

CLASSIC DRIVER

Even bankruptcy couldn't stop this Lamborghini Countach from being born

Lead

The start of the 1980s couldn't have been worse for Lamborghini, but this stunning Countach LP400S still managed to emerge from the company's financial ashes to star at the 1981 Geneva Motor Show. Now it's heading to auction with Bonhams.



Impending financial ruin is seemingly a hallmark of a great supercar manufacturer at this point. Aston Martin has almost perpetually been on the brink of bankruptcy since opening its doors over 100 years ago, and even the likes of Porsche almost went under in the 1990s, but arguably no manufacturer has managed to combine fiscal failure with automotive brilliance in the same way as Lamborghini at the start of the 1980s, when this Countach LP400S Series II first broke cover.





This car's story starts at the tail end of the 1970s, early 1979 to be exact, when the raging bull was very much flailing under the ownership of Swiss businessmen Georges-Henri Rosetti and René Leimer. The year prior the firm was placed in safeguard proceedings by the Italian courts, and amidst this financial turmoil, Mr Leimer would initially commission the construction of the Countach you see before you: no.1121070. The car was finished that year as one of the very first LP400 S Series I produced, but before this Countach would ever be shown to the world, Lamborghini itself would change hands no less than three times.

After Automobili Lamborghini went bankrupt in 1980, brothers Jean-Claude and Patrick Mimran took the helm in 1981, and the 1981 Geneva Motor Show was set to be the stage for Lamborghini's triumphant return. Having never left the factory, this unusual Blu Notte Countach was upgraded to Series II specification for the show. That meant the Campagnolo Bravo wheel rims specific to Series 1 were replaced with the pared-down Series 2 wheels, while the rear spoiler and Vitaloni Baby Tornado rear view mirrors were added to the car. Completing the transformation, no. 1121070 was endowed with a new identity by the Sant'Agata Bolognese factory, no. 1121272, while the chassis, registration plates, and engine were also renumbered in accordance with the car's update, thereby dating its "birth" to 1981.



In the end, this car did indeed make it to the official Lamborghini stand at the 1981 Geneva Motorshow, alongside prototypes for the LM001 (the LM002's precursor) and the Jalpa. Fitted with unusual and desirable options such as wide tyres, Ansa "racing" exhausts, Weber 45 DCOE carburettors and racing camshafts, this Countach is also the only known LP400S Series II finished in this colour. Now this historic Countach is coming up for auction at [Bonhams' Les Grandes Marques du Monde auction in Paris on February 1st](#) and would make for a fabulous addition to any Lamborghini collection.

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