



“New” GTV and Spider Buyers Guide



Chris Cousins looks at the pleasures and pitfalls of owning these two closely related models which were in production from 1995-2005



This article covers the Alfa Romeo GTV and Spider models launched in 1995, which remained in production until 2005. The Pininfarina design was bold at the time and still looks fresh today. Both models shared the same front end and there was some mechanical part commonality with the 155, which was based loosely around Fiat Tempra underpinnings.

Although Alfa had produced front wheel drive cars since the 1972 Alfasud, these were the first coupe and spider models so equipped. With the previous Alfetta GTV having been out of production since 1986 and the Series 4 Spider since 1992 there were no immediate predecessors to compare with. However initial reaction was very favourable with both models receiving tempered praise in the motoring press (remember this was the time when Alfa were still recovering and sales were very poor).

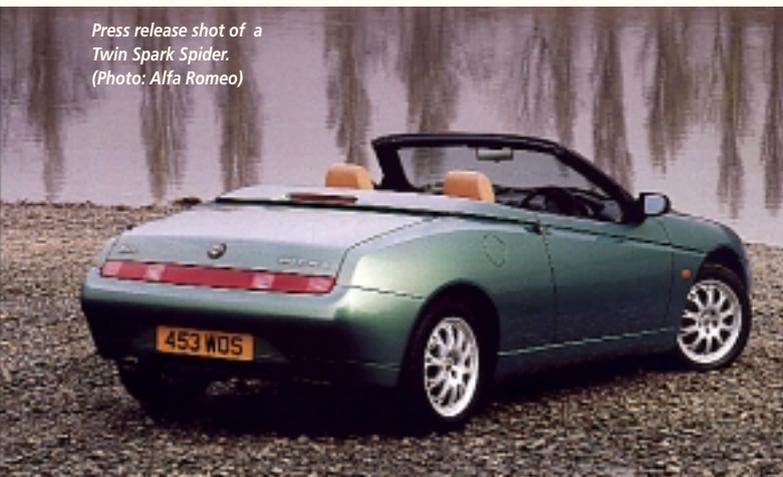
The 156 was still some years away and the reputation still had some ground to make up.

The only engine available at launch was the twin spark two litre that debuted on the 155. This was not the classic all alloy twin cam that died with the 75, but rather an Alfa alloy head mated to a generic Fiat cast iron block. Although this may have been a disappointment for some Alfisti, in practice the engine worked well and was powerful and reliable. A two litre V6 turbo was offered in the rest of Europe but not the UK. Initially only one specification was available, which included 15" alloy wheels, remote central locking, electric windows with one touch operation on the driver's side, electric heated mirrors and an electric radio aerial. Twin airbags and ABS were included too. The only options available were metallic paint, an electric sunroof and a Lusso pack which provided air

conditioning, leather trim and 16" alloys.

The glorious three litre V6 was introduced in 1998 for the GTV only in the UK although it was available in the Spider as well on the continent (and later in the UK too). Also in 1998 came the Phase 2 model, which had body coloured sills and lower bumpers, a chrome grille surround and silver highlights to the dashboard along with the climate controls from the early 156. The final update was made for the 2003 model year and introduced traction control, the new 2.0 JTS engine in Lusso models (although Turismo models continued with the Twin Spark engine) and most obviously, styling changes at the front end to introduce the bolder Alfa Romeo shield and offset number plate. Satellite navigation was also available from the options list for the first time.

Press release shot of a Twin Spark Spider. (Photo: Alfa Romeo)



Side on shows that the GTV changed little until the final series arrived in 2003. (Photo: Alfa Romeo.)

