



Photo © Jay Molis

## ***Lamborghini Miura Roadster***

One of the most exclusive Miura's, still in existence, is the Miura P400 Roadster, which was presented on the 1968 Brussels Auto Show.

Designed and built by Bertone, this open version was not a normal Lamborghini with the roof removed. Unlike the 350 GTS presented by Touring a few years earlier, the Miura Roadster was almost completely redesigned, with excellent taste as always. The complete rear section of the car was modified, the rear louvers covering the engine were removed, the tail lights changed and the exhaust pipes now went through the lower grill. Various small changes were made to the rear section of the original Miura, like lowering the roofline by 3 cm, and the angle of the windscreen was changed. All this was necessary to eliminate undesired turbulence at 300 Km/h even without the roof, which was actually never even built.

The interior also had to be modified, because the switches from the overhead console had to be put somewhere on the dashboard, and the steering wheel showed a great similarity with the one of the Marzal and the Espada prototype. The car was finished in a bright-metallic azure, while the interior was upholstered in a magnolia colored leather (just like on the first 350 GTV). The impact was very great, but this was to be another one-off, many owners requested a similar car, but Lamborghini never delivered a Miura Roadster or even a replica, but Bertone had never even designed a top for this prototype Miura.

The Miura Roadster was also known as the Spider or Spyder, but its official denomination was the Roadster, this original car was soon sold to the ILZRO, the International Lead and Zinc Research Corporation. This company was already delivering various metals to the car industry (aluminum, zinc and alloys). They decided to buy a Miura some time earlier to reconstruct it using their own metals and technology, to show the car on various auto shows and display the use of their metal alloys.

The ILZRO was able to acquire the Miura Roadster since Lamborghini didn't authorize the modification of a production Miura, and Bertone began working on it as soon as the ILZRO paid it. It was completely disassembled and all possible parts were changed into zinc-plated, chrome-plated, polished or remanufactured using some metal made by the ILZRO, some of these items included the carburetors stacks, exhaust system, radiator, bumpers, switches and both front and rear bumpers.

These modifications were all directed by John Foster, who was actually a designer for Ford. But the result was rather special, the Miura Roadster was converted into an showcar, a Miura replica almost.

Bertone usually used bright colors and contrasting black detail work on the prototype, but this car featured chrome details, and was finished in a metallic green sprayed over a black metallic base giving a strange dark green pearl like color, with a contrasting brown suede upholstery it looked really nice.

The name also changed, now into the 'Zn-75', a name taken from the periodic table of metals used for this modification. The Zn-75 appeared in May 1969, it was displayed all over the world on various Auto Show and to automotive companies worldwide, always attracting a lot of attention, when this job was over, the Miura Roadster was auctioned off to S.F. Radtke, the Executive Vice President of the Ilzro at that time.

In late 1980 the Miura ZN75 was completely refurbished by Synthetex Inc. and valued at \$186,000 when Mr Radtke donated the car to the Boston Transportation Museum in Massachusetts, U.S.A. in February 1981. The Miura was then shown in this museum for a long time were it was for sale at one time for only \$ 50,000, later it was restored for the museum by J. Geils who was actually on the board at the museum. After the restoration the car was sold at an unknown auction for a rumored \$200,000. Later this rare Miura was auctioned again and bought by the UK based Portman group, who intended to start a Lamborghini museum featuring this very unique Miura.

At one moment in time the Miura Zn75 was thought to be located in Japan, as part of the Matsuda Collection, although no confirmation was found on this information, today this unique Miura is located in the United States.