

A beautiful three-dimensional illustration by Gandini.

All it took was an hour, in the suffocating afternoon heat in front of a shocked crowd of 10,500 jammed into the small Plaza de Toros in Linares, for a ferocious black Miura bull named 'Jslero' to end the life of 'Manolete,' widely accepted as 'The Greatest Matador' who ever entered a bullring.

If the ferocious beasts from Seville were previously well-known only to die-hard bullfighting aficionados, the death of Manolete upon the horns of one of its fiercest on August 28th 1947, ensured immortality for the Miura bulls forever.

Manuel Rodriguez Sanchez, universally known as 'Manolete,' was at the height of his career when he strode into the bullring in his own regal way that August day, resplendent in his golden 'suit of lights' which sparkled brilliantly in the afternoon sun. The men cheered their idol with a standing ovation, and women simply swooned. Manolete stood tall, dark and slim, with the same tragic mournful expression that belied those that make a living cheating death. 'El Monstruo' as he was known amongst fellow bullfighters, his appearance in bullrings commanded incredible sums of money by today's standards, making him rich beyond the wildest dreams of his meager upbringing. Manolete's legendary bullfighting style was that of total calm, standing erect with almost balletic, minimal movement, and fighting very close to the bull; all the while making it look unbelievably easy.

As he tried to finish the Miura bull off in Linares that day, Manolete made but a single mistake. Whilst trying to execute a special move that was famously named after him (the 'Las Manoletinas' involved him turning his back on the bull with absolute bravery whilst allowing it to make a charging pass at full speed), he was caught in the thigh by the bull's horn and flung

upwards like a lifeless rag doll. The crowd rose with a collective gasp, appalled at seeing the helpless idol completely at the mercy of the bull. Manolete was rescued by the handlers and quickly carried out of the bullring, the entire tragic proceedings having been captured in gory detail on film. The bullfighter's femoral artery had been completely severed by the vicious goring and, whilst perhaps today he might have been saved, in 1947, in hot and dusty Linares, 'Manolete' lay prostrate at ringside bleeding to death.

The doctors were called but it was to no avail; Manolete had lost too much blood. In a cold sweat he complained that he could not feel his feet, and then his legs. As his life ebbed away, he clutched the sleeve of his longtime manager Carlos Jose Camara and whispered his last words: "Ay Madre" (Oh Mother). And then, with a heavy sigh, it was over.

Spain was in a state of mourning for its national treasure, and General Franco expressed his deepest condolences to Manolete's mother. Hemingway wrote that in the Spanish-speaking world, grown men mourning Manolete's death wept on street corners, and came to blows attempting to crowd cinemas to capacity to watch old black-and-white newsreels of their slain bullfighting god, over-and-over again. When scenes of their idol's demise came up, they simply looked away, unable to watch. "Only a Miura bull could take our hero away ..." they cried. Thus, the Miura legend was truly born.

The Miura breed of fighting bulls takes its lineage from a legendary beast named 'Murcielago' (after the devilish vampire bat), who was bestowed as a gift upon Spanish bull breeder Don Antonio Miura in 1879 by the famed bullfighter Rafael Molina (popularly known as El Lariatijo).

El Lariatijo had spared Murcielago's life after an astonishing display of stamina and bravery. Anyone who has seen a Miura bull in action, either in the bullring in Spain, or at the Running of the Bulls in Pamplona, knows just how these majestic animals are revered and respected today by those who

(Opposite) Early Gandini illustration of Miura number one.



A man and his machine; Ferruccio and his Miura.



It wasn't unusual for customers to collect their brand new Miuras from Sant'Agata and drive them away on 'EE' plates ...

to an 'S' for a fixed price, noting that the engines were only good for 40,000 miles! So, I must have gotten my money's worth."

Another motorsport participant who ordered a new Miura was French motorcycle racing champion and Formula One racing driver Jean-Pierre Beltoise (3108). Again, Dallara ensured that the engine was well-tuned, although in this instance Beltoise crashed the car within a year, at high speed in the wet.

The 126th Miura (3312, supplied January 1968) had its chassis metal gauge increased from 0.9mm to 1mm as built by Marchesi. This car went to Tobias Steinwinter, and he used it in competition in sports car classes with German hillclimb champion Gerhard Mitter at the wheel. Unfortunately, the effort only served to underscore the fact that the Miura was built for the road and definitely not the track.

By the 200th Miura (3537, supplied May 1968) onwards, the front box section of the chassis was further reinforced. As was the case with previous



Perhaps the most exhibited Miura of all time?



Les Bidrawn captures a Miura legend for posterity.



whether specially tuned engines were made available for testing journalists, Wallace confessed that this indeed was the case. “Was there a trick engine and a super-trick engine? (for journalists)” asked Lyons. Wallace replied matter-of-factly: “Aw, we had whatever you wanted ...”

It makes sense to examine performance statistics from magazines that were renowned for comprehensive and detailed tests with standard cars, allowing for the fact that variables like weather conditions, location, tune of the individual car, etc., were a factor in just how ideal the tests were. In this author’s opinion, the further away from the factory the tests were performed the better, and as such, the USA tests produced rather accurate results as to what performance an average Miura was capable of. Then again, by examining a series of tests both in the period and later, a pattern emerges that establishes within a close degree just what the mean performance of the cars is.

Also, all the tests reproduced here were independently timed and, therefore, the final velocities can be relied upon as accurate. The Jaeger speedometers used in Miuras are renowned to be rather optimistic, becoming more so with age.

MIURA P400 PERFORMANCE

In June 1967, *Motor* magazine tested a P400 and achieved the following vital statistics:

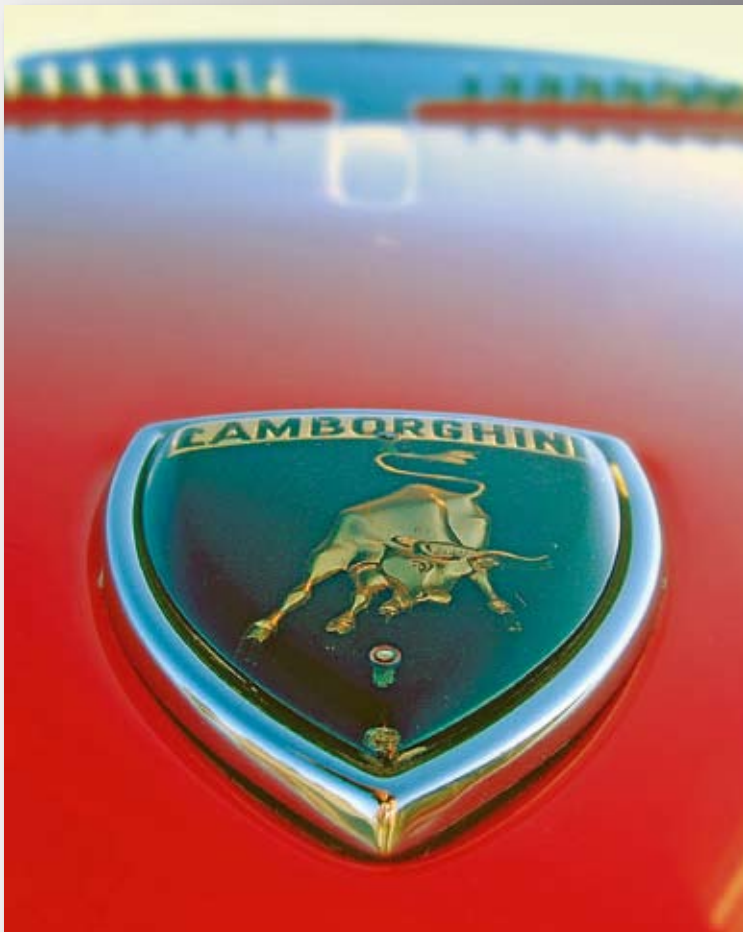
- 0 to 60 – 6.0 secs
- 0 to 100 – 13.4 secs
- Mean maximum speed 171mph

This is an important test, as it was performed right at the beginning of production with a fresh car. Zero to sixty in six seconds flat was an astonishing feat for a road car at the time. As for 171mph at a time when maximum speed for most cars on the road was perhaps 95mph, it was an out-of-this-world statistic. However, in response to the top speed, Bob Wallace would only make the rather dry comment: “This is less than we claim ...”





In this instance, no polished levers or chromed gates – just adherence to the car's original finish.



'Finishing touch.' The emblem is worn proudly by 4884.

more phone calls revealed that a Doctor Brown in Georgia had purchased a Miura SV in the mid-1970s, one which ex-factory chief development engineer Bob Wallace worked on, and it was thought to be, "The first one brought into the USA," my contact suggested, somewhat vaguely. He went on to suggest that he thought the aforementioned Doctor Brown also owned Ferraris. A telephone campaign to canvass every suspect Doctor Brown in and around the Savannah area where he was thought to reside resulted in either no response at all, or a typical: "No, I've never even seen a Lamborghini Miura in my life, and furthermore, old sports cars don't interest me at all ..." Then, just when I had all but given up and the trail had run cold, Lamborghini historian and Club founder Jim Kaminski dusted off his old 20-year-old notes after my somewhat despondent call to him, and a scrap of paper suggested that the elusive Doctor Brown and his Miura showed up in a file as living in a little town called Tupelo (Mississippi). However, he was not a Club member, so there was no contact information, and the information was merely a lead from someone in the trade. With Brown being a fairly common name, it could easily be another person besides the one I was searching for, and the chances that he had moved on were better than the odds that he hadn't. It was going to be a shot in the dark at very best.



First series USA-spec SVs (8 single-sump cars) originally had 200mph speedometers. The 13 split sump cars had 190mph speedos, although it remains a mystery as to why.