


CLASSIC DRIVER

1976 Lamborghini Countach LP400 'Periscopica'

- Lot sold
USD 1 100 000 - 1 500 000
Year of manufacture 1976
- **Lot number** 116
- **Drive** LHD
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Exterior colour** Other
- **Car type** Other
-

Description

PROVENANCE

Mitsuo Sanami, RAIKA Fashion Museum Collection, Tokyo, Japan (acquired new in 1977)
Isao Noritake, Aichi, Japan (acquired from the above in 1982)
Yoshiaki Okada (acquired from the above in 1986)
Isao Noritake, Aichi, Japan (acquired from the above in 1992)
Current Owner (acquired from the above)

THIS CAR

Of the many lightning bolts thrown by a young Marcello Gandini during his tenure at Carrozzeria Bertone, the Lamborghini Miura and its successor, the Countach LP400 "Periscopica," defined many precepts of the mid-engine exotic car. When the Lamborghini LP500 show car debuted at Geneva in 1971 with a five-liter version of the Lamborghini V-12, few thought this "kinetic sculpture" would enter production. The LP500's chiseled shape and scissor doors were more feasible elaborations of the forms first seen in Gandini's 1968 Alfa Romeo Carabo show car, but the LP500 was nonetheless quite outrageous. Casting further doubt over development of any production Countach, in the year after its Geneva debut Ferruccio Lamborghini agreed to sell a 51% stake in Automobili Lamborghini to Georges-Henri Rossetti, and sold all interest in his tractor company.

Mr. Lamborghini remained heavily involved during initial phases of Countach development. In 1972, lead engineer Paolo Stanzani and development driver Bob Wallace drove a prototype Countach to Sicily and back, and shortly after that journey Rossetti and Lamborghini approved production. At Geneva in 1973, Lamborghini presented the yet more fully realized Longitudinale Prototipo 400, or LP400, using the proven four-liter V-12 that for years had served in varying forms in the Miura and Espada. As development progressed, it became obvious that cooling the engine required modification of Gandini's purist LP400 design, but the resulting NACA ducts that punctured the rear flanks to guide airflow to the radiators joined the scissor doors, origami-like bodywork, big V-12, and the "periscope" rearview mirror as defining elements of the early Countach. Series production ramped up slowly throughout 1974.

Of the approximately 160 Countach LP400 "Periscopicas" ever made, five were commissioned in 1975 for customers in Lebanon, but only the first three were delivered. The fourth was redirected to a buyer in Saudi Arabia. Final construction of the fifth of those ordered, the car presented here, was delayed until May 14, 1976, and it was delivered new into Japan as the only production LP400 to be finished in the desirable combination of black with a black interior.

In Japan's postwar decades of relentless economic growth, entrepreneurs and corporate executives often amassed collections of a wide range of luxury goods, sometimes held in company museums. According to the car's file, Mitsuo Sanami of Tokyo, a champion trap shooter who represented Japan in the 1964 Olympics, took delivery of this car on December 12, 1977, and placed the Countach in the RAIKA Fashion Museum in Tokyo.

Isao Noritake, a legend among Lamborghini enthusiasts, owned this car twice, buying it the first time from Mr. Sanami in 1982. Mr. Noritake served for many years as chairman of the Japan Lamborghini Owner's Club, which he co-founded in 1988, and is still the manager of the JLOC race team, which has contested every season of the Japanese Super GT series.

In 1986, Mr. Noritake sold the car to Yoshiaki Okada, before reacquiring the Lamborghini in 1992 and shipping it to Italy to spend nearly two years at the Lamborghini factory, where it was restored in its present livery, white with a white and blue interior at a cost of \$165,000. The interior includes blue and white ultra-suede (Alcantara), a fabric developed in both Japan and Italy that was coming into vogue at the time. The car returned to Japan in 1994, residing in Mr. Noritake's collection and never road registered.

In 2015, the Lamborghini was purchased by its current owner through Symbolic Motorcars, showing, as it does now, less than 550 km on its odometer. Appearing in stunning condition after its refurbishment by Lamborghini in the 1990s, the car has only minor paint blemishes on the lower rockers and valance panels and retains the plastic seat covers applied by Lamborghini. Apart from the updated finishes done by the factory, this amazing Countach appears unrestored and original, and while running, will require mechanical servicing and attention prior to any spirited road use due to years spent in static storage.

Accompanied by an owner's manual, along with sales and US import documents, this Countach also comes with factory build specifications recently acquired directly from Lamborghini Polo Storico verifying that it retains its matching numbers engine. This LP400 "Periscopica" presents an excellent opportunity for its next owner to enjoy it in its current state or to be returned to its original Nero/Nero livery, and should not be ignored.

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