancia Hyena is just one of the cars at RM Auction's forthcoming 11-12 May, Monaco sale.

Photos: RM Auctions

Gallery

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