

MODEL FILE 24 · V12 FLAGSHIP LINEAGE · LAMBORGHINI CLASSIC

LAMBORGHINI COUNTACH

V12 · 1974–1990 · LP400 → LP400 S → 5000 S → QV → 25TH ANNIVERSARY

THE FAMILY IN BRIEF

VARIANTS

LP400 “Periscopio” 1974–78 (152 cars, 3,929 cc, narrow body, roof channel) · LP400 S 1978–82 (235: sub-series S1 lowbody with Bravo wheels, S2, raised S3: register figures around 50/105/82, attribution strictly by chassis via register/Polo Storico, never by look) · 5000 S 1982–84 (323, 4,754 cc) · Quattrovalvole 1985–88 (631, 5,167 cc, 48 valves: 455 CV carburetted, 420 CV US-injected) · 25th Anniversary 1988–90 (658, QV-based, the largest classic series). Total: 1,999 series cars. Walter Wolf specials, Euro/US delivery and federalisation are separate layers, not variants. The 2021 Countach LPI 800-4 gets its own modern file.

LP500 PROTOTYPE

The yellow 1971 Geneva LP500 is NOT an early series car: 4,971 cc, different chassis concept, different intakes, electronic instrumentation. Lamborghini used it intensively for development, temporarily fitted the robust 4-litre engine, and finally sacrificed it in the European homologation crash test at MIRA on 21 March 1974: the original was scrapped afterwards. File rule: LP500 PROTOTYPE ≠ LP400 SERIES CAR.

WHY IT MATTERS

The first pure classic in this register, and the buying logic inverts accordingly: VERSION → IDENTITY → CHASSIS → ORIGINALITY → RESTORATION QUALITY → MAINTENANCE → mechanical condition. A bad clutch slave cylinder can be fixed. A historically wrong LP400 with hidden frame rot and doubtful identity cannot, at any sane price. Mileage is close to the least important number on this car.

HISTORICAL AUTHENTICITY · THE WING

REAR WING ORIGIN

The image almost everyone carries: wide Countach, P7 tyres, huge V-wing: is NOT the original Countach. Gandini’s LP400 had no big rear wing. Walter Wolf, owner of the Walter Wolf Racing F1 team and close to Lamborghini and Dallara, commissioned special cars: his first series LP400 (chassis 1120006, per the Countach Register) received an adjustable wing for high-speed stability, and the later Wolf specials combined wide Pirelli P7s, wide wheels, arch extensions, front spoiler and the big wing: these cars became the development template. Lamborghini itself states the LP400 S arose directly from Wolf’s special LP400: and codes the S-wing as optional/aftermarket equipment. Precision matters: Wolf was the trigger and client, development ran through Lamborghini/Dallara: not “the F1 team engineered a series wing”.

WING CONSEQUENCES

The wing improves high-speed stability but COSTS top speed through drag (documented): iconic, not a performance upgrade. PPI: on an LP400 a later big wing is normally NOT original configuration: on S/5000 S/QV/25th the questions are: originally ordered, period installation, Lamborghini accessory, later replica, correct supports and wing version, extra drill holes. Fields: REAR_WING_PRESENT, REAR_WING_PERIOD_CORRECT, FACTORY/PERIOD_ACCESSORY, ORIGINAL_BODY_DRILLED, WING_REMOVED_HISTORY.

P7 & MAGNESIUM WHEELS

The S was not just wider arches: the extremely wide low-profile Pirelli P7 drove changes to wheels, arches, suspension and brakes: tyre and wheel specification must match the variant exactly for authenticity. Early S/5000 S magnesium wheels are their own PPI point: correct casting marks, cracks, corrosion, porosity, weld repairs, material lost to over-polishing: NDT is very sensible: a visually perfect but repeatedly welded magnesium wheel is not a good wheel.

STRUCTURE FIRST · THE STEEL FRAME

HIDDEN FRAME CORROSION

Probably the single most important Countach PPI insight. Buyers think “aluminium supercar, no rust”: wrong: the structure is a complex steel-tube spaceframe under aluminium, fiberglass and composite skin. On many cars fiberglass floor and cover elements ENCLOSE frame sections, blocking air circulation: corrosion progresses invisibly underneath (ex-Polo-Storico specialist insight). Therefore: PAINT CONDITION ≠ CHASSIS CONDITION. Zones: main tubes, outriggers, sills, suspension mounts, floor interfaces, everything under and inside composite covers: on suspicion borescope, endoscope, thickness assessment, partial exposure. Galvanic corrosion at aluminium/steel/fiberglass/fastener interfaces adds to it. STRUCTURAL CHASSIS CORROSION = CRITICAL/HIGH.

ACCIDENT & HAND-BUILT BODY

A badly repaired 1970s/80s spaceframe is a massive asset risk: tube diameters, weld seams, deformation, repair pieces, suspension pickups, asymmetric geometry: unusual vibration from the uniball/suspension structure can itself hint at old damage. The body was hand-formed in Sant’Agata (the first series built this way, per Lamborghini): slight left/right deviations are historically authentic: a 2026 gap-gauge standard produces false findings: dramatic asymmetry however remains an accident indicator.

DRIVETRAIN · ROBUST, NOT MAINTENANCE-FREE

V12 CORE

The classic V12 is fundamentally strong. What kills it: overheating, oil starvation, wrong carburettor setup, wrong valve clearances, old fuel lines, long storage, bad repairs: not a flawed design. Overheating HISTORY is more dangerous than high mileage: a 70,000 km car with clean cooling, synced carbs and good oil supply beats a 15,000 km museum car with dead fans and repeated boil-overs.

COLD START

Mandatory, and never negotiable: start duration, choke behaviour, oil pressure, smoke, mechanical and chain noise, misfire, leakage. A seller who pre-warmed the car for 30 minutes = red flag: COLD START UNAVAILABLE goes into the report as a finding of its own.

CARBURETTORS & FUEL

Six Weber twin-choke = twelve individual channels that must work as one: synchronisation, throttle shafts, float levels, jets, linkage, accelerator pumps, seepage, mixture. A badly running Countach does NOT automatically need a rebuild: backfire, rough idle, poor response are classic symptoms of pure mis-synchronisation (a documented specialist case transformed the engine by syncing alone): ignition, fuel pressure, carb balance, clearances and compression are checked systematically BEFORE any teardown verdict. Fuel system = fire zone on a 35–50 year old car: both tanks, lines, crossover, pumps, filters, clamps, filler neck, venting: hoses of unknown age are replaced: FUEL SMELL = HIGH/CRITICAL, never “old Italians just smell of petrol”: ethanol-compatible lines documented on restored cars.

COOLING, OIL & VALVETRAIN

The V12 is robust if never boiled: radiators, fans, thermostat, water pump, hoses, expansion system, senders, relays: full warm-up with observed fan cycles is part of the PPI: continuously climbing temperature at standstill is a red flag, not “Countachs do that”: ageing contacts and relays at the fan control now matter more than the radiator itself. Oil: weep and light sweating are age-normal: active oil onto exhaust = HIGH/CRITICAL fire risk: 4-litre cars get the oil-cooler lines along the chassis checked. Valve clearances are real mechanical maintenance (QV: 48 valves, much more labour): VALVE_ADJUSTMENT_DATE recorded, budget reserve if undocumented. Timing chains: cold rattle, tension, guide history: AGE/HIGH-CONSEQUENCE INSPECTION, not a fleet epidemic.

GEARBOX & CLUTCH

The 5-speed sits AHEAD of the engine, practically between the seats, driving back through a shaft to the rear differential: that is why the shift feels so mechanically direct, and it separates the Countach fundamentally from the Miura. The gearbox is durable if not abused: the recurring specialist finding is SECOND-GEAR SYNCHRO wear: cold 1→2 slowly and 2→1 only carefully, warm 1→2, 2→3, 3→2: crunch, baulking, jumping out. The box is mechanically loud and stiffer cold: NOISE CHARACTERISTIC vs BEARING WHINE needs reference experience. The weep hole at the engine/gearbox junction is a documented seal tell: visible oil there points to engine or input-shaft seals: ENGINE/GEARBOX WEEP HOLE = DRY/WET goes straight into the checklist. Clutch: wear point whose cost is dominated by ACCESS (major removal labour): bite point, slip, judder, release bearing, hydraulics: very heavy pedals are normal: a sudden change is not.

CHASSIS, BODY & CABIN

SUSPENSION, BRAKES & STEERING

Rose-joint/uniball-style suspension: ball joints, tie rods, bushings, dampers, wheel bearings, alignment: joint wear is a common age finding. Parts availability is its own risk factor: some components cross-reference or reproduce, some Countach-specific bushings and trim do not: SMALL DEFECT ≠ SMALL EFFORT. Brakes: no servo/ABS expectations, the pedal is heavy by design: discs, pads, calipers, hoses, master cylinder, fluid, handbrake: after storage, seized rear calipers and handbrake mechanisms are typical: after a short drive, compare temperatures at all four wheels: one hot wheel = dragging-caliper suspicion. Steering unassisted: brutally heavy when parking is normal: unusually heavy AT SPEED means tyres, alignment, rack and joints get checked.

DOORS, ELECTRICS & A/C

Scissor doors: hinges, struts, latch, alignment: ageing struts that no longer hold the doors up are small but typical. Electrics are an AGE-RELATED CORE PPI AREA (the youngest car is 36): fusebox, grounds, relays, alternator, starter, fans, pop-up headlamp motors (both together, end stops, aim: lighting is a real-world MOT finding), instruments, switches, window motors. A/C was mediocre when new and is often empty or dead today: A/C NONFUNCTIONAL = MEDIUM, a genuine condition point with unpleasant repair access, not cosmetics.

ORIGINALITY & SURFACES

Interior originality is highly relevant: dashboard, seats, wheel, shift knob, carpets, headliner, switchgear: original trim is a documented supply bottleneck. Paint spans aluminium panels, fiberglass parts and steel interfaces: a thickness gauge alone is insufficient: edge finish, rivets and fasteners, seams, overspray, filler, waves, stress cracks. Over-restoration is value damage on a hand-built car: too-perfect gaps, modern fasteners, wrong weld patterns, wrong leather grain, wrong finish levels: FACTORY-CORRECT > CONCOURS FANTASY. Ergonomics are design, not defects: tight, hot, loud, heavy steering and clutch, miserable rear view (the QV carb hump makes it worse: construction, not accident evidence): the famous sit-on-the-sill reversing technique is a practical necessity.

MARKETS, IDENTITY & PAPERS

FEDERALISATION

On US cars the question is never just "US car?" but "HOW did it get there?": period federalisation covered bumpers, side markers, lighting, emissions equipment, catalysts, different exhausts (NHTSA-era documents even show bumper-exemption requests): many cars were later converted back to Euro looks. Three states, separated strictly: ORIGINAL EURO · ORIGINAL US · FEDERALIZED + LATER DE-FEDERALIZED: collector value differs massively. A US QV with bumpers removed and Euro lights is NOT an original European downdraft car: original delivery market and build sheet decide. QV DOWNDRAFT and QV FUEL INJECTION are separate data objects (455 vs 420 CV).

IDENTITY & POLO STORICO

Identity outranks everything: chassis number, engine number, gearbox, original colour and interior, delivery country and dealer, wheels, wing, bumper and carburettor/injection spec: a technically wonderful but historically wrongly configured car is a weakened asset. Polo Storico (factory archive, original configuration, certification) is weighted extremely high in this price class. Restoration documentation outranks mileage: an unrestored 70,000 km car with excellent history can be the better asset than an undocumented 12,000 km full restoration: demanded: photos before/during, stripping, chassis inspection, rust and tube repairs, body, engine, gearbox, interior, paint, parts sourcing.

RECALLS · A DIFFERENT ERA

NO MODERN MATRIX

For a 1974–90 classic the modern recall database is not the governing frame: NHTSA vehicle queries return no Countach campaigns (verified September 2026), and historic datasets are inherently incomplete: no matrix is invented. The compliance layer of this file is instead: identity, original delivery market, federalisation history, period modifications, restoration history: and the PPI needs no 50-module scan: it needs a genuinely experienced historic Lamborghini specialist, with Polo Storico as the reference point.

COST DISCIPLINE · RESTORATION ECONOMICS

STATUS

Deliberately no fixed working-range table in this round: classic Countach costs are scope-driven (recommissioning vs partial vs full restoration) and pricing them without the restoration/transaction dataset would be invention. Held as principles: clutch cost is access-dominated: carb synchronisation, fuel lines, cooling refresh are normal recommissioning, not defects: structural frame repair and historically correct trim are the open-ended positions: bands follow the dataset round.

BUYING NOTES · THE TWO CHECKS THAT MATTER

1 · VERSION, IDENTITY,
CHASSIS

Buy in this order: correct version and sub-series (register-attributed), documented identity (Polo Storico), sound structure (frame inspected where it cannot be seen): then originality and restoration quality: only then mechanical condition: everything in the last category is fixable.

2 · CONFIDENCE DISCIPLINE

Strong age/structural patterns: hidden spaceframe corrosion, mixed-material corrosion, suspension-joint wear, brake and handbrake seizure, old contacts and relays, A/C. Strong mechanical/service patterns: clutch wear, second-gear synchro, engine/gearbox seal leakage, carburettor imbalance, fuel-line ageing, cooling deterioration. High consequence, not necessarily common: timing-chain wear, major overheating damage, magnesium-wheel cracking, structural accident repair. NOT called common: catastrophic V12 bottom-end failure, universal gearbox failure, universal head-gasket failure: the car is old and maintenance-sensitive, not badly engineered.

MARKET POSITION · HIERARCHY OF ORIGINALITY

STATUS

Bands follow the transaction dataset. Structural readings: LP400 Periscopio at the top of the ladder, S1 lowbody carrying its own premium, QV downdraft vs injection split, the 25th as the accessible entry: and across all of it, identity, Polo Storico documentation, structure and originality price the car: not the odometer.

1,999

Series cars 1974–1990, plus one LP500 prototype sacrificed for homologation

152

LP400 Periscopio: the historically most sensitive cars of the family

12

Weber channels that must work as one: before any rebuild verdict, synchronise

Sources: Lamborghini factory/heritage data (variant production 152/235/323/631/658, hand-built bodywork, LP400 S from Walter Wolf's special, wing as optional/aftermarket equipment, Polo Storico); LP500 fate and QV/variant technical data verified September 2026 (4,971 cc prototype, MIRA crash test 21 March 1974; QV 5,167 cc, 455 vs 420 CV); LP400 S sub-series figures per register data; Wolf history per Walter Wolf and Countach Register sources; frame-corrosion and mechanical patterns per named specialist sources (ex-Polo Storico, Hemmings, marque specialists); wing drag effect per Hagerty; NHTSA vehicle queries return no Countach campaigns. Cost bands deliberately deferred to the restoration-economics round.