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Sleeping Beauty Nº22: Lamborghini Espada



A beauty indeed was the Lamborghini Espada and her devoted admirers have been predicting her awakening for decades. While we're still waiting for her to come properly out of her slumber, we must note her pedigree and admire those stunning looks.

Designed by **Marcello Gandini** of **Bertone**, the striking two-door **Espada** was front-engined with rear-wheel drive and all-round independent suspension. It was a genuine four-seater, admittedly not quite a **Rolls-Royce** in the rear but still pretty good, and that perhaps is what will prevent her from being given that vital, awakening kiss now.

Your average **Prince Charming** of real means does tend to go for the sportier, lighter two-seater type, after all. No true nobleman would mention it but this beauty might be seen as, well, slightly on the hefty side: a UK road test car came out at 34.6cwt in 1970 and that, for younger readers, equals 1758kg. She's a big girl, 6ft 1.5in wide and 15ft 6.5in long if a mere 3ft 11in tall.

Yet here we have a genuine thoroughbred, powered by a big V12 engine, bearing the **Lamborghini** name and that combination makes the **Espada** worth serious consideration. The 3929cc engine produced 325bhp in early models, and there were some bugs which had to be ironed out. It was hard to see out when it rained, for example, because the screen wipers swept only a narrow slit and the inadequate heating and ventilation systems allowed the interior to steam up rather easily.

Power was increased to 350bhp for the **S2** of 1970, which was much improved all round, and the **S3** of 1972 was even better, especially in its interior design. A top speed of over 150mph was claimed. From the outside, there was little change in the **Espada's** looks over its decade of production, apart from the introduction of US-style impact-absorbing bumpers in 1976.

A total of 1217 **Espadas** were built, an unusually high production number for **Lamborghini** in those days but very few were right-hand drive – it cost over ten grand in the UK in the late 1960s, a mind-boggling price which was about twice that of a new **Aston Martin DB6**. Most were five-speed manual transmission cars but a minority were sold with a three-speed automatic gearbox.

The name **Espada** is Spanish for sword, particularly of a type used in bullfighting. As a motor car, the **Espada** will attract crowd-stopping looks wherever she goes. Providing the grandest of grand touring style, if not the ultimate in comfort, the **Espada's** value has yet to go through the roof. Tempting?

Sword in hand, you could fit three damsels in distress in an Espada. Have a look in the [Classic Driver car database to see what's available](#).

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