

# CLASSIC DRIVER



## Lamborghini Gallardo: Raging bull, reasonable bill

18 April 2013 | Alex Easthope

*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*

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