



# Lamborghini Gallardo Spyder

A DAY OUT AT THE MIAMI  
HOMESTEAD SPEEDWAY

# Topless in Florida

Test by Roberto Giordanelli / Photography by xxxxxxxxxxxx

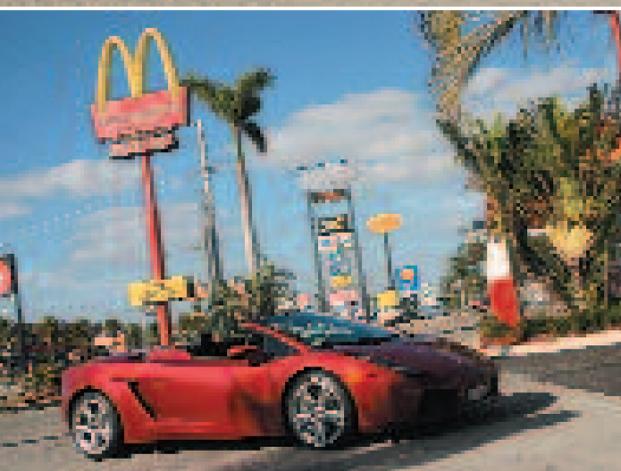


Lamborghini is on the up. Miura concept car apart, the Gallardo is the car that is making everyone pay attention; fast, fun and four-wheel drive. This is a story about the very latest model, the 520bhp Gallardo Spyder, but I think I stumbled on the next Gallardo too. All very top secret – read on.

During the 1960s and '70s, the Sant'Agata company shook the supercar world with fabulous cars. Then Lamborghini battled for its very existence during the 1980s and '90s when the company had more owners than customers. In 1998 came the VW/Audi takeover; with VW supplying the money, Audi the organisation and Lamborghini the panache. The Bolognese company has always been a global brand but now it is stealing sales from the opposition. Lamborghini may be German-owned and have a German head but its heart will always be Italian. Currently more than 90% of its 700 employees are Italian. Car-men like Enzo Ferrari, Horacio Pagani, Colin Chapman, Alessandro De Tomaso, William Lyons and Ferruccio Lamborghini made cars because they wanted to make cars. Money was a secondary factor. At Lamborghini we now have a sound collaboration between the accountants and the artists.

I jetted down to the Florida Keys to try out the new Gallardo Spyder. Fears that I would never get to shout 'Yeeehar' because of the 55mph limit vanished when those nice Lamborghini boys and girls pointed me in the direction of Florida's Homestead Miami Speedway. Yeeehar it is then. Apart from our multi-coloured supercars, this fabulous automotive superbowl was empty but you can just imagine the flamboyant flag marshal on the overhead gantry; not to mention the Coliseum-style baying crowds.

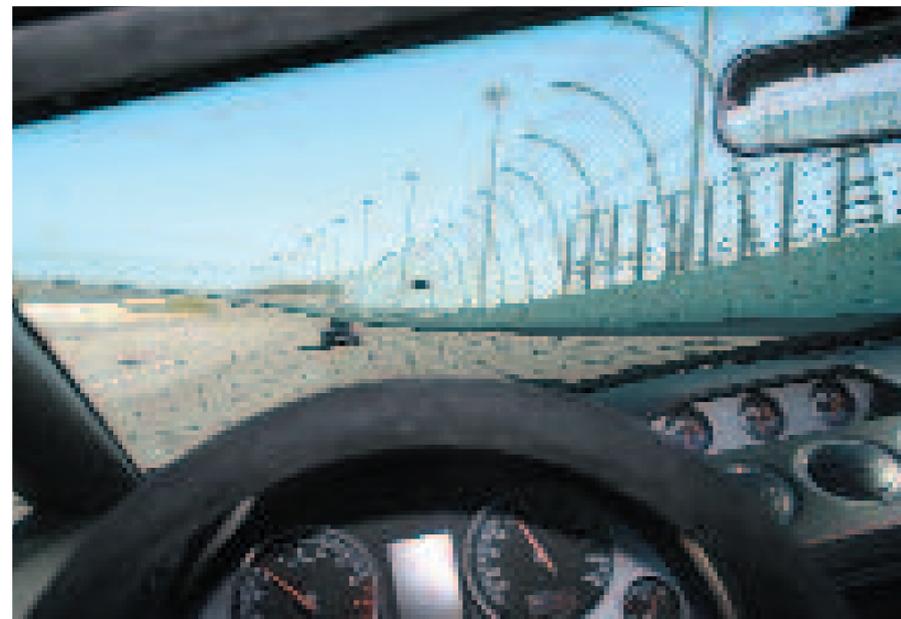
Let's look at some Lamborghini statistics. Overall 2006 production (Murciélago and Gallardo) will be 1900 cars. Eight hundred of these will be Gallardo Spyders, and just ⇄



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The bypass opens at 3400rpm but if full throttle is used, then it opens at 2800rpm. So at any speed below 85mph, the driver has control over the noise he wants to make. The new Gallardo can be driven in humble or hooligan mode on demand. The noise from that V10 beggars description. Heaven is a new Gallardo Spyder, top-down in a tunnel.

The fabulous engineering in this car is evident in the hood operation. Push a button, and the carbonfibre rear deck opens, the hood disappears and the deck closes, all in 20



seconds. A rear windscreen rises at the push of a button if desired. The body is made from aluminium with composite bumpers. The Gallardo's aluminium chassis has been considerably stiffened for its chop-job, taking its dry weight up from 1450kg for the Coupe, to 1570kg; not bad for a luxury four-wheel drive convertible. With torsional rigidity at 15,000Nm per degree, they say that it is stiffer than the Ferrari 430 Spider. Rollover protection is invisible; two rollover hoops pop up from the rear bulkhead in the event of a roll.

On the road, passers-by can't miss the Gallardo. They point. I resist dropping down a gear to show off. The e-gear paddleshift works brilliantly and gives a hearty blip for you on downshift. For upshifts it is very quick. In sport mode it is even quicker – too quick for road use but great for Homestead Miami which is not far away. The forward cockpit, steeply raked screen, long wheelbase and zero overhangs make the Gallardo look very purposeful.

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## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

<b>Engine:</b>	Mid-mounted, alloy V10, 4961cc
<b>Bore x stroke:</b>	82.5mm x 92.8mm
<b>Compression ratio:</b>	11:1
<b>Valve gear:</b>	Chain-driven, dohc, 40 valves, variable cam-timing
<b>Power:</b>	520bhp @ 8000rpm
<b>Torque:</b>	376lb ft @ 4250rpm
<b>Transmission:</b>	Permanent 4-wheel drive
<b>Gearbox:</b>	6-speed manual or 6-speed e-gear paddleshift
<b>Brakes (front):</b>	365mm vented drilled discs, 8-pot calipers
<b>Brakes (rear):</b>	335 vented drilled steel discs, 4-pot calipers
<b>Wheels:</b>	Alloy 8.5Jx19 front, 11Jx19 rear
<b>Tyres:</b>	235/35ZR19 front, 295/30ZR19 rear
<b>Dry weight:</b>	1570kg
<b>0-62mph:</b>	4.3sec
<b>Top speed:</b>	192mph hood open, 196mph with hood closed
<b>Cost:</b>	c£110,000 plus tax



80 will come to the UK when they become available in Spring. Six-speed e-gear paddleshift will account for 70-80% of production, with six-speed manual making up the difference. While the USA is Lamborghini's largest market, the company is opening new dealerships worldwide with two more planned for the UK: Birmingham and Edinburgh. Prices are not yet fixed but you can reckon on about £110,000 plus taxes.

In traditional Lamborghini style, the Gallardo has been steadily improved since 2003. The new Spyder has 20bhp more power at 520bhp, better gear ratios, 20% quicker steering (2.6 turns) and one mother of an exhaust system. A new exhaust bypass has both satisfied customers' requests for a sportier sound and helped free up top-end breathing.



## Lamborghini Gallardo Spider

coming soon. Turn-in is excellent with a dash of initial understeer. It is so pure that I forget it is four-wheel drive.

Lamborghini was into four-wheel drive with the Diablo, long before any Audi deal. The Gallardo's system is Lamborghini's tried and tested VT system (Viscous Traction). This normally sends the torque on a 40% front, 70% rear distribution. The static weight distribution is 47% front, 53% rear; but when on power, weight shifts aft and so does the torque. If there is any loss of traction, then the torque automatically shifts fore or aft to compensate. The new gear ratios give a punchier feeling to the acceleration without compromising top speed. Both differentials are lsd type and there is also a new twin-plate clutch. This gives you the confidence to power out of a corner very early. Earlier, quicker and better than its rivals, be they from Maranello or Stuttgart. But it gets even better. Go too quickly and the Gallardo will slide oh-so very gently. ↪



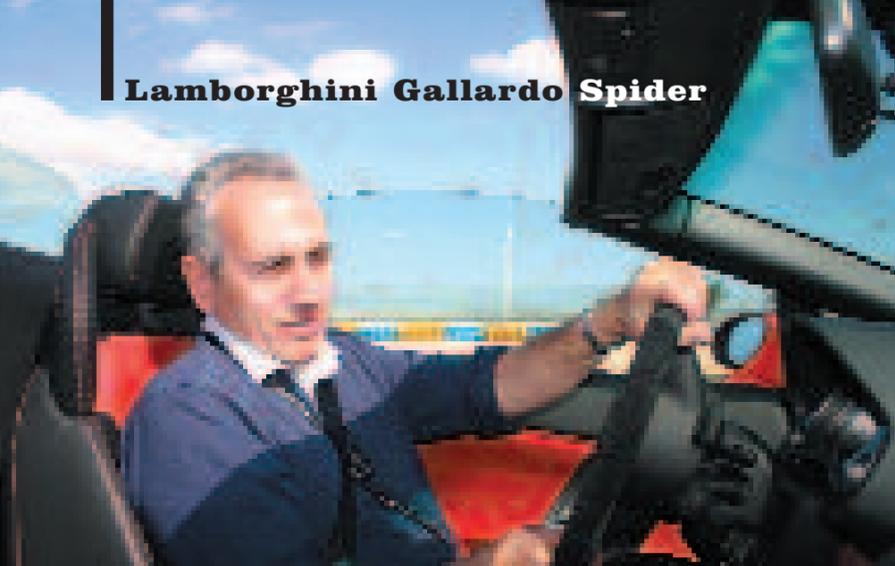
### HOMESTEAD MIAMI SPEEDWAY

**Opened:** 600-acre site was inaugurated in 1995  
**Length:** 1.5-mile oval banked to 20° plus 2.21-mile road course  
**Grandstand capacity:** 65,000  
**Press capacity:** Over 400 journalists  
**TV monitors:** 750  
**Parking capacity:** 30,000 cars plus 1300 SUV camping bays  
**Race School:** Richard Petty Driving Experience  
**Palm trees:** Over 1000  
**Nascar average lap speed:** 190mph

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## Lamborghini Gallardo Spider



3.5 million millionaires. America, where the rich and poor live apart in perfect harmony. Stereotyping is strong in America, "Nothing Italian works but this Lamborghini is okay because it is German." Fine, if that sells Lamborghinis in the USA, why not? You have to admire a people who reject speed cameras and crash-helmet laws in favour of personal liberty. I also think about democracy. As the solitary world power, should not the 6.5 billion world population be voting in the US elections, not just 300 million US citizens? Say what you will about the USA but there is no denying that America is still a land of opportunity and a really amazing place. Finally, as I climb above the Atlantic Ocean homeward-bound, I think of what a great car the Gallardo is, and that I forgot to shout 'Yeegar'. Next time. 

A smooth detraction from trajectory, be it with front-end washing out, a four-wheel drift or the tail coming round to say hello. Just when you think that this communication can't get any better, the car manages to sort itself out.

The chassis and the software are amazing. In normal mode some slip is permitted. In sport mode you can have a bit more. The only thing you can't do is the new motorsport fashion of drifting; the computer won't let you, but then that market is catered for elsewhere. The only way I could unbalance the machine was to hurtle into a corner and then lift off on turn-in. It still never bit me but instead waited for me to bury the loud pedal for stability to return. So here we have a trackday car (especially when the carbon brakes arrive) that will spend 99% of its life a boulevardier. Boarding the flight back to Europe I think about the USA's

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