



Lamborghini Murciélago LP640.

A few days before the 2006 edition of the famous Geneva Auto Show would open its doors, Automobili Lamborghini SpA made a rather unexpected announcement, they would introduce the next step in the Murciélago evolution; the LP640 model.

The LP640 name goes back to the days of the legendary Countach, where LP stood for 'Longitudinale Posteriore', just like on the new Murciélago, only the digits now stand for the number of horsepower behind your ears instead of the engine displacement like on the Countach.

A more powerful Murciélago was actually expected, an increase in horsepower would be needed to differentiate the flagship further from the 520 hp Gallardo V10 model, but Automobili Lamborghini SpA didn't just get more power from the engine, they created a brand new designer suit for their V12. Since the Murciélago was introduced in 2001 its design had hardly aged, it still looks wild and aggressive today and about 2000 cars left the factory at Sant'Agata before this even more radical Murciélago would be available ... the LP640 edition.

On the outside you would immediately notice the new looks of the car, with a larger front spoiler, that is both deeper and comes further forward than the older one, also the air intakes are now larger. Further to the back of the car you would notice a new windscreen wiper and redesigned rear view mirrors, these latter are now more aerodynamically integrated into the overall design.

But than the asymmetrical design hits you, the air intake and exhaust on the left is much larger than the one of the right side of the car ... and it has a practical reason, because of thermal consideration the enlarged 6.5 Liter engine required a larger oil cooler, hence a larger air flow. Since there is only one oil cooler and it's mounted at the left of the car, this is where the large air intake is located, putting an equally large intake on the right side would be useless, and on a Lamborghini nothing is there for looks only.

Getting around the car and admiring the back would draw your attention to that massive central mounted exhaust, there was only one of them now and it was large, in every sense of the word, Freud would have a field day about this one. But it is magnificent at the same time ... and we don't even mention the howling sound that emits from it yet.

Beautifully modified taillights now featured clear glass covers and mirrored interiors, making them look very deep, and those brake lights are needed with this much power in the back..

Talking about brakes, these became massive 380 mm tall at the front, while the rear ones were still 355 mm tall, which happened to be larger than most other sport cars had on their front axle by the way. These large discs were coupled to a four channel anti-lock system featuring an electronic brake control (DRP) and TCS traction control using an electro-hydraulic controller and four speed sensors.

If all this wasn't enough for you, there was an even better system on the options list; ceramic brakes with large 380 mm rotors around and six piston calipers, once you would experience these on the Murciélago LP640 you would never want to go back to 'ordinary' discs again.

All this material was mounted behind magnificent new Hermera wheels, available in both silver finish and dark titanium finish, and again these wheels reminded you of the asymmetrical design of this new car, with very special spokes, naturally there were five double spokes and the 'telephone dial' style of the Countach was still recognizable on them.

But feast your eyes on the next option on the list ... a glass louvered engine cover which allowed everyone to see that stunning engine, which was heavily reworked by Gabriele Gabrielli, lead engineer for the LP640, and his team.

The Lamborghini V12 engine still features the ignition sequence on the cover, a detail that would look tacky on other cars, but on the Murciélago it's accepted..

A continuous variable timing system on both the inlet and outlet camshafts had enhanced drivability of this new Lamborghini together with a drive-by-wire system. The new engine featured a displacement of 6.5 liter, obtained by increasing the bore and stroke of the engine to 88 x 86.8mm, with a totally new cylinder head and reworked intake system, power went up to 640 hp at 8000 rpm, giving the new Murciélago more than enough power to outrun just about anything you might encounter on the open road these days.

And what's more, this brand new evolution of the legendary V12 engine will not be used in any Audi model, unlike the V10 engine that found its way into the high-performance S-model from Audi, the V12 will remain in Italy ! This new masterpiece from Automobili Lamborghini SpA was the most powerful, normally aspirated engine in production at that time.

To keep all this power under control the six speed gearbox had to be modified, and a larger rear differential was installed, a nice touch is the 'thrust' mode on the optional e-Gear transmission, all this resulted in an impressive acceleration to 100 Km/h in only 3 seconds flat. Also note that the gear ratio's become shorter on the both the manual and the e-Gear transmission.

Putting the full 640 Hp on the tarmac is still done via the well known Lamborghini VT system, the Viscous Traction uses a central differential that seamlessly divides the power to the front and the rear in a 30 / 70 percent torque split, however a full 100 percent can be shifted to both the front or the rear axle.

If you actually own a car like this, you'll also be on the inside won't you, so let's take a look at the new interior of the LP640. You would be seated on newly designed seats, a little wider than the earlier ones, and with a new headrest design, but the best would be that stunning pattern on the seats ... lozenge shaped stitching that is listed as 'Q-citura' in the brochure, the same pattern was also visible on the door panels, the central console, the roof and the 'wall' behind the seats, as an option you could order some really nice sport seats, which closely resemble racing style bucket seats by the way. A nice anecdote was heard at a local dealership the last day; do you know why the seatbelts are mounted in the center of the car instead of on the outsides ? Naturally because there would be more room for them, but a much more pleasant answer came from the salesperson : 'They were mounted there to allow you to admire that amazing engine when turning your head towards them to reach for the seatbelt'. How's that for a reason ?

Looking past the steering wheel you would notice some new graphics on the dashboard, but glancing to the right should surprise you even more, standard fitment on the LP640 is a Kenwood main unit with a large 6.5 inch screen for the DVD player. An optional navigation system could replace this Kenwood however, in case you might get lost in your new Lamborghini.

Automobili Lamborghini SpA still offers their 'Privilegio' programme on the Murciélago, which means you can order just about anything you heart desired, like wild leather upholstery or a full Carbon Fiber package for the interior ... and any color you might want, even based on samples if you like, and if your wallet can support it naturally.

Getting into this luxurious interior is still via those trademark doors that swing upwards, fortunately that remains a feature of the Lamborghini flagship, replacing them with ordinary doors would mean pulling the Murciélago from its pedestal of exotic supercar, these 'wild' doors close very solidly anyway.

Turn the key in the ignition and after three seconds the starter motor will burst that legendary V12 behind you into life with a mind blowing howl, like waking up the devil ... it isn't called the Diablo anymore, but the LP640 was probably the fastest way to get there.

At 3500 rpm the sound is amazing, go up to 5000 rpm and there is an important change in note, much deeper and meaner, dare to hit the 8000 rpm limit and the sound is out of this world altogether ... this car will shatter 100 Mph in second gear only, imagine the speeding tickets you would be getting in a car like this ... if they can catch you that is.

The Lamborghini Murciélago LP640 is a proper supercar, it's loud, fast, expensive, violent and vicious ... granted it's not a gran turismo like a Ferrari 599 or as plush as a Porsche 911 Turbo ... but this is a Lamborghini, and a real 'Raging Bull', it is brutal, intimidating, aggressive and costs a small fortune, both to buy and to maintain, but all that is relative, because a icon like this can only be compared to cars like a Zonda, a Bugatti, an Enzo or a Koenigsegg, and all these latter cars cost a lot more, so the Lamborghini is a bargain, order yours today.

It may ultimately not be the quickest car on the market today, but it sure is the best looking one in my opinion, an opinion that is shared with a lot of enthusiasts apparently, waiting lists are getting longer for this new Lamborghini, every single one of the 300 units that will be built in 2006 were sold already, and production for 2007 was selling quickly so the current waiting time was around 12 months for an LP640, much like the Gallardo Spyder who also demands a 12 month waiting period, only the Gallardo Coupé could be delivered within 6 months

The Lamborghini Murciélago LP640 is another product of the decades old tradition set by the late Ferruccio Lamborghini in the early Sixties ... a Lamborghini would have to be more powerful and faster than any rival with a prancing horse logo ... and the LP640 passed both criteria with flying colors.