

LAMBORGHINI DIABLO FAMILY

PRE-PURCHASE PROTOCOL · BUYER CHECKS · SPECIALIST PPI · RED FLAGS

Compiled from public sources, the Lamborghini Diablo family, its Model File and specialist review · Personal use only · v2.1

WHAT THIS CHECKLIST IS, AND WHAT IT IS NOT

This checklist is written for enthusiasts who want a base of knowledge: enough context to follow what a PPI specialist tells them, to read an inspection report a dealer hands over, and to understand what is being discussed in videos and forums. It does not replace the diagnosis or judgement of a qualified specialist or workshop, and it is not a tool for saving the cost of one. If you are not deeply familiar with these cars technically and are unsure about a vehicle's condition, our standing recommendation is simple: commission and pay a qualified PPI specialist of your choice, whether an official dealership, a marque specialist, or an experienced supercar specialist who knows the brand. The checklist gives you context; the specialist gives you the verdict.

A · BUYER CHECK · IDENTITY & PAPERWORK

- ☐ Generation and factory variant first: era (2WD / VT-era / 1999-6.0), variant against build sheet: SV/GT-look conversions separated from factory builds: FACTORY_VARIANT vs CURRENT_APPEARANCE.
- ☐ Recall VIN check: 95V186 (S.E. wheels: chassis decides, not the aggregator model year), 98V030 (window drop), 98V162 (Roadster header: is the protector still with the car?).
- ☐ Collector variants by documentation: SE30 numbered badge, Jota FACTORY documentation (airbox + loud exhaust ≠ Jota), Monterey spec, GT build number and gear ratio, 6.0 SE plaque.
- ☐ Maintenance age over mileage: clutch date and invoice, valve service, cooling work, chain/tensioner history, overheat events in writing.
- ☐ Delivery market and federalisation: ORIGINAL US / EURO IMPORT / FEDERALIZED / DE-FEDERALIZED: Euro-look rebuild ≠ Euro car.
- ☐ Accident file: geometry, structure, composite repairs: gloss paint proves nothing.
- ☐ Polo Storico status (covers through 6.0 SE): weighted high on collector cars.
- ☐ Electrics and A/C history: repairs, known faults, window-lifter work.
- ☐ Date-stamped items: tyres by DOT (VT: matching family and circumference), battery, fluids.
- ☐ Ownership chain and storage periods; service gaps named, not romanticised.

B · BUYER CHECK · AT THE CAR

- ☐ Cold start mandatory: cranking, oil pressure, smoke, misfire, chain noise on start and overrun: a pre-warmed car is its own finding.
- ☐ Window drop tested on BOTH doors before anything else: the door must open reliably: 98V030 logic applies to every Diablo.
- ☐ Full warm-up: town, stop-and-go, highway, then standing: both fans cycle, temperature stable, no coolant smell.
- ☐ Gearbox cold 1→2, 2→3 gently: warm repeatedly 1→2, 2→3, 3→2: stiff is normal, grinding is not; shift lever and gate play checked.
- ☐ Clutch: bite point, pedal force, slip under load, judder, pedal return: heavy is era-normal, uneven is not.
- ☐ VT: full-lock manoeuvres both directions: binding, hopping, clunk; steering assist present (VT) or honestly absent (early 2WD).
- ☐ Brakes by era: consistent pedal, straight stops, no fast fade; 1999+: ABS lamp logic correct.
- ☐ Pop-ups rise together (pre-1999); fixed lights original (post-1999): retrofits are an originality finding.
- ☐ Roadster: roof off and on, latches, seals; water traces at carpet, seat bases, ECU areas.
- ☐ Electrics walked completely: windows, instruments, fans, lights, HVAC: "Italian electrics" is not a verdict.
- ☐ 30–45 minute road test warm, then leak map and second look underneath.

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C · SPECIALIST PPI SCOPE (MINIMUM)

- ☐ Order: identity/variant truth → cold visual and leak inspection → structure/corrosion → cold start → warm-up and cooling test → gearbox/clutch road test → VT driveline → heat soak → hot start → post-drive inspection.
- ☐ Corrosion zones: door bottoms, arches, footwells, boot floor, filler area, sill interfaces: galvanic points at steel/aluminium transitions.
- ☐ Accident forensics: geometry, pickups, rear structure, apertures; composite repair quality (fibre, filler, fasteners).
- ☐ Chain/tensioner diagnosis on any rattle: cold, warm, overrun: never “old Lamborghini”.
- ☐ Compression and leak-down on overheat suspicion; cooling pressure and combustion-gas test.
- ☐ Clutch and slave cylinder: wear, hydraulics, seepage, disengagement; access-labour reality priced in.
- ☐ Synchros 2nd/3rd under load; gate mechanism condition.
- ☐ VT: viscous coupling behaviour, front diff, propshaft, CVs, leaks; tyre rolling circumferences measured, not assumed.
- ☐ Suspension: front hydraulics leaks, rear damper condition, wishbone bushes, ball joints, bearings; mode function on VT.
- ☐ Electrical survey: grounds, relays, charging, fans, engine management; window-drop mechanism both sides.
- ☐ Valve-clearance evidence (≈18,000-mile logic): budget reserve if undocumented.
- ☐ Typical full specialist PPI cost, rounded orientation by market (2026): ≈€800–1,500 / ≈£700–1,300 / ≈\$850–1,600. Indications, not conversions; obtain current local quotes.

D · PRICE & INVESTIGATION ITEMS

The bad Diablo is an accumulation, not one defect: name each deferred item, price it, then decide. Maintenance age is the price.

- ☐ Recommissioning package (fluids, hoses, cooling refresh, brake service) expected on standing cars: quoted, priced.
- ☐ Clutch and slave findings: access-dominated labour: quote before purchase.
- ☐ Synchro wear: gearbox-out money: priced as such.
- ☐ Cooling catch-up and fan/relay work: normal ageing, quantifiable.
- ☐ Damper, bush and mount package: age-normal, quoted per axle.
- ☐ Dead A/C: real money on a hot car: quote, not shrug.
- ☐ False-variant findings (SV/GT look): value correction, not repair.
- ☐ Negotiate from the documented file: never from the odometer.

E · RED FLAGS · WALK-AWAY OR ESCALATION

- Structural or chassis damage without documentation.
- Fuel smell or fuel leak, undiagnosed.
- Documented or suspected severe overheating without repair evidence.
- A window that will not drop: the door-opening safety chain (98V030 logic).
- Grinding gearbox or clutch chaos, undiagnosed.
- Collector specification that cannot be proven: Jota, Monterey, GT, 6.0 SE without papers.
- Fifteen years of service gap sold as “runs great”.
- Mileage or diagnostics that contradict the wear picture.
- A car whose problems cannot be named, quantified and priced.

F · FIRST WEEK OF OWNERSHIP

- ☐ Hoses, fluids and tyres of unknown age addressed before real driving.
- ☐ Battery maintainer and a gentle recommissioning plan: brakes, cooling, clutch exercised progressively.
- ☐ Polo Storico file opened for collector cars; purchase file, recall evidence and PPI report archived.

“The bad Diablo is rarely one broken thing: it is ten small deferred things at once. Buy maintenance age, documentation and the correct variant: the V12 will do its part.”

Deep dive: Supercar Models Paper 26 · Model File 26 · Owner's Intelligence series.