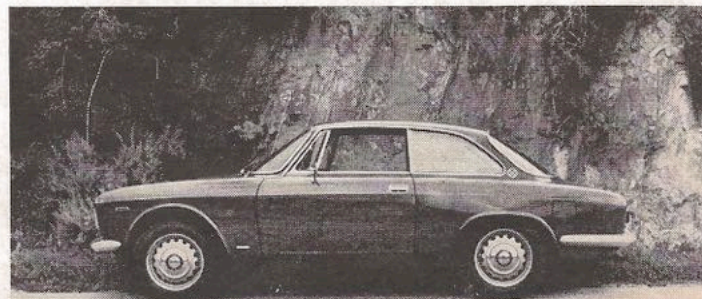




SCOTT MALCOLM PHOTOS

ALFA ROMEO GTV

*Grace, style and excitement in
an (occasional) 2+2 sports sedan*





CRASH! THE ENTRANCE of our Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint GTV was undeniably dramatic. The scene: A fog-smothered coast highway intersection, where the Alfa waited apprehensively before a red signal, surrounded by darkness and things that go bump in the night. The heavy: An on-coming full-size native sedan, secure in self knowledge and pride of home turf. The action: Predictable and disastrous. Nuccio Bertone would have wept.

Taken squarely up the back by two tons at 30 mph, the rear bodywork was crushed, but with superb progressive reluctance; to such good effect that our driver emerged physically unharmed, though with a bombed-out psyche. Crumpling extended forward to the front of the rear wheel well, popping loose the rear window and distorting the rear vent frames. Surprisingly, however, the doors could be opened after the collision, and even the chassis and rear axle geometry remained undistorted. All of which rounds out to high marks indeed for the craftsmen of Milano, plus a concomitant hint to the legislators of Washington that there may be even more to automotive safety than lap belts and hazard lights.

Three weeks later, after corrective ministrations by Alfa Romeo's Long Beach, Calif., facility, we were once again entrusted with the same GTV. Barring a high-speed wind whistle from the vent window and a rattle from the rear package shelf the car seemed as new, and once again we began to experience that rare, easy Italian charm with which nearly any Alfa Romeo progressively disarms, beguiles and finally enchants us.

Very few test cars have been flattered by the instant acceptance and sustained interest the GTV commanded during its reign over the *Road & Track* parking lot. Our tenure with the very similar Giulia Sprint GT (R&T, December 1964) had been enthusiastic but brief, and this time most staff members managed to find impeccable reasons either to renew their acquaintance or to see what they had missed three years ago. As testing proceeded, nearly every driver had praise for the car; a rather startling unanimity of opinion.

For example, even a Porsche owner ungrudgingly approved the entire Alfa *gestalt*, and spoke highly of its quick, precise handling and instant recovery through a badly chuck-holed stretch of dirt road. And a former Chrysler engineer tried a brief test ride, returned wondering "how the devil do they do that with a live rear axle," then forthwith demanded more time for a really thorough examination.

On analysis, the reasons for this broad spectrum of appeal are both simple and complex. They boil down to a machine carefully designed to become an extension of the human body, satisfying its wishes and amplifying its physical actions with a minimum of mechanical interference. This is no uncommon goal for automobile designers, of course, but the scarcity of such vehicles indicates the extreme difficulty of execution.

An Alfa Romeo GTV in full flight down a winding back road is considerably more than the sum of its parts, but an examination of some important components at least partially describes the whole car. The engine, a 1570-cc, dohc, inline 4, is basically the same power source Alfa has used in previous 1600 models, including the Sprint GT, Sprint Speciale and the Duetto. In the Giulia GTV (Grand Touring Veloce) carburetion is by a pair of horizontal twin-choke Webbers.

Engine performance is flexible but not mechanically smooth. It is quite possible to lug from 2000 rpm, and if the owner does this judiciously at the appropriate times the engine's longevity will be enhanced. The engine starts quickly, idles quietly and outside of a tendency to foul plugs in easy running it is remarkably vice-free for a unit with a power output of over 1.2 bhp/cu in. Alfa tests each engine for over two hours on the bench before installation.

At cruising speeds of 70-80 mph, where the car would otherwise be in its element, a peculiar resonance appears—apparently a heterodyning beat between the dual exhaust system and another noise element. This annoyance could, and



should, be tuned out. Also, this engine has the standard Alfa trait of running "too cool"; at less than 175° F. A long-time Alfa owner's ploy has been to partially block the radiator, especially in cold weather, but a 195° thermostat would be a better solution. A higher operating temperature should reduce wear, corrosion, and hydrocarbon emission, and certainly should improve performance of the minimal Alfa heating system.

The fuel-gauge needle is supplemented by a red warning light which flashes intermittently as low fuel sloshes from side to side in the tank; then the light settles down to a baleful, accusing glare as the last few gallons are reached. The early blinking can cause an inexperienced driver to make over-frequent gas stops, but the progressive action of the system soon becomes useful.

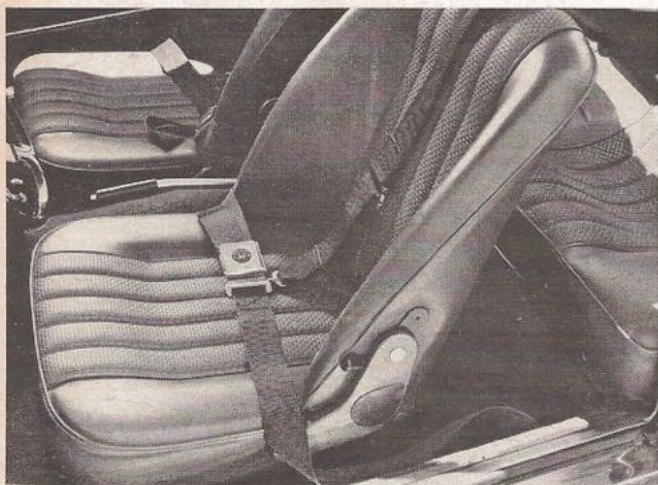
Our great enjoyment of the superb Alfa Romeo transmission has brought forth encomiums in the past and undoubtedly will again. This all-but-faultless unit gives the driver a control of gear ratios very nearly as flexible, swift and effortless as the thought of shifting itself. All five forward gears are synchromesh, with first and second on the lefthand leg of a "double-H" gate, third and fourth in the center, and fifth and a telescoping lockout reverse at the right. A double spring action urges the lever toward the center from either side, and as soon as the driver learns to let it seek its own position there is no excuse whatever for confusion in either up- or down-shifting.

Gear ratios are evenly spaced, from the very low 3.30:1 first gear up through the overdrive 0.79:1 fifth. Most about-town puttering centers around third gear, however, to the det-

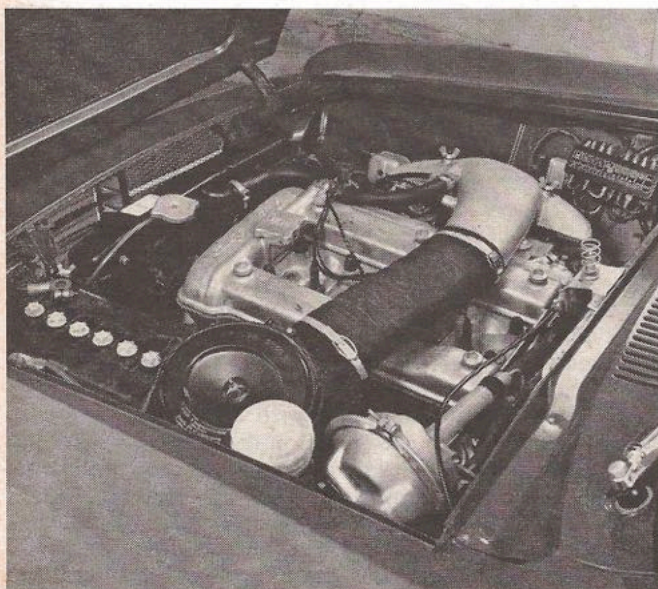
ALFA ROMEO GTV AT A GLANCE

Price as tested	\$4448
Engine	4-cyl inline, dohc, 1570 cc, 125 bhp
Curb weight, lb	2230
Top speed, mph	112
Acceleration, 0-¼ mi, sec	17.6
Average fuel consumption, mpg	23
Summary:	Traditional Alfa virtues and vices: superb handling, gearbox, finish; minimal heating & ventilation . . . redesigned front seats, improved rear seating area.

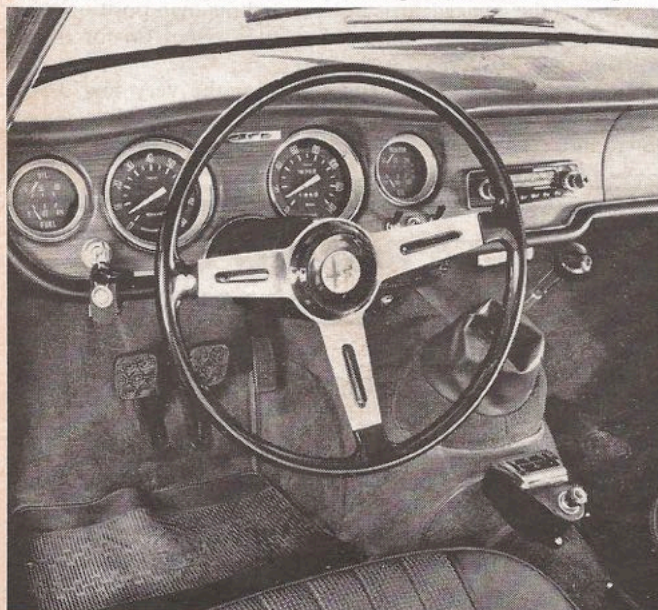
ALFA ROMEO GTV



New vinyl-clad bucket seats give firm support, have seatback adjustment. Lever lets back fold forward for rear-seat entry.



Veloce arrangement requires cross-top air duct leading to two side-draft Webers. In line 4-cyl engine produces 125 bhp.



Hooded console cuts reflections; is well instrumented, but needs ammeter. Redline-less tachometer reads to 8000 rpm.

rimment of the fuel supply but the benefit of the engine. The sharp, eager clutch bite recorded in our test of the Sprint GT was missing in the GTV. Acceleration tests, and even the reasonably fierce street driving this car invites, produced unmistakable indications of slip when completing shifts, along with doubts regarding the adequacy and longevity of the 7.9-in. dia. clutch plate. At this time, this is speculation.

Comfort appraisals were oddly varied, and we could arrive at no clear pattern of agreement. Most drivers, ranging through both extremes of the height scale, could find excellent accommodation for operating the car easily and with long-haul comfort. Others decided that their arm and leg length apparently were outside the Italian norm, requiring some to adopt an indecorous knee-spraddle around the steering wheel and a few to resort to an unstylish elbow-cock.


The new Alfa swept-around bucket seat, however, earned complete—or nearly complete—approval. (One right-side entrant attempted too-hasty ingress, came afoul of the seat's outer wing, and later made piteous claims of having been rendered rump-sprung.) The configuration of the front seats is very good, giving complete lateral support during brisk driving, yet freedom for necessary body action. Seat travel is long and seat-back rake is variable through a considerable arc by use of a large, positive-acting control knob at the side. The rear compartment is comfortable and large enough for occasional occupancy by two adults, with the lower seat cushions hollowed somewhat to make better use of headroom.

The instrument panel design is almost identical with the clean, readable layouts of the GTV's forebears. Dials and gauges, including an oil-temperature gauge, are set well down into the console, eliminating all but occasional sidelight reflections from their faces. The manual controls are grouped close to the driver's hands in natural, logical positions, though a row of three identical toggle switches is unlabeled and unnecessarily confusing. Operation of the light switch will be unusual to most new drivers—it consists of a knobbed stalk projecting leftward out of the steering column and is twisted forward to turn on the headlights, then lowered for high beams.

The interior of the GTV is luxurious and impressive, yet not overdone. All the amenities are functional, not merely decorative, and taken together they give an overall feeling of invitation, comfort and purpose. Both the seats and the side panels are upholstered in soft, padded vinyl, which is both firm and agreeable to the touch. The steering wheel is large and properly substantial, yet simple and attractive, as are the other major controls. Rather than attempting to camouflage them—the parking brake lever is prominently, and conveniently, right out in the open between the front seats—Alfa took the opposite course and made them important features of the interior design.

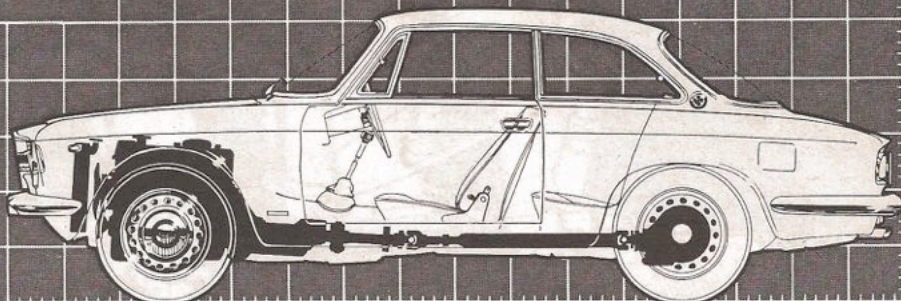
Vision from within the car is particularly good, and the large glass area and unobtrusive pillars also help give the exterior an airy, sporting look. The rear-quarter *quadrifoglio* badges are a reminder of the days when great racing Alfas carried this symbol, which, incidentally, has begun to appear again on the new 2-liter, rear-engine prototype.

Alfa Romeo brakes have always been a matter of considerable pride to their owners, from the impressive-finned-aluminum drums of yesteryear down to the present vacuum-servo-assisted discs. With 11.3-in.-discs in front and 9.7-in. at the rear, the GTV can be slowed or stopped quickly, without undue effort, and under perfect control. A series of hard stops from 60 mph showed exactly the result we expected from a well-designed disc system: sustained braking power with very little increase in pedal effort, and no loss of control.

As one of the last sporting redoubts of the live rear axle, Alfa maintains its position with powerful ammunition indeed. The combination of light, precise steering and controllable understeer through almost any road condition makes it an easy, safe and enjoyable car for the novice, as well as a source of continuing exhilaration to the skilled driver. 



ROAD TEST ALFA ROMEO GTV



SCALE: 10" DIVISIONS

PRICE

Basic list \$4200
As tested \$4448

ENGINE

Type 4 cyl inline, dohc
Bore x stroke, mm 78 x 82
Equivalent in 3.07 x 3.23
Displacement, cc/cu in. 1570/95.8
Compression ratio 9.0:1
Bhp @ rpm 125 @ 6000
Equivalent mph 116
Torque @ rpm, lb-ft. 115 @ 2800
Equivalent mph 54
Carburetion 2 Weber 40 DCOE 27
Type fuel required premium

DRIVE TRAIN

Clutch diameter, in. 7.9
Gear ratios: 5th (0.79) 3.60:1
4th (1.00) 4.56:1
3rd (1.36) 6.21:1
2nd (1.99) 9.08:1
1st (3.30) 15.0:1
Synchronesh on all 5
Final drive ratio 4.56:1

CHASSIS & BODY

Body/frame steel unit
Brake type: ATE disc with vacuum assist, drum parking brake
Swept area, sq in. 368
Wheel type & size, in. 15 x 4.5
Tires Pirelli Cinturato S 155-15
Steering type worm & sector
Overall ratio 15:1
Turns, lock-to-lock 3.75
Turning circle, ft. 32.8
Front suspension: independent with unequal-length A-arms, coil springs, tube shocks, anti-roll bar.
Rear suspension: live axle, trailing arms, coil springs, tube shocks.

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Included in "as tested" price: AM/FM/SW radio, 2 seat & shoulder belts, outside mirror.
Other: cast alloy wheels, rear seat belts, rear window defroster.

ACCOMMODATION

Seating capacity, persons 2 + 2
Seat width, front/rear 2 x 21.5/2x23.0
Head room, front/rear 40.0/35.0
Seat back adjustment, deg. 30
Driver comfort rating (scale of 100):
Driver 69 in. tall 85
Driver 72 in. tall 80
Driver 75 in. tall 75

INSTRUMENTATION

Instruments: 140-mph speedometer, 8000-rpm tachometer; oil pressure, oil temp, water temp & fuel level gauges.
Warning lights: generator, directional signals, lights on, high beam, heater on, low fuel.

MAINTENANCE

Crankcase capacity, qt. 6.0
Change interval, mi. 3600
Filter change interval, mi. 3600
Chassis lube interval, mi. 3600
Tire pressures, psi 24/26

MISCELLANEOUS

Body styles available: coupe as tested.
Warranty period, 6 mo/unlimited mileage.

GENERAL

Curb weight, lb. 2230
Test weight 2625
Weight distribution (with driver), front/rear, % 53/47
Wheelbase, in. 93.0
Track, front/rear 51.5/50.0
Overall length 161.0
Width 62.0
Height 52.0
Frontal area, sq ft 17.9
Ground clearance, in. 5.0
Overhang, front/rear 30.4/37.6
Usable trunk space, cu ft 9.5
Fuel tank capacity, gal. 14.0

CALCULATED DATA

Lb/hp (test wt) 21.0
Mph/1000 rpm (5th gear) 19.6
Engine revs/mi (60 mph) 3060
Piston travel, ft/mi 1645
Rpm @ 2500 ft/min 4645
Equivalent mph 91
Cu ft/ton mi 64.4
R&T wear index 50.4
Brake swept area sq in/ton 280

ROAD TEST RESULTS

ACCELERATION

Time to distance, sec:
0-100 ft 3.7
0-250 ft 6.3
0-500 ft 9.6
0-750 ft 12.5
0-1000 ft 14.9
0-1320 ft (1/4 mi) 17.6
Speed at end of 1/4 mi, mph 77
Time to speed, sec:
0-30 mph 3.4
0-40 mph 5.5
0-50 mph 7.2
0-60 mph 10.5
0-70 mph 14.2
0-80 mph 19.2
0-100 mph 35.5
Passing exposure time, sec:
To pass car going 50 mph 7.4

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Normal driving, mpg 21-25
Cruising range, mi 295-350

SPEEDS IN GEARS

5th gear (5700 rpm), mph 112
4th (6800) 104
3rd (6800) 77
2nd (6800) 53
1st (6800) 31

BRAKES

Panic stop from 80 mph:
Deceleration, % g 78
Control excellent
Fade test: percent of increase in pedal effort required to maintain 50% g deceleration rate in six stops from 60 mph 11
Parking brake: hold 30% grade. no
Overall brake rating very good

SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph indicated actual 26.8
40 mph 36.0
60 mph 54.6
80 mph 73.2
100 mph 91.4
Odometer, 10.0 mi actual 9.62

ACCELERATION & COASTING

