

2000 GT Veloce SE (Special Equipment)

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Introduction

The reason for researching the 2000 GT Veloce SE and putting pen to paper are two-fold. Very little has been documented about these ‘Special Equipment’ cars and the aim here is to give them a bit more exposure. Additionally, what has been written in books, catalogues and magazines, has not been entirely complimentary, so I would also like to redress this imbalance.

Time and place

By 1975, the 105 series 2000 GT Veloce was reaching the end of its natural life, as it was based on 1960s technology and design, and was about to be superseded by the more modern, 116 series Alfetta GTV 2000 with that all-important wedge shape. It obviously made good business sense to produce an end-of-line special edition in order to help sell off remaining stocks.

Stuart Taylor very kindly sent me a list of the 17 cars that have been registered to the AROC since 1982. Looking at the chassis numbers, it seems that they span at least one thousand cars, although it has been estimated that only a hundred or so Specials were actually made. Therefore, I think we can suppose that the cars selected for Special Equipment conversion were the final orders arriving from Italy, plus the ones that were still hanging around Alfa Romeo GB, Edgware Road, London.

Pricing in 1975

Interestingly, **Autocar** magazine, published 6th July 1972, ran an Auto Test on the Alfa Romeo 2000 GT Veloce with the heading ‘Same style, more punch’. As you can see in the table below, it lists the price of a standard 2000 GTV and the cost of extras including purchase tax.

MANUFACTURER	
Alfa Romeo SpA, Via Gattamelata 45, Milan, Italy	
UK CONCESSIONAIRES	
Alfa Romeo (GB) Ltd., Edgware Road, London NW2	
PRICES	
Basic	£2,012.00
Purchase Tax	£420.73
Total (in G.B.)	£2,432.73
EXTRAS (inc. P.T.)	
Heated rear window*	£19.33
Limited slip differential*	£38.67
Air conditioning	£319.00
Alloy wheels	£96.67
Electric windows	£58.00
* Fitted to test car	
PRICE AS TESTED	£2,490.73

In a later **Autocar** magazine, published 14th September 1972, there is a ‘2 car test’ which compares a Datsun 240Z and an Alfa Romeo 2000 GTV, in which the article says:

‘It seems that the heated rear window and Limited-slip differential, although listed as extras, are part of the British market specifications, bringing the total price of the Alfa 2000 tested to £2,650.’

One would expect the ‘SE’ to have been priced above the standard car, which as listed in **Autocar** magazine on 6th September 1975 had a selling price of between £2,400 - £2,700.

The 'SE' was very well equipped and although we don't know the total cost for these extras in 1975, one can assume that Trimcraft made a decent profit on carrying out all the work that went into producing the SE and that this cost would have been added to the final price tag pushing it to the upper price limit of £2,700 or perhaps beyond.

Unrecognised & unwanted

A special equipment car or 'SE' usually adds a premium and becomes sought after; although I feel that this may not have been the case with the 2000 GT Veloce SE, which has never really been cherished and of the hundred or so that were made we can be sure that very few of these cars still exist today. Most will have either rusted away or been broken for spares and of those that have survived, a proportion will have been converted back to the standard car leaving very few in original SE attire. There are no records of which cars were converted and nothing on the log book to indicate an SE; so once returned to standard, an SE is in effect, lost forever.

Compare the following pair of superb red SEs which appeared together on the website **Flickr**. Which do you prefer - the almost original SE on the left or the SE on the right which now looks like a standard GTV?



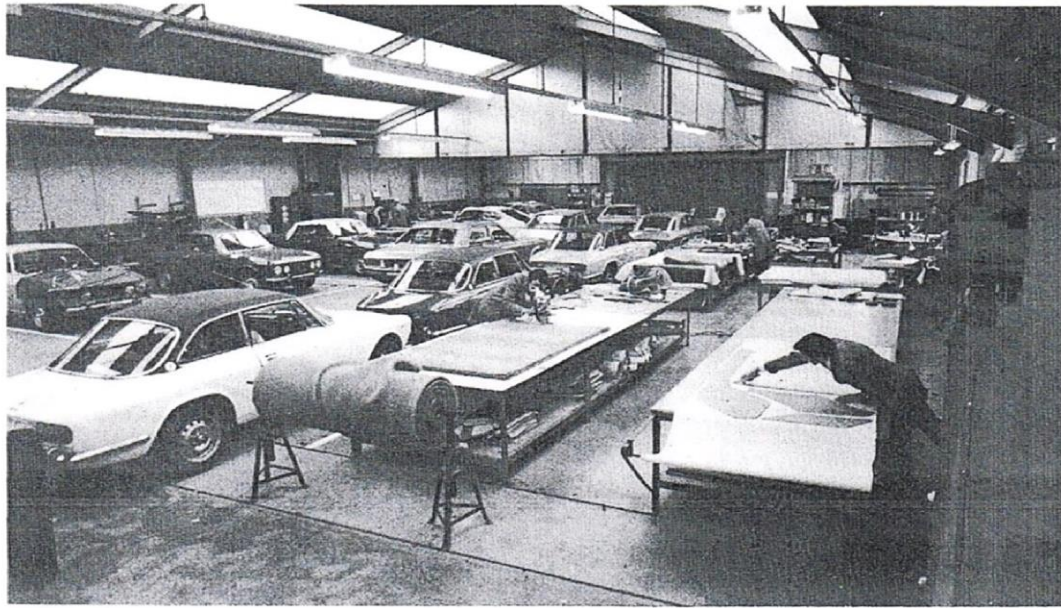
The SE is nowadays an extremely rare car to come across so perhaps we should not be so quick to dismiss the car as eminent Alfa experts and connoisseurs have done before now. It has often been said that the fashions of the 1970s were tacky, with glamour, vinyl, dodgy facial hair and naff flares; therefore it's not surprising that the SE has been considered in the same way as it reflects that period in history. Perhaps we should accept this variant for the car that it is - produced during a particular time for a particular customer.

The printed word

Here are some of the things that have been printed about the Special Equipment variant in various publications over the years.

In **Autocar** magazine, week ending 8th February 1975, there appeared an article on page 43 called: *'Special Trimming - The story behind the latest crop of 'special' cars from sales starved manufacturers.'* It included a photo showing eight Alfa Romeo 2000 GT Veloce SEs on the production line alongside other makes of car.

A view of the workshop at Luton as the line of Alfa Romeo 2000 GTV Specials is worked on. Pattern making and cutting (right) is a highly skilled business



The article talks about the creation of specials and makes particular reference to the Alfa Romeo 2000 GTV 'SE'. Most of what was printed appears below:

'At a time that the car industry is so hungry for sales it hurts, one company at least is doing very nicely thank you out of the current recession.'

'For Trimcraft Motor Products Ltd., a subsidiary of the Tricentrol International Group, have found a unique – and extremely profitable – niche in the market, up-grading the specifications of a whole range of cars, by fitting them with specialized custom packages. If you can't sell a car – make it a de luxe model, the trade seem to be saying.'

'Most motorists will be aware of the number and variety of special 'one off' customized cars available on the market. The theory is that if a particular car could use a specification uplift, Trimcraft contract to take a limited production run, and transform the cars into 'GT' or 'Super' models by fitting vinyl roofs, body mouldings, air conditioning, special radios, tape players, sun roofs, or special wheels. On small runs they can do this very much more effectively than can the manufacturer himself. At the Motor Show last year, for example, Tricentrol were responsible for special runs on Alfa Romeo, BMW, Daf, Lotus, Saab, Skoda, and some specialized minis.'

'The good reception given to the Alfa Romeo 2000 GTV Special with its Montreal wheels and the Skoda S110R with its leather roof and modified grille point to the success of the concept.'

'Obviously Trimcraft are not alone in offering vinyl roofs, they are only one of several companies in this field. However,... they say that it is impossible to fit a vinyl roof properly without first taking out both front and rear windscreens, and wrapping the

vinyl material right round the leading edges of the roof. Any other method results eventually in the material lifting, and the roof looking scruffy. The adhesive is the result of a long and detailed research programme to find the best substance for permanently affixing the material.'

'Sun-roof fitting is a natural adjunct to the customizing ride, and one they will be expanding in the future.'

'...and it is interesting to note the extent of the colour range offered in vinyl roofs. If the leather-cloth (or vinyl) roof matches the colour of the interior trim, the overall effect is much more pleasing than a simple black top. The Alfa special used this latest extension of the colour range.'

In **Classic and Sportscar** magazine, June 1982 there was an article written by Jon Dooley called 'Bertone's Beauty', which profiles the Alfa Romeo 2000 GT Veloce, and includes a photo of the SE plus the following brief mention:

'...in the UK as part of the tidying up of the last remaining 2000 GTV stock an SE version was offered with vinyl roof, alloy wheels, rear fog warning lights and radio cassette standardised. The SE version, although well equipped, was a rather tarty affair.'

This may be a press shot taken around 1975, which shows the front and off-side view of the SE.



In his book, **Essential Alfa Romeos - Giulia & Giulietta Coupes & Spiders** published in 1995, David Hodges says:

'Special equipment versions sometimes helped move cars from dealer forecourts. Among the adornments on this UK-created 2000 GT Veloce SE is a vinyl roof – a passing fad.'

David Hodges concludes that *'the 2000 GTV had reached maturity at the beginning of the decade (1970) and was perhaps past its prime by mid-decade, when it no longer stood out in the crowd and was seriously dated in some respects, such as boot space.'*

There is also a photo of an SE, presumably taken at the same time as the photo above (see marble floor), but showing the rear and nearside view.



In his catalogue **The Giulia Coupes 1963 – 1976**, published by AROC in 1998, Chris Savill wrote the following about the SE:

'This was Alfa GB's attempt to sell off the final allocation of 2000 GTVs when the Alfetta GT was about to become available. A vinyl roof, a side rubbing strip along the cease line, a matt black grill, rear fog warning lights, rather fussy multi-finned alloy wheels and tinted glass were immediate distinguishing features. Inside a radio cassette was fitted as standard. There was a rumour that the alloy wheels were fitted because the cars had been standing too long and the steel wheels had rusted! Some say that the vinyl roof was applied to avoid a re-spray!'

Chris Savill ends with the information:

'I could find no figures as to how many SE's were turned out but it may have been a hundred or so. Production: 1975 – 1976.'

A moment in time

This section will show some of the images found on the internet while researching these cars and look at the various features that make up the Special Equipment.

I will also try to evaluate which of these features enhance the GT coupe image and which ones are less successful. This will of course be based on my personal taste and opinion, which has mellowed over the years. I wasn't entirely smitten with these 'extras' back in 1987, when I bought my own SE and restored it back to an almost standard car.

Below are 2 images which are on the **Internet Movie Cars Database**, taken from the film 'Carry on Behind' made in 1975. The yellow piper 2000 GT Veloce SE in the background would have been identical to my own car when it was new.



These specials have grown on me and I must confess that the following blue car with beige vinyl roof does look rather classy. It appeared on the **Alfa Romeo Bulletin Board & Forum** in May 2007, following an inquiry about repairing the vinyl roof. I have reproduced most of the dialogue as it is very natural and causes Alfa forum sceptics to have a change of heart regarding the SE:

'Why not get rid of the vinyl roof, alfa never intended the gtv to have one. From what I have read the SE options were dealer add-ons to sell slow moving stock and are in my opinion a little tacky.'

'Thanks for the advice Nero....I think if you saw her you'd be saying the opposite...Dutch Blue with a beige roof looks anything but tacky! I have however replaced the black front grill with a chrome one!'

'The SE was one of the last Mohicans, of which only a few have been produced, and in my point of view, surely a good example should be treasured whatever the reason was for fixing the vinyl roof.'

'Joseph..thank you kindly!! I couldn't agree more regarding the SE. It is fast becoming a very rare car and my aim has been to restore the car over time to make it one of the best examples around.'

'It's most definitely a head turner!!'

'Any photos, never seen ones of these beasts in the flesh.'

'Hopefully this will work...'



'Actually that doesn't look too bad; I was expecting something really garish. Tell you what I have never been a big fan of is the sunroofs; it seems to ruin the lines of the roof too much for my liking. Thanks for that.'

'Is the aerial standard?'

'It is indeed, it also came with a state of the art (for the time) Hitachi Radio/Cassette player.'

'I'm not a 2000 fan (never have been, hard-core 1750 man me), but this is sort of growing on me, I wonder if there are any more on the BB, obviously a UK mod, so given the climate can't imagine too many around, what with the nailed on roof.'

What are the SE features?

There were no records kept of the Special Equipment added by Alfa Romeo (GB) Ltd., so we must be guided by what Chris Savill listed in his catalogue (published by AROC in 1998); as well as the two black and white 'press shot' photos of the 'new' 2000 GTV SE and what we have found in existing cars. From these sources we can confidently say that all SEs came with the following seven special features:

1. A vinyl roof
2. Alloy wheels
3. Blacked out bright work (grill, headlight cowlings, wiper arms and blades, and driver's door mirror)
4. Side rubbing strips
5. Tinted windows
6. Stereo radio/cassette player, rear speakers and roof mount aerial
7. Rear fog warning lights and dash mounted switch

Other features which also seem to be common on all SEs are the heated rear screen and limited-slip differential, but it seems that these were standard on all British 2000 GTVs at the time. So far, all SEs I have come across were registered in 1975 and are therefore 'N' registered. Some cars with black vinyl roofs were also fitted with a full length sun roof.

What follows are details of the SE features I have found on my own car (and a few other SEs spotted along the way), but this list is by no means definitive or conclusive and should be considered as a starting point. Some of the items I have listed may not be the same on all SEs.

The cars were put together over a period of time from the latter half of 1974 to the start of 1975, so specific item parts ordered may have varied in make and model over this period. For example, the rear speaker covers fitted to my own car do not appear to be the same as those on the black and white press release car.

Vinyl roof

The **vinyl roof** is probably the most outstanding feature of the SE variant and the one which looks the most dated – just the thing to have in the 1970s, but not particularly desirable after that. Trimcraft used a vinyl colour to match the interior of the car, so two vinyl colours can be found - *black* and *beige*.

The vinyl roof on the SE was well tailored and professionally finished, with seamed edges folded over and riveted to the windscreen surrounds and tucked under the stainless steel trim that go around the side windows and down the ‘A’ pillars, with the bottom of the serpent badge resting on the lowest seam on the ‘C’ pillars.

The ‘cover-up’ theory regarding the vinyl roof that Chris Savill hints at in his catalogue ‘*The Giulia Coupes 1963 – 1976*’, perhaps should remain merely hearsay. I can say for sure that when I removed the vinyl roof from my own SE in 1988 the paintwork and metal were fine underneath. Many cars wore vinyl around that period, so almost certainly the vinyl roof was added for reasons of fashion.



The vinyl roof on my own car in 1987, at only 12 years old, was beyond salvation, in fact, the whole car was in a bit of a mess dissolving like Alka-Seltzer each time it rained. If the vinyl had been in good condition I would have kept it to keep the car original and also because I think that a black roof on piper yellow paint contrast quite nicely – very 1970s.

Unfortunately, my car had been exposed to the elements and the material had deteriorated badly with splits and cracks and despite using various vinyl restorers it had

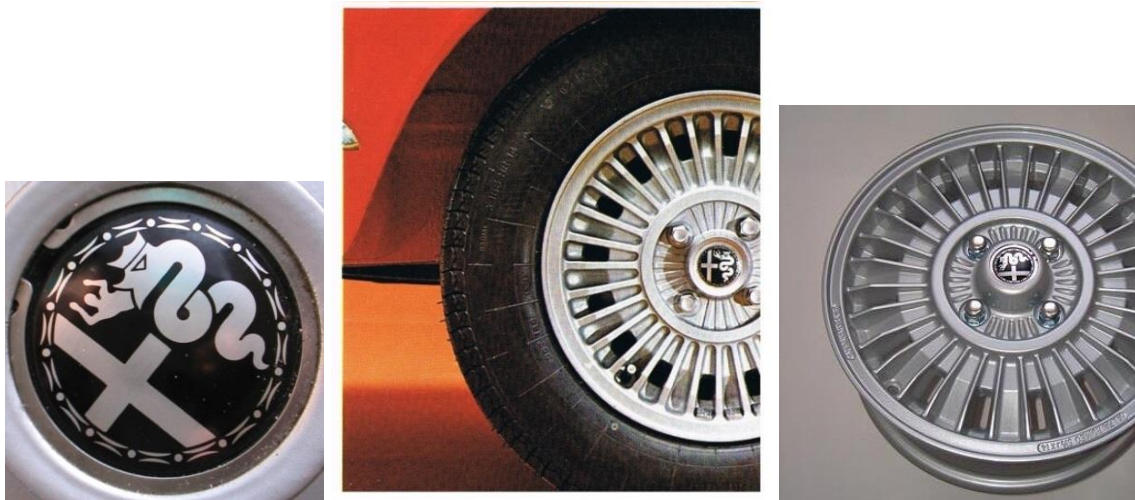
to go. When I ripped it off, after much deliberation, I did so thinking that at a price, I could one day have a new one made up, if I so desired.

Alloy wheels

These finned alloys manufactured by Campagnolo and Cromadora are often referred to as 'Millerighe' or 'Turbina' alloys and must be the second most striking feature on the SE.

According to Keith Faulkner's very informative article about alloy wheel restoration on the Alfa Romeo Owners Club Australia – Queensland Division website, there is only a small visual difference between 105 Series Turbinas, but the technical differences are more significant. The Campagnolo Turbinas were high-aluminium-content sand castings and weighed around 5.785kg each. The Cromodoras with higher magnesium content were slightly lighter at 5.725kg and more finely finished than the Campagnolos, which means they are also easier to balance and keep clean.

The UK sales brochure, which shows both a Spider & Coupe wearing Campagnolos (photo in the centre), says that all the 2000 Veloce models were available with these alloys as an optional extra. If you are going to produce a Special Equipment model it would be foolish not to add these desirable and delicately styled alloys.



Their design hasn't dated in the same way as the vinyl roof and in fact, it is one of those designs that looked stylish in the 1970s and to my mind still looks modern today. Personally, I consider them rather flattering as they complement the slatted grill on the 2000 GTV. The refined design of the 'Millerighe' alloys mirrors the grill superbly, adding a bit of character and aggression to what is otherwise an extremely cute car.

Clearly one thing to watch out for with these magnesium based alloys is corrosion, although they are available again new from E B Spares. These alloys save over 2kg in weight over a standard 14" x 5" steel rim weighing in at 8.0kg. As well as being lighter and more attractive, the alloys make for a more confident driving experience wearing wider 185 tyres compared to the rather slender 165 steel wheels.

Blacked out bright work

Another important distinguishing feature of the SE is the blacked out grill, headlight surrounds, door mirror, wiper arms and blades, which complement the black vinyl roof. In fact, blacking out items of exterior trim started to become common place on cars from the 1970s onwards.

Black helps to hide detail and perhaps unfortunately, in the case of the 2000 GT Veloce the matt black paint seems to flatten the **grill**, which is a pity as the grill is one of the defining features of the car. On the positive side, blacking out the horizontal slats does help to highlight the traditional Alfa heart.

The black **headlight cowlings** give the effect that the headlights are floating inside the grill. The Alfa Montreal has sunken twin headlights semi-hidden and floating within black, so perhaps this is what inspired the SE designers.

The SE also came with a matt black **driver's door mirror**. The round door mirror suits the 2000 GT Veloce as it complements the circular headlights. Painted black is different, though the standard chrome is difficult to improve upon.

The **wiper arms** of the SE were also painted matt black and black wiper blades were added, much like all the other cars of that period and up to the present day. However, the 1960s style stainless steel or chrome finish wipers on a standard 2000 GT Veloce is most fetching, so why try to hide them.

The black paintwork on most of these items had worn off my own car just 12 years down the line. Some paint remained between the slats on the grill, on the inside of the headlight cowlings and only a bit had flaked off the wiper arms. We can conclude that Trimcraft spent very little time considering longevity when it came to paint preparation and paint quality.

Side rubbing strips

The **rubbing strips** run along the mid-riff from the front wing, along the door and rear wing. They were theoretically a good idea as the body of the coupe is very exposed along this crease line, especially when other car owners carelessly fling open their doors. Suffice it to say, the body strips protruding as they do, add nothing to the beauty of this elegantly designed car.

In fact, looking at the SEs that exist now most cars have 'lost' these side strips, which makes me think that they were probably not very securely held in the first place or difficult to replace after a re-spray.

Tinted windows

The **tinted windows** could have been chosen as an optional extra when the 2000 GT Veloce was new, but came as standard on the SE model. I suspect that one of the selection criteria for those cars despatched to Trimcraft was that they already had tinted

windows in place. This may be one of the reasons why SE cars do not have sequential chassis numbers.

The tinted windows, which have a greenish finish, suit the car, as well as having a practical function. Below are examples of the ID/code stamps used by the manufacturer SICURSIV on the laminated front screen and tempered side windows.



Stereo radio/cassette player

Most cars were fitted with a state of the art Hitachi Auto radio/cassette, model number CSW-217R. Manufactured in 1974, it ties in with the year of manufacture of the SE. The listed data supplied by the Radio Museum state that it was a Super-Heterodyne, ZF/IF 465 kHz, broadcasting medium and long wave, with a power output of 14 W. Below is an image copied from the Radio Museum website.



Interestingly, in an advertisement for the Hitachi Car Radio CSW 217 published in Motor Sport magazine in March 1974, the player was available from Hitachi Sales (UK) Ltd., London for £63 (speakers extra). The photos below show the Hitachi radio/cassette in place, although it's also possible that other models were fitted.



Parcel shelf speakers

The **speakers** which were fitted into the rear parcel shelf of my own car were a pair of square shaped Dual Core Pioneer TS-161 Full Range car stereo speakers, which in their day, were reasonably good and nearly 40 years later they are still working well.



They look very neat, lying flush with the shelf, but from inside the boot looking upwards you can see the hardboard panel was a bit hacked by the Trimcraft fitters.

Roof mount aerial

The Harada **roof mount aerial** model R-2S was very popular in the 1960s and 1970s and was fitted to all SEs. Being diagonally angled it looks streamlined and rather purposeful on the coupe.



However, as they are made of chrome they do become pitted over time. I recently bought a new one from Classic Car Stereo, although there is a limited stock available.



Rear fog warning lights

Rear fog lights were a good safety feature and would have been especially useful in a typical UK winter. The fog lights were bolted directly onto the rear valance under the bumper with wiring fed through the valance and then into the boot via the number plate light cables on into the cabin under the seats.

The switch, which lights up when activated, was placed on the dashboard to the left of the steering wheel, alongside the rear demister and light cluster dimmer switches.



Perhaps they do clutter the rear end a little, but to my mind, not overly so, since the rear light cluster is fairly large on the 2000 GT Veloce. They line up quite well mirroring the rear lights below the bumper.

My car had lamps identical to the Britax ‘fogbeaters’, which in the 1970s were sponsored by Jackie Stewart. These appear to be slightly longer than those fitted to the ‘press shot’ car, so again we cannot be sure if Trimcraft used the same lights on all cars.

To sum up

I think most people would give a thumbs-up to those Special Equipment features which could have been added as extras to the standard model back in 1975 including the *alloy wheels; tinted windows; fog warning lights; stereo system and roof mount aerial.*

However, many would think the other features are far from flattering. The roof is an integral part of the flowing lines of the 105 series Giulia coupe design and the *vinyl roof* does little to enhance the looks of the elegant shape of ‘disegno di Bertone’ and neither do the *side rubbing strips & blacked out paintwork.*

Whether you like the SE variant is a matter of personal taste, but these cars would have almost certainly appealed to a buyer in 1975 who was looking for a car with full specifications, a trendy image and a curvaceous retro shape.

SE values now

In the world of classic cars, a variety of factors contribute to value, including condition, provenance and rarity. Here are three cars found on the internet that were up for sale (and had sold at the time of writing) and give a good idea of the price you can expect to pay for a 2000 GT Veloce SE.

Ranging from £22,000 for an immaculate example with provenance and very low mileage; £8,400 for an original car with provenance, a reasonably low mileage, but in need of some work; and down to £1,265 for a car with dubious provenance, in need of a lot of work and probably a non-runner.

Suffice it to say, these are also the values you would expect to pay for a standard 2000 GT Veloce in similar states. It appears that as yet the SE tag, which makes the car extremely rare, adds very little, if any, extra value to the car. The Special Equipment features were all aesthetic and I cannot help thinking that if Alfa GB had made some mechanical and performance up-grades then desirability and price may well be different.

Bibliography & acknowledgements

- ‘**The Giulia Coupes 1963 – 1976**’, published by AROC UK in 1998, Chris Savill
- ‘**Essential Alfa Romeos - Giulia & Giulietta Coupes & Spiders**’ published in 1995, David Hodges
- ‘**Classic and Sportscar**’ magazine, published in June 1982, article written Jon Dooley
- ‘**Autocar**’ magazine, published 8th February 1975, article on page 43 called ‘*Special Trimming*’ written by CRG; 6th July 1972, article ‘Auto Test’; 14th September 1972, article ‘2 car test’

I would like to thank **Stuart Taylor**, Alfa Romeo Owners Club UK - 105 series register, for his encouragement in this endeavour.

I would also like to acknowledge the owners of those cars which appear in this article.

As well as the following websites which have been very useful for reference...

- ‘**www.flickr.com**’
- ‘**www.alfabb.com**’ (Alfa Romeo Bulletin Board & Forum)
- ‘**www.imcdb.org**’ (Internet Movie Cars Database)
- ‘**www.arocaql.com**’ (Alfa Romeo Owners Club Australia – Queensland Division)
- ‘**www.radiomuseum.org**’