



## Test drive of the Lybra - Dec 1999

By Huib Geurink, webmaster of viva-lancia.com

On Saturday December 4th, 1999 at 13:00 Mr. Hoogendoorn of Autobedrijf Otten handed me the keys of the new Lybra, "a fully loaded 1800 cc model". I did not go any further into technical specifications and other details as I thought it would be nice to judge the car by feeling only. After all, I had been driving Fulvia, Appia and Flaminia only for the past 5 years. The difference between those cars and the Lybra is too big to make a comparison of the "paperwork" useful.



### Lancista for more than 30 years

In 1967 I bought my first Lancia, a 3rd hand Flavia coupé iniezione. The first new Lancia arrived in 1970: an S2 Fulvia berlina. After that followed more new Lancia's: Beta berlina, Beta coupé, Gamma berlina, Beta HPE IE, Thema Turbo 8V, Thema Turbo 16V and several Y10's.

The Thema Turbo 16V was replaced by a Fulvia coupé in 1995. Soon a Flaminia coupé joined as well as a Fulvia berlina. A year ago a 1967 S1 Fulvia coupé and another Fulvia berlina (a 1963 "normale") joined the family. In September 1999 a 1961 Appia berlina was found in Switzerland, which also joined the family.



Quite a difference going from these fine "real" Lancia's to the Lybra. The Lybra is comfortable, smooth and fast. The power steering has a strong self centring force, reminding me of the Citroen CX break I had on the side some 15 years ago. After a while one gets used to the power steering. The self centring actually helps quite a bit to increase comfort on the motorways and straight roads. After another while, one notices, that it does not at all prevent the Lybra from being taken through curves at a very illegal speeds.

### Also Annabelle is a Lancista for more than 30 years

Annabelle, my wife, bought her first Lancia also in the late sixties. She was a nurse then with a good salary and could afford a second hand Flaminia Touring Convertible 3C to drive to and from the hospital. The last 12 years she drives a Y10. Annabelle enjoys being driven around, particularly in a Thema, Flaminia or Augusta, but also in a Fulvia, Flavia, Appia or Lambda (she has not yet tried the Aurelia's and other older Lancia's). She enjoyed the Lybra very much.

By the way, Annabelle is now looking for an Ardea or Augusta to use as a daily driver. She gets too many speeding tickets with her 1967 Fulvia coupé Rallye 1.3 and her Y10 is quite rusted.

### Real Lancia?

Often one gets into discussions what the last real Lancia was. I was of the opinion, that the Thema was the last "real Lancia". I take that back. The Lybra is certainly a real Lancia. The people who thought that Lancia was dying, can relax. Lancia is back on track! Although I have an idea or three myself about future Lancia's, I think the people in Torino have done an excellent job and raised expectations for other new models.

Many Lancisti consider the Lancia's of the sixties the last true Lancia's. I am in a good position to compare the Lybra with the Fulvia, Flavia and Flaminia.

The Flaminia combines a regal ride with a very high level of comfort. One sits **on** the seats (thrones really) rather than **in** the seats. The Lybra does not give the "regal" feeling. In fact, no post-Flaminia car has equalled the feeling one gets from the Flaminia.

The Fulvia, specially the coupé, gives the feeling that it is designed for mountain roads. Even today it is an absolute joy to drive these cars through the Alps (or the Vosges during the Tulip Rally). Also, the narrow dikes in Holland with lots of curves are a delight for the Fulvia. Don't be mistaken, also on the long stretches the Fulvia does fine. My daily driver is a 1976 Fulvia coupé 1.3S. It eats motorways for breakfast. The first impression of the Lybra is, that it is not designed for mountain



The picture above was taken in a camp for young delinquents in Belgium, just across the border from the Netherlands.

Very smart of the Belgian ministry of justice to teach these young people how to earn a honest living in a casino.

roads like the Fulvia. Again, don't be mistaken, the Lybra can be taken safely through the curves at high speeds. In absolute terms of course much faster than the Fulvia.

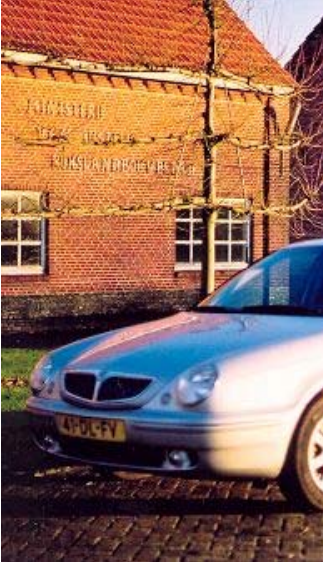
Now look at the series 1 Flavia berlina, what I call the Flavia Flaviarum. When driving the Flavia, one immediately gets the impression that it is built to drive distances safely, comfortably and relaxing. At first, one is a bit afraid that it will topple over, if it is taken though corners very fast. Utterly misleading. Try to follow an experienced Flavia driver on a winding road. You will have a hard time keeping up with the Flavia. In fact, two years ago Annabelle and I drove home in our Flavia over Belgian country roads, when a pedestrian suddenly started to cross the road. I had to apply the so called "elk test" unprepared in a split second. No instability at all. Did not even have to do the third steering movement. The Lybra is a true descendant of the Flavia Flaviarum. Gran Turismo in optima forma. Yes, very much a real Lancia.

Much to my regret I had to bring the Lybra back on Monday morning. Let's hope that we will see many on the roads. The Lybra deserves it and the people who designed and built it deserve it.

Would I sell my Flaminia, the Appia and at least two Fulvia's to buy a Lybra? Better not ask the question.

### Culture shock

On the Saturday I also moved many of my older Lancia's around between barns. Quite interesting to jump from a Fulvia or Appia or Flaminia into the Lybra and vice versa. I found the "culture shock" the smallest when changing from the Appia to the Lybra and back.



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