

CLASSIC DRIVER

Would you restore this Stratos from barn find to circuit destroyer?

Lead

While the Lancia Stratos is mostly known for its dominance on the rally stage, this barn find coming up for auction at RM Sotheby’s Monterey 2022 sale was built by its first owner to dominate the road racing scene.

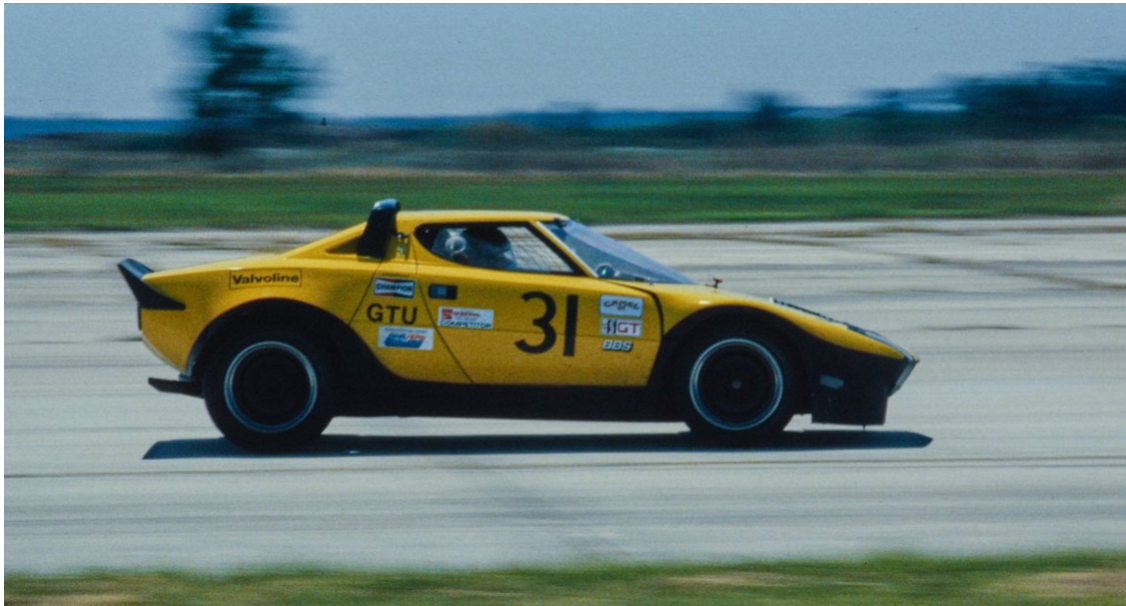


As is the case with most of Lancia’s creations, one would expect a racing veteran such as this barn find Stratos to have history competing on various rally stages throughout Europe. However, this car’s first owner had different plans for his Italian pocket rocket, thinking it a worthy adversary to the Porsches competing in road racing in the under 2.5-litre class. That man was an Oklahoma-based entrepreneur by the name of Anatoly Arutunoff, and unfortunately Lancia didn’t quite agree.





In spite of Lancia's factory "un-support", as Arutunoff described it, he bought his very own Stratos from the Lancia showroom in Italy in late 1976. He then began the long journey back to Oklahoma, first driving from Turin to the port of Cherbourg, France, and then across the channel by Ferry to England. There, it was loaded onto the Queen Elizabeth 2 and was promptly shipped to the USA. After unloading in Boston, Arutunoff continued his shakedown in frigid conditions on the roads back to his hometown of Tulsa, where the preparations for road racing would begin.



Unfortunately, a Stratos hallmark had to be thrown in the dumpster to comply with IMSA aero regulations, namely the "basket handle" roof spoiler, which was surprisingly just a cosmetic feature, according to Lancia. Once ready, this Stratos toured America's greatest circuits, competing at the 24 Hours of Daytona, Sebring, Watkins Glen, Road America, Road Atlanta, and Talladega, taking to the starting grid one last time at the Budweiser Grand Prix of Miami in February 1984. Despite never finding a spot on the podium, Arutunoff was very fond of "The Duck" (named for its bright yellow livery), noting that it was a great joy to race. As one of less than 500 Stratos HFs built, [this example](#) is a truly unique remnant of one man's crazy dream to fit a round peg in a square hole. Up for auction at [RM Sotheby's Monterey 2022 sale between August 18th and 20th](#), this would make for a supremely interesting addition to any collection.

Gallery

