



ROAD TEST

LANCIA FLAMINIA

Fun, and sometimes games, in an expensively modest Italian sedan.

TIME and the demands of economics have not dimmed the aura around the magic name of Lancia, particularly when it manifests itself in the most expensive current model. The Flaminia is the Rolls-Royce or Cadillac Eldorado Brougham of Italy, and perhaps of other countries as well. It is oddly like a high-class German car in many details, and others suggest that its designers had the American market very much in mind.

For those who enjoy browsing over ingenious solutions to engineering problems, there is nearly limitless opportunity here. But a car like this is for driving, and we felt impelled to take off on first acquaintance. Though it was scarcely broken in, the silky V-6 sent the tachometer needle spinning without protest. The 4-speed, fully synchronized transmission has a satisfactorily firm H-pattern column shift that was still stiff on the test car; particularly with the optional separate (and reclining) front seats, a floor lever would be preferable for us. Third and 2nd gears must be used frequently to get the most from the Flaminia in traffic, but the top speed in 3rd (67 miles per hour) means that it is not always useful for highway passing; the direct-drive 4th is quite adequate for high-speed maneuvering, however.

The ride is smooth and level at any speed up to top on all straight roads, and it was soon our joy to discover that the same situation prevails on curves and turns to a sensational degree. No sound or feeling of resistance comes from the suspension, the steering (hard at low speeds) or the Michelin X tires. There is no roll, and the engine seemingly wants to give more and more. As a result, there



The Flaminia gives an impression of size to other drivers, but not to its own. Well integrated as they are, the rear fins add to the impression of boxiness. Only a few of the car's amusing gadgets—among them the rear wipers—can be seen from outside. The antenna is vacuum operated.



Though chrome trim is heavy around the windshield and side windows, purely decorative pieces are absent.

is no warning whatsoever that the rear end will let go on either wet or dry pavement. Recovery is easy, and a check of how fast one was actually driving establishes the car's competence; but the passengers are taken by surprise, and the fun of exploring unknown roads may be diminished by some apprehension.

Brakes are large drums (inboard at rear) that require a firm foot but always respond as they did the last time. The hand brake extends horizontally under the dash, to the driver's left, and takes a real tug to set it on hills.

Lancia has departed from the exact form of the Aurelia's V-6 in designing the Flaminia's powerplant. It is still a 60° V-6 with pushrod-operated overhead valves, but both bore and stroke are different, giving better low-speed torque than its Gran Turismo sister. Our testing was done with premium fuel, but the low compression ratio (7.85:1) would make regular grade satisfactory. Everything beneath the hood is beautifully finished, and the compactness of the

engine has made possible the mounting of the covered 12-volt battery in front of the radiator, where the cool atmosphere should add to its life span. Extra oil, not needed during our testing, may be added through either valve cover. Front suspension is conventional, the sliding pillar type of Lancia tradition having been abandoned here.

As shown in the data on the next page, the car is actually heavier at the rear than at the front because of the mechanical components grouped there. The rear transmission, audible only when the European-type straight-cut reverse gear is used, is grouped in a unit with the inboard brakes, the gearbox and the clutch. A de Dion rear axle supports the semi-elliptic springs, which can be seen under the rear fender at times. This arrangement has resulted in a rather high trunk floor, but the lid is high too, so there is plenty of room. Loading is exceptionally easy because there is no high sill for styling purposes. The floor has a rubber mat, the vertical spare is covered, and the tool kit is complete.

The compact, willing-to-rev V-6 asks very little room.



PHOTOGRAPHY: POOLE



Dials combined with warning lights are the best yet.

A Cadillac owner looking for a change (and for a chance to drive again) will find the Flaminia richly stocked with thoughtful details. He will have to hunt for some of them, like the inset rubber pad on the inside edge of the exterior door handles. (He may be irritated, too, by the single exterior lock on the driver's side.) Once in, he will note the absence of floral fabrics and of ventilating panes in the front doors. A fine ventilating system allows driver and passenger to direct fresh air to their feet or faces; simple swinging deflectors at the base of the wrap-around windshield let the upper air stream defrost the glass or flow back toward the occupants.

A huge speedometer and tachometer can be read easily through the smallish wheel. The other instruments are small but easily read, and some of them incorporate warning lights with the conventional dials. The oil pressure gauge has one such combination, but in this case it is an annoyance: idling in traffic causes the light to flash on when the condition is not abnormal. The manual choke also turns on a red light, in Rover fashion; the choke button itself swings under the dash.

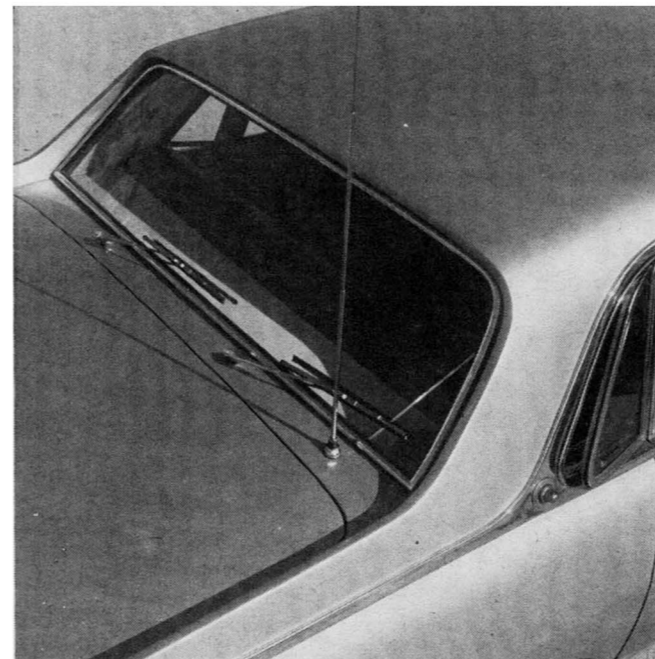
Lights are turned on with a pull-twist-pull knob, but may be dipped by pushing the direction signal lever in toward the dash, at right angles to its usual plane of motion. Handy on the highway, this also makes it possible (by clumsy use of the direction signal lever) to switch to parking lights unintentionally when city lights only are switched on.

The rather fussy arrangement of rear window wipers (two inside and two out, working in tandem) is set in motion with the aid of manifold vacuum. A pushbutton to the right of the steering column produces one complete swipe and parks them. As the handsome lip over the rear window can produce an effect similar to peering out through Victoria Falls, they will be appreciated. In a freak situation—the car was facing sharply downhill in an all-night storm—a lake formed on the front floor.

Three other buttons on the left side of the column open the rear-quarter vents separately, and theoretically close them together; on the test car an undignified push from the outside was necessary to close the right one.

We can't help in accomplishing it, but if every owner of an expensive U.S. sedan could drive a Flaminia for a day, there would be some changes made . . .

Dash buttons open the vents with manifold vacuum.



ROAD & TRACK ROAD TEST 203



LANCIA FLAMINIA

SPECIFICATIONS		PERFORMANCE	
List price	\$5998	Top speed (4th), mph	100
Curb weight	3460	best timed run	102
Test weight	3770	3rd (5200)	67
distribution, %	48/52	2nd (5200)	46
Dimensions, length	191	1st (5250)	31
width	68.9		
height	57.5		
Wheelbase	113		
Tread, f and r	53.8/53.9		
Tire size	165-400		
Brake lining area	273.6		
Steering, turns	4.2		
turning circle	40		
Engine type	V-6, ohv		
Bore & stroke	3.15 x 3.21		
Displacement, cu in.	149.9		
cc	2458		
Compression ratio	7.85		
Bhp @ rpm	112 @ 4800		
equivalent mph	93.6		
Torque, lb-ft	142 @ 3000		
equivalent mph	58.5		
		FUEL CONSUMPTION	
		Normal range, mpg	16.21
		ACCELERATION	
		0-30 mph, sec	4.7
		0-40 mph	7.7
		0-50 mph	11.7
		0-60 mph	15.5
		0-70 mph	22.0
		0-80 mph	30.2
		0-90 mph	41.8
		0-100 mph	55.1
		Standing 1/4 mile	20.0
		speed at end, mph	68
		GEAR RATIOS	
		O/d (n.a.), overall	4th, lb/ton @ mph
		4th (1.00)	175 @ 55
		3rd (1.51)	275 @ 45
		2nd (2.20)	380 @ 37
		1st (3.31)	500 @ 25
			Total drag at 60 mph, lb
			151
		CALCULATED DATA	
		Lb/hp (test wt)	33.7
		Cu ft/ton mile	71.0
		Mph/1000 rpm (4th)	19.5
		Engine revs/mile	3080
		Piston travel, ft/mile	1650
		Rpm @ 2500 ft/min	4675
		equivalent mph	91.1
		R&T wear index	50.9
		SPEEDOMETER ERROR	
		30 mph	actual 28.5
		40 mph	37.5
		50 mph	47.0
		60 mph	57.1
		70 mph	67.6
		80 mph	78.2
		90 mph	88.5
		100 mph	99.0

