



Alfa Romeo GT Junior and GTV

A thing of beauty that is also fantastic to drive, Russ Smith suggests you buy one now — prices are already rising



STUDIO PHOTOS BY LUKE PARMINTER, ARTWORK BY JAMES RUPPERT

YOU CAN pretty well rely on the Italians for drop-dead gorgeous car design. It helps owners live through the odd foible and fragility that are so often part of the package deal. They still do it today, but the Sixties has to be their Golden Era, bringing us such glories as the Ferrari 275GTB, Dino and Daytona, Lamborghini Miura, Alfa and Fiat Spiders, and the Giulia GT coupés we're dealing with here, to mention but a few. The Alfa was by stylists Bertone, though the actual lines were penned by a young chap named Giugiaro, who soon became famous in his own right, later styling the VW Golf and Scirocco.

'It's a really beautiful and quite subtle design. You can't catch it out from any angle,' says Richard Norris from Alfaholics. 'They're even now starting to surpass Alfa Spiders in popularity and price.'

Competition in the parts' market has pushed many prices down by 10-20% over the last year. It helps make the cars worth restoring, and reasonably cheap to look after and maintain. Especially as the other great Italian trick is making their cars a pleasure to drive as well as look at.

The tough part is keeping them that way. 'I'd certainly recommend garaging these cars,' says Richard. 'They really don't like being stood outside for long winter nights in the rain and snow. At the very least you want to use a breathable outdoor cover — and plenty of rustproofing wax.'

So now we all want one, what should we be aware of and scared of? Richard gave us the benefit of his hard-won experience.

BODYWORK

THE INITIAL thing to look at is that they can rot all round the bottom eight inches of the body. You need to look right round the car and evaluate the state of all panels, what work has been done and how well.

Some cars will have rot around the front and rear screens, which is quite expensive to repair. You can buy a repair section that goes all the way round beneath the rear screen, but it costs £110 and is a major job to get lined up and fitted correctly. To see what's really going on, you need to get your head in the boot and look up under the parcel shelf to assess the true extent of any corrosion. If it's serious, think very carefully before buying that car.

Sills are constructed from inner, middle and outer sections. You're likely to find some corrosion on the outers of anything but a

very nice car. Once cut away, you tend to find the bottom of the middle section is gone too. That's not too much of a problem — the inner sill's the one to worry about. Get under the car and look outwards, particularly at the ends and around jacking points. If it's corroded or plated all the way along, steer clear of the car unless there's something really special going for it. You can get all the panels, but to do the whole job is pretty costly. The panels alone are £250 a side.

The sills are also a real tell-tale sign of whether a car has been restored reasonably well or not. Outers are originally one-piece items that run behind front and rear wings. If you can't see seams where the wings overlap, in line with the front and rear door edges, it's probably had a cover sill and filler to smooth over the joins.

Says Richard: 'On any car over £3000, I'd want to see those seams. If they're not there it's been bodged and I'd walk away.'

Door bottoms are often bubbly, but as long as the frame is sound, you can fit complete new door skins, which are £95 in steel, £105 for aluminium. If the frame is original you should see three drain holes running along the underside. Check also around the lower door hinge.

More important is the steering box mounting area. Flexing caused by steering pressure can result in tiny cracks which become corrosion. The best place to view any damage or repairs is from the driver's side wheelarch. You can see the three mounting bolt heads on the inner wing.

Check floorpans, particularly in the footwell area. Water collects here if rubbers are leaking, or due to the plastic scuttle drain tubes perishing on bends. They're often neglected: replacement is fiddly enough, but it's been hard to find the right tubing to use. It's a bit like washing-machine hose. Alfaholics has just obtained supplies of the correct stuff.

Repro floorpans are now available, made in Germany, and very good with all the right pressings. Even better, unlike original panels, the front and rear sections can be bought separately, £95 and 105 respectively.

Splash panels at rear of front wheel wells rot away. You'll often find ally or glassfibre replacements now. Or bodged rust repairs, so beware. It's also worth checking the slam panel ahead of the bonnet for rust — they're quite expensive to replace.

Apart from bottom section, front wings don't tend to rust unless subject to poor accident repairs, which is just as well as repro

SPOT THE GROT



Inspect front crossmember under radiator, this is fairly expensive to repair properly.



Steering box mounting area cracks. View damage or repairs from driver's side arch.



No clear seam where wings overlap the sill means car has been bodged in some way.



Check floorpans, especially footwells. Water gets in from perished scuttle drain tubes.



OUR EXPERT

RICHARD NORRIS, 34, bought a 1750 GTV by chance 11 years ago, had it restored on the cheap and ran it every day for 35,000 miles. He fell in love with the cars and restored three others and a Spider. Then he started buying cars to break for his own parts supply.

An ad for unwanted bits in a club mag mushroomed into a part-time business. After eight years, it had grown to the point where he had to go full-time and find a partner. He formed Alfaholics in 1999 with Richard Banks, who's had 25 years experience restoring these cars.

He now owns one of the best 1750 GTVs in existence, the 19,000-mile example illustrating this feature.

1964-1976



1974-76

◆ **GT 1300 Junior** launched in 1966 with spirited 103bhp engine. Single headlamps distinguish all Juniors from GTVs.



1967-72

◆ **1750 GTV** adds fun to range with larger 1779cc 118bhp engine, hydraulic clutch, new dashboard and four-headlight nose.



1964-66

◆ **Gullia GTC 1000** convertibles built by Touring. 99 were righthand-drive. Now fetch silly money — when they come up.



1972-76

◆ **1600 GT Junior** gets indicators on bumper, twin-pod dashboard. From 1974 same body and details as 2000 GTV.



1971-76

◆ **2000 GTV** with torquey motor, ZF limited slip diff, larger rear tailfamps, no hubcaps, restyled interior, eyeball fresh air vents.



ones are over £300. Rust is also rare on inner wings; in fact, there's not much to look for in the engine bay, just in the area around the engine mounts.

In the boot, you should pull out the spare wheel and check the well around drain holes and where the well meets the righthand inner wheelarch causing a moisture trap. Also inspect all round the petrol-tank support frame. Tanks rot too. Creasing in boot floor means accident damage.

Bootlids themselves rot along the rear lip. Repair sections are £20, but not a very good fit. You can buy an aluminium bootlid for just under £300, but steel ones will have to be repaired or sourced secondhand — around £100 is normal.

Brightwork is mostly stainless, even bumpers (except on first couple of years which were chrome, but stainless can be retro-fitted to these). Plenty of trim about secondhand, if it's damaged, apart from rear bumpers as they often get knocked. You can get new ones for £200 though. Exceptions include door handles and quarterlight hinges, which are diecast and pit badly.

BRAKES

BRAKES ARE a problem for UK cars. Later models have twin servos, which often fail. They can usually be rebuilt cheaply with a kit, but if beyond help will cost £125 each to replace. Failure is easy to spot as brake

fluid will be drawn into the inlet causing clouds of white smoke.

Master cylinders for twin servo cars have been unavailable for five years, and are probably the biggest problem now. Being mounted under the car, they are very vulnerable. Indication of problems can be a spongy pedal or rear brakes dragging. Recon units are £125 exchange, or you can buy a repair kit — but there's only a 50/50 chance of success as the bores are often too pitted.

Tests are being carried out at the moment on resleeving the bores with stainless.

Beware of cars that have stood for a long time. Seized cylinders and servos can land you with a bill for £500 before you've even looked at the calipers and discs. They're not the worry, though, as rebuild kits for front

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and rear are only £11 for the whole car. Exchange calipers are £75 each, discs and pads are cheap.

ENGINE

ENGINES CAN sound a bit tappity and chains clatter a bit, but don't let that put you off too much. More importantly, look for signs of head gaskets leaking, especially on the larger engines. You'll see trickles of oil running down either side of the block. It shouldn't necessarily put you off buying the car as replacement is a straightforward job, but it should be taken into account. More serious gasket failure will show up with water in the oil.

To rebuild an engine completely will be around £500 in parts, the main cost being new pistons and liners at £185.

Carbs can be Weber, Solex or Dell'Orto, almost at random. Rebuild kits are available for all. Some people shy away from the Solexes. They're apparently not quite so good at the very top end, though Richard has found no other notable problems with them.

TRANSMISSION

WARM THE car up and see if it changes into second gear easily. Synchromesh is often weak and can crunch if you shift too quickly, more so when changing down from third. Let the clutch up quite sharply in reverse to see if it jumps out of gear. That means a bent selector fork, another typical weakness in these 'boxes. They can start to give trouble from as little as 50-60,000 miles and a recon 'box is typically £450-500.

Differentials can start to whine at 90-100,000 miles. Most 2000 GTVs came as standard with limited slip diffs, and you'll occasionally find them fitted to other models now. Popular with racers, too, which has pushed prices up to around £200 for secondhand units.

SPOT THE GROT



You've really got to inspect the inner sill area. Get under the car and look outwards.



Check all three drain holes are present and there's a neat folded edge all round.



Round profile to arch lip means a replacement. Feel behind it for quality of repair.



Look up under parcel shelf. If there's much rust here, the car is probably best rejected.



In the boot, pull out the spare wheel and check well, especially around drain holes.



All Alfa Romeos can look as good as this because all trim is now available.

PRACTICAL CLASSIC?

WHAT ARE THEY LIKE TO DRIVE? Controls are really precise and communicative — you can always feel exactly what's going on. Engines are revvy and gutsy, and all feel larger than they are. With enough go to overcome standard-size tyres, handling can be entertaining, but always feels safe and controllable. In a nutshell, they drive as good as they look.

WILL I FIT BEHIND THE WHEEL? Probably. All but the most long-legged should find a comfortable driving position as these aren't as bad as many Italian cars. You may have a problem with the height of righthand-drive cars' floor-hinged pedals if your feet are below about size eight though.

WHAT BODGES SHOULD I LOOK FOR? Cover sills and rear arch plates hurriedly put over rust. Also nastily plated floorpans or inner sills, and filler in rear boot lip.

WHAT SHOULD I PAY? Resto projects for all models run from £300-1500. Pay no more for a car without MoT. 1300 GT Juniors are least valuable, first series 1600 Juniors ('71-73) most underrated. Nice ones of both are £4500-6000. Late GT Juniors ('73-77) are good cars with better brakes, identical to 2000 GTV apart from lights, and fetch £5000-7000. 1964-66 Sprint GT and '66-68 GT Veloce rare and desirable and make £6000-10,000. Most sought after are 1750/2000 GTV. Former is the connoisseur's choice, having sweeter engine, wooden dash, more chrome and prettier front; latter has more grunt and some people just have to have the biggest lump. Both are £5000-6000 for reasonable cars, up to £12,000+ for show stuff.

WHAT WILL INSURANCE COST?

◆ £450 for 25yo, 2 years' NCB, 10,000 miles, clean licence, only car, kept on drive.
◆ £104 for 42yo, full NCB, 3000 miles, clean licence, second car, garaged.

Comprehensive cover for a 2000 GTV worth £5250, based in Peterborough. Quotes from Firebond (07000 347326)

WHO ARE THE SPECIALISTS?

Parts/car sales

◆ Alfaholics, London (0208 299 2929/01398 351360) www.alfaholics.com

Restoration/repairs

◆ Alfa Restorations,

- Shropshire (01939 234350)
- ◆ Andrew Thorogood, London (0207 720 8816)
- ◆ Classic Alfas, Somerset (01934 626279)
- ◆ Ian Ellis, W Sussex (01273 563279)
- ◆ Gran Turismo Engineering, London (0208 332 7633)
- ◆ MGS Coachworks, Surrey (0208 645 0555) www.mgscoachworks.com
- ◆ Spiders Web, Norfolk (01760 756229)
- ◆ Timeless Motor Co, Essex (01245 248008)

Parts

- ◆ Alfa Stop, Derbys (01773 822000) www.alfastop.co.uk
- ◆ EB Spares, Wilts (01373 823856) www.ebspares.co.uk
- ◆ Highwood Motor Co, Swansea (01792 234314) www.cometo/highwood

Servicing

- ◆ Alfa Il, Middlesex (0208 951 4100)
- ◆ John Goodchild, Surrey (0208 680 2120)
- ◆ CW Lear, W Yorks (01535 864559)
- ◆ Rossi Engineering, Middx (01932 786819)
- ◆ David Thomas, Herts (01438 820288)
- ◆ Westune Auto Services, Lancs (01204 697535) www.westune.u-net.com

Engines

- ◆ Bob Dove Motorsport, Essex (01245 328278)
- ◆ Jim Evans, N Yorks (01944 758909)

WHAT ABOUT SPARES PRICES?

- Front discs:** £35.25 (GTV), £32.31 (Junior)
- Front pads:** £22.33 (GTV), £14.10 (Junior)
- Water pump:** £32.31
- Complete clutch:** £88.13
- Front wheel bearing kit:** £22.91
- Koni shock absorbers:** £94pr (f&r)
- Outer door handle:** £35.25
- Rear light lenses:** £32.90-41.13
- Windscreen rubbers:** £29.38 (f&r)

ANY PARTS HARD TO GET?

As well as the brake master



cylinders mentioned in the text, original Carello rhd outer headlamps are not available. Others can be substituted using adaptor ring, but nothing else looks as good. Complete pre-2000 GTV rear light units not available new and sought after secondhand.

CAN THEY COPE WITH UNLEADED?

Yes, though they prefer Super Unleaded. Heads are silly, so seats and guides are hard. They should last until the rest of the engine needs rebuilding, anyway.

WHERE ARE THE IDENTIFYING MARKS?

Engine numbers on early cars are located on the side of the block under the carbs, later on exhaust manifold side of block next to bellhousing. Chassis number always stamped on bulkhead above inlet cam box.

WHICH OWNERS CLUB SHOULD I JOIN?

◆ Alfa Romeo Owners Club: £30pa + £7.50 joining fee. 3500 members, monthly mag, tech advice, ins scheme, discounts, race series, specialists directory, model registers.

WHICH IS THE BEST BOOK?

Alfa Romeo Giulia by R Bremner, ISBN 0 947981 59 4.

Practical Classics has teamed up with HPI to offer you the ultimate protection when buying a classic. For just £28, a call to the Practical Classics



Vehicle Check hotline on 01722 435516 will establish a series of checks and give an independent valuation. HPI will advise if you need to take any steps with the purchase. See pg 174 for more details.



INTERIOR

THE BIGGEST change in the last year or so has been the launch of reproduction upholstery and trim by Alfaholics. Older restorations have often been let down by the state of the interior, either make-do or trimmed in the wrong material or style. Most cars you'll find being sold now will still have wrong or scruffy interiors, so bargain against the cost of putting them right.

Seat covers are now stocked in all the original Italian materials, even the complicated and wild basket-weave design in the Mk I 1750 (very popular and often found retro-fitted to other models now, as shown here). Covers are about £70 per front seat, £140 for the complete rear. Door panels are available too, thankfully, as the hardboard backing always goes wavy at the bottom. They're £50 each and exactly as original, with the correct chrome strips and everything.

Note that blue cars always came with tan interiors, red ones with black. If you see anything otherwise, it's not original.

Dashboards crack and repro stuff is only made in lhd — demand for rhd is perceived as too small. Specialists sell all decent used ones they can get hold of for £120-150.

Alfaholics breaks one a month, but only one in four is any good.

Headlinings are now in original material and shape, with the correct recessed portion in rear to increase headroom.

ELECTRICS

THESE CARS don't give much of a problem, despite the reputation Italian cars have. Richard has not found them troublesome at all. Typical exceptions involve the fuel tank not earthing well to the body, causing erratic fuel gauge readings. And wiper arms often don't self park. Some people have trouble with indicator and headlamp stalks. There are no replacements, but they can be rebuilt or exchanged by specialists. It's a straightforward job, except you will need a special puller for the steering wheel as it's mounted on a taper spline.

HOTLINKS

- Dealer ads, page 86
- Reader ads, page 95
- Club Guide, page 176
- Website: www.pnd.co.uk/aroc

SPECIFICATIONS

	1300 GT Junior	1600 GT Junior	1750 GTV	2000 GTV
ENGINE	1290cc/4-cyl	1570cc/4-cyl	1779cc/4-cyl	1962cc/4-cyl
POWER (bhp@rpm)	103/6000	110/6000	122/5500	131/5500
TORQUE (lb ft@rpm)	101/3200	115/2900	137/3000	134/3000
TOP SPEED	104mph	112mph	118mph	122mph
0-60mph	13.2sec	10.3sec	10.1sec	9.2sec
CONSUMPTION	25mpg	24mpg	24mpg	21mpg
GEARBOX	5-spd	5-spd	5-spd	5-spd
LENGTH	13ft 5in (4.09m)	13ft 5in (4.09m)	13ft 5in (4.09m)	13ft 5in (4.09m)
WIDTH	5ft 2in (1.58m)	5ft 2in (1.58m)	5ft 2in (1.58m)	5ft 2in (1.58m)
WEIGHT	2224lb (1010kg)	2244lb (1020kg)	2240lb (1017kg)	2301lb (1045kg)

'Handling can be entertaining, but always feels safe and controllable. In a nutshell, they drive as good as they look'

SPOT THE GROT



Decent repair sections are now available for all common rot spots at £30 a throw.



Original Carello headlamps are prized by Alfa owners, currently irreplaceable in rhd.



Heart-shaped grilles suffer from pitting, new replacements cost close on £100.



Split seats and warped door cards common, but all can be replaced to original standard.



Dashboards crack, repros only in lhd. Good used ones change hands for £120 to £150.