

CLASSIC DRIVER

Architectural Sculpture:



Any car named after a bull which killed a legendary matador is unlikely to be run-of-the-mill. Any car whose designers took inspiration from fighter aircraft will probably turn heads. And when that car is a Lamborghini, and only 20 will ever be built, you have something exceptional: the Lamborghini Reventón, every sharp-edged, clean-lined centimetre of it.

Think of Le Corbusier's architecture, the German Bauhaus design school and its artists. They push the boundaries of design yet retain the essential functionality. Think of Frank O. Gehry's design for the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, or Andreas Gursky's 'interpretation' of the Bahrain F1 track. Then look at the Reventón, and you'll understand why 20 customers have each been only too keen to exchange 1,000,000 euros (plus VAT) to own a moving, fully-functioning work of art.





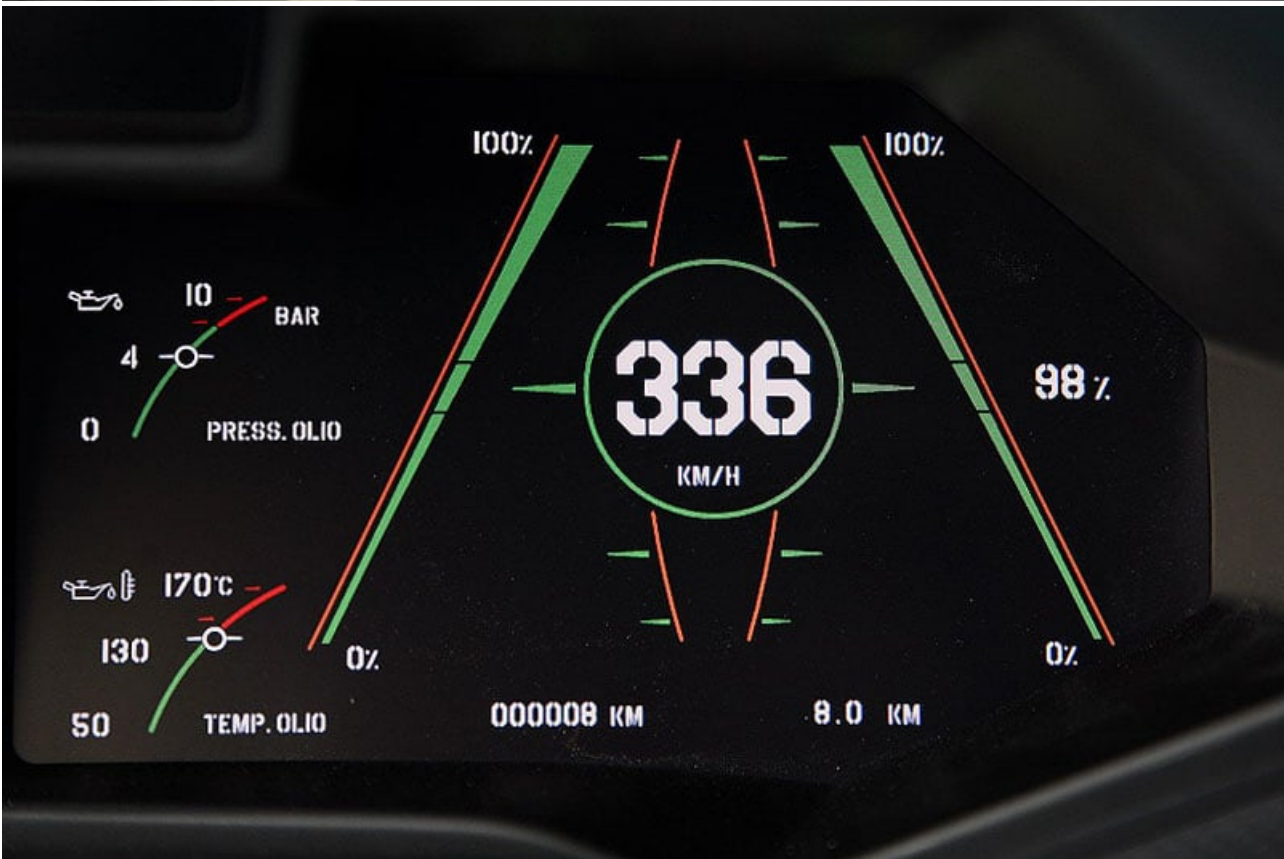
It's 10am on a cool January morning. The winter sun shines on the matte green/grey skin of the Reventón, metallic particles revealing multiple colours. And we're going for a drive.



The Reventón is based on the Murciélago LP640, so the cockpit size is familiar, but that's where the similarity ends. The fighter jet inspiration is all around, albeit clad in Alcantara, carbon, aluminium and leather. The instrument panel contains three TFT liquid crystal displays, housed in a structure milled from a solid aluminium block, encased in carbonfibre. With a nod towards Formula 1 as much as contemporary aircraft, there is also a g-force meter, showing dynamic drive forces, longitudinal acceleration during acceleration and braking, and transversal acceleration around bends.



Lamborghini's figures show that 0-100km/h acceleration is completed in 3.4 seconds but, much as I would like to see how this 'plane' really takes off, the roads are too busy. So I content myself with enjoying the effortless overtaking abilities presented by the massive 12-cylinder, 6.5-litre engine. The ride is harder than that of the 'parent' LP640, the seats narrower and deeper, like sitting in a vice.



As the first bend approaches, the ball in the g-force meter jumps from right to left and suddenly I fit in that tight seat as if it had been moulded exclusively for me. I'm brought back down to earth by my passenger pointing out that I need to turn left for the location chosen for photography. Changing down, the staccato roar of the engine brings a wide smile to my face.



Contemporary Lamborghinis are distinguished by their inheritance from the Countach; absolute stylistic idiom, sharp edges, precise lines, clean surfaces with, according to Lamborghini, each element created exactly according to its function. In the Reventón, the Centro Stile designers have developed this philosophy yet further, using the inspiration of modern aeronautics to take it to new levels.



Stephan Winkelmann, President and CEO of Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A explains: "The Reventón is the most extreme of all, a true automotive superlative. Our designers at the Lamborghini Style Centre took the technical base of the Murciélago LP640 and compressed and intensified its DNA, its genetic code."



The result is truly striking, with interrupted lines and contorted surfaces creating a fascinating play of light on the matte green/grey CFC body. The acute angle of the central 'arrow' and powerful forward-facing air intake set the tone from the front, with the glass laminate engine hood offering a glimpse of the power unit within. The doors, of course, open upwards, with asymmetric air intakes beneath them to accommodate the flow of oil to the radiator on the driver's side. The rear diffuser, with its distinctive, accentuated shape, gives stability at even the top speed of 340km/h.





Attention to detail is everywhere, with special heatproof LEDs used for the rear indicator and hazard lights, stoplights and rear lights, carrying the arrow theme through even here. The fuel tank lid is a minor work of art, lovingly milled from a solid aluminium block. And yet all this took less than a year to progress from conception to finished product, a testimony to the skills and creativity of the designers at Sant'Agata Bolognese.

□ Great contemporary works of art often sell before they are completed, the legend preceding their creation. With the Reventón, Lamborghini has presented the automotive world with its latest work of mobile sculpture. It is worthy of a place in a gallery, but so much more worthy of a place on the road.

Text: Classic Driver
Photos: Nanette Schärf

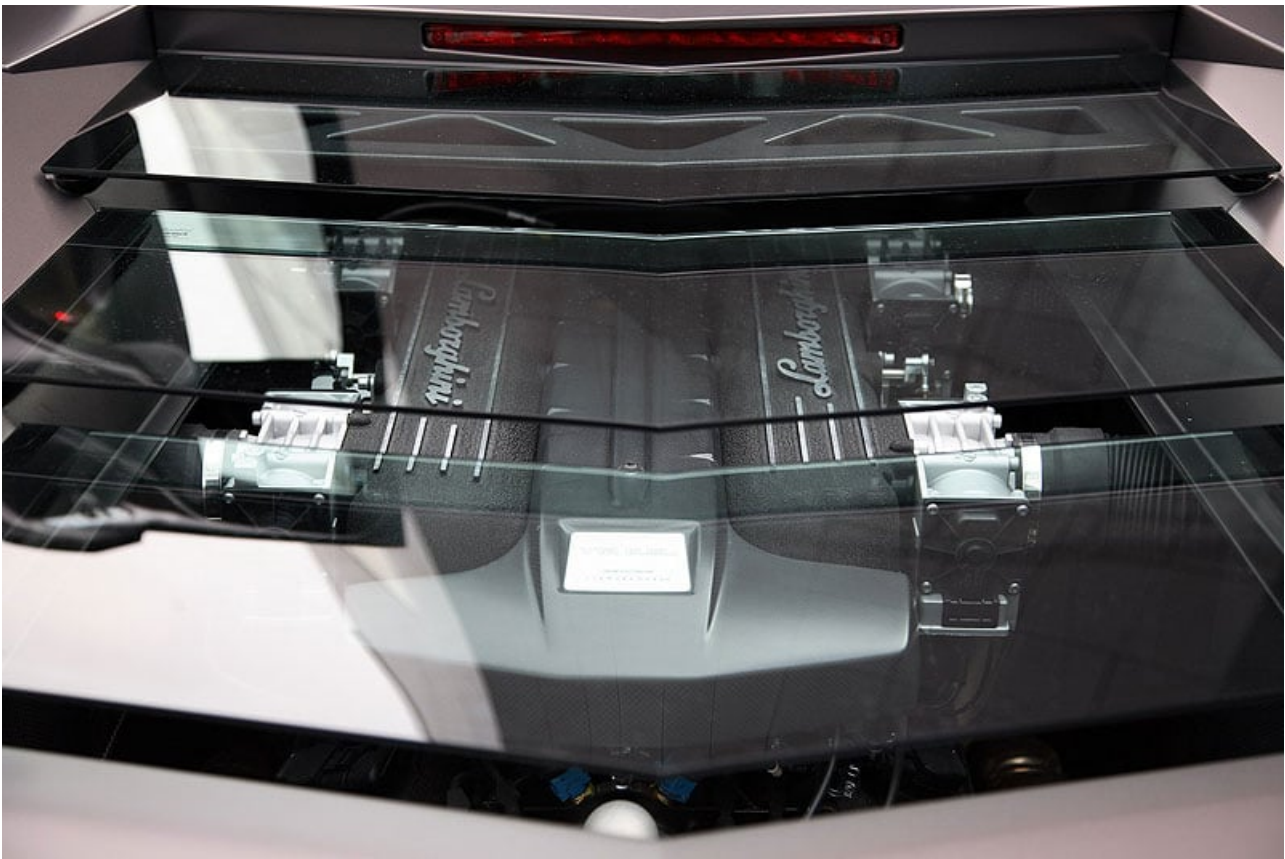


















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