

THIS WEEK

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**AUTOCAR
IMAGE**



Giulia spearheads Alfa recovery plan

■ New 3-series rival on sale in 2015 ■ Seven other new models due by 2018 ■ 'Skunkworks' set up to create them ■ Exclusively rear-wheel drive or 4WD, with a distinctly Italian flavour

Alfa Romeo will transform itself into a maker of stylish, high-quality rear-drive and all-wheel cars powered by bespoke engines, styled and engineered with strong reference to Alfa's and built entirely in Italy. The first model will be the Giulia, a new compact executive saloon to rival the V3-series, Mercedes-Benz A-Class and Audi A4.

will be followed by seven other new models by 2018, including a Giulia estate, two SUVs, a larger saloon, a two-strong range to replace the Giulietta and a new flagship sports car. They will be built on the same modular platform and powered by the same engine line-up. The latest €5 billion (£4.1bn) Alfa recovery plan, the fourth such in recent times, will aim to lift sales from 74,000 units last year to 400,000 by 2018. That's an increase of more

than five-fold and will expand the company's reach outside its European heartland into North America and China. Alfa boss Harald Wester laid out the 'rules' that each of the company's new cars must adhere to during a presentation on the future of all the Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) brands in Michigan last week. Each new Alfa must be powered by "advanced, innovative engines", have

"perfect 50/50 weight distribution", feature "a unique set of technical solutions", have "class exclusive power-to-weight ratios" and demonstrate "ground-breaking and distinctly Italian design". Alfa admits that its recent models – including the current Mito and Giulietta – "did not respect this DNA". It also said it had never fully cashed in on its 104-year-old history and significant success on

the race track by building commercially successful road cars. Sales peaked at around 180,000 vehicles in the 1980s and have been in decline since. "Our German competitors built a phenomenal lead over us over a number of years," Wester confessed in the Alfa presentation. "We had little credibility in making 'traditional' assertions on projections about Alfa. "We realised we needed a radical solution that would

resist the conformist pressure that a mass car manufacturer would exert, not be bound by traditional processes, benchmark itself against the best the German automotive

industry had to offer and be 'protected' and funded by senior leadership." An operation called 'Skunkworks' has been created to design and engineer the new

'Alfa's £4.1bn recovery plan aims to lift sales more than five-fold by 2018'

models. Two senior Ferrari chiefs have been appointed to oversee this, and more than 200 "hand-picked" engineers from FCA and the wider car industry have been brought on board. Engineering staffing levels are expected to grow to 600 by the end of next year. Alfa says Skunkworks will have "no interference from the FCA 'machine', except where talent is required". According to the company, the project is working to "tight deadlines"

and has "clear objectives and a single purpose". The most immediate goal is the launch of the Giulia next year. The Giulia will be the first car to get the brand's new rear-wheel drive platform, with all-wheel drive being offered as an option. The car's design is expected to take its cues from the 4C, with the manufacturer saying that the sports car is "the perfect embodiment of the brand's DNA".

Alfa promises to focus its attentions on people, rather than machinery – unlike, it says, many of its rivals – and will offer an "exceptional driver experience". The engines for the Giulia will be selected from the new lightweight range of four and six-cylinder petrols and diesels confirmed by Alfa last week, and are all likely to feature direct injection and turbocharging. The Italian-designed and

THIS WEEK

In search of Alfa DNA



ALFA ADMITS IT'S only the design of its most recent model that fits in with its historical DNA. In particular, it picked out the 2005 Brera, 2006 159 (pictured below) and 2006 Spider as being "beautiful cars". As such, the look of the next-generation Alfas isn't expected to depart too far from the design language established for these attractive cars. It's these models that mainly inspire the artist's impression you see here, with some nods to the most recent new Alfa, the 4C.



it engines will include four-cylinder petrol, with the lower-capacity models having power outputs of between 190 and 320bhp, while the four-cylinder unit will produce between 190 and 320bhp. The six-cylinder petrol will produce between 400 and just 500bhp, allowing the Giulia to be a full-blown rival to the likes of the BMW M3 and Mercedes C63 AMG. It will be the Giulia Cloverleaf, the diesel front, there is a four-cylinder engine producing between 105 and 150bhp, and a six-cylinder engine offered in outputs of between 250 and 350bhp. The new platform and engine will be the 'toolkit' to underpin and power the entire range of new models in the Skunkworks programme. It's a system similar to the Volkswagen Group's utilisation of the MQB platform and related engines

across several segments.

The Giulia saloon will be the first of eight new models, with the next seven arriving between 2016 and 2018 – among them a Giulia estate.

Two of the models will be smaller than the Giulia. One will be a rear-drive replacement for the current Giulietta five-door hatch. The other is unspecified at present but is likely to be an estate version of the Giulietta.

A saloon rival for the BMW 5-series will also be launched, plus two new SUVs. One of the SUVs will be an Audi Q3-sized compact model. The other will aim for the core of the market, taking on the likes of BMW's X3.

The final new model in the plan is a 'speciality' car to sit alongside the 4C coupé and 4C Spider in Alfa's expanded range. The identity of this car is unknown, but its location on a chart showing the positioning of the company's new models suggests that

it will be larger and more powerful than the 4C.

The manufacturer has also confirmed that the 4C will generate a more potent Cloverleaf-badged car in 2015. Indeed, Cloverleaf versions of all the new cars are planned to push the performance credentials of Alfa. The Cloverleaf range will

be crowned by a 500bhp-plus version of the company's 5-series-sized saloon.

There are some notable absentees from the plan. The Mito will not be replaced and will be phased out as new models start to reach the showrooms. The Mito is front-wheel drive and derived from another FCA model,

and therefore doesn't fit the Skunkworks strategy.

Plans to launch a new Alfa Spider derived from the next-generation Mazda MX-5 have also been shelved because the car would not conform to Alfa's 'made in Italy' pledge. The Spider will instead morph into a Fiat Abarth model (p18). **MARK TISSHAW**

FUTURE MODEL TIMELINE

	CURRENT	Q4 2015	2016-2018
Sub-compact	Mito		
Compact	Giulietta		New Giulietta hatch Giulietta estate
Mid-size		Giulia	Giulia estate
Full-size			Large saloon
SUV			Compact SUV Mid-size SUV
Speciality	4C coupé 4C Spider		New sports car

Alfa intends to learn from its past mistakes

THE REALLY SURPRISING thing about the presentation by Alfa Romeo boss Harald Wester was the unashamed exposure of the company's past mistakes. One slide shown on the giant screen mocked the idea of turning the Fiat Croma into the Alfa 164 and another described the Nissan Cherry-based Alfa Arna as the "original sin".

The presentation opened on a much more positive note, however, quoting Enzo Ferrari's famous remark about the company: "I still have for Alfa the tenderness of a first love – the pure affection of a child for his mother."

There was also an extensive rundown of Alfa's sporting success, starting way back in 1925, taking in its Formula 1 World Championship successes of the 1950s and ending with

its more recent remarkable record in touring car racing.

The presentation then switched to the hard facts – under the heading 'Much glory on the race track which never translated into great financial success'. According to the brief summary of Alfa's lifetime production, the brand has never shifted more than 180,000 vehicles in a year.

Having been so brutal about its past, Alfa then revealed what it thinks will make the big difference to the new models: its Skunkworks production operation.

According to the presentation, setting up Alfa's development team in industrial units far away from Fiat's Italian facilities (it's thought to be near Modena) will achieve a number of things, particularly helping Alfa "resist the conformist

pressure that a mass car producer would exert".

Alfa showed a series of shots of the Skunkworks, assuring the audience that it was successfully creating an atmosphere of engineering freedom that will result in a new generation of authentic pure-bred Alfas.

After twice making big predictions for Alfa Romeo's growth during this decade and twice having to cancel the projections, FCA boss Sergio Marchionne expects relatively modest growth – from 2013's 74,000 sales to around 400,000 in 2018.

You can't fault this big-money reboot. Alfa will lose all its Fiat affiliations and stand or fall on its own merits.

It would be great if it works; a future premium world dominated by the German big three is not very appetising.

MUCH GLORY ON THE RACE TRACK... WHICH NEVER TRANSLATED INTO GREAT FINANCIAL SUCCESS



FIAT S.P.A. ACQUIRED CONTROL OF ALFA ROMEO S.P.A. IN 1987 & BEGAN A CONVERGENCE PROCESS WITH FIAT ARCHITECTURES AND POWERTRAINS, WHICH PRODUCED THIS...

FIAT BUILT THE CROMA... ... AND TRIED TO TURN INTO AN ALFA ROMEO



**AUTOCAR
IMAGE**

Updated Cloverleaf version of the 4C is due next year

DNA TEST

The Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint GTA of the 1960s encapsulates all that is great about Milanese sports cars. **Andrew Frankel** asks if the latest 4C ignites the same passion

PHOTOGRAPHY STUART PRICE



We know how the Alfa Romeo 4C stacks up in the white heat of the modern marketplace. We've tested it against every known rival on road and track, in print and on video. What could there possibly be left to say? What fresh angle exists to allow a hitherto unseen shaft of light to shine upon what no one is denying is Alfa's most interesting car in a generation?

Only this: an Alfa Romeo – a proper one at least – is as individual a choice as they come. If what you want is a sporting car that is never, ever going to annoy, perplex or frustrate you, the 4C is never going to blip even on to the perimeter of your clinically objective, finely calibrated radar. You'll just buy a Porsche Cayman. Likewise, if you've got your heart set on a 4C because the very sight of it sends the scarlet blood of the Alfisti boiling through your veins, you're not going to allow the trifling inconvenience that the Porsche is a far more complete car deflect you from your course.

What you might want to know and do not yet know, however, is not how good it is at being a modern sports car but how good it is at being an Alfa Romeo. And that is a very different thing.

Nor is it something that can be resolved by driving the 4C on some entertaining roads, sticking a finger in the air and making a judgement. In order to command credibility, that judgement has to have a tangible basis – a benchmark, as it were, something against which the 4C can be judged. And that is the

point at which this little red thing comes in.

So spool back 48 years to 25 March 1966 and join me in the paddock of the Sebring International Raceway for the first ever round of the Trans-American Sedan Championship, the less than catchy title for what would soon and simply become known as the icon that is TransAm. There were two classes: one for the big boys – cars of up to 5.0 litres where rumbling monsters such as Plymouth Barracudas, Ford Mustangs and Dodge Darts would fight over the major places – and another minor class for the sub-2.0-litre minnows, intended to attract entries from Europe who, in the race itself, would obviously come nowhere.

Except that's not what happened. Four hours later it was not a vast 5.0-litre V8 American that swept to victory but a little 1.6-litre, four-cylinder Italian, driven by some bloke called Jochen Rindt. Poor old Dodge was reduced to issuing a press release proclaiming "victory in the over 2.0-litre class".

A freak. A fluke. Beginner's luck. Surely? But no. Seven races later, at the end of the season, it was the upstart from Italy that took the first ever TransAm title. A scalpel among bread knives, the Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint GTA had scythed its way to the top. On this side of the water, the story was the same. The GTA won the European Touring Car Championship that year (ending the competition career of the Lotus Cortina) and would do so again the following year, adding the European hillclimb championship to its tally for good measure. ➤

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MANAGED TO TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL"

SL 997 TURBO 3.6 (EVO SEPTEMBER '08)
IS EPIC, HILARIOUS AND ADDICTIVE IN EVERY GEAR,
BUT DOCILE WHEN CRUISING"

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CARRERA S » 376+ BHP
CARRERA PDK » 368 BHP
CARRERA GTS » 435 BHP
GT3 UP » 436 BHP
STER 3.4S » 336+ BHP
MAN S » 342 BHP
ENNE GTS » 440 BHP
ENNE TURBO 4.5 » 565+ BHP
ENNE TURBO 4.8 » 578+ BHP
ENNE TURBO S 4.8 » 600+ BHP
ENNE 4.2 DIESEL » 450+ BHP
ENNE DIESEL » 300+ BHP
AMERA TURBO » 600+ BHP
AMERA DIESEL » 305+ BHP

MERCEDES-BENZ

'63' 5.5 Bi-TURBO ALL MODELS » 600+ BHP
'500' 4.7 Bi-TURBO ALL MODELS » 498+ BHP
SL65 BLACK » 720+ BHP (+DELIMIT)
SL65 AMG » 690 BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
'55' AMG KOMPRESSOR » 580+ BHP
C63 AMG » 530+ BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
SL63 AMG » 560+ BHP (+DE-LIMIT,
RE-MAP & LOWER ABC SUSPENSION)
CL600 Bi-TURBO » 580+ BHP
SLK55 AMG » 389 BHP (+DELIMIT)
SLK 350 » 328 BHP
220 CDI ALL MODELS » 210+ BHP
250 CDI ALL MODELS » 259+ BHP
320 CDI V6 » 274 BHP
350 CDI V6 » 312 BHP
420 /450 CDI V8 » 358 BHP

BMW

M5/M6 F10 » 620+ BHP
M5 V10 » 548+ BHP (205 MPH)
X5M / X6M » 618 BHP
1M » 411+ BHP
M3 E90/92 » 445 BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
M3 E46 » 370 BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
F10 520D » 221 BHP
F10 530D » 296 BHP
F10 535D » 358 BHP
335i/135i/X6 » 370+ BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
123D » 252 BHP
330D E90 » 296+ BHP
320D E90 » 215 BHP
730D » 290+ BHP
X5 4.0D / 740D » 370 BHP
X5 3.0D » 296 BHP
X6 X50i 4.4 » 500+ BHP
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M135i Please call

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FERRARI 430 » 525 BHP
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LP560 » 600+ BHP
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MURCIELAGO LP640 » 707 BHP
MASERATI GT/SPORT » 438 BHP
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AUDI 3.0TDi (ALL MODELS) » 300+ BHP
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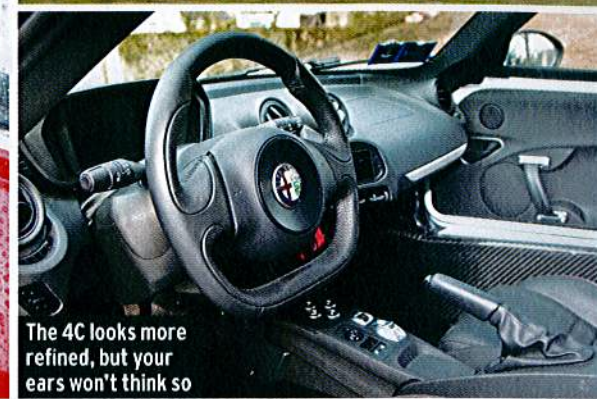
MORE
BHP
EQUALS
LESS
RPM
EQUALS
MORE
MPG



Race-prepped GTA
weighs a stripped-
out 700kg or so



Alfa 4C vs GTA | Comparison



The 4C looks more
refined, but your
ears won't think so

FROM FIRST TO LAST, THE 4C HAS NEVER BEEN
LESS THAN EXCITING. THIS AUGURS WELL



The GTA was so trick that Alfa only made the minimum 500 required to homologate it. It may have looked like a standard Sprint GT of the period, but with all-aluminium bodywork, a twin-plug engine, short gears and completely different suspension, it was a breed apart. Today, 'stradale' versions stand as the most revered Alfa road cars of all, certainly of the post-war era.

And this is one of them, the real deal – one of the 500. If you thought the Cayman would shine a bright light on the 4C, it is but a 10-watt bulb compared to the dazzle offered by the GTA.

It has taken 150 miles to get to the GTA in the 4C – 150 miles over which it has done its best to make me hate it. Its ride and thin seats have jarred my back and the road noise resonating through the bare carbonfibre monocoque has numbed my hearing. And it has tramlined – oh, how it has tramlined – left, right and once nearly off the road altogether. All it hasn't done in this filthy weather is aquaplane.

Indeed, given how light and stiff it is and the width of its tyres, it's quite remarkable in wet weather – useful, considering how it's been here of late.

But I can't hate it. Or at least I don't. From first to last, the 4C has never been less than exciting, and if it can keep me engaged and amused on a dark, wet motorway network, this augurs well for the roads of rural Cambridgeshire we're heading to. I don't agree with many of the choices Alfa made for this car, including the absence of a manual gearbox and the mandating of a turbocharged engine, but the ethos of building a car as light and stiff as possible is engineering at its purest and best. I applaud its absence of power steering and even the powertrain, which, while not one I'd have chosen for this car, is brutally effective at generating the 4C's power and putting it where it's needed.

I thought the 4C was a small car, and so it continues to seem right up to the moment you park it next to the GTA. They're actually remarkably

similar in length and wheelbase, despite the fact that the GTA was designed to have rear seats and a large boot. But it's the width differential that grips you, and here's why: it's greater than the difference in width between a Fiat Panda and a Ferrari F12. But despite this, the 4C doesn't seem fat or bloated, even in the company of the GTA. In fact, and in the face of one of Bertone's prettiest creations, the 4C's beauty stands undiminished. Given the legislative loopholes through which all designers must leap today, I'd rank it the greater achievement.

What do these two have in common, save the emblems on their noses? More than you'd think, more even than the fact that both have four-cylinder engines that direct their power to the rear wheels alone. At an absolutely essential level, the design of both cars was driven by the quest for light weight. And again, I find the fact that Alfa kept the weight of the 4C to just 895kg dry (probably near 1000kg at the kerb) at least as impressive as the



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THE GTA IS SET UP TO DRIFT, DRIFT AND DRIFT SOME MORE



of the fully trimmed GTA. This one has popped out thanks to a former life as a racing car, probably nearer 700kg. By normal standards, both are ludicrously light. When new, the GTA's classic twin-spark four produced 115bhp, but this one is a distance race spec with near to 160bhp. It's so fast that if you wanted to keep up with a modern, normally aspirated 1.6-litre car, you'd need a Caterham Seven Supersport. And the raptures come courtesy of that slow and steady but classically creamy five-speed Alfa transmission. It won't rev as high as the GTA, but then you don't need to. With all that turbocharged grunt, it feels quicker than the GTA and far more so. Its sound is not beautiful – in fact, it's ugly – but at least it's interesting, and I say the whole revcounter appears to turn your peripheral vision when a new gear is selected. One tug and, bang, it's there. I still remember the initial, but even I won't deny that the slide in the 4C feels not only modern but appropriate to these surroundings. It didn't come all this way just to blast up a straight road. On British lanes the 4C's

width is an issue, albeit one that diminishes over time. At first you're diffident about committing to blind corners lest there's something at the exit taking up more than its fair share of road and threatening to skim the side off the Alfa. But the steering is so accurate and full of feel that you're soon able to judge its width to perfection. And as long as you watch for camber changes and the tramlining they induce, you can drive the 4C with astonishing rapidity and security, even in the wet. What it won't do is slide. Even if the test car had been fitted with the optional limited-slip differential, the 4C is not a drifter; it's designed to generate rather than squander grip. Your very real enjoyment is derived from feeling forces build on your body, keeping your lines clean and mitigating the mild understeer that eventually results. By stark contrast, oversteer comes as naturally to the GTA as procreation to a sex-starved rabbit. Born in an era where the limitations of racing tyre technology actually meant the fastest way through a corner was with an appreciable slip angle, GTAs are set up to drift, drift and drift some more. In this rather wonderful world, the conventional roles of the major controls are cast aside. The steering is no longer for steering so much as instigating the slide. The accelerator then determines the angle and duration of the drift, while the steering merely keeps up to ensure that when it's time for the slide to be caught, the front wheels are pointing in the desired direction. So keen is the nose to sniff out an

apex and so determined is the tail to describe the widest possible arc around it that the GTA makes a Toyota GT86 seem positively ponderous. To describe the 4C as a modern GTA would be entirely wrong. Even to suggest that it's a worthy successor to the greatest post-war Alfa is to miss its point by some distance. And that's not the issue before us now. The question is this: how good is the 4C at the job of being an Alfa in the 21st century relative to how good the GTA was at the same job almost 50 years ago? And the answer is very good indeed. Indeed, I'd say it is a more remarkable accomplishment to produce a 4C in 2014 than it was a GTA in 1966; back then, there were next to no rules and Alfa could design a car any damned way it chose. Today, given the hard points within which any manufacturer hoping to build cars in any less than minuscule quantities must operate, it's a wonder a car like a 4C is even possible, let alone that it be executed with such flair. Yes, the 4C can infuriate and, to be honest, it feels slightly unfinished. I know that if Lotus had done the steering, they'd have engineered out the tramlining and if Porsche had developed the chassis it would ride better than it does. But this is an Alfa Romeo, and while that can never excuse such flaws, I'd rather they were there than engineered out along with all the conspicuous charm and character this car possesses. No, it's not Alfa's finest road car ever, but it is a proper Alfa – entirely distinct from any other – and a damned fine one at that. ■

Alfa 4C vs GTA | Comparison



The 4C feels wide on B-roads; GTA is wider when it's sideways



4C's turbo 1.7-litre four has 237bhp; GTA's 1.6 twin-cam makes 160bhp here, not the stock 115bhp

	Alfa Romeo 4C	Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint GTA
Price	£45,000	£2898 (in 1966)
0-62mph	4.5sec	8.1sec
Top speed	160mph	115mph
Economy	41.5mpg (combined)	21mpg (est)
CO ₂ emissions	157g/km	na
Kerb weight	895kg (dry)	745kg
Engine layout	4 cyls in line, 1742cc, turbocharged, petrol	4 cyls in line, 1570cc, petrol
Installation	Mid, transverse, RWD	Front, longitudinal, RWD
Power	237bhp at 6000rpm	115bhp at 6000rpm
Torque	258lb ft at 2200-4250rpm	105lb ft at 2800rpm
Power to weight	265bhp per tonne	154bhp per tonne
Specific output	136bhp per litre	73bhp per litre
Compression ratio	9.25:1	9.7:1
Gearbox	6-spd dual-clutch auto	5-spd manual
Length	3989mm	4140mm
Width	1864mm	1579mm
Height	1183mm	1275mm
Wheelbase	2380mm	2616mm
Fuel tank	40 litres	45 litres
Range	365 miles	207 miles (est)
Boot	110 litres	320 litres
Front suspension	Double wishbones, coil springs, anti-roll bar	Wishbones, coil springs, anti-roll bar
Rear suspension	MacPherson struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar	Live axle, trailing arms, coil springs, telescopic dampers
Brakes	305mm ventilated discs (f), 292mm ventilated discs (r)	Discs front and rear
Wheels	18in (f), 19in (r)	14in
Tyres	205/40 R18 (f), 235/35 R19 (r)	165 R14



The 4C generates impressive grip, even in the wet

James Ruppert chooses his top used Alfas p56



Don't be scared of buying a used one

Is it worth taking a punt on a secondhand Alfa? **James Ruppert** reckons that it is – and he recommends nine Alfas that you should take a look at

MORE
BHP
EQUALS
LESS
RPM
EQUALS
MORE
MPG



Some have said that you can't possibly call yourself a car enthusiast unless you have enjoyed the full Alfa Romeo ownership experience. It has also been said, probably by me, that you'd need your head examined if you bought a used Alfa.

That's because it will break down, fall apart and ultimately bankrupt you. Either that, or the driving position could cripple you for life.

The upsides are that it should be lots of fun to drive, the engine will make a characterful sound and most Alfas are exceedingly pretty. But by far the best bit about buying an old Alfa is that it will be cheap. For the Bangernomic bargain hunter, Alfas offer an awful lot of fun (and possibly grief) for not much money.

So what is the truth? Would you be mad to buy an old Alfa, or could it enrich your motoring life? Here are nine that are worth considering.



Alfa Romeo Brera

£4800-£18,900

For a while, the Brera really did seem like the Alfa that you didn't need to make allowances for. It seemed to be reliable, great value and very pretty. At the time of its launch, the only criticism seemed to be that it wasn't as sporty to drive as some other coupés (such as the BMW 3-series), despite the sharp steering. It sounded really good, too.

As a used buy, there are a few things to look out for. Check the front suspension wishbones, which can wear out quickly. Noisy steering means that a new power steering pump is required. The 2.4-litre diesel model can suffer from diesel particulate filter failure and ideally needs to be remapped. There are also lots of cases of cars needing new injectors. Apparently, 2006-registered cars can suffer from rust underneath.

ONE WE FOUND



2.0 JTS, 2006, 100,050 miles
£3200 Call 0702155690



Alfa Romeo Mito

£5000-£16,500

If you want a modern Alfa that gets most things right, the Mito is it. It is stunning to look at and, of course, has the advantage of not being yet another Mini. There has been criticism of the handling, refinement and rear legroom, but that's nit-picking. This is the best little Alfa you can buy and, from new, came with a five-year warranty. And it has been pretty reliable, for an Alfa. Issues? The carpets can wear

ONE WE FOUND



1.6 JTDm Veloce, 2010, 58,000 miles
£6995 Call 07021535179

through, and red paint fades and chips easily. There are some reports that the MultiAir engine can spring oil leaks. Otherwise, the Mito seems to be quite solid, sensible and buyable.



Alfa Romeo 147

£400-£9000

Before the Mito, this was the best pocket-sized Alfa for decades, with great styling, engines and specs. It's a genuine alternative to a safe and dull old Volkswagen Golf, and it will always be cheaper. All the engines have plenty of power. The 1.6-litre petrol is the smallest but rows the car along with spirit and the 2.0-litre packs real fizz. A patchy service history can be a worry. It's worth knowing that the

ONE WE FOUND



2.0 TS Lusso 5dr, 2001, 136,000
£1294 Call 01695 317003

suspension becomes harsh and t at 50,000 miles, when new bush often required. A cambelt change scheduled at 60,000 miles, but i to change it when you buy.



Alfa Romeo 156

£100-£7500

Plus points are a great range of engines – 1.6, 1.8, 2.0 and 2.5 V6 petrols and 2.4 JTD diesel – and an attention to finish detail that is hugely satisfying for enthusiasts. Inside and out, this has always been a great-looking car that is involving to drive. The level of standard equipment is also convincing. However, build quality has been an issue since day one, more so on the earlier, pre-2000 models. Clutches and brake boxes caused the most upsets,

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2.5 V6, 2002, 79,000 miles
£1200 Call 07021 557668

although there were also niggling electrical problems. This model requires a cambelt change at 45,000 miles. Warped brake discs and weak steering boxes have also been reported.



Alfa Romeo GTV

£500-£5000

The appeal of a head-turning body styled by Pininfarina was augmented by a 2.0 Twin Spark under the bonnet from 1996, followed by a characterful 3.0 V6 in 1998. Standard spec was twin airbags and an alarm, but the Lusso pack added air-con, leather and 16in alloy wheels.

The low-slung engine is vulnerable to sump damage. The plate protecting the radiator needs to be in decent nick. Electrically, the windows must operate smoothly and seal properly

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2.0 TS Lusso, 2001, 48,900 miles
£2195 Call 07021 539872

at the top. If the airbag light stays on, that can sometimes be traced to a wiring fault in the seat. Cambelt changes need to be frequent; specialists recommend every 30,000 miles.



Alfa Romeo 159

£100-£16,900

Alfa Romeo 159 looks good on the road (a little bit like a Brera with more style if you squint). Most high-mileage examples are going to want to go for the frugal and refined diesels. Petrol

choices include the 3.2 V6 and 1750 TBI. The 159 isn't as much fun to drive as the usual German suspects, but it comes with plenty of standard kit, from climate control to alloy wheels.

There are few things to be wary of, though. Water pumps can seize on the

diesel engine and fail as early as 40,000 miles. Some specialists recommend changing the cambelt and water pump every 60,000 miles rather than the official 90,000 miles. So if the car that you're thinking of buying runs hot or the heating is malfunctioning, beware.

ONE WE FOUND



2.0 JTS, 2006, 100,050 miles
£3200 Call 07021 55690



Alfa Romeo GT

£1000-£11,500

Overlooked and underrated, this four-seat coupé looks good and handles tidily. As with all Alfes these days, the spec is reason enough to consider a GT,

as one trim level fits all. The V6 is the one for enthusiasts, but a turbodiesel is fine for the more practical owner.

The Selespeed robotised manual isn't everyone's favourite way of changing gear and there have been some

problems with the actuator, for which there is an official Alfa fix. There are reports of oil leaks, some weak steering boxes, warped brake discs and bits of flappy trim. What this Alfa really needs is some tender, loving care.

ONE WE FOUND



2.0 JTS, 2006, 100,050 miles
£3200 Call 07021 55690



Alfa Romeo 166

£1000-£6000

This is a big, stylish car that likes going quickly and lets you to take corners very smartly, yet it can be fairly quiet and comfortable transport, too. Inside, the dashboard looks lovely, all overlapping dials, and there's a timber-rimmed steering wheel and plush leather on the Lusso models. Niggly electrical problems have been a recurring feature, though, and the suspension can wear as the miles build up.

ONE WE FOUND



V6 Super, 2002, 78,000 miles
£1990 Call 020 85510947



Alfa Romeo Spider

£7500-£19,900

The latest Spider is yet another looker and, with its standard rear deflector, it keeps buffeting to a minimum. There are three very decent engine options: a solid 2.2 petrol, a serious four-wheel-drive 3.2 V6 petrol and a frugal 2.4 diesel that does over 40mpg. With a full service history, there shouldn't be too much to worry about, provided the cambelt change has been done at 60,000 to 70,000 miles.

ONE WE FOUND



2.2 JTS, 2007, 25,000 miles
£9980 Call 07773 808080