

Under maximum cornering, right, the coupe remains almost dead flat and slightly understeering. Far right is the angle-mounted V-4 with its twin Solexes.

# LANCIA FULVIA HF

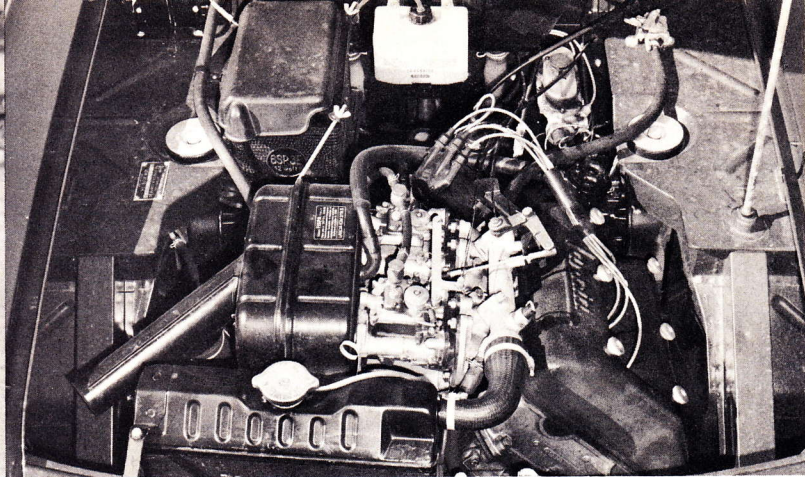
**ROAD TEST 5/67** It was just a matter of luck that we managed to have a near-duplicate of the cars placing second, fourth, and fifth in the Monte Carlo Rallye in our hands for test at the same time. Lancia is a classic name in the automotive world, but most of its reputation is derived from high-powered, luxury GTs, and racing cars of an era past. The little Appia sedan and the convertible that followed were pleasing automobiles aimed at a relatively mass market, but they weren't really exciting cars in any particular aspect. The Flavia, powered by a flat, 1.5-liter four, was front-drive, semi-luxurious, and quite interesting, yet a limited-production sedan with a healthy price tag. Lancia's latest is a replacement of the Appia called the Fulvia. Powered by basically the same V-4, it's made in sedan form with 1100-cc and a coupe version of 1215-cc engine size. The latter, in standard form, sells for \$3475 in Los Angeles, the sedan for \$2850. Our test car, designated "HF," was the performance version of the coupe, selling here for \$3850. It can be raced as a Class C (1000-1300) sedan.

Evaluated strictly on the basis of cubic-inches-per-dollar, the Fulvia HF doesn't appear much of a buy. It is, however, when you consider its overall performance in with it. We drove it around town and in normal commuting for a couple of days without really getting enthused, but a quick trip out in the country changed that . . . fast. First, the HF has eight more DIN horsepower than the standard model. Its weight is reduced by almost 200 pounds through the use of aluminum (hood, deck, and doors), plexiglass (rear and quarter-windows), and 'stripped-out' interior. While there is a minimum of upholstery, what there is of it is quite comfortable and attractive. The bucket seats, for example, are built of tubing and in a wrap-around style like a good competition seat. They are amply padded. The rear seat in this two-plus-two is really minimal in terms of padding, but you can still cram two small adults back there in an emergency. Otherwise, there are no sacrifices. The prepared cars used on the Monte 85 has been removed from the production HF via plexi side-

*A lighter, hotter version of the new front-drive V-4*







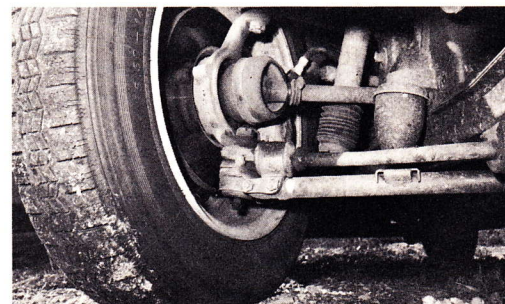
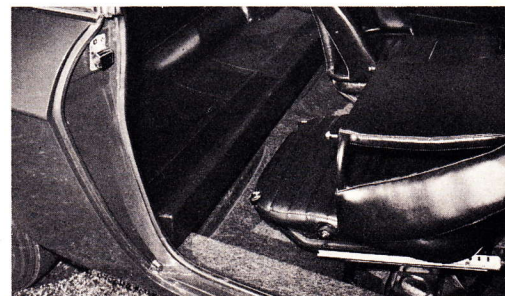
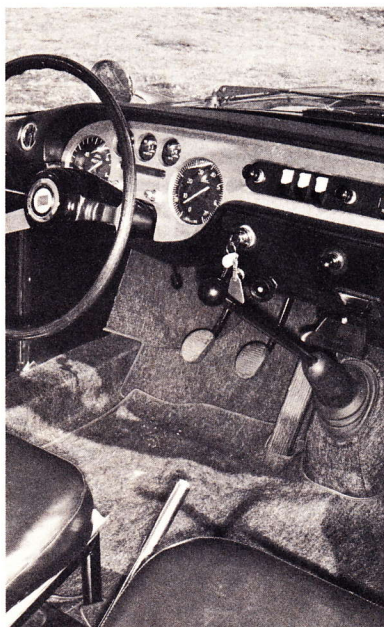
windows, removing the heater, and so on.

The V-4 is a unique and well-proven power-plant. Its Vee is at a 45-degree angle, so both banks are contained in the same cylinder head and the block has a rectangular cross-section. Thus, even though it is a push-rod, it looks like a little in-line cammer from the exterior. All the carburetion is on the right side, all the exhausts on the left. You're right; the left bank has longer intakes and shorter exhausts than the right. Exhausts can be and are compensated for in an individual header-pipe length, but the intakes are left uneven . . . apparently without ill effect. By carving up the head unmercifully and welding in his own ports to even their lengths, an Italian Junior manufacturer named Dagrada was able to pull 105 horsepower from the 1100-cc version several years ago, so 88 hp with the extra 115 cc seems quite conservative and, in fact, the engine is in a pretty tame state of tune and runs with exceptional smoothness past the 6200-rpm redline. Otto Zipper, West Coast distributor for Lancia, advised he'd been using 6500 without ill effects, so we tried it and found it still pulled strong up there.

Beneath and behind the engine is the four-speed, full-synchro transaxle. Its ratios are wide-spaced, especially between third and fourth, to enhance acceleration with a relatively high, final-drive ratio (3.9) for the small power plant. A long gearshift protrudes into the cockpit through a lump in the fire-wall and, aside from its length necessitating fairly long "throws," the shifting is easy and positive. From the gearbox, the drive is taken out to the front wheels via two-joint, open axles and, aside from the spinning of front wheels in standing-start accelerations instead of the rears, there is little else that is indicative of front drive . . . no joint-bind on full-lock turning, no high steering pressure, nor excessive understeer. In fact, steering pressure is exceptionally light and, were it not for the fact that it's also very positive, we'd suggest that they quicken up the slow ratio.

Once seated in the coupe, you quickly get clues that it's a business-like automobile. The buckets fit nicely and are mounted at an

By Jerry Titus



**Above, only the right bucket folds forward to allow access to the small rear seat. Directly above is a drive axle and front suspension.**

**Lower left, trunk space is fairly small, but access is wide.**

Photos: Bob D'Olivo





almost-semi-reclining angle. Wheel and pedal location are laid out in the no-nonsense manner of a competition car. Instrumentation follows the same theme, except that the panel is more attractive than stark, with an oil-temperature gauge by its lonesome over to the right. Visibility is excellent. Noise level is surprisingly low. Above 85 mph the wind noise gets a little high, but we suspect it is due to an outside, rear-view mirror upsetting the flow. Weather-proofing is excellent, with an efficient heater and a blower motor that turns up like a turbine. The ride is fairly firm but very comfortable over everything except short, choppy bumps. These get to you, mainly because of the lack of extra padding in the seats.

Driving around town and the like wasn't really inspiring. The Fulvia moves through traffic well on both surface street and freeway. First cog is a little high and takes sensitive control for smooth starts. You have to 'row' it a bit to really keep it moving, but not to an annoying degree by a good margin. A trip through deserts and mountains proved more fun than Disneyland. Its bloodlines popped to the surface in a hurry. First, it contentedly cruises at 90 mph and doesn't take very long to reach its maximum of 106 mph. It is almost completely devoid of wind-wander. At top speed you can take your hands completely off the wheel with no drama. Mountains it just chews up and spits out. We have serious

doubts that the highly-rated Porsche 911S could stay with it under such conditions unless power was really a factor. Definitely an understeering car, it is amazingly well-balanced and light in response. By driving technique, it is easy to make it oversteer slightly to suit your purpose for a particular corner. Braking it's equally good at and the discs seem impervious to fade. Side-bite is nothing short of fantastic, especially in view of it being equipped with a rally-type, belted-tread tire that works exceptionally well in the rain. If you want to take it off the hard road and onto the dirt, the known attributes of front-drive come into play and you've again got a real performer on your hands. We completed a 150-mile run of give-it-hell type driving without the coupe or its pilot even breathing hard. There were no flaws. About the only carp we had was about the window handles. They went to a lot of trouble to flush-mount the interior door handles but left the window crank right in a position for proper knee-banging — a small but annoying fault.

To sum it up, we wound up very fond of the little Fulvia. Maybe it's a little odd-ball and maybe it could use a bit more power to match its outstanding roadability, but these things contribute more to giving it character than being drawbacks. It's doubtful a dealer will let you wail his demo around hard enough to let you really see this character but, if you get the chance . . . 🏁

**PRICE** As tested . . . . . \$3850 POE LA

**ENGINE**

Type . . . V-4 (45°), water-cooled, four cycle  
 Max. bhp @ rpm . . . . 88 DIN @ 6000 rpm  
 Max. torque . . . 79.5 @ 5000 rpm  
 Displacement . . . . 1216 cc (74.2 cu. in.)  
 Compression ratio . . . . 9.8 to 1  
 Induction system . . . 2 Solex C 35 PHH carburetors  
 Exhaust system . . . . Individual headers to single pipe  
 Electrical system . . . . 12 V

**TRANSMISSION**

Type . . . Four-speed, full synchro  
 Ratios: 1st . . . . . 3.69  
 2nd . . . . . 2.179  
 3rd . . . . . 1.419  
 4th . . . . . 1.0

**CHASSIS**

Frame . . . . . Semi-unit with sub-frame for drivetrain  
 Body . . . . . Steel with aluminum doors, hood and rear deck  
 Front suspension . . . Unequal arm, transverse leaf spring, tube shocks  
 Rear suspension . . . Solid, tubular axle, semi-elliptic leaf springs, tube shocks  
 Tire size . . . . . 5.50 x 14  
 Tire type . . . . . Michelin X 145

**WEIGHTS AND MEASURES**

Wheelbase . . . . . 91.7 in.  
 Front track . . . . . 51.18 in.  
 Rear track . . . . . 49.39 in.  
 Overall height . . . . . 51 in.  
 Overall width . . . . . 61.22 in.  
 Overall length . . . . . 154.91 in.  
 Ground clearance . . . . 6 in.  
 Curb weight . . . . . 1900 lbs.  
 Test weight . . . . . 2285 lbs.  
 Crankcase . . . . . 3½ qts.  
 Cooling system . . . . . n.a.  
 Gas tank . . . . . 9 gals.

**PERFORMANCE RESULTS**

**ACCELERATION**

0-30 . . . . . 3.4 sec.  
 0-40 . . . . . 5.2 sec.  
 0-50 . . . . . 8.4 sec.  
 0-60 . . . . . 10.6 sec.  
 0-70 . . . . . 14.4 sec.  
 0-80 . . . . . 19.7 sec.  
 0-90 . . . . . 28.1 sec.  
 Standing quarter-mile . 18.4 sec.  
 @ 79 mph  
 Top speed, mph . . . . . 106

**FUEL CONSUMPTION**

Test . . . . . 24.5 mpg  
 Average . . . . . 26.0 mpg

**LANCIA FULVIA HF ROAD TEST**

