



# LANCIA FULVIAS: 1.3 RALLYE & ZAGATO

*A precision motorcar, an engineering tour de force*



LIKE MASERATI, Lancia is a fine old Italian marque that has been pretty much dormant here in America for several years. When John Bond first published his list of the world's seven best made automobiles in 1961 he included Lancia; this year he left it out, not because he felt the quality had declined but rather because they seemed to be just too small and modestly powered for the money. When offered a pair of the latest Fulvias for road testing, the staff of R&T felt pretty much the same about them. But we like to think we have open minds and with the importers (Trident Motors, Rosemont, Pa.) so eager for us to try them that they'd airmail them to us in California we happily accepted a chance to try these unusual cars. They were posted off forthwith and after being checked out by dealer Otto Zipper in Los Angeles were delivered to us.

To put it succinctly, we were pleasantly surprised by both of these Fulvias. True, \$3520 seems a lot for a 1300-cc car—not to mention \$4250 for the Zagato-bodied version—but then we test a lot of 1600-cc jobs that cost well over \$4000.

The first surprise came when we rolled the Zagato onto the freeway. It has all the character of a real long-legged cruiser, from stumbling a bit when moving off from rest in 1st gear to gliding along the freeway at 70 mph. Not that 3800 rpm at 70 mph is really tall gearing—it just does it so easily that it *feels* that way. The typical small 4-cyl engine is firing only 7000-9000 times per minute at 70 compared with the 12,000 times per minute of the typical big American

V-8. But the vibration of most inline fours more than makes up for this and thus many of them are what we call “buzzers.” The V-4s we have driven lately—namely the one in the Saab and these two—are considerably less afflicted with vibration periods than nearly any inline fours we can name. The Dearborn-designed German Ford engine used in the Saab achieves its smoothness through use of an auxiliary balance shaft. The Lancia has no such shaft, but nevertheless its designers have achieved outstanding smoothness right across the speed range. Coupled with adequate sound insulation and a low level of wind noise, the engine gives ultra-smooth cruising in the Zagato and only a little less impressive touring in the Rallye, which has a numerically higher final drive ratio but is not so wind-cheating in shape.

The power package of the Fulvia series—which includes a basic sedan and also the high performance HF version of the Rallye—is most interesting. Introduced in 1963 to replace an older V-4, rear drive design (the Appia), the Fulvia has a 13° V-4 canted to the left at 45°. The engine is a lovely thing to look at, resembling a dohc four with a single head casting serving the narrowly separated banks of cylinders and containing a single camshaft per bank. But of course it's much shorter than a four; it sits well forward in the engine compartment, with the transaxle assembly completely behind it. The transaxle is sturdy, directly from the 1800-cc Flavia fwd models. Its four forward gears are the same in both versions tested here but the final drive ratio is lowered in the

Zagato version to take advantage of the lighter weight and better aerodynamics.

This engine began life as a 1091-cc version and has grown in two steps to its present 1298-cc form by bore and stroke increases. Its block is of cast iron but the head and many other parts are made of aluminum. At 87 bhp it is pretty highly tuned and this fact is made known by mild signs of temperament—it bumbles a bit at speeds below about 1500 rpm, probably because of over-carburetion, and it idles at 1100 rpm. But the overall noise level of the unit is so low and its general performance so flexible that it could be mistaken easily for a larger-displacement unit of less specific output.

The floors in both Fulvias are properly flat and the gear-shift lever is a long, straight stalk growing out of a bubble in the toeboard. Lever movements are notchy, fairly precise and rather long. The gearbox itself is very quiet and pleasant to use but we found 3rd gear synchromesh to be beatable on both cars. The indirect ratios chosen seem to be just about perfect in the Rallye, and in the Zagato they would be just as good except that the taller final gearing gives the engine a little harder time in getting the car off the line. This isn't borne out by the performance figures, however, and applies only to leisurely driving. The clutch is of seemingly adequate size (7.87 in.) for the displacement, but it begins to slip after a few hard standing-start acceleration runs. Final drive noise is notably absent in both cars, but the Michelin X tires put up their usual reassuring howl at moderate speeds.

Seating for the front two passengers and instrumentation are virtually the same in both versions. The instrument panels are exactly the same despite both cars having entirely different bodies; they are finished in a nice piece of what appears to be teak and the dials are just what you would expect in a quality Italian GT car. The sharply raked windshield of the Zagato picks up some reflections at night. Heating and ventilation are also what we have come to expect in Italian cars—minimal, with a noisy one-speed blower the only available boost. There's an array of warning lights but they're not labeled. Neither are the switches. The Zagato has a unique touch in its electrically driven rear window that raises 1.5 in. for extractor effect at the touch of a button on

*This is the Rallye's instrument panel; the Zagato's is almost exactly the same. Carpets would give a more luxurious feeling.*



*Shape of Fulvia Sport, created by Zagato, is aerodynamically excellent, improves 80-40 mph coasting time by almost 12 seconds.*



*However, the standard Rallye coupe is still very attractive and costs a lot less. Front-wheel drive allows good use of space.*

the dash. A clock is standard, and in both cars the clocks kept perfect time for the two weeks we had them. Our largest staff members found both of these rather small cars very comfortable, thanks to well contoured and fully adjustable seats in both. The Rallye has a diminutive bench seat in the back that can seat two adults for a short time and the Zagato simply has a carpeted area intended mainly for luggage. A padded barrier in the Zagato separates the two storage areas. ➡➡➡

*Rallye follows the Zagato onto the freeway, where both of them are very much at home. Rallye's tail has the fashionable chop.*

