

Brian Judge and his 1963 Giulietta Spider

Words: Duncan Steer | Picture: Pete Goding

How long have you owned your Alfa Romeo Giulietta?

Nearly eight years. I had a sports car in the 60s – a Sunbeam Alpine – then I got married, sold the car and went to live in Tehran, where I bought a Coupé version of the Giulietta. Then the kids came along and you get bigger cars to cope with all the paraphernalia, don't you? As I got older, I thought it would be nice to have a sports car again. I was working with an Italian lad in the office and he kept putting things about Giuliettas on my desk. So I eventually gave in and bought one.

What has been your best trip?

In 2004, it was the 50th anniversary of the launch of the model. So when the owners' club – the Giulietta Register – decided to go on a trip to Milan, I said: 'Count me in.' And 30 cars turned up at Dover, including a couple that had been shipped from America. It was quite something. We drove down through France to Milan, ending with a police-escorted fast drive to the centre of the city from the old Alfa Romeo factory on the outskirts.

They said: 'Don't worry about traffic lights, just follow us.' And we all parked up round the Duomo in Milan before going to this reception and gala dinner. It really was great. The police were there, quaffing the wine in their uniforms.

How much did the Spider cost you?

£8500.

And that was your ticket into the world of civic receptions and police escorts?

Absolutely! And, despite the recession, the prices have gone up because people aren't selling them but the demand is still there. Next year, we're celebrating 100 years of Alfa Romeo by heading to Milan again.

How is it to drive?

It's a lovely car to drive. I mean, when it was made it was top spec but now I can just about keep up with a Ford Transit! The Spider also has no power steering, but that only really makes a difference when you're parking. The engine feels almost invincible – but it's comfortable too, especially when you compare it to something like an MGA. I drive it as

much as I can in the summer – I've driven it round Goodwood and Brands Hatch. I enjoy the sporty side of driving.

So are you an Italophile?

Yes – I like Italian food and the people; they seem to have a very good attitude to life. Driving in Italy is quite interesting: they sometimes drive as if they couldn't care less but you rarely see an accident. I've seen them make an *ad hoc* extra lane on the motorway by driving closer together. It works for them.

It's a bit of a playboy car, isn't it – who do you pretend to be when you're driving?

We went to Castle Combe a few weeks ago and a chap came over and said: 'Isn't this the car that Edward Fox drove in *The Day Of The Jackal*?' I said: 'Yes, but I've lost a bit of hair since then!' But I suppose I feel like myself – just 20 years younger than my 71 years!



Thanks to Danny House, where we photographed Brian and his car. dannyhouse.org.uk