



***The Lamborghini Diablo Roadster,
the ultimate car for cruising Monte Carlo.***

On the 1992 Geneva Auto Show, Automobili Lamborghini SpA presented a prototype of an open-top version of their flagship, the Diablo Roadster, but it took another three years of work and development to have this Diablo VT Roadster ready for sale.

It was however a little reworked; it was not quite the same car as the prototype three years earlier. The bodywork was altered; the side-air intakes used a design similar to the one seen on the Diablo SE model, with the two vertical slots leading air onto the rear disc brakes.

The front spoiler was completely redesigned to distinguish the VT Roadster from its 'normal' closed counterparts, the fog lights were now separated, two rectangular lights and two circular lights were used instead of the four square units on the closed Diablo's. Also, twin air intakes were mounted next to these rectangular lights to guide air onto the front disc brakes.

The rear bumper used a design similar to the one used for the SE model, this way the backup light and the rear fog lights were built into the bumper, the grille between the rear taillights was also close to the SE styling grille. The VT Roadster now used four oval exhausts instead of the earlier round ones.

The engine cover needed to be redesigned, together with the bodywork behind both passengers, because that's where the roof was stored when not in place above the driver. This roof section was made of carbon fibre to keep the weight down, but Lamborghini was going to offer an electric system to open and close the roof. This system would be developed in association with the Swiss Lamborghini importer Affolter (see the GT's section). When the roof was stored in the engine lid, it did not remain open when accessing the engine, you would have to put the top back in place when checking the oil.

The last thing you'd notice on the outside were the specially designed rims, 17 inch tall front and rear, also with the three-piece design, but slightly different from the original Diablo ones. By the way, the Roadster was only available in VT version; an SV Roadster with rear wheel drive was developed by the factory, but only very few were ever made, and all on special order.

On the inside, the Roadster was much like the latest Diablo VT from which it used the entire dashboard configuration, one thing was unique for the Roadster however, the seats were slightly modified and used a completely different stitching design for the seat and backrest. In addition, the leather used was especially selected for the Roadster, since the possibility of rain was always present and the leather would have to resist to direct sunlight too when driving top-less, for which the Roadster was intended of course.

During the Paris Auto show in October 1998, Automobili Lamborghini SpA presented an evolution of their Diablo series, the car had been redesigned to keep up with the current trends and also to set it apart from the earlier Diablo's.

Naturally the VT Roadster was also modified for the 1999 model year, like the other Diablo's in the range, the front received new, fixed headlight units while the wheels became 18-inch, to be able to cover the enlarged perforated disc brakes. From 1999 a Lucas derived ABS system by Kelsey Hays was used on all Diablo's, so stopping the Devil at high speeds became a little less frightening.

The interior of the Roadster was redesigned into the MY 1999 specifications, the steering wheel used an integrated airbag and the passenger side airbag was neatly integrated into the dashboard, a top array of indicators were located above the standard speedometer mounted in a new console.

The 1999 modifications also included an increase of power-output from 492 to 530 Bhp, perhaps an academic value but surely noticeable by the experienced driver, the entire engine management system was modified, these new engines could be recognized by the 'Valve Timing Management' inscription on the central cover over the intake manifolds.

Since this would become the final evolution of the Diablo VT Roadster it became an instant collector's item, these were the finest driving Diablo's ever and with the added bonus of open-top driving it was one of the most desirable cars made.

The rear wing was still available as an option, however it didn't look as good on the Roadster as it did on the SV or VT models.