



# Return of the



**o turbo, no diesel, no hybrid. And no SUV – just design, quality, desirability and scarcity, producing less than demand.”**

Stephan Winkelmann, President and CEO of Automobili Lamborghini SpA, is adamant about his company's direction, and about the purity of its product. It is, and will always be, simple raw power, generated the old-fashioned way. He is speaking at the Arizona launch of the firm's newest model, the Gallardo Superleggera. Coming out of the company's best year, when it sold 2,087 cars worldwide in 2006 (up from 1,600 in 2005), he promises a new product annually, but says there will only be two nameplates, the Murciélago and the Gallardo.



There are only 27 dealers in all of the U.S., and a mere three in Canada, in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. Most automakers dream of their products ruling the road; Winkelmann is happiest when his cars are absent. "I don't want to see them everywhere," he says. Their paucity only deepens their mystique; at a luxury resort prior to the launch, where guests drive Rolls-Royces and Bentleys as a matter of course, a line of six Gallardo Superleggeras drew a constant crowd of people who normally wouldn't acknowledge such a display of wealth. You just don't see six of them in a row, no matter who you are. And that's the way Winkelmann wants to keep it.

The Superleggera – the "Super Light" – is indicative of Lamborghini's philosophy of speed through strength. In horse racing, there's an age-old saying: weight will stop a freight train. In horses, extra weight is added as a handicap to even the field; in horsepower, it's taken away to gain an advantage.

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So the company takes its standard Gallardo coupe and shaves it down, swapping aluminum parts for carbon fibre. The exterior mirrors, spoiler, hood, rear diffuser, inside door trim panels, engine cover, body undertray and console tunnel are all formed from the pricey cloth, which reduces the Gallardo's standard featherweight of 1430 kg by another 70 kg for North American buyers. (European customers also get monocoque carbon fibre sport seats, which pares off an additional 30 kg, but over here we get the standard Gallardo seats, with



side airbags.) As well, the glass engine cover has been replaced with polycarbonate, the exhaust system is lighter, the wheel carriers and drive shafts have been modified, the wheel nuts are titanium, and all that would normally be clad in leather is now wrapped in Alcantara. Using revised intake and exhaust systems and optimized electronic control, the engineers have also wrung another 10 hp out of the V10 engine.

All that translates to a weight-to-power ratio of 2.5 kg per hp, which propels the handsome coupe from zero to 100 km/hr in just 3.8 seconds, a savings of 0.2 seconds over its all-aluminum sibling, along with a one-metre advantage in braking distance. Both share a top speed of 315 km/hr and that famous Lamborghini roar right behind one's head, but while the Superleggera ate up the straightaway in split seconds and held hard in the corners on our laps at Phoenix International Raceway, its road manners were impeccable en route to the track.

That's all part of Lamborghini's marketing plan: the company knows that while most owners want something capable of competition, the reality is that most, if not all, of their seat time is spent on public roads. So while a considerable weight handicap could be further shaved off by removing the electric windows and air conditioning, the company's smart enough to leave them in. The biggest U.S. markets are in California and Texas, where a car without a/c is as much good as one without wheels. And while Winkelmann was tight-lipped when asked what next year's new product will be, it's easy to speculate that removing the refrigerator could be the first step toward a race-specific version.

Like the regular Gallardo, the lightweight model comes with an E-Gear transmission that shifts via paddles or can be set into full automatic mode



## LAMBORGHINI GALLARDO

Base price: \$317,600 (Cdn) Engine: 5.0-litre V10, DOHC, 40 valves Transmission: Six-speed standard or robotized sequential E-Gear system Performance: 522hp @ 8000 rpm; 376 lb-ft of torque @ 4250 rpm; acceleration 0-100 km/hr



Depreciation: -  
Import/Export: -  
Retail Price: -  
Insurance: -

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# LAMBORGHINI GALLARDO SUPERLEGGERA

via a button on the console; the other choice, for the same price, is a regular six-speed with gated shifter, but the company expects very few of those to end up on this side of the pond.

**So far, all of the 350 Superleggera models scheduled for 2007 have been sold out.**

Winkelmann won't reveal exactly how many the company plans to build in future – each with a 20 percent premium over the price of a regular Gallardo – but is insistent that numbers will be small, making the car even more desirable.

"It's not a limited edition, but it's limited in production," he says. "We are always getting more new customers, and we have people who are transforming their orders from the (Gallardo) coupe to the Superleggera even before they took delivery of the coupe.

"The awareness and image of our company is rising. It was a collector's item before; and now people are realizing the quality and performance. The life cycle of our cars is double that of most low-volume cars, but each year, there must be new products. We must be on the spot all the time."



## SUPERLEGGERA

in 3.8 seconds, maximum speed 315 km/hr. Construction: Structural aluminum spaceframe, aluminum body with thermoplastic "hang-on" parts, carbon fibre hood with polycarbonate transparent panel, front and rear aluminum double wishbones, full ESP system with ABS, 8-piston front and 4-piston rear calipers. Wheels & Tires: Aluminum alloy "Skorpius" rims, Pirelli P-Zero Corsa 235/35ZR19 front, 295/30ZR19 rear

## AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

For a unique luxury automobile like this, the insurance aspect is expensive; depreciation is good; retail price is expensive and import/export risks are or can be severe – depending on buyer's expectations.

**If the buyer values depreciation at 50% – then a neutral rating would occur.**

**If the buyer values depreciation at 100% – then a positive rating would occur.**

Overall Economic Risk (only if we weight the above in equal proportions):

Most Lamborghini buyers would weight Import/Export/Retail Price/Insurance risks at almost or close to "0"

