

# The Beta at 40

by Alan Cooper

The earliest publicity material I have for the coupé is a small four page leaflet printed in four languages, I believe this was issued in 1973. The car featured is clearly a prototype as several details differ from the first production models. The radiator grille is black along with the vents behind the rear window, both of which were chrome effect on production models, the door mirrors seem to be of a different design and the seat upholstery lacks the lateral stitching across the centre panels. The English language press pack for the early coupé is dated March 2 1974, this shows the coupé in its definitive early form.

The coupé was built on a shortened version of the berlina platform and came with a choice of two mildly uprated engines a 1592 producing 108 bhp and a 1756 producing 120 bhp. For reasons that are unclear Lancia (England) chose to import just the smaller 1592 variant but even so it received a lot of very positive comments from the UK press at the time. A brochure was issued, depicting a blue coupé with red seats, made from a simple single sheet roughly 2 x A4 long but with quite stylish folds incorporated. There was also a larger brochure depicting another blue car, maybe the same one, on the cover but inside it illustrates the car in the very sharp Maya Yellow. In Germany they produced a very nice range brochure printed in 1975, and a fold out brochure that also features the Montecarlo and HPE, but as those two were announced on May 31 1975 and the series two press pack, with a cover in almost luminous lime green, is dated November 1975 it would seem that this was a rather short lived publication.

In the official press photographs and brochures the car sits considerably lower than standard presumably to give it an enhanced sleekness, I've often pondered if they fitted special suspension or maybe they just put a couple of

*Written in response to the fact that it is 40 years since the Beta was first announced here is a piece concentrating on probably the most prolific surviving version, the coupé, with briefer notes on the other models. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy but any additions or corrections would be appreciated in particular there was not enough information to comment more than briefly on the North American cars. The Montecarlo has been omitted as it is a distinct model in its own right that wore the Beta badge as a marketing convenience and deserves a separate article, any volunteers?*

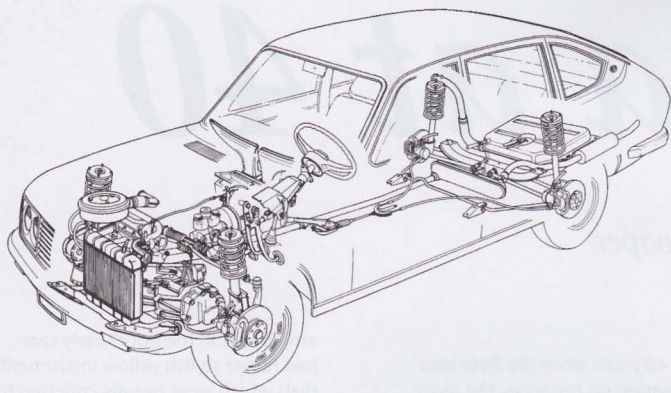
employees in the boot? Early cars had rather stylish yellow instrument dials which were heavily criticised to the point where Lancia fitted revised dials to later cars, I don't recall seeing these dials fitted in UK cars but genuine series 1 coupés have been so rare here in recent years that you certainly wouldn't need to take your socks off to count them. Given this I cannot really be sure and actually I seem to remember seeing an MPH speedo 'new old stock' on eBay

recently. Colour combinations on early cars were often bold in a very early 1970s style, vivid velours clashed with the external finishes. Strangely it worked on a Beta in a way that only the Italians could get away with, some colour combinations were similar to those on the Fulvia 3 but whereas on the Fulvia they looked slightly inelegant and out of place on the Beta they seem to fit the 1970s fashion perfectly.

A fashionable executive in his weekend attire of flower power shirt and tie with tie dye flares must have been an eye searingly bad vision in combination with a Beta in maya yellow and a red interior! Incidentally the 'red' is Lancia's description many people would consider it to be orange. I've never really managed to resolve the available colour combinations for the interior, the ones with leatherette or real leather seats are straightforward but the fabric seats seem to have been in a velvet bolster/brushed nylon centre sometimes in a two tone variation which the colour charts seem to fail to fully illustrate. Lancia were very proud of the seat design in the coupé and went as far as including a full feature on their design in *Rivista Lancia* (issue 33) unfortunately only in Italian so I can tell you no more. The dashboard is styled in an almost architectural manner the centre console looking like a central tower on an art deco building all made the height of fashion by chocolate brown vinyl garnished with a few wooden trim inserts and gear knob. Externally the design of







Beta berlina Series 1 cutaway drawing.

the early coupés is the most delicate and, as is often the case, display a purity of design that is not surpassed by later 'improvements'. The radiator grille in particular remains a masterful design not bettered by later revisions, using a typical late 1960s/early 70s geometrical patterned design and the bonnet with its central rib and twin vents is much more delicate than the later version. Lancia issued a 'sales manual' to dealerships detailing the virtues of the coupé and on the whole it is very factual although it does have the comment, relating to the gearbox, '...you can feel the snappy effect of a racing car getaway with the smoothness of a touring car. This is much appreciated particularly by lady-drivers.' They also seemed to think that the coupé has four comfortable seats and is ideal for a family, in the land where Lambretta was the norm and a 500 was near enough a family limousine maybe that was true?

Late 1975 saw the release of the series 2 models. The most obvious of several changes being that the larger engine was increased in size to 1995cc, but the changes went deeper than that and indeed the full engine range was rationalised to allow the production of three engine capacities using less parts, the 1600 was now 1585cc and a 1300 coupé was added bringing the choice of engines into line with the berlines, also there was no longer a special tune for the coupé engines.

In what appears to be an attempt to fill the gap left by the Fulvia 3 Lancia chose to brand the 1300 simply as 'Lancia 1300 Coupé' and they gave it some unique features such as a bench rear seat and a black radiator grille not fitted to any other coupé variant. The car had a dedicated brochure as well issued in four languages. Lancia (England) even produced their own brochure on this model but for their purposes they decided that it was a Beta after all!

There were more technical changes on the series 2 and in particular there were changes to the subframe rear mounting which are not detailed in the sales literature or press pack but in the technical data book it is clear that certain dimensions relating to this mount were altered. I think it is clear that even in 1975 Lancia were aware of, and had worked hard to resolve, the corrosion issues which were to cause such an issue in later years. For more on the rust scandal I would strongly recommend that you read "turning back the clock" by Geoff Owen, it is out of print but usually available for a few pounds second hand, there is a small section on this issue and the rest of the book, whilst not about Lancias, is a very entertaining read.

The series two 1600 models changed very little visually, they retained the original radiator grille and bonnet the only change seems to have been to the upholstery but this is confused by the marketing department who seemed to have recycled photographs from the early cars, however the German market brochures show seats upholstered all over in the same brushed nylon rather than the earlier velvet/brush nylon combination. To add further confusion



Beta coupe Series one.



Beta berlina Series 2 late version with extended gutter.

some cars seem to have had vinyl piping, I presume this is what the spare parts book refers to as 'garnish' and the marketing department excel themselves by showing both variations on the same page of one brochure. There is also at least one coupé brochure showing a picture of green seats that have vinyl sides a feature I had only thought occurred on the HPE, probably an error but if it was confusing for them what is it for us pushing on towards 40 years later?

On the outside the new 1995cc cars gained a different look by adopting single piece glassed in oblong lights in the style of the recently introduced HPE, a different grille in black with five horizontal chrome bars and a different bonnet necessitated by the additional height of the 2-litre block. Power steering was also introduced but only as an option on LHD vehicles unfortunately UK buyers were going to have a long wait before it was available with RHD.

The series two cars were actually introduced in the UK between March and May 1976 I found initial chassis numbers quoted in an old publication as 1600-1104, 2000- 2341 but I do not know if these are reliable. During the period of the early series two cars several brochures were produced both just on the coupé and the complete range. The main large format brochure seems to have been produced in two versions, which confusingly bear the same print code, one with a red 2000 and the other a brown metallic 2000 on the cover but other than this they are absolutely identical. There were several range brochures examples being 'le Lancia Beta', 'choose a Lancia', a small UK produced leaflet 'the Lancia Beta series the most Italian car' and so on. Exterior colour choices appear to have changed during the production of the series 2 cars with some colours, for instance giallo Bangkok, being discontinued in the later part of production.

This toning down of the range continued with the introduction of the extensively revised Series 2 facelift (or only if you are in Italy 'series 3' try to make sense of that sort of logic!). The interior was completely changed. Seating was in a less stylised shape and upholstered in a woollen cloth much kinder on the eye, the dash was made cleaner looking and finished in black, wood trim was deleted and the steering wheel was changed to a simpler design. A neat feature of the new dash was a removable anti-theft cover for the radio. The whole interior became more sombre and upmarket but at least in my eyes probably not so interesting and quirky. The exterior, aside from more sombre colours, did not seem to have changed greatly but the 2-litre bonnet and the five bar grille had been standardised across the range and the headlights had returned to the four separate light units but this time with black surrounds. The previously rust prone rear side window frames were changed to all stainless steel and the door mirrors were given internal adjustment and fitted through the quarter light glass. If you looked carefully there



Early Series 2 berlina interior.



were other significant changes. The edge of the roof along the gutters had changed, instead of the original smoothly curved edges the roof has a flat edge giving a sort of squared off effect, if you have never noticed this try to compare an earlier and later car side by side and you will see what I mean. I don't have a press pack for this facelift range so I'm unsure why it was done, possibly to increase headroom or to improve rigidity? There were further changes behind the rear bumper where the rear panel was changed from a single piece to a two piece welded together at a seam hidden by the bumper, this clearly made it easier to join the panel to the rear reinforcing panel that sits behind. The joint was spot welded with the lip of the reinforcement sandwiched between the lips of the rear panel and valance, whether that is the only reason for the change probably remains lost in time but I suspect that this construction may also be more rigid. Unfortunately the ledge created by the seam also became an annoying moisture trap leading to corrosion, as many coupé owners will be aware. In other respects though Lancia built in good measures to reduce corrosion including plastic wheel arch liners at the front so perhaps we shouldn't complain. This series of Beta coupé does seem to have survived in much higher numbers than the earlier series, this may well be partly due to additional rust proofing applied in the UK around the time of the rust scandal and possibly the unnecessary scrapping of some earlier cars under the buy back scheme. There were a few changes under the bonnet, completely revised electrics, electronic ignition, thermostatic intake and different engine tunes. Due to the slightly crazy engine capacity related speed limits in Italy the 1300 had its engine increased to 1301cc. The 1300 also became part of the Beta range and lost the unique features fitted previously instead being just a slightly simplified version of the larger capacity versions. These cars appear to have been introduced in the UK in January/February 1979 initial imported chassis numbers said to be 1300-016001, 1600-032901, 2000-016001 but these don't seem to make sense as it seems unlikely that the 1300 and 2000 would share the same chassis sequence.

The brochures for these cars were as grown up in tone as the cars themselves, plain blue covers and a more up market tone inside, 'BETA COUPÉ the sporting dimension' proclaimed the cover of the most common brochure, one that was issued in several languages. The German market brochures were very similar on the outside but different on the inside. Cars for that market, for at least during part of this series, wore different upholstery from cars in the rest of Europe this being the 'L' cloth familiar to Gamma enthusiasts. Maybe a German Lancista reading this can confirm? Automatic transmission became an option at around this time utilising a British AP design but built in Italy and which in retrospect cannot be seen as particularly successful. The sales division produced a new booklet entitled 'information for salesmen' this time in a small A5 format and covering both coupé and HPE. It contains some rather quirky black and white drawings and a quite strange attempt to explain why the Beta is smaller than its competitors, 'MANSIZE The Beta Coupé is highly responsive, and very easy to park in town. Its proportions are based on the proportions of



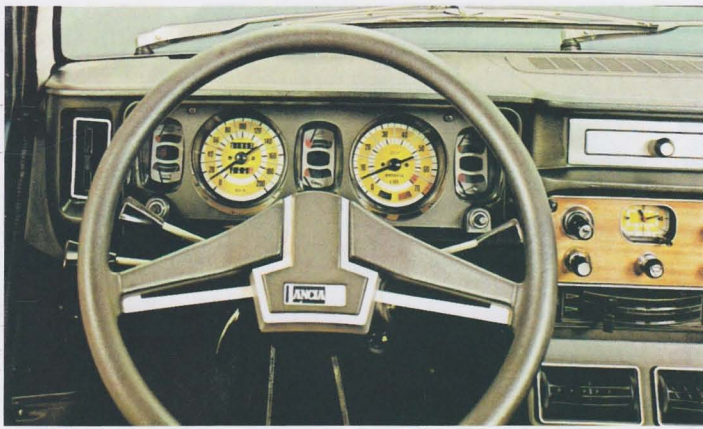
*German market Series two coupé seats. Superb 'L' cloth (also used in the Gamma) was specially commissioned by Lancia from luxury tailors and clothmakers Ermengildo Zegna best known for their 'yachting' range of clothing. Cloth was more expensive to replace than leather.*

the human body, and this gives the car ideal dimensions unrivalled by any of its competitors'. During the time of the S2FL cars an agreement was made whereby SEAT in Spain would build both Coupés and HPEs and these cars appear identical to the models built in Italy but to meet local tax regulations came with the SEAT 1919cc version of the twin cam. I have a brochure for the HPE but have never seen one for the SEAT built coupé. This arrangement was



*Series 2 FL2 coupé and HPE.*



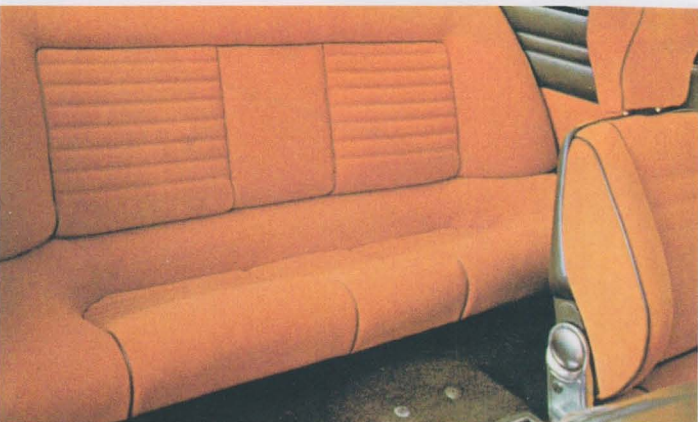


*The bold and much criticised Series 1 instruments.*

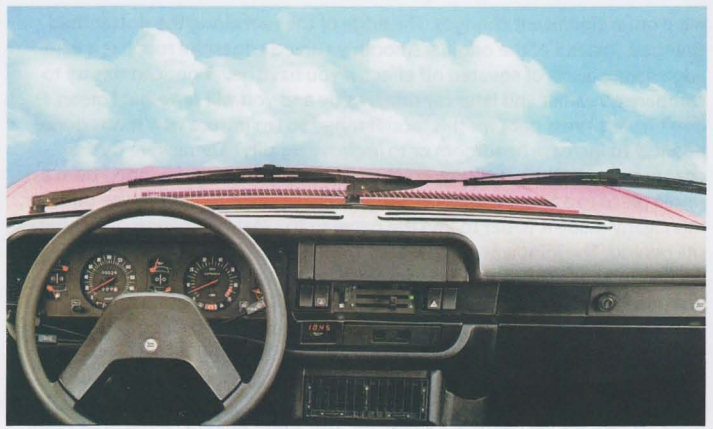
short lived as it all went sour between Fiat and SEAT culminating in VW taking control. Small numbers of Beta coupés were also built from CKD parts in South Africa presumably, but I do not know for sure, by Daihatsu who had built Fulvias, and in Thailand but I don't know much about these.

In 1981 a further revision was made to the coupé with the S2FL2 (series 4 in Italy) cars, The main changes were the adoption of the latest grille as seen on the Delta, black exterior trim, side rubbing strips, boot spoiler, black sills and bulkier redesigned bumpers (except the 1300 which retained early style bumper but finished in black) plus new interior trim including new interior lights, seat upholstery, steering wheel with fluted centre, new gear lever and other detail changes. The engine range was a new 1366cc for the 1300, 1600 and 2000 as before plus an i.e. version with Bosch L jetronic. In practice I cannot find evidence that the 2000 carb model was a generally available model but it was produced for certain specific markets such as Australia. This series brought the introduction of power steering to RHD production and along with the extra smoothness and performance of the i.e. version refreshed the appeal of the coupé. The brochures on this range follow the corporate Lancia style of the time showing the front of the car below the waist facing out of a black cover. The brochure features a red 2000 i.e. throughout and lists 1300 and 1600 as well, although the 1300 and 1600 were never offered in the UK. By this time Lancia (England) was no more and Fiat auto (UK) had taken over distribution and marketing. They issued their own brochure as a combined publication for coupé and HPE, given the issues of the last couple of years the cynical amongst us might think this was so they could miss 'Beta' off the model name. The press pack for the UK market coupé was issued on June 22 1982. This version had been available in Europe from 1981 so I think it is fair to assume that Fiat inherited large unsold stocks in the UK and that the recent adverse publicity had produced severe customer resistance that the addition of a new six year corrosion warranty could not solve. In the UK the coupé was only offered in two colours red or black but in the rest of Europe the choice was much wider.

In autumn 1983 Lancia introduced a volumex version of the coupé, this was probably not unexpected given the introduction of the Trevi volumex some time before but this time, unlike the Trevi, the car was offered for sale in the UK. I only have a UK issued press pack and a general full range press pack for Frankfurt 1983 but there was a full volumex HPE and coupé press pack as well which I am yet to acquire. The marketing of Lancia in the UK had changed hands again this time to an outside organisation in the form of Heron who set up Lancar limited. Much was made of the supercharging system of the volumex although they had to steer a careful path when extolling its virtues over turbocharging, as the first Delta turbo had been announced at the same time.



*Unique rear seat of early 1300 coupé.*



*Latest style dashboard in this case from a Series 2 facelift spider.*

The main changes over the i.e. were as follows, supercharged engine using a Weber dca36 carburettor and an Abarth built roots style supercharger, small bonnet bulge to accommodate the air intake, higher final drive and larger clutch, black front air dam, rear spoiler restyled and extended over the rear wing edges, leather steering wheel rim, uprated suspension, bronze tint glass and Zegna grey/black check woollen upholstery. The colour choice was more extensive in the UK than on the i.e. but there was still more choice in Europe. UK cars also had Recaro front seats, these were optional in Europe but seem very rare outside of the UK, the parts microfiche suggests that French market cars received a sports steering wheel. Sales material for the volumex cars is quite limited, there is a brochure produced by Lancar, quite simple and illustrating UK market cars complete with optional side striping. I have never been able to be 100 per cent sure but it appears that these stripes were a UK inspired addition as they do not appear in the spare parts microfiche and the part number does not seem to follow Fiat/Lancia format. I have never seen a proper factory issue English language Volumex coupé brochure but no doubt they did exist, I only have this brochure in French and Italian and even these appear very rare and they don't turn up anywhere very often. From the outside this brochure is in the same style as the earlier issue but is different inside and covers the 1300, 1600, 2000ie and the volumex. In Germany and probably some other countries in Europe a simpler poster style brochure was also issued that folds out to a large picture of a volumex coupé engine bay.

The volumex was the final development of the Beta coupé, during a production run that spanned over 10 years there were many changes in detail but the basic concept remained constant, as good as it ever was and still ahead of many of the competition when production ceased. It is said that only 150 volumex coupés were imported, the first chassis number imported is said to be 940350 and the final 950000. Based upon the statistics at howmanyleft.co.uk it appears that roughly 40 remain in the UK split virtually 50/50 between road-worthy and long term SORN/off the road. The survival rate may well have been higher but because the supercharger is approved for vintage racing the volumex has become the prey of pre-war MGs so sadly some restorable cars may well have been scrapped just to donate this item.

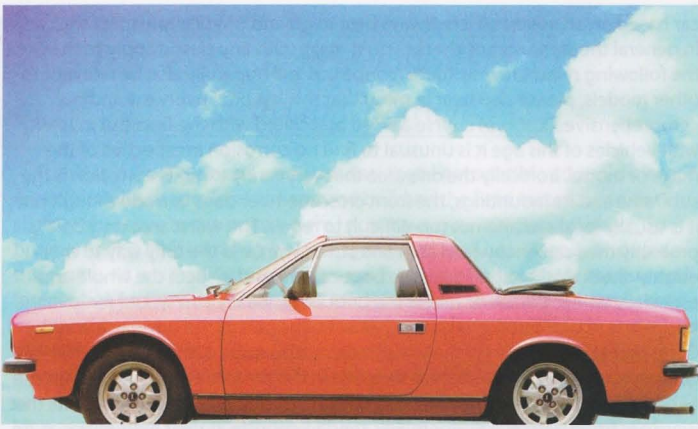
### *Limited and special editions*

In the UK the Beta HiFi is probably the most well known limited edition, introduced in 1981 each car was modified by Tickford additions being a



*Series 1 spider note the lack of bars above the doors.*





Series 2 FL spider.

Voxson radio and graphic equaliser, front and rear spoilers, striping, black and gold wheels, Pirelli P6 tyres and numbered badges. The colour choices seem to have been the same as the normal coupé probably because the cars were modified from existing stock. The brochure for this model is very half hearted a very small leaflet with just one picture on the front cover. The car was an edition of 300 and it cost an additional £545.67 over the list price of the standard coupé but they still charged extra for metallic paint, electric windows and tinted glass. It appears that out of 300 the number remaining is in single figures. Lancia adopted a Stratton bodykit as an official option for the volumex including colour coding and Exip alloy wheels, they even produced one in a lurid pink metallic. It appears unknown as to how many were modified but at least one still exists. There was also one white coupé produced with Martini stripes as the prize in a Prisma test drive competition.

In Europe there was a limited edition of 200 coupés by Fissore (also available as an edition of 300 on the HPE) which had a bodykit and special alloy wheels, the Laser which again had special alloy wheels plus stripes and a Turini (also as a berlina) produced by Chardonnet, the French importers, with spoilers and stripes, but I do not know much about either of these or have any brochures on them. Zagato produced some coupés with special trim but these seem to have only been one off designs shown at exhibitions. If anyone is able to add more detail about these editions, or any other editions, it would be appreciated.

### *HPE and Spider A brief note on the closest relatives*

The spider and HPE arrived later than the coupé but still in time to be part of the first series.

Pininfarina designed the spider however Zagato built the production model which followed the Pininfarina proposal closely only minor details being changed. The second series saw the introduction of modifications that appear to have been aimed at increasing body rigidity in particular bars over the top of the doors and frames around the door windows. In other respects the spider followed the same changes as the coupé except there was never a 1300 version. Both series one and two spiders had unique seat designs seemingly always trimmed in a mid-brown vinyl, the later cars had similar seats to the coupé but without the option of cloth upholstery most being trimmed in black or beige vinyl. In Europe there was no S2FL2 version of the spider although some details did appear on very late cars such as the exposed fuel



Showing the practical side of the HPE.



Series 2 FL coupe rolling off the SEAT assembly line in Spain.

cap with no flap but it was never offered with injection or the new Delta style grille, production stopped in 1982 two years before the coupé.

The HPE 'High Performance Estate' arrived only a few months before the second series, except for the lack of a 1300 it followed a similar development path to the coupé with production ending at the same time, by that time it had been rechristened 'High Performance Executive'. The HPE was built on the berlina floorpan so managed to combine near berlina space with hatchback versatility and sporting style. The interior design of the early cars was a masterpiece of 1970s style if the rear seat had been a piece of living room furniture I am convinced it would have been a highly prized collectors design classic by now. There seems some doubt as to whether the series one HPE was sold in the UK, the *Beta collectors guide* suggests they were imported in 1592cc form only but the only information I could find shows first imports to be April 1976 which would make them second series, whatever the case early HPEs are rare in the extreme probably because their sheer usefulness means the majority were used hard and driven into the ground with even the later series not as common as you would expect.

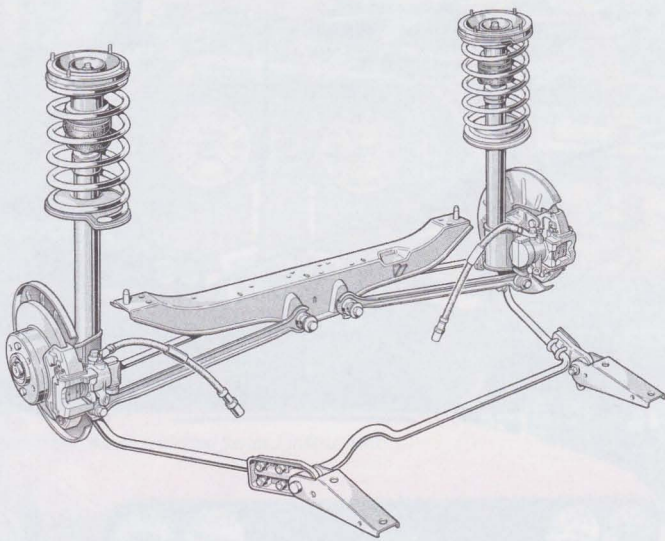
### *Berlina and Trevi*

The version that started it all announced in 1972 barely three years from the Fiat take over it was a remarkably accomplished car given that it was designed from scratch in such a short period. The berlina is said to have been styled by Fiat and it is also rumoured to have some technical input left over from Fiat's short lived cooperation with Citroen. However it did include a lot of Lancia design and engineering input, the rear suspension is a well known masterpiece, frequently copied over the years by other manufacturers, and Lancia also developed their own tune for the Fiat twin cam. It was also full of the luxury touches expected of Lancia. Early cars were available as 1438, 1592 or 1756 versions with the 1438 later superseded by a 1297 and at the same time an LPG version was added which was probably an Italy only option.

Extensive alterations were made for the second series, deeper side windows and a completely altered rear window angle were adopted to improve visibility, the engines changed in line with the coupé and there were many styling and detail alterations. At around the same time as the coupé S2FL they added electronic ignition, changed the upholstery to match the coupé and made other detail changes including extending the roof gutter right to the back of the car instead of ending in line with the rear window.

The next change was rather radical. On the outside the berlina gained a cleaner look with the late style grille, inside it received what must be one of the craziest interior designs ever fitted to a mass produced car. Most famously the Bellini styled dashboard but the whole interior was full of slightly off the wall features, concealed interior door handles come to mind, and was a bit of





*The much-copied rear suspension; this is a late version. The anti roll-bar and arms differ in detail from early cars.*

a shock to the senses back then. It seems that only a small number of cars were imported to the UK all 1600s.

The final berlina was the Trevi (three volume) basically the final Beta berlina but with a conventional rear end designed by Pininfarina. This was imported into the UK in 1600 and 2000 versions but for some reason the UK never received the i.e. and volumex versions. We also didn't receive the facelifted version which had cleaner styling at the rear and revised trim inside including improved seats and door trims without concealed door handles.

## North America and Japan

I cannot claim to know a lot about the Betas for the North American market. Berlina, coupé, HPE and Zagato (spider) were all available but were modified to meet strict safety and emission regulations frequently necessitating revised technical specifications. This included the addition of very unsightly bumpers and engines strangled by anti-smog controls. Fuel injection was offered in advance of the European market cars which eventually gave the cars the power they needed. Oddly the Zagato received the S2FL2 changes that were never applied to the European spider.

I am not sure which models were sold in Japan, I only have Japanese brochures for the coupé and these all relate to early versions in the same specification as the North American cars.

## Success or failure?

In the UK even to this day the Beta bears a very heavy burden in the media due to the rust scandal and less well educated motoring enthusiasts may well view the model as a failure. Well I know I am biased but there are many reasons to think differently. Firstly over a period of about 12 years Lancia built 428,372 Betas of all types plus the design can be seen to be at the top of a family tree of designs including Thema, Fiat Croma, Alfa Romeo 164, SAAB 9000, Prisma and Delta. More importantly Betas of all versions are a remarkably good drive, it was amazing when you consider that the UK competitors at the time were the Ford Cortina, Morris Ital and Vauxhall Cavalier. A further asset is the brilliant Fiat twin cam which is not only sporty but also exceptionally well made and durable. On top of this there are sporting versions with the most subtle and elegant style and the HPE that even manages to combine the whole package into a single car being both sports car and family car at the same time. Back in the seventies quite a lot of people owned a Lancia in the UK and if you meet a past owner what is surprising is rather than talking about rust they more often talk about how they loved the car with a big grin on their face.

## Finding and owning a Beta

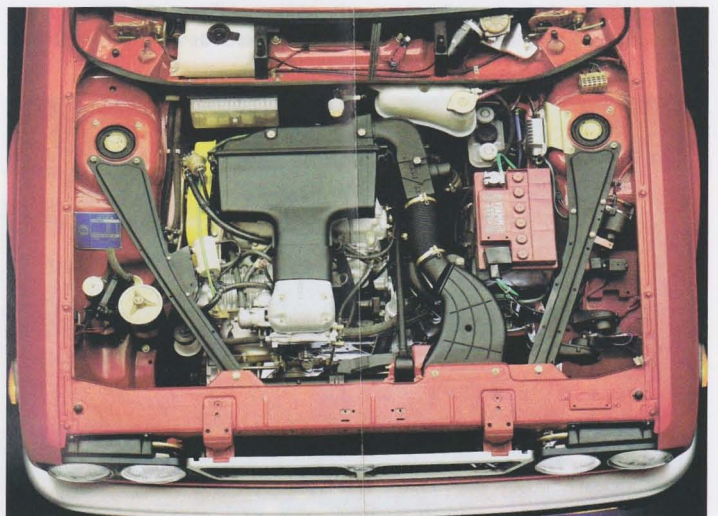
Unless you are looking for an early model there is still a steady flow of cars for sale and restoration projects turn up regularly on eBay. It is difficult to assess a

car based on an advert so it is always best to go and physically inspect the car. In general the same sort of checks you'd make with any classic apply to the Beta but the following relates mainly to the coupé but will hopefully also be relevant to other models, please also bear in mind that this is a brief overview and not comprehensive. Rust is of course a word associated with the Beta but in reality with vehicles of this age it is unusual to find no corrosion irrespective of the make or model. Ironically the one area that very rarely exhibits corrosion is the subframe and its mountings, the front cross member does corrode though but it is usually localised and not too difficult to repair. The worst area on a Beta is probably the rear inner wheel arch and strut tower and the only way to thoroughly check this is to pull back the boot carpets and inspect the whole area especially where the tower meets the boot floor, ideally you would remove the back seats as well but this is not very practical as part of the buying process! Corrosion at the bottom of the windscreen is also quite common especially on cars with a sunroof, it is usually at its worst in the bottom corners and is not the easiest area to repair. Front inner wings can corrode badly on the early cars that were not fitted with plastic liners. Sills tend to corrode at their extremities as do all the other usual weak areas of any 30 plus year old car. With some patience and a bit of luck new panels can still be found and there are newly made repair panels for many areas. Mechanically the cars are very strong so you should simply take the usual care, look for a complete original looking engine bay and neat wiring without any bodging evident. Check how the engine sounds and if possible check how the car drives. On a volumex it is critical that the supercharger is in good order as second hand prices are high and supply limited.

All trim is important both inside and out as items are rarely available new and can be difficult to source used.

Maintaining a Beta is a whole lot more challenging than owning an MGB but that can be all part of the fun, parts are difficult, but not impossible, much entertainment can be had looking for those elusive parts and wise Beta owners tend to be permanently watching eBay for that elusive part. Remarkably almost anything turns up eventually but it can be a long wait. Asking prices for parts can be high but sensible prices new or used can still be found and there are several specialist suppliers across Europe plus quite a few in the rest of the world. I have also spent many hours cross checking parts to save money, it is surprising what items were shared across the Italian manufacturers, did you know for example that a Fiat Regatta 1.7 diesel cam belt tensioner is the same as the tensioner for a volumex supercharger belt, that the belt itself originates from the 1.9 version of the same car and wheel bearings are apparently the same as some Renaults? Conversely it is unwise to make assumptions about what will fit or are suitable, Lancia made many detail changes over the years some less obvious than others so a second hand part from one Beta might not fit another which all adds to the fun. After market items that are listed as correct sometimes are not quite right, for instance water pumps for volumex (and Montecarlo) should have a deeper impeller but most after market suppliers sell a one size fits all item. So long as you take the time to understand it the Beta should be well within the capabilities of a home mechanic and unlike more modern cars it never gets excessively over complicated.

Most importantly the Beta is a really great car to drive with a really alive feel to it, difficult to say which version is best, on a sensible level a S2FL2 HPE with fuel injection probably provides the best mix of attributes but a volumex coupé, spider of any series or an early series one coupé are probably the cars most fans would regard as the most desirable. Then again a series 2 Berlina is still a sharp drive, very spacious and as with all Lancia berlinas more solidly built than any of the more glamorous models. Whichever you chose they are all still very cheap to buy so a good one has got to be the best bargain amongst Italian classics.



*Volumex engine bay.*



## Beta technical documentation

I used to collect literature on all Lancias, then I got sensible and sold most of my collection but I decided to keep and build on the Beta material and got slightly obsessive to the point where I now have over 100 Beta related brochures. It is all fascinating (at least to me) and I still occasionally find something new. As well as brochures I have parts books of which there are three different ones for front drive Betas and microfiche for the later cars, I would recommend anyone with a Beta to acquire the one relevant to their car as the exploded diagrams are very useful probably even more so than a workshop manual. Talking of which Lancia issued a very thick manual on the series one cars that turns up on eBay quite often, irrespective of the series you own and so long as you learn the differences it is very useful. There is a Haynes manual which is no more adequate and can cause confusion with later variations, a thin publication by 'Revue technique automobile' in French which, in the most recent print, briefly covers most models aside from the volumex and one in German by 'Verlag buchelli' nicely illustrated but doesn't seem to cover i.e. or volumex cars. Lancia didn't appear to update the main manual which was reprinted several times with more modern covers but still contained the same information. They did produce a separate technical data book that was updated up to about late 1979, most of the data is not readily available elsewhere it is really worth having a copy of this in the latest print date you can find. In addition to the large manual Lancia produced concise manuals for owners, these are handy but not very comprehensive but they did produce an updated one for series two cars which is worth having. The format of manuals was changed at around the time the S2FL2 cars came out and for those cars Lancia issued a slim manual which detailed the changes on the car and the technical data. There was one issued for coupé/HPE combined and a separate one for Trevi. The Bosch injection system was covered by a separate book in the same manner as the automatic gearbox a year or so earlier. In addition there was a very comprehensive bodywork repair manual for the coupé, I suppose there might have been similar publications for the other versions but I have never seen them. The volumex cars only received, at least in English, a duplicated booklet of technical information, there might have been a more comprehensive version but I have never seen one.

The North American cars had their own technical books, I am not sure how often they were produced but they are quite numerous because the emission control equipment changed regularly, as with other things relating to these cars they would be better explained by an expert from that side of the water.

Anyone seeking more knowledge on the twin cam would be well advised to obtain a copy of Guy Croft's book *Modifying and tuning Fiat/Lancia engines*.

## The end

Just before I close a small piece of information, I had never seen in print a definitive date for the final Beta so many thanks to Tim Speechley at Fiat UK for taking the time to research this for me, unfortunately the type is not recorded but the chassis number is 954124 and it was built in November 1984.

I asked Tim what production information is still available and to quote: 'Information on all Lancias of this era is very scarce and even in Italy there is very little because I think a lot of the paper archives were destroyed in a flood many years ago. I personally have some build date info for 1978 onwards but nothing before then and it is generally just for the model not separated into versions'.

Tim has generously agreed that if any owner of a Beta registered from 1978 on would like to know the build date of their car he is happy to accept enquiries

## Regional reports

### NEWS FROM THE NORTH OF SCOTLAND

I have been very busy with the organisation of the GNW at Dunkeld, but by the time you read this it will all be over, and time to think of forthcoming events. The Glamis Castle weekend will be July 7 and 8. We usually get a good turnout of Lancias for this one. Please let me know if

you are coming by the end of May, as I have to organise passes, well in advance.

The Scottish Italian Car day in Fife is to be on May 27. A different venue this year. It will be held at the Hill of Tivit Mansion House and Gardens near Cupar.

**Donald J Smith**

Tel. 01674 672111 or 07739897477  
donaldsmith01@btinternet.com

by e mail only to tim.speechley@fiat.com and he will check if the information is available.

I hope that this has been informative if anyone wishes to make comments or additions please send them in to *Viva Lancia!* for a future issue.

**Alan Cooper**  
alan.c.ia@ntlworld.com

## Welcome to new members

The Club would like to welcome the following new (and returning) members who have joined in the last few months:

|  |                      |  |
|--|----------------------|--|
| Karl Helgesen                          | Hampshire            |  |
| William Corke                          | Surrey               |  |
| James Costello & Lorenzo Lopez Santana | London               | 2 Beta 2nd Series Berlinas   |
| Sarah Heath-Brook                      | Essex                |  |
| Andrew Froggatt                        | London               | Fulvia 1st Series Coupe 1.3  |
| Richard Sweeting                       | West Yorkshire       | Fulvia 2nd Series Coupe 1600HF   |
| Osian Owens                            | Hertfordshire        | Fulvia 3rd Series Coupe  |
| Andrew Watt                            | Cheshire             | Gamma 1st Series Coupe   |
| David Blumlein                         | London               |  |
| Tim Lane                               | Dorset               | Belna Late Standard Berlina  |
| Andy Cocks                             | Norfolk              | Fulvia 3rd Series Coupe  |
| Peter Bridger                          | East Sussex          | Fulvia 3rd Series Coupe  |
| Howard Papworth                        | Oxfordshire          | Beta 3rd Series Coupe 2000 VX  |
| Peter Clarke                           | Berkshire            | 2 Delta HF integrale Evo 1   |
| Steven Tildesley                       | Leicestershire       | Flavia Convertible 1.8 Vignale   |
| Matt Evans                             | Hampshire            | Beta 2nd Series Coupe 2000, Beta 1st Series Coupe 1600                           |
| Mark Jaques                            | Surrey               |  |
| Steve Bestwick & Jo Musson             | Nottinghamshire      | Delta HF integrale   |
| Geoff Phillips                         | Surrey               | Aurelia B20 6th Series GT  |
| Anne Young                             | London               | Lambda 1st Series Torpedo, Aurelia B12   |
| Danny Cami                             | Belgium              | Delta HF integrale Evo 1   |
| Nick Seddon & Citra Susanto            | Hong Kong            |  |
| Simon Ingham                           | France               | Aprilia 2nd Series Berlina   |
| Robin Davis                            | Gloucestershire      | Flavia Convertible 1.8 Vignale, Flavia Coupe 1.8, Fulvia 2nd Series Coupe 1600HF |
| Anthony Galliers-Pratt                 | Hereford & Worcester | Aurelia B20 4th Series Coupe Rally 037, HF integrale                             |
| Richard Whitehouse                     | London               |  |
| John & Pauline Reeder                  | Norfolk              |  |
| John Hart                              | Buckinghamshire      | Ypsilon  |
| Peter & Lesley Rowbotham               | Kent                 | Fulvia 2nd Series Coupe  |
| John Muddle                            | East Sussex          | Fulvia 1st Series Sport 1.3  |
| Robert Lawlor                          | West Sussex          | Fulvia 3rd Series Coupe  |
| Philip & Emily Wales                   | Somerset             | Delta HF integrale Evo 2, Delta HF Turbo Martini                                 |
| Richard Gorman                         | USA                  | Astura 3rd Series Convertible Pinin Farina                                       |
| Charles Frodsham                       | Glamorgan            | Flaminia Coupe 2.5 3B Pininfarina  |
| Neil Wardman                           | West Yorkshire       | Beta 2nd Series Spider 2000  |
| Bashir Khwaja                          | London               | Fulvia 1st Series Coupe 1.3  |
| Steve Hinson                           | Lincolnshire         | Montecarlo 2nd Series Spider   |
| Eliyahu Solomon                        | Singapore            | Fulvia, Montecarlo, Themas   |
| Mark Bennett                           | Hertfordshire        | Flaminia GT Touring  |
| David Relph                            | Kent                 | Beta Montecarlo Spider 2000  |
| Michael Whiting                        | Derbyshire           | Delta HF integrale 16v   |
| Mark Smith                             | Shropshire           | Beta 1st Series Coupe  |
| Philip Nixon                           | Gloucestershire      | Aurelia B20 3rd Series GT  |
| Giles Usher                            | London               |  |
| Trevor & Joy Pullen                    | Hampshire            |  |
| Gareth Shipley                         | Clwyd                | Delta HF integrale 8V  |