

BEST BUY:

Alfa Romeo GTV

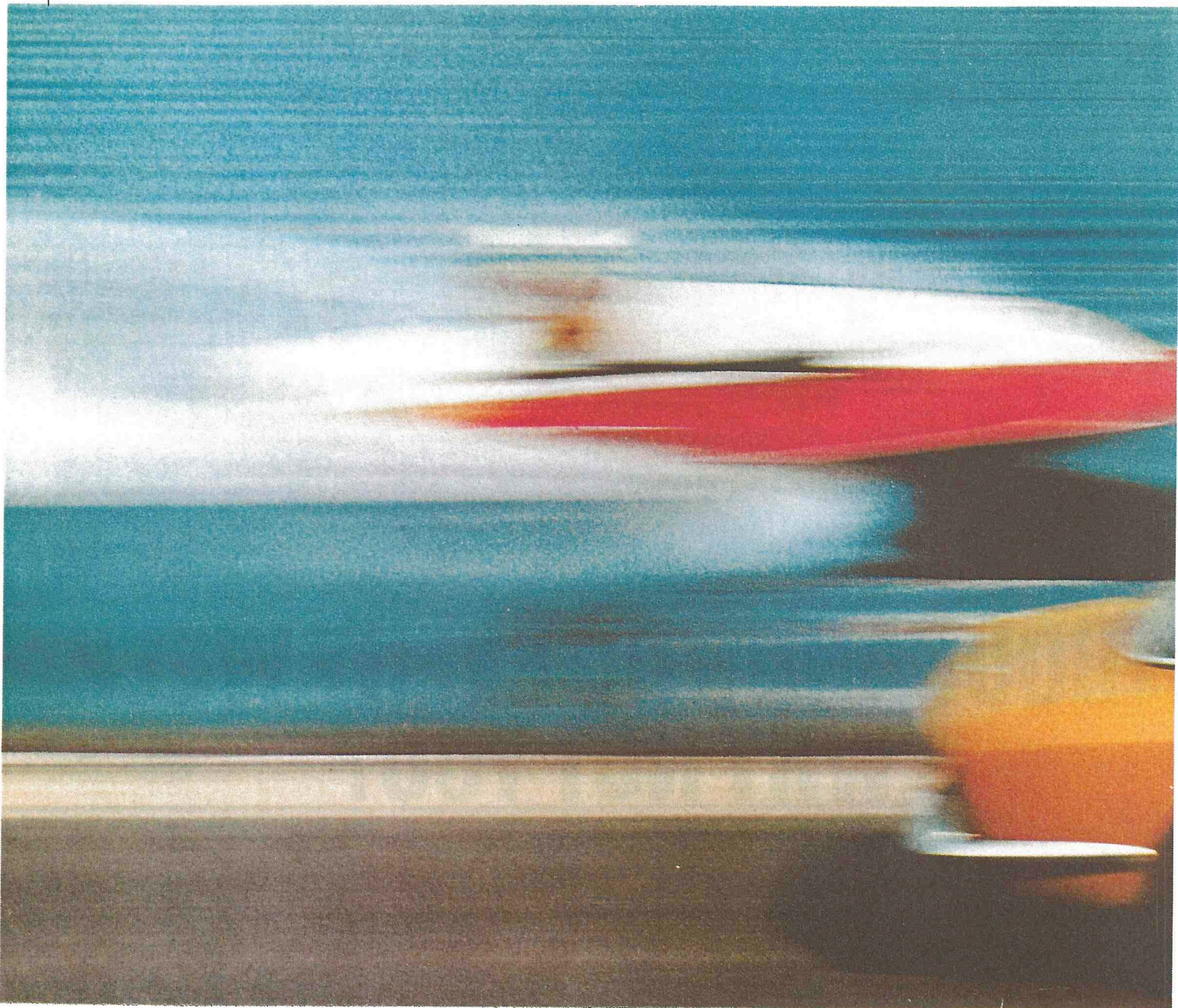
Nothing can touch Alfa's 105-series Bertone coupe for driver appeal, and they aren't as impractical as you'd think. The 2000 GTV is the one to go for, reckons Martin Buckley, and talks to Alfa expert Jon Dooley about the realities of buying

Pure – affordable – driving pleasure doesn't come much better than a 105 series Alfa Romeo coupe. Not all versions are especially quick, but they all handle superbly, and talk to an interested driver through their beautiful steering in a way few modern cars can. If you like to get involved with your car, you can interact with these responses when the opportunity to drive fast (and well) comes up. Few post-war GTs can match these little Alfas.

And pure driving pleasure rarely comes so elegantly packaged either: to most eyes that stubby shape still pleases if you like rounded, compact forms. The 105 Coupe – first seen as a Sprint GT in 1963 – was sixties Bertone at its most characterful and friendly.

Why 2000 GTV?

There's a maze of different 105 Series models to choose from – poverty 1300 Juniors to exotic GTA track stars – but our *Best Buy* choice of the last-of-the-line 2000GTV (current from June 1971 to 1976) has been carefully considered. It's the latest car with the latest technology; it will have had less time to deteriorate; and, best of all, it's the fastest car with the biggest, most torquey



engine. The twin-cam, all-alloy wet-liner 'four' was bored from 80 to 84mm but retained the same 88.5mm stroke as the 1750 for a capacity of 1962cc. Power went up to 131bhp at 5500rpm (up 15bhp over the 1750) and had 134lb ft of torque at 3000rpm (up 14lb ft over the 1750). What that means on the road is a car with more solid, torquey punch in the low and mid ranges than its predecessor, excellent low-speed flexibility and still-impressive outright speed: a 2000GTV should better 120mph all-out, cruise at the ton, and accelerate with the lesser fast hatches. And 21-25mpg fuel economy makes the 2000GTV a practical everyday machine too.

You can buy a 2000GTV quite readily on the British market. The 1750GTV, on the other hand, was a relatively rare, short-lived variant in Britain.

More specifically, the 2-litre car had a ZF limited-slip differential which tidied up the handling considerably compared to earlier cars, checking the messy, power-wasting wheelspin from the unloaded inside wheel a hard-cornering 1750 owner might experience. There's one myth that says the 1750 has the smoother, more free-revving engine but there's little real reason for this: the 1750 has the same stroke as the 2-litre and the valves



GTA (above) and 1750 (below) shared the same bodyshell as the 2000, but have detail changes – 1750 wears steel hubcaps, 2000GTV has centre caps and exposed nuts

are fractionally smaller on the older car but, fundamentally, only the 'bang' when a 2-litre fires is bigger, and that can't make much difference. The 2000 is red-lined at a conservative 5700, but that was only Alfa's recommendation for sustained high speeds; 6000rpm was sanctioned for short overtaking bursts.

Admittedly some of the detailing on the

earlier cars is nicer, more subtle. The 1750 has a cleaner, more delicate-looking nose reminiscent of the GTAm track cars – than the glitzy, multi-slatted 2000 with its embossed outline of the traditional Alfa grille. Other outward 2000GTV recognition points include slightly lifted rear wheelarches (probably to accommodate wider tyres the



2000GTV PRICES



£500 Spares or repair car, might be a runner if you're lucky.

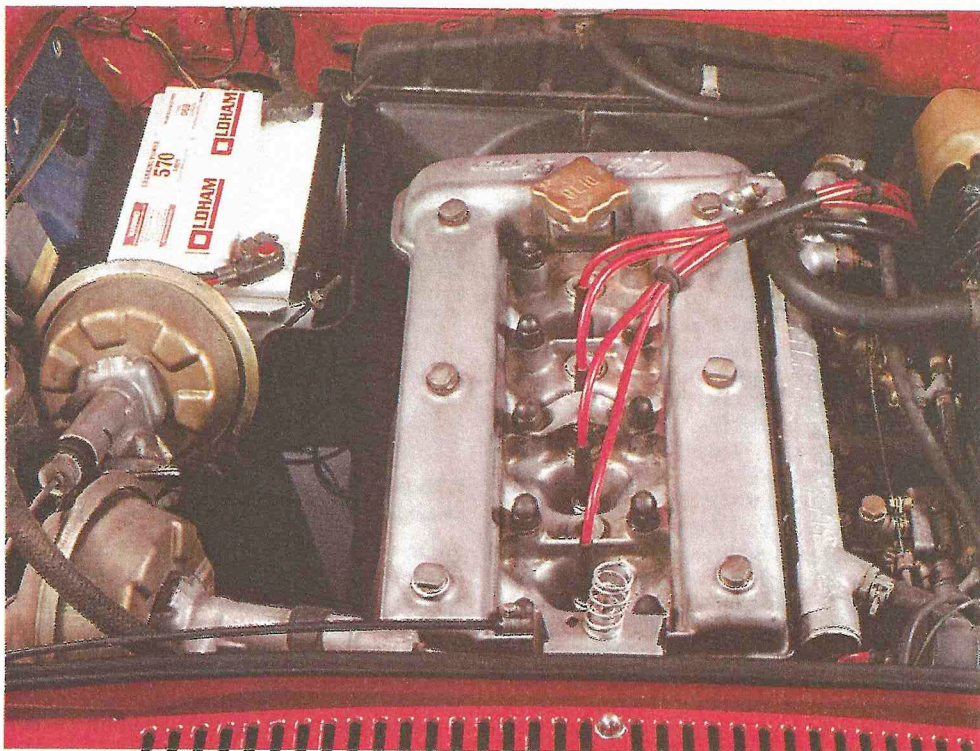
£1000-£1200 Running car with MoT, will need just as much work as above but at least you could use it.

£2000-£2500 Better, tidy cars. Will need work on body but should be usable, and respectable-looking.

£3000-£4000 As above but had more money spent on it, should need little immediate expenditure.

£6000-£8000 Good restored cars, or for the same price, outstanding original machines with complete history.

£10,000-£12,000 Truly excellent cars stopping just short of concours should be available for this money. Looked at as an alternative to a modern performance coupe (Vauxhall Calibra: £16,200 basic) it doesn't look so costly. Concours cars are changing hands for maybe £15,000.

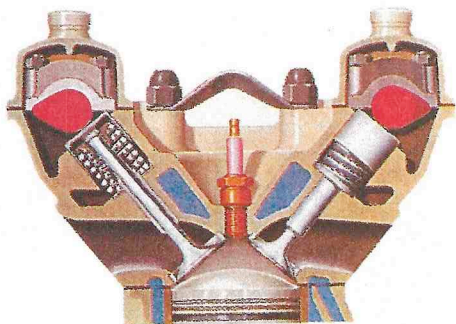


All engines look alike, whatever capacity. Note twin, troublesome, servos

car never actually got) and larger rear lamps incorporating reversing lights. The steel wheels lost their hubcaps, leaving exposed wheel nuts and chromed centre caps.

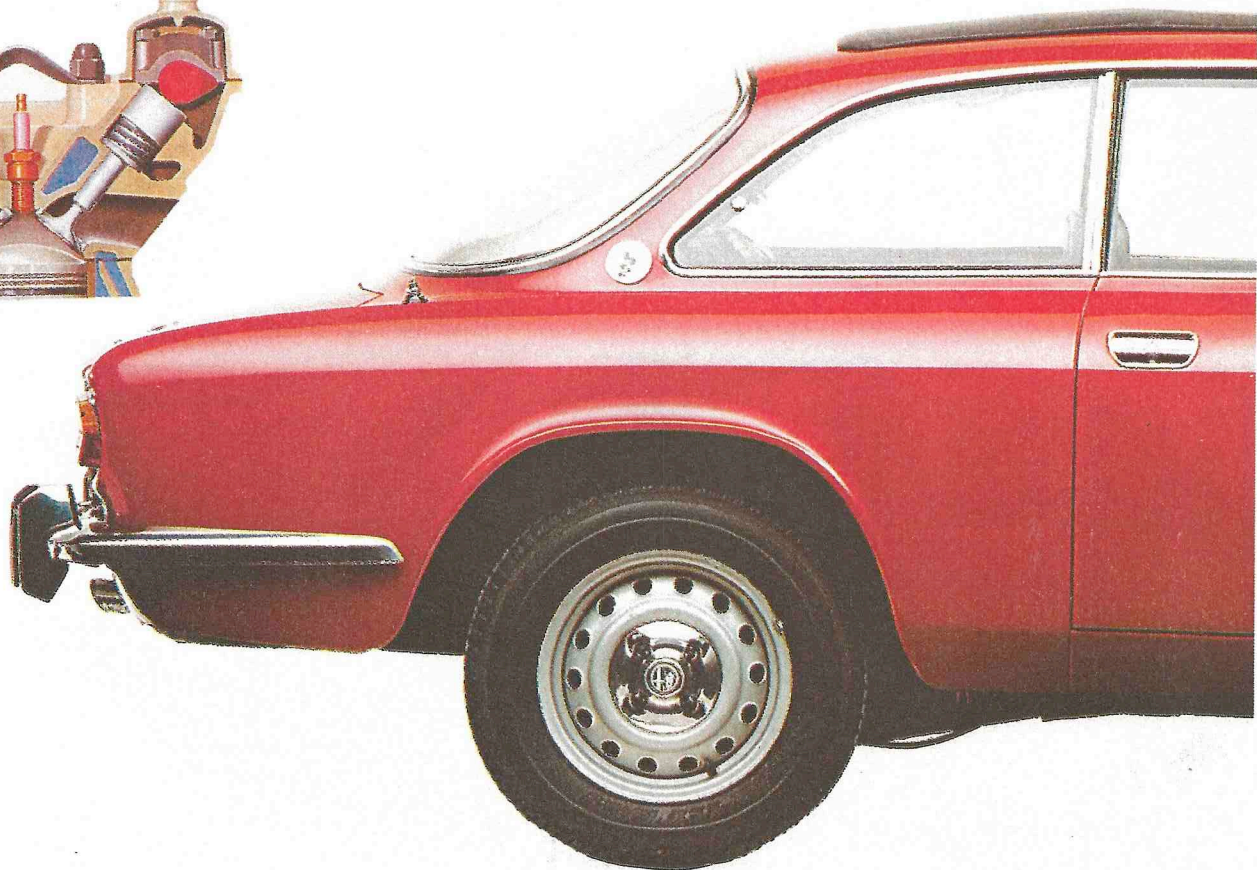
Inside, 2000s have a restyled instrument cluster with fuel level and coolant temperature gauges in their own pods between the speedo and rev-counter (rather than on the centre console) with stylised 'cloverleaf' segmented warning lights underneath, an

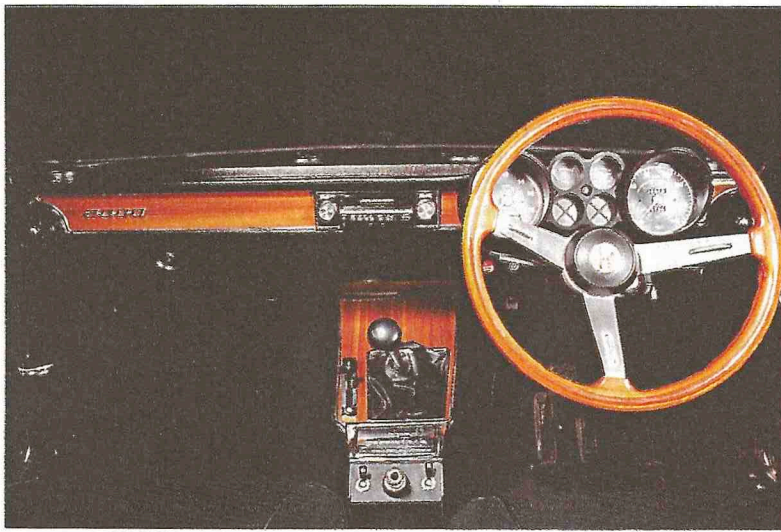
arrangement some don't like. Still, heating and ventilation is better on the 2000, with eyeball vents either end of the dashboard and the centre console is a more sober affair than the sweeping, cheap-looking 1750 appendage with its wood finish. The seats have extra horizontal pleats on the 2-litre car – but essentially of the same design – and you might find one with the rare but short-lasting cloth interior trim.



STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHY BY PHIL TULK

Above: Alfa uses classic hemi-head twin-cam engine. Shims are under buckets. Right: basic bodyshell used for several different cars





Left: interior hard to find bits for, and cloth seats wear fast. UK cars had floor-mounted pedals

Bodywork

Yes, seventies Alfas rust and none with more vigour than the GTV – although they're no worse than Fiats, Lancias and even one or two British sports cars of the period.

Despite Alfa's exotic claims about electrophoretic dips there was minimal protection against rust and the design of the car leaves traps for water and moisture: not a problem in Italy, where the roads are bone-dry again an hour after a rain storm. Corrosion wasn't really an issue back at the factory; combine that complacency with the fact that Alfa steel quality was always suspect during this period (latterly some may have been sourced from Russia) and you've got a recipe for disaster.

Start your search around the front radiator crossmember, and particularly the outer ends that carry the anti-roll bar mounting points.

The whole area where the bulkhead comes down and meets the front wings and the forward ends of the side box members, sills and jacking points you should check carefully. The cover plates inside the wheel-arches cause as many problems as they solve: road dirt lodges between the rubber flaps and wings, building up dampness. When the moisture gets behind the cover plates it never gets a chance to dry out because the flaps are there to prevent it.

That leads us into the sills. They project down below floor level, which produces the situation – when the car's being driven – where the top part of the box members are getting warmth from the interior and the bottom part is cold, catching the weather: at the very least that causes a lot of dewing and, in Britain's climate, those bottom edges never get dry and eventually go through.

WHICH MODEL?



1750GTV, 1968. Best 105, some say

Giulia Sprint GT The first of the 105 Series coupes, introduced in September 1963 with the 1600 engine.

Giulia Sprint GTV Announced early 1966. Improved GT with three more horsepower thanks to reworked porting.

Giulia GTC Introduced at Geneva show, 1965. Touring-built convertible version of coupe. Elegant but short-lived – only 1000 built.

Giulia GT Junior Tax-beating, lower cost coupe with 89bhp 1300cc engine, less equipment. Announced Autumn 1966.

1750GTV New in January 1968. Bigger, more powerful engine, hydraulic clutch, subtle styling changes to nose plus new dash. Replaced Sprint GTV.

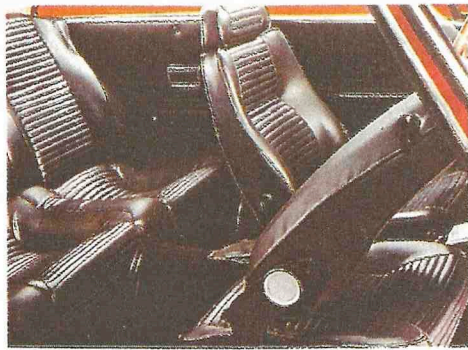
1300/1600GT Junior Introduced early 1971, revamped Junior coupe, with 1750-style lowered bonnet smoothed into front panel, indicators mounted on bumper and twin-pod dash. Marks re-introduction of 1600 engine in coupe. These cars adopted 2000GTV bodyshell and details from 1974, and lasted until 1976.

2000GTV Announced June 1971 but introduced in the UK in October 1971.



2000GTV lost subtlety, gained torque





GTV can seat four – just – but rear seats for kids really. Most cars have this plastic trim. Cloth seats rare and desirable.



Rear pillar badge depicts luckless Milan citizen being eaten by dragon. All trim for coupes getting difficult



Above: Alfa badge is on sill plate. Below: rear light clusters are bigger on 2000GTV and later Juniors



The GTV's spot-welded construction was another source of trouble: spot-welded joints needed clean metal to work properly and any contaminates getting into the joints could mean the beginning of trouble.

Rear wheelarches are another problem area – check inner and outers – which leads us into the boot floor. The small structural members down the sides of the boot at the back rot, and bear in mind that the rear floor areas are designed soft so they crush in a rear-end shunt. Thus there's a fair amount of movement in the rear structure working against the rear arches, and that promotes rear-end rot.

You won't find many problems on the floorpan underneath unless water's been allowed to leak and lie in the car: usually there's enough heat coming back from the engine (and probably a fair amount of oil) to keep the central areas of the floor sound. Water leaks on the GTV are an important point to remember: a high proportion of these cars have developed leaks, with water being allowed to lie on top of the fuel tank or boot floor, and it doesn't have to be that much of a leak for the raising and lowering of the temperature of the air to produce dewing.

Doors? The seals at the top are designed to stop the glass rattling rather than keep water out, so water drips into the doors. That's fine when the drain channels in the bottoms of the doors are clear, and while the plastic membranes behind the door trims are intact. Take away those factors – and add dirty, horrible British rain water, salt and badly-fitting trim strips – and water starts rotting the bottoms of the doors out and running into the inside of the car. Stress plays its part in the deterioration of the GTV door, especially around the door handle which some people find difficult to operate and start

10 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW

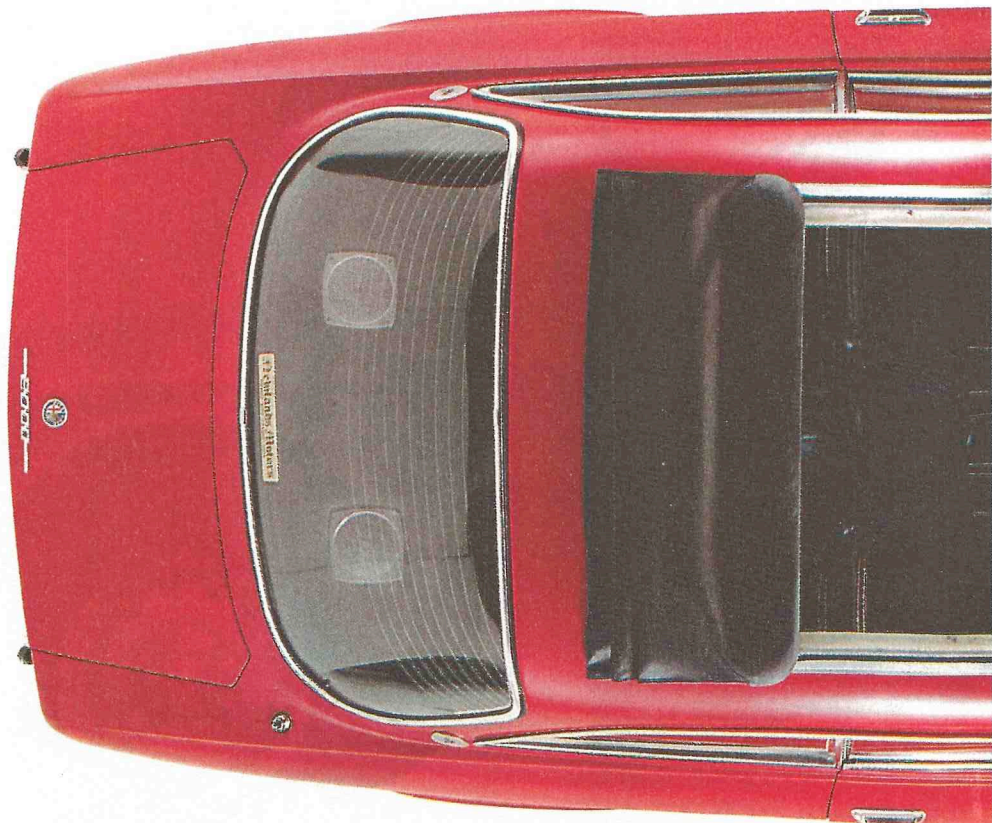
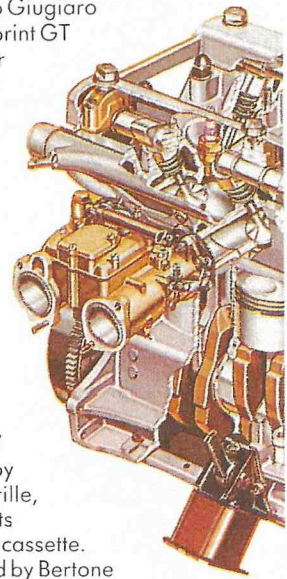
- The young Giorgio Giugiaro designed the Giulia Sprint GT of 1963, but he's never personally liked the design.

- The 1750GTV actually had a capacity of 1779cc. It was badged a 1750 to evoke memories of pre-war 1750 cars.

- To mop up the last of the 2000GTV coupes prior to the introduction of the Alfetta GT, Alfa GB came up with the GTV SE with vinyl roof, alloy wheels, matt-black grille, rear fog warning lights and a standard radio cassette.

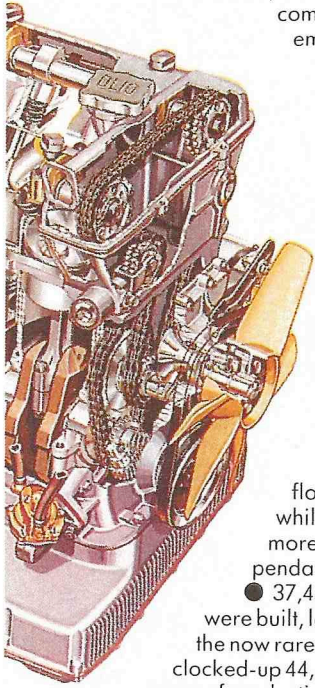
- Although designed by Bertone the 105 coupés were built in-house at Alfa's Arese plant, the first coupe Alfas not to be built outside.

- Six Radford Guilia coupes were built in the mid sixties. Among the changes were rectangular Cibié lights, restyled rear panel picked out by a stainless steel surround, wire wheels and stainless steel gravel rails. Inside, the car had a new dash, a 'Cleopatra couch' replacing the rear seat, optional power windows and extra soundproofing. Amazingly, two were built on the basis of lightweight GTA; Peter Sellers is reputed to have owned one.



ABOUT THE 105 COUPES

● North-American market 1750 and 2000GTVs used Spica fuel injection to comply with local emission laws.



● Alfa tended to mix and match components for no apparent reason: GTV coupés can use Solex, Weber or Dell'Orto Carbs, Marelli or Bosch ignition systems, and cam-and-peg or recirculating-ball steering.

● For some reason, British market 2000GTV buyers had to suffer floor-mounted pedals, while lhd cars got the more comfortable, pendant type.

● 37,458 2000GTV coupés were built, less, amazingly than the now rare 1750GTV, which clocked-up 44,269 units in four years of production.

● When the original Sprint 1600GT arrived in 1963 many Alfa buyers didn't like its styling. In response, Alfa reintroduced the old Guileta-style 101 series coupé in 1964, fitted it with a tax-beating 1290cc engine, and renamed it Guilia 1300 Sprint.

wrenching around. Result: fatigue and rust.

Bootlids go rotten between the skins and the frames while bonnets usually stay sound if there hasn't been some kind of accident damage. A rotten bonnet, Alfa expert Jon Dooley reckons, is often an indication that the rest of the car may be *very* rough.

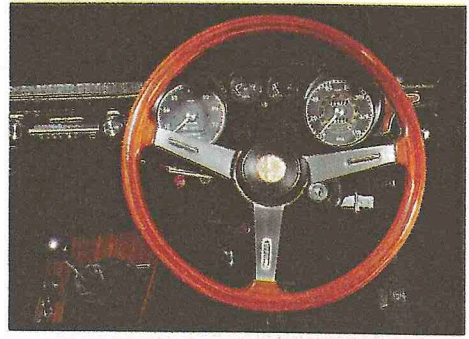
Front wings rust around the backs of the wheelarches and where the forward cover plates but-up you can get a ring of corrosion. Rust starts where the indicator repeater lights bolt on, too. Inner wings, surprisingly, usually stay sound and roofs rarely rot, but you might find problems around the 'B' posts and thus leading to the resultant sill maladies already mentioned. Front and rear valance corrosion will be fairly evident.

Another area is the drain tray underneath the wiper motor which picks up air going to the heater. It collects leaves too, and lets water overflow into the interior of the car when it gets blocked.

On the trim side the stainless steel bumpers last well but the 2000's front grille pimples from about the third month. Headlights – by Carello – go rusty in the bowls, although often leaving the reflective surface intact.

Engine and transmission

Engines can run for a very long time: 120-140,000 miles are fairly common. You know the end is in sight when large amounts of oil begin to be burnt, and timing chains start to rattle although even then a GTV can still go incredibly well. They usually suffer some form of mechanical accident in the hands of insensitive owners – running without water or oil – or, simply, they've been driven too slowly. City driving – stop-start running – means the oil doesn't get hot enough to burn off contaminants or move around the engine



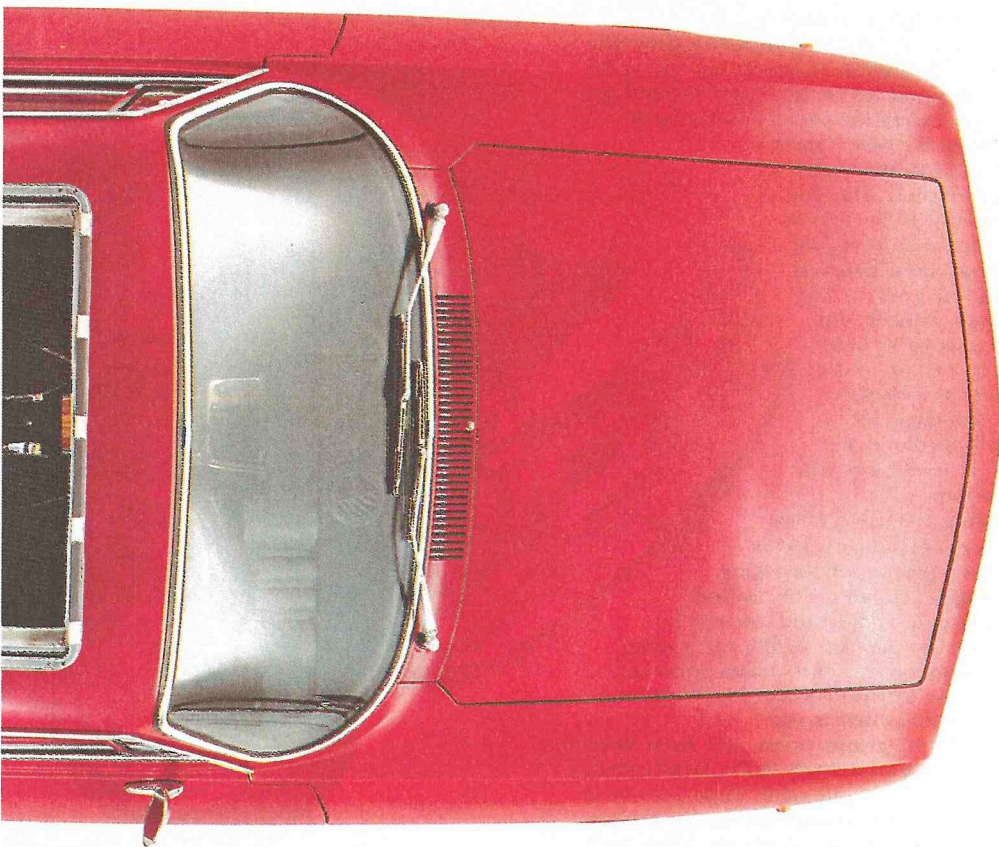
All cars had wooden steering wheel and came fully, if fussily, instrumented. Strange gear lever angle



Door handles are sometimes found awkward to use and break. Can weaken steel around them, causing rust



Alfa cutaway of 1750 GTV shows well-located coil sprung live axle, four-wheel disc brakes



GTA, GTAm AND GTA JUNIOR



The GTA, introduced in 1965 ('A' stood for *alleggerita* or lightened) was perfectly road-usable in showroom form but had an all-alloy outer body on the original coupe steel frame, paring the weight down by 450lb. Outwardly, you could spot a GTA by its grille, dainty door handles and alloy wheels. Mechanically, the car had twin-plug head (boosting power to 115bhp) a sliding block rear diff (to cope with the transverse loads imposed on the trailing link suspension set-up) and small 14in wheels. Up to 1969 493 GTAs were built, 50 with rhd. They very expensive, needless to say £2898 in the UK in 1967, compared to £1950 for an already pricey Sprint GTV.

The GTAm grew out of the GTA, 'm' standing for *maggiorato* or enlarged. Introduced in 1968 as a 1750 car, it became a 2-litre in 1971 but neither version was a usable street car; 40 were built.

The 1968 GTA Junior was street car, based directly on the 1600GTA. It had a twin-plug 110bhp engine and the same lightweight aluminium body panels as its bigger brother. Just 447 were built between 1968 and 1972, latterly with Spica fuel injection.

WHY NOT TRY A BERLINA

Some Alfa fans will tell you that the best 105 of the lot were the Berlina's, the 1750 and 2000 cars built between 1967 and 1977. Much roomier, quieter and more comfortable than the coupes, they were a little slower and handled just as well – better, some say. They're probably rarer now than the GTVs in the UK and far better value for money: £1500-£2000 should buy you a good one. If you can live with staid looks, one of these unappreciated saloons could be worth a look. As used by the Italian police in their day, too.



quickly enough, with poor lubrication of the cylinders and rapid cam and valve guide wear.

On cold mornings with cold, thick oil, too many revs can blow the seals in the head gasket, but that didn't show up as so much of a problem with this generation of Alfa engines. Cranks are very strong – they're nitrided as standard – but vibration *can* pop out the sealing plugs in the crank.

So assuming the car is sitting there in the vendor's drive, what can you, practically, look for? First off, has it got oil in the water? Has it got oil coming out of the head joint and running down the side of the block to indicate the seal has broken down? Worse, has it got water in the oil, which usually means broken seals at the base of the liners which, in turn, means the engine has to come apart? On a brighter note, with a wet-liner engine you can take the unit apart like a set of Meccano and have the pots rebored. You can, just about, do this work without taking the engine out of the car but, unless you're totally without facilities, it's more trouble than it's worth to do things that way.

Let the engine tick over for a while and then blip the throttle. A big puff of smoke means valve guide trouble. A further test is to drive the car, rev it to 5000rpm, and then let it go on to over-run. See lots of blue smoke and you could be looking at new rings and liners – valve guide work at the very least. Obviously, listen for unsavoury noises from the bottom of the engine, although that kind of trouble is unusual.

The subject of oil pressure is a can of worms. In an ideal world you should be looking for more than 50lb at 3000rpm with the engine hot. However, there's a tendency for the reading to drop to 20lb at sustained high speeds, which doesn't seem to do harm.

Don't worry too much about very low readings at tickover, which could be sender or gauge trouble, or even a tickover set too low. However, if the oil pressure is generally low the first question to ask is: has one of the plugs dropped out of the crank? Try and get to the car before the owner has started the engine up because if there's a little oil in the water it might not show. Also, you really want to be able to start the car up from cold and hear what happens as the oil goes to the bearings. Check for big-end noise by holding it on an even throttle at 2500rpm and listening for a light-to-medium tapping. It could even be piston slap.

Timing chains go rattly. The top one adjusts and is easy to replace without taking the engine to bits. The bottom chain does not adjust and can only be replaced as part of significant engine work. Sometimes a rattly chain noise can actually be worn sprockets, but wear has to be severe for a chain to slip.

Engine mountings break and have been seen with sheared studs in the block, obviously difficult to put right. Leaks can be a problem: the seal around the distributor can weep if it isn't seated properly. Make sure

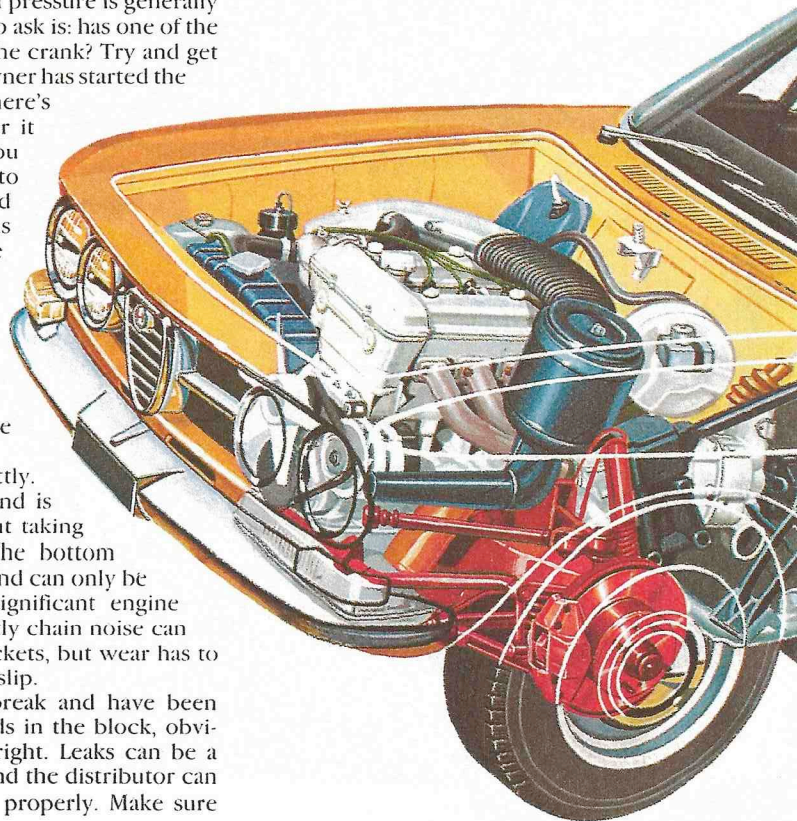
JEREMY GOFF'S 'LI



Jeremy Goff, owner of the superb red Alfa 2000 GTV in our colour shots, has been a 105 coupe fan since adolescence: "My parents had a 1750 GTV followed by a 1600 GT and the way they drove – the superb steering,

your engine has the right dipstick in it: if it's the wrong one it could be giving a false reading, and the results of running too much or too little oil could be disastrous.

As a general guide, an engine rebuild can cost you anything up to £2000, although a more usual figure is £1200 – depending on what needs doing. That's maybe £400-£900



'NEW' 2000GTV

precise five-speed box and smooth power delivery – made a lasting impression on me. They rusted badly though – they weren't suited to the English climate."

After viewing a selection of tired GTVs four years ago, Jeremy was on the point of buying an Alfa 33 instead: "Quite by chance on the morning of the test drive I was casually looking through the advertisements in CLASSIC AND SPORTSCAR and noticed a 'genuine ultra low mileage 2000GTV, almost like new condition', for sale just an hour away from the Alfa dealer."

A quick inspection showed that the car had been very well looked after and Jeremy put down a deposit on the spot. Mike Buckler of Gatwick Alfa confirmed how good it was – "it hasn't been used very much – it's like new," – and realising what a find he had Jeremy resolved to keep it that way: "A year later I had the car bare-metal resprayed and the bodywork was in excellent condition – none of the panels needed replacing."

A trip to Northern Scotland revealed the car's superb driving appeal: "The performance is as good as any modern hot hatch or 2-litre saloon – brilliant for a 21-year old production car."

in labour and £300-£800 in parts.

People sometimes have trouble tuning the carbs on these cars, which are either twin Weber, Dell'Orto or Solex. Often they're blaming the carbs for another engine malady, like a bent valve or ignition that hasn't been serviced in a long time. If anything, Jon Dooley prefers the Dell'Ortos because they

give slightly more power thanks to more area in the entry tract. Solex is least favourite, if only because they're the most difficult to work on. On the ignition side, cars can use Bosch or Marelli distributors: the Marelli is horrible to work on because the advance/retard mechanism is in an awkward place, above the points. You get inertia effects because the advance-retard is mounted up high, a long way from the bushes. Bosch points are just much easier to get hold of – most local accessory shops have them. On the subject of starter motors, these must use their original spec precision bolts: anything less and it won't engage properly with the ring gear.

Moving down the drivetrain, clutch life depends on the kind of use the car gets. The long-life tricks are not to slip the clutch, sit at lights with the clutch depressed, or hold the car on an incline using the clutch. Flywheels can break or glaze if the clutch is abused often enough, and if you let the car stand for months on end, the clutch can stick to the flywheel and maybe even seize on its splines.

On the box itself second gear synchromesh shows signs of wear first, the cause being too many unnecessary downchanges, not pausing between changes to let the speed drop and making it do too much work while the oil is still cold. For some reason, first gear synchro only works when you change down into first – not up into first. People who don't wait for the gearbox to stop spinning when they put the lever into first at lights or whatever crunch the change. If the reverse gear selection mechanism fork gets bent or worn it has a tendency to push the lever out of reverse, a common complaint.

Too-stiff gaiters on the gearbox, or even a wrongly-mounted centre console, can cause

THE CLUB

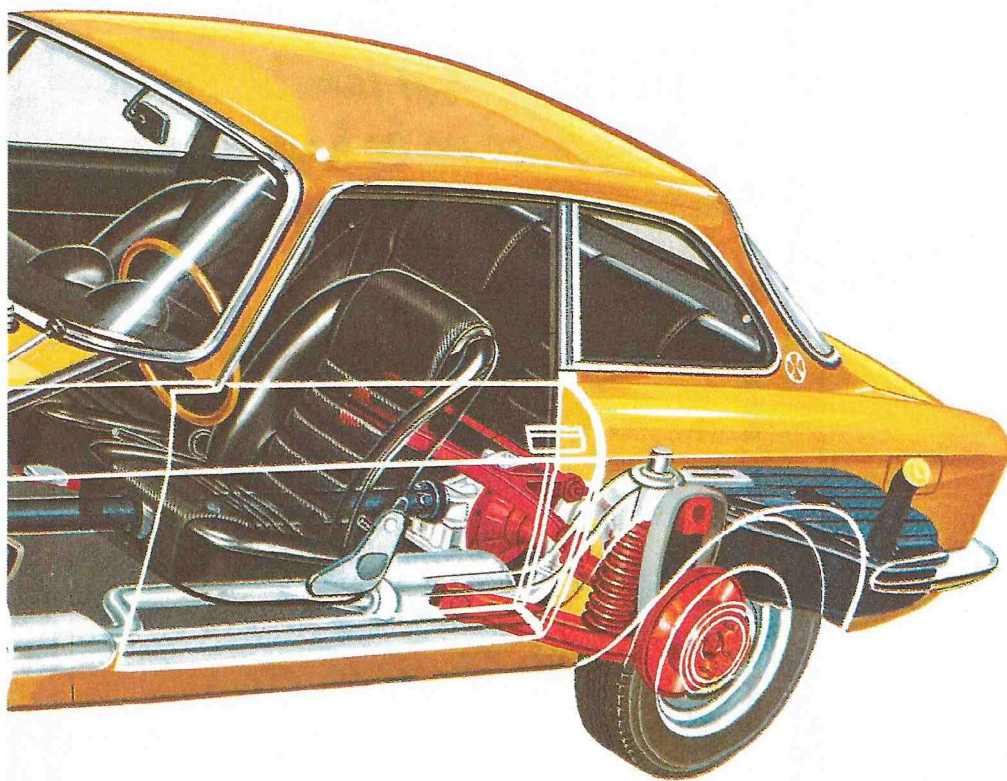
2000GTV owners have only one club to join: the Alfa Romeo Owners' Club, formed in 1964 and with a membership of 2000-plus. Concentrating on post-war machinery, each series has its own Register and Chris Sweetapple of Essex is the man to talk to regarding 105 series cars. The 105 Register, in fact, is one of the more active sections and runs a regular Goodwood test day, where fun is had by all. The club can offer help with spares and both the magazine and monthly newsheet always have a comprehensive selection of cars and spares for sale.

Contact the Alfa Romeo Owners' Club at 97 High Street, Linton, Cambridge CB1 6JT, or telephone 0223 894300.

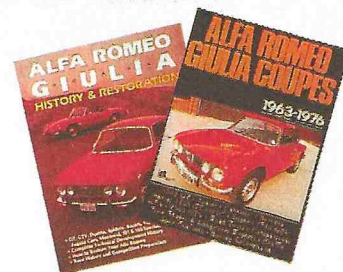


this too. The innermost gaiter at the top of the gearbox is designed to keep the oil in, but many aren't properly clipped, which leads to the gearbox emptying itself of oil. Look for leaks under the car. Oil seals stand up well.

On the propshaft the forward rubber on the back of the gearbox eventually breaks up. There's a spigot within the rear gearbox drive spider which engages in the back of the



BEST BOOKS



For a balance of technical information, history and opinion we reckon Pat Braden and Jim Weber's **Alfa Giulia History and Restoration** is the best thing around at the moment. Published by Motorbooks International at £17.95, it covers saloons, coupes, spiders and Zagatos as well as the homologation specials and the Montreal. It gives the complete technical nuts-and-bolts development of the cars, and plenty of practical tips with appropriate 'dirty fingernails' shots.

For the dedicated, we must mention **Alfa Romeo Tutte Le Vetture** by Luigi Fusi, a big, bilingual tome covering all the cars from 1910. First published in 1965, it's widely regarded as the Alfa bible, though the current updated edition is expensive as £79.95. To be honest, 2000GTV fans will find more of interest in the **Brooklands Road Test Collection** on the Giulia coupes, yours for £7.95.