

Founded by Vincenzo Lancia in 1906, Lancia was largely unknown until 1922 when it introduced the *Lambda*, a car so ahead of its time that Lancia was soon world famous.

Lancia (pronounced *Larn-chuh*), was also a pioneer in aerodynamics in the 1930s. The revolutionary *Aprilia* was the result.

After World War II Lancia tried to regain its former glory but, overstretched and facing bankruptcy, was taken over by a group of businessmen.

Lancia still couldn't hack it and was taken over by Fiat in 1969.

The worst indignities were yet to come. In the mid-1960s, the Russian



government had permission from Fiat to build obsolete Fiat models under licence. These became the infamous *Ladas*. As part of the deal the Russians paid in steel, which was used in Fiat company cars. The steel was of appalling quality and as a result all Fiat-group

cars developed a reputation as rustbuckets that persists to this day.

Lancia was the biggest casualty. After stories started breaking of Lancias rusting even before they were sold, the brand was irreparably damaged.

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LANCIA

Official name: Lancia Automobiles S.p.A.

Owned by: Fiat Group.

Current situation: Lancia never really recovered from the scandal of rusty vehicles in the 1970s. Lancia remains in operation mainly because Fiat has never got around to closing it down, but Lancias these days are simply Fiats with different badges, which is a pretty sad end for such a famous marque.

Chances of survival: Poor. If things get tough for Fiat, it is likely that Lancia will be simply closed down. Selling the brand to another car company is unlikely, as it would cause great loss of face for Fiat, and very little gain •

