

Concept Car of the Week: Lancia Bertone Sibilo (1978)

by Flavien Datchet 02 Aug 2013



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The second half of the '70s saw automotive design fall into an era of uninspired and uninspiring economic cars finished with cheap plastic add-ons and stuffed with beige itchy fabrics. Working from the little Bertone studio in Turin, it seems Marcello Gandini didn't get the memo and carried on drawing futuristic wedgegy supercars.

With the Sibilo, he pushed his signature angular style to a new level of modernity. In Italian, Sibilo is the hissing sound that an object makes when flying at high speed, which suits the fast silhouette of the car. Everything that could be integrated has been – lamps, bumpers, and windows. To replace the drop-down windows, some unexpected circular openings in the polycarbonate panels pop inwards and slide forwards on runners. All the joints have been filled and painted in dark chocolate brown blending seamlessly the glass to the body.

The only elements breaking the clean surfaces are the squared up arches pushing the waistline upwards in a very unique way. It had never been seen before, and has arguably never been seen ever since, apart from a one-off car that starred in the original Total Recall, which took ample inspiration from Gandini's design.

The chassis was taken from the road-going version of the World Rally Championship-winner, the supreme Lancia Stratos, but was extended by 100mm, meaning the car was a fully running prototype.

Inside the compact cabin, the dashboard is reduced to the minimum – the Stratos crossbeam is simply wrapped in brown velvet and brown leather, matching the seats. The steering wheel contains three large red buttons in its hub that seem to control everything but the horn, appearing more likely to be for stealth mode, pulse rifles and hyper speed. Information was displayed on a horizontal LCD screen carved into the dash and angled towards the driver.

Because of the current tough economical climate, Bertone had to part with some of its amazing collection of cars, one of which was the Sibilo. The auction took place at the 2011 Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este and saw the concept sold for €95,200 (approximately \$125,000).

Designer Marcello Gandini
First seen 1978 Turin Motor Show
Engine V6 2,400cc from Lancia Stratos
Power 190bhp

Your author, Flavien Datchet, is a UK-based, French-born car designer. You may know him as the purveyor of KarzNshit, a photo blog that if isn't already in your bookmarks, certainly should be.

