



### ***The Lamborghini Murciélago Roadster.***

It has been a rather long wait between the presentation of the Concept Car in Detroit during the 2003 Auto Show and the introduction of the actual production model for the Murciélago Roadster in 2004, people were standing in line to order this latest 'open top' offering from Sant'Agata.

Some were worried that the cutting edge design from the Concept prototype wouldn't make it into production, but most of it did, so the Murciélago Roadster became a stunning car, and those awesome new wheels also remained, and became available on the coupé as an option.

But what sets the Roadster apart from the closed version, in addition to the canvas roof section naturally ..., there is a new engine cover, which is almost a work of art on it's own, note that this new cover actually hinges at the rear of the car like on the legendary Miura from the Sixties. The Roadster will have a sports exhaust as standard fitment, on the coupé this remains an option, and naturally those awesome, five-spoke wheels in massive 18-inch height.

Another distinguishing factor is the interior, the upholstery used for the Roadster is different from that on the coupé, inside the Roadster the driver is seated on perforated leather while the passenger still receives smooth leather. This perforation is also used on the left door panel, and the entire cockpit is much more driver orientated inside the Roadster.

Note that the central section on both seats is standard fitted in Alcantara, with leather as an option, and most of the time in a contrasting color to the rest of the interior, even the steering wheel has a perforated leather section ... talk about an eye for detail.

A nice detail is the fact that the Murciélago Roadster has a 'non-reflective' rear view mirror, very useful when driving with the top open, and the roll over bars are nicely 'tucked away' behind the headrests until needed, when they pop up to protect the driver and passenger.

This Roadster isn't just Murciélago with the roof cut away, the entire design of the windscreen and side windows was reviewed, and the side windows now seem to disappear into the rear air intakes, which remain adjustable like before, a very impressive sight.

Naturally there was need for structural reinforcements, you can't take away the roof on a car with nearly 600 Bhp without strengthening the chassis, so among other things a special lattice was mounted over the engine, finished in black steel but optionally available in genuine Carbon Fiber, also the inner finish of the new engine cover could be ordered in Carbon Fiber making the engine look really nice when visible, a glass engine cover is however not available at this time.

Automobili Lamborghini SpA have published the top speed of the Roadster at around 320 Km/h, but they do state that with the roof in place, speed should be no higher than 160 Km/h, but I've talked to owners that reached 200 Km/h with the roof in place, and no excessive wind noise or buffeting was noted, so I guess the 160 Km/h limit has been set to be on the safe side, you do have to fix the roof in place tightly on this kind of super car.

Which brings us to the next interesting item, even if it's only a small canvas roof section, it is surprisingly watertight and wind tight, no extreme wind sounds are noticeable within the car, and even with the roof removed, open top motoring is very enjoyable, no gale force wind inside the car, even at speeds above 200 Km/h. It is however wise to go for the optional 'windbreaks' behind the seats on and the windscreen, you are still driving a V12 Lamborghini convertible.

But what is it like to drive the new Roadster ... it's simply divine ! Naturally you're still driving a very low super car, using the interior rear view mirror could result in some unpleasant surprise, you will only see the roof of the cars behind you because of the high rear section of the Murciélago and the powerdome on the engine cover ... you will however notice the flashlights from the police car behind you ...

Some journalists complained about this, and reverse parking the car into a spot could be tricky, but every true Lamborghini enthusiast knows how you should park a car like this anyway, door open and sitting on the side sill ... it takes a bit of practice, but it works perfectly.

Probably one of the best things about driving the Murciélago Roadster is the sound of that amazing V12 just behind your ears, at about 5000 rpm the raw sound of this engine is everywhere around you, no need for a radio or for conversation, this sound is all you want, it is not as high pitched as say a Diablo GT engine, but it is close, albeit in a lower tone.

Driving in the city limits would be possible in first gear only in this car, but it is way more fun when driving in second gear when you arrive at a stop light, downshift to first and the engine makes a howling sound, almost alien ... rest assure that you will be noticed !

The Murciélago Roadster is one of last true super cars, a breed that is slowly fading away, a powerful engine in a car with no roof, pure and simple motoring, a mid-engine adventure on four wheels ... now the only thing that could top this would be an LP640 Roadster version, which should be available during the 2007 production year.