The Lamborghini Diablo SV Roadster is the greatest raging bull they never built

Lead
Lamborghinis have never been produced in huge numbers, but even among these rare machines, the Diablo SV Roadster stands out as one of the most elusive raging bulls ever. Now, thanks to RM Sotheby's, you could add one of only two built to your collection.

Lamborghinis are pretty rare, aren't they? That question should have an obvious answer, but now that there are literally millions of millionaires, and thanks to the rise of social media and a globe-spanning army of car-spotters, they seem to be cropping up more frequently than ever on our Instagram feeds. The Sant'Agata-based supercar manufacturer's recent success has also contributed to the number of raging bulls seen on our streets and screens alike; 11,465 Aventadors were built during its 11 year production run, which is more than all of the previous Lamborghini V12 models combined.

In 2023, the raging bull population is healthier than ever, but during the 1990s they were still very much a rare sight; look at the Diablo's production run of just over 2,900 units — around one quarter of the Aventador's — and you'll begin to understand. However, like many Lambo models, there were plenty of special editions to built satisfy their most loyal customers, and one of the rarest of them all is the Diablo SV Roadster.

Unveiled at the 1998 Geneva Motor Show — just as the Volkswagen Group was taking ownership of the marque — the Lamborghini Diablo SV Roadster sent car fans across the globe into a frenzy. After all, it seemed to combine the best features from every model released thus far, blending the SV's bombastic styling, singing V12, and RWD drivetrain with the VT Roadster's removable roof. You could even still see that 530 horsepower jewel of an engine through a triangular window cut into the rear deck, so it's no surprise that car enthusiasts worldwide were a bit obsessed.

Had the Diablo SV Roadster entered production, it would have likely sold like the proverbial piping-hot pastries, and yet with just one Pearl Orange example completed, limited funds put an end to production before it even started. However, as we mentioned earlier, these rare special editions were built to satisfy Lamborghini's most loyal customers, and Emanuele Conforti — lifelong raging bull enthusiast and owner of leading Milanese Lamborghini distributor Touring Auto S.r.l — was dead-set on acquiring a Diablo SV Roadster of his own.

A conversation between Conforti and then-CEO Vittorio Di Capua followed, and an agreement was made to produce a second and final Diablo SV Roadster, the exact car you see here. According to factory records, chassis WLA12960 rolled off the Sant'Agata Bolognese production line on April 6th 1998 before being delivered Touring Auto S.r.l's headquarters in Milan at Corso Porta Roman around two months later.

We think you'll agree that its specification is nothing short of spectacular. Finished in Giallo Roadster over a Nero "Torpedo" Alcantara interior with complementary yellow piping and "SV" stitching, chassis WLA12960 proves that not all Lambos need to be orange. As if it needed any more eye candy, the centre console, removable roof, enormous rear wing, and side intakes were all finished in matte carbon fibre, while the massive 'SV' lettering on both flanks ensure that nobody will confuse this Diablo SV with lesser roadsters. While we certainly won't claim the Diablo is the paragon of practicality, this example's desirable factory front lift system means speed bumps need not fill you with dread if you're lucky enough to get behind the wheel of this rare beast.

After a few years under the care of Touring Auto S.r.l, chassis WLA12960 was sold to Germany, where it was registered in 2001. In the last two decades, this Diablo SV Roadster has belonged to three separate well-known Lamborghini enthusiasts, rarely venturing onto the open road, bar a handful of International Lamborghini Owner’s Club (ILOC) outings.

Its most recent custodian spent a great deal of effort researching this raging bull’s history, combing through factory documents and even interviewing former Lamborghini employees to confirm this Diablo as one of the rarest cars ever to emerge from Sant’Agata. Following the model's cancellation shortly after the 1998 Geneva Motor Show, many tried to recreate the magic of the Diablo SV Roadster. Some clients ordered their 1999 Diablo VTs with a front differential delete, and one customer even created his own version, which was dubbed the 35th Anniversary edition, but none boast the same outrageous styling as the two ‘real McCoys’.

Now offered through Sotheby’s Sealed between the 13th and 15th of December, this is your chance to acquire one of the most exclusive Lamborghinis ever built. Currently showing just 42,842 kilometres, this Diablo SV Roadster has been enjoyed sparingly throughout its pampered existence and remains in truly outstanding condition. Rarer than the celebrated SE30 Jota, Diablo GT, and almost all other road-going Lamborghinis, this could be your chance to acquire a true raging unicorn.

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