

CLASSIC DRIVER

Lamborghini Gallardo: Raging bull, reasonable bill

Lead

Introduced at the Geneva Motor Show in 2003, the Gallardo offered much of the performance of its bigger brother, the Murciélago, but in a more compact and accessible package...

Although Gallardos are still rolling off the production line in Sant'Agata today, early pre-owned cars offer the genuine Lamborghini experience at a fraction of the cost.

Following Lamborghini's acquisition by the Volkswagen Group (via Audi) in 1998, and the debut of the all-new Murciélago, a new baby supercar was conceived. Christened the Gallardo – after a breed of fighting bull – it was built to offer true sports car performance but with all the everyday functionality of a German saloon.

The car was powered by a 5-litre V10 producing nigh-on 500bhp, translating its power via a reworked version of the Murciélago's four-wheel-drive system. The dry-sump lubrication and 90-degree angle of the cylinders helped to keep the centre of gravity lower, equating to a better-handling car. It was offered with a six-speed manual gearbox, or an electronic e-gear system operated by steering-wheel-mounted paddles – a largely new (and somewhat flawed) technology at the time.





Its styling – based on an Italdesign-Giugiaro proposal and developed in-house by Lamborghini Centro Stile – was radical, encompassing sharp trapezoidal shapes, first seen on the revolutionary [Marzal concept of the late 60s](#). The use of both acute and obtuse angles imposes an aeronautical feel and the sleek, no-compromise aerodynamic design meant it was capable of 192mph. Its compact dimensions and short overhangs translated to exploitable dynamics on the road *and* the track.

The Gallardo has proven successful, becoming Lamborghini's best selling car ever; over 13,000 have been delivered since its introduction a decade ago. Since then, it has seen several variations including a major update (the LP-560) and countless special editions. To demonstrate the diverse capabilities of the Gallardo,

one was donated to the Carabinieri (the Italian police force) to patrol the roads, engage in high-speed pursuits and deliver body organs destined for transplantation.



Early Gallardos offer almost all the performance of the current versions, at a fraction of the cost: sometimes less than half the original retail price. Some would argue that it looks better in its original state than the over-styled newer models do, too. It's certainly not perfect, but the optimised blend of performance and practicality is a seriously appealing trait, especially in comparison with the big, rorty Lamborghinis of times gone by.

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The car seen here can currently be found in the [Classic Driver Marketplace](#).

Photos: Global Car Trading Company GmbH

Gallery

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