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AND SPORTSCAR

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**SPIDER!**  
ALFA ROMEO'S  
TEMPTRESS  
PROFILED



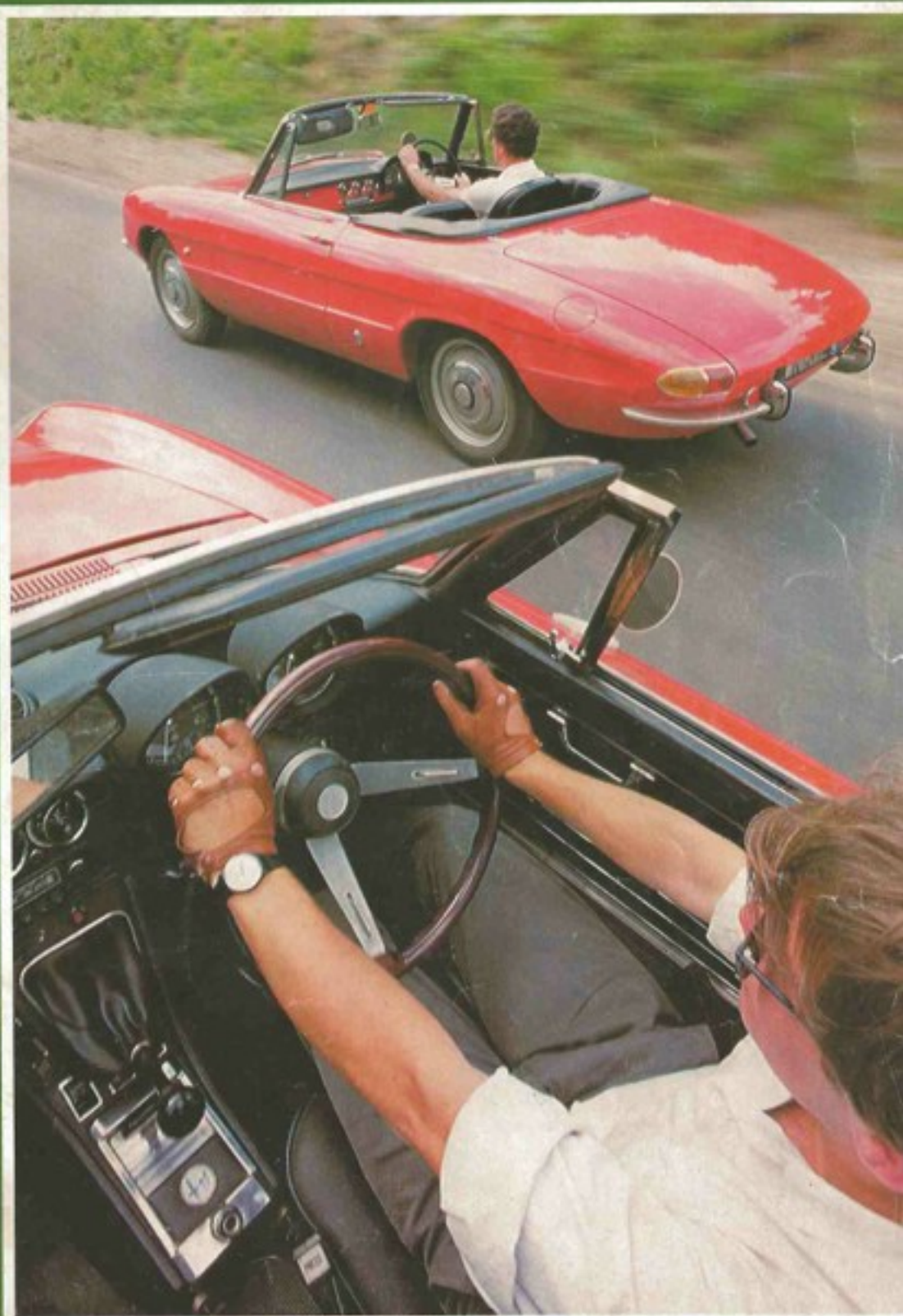
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# PROFILE

Alfa Romeo Spider



The baby of the Alfa Romeo Spider family is the 1300 Junior, introduced to take advantage of Italian road tax brackets in 1968 — they're common in Italy but rare here

## HEART-THROB OR HEADACHE?

The Alfa Romeo Spider is fast becoming one of the most collectable of mass-produced sports cars built during the sixties and seventies. The ingredients for this Italian temptress were near perfect, and when cast by Hollywood for 'The Graduate', "the little red Wop job with the awkward foreign shift" found worldwide appeal, and consequent romantic nostalgia every time the movie is repeated. No matter how disinterested a pretty girl may be in cars, she can always remember that Dustin Hoffman drove an Alfa Romeo Spider to the dulcet tunes of Simon and Garfunkel.

The model's specification was unbeatable: a lusty, beautifully responsive, all-alloy twin-cam engine, allied to a finely balanced chassis with first class handling, both exciting and refined. Sensitive steering and terrific brakes, amalgamated with sculptured, distinctive Italian styling, completed the package. Many dismissed the styling as awkward and contrived, but no-one could ignore it! From certain viewpoints the shape is ugly, particularly front three-quarters, and direct side with the hood raised, but bathed in the late evening sun its vision from a high balcony is irresistible. It is not surprising that motoring cognoscenti rank their hours behind the wheel of an open Alfa Romeo as among their best memories, and certainly the description "the poor man's Ferrari" is an unparalleled compliment.

But like the finest Italian wines, the Spider can induce a sickening headache. Its seductive bodywork is easily infected by rust, the consequence of Alfa Romeo's poor drainage design and almost total lack of internal protection from corrosive elements.

**Overflowing with charisma but susceptible to rust, the Alfa Romeo Spider presents the potential buyer with a dilemma. Mike Walsh relates the model's production history and attempts to unravel the problems for those captivated by the Spider's charms**

To terminate this problem is timely and expensive, so rational thinking — difficult with a 'spider affair' — is essential.

It all began back in 1963, when the beautiful Giulietta Spider was 10 years old. As its saloon and GT counterparts had been successfully restyled by Bertone, the task of creating the new Spider fell to Pininfarina. This was in fact to be Battista Pininfarina's last complete design.

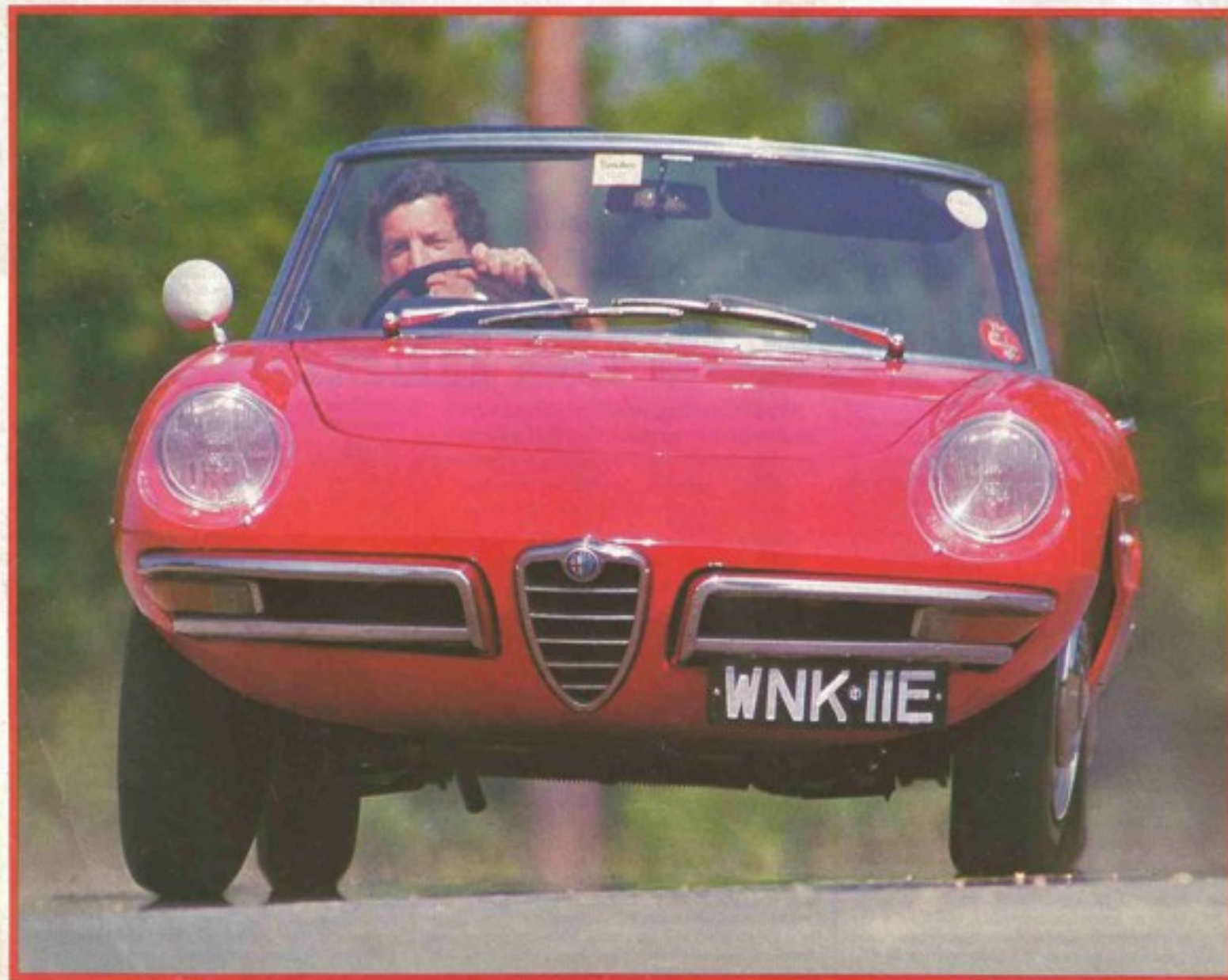
The car appeared at the Geneva Motor Show in 1966 to a very mixed reception — its rounded front and rear body shape and the deep channelled scallop running along the sides were certainly distinctive. Its styling had clear origins with two show car prototypes. One, the Super Flow I, was based on a 6C 3000CM sports racer and built in 1956, and has the beginnings of the Duetto's unique shape, particularly the front overhang for stability at high speed. The other, the most obvious ancestor of the new car, appeared in 1962 — it was a two-seater coupé based on the Giulietta chassis. This dream car had retractable headlights and an

ingenious opening hardtop for easy access. The shark-like frontal shape with its traditional shield pattern Alfa grille, scalloped side moulding, and the near identical tail design would clearly indicate this was the prototype for the new Spider, although the car appeared on the Pininfarina rather than the Alfa stand.

The new 1600 Spider was eventually launched in 1966, the styling as different from the old Giuliettas as ravioli from antipasto. Its bullet-like appearance provoked dismissive reactions from the motoring press. One writer said it was 'a contrived design with meaningless styling gimmicks', another felt Farina had 'missed the ball this time', while Bill Boddy described the Spider as 'compact and rather ugly'. Many others concluded that it was one of those designs which you grow to love, and that viewed from above it was quite beautiful. The most devout *Alfisti* refused to accept the fifties Giulietta could be improved.

Mechanically, the Spider had perfect ingredients. The all-alloy twin-cam jewel, first launched in 1954 for the first Giulietta, was the master work of Dr Orazio Satta Puliga, whose argument for hemispherical combustion chambers, with the plug in the centre, lasted till the seventies, providing the most efficient combustion with quick input and extraction of gases through large valves. Alfa had learned the art of precision aluminium casting from their extensive aero engine practice during the war, and even the first 1900, a sober mass-market saloon, was blessed with an alloy head and block. The Spider's twin overhead camshafts were chain driven and operated the valves









Super Flow I, based on a 1956 6C 3000CM sports racer, shows hints of the Duetto shape

Super Fast III, regarded by some as the prototype Duetto, was seen in '62 at the Turin Show

through inverted cup tappets. Two twin choke Weber carburetors and larger inlet valves raised the power to 109bhp at 6000rpm, producing a top speed of 115mph. The changes to the 105 series chassis were the adoption of disc brakes on all four wheels, and a new front suspension with a slightly wider track derived from the competition Tubolare GTZs and the conversion to recirculating ball steering.

The metal dashboard was painted to match the bodywork; and a separate binacle sitting behind the steering wheel housed a large, boldly marked tachometer and speedometer. The remaining dials — for fuel, water temperature and oil pressure — were angled with stylish chrome surrounds to face the driver, arranged in a row on the main dash. There were no carpets, just distinctive rubber mats emblazoned with the Alfa badge, a far better and more practical idea for an open sports car.

### Driver's delight

The standard five-speed gearbox — rare on a mass-produced car — was a driver's delight with, said *Autocar*, 'unbeatable synchromesh, making changes light and precise, like a hot knife through butter'.

The driving position was suited to Italian ape proportions, so a long-legged owner found the lack of leg-room meant his kneecaps were higher than his elbows. The seats were well contoured and very comfortable, while the minor controls were located on fingertip stalks, and the washers and wipers were operated by an ingenious foot button. The heater was equally simple, with a pair of sliding controls mounted below the centre of the dash and effective air vents at each end of it. The boot had no external handle, but a locking catch mounted internally alongside the passenger seat.

The hood was a masterpiece, raising requiring a one arm action from the driver's seat, anchorage being simply by a pair of overhead clips mounted on the windscreen. That it can be carried out at traffic lights was perfectly demonstrated by Dustin Hoffman on his first date with the gorgeous Katharine Ross in 'The Graduate'. An optional hard-top was available, but to some the straight line design rather conflicted with the curvaceous body styling. Its price on introduction was £70, at the time a very expensive extra and consequently a rare fitting much desired by today's enthusiasts.

To decide a name for the new model, Alfa Romeo held a worldwide competition, with the newly christened Spider as the grand prize. Over 140,000 suggestions flooded in, many following the theme of a girl's name to replace the dearly departed Giulia, but Lucia, Patricia, Lollobrigida and Bardot didn't suit the car's character. The factory's nickname, in fact, was 'cuttlefish', and the model's fish-like shape suggested Piranha and Sole. Other names included animals with connotations of speed, like Leopard, Panther and Wolf, while winds like Ghibli and Monsoon anticipated future Maserati policy. Other suggestions were far more bizarre, including Acapulco, Nuvolari, Shakespeare, Stalin, Al Capone, Pizza, Sputnik, Costa Smeralda, Edelweiss, Zeus, Gin, Riffi, Strip, Goal, Surf and even Hitler! The judges



Dr Orazio Satta Puliga's twin-cam engine in 1750cc guise



Painted metal dashboard appears on all pre-1970 cars

finally chose the inoffensive and logical Duetto, because it symbolised the twin-cam engine and two seater image. Guidobaldi Trionfi from Brescia became one of the car's lucky first owners.

After the initial criticisms of the Duetto's styling, the press were eulogistic about the Alfa's handling, performance and exceptional refinement. John Bolster in *Autosport*: 'It would be tempting to be nostalgic about the hairy-chested motoring of the past, but the Duetto's comfort and ease of handling has not been bought at the expense of performance. The new Spider has almost identical acceleration figures to a really good supercharged pre-war 2.3 8C, but it is 10 mph faster owing to its cleaner aerodynamic form, and the fuel consumption at similar speeds is just about half that of its ancestor.' *Autocar* were more direct in their conclusions: '... fast with fun... the performance is good, the roadholding excellent, and the handling superb.' They happily concluded that 'it cornered splendidly, helped no doubt by its shorter wheelbase, lighter weight, and low centre of gravity.

It felt much more stable than the GTV, and we were able to throw it about with spirit after only a minute's driving.' *Road & Track* reacted similarly: 'If no one of the staff was wild about the Duetto's appearance, exactly the opposite was true about driving the car. Everybody loved it... The steering is excellent, light, accurate, and one of the best we've ever encountered in any car.'

The Duetto did present a problem in wet and icy conditions, for a distinct lack of weight over the rear wheels creates very tail happy characteristics. David Owen, author and long-time Alfa Romeo aficionado, found that when pushed hard the Duetto plunges into strong understeer, requiring lots of arm action to hold a precise line. It is generally acknowledged that the long wheelbase Berlina models had the most stable roadholding.

With a price tag of over £2000 — almost identical to the Jaguar E-type roadster — the Duetto lived up to Alfa's expectations, and in just one year 6325 cars were sold, an improvement on the most successful year of the Giulia Spider.

### Power increase

In 1968 the 1590cc engine was bored out fractionally and its stroke lengthened to increase capacity to 1779cc, giving rise to the 1750 designation with its glorious association with the Jano designed sports cars of the twenties. After all the effort to choose a name for the Duetto, that name passed into history books and the more powerful (now 118bhp and a top speed of 118mph) variant was logically called the 1750 Spider. This to many *Alfisti* is the sportiest of Spider power units, with superior flexibility through the revs due to a wider torque band. There were also other improvements including a brake servo, an alternator in place of a dynamo, and wider section, smaller diameter wheels on 165-14 tyres. The front suspension geometry was revised to give a higher roll centre and the rear was given slightly softer springs, redesigned transverse links, and an anti-roll bar. The debut of the revised model came at the Brussels Show in the spring of 1968. The European spec models continued with trusty Weber carburetors, but emission control cars for the American market were fitted with Spica fuel injection.

Due to a hefty premium in road tax relative to engine capacity, Alfa also introduced a 1290cc Giulietta version of the Spider, delivering about 89bhp and a very respectable 110mph. With a price tag nearly three quarters of the bigger car, it became a very attractive proposition on the home market, especially as it offered better fuel economy.

The most dramatic change to the Spider came in 1970 when the Duetto shape was given drastic styling surgery. The pretty round tail was chopped off to create the new 'Kamm' tail. This again was the work of Pininfarina. Boot length was reduced by 6ins, but the shape proved less vulnerable. It still remains a personal preference today as to which is the prettier looking car!

The dashboard also received a long-awaited facelift in 1970. The two main instruments were set in distinctive separate cowls much like the Detroit



# ALFA ROMEO SPARES - FROM THE ITALIAN CONNECTION

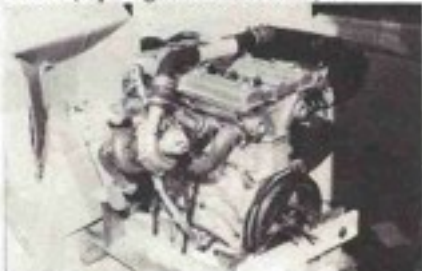
"If a man can write a better book, preach a better sermon, make a better mousetrap, OR SELL ALFA ROMEO SPARES CHEAPER than his neighbour, though he build his house in the woods, the world will make a beaten track to his door" (Apologies to Emerson).



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ALFETTA GTV OWNERS - this photograph may not be aesthetically brilliant but shows a set of parts destined for a crash damaged GTV in Scotland, similar kits are often set overseas. If you have damaged your car don't be frightened by high spares quotes, give us a ring.



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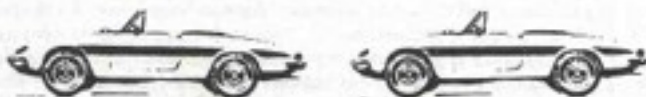


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dream cars, while the rest of the switches and instruments were repositioned on a central console. The whole dashboard was finished in a padded vinyl, and head rests were fitted as standard. The effect was altogether a more luxurious package, while external changes included recessed door handles and alterations to sidelight arrangement at the front and rear. The press were still not convinced, and, with the basic design only four years old, *Road & Track* felt the body already aesthetically outmoded: 'The Spider Veloce is a refined, rewarding sports car. The body is dated, and the ergonomics are outdated. The next Spider should keep all the mechanical components and put them in a better package.'

### Larger engine

In June 1971 Alfa revealed the 2000 Spider Veloce — almost nothing had changed except the increase in engine size. The bores were widened from 80mm to 84mm, taking capacity to 1962cc. With 132bhp at 5500rpm as its power peak, the Spider still had a top speed of 118mph, and acceleration to 60mph in 8.8secs. As wheelspin had been easily provoked on the early Spiders, particularly under hard cornering, for the extra power of the 2000 a limited slip differential was fitted, giving extra stability and refinement to the handling.

The Spider continued in production throughout the seventies alongside the new Alfetta and Giulietta, sharing only the eternal twin-cam engine. There were continual rumours of its demise, but what could possibly replace it? Alfa showed little interest in Pininfarina's 1974 design, a stylish coupé with targa top based on the 1.8-litre Alfetta chassis.

But the Spider soldiered on, overcoming the ever more stringent American emission controls, eventually dropping out of the lucrative Californian market between 1975-6. By 1977 the manufacture of a special version to meet even British type approval became uneconomic for Alfa and, sadly, the right-hand drive 2000 Spider was taken out of production, with the last car sold here as late as 1978.

Even in its later life the overall verdict on the Spider's addictive charm remained the same, particularly from *Road & Track*: 'For the Alfisti, and we are unashamed devotees, the magic of the Spider is the way it makes you feel when you're driving it... With the easy-to-operate convertible top in the down position, and the wind ruffling your hair, it's easy to look upon other drivers in other cars with smug disdain, and recall the words of Dante's *Inferno*, "These unfortunates, who never were alive".'



### SPECIFICATION: ALFA ROMEO 2000 SPIDER

<b>Engine</b>	In-line 'four'
<b>Capacity</b>	1962cc
<b>Bore/stroke</b>	84mm x 88.5mm
<b>Valves</b>	Twin ohc
<b>Compression</b>	9.5:1
<b>Power</b>	132bhp (DIN) @ 5500rpm
<b>Torque</b>	132lb ft @ 3500rpm
<b>Transmission</b>	Five speed
<b>Final drive</b>	4.1:1
<b>Brakes</b>	Discs with dual servo
<b>Suspension, front</b>	Ind. by double wishbones, coil spring, telescopic dampers, and anti-roll bar
<b>Suspension, rear</b>	Live axle, trailing arms, coil spring, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar
<b>Steering</b>	Recirculating ball
<b>Body</b>	Monocoque, all steel
<b>Tyres</b>	165-14

#### DIMENSIONS

<b>Length</b>	13ft 6.2ins
<b>Width</b>	5ft 4.2ins
<b>Height</b>	4ft 2.8ins
<b>Wheelbase</b>	7ft 4.6ins
<b>Kerb weight</b>	20cwt

#### PERFORMANCE

<b>Max speed</b>	118mph
<b>0-60mph</b>	8.8secs
<b>Standing ¼ mile</b>	17.1secs
<b>Fuel consumption</b>	24.8mpg

#### PRODUCTION

<b>Years built</b>	1970 to date
<b>Numbers built</b>	21,993 (thru 1977)
<b>Price when new</b>	£3848 (1976)

Like nonconformist Dustin Hoffman on his way to save the luscious Katharine from a fateful marriage, the Spider never seems to give up. Production continues at Arese and in Pininfarina's body workshops in Turin, while in Britain Alfa agents Bell & Colvill are converting the latest federalised version with its heavy bumper styling to right-hand drive, and even at a cool £10,000 it continues to find a market. As Clive Richardson concluded in *Motor Sport* in 1977: 'Although not reflected in its bodywork quality, but worth it for style, and the sheer enjoyment it adds to everyday life, this is a collector's piece still available new off the shelf.'

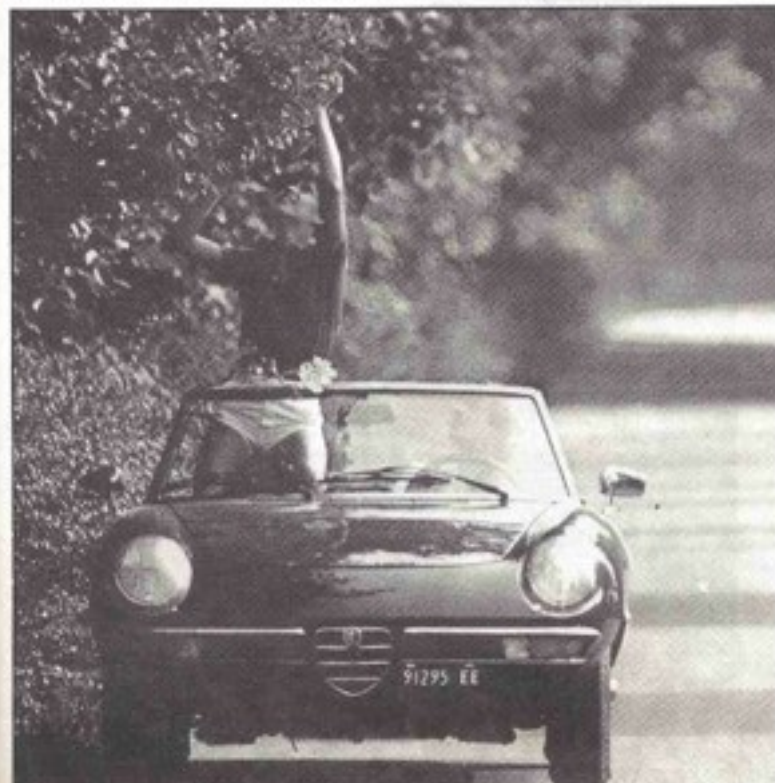
### PRODUCTION FIGURES

Duetto 1600 (1966-8)	62324
Duetto 1600 (1977-81)	1699
1750 Spider Veloce (1967-72)	4320
1300 Spider Junior (1968-78)	4787
2000 Spider Veloce (1971-81)	39143

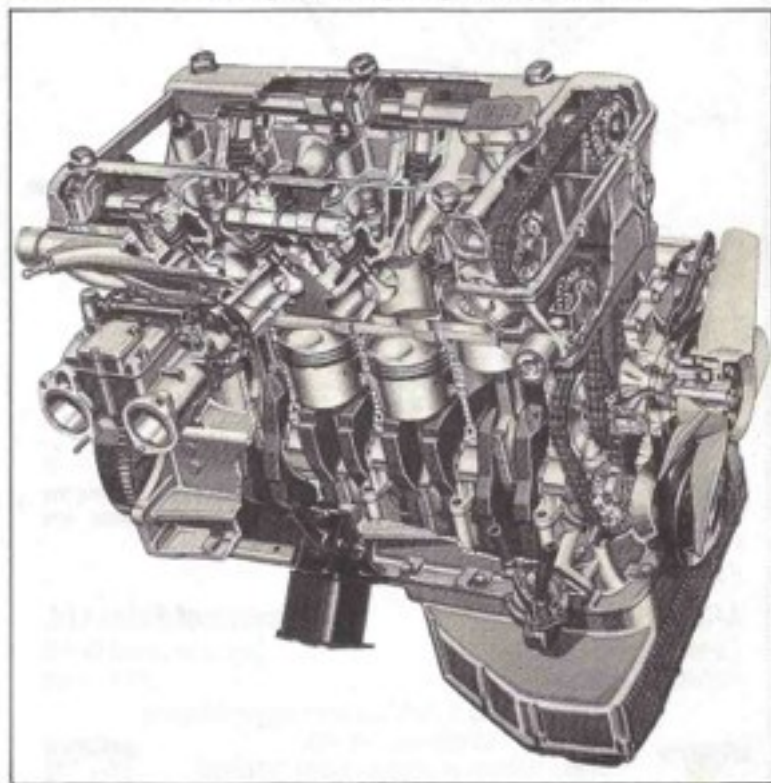
### Buyer's spot check

Any aspiring Spider owner can be seduced too easily by the model's charm, and therefore blinded to the pitfalls of owning a badly corroded and abused example. It is well known that the Spider is one of the easiest sports cars to sell, and as a consequence even the saddest examples can be cosmetically dressed to make a sizeable profit.

The body of any classic Alfa is the priority area for a prospective purchaser. It is not the quality of the steel that is at fault, but internal design of the monocoque. With any convertible, water drainage is an important consideration, and this is the route to the more obvious corrosion of the Spider's seductive curves. The tell-tale areas are the base of the front sill, and the lower half of the rear wing, in front of the wheel arch. The latter area can be particularly bad, and is caused by a blocked drainage pipe which runs from the hood scuttle to an outlet in the chassis. These areas are often patched, disguising the body's real state.



Alfa Romeo's publicity hit the right note: they thought their Spider the pick of the crop



Cutaway shows the neatness of this classic twin-cam design, seen in the Giulietta 30 years ago



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It may only look like superficial rust bubbling (left), but it could mean that the inner section is badly corroded (above left). This is due to a lack of internal body protection and blocked drainage pipes. Peeling back the mats at the door base can reveal a rotten inner sill wall (above right). Also check for rusted seat runners, which can indicate a rotting floor (right). All of this corrosion means a lot of welding and cutting work, which is expensive and time-consuming.

Other vulnerable areas are the peak of the wheel arches, where any sign of corrosion is an indication that the inner arch is in a worse state. The front jacking points are other weak areas, while it is not unknown for a plate to be pop-riveted along the outer chassis member to disguise the condition of the inner sill section. A quick check can be made by running your hands behind the sill section under the chassis. Any plating that obstructs this check is very bad news financially.

An inherent problem with Spider bodywork is the total lack of internal protection, so any outward corrosion, particularly marks on the upper wings (which may look superficial), is more likely to be indicative of a rotting core.

Many crucial areas can be checked from the passenger compartment. By peeling back the rubber mats, the inner sill wall can be examined, and also the base of the footwell for a rotting floorpan. The seat runners can also rust badly along the weld seam. The metal shelf under the back seat is not usually a problem, but is a good pointer to the state of the drainage pipes if it's filled with water.

The boot floor, in particular any rusting around the spare wheel well and the fuel tank, is indicative of the overall condition of the body. Carefully check the tops of the wings for sunken paintwork, another ominous sign. The spacing between the nose section and the decorative chrome bumper is a key to accident damage, while — it may seem obvious! — check that panel fitting is flush and equal. Don't worry if the magnet test detects filler at the extremities of the Spider's vulnerable shape, as the Alfa's bumpers offer very little protection against careless drivers.

A careful survey of all the chrome work, badging (in particular the enamelled Pininfarina emblems), and trim can save considerable outlay during ownership, as many of the parts are now obsolete and consequently very expensive. The condition of brightwork and rubber matting is a good guide to the mileage claims of the vehicle.

It is generally accepted that the long tail body shape is far more vulnerable to rear end decay due to the complexity of the skin structure, which has a surplus of water traps. Rear wings for these earlier cars are now totally obsolete, and consequently restoration work is very time intensive, and expensive. Perspex headlamp cowls are now obsolete parts too, basically because they are illegal in Europe, so any that are missing are very expensive to replace.

The hood is one of the finest designs around but, due to the ease of action, probably gets considerable use. Do not worry unduly at faded coloration of the canvas, but do check for worn covers on the hood frame where it rubs with bodywork. Quality hood replacements are readily available from T.A. and J.M. Coburn of Swindon, but fitting can be expensive, particularly on the Kamm tail. It is best left to the experienced.

Mechanically the Spyder is far less of a problem if it has been treated with care and properly serviced throughout its life. So few Alfa owners remember the golden rule of warming up the engine before driving off — it is essential for any alloy block, but also in this case helps second gear engagement.

The twin-cam engine is the jewel at the heart of the Spider but, like any sports car motor, tends to lead a

hard life. The most common problem is a blown head gasket; the rubber 'O' rings underneath the camshaft bearings are a weak point, and the tell-tale signs are three trails of oil down the side of the block from the head, or more obviously oil traces in the header bottle on the water circuit. Oil traces in the air cleaner from the breather pipe are indicative of the engine's wear. When the unit is warm oil pressure should not fall below the half way mark (4kg/sq cm) at speed, but at idling do not worry if the needle drops. The 2000 is reckoned to be the stronger engine, producing much more low down torque, but is flatter than the smoother and more willing 1750 unit. It is worth noting that engines in a pretty poor condition still produce competitive performance, so don't be deceived. The engine mounts, particularly on the exhaust side, give way to engine stress, and although not serious could leave you stranded when they collapse. A quick check can be made by rocking the cam covers.

The cast aluminium block, incorporating intricate waterways, is very susceptible to frost damage, and a split water jacket can easily be disguised by modern sealing compounds, traces of which can often be detected in the thermostat housing.

Clutches can have a very short life, although heavy duty assemblies are now a common replacement. The gearbox is a sturdy unit, but synchromesh is weak on second gear. Always check gear selection when the oil is warm. Another frequent problem is a tendency to jump out of reverse gear, but it can easily be cured if caught at an early stage. If left, it will eventually damage selector cones. The differential is a rugged design, and always a little 'clonky' under acceleration. A higher pitched knock could indicate worn u/j's.

The bottom steering ball joints can cause MoT failure, and steering play often reveals worn bushes. In general, though, the worm and roller system is trouble free, but pulling to left or right is a good indication of accident damage. If this is the case, a quick survey of tyre wear should confirm the suspicion. Generally the front suspension is fail safe, although squeaking under pressure could mean sagging coil springs or that the wishbone bushes need replacing. The roll bar mountings are very exposed and can deteriorate badly when the rust bug attacks.

The problems with the rear suspension are not serious, but sagging springs and tired shock absorbers are a familiar sight even on low mileage Spiders. E.B. Spares recommend a heavy duty set, 20 per cent uprated with a thicker coil, matched to Corte and Cosso Autodelta shock absorbers, to give a longer service. This does not jack up the tail as many suspect. An easy cure for rear end steer is a trailing arm bush



Bumpers offer little protection against parking nudges

set, which transforms the handling. Another check of the genuine mileage of any Spider are the rubber bump stops on the rear suspension, which when worn will produce a metallic clonk over bad road surfaces.

In the braking department, it is worth checking fluid levels for signs of a leaking servo, while the master cylinders have a remarkably short life of three to four years, rapidly wearing down the bores. It is always recommended removing road wheels to check the condition of the brake discs, because lazy maintenance of worn pads can score badly, and then require complete replacement of discs.

Exhaust systems are not cheap, but the three part design has the advantage of single section replacement, in particular the back box which often has to be renewed annually. A stainless steel system is a bonus, but not an Alfa Romeo standard part, and often prone to cracking.

It is a myth that Alfa Romeos are fragile, but like any high quality product they will suffer at the hands of unsympathetic owners, and the Spider's recent vogue has encouraged many such drivers. To any inexperienced buyers we cannot recommend highly enough the value of a specialist check, a service most will only too willingly provide if advance notice is given.

## Rivals when new

The price was certainly one of the most exclusive aspects of this open Alfa Romeo. The first Duetto, just £100 short of the E-type's tag with absolutely no hope of matching such a sensational performance package, found a small market for the man who desired something more exotic that matched his sharp Italian loafers, his tailored sharkskin suit, and Chelsea penthouse.

The Lotus Elan offered superior performance, but was altogether too primitive and unreliable to match the Spider's qualities in the late sixties. By the mid-seventies the open air sports car was becoming a rarer breed, and the nearest competition came from the new Jensen Healey, but somehow the model's bland styling never matched the charisma of the new 2000 Spider. The infamous Lotus twin-cam engine may have been quicker but its disastrous reliability put the model out of contention.

Even today with its rather compromised, federalised styling, and nearly 20 years after the Duetto's launch, the Spider offers a serious match to the chopped top GTI trend, and along with its Pininfarina sister, the immortal Fiat 124 Spider, still continues to satisfy.

1966	Price	Speed	0-60mph
Alfa Romeo Duetto 1600	£1895	113	11.3secs
Jaguar E Type 3.8	£1967	153	7.2secs
Austin-Healey 3000 MkIII	£1126	121	9.8secs
Triumph TR4A	£985	109	11.4secs
1969			
Alfa Romeo 1750 Spider	£2200	118	9.2secs
Jaguar E-type 4.2	£2294	140	7.4secs
Morgan Plus 8	£1510	124	6.7secs
Lotus Elan	£1797	120	7.8secs
MG C	£1226	120	10.0secs
1974			
Alfa Romeo 2000 Spider	£2999	118	8.8secs
Jensen Healey	£2420	119	7.8secs
Triumph TR6	£1949	115	9.5secs





The nightmare of any Spider owner: this low-mileage car needed complete wing replacement

### Clubs, specialists & books

A survey of type representation at the Alfa Romeo Owners Club national day at Stanford Hall would confirm the Spider is undoubtedly one of the club's most popular cars. Over 60 examples varying from very early 1600 Duettos to the latest federalised conversion to right-hand drive were present. The AROC, in fact, has no such Spider register, but encompasses the model under the Giulia 105 Series group, a mistake to my mind as the problems of running a Spider are significantly different from its saloon counterparts. However, the AROC is a well established club of *Alfisti* with membership now bordering 2000, and produces a very professional publication every month, even if it is a little biased to the club's extensive competition programme. The area sections produce a widespread social calendar, while for the more performance orientated member regular practice and sprint days are keenly contested at Goodwood and Castle Combe. No-one has yet been brave enough to compete with a Spider in the Club's national race championship.

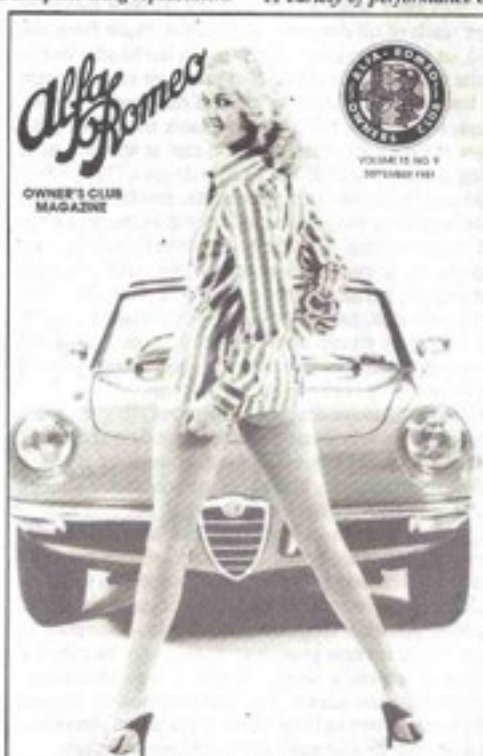
Spiderman, Alan Bennett, is probably the most respected specialist and is based at Benalfa Cars, 5 Washington Road, West Wilts Trading Estate, Wiltshire (tel: 0373 864333). He will undertake both mechanical and body rebuilds. E.B. Spares is another very good reason for going west, and is located opposite Benalfa at 2 Washington Road, West Wilts Trading Estate, Westbury, Wilts (tel: 0373 823856), and it is always worth giving Dave Edgington a ring to confirm the unbeatable and friendly service they offer.

Other respected specialists include Brookside Garage, 55 High Street, Wrestlingworth, Sandy, Beds (tel: 076 723 217); J & R Goodchild Engineering, 2 Garrick Crescent, Parkhill Road, Croydon (tel: 01-680 2120); Peter Hilliard & Son, 41 High Street, Penge, London, SE20 (tel: 01-778 5755); John Clifton, AROC scrutineer, is also a wizard with Alfa mechanicals, and is based at Horsham Road, Forest Green, Dorking, Surrey (tel: 03067 0340); Alfaparts, 10-12 New Road, Watford, Herts (tel: Watford 52017); Hexagon of Highgate Road, London NW5 (tel: 01-267 6762); C.P. Motors, 2 Hermit Place, rear of 246 Belsize Road, London NW6 (tel: 01-625 6938); Richard Banks, Commerce House, Wickhambrook, near Newmarket, Suffolk (tel: 0440 828291) and Alfaman, rear of 60 Greenford Road, Greenford, Middlesex (tel: 01-578 1633) all offer a variety of services to the Spider owner from specialist tuning to total rebuilds.

For spares, Alfacentre of Turgis Green, Basingstoke, Hants (tel: 0256 882831) are friendly and competitive, while for hoods, seats, retrim or simple repairs you need look no further than T A & J M Coburn, Motor Upholsterers, Widhill House, Blunsdon, Swindon, Wilts (tel: 0793 721501). Stuart Metricks, Downton Body Works, Lymington, Milford-on-Sea (tel: Milford-on-sea 43326), who restored the immaculate Duetto on our colour page, and Stuart Rees, Market Garage, Southall, Market, Southall (tel: 01-843 9967) are highly recommended for Spider body renovation.



A variety of performance extras: Melba alloy rims, high-lift camshaft, stiffer dampers etc



Cheeky cover for AROC magazine . . .



Concours Spiders at AROC Stanford Hall National Day

David Owen has had a life-long passion for Alfa Romeos, in particular his 1967 Duetto, so his book *Alfa Romeo Spiders*, published by Osprey at £6.95, offers a very personal and highly entertaining history of the model. The book includes a good selection of contemporary colour and a chapter on living with a Spider, but—like this profile!—could be regarded as a little biased by the more dispassionate readers. To put the Spider in a broader historical context, David Owen's *Alfissimo* and Luigi Fusi's *Alfa Romeo: Tutte le Vetture dal 1910*, are essential reading, both being complete Alfa histories.

Brooklands Books' invaluable *Alfa Romeo Spider 1966-1981* includes reprints of almost every significant road test of the model.

### SPARES PRICE GUIDE

(VAT not included)

Complete clutch	£45.80
Pistons and liners	£82.00
Exhaust	£59.00
Brake pads	£10.10
Frontwings	£89.00
Rearwings	£98.00
Sills	£22.50
Hood	£95.00
Water pump	£16.50
Brakes (Dual master cylinder)	£57.50
(Single master cylinder)	£26.50

NB: These prices are based on current EB spares stock listing and are meant simply as a guide to the average running costs of a Spider.

### Prices

Surveying Alfa Spider prices over the past year indicates clearly that the most expensive examples are late seventies cars with low mileages. Several immaculate examples with mileages under 20,000 have recently been advertised at over £6000. But with the latest federalised Spider now available from Bell & Colvill at approximately £10,000, these could be judged to be competitively priced.

However, a cherished mid-seventies car is generally marketed at nearer the £4000 mark, along with pristine Duettos, certainly the fastest appreciating examples of the model. At a recent Christie's auction an extensively restored 1972 Kamm tail 2000 with 40,000 miles recorded realised £4500 from a very disinterested floor.

The most precarious market area is between £2000-£3500, where a great deal of care should be taken. The buyer should always balance the future work required, particularly if the bodywork needs attention, against the asking price.

It is essential for an inexperienced buyer to have the car checked by an Alfa Romeo specialist. This service is only too willingly provided if some notice is given. The cost of such a survey will be an investment compared with the pitfalls of buying a cosmetically 'restored' example, and — be warned — there is no shortage of this type of Spider . . .

MoT failures and crashed examples are generally over-priced considering the complexity and expense of restoration to a worthwhile state.