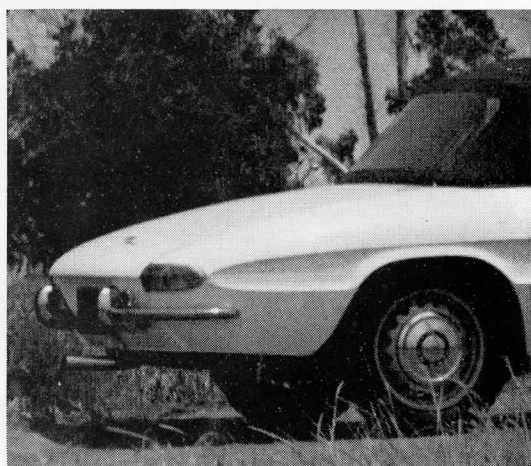
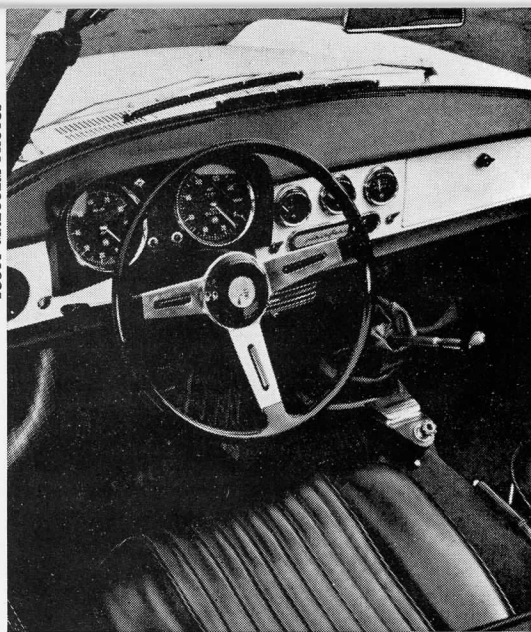


ROAD & TRACK
R & T
ROAD TEST



SCOTT MALCOLM PHOTOS



ALFA 1600 SPIDER

Called the Duetto, it sings a happy song for the Alfisti

WE ALWAYS LIKED the Alfa Giulietta. We liked it the first time we saw it (at a Pomona, Calif., race in 1956), we still liked it when it was given a 1600 engine and called the Giulia and we were among those who were sorry to hear it was going to be discontinued in favor of a new 1600 roadster. But nothing is forever in this life, not even the Giulietta, and we come now to a new Alfa Romeo.

The new car is called the Duetto, a name submitted by Guidobaldo Trionfi of Brescia, Italy, in a contest that drew more than 140,000 entries from all over the world. It means "duet," according to our Italian-English dictionary, but perhaps it says more when you say it in Italian—two seats for two people in harmony, two overhead camshafts, all singing along together perhaps.

We found almost no disagreement among members of our staff about the appearance of the new model—no one liked it as well as the Giulietta or the Giulia. One condemned it as a contrived design with meaningless styling gimmicks. Another said, "I think Pininfarina missed the ball this time." Somebody else commented, "They did this shape five years

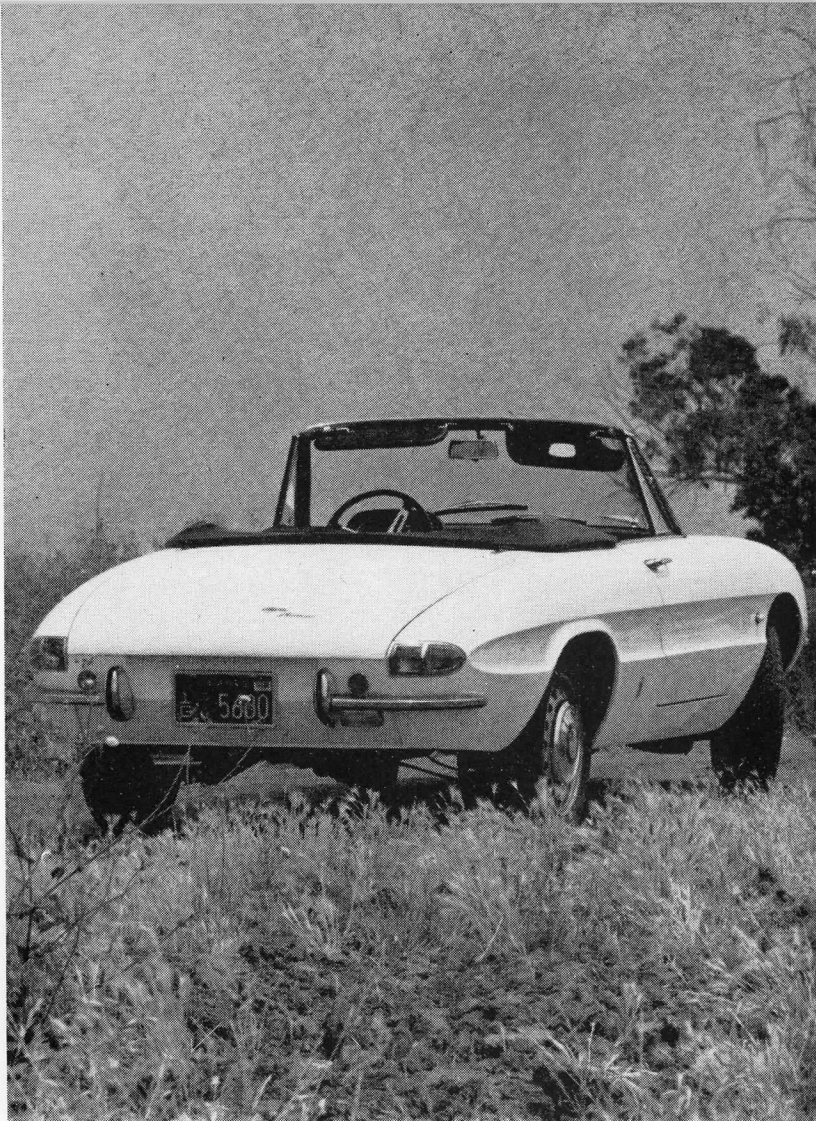
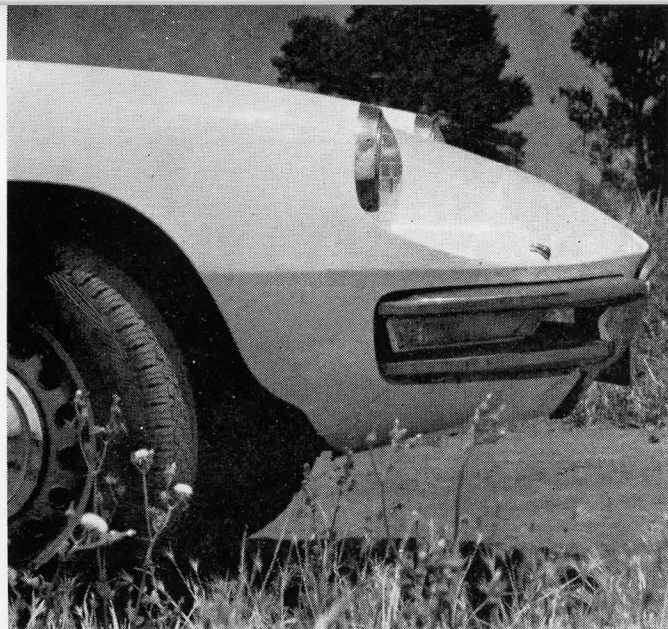
ago on a show car and it isn't any better now." Several people compared it, unfavorably, with the Lotus Elan.

In spite of our personal disappointment, we understand that the car is having an excellent reception. Not because it is in itself an exciting and beautiful design, but simply because it is a new Alfa. The old Spider had been around for so many years that even the most devout Alfisti were finding it difficult to justify buying another.

And, to be absolutely fair about it, by the time we'd had the car a few days, driven it and become accustomed to seeing it in the parking lot, we began to like it better. Maybe it's one of those designs that grows on you.

Underneath the sheet metal, however, there dwell enough of the familiar Alfa Romeo virtues to warm the heart of any car lover: Double overhead cam engine, Weber carburetors, 5-speed all-synchro gearbox, disc brakes all around and so on. The mechanical bits have that typical Alfa Romeo beauty, as Italian as prosciutto or Sophia Loren.

The engine is the familiar Alfa 1.6-liter unit (1570 cc, to be exact) with four cylinders (iron sleeves in an aluminum block), hemispherical combustion chambers with the spark



plug in the top of the roof and chain-driven camshafts operating the valves through inverted-cup tappets. There are five main bearings, sodium-filled exhaust valves, and though you may never see them you can feel confident that the interior components of the engine are as neatly and carefully finished as they should be.

The engine used in the Duetto is rated 125 bhp at 6000 rpm, the same as in the Giulia Sprint GT Veloce. This is an appreciable increase over the 109 hp offered in the standard 1600 Giulia Spider and puts it into the same performance class as the Giulia Veloce.

The Duetto has the same wheelbase as the Giulia Spider, 88.6 in., but is over a foot longer (167.3 vs. 153.6 in.), which means more overhang at both ends. This also means more luggage space, so don't knock it. Even though the new car bulks larger (it is also 2 in. wider), it hasn't gained any appreciable amount of weight. Weight distribution is a couple of percentage points more nose-heavy than the earlier model.

The new model is produced on the new 105 series chassis, which is currently shared with the Giulia Sprint GT, GT Veloce, GTA and Giulia Super. All of these use the new chassis with mainly dimensional changes. Many parts of the 105 chassis, such as the front suspension and brakes, are direct descendants of the GTZ competition coupe. It is not, repeat not, the same chassis as used on the Giulia 1600 Spider and we apologise for having reported that it was in an early story on the new car.

The transmission is the fine Alfa 5-speed that we like so much. In fact, we've come to like it so well that we find ourselves using it as the standard with which to compare other

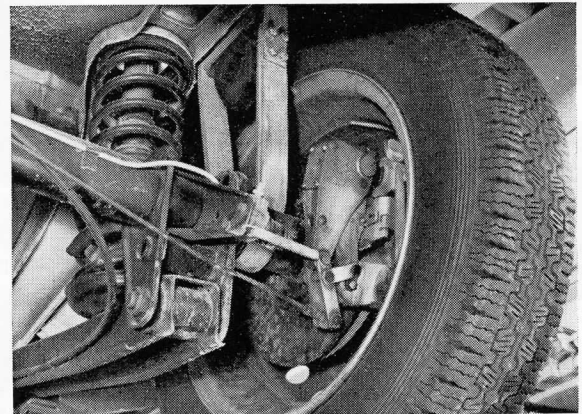
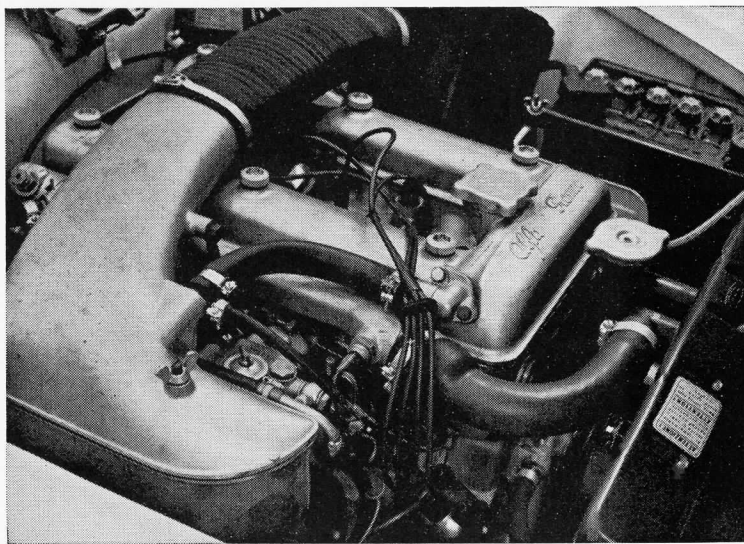
5-speed gearboxes we encounter. It is a delight to operate, the handle is in the right place, the knob is the right size, the throws are the right length and the movement is crisp and precise. In addition, the shift pattern is the proper one for a 5-speed, with 1st through 4th where most sports car drivers expect them to be and 5th is logically one step further—up and away to the right. Reverse is to the right and back, but the knob must be pushed down to enter that gate so there's no likelihood of clanging reverse when shifting down from 5th to 4th.

The seating position for the driver left something to be desired, except for the shortest member of our staff. The

ALFA 1600 SPIDER

AT A GLANCE...

Price as tested.....	\$4025
Engine.....	4 cyl inline, dohc, 1570 cc, 125 bhp
Curb weight, lb.....	2195
Top speed, mph.....	113
Acceleration, 0-60 mph, sec.....	11.3
50-70 mph (3rd gear).....	6.2
Average fuel consumption, mpg.....	23



ALFA 1600 SPIDER

complaints from taller drivers seemed to result from the relationship of the comparatively low steering wheel to the pedals. It was difficult to find a position where the lower rim of the steering wheel did not interfere with the legs when operating the clutch or brake. Other than this, it is difficult to find anything to complain about in the cockpit, as the seats are superb, containing just the right amount of padding to suit us and with a wide range of adjustment both for up-and-back and for lean-back.

The instrument layout on the Duetto is new for Alfa. It puts the 8000-rpm tachometer and 140-mph speedometer directly in front of the driver in a recessed hood, while the three supplementary instruments (fuel level, oil pressure, water temperature) are mounted in the center of the dash and angled toward the driver. Alfa instruments have always been handsome and informative and these continue the tradition. The speedometer also carries on an Alfa tradition—it's optimistic by almost 5 mph at 60.

If no one on the staff was wild about the Duetto's appearance, exactly the opposite was true about driving the car. Everybody loved it. The overall impression is one of great responsiveness, and the feeling that the car is an extension of the driver at the controls is unmistakably clear. The steering is excellent—light, accurate and among the best we've ever encountered in any car. We've already led three cheers for the gearbox, and except to add that 5th is actually overdrive (0.79:1) and gives the car a long-legged easy-running cruising speed, there's little that we can add.

It might be superfluous to add that the Duetto seems to be at its very best on winding roads. All Alfas are. The Duetto sits much flatter in the turns than did the Giulietta or Giulia

and there is a noticeable lessening of body lean.

Pushed very hard, the Duetto plunges into strong understeer, requiring lots of minor arm action to hold a precise line. At this point it becomes a matter of "twitching" the front end to and fro across its limit of adhesion, all the while applying power to keep the rear end poised. Thus, it lacks the ultimate cornering power of some of its competitors, but it does warn the driver before he does anything clumsy.

The all-around comfort of the Duetto is excellent. Certainly the interior ventilation system is superior to that of any other sports car we've encountered. There are under-cowl outlets to bring fresh air in around the feet, a shortcoming in many sports cars, and there are also adjustable vents at each end of the dashboard to supplement the fresh air flow.

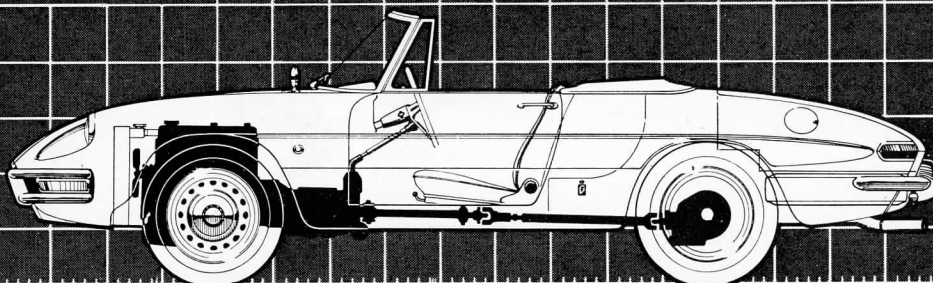
Our test car, one of the very early models to arrive in the U.S., had a flapping top and the distributor assured us that the flap would be corrected in later examples. This could be avoided, provided it was cool enough to keep the windows closed, as it seemed possible to find venting combinations that would do away with the drumming. The top was otherwise excellent and genuinely easy to put up and take down, an honest one-man, one-minute job. When down, the top folds neatly behind the seats and is hidden by a form-fitting elasticized vinyl cover. There is a minimal amount of space behind the seats for such objects as groceries and the like. The trunk, which has a lockable latch in the left door jamb, is a practical, uncluttered shape with the spare hidden under the floor mat.

Most of all, though, what we like best about the new Duetto is the way it handles. It goes where you point it, gets you there with a minimum of sweat and stops when you apply the brakes. We'd like to suggest that all politicians be required to drive one a thousand miles or so before considering themselves qualified for making speeches about what an automobile ought to be.





ROAD TEST ALFA 1600 SPIDER



SCALE: 18" DIVISIONS

PRICE

Basic list\$4025
As tested4025

ENGINE

No cyl & type 4 cyl dohc
Bore x stroke, mm 78 x 82
In 3.07 x 3.23
Displacement, cc/cu in. 1570/95.7
Compression ratio 9.1:1
Bhp @ rpm 125 @ 6000
Equivalent mph 113
Torque @ rpm, lb-ft . 115 @ 2800
Equivalent mph 54
Carburetors 2 Weber DCOE 27
No. barrels, dia 2 x 1.062
Type fuel required premium

DRIVE TRAIN

Clutch type sdp
Diameter, in 8.0
Gear ratios: 5th (0.79) 3.61:1
4th (1.00) 4.56:1
3rd (1.36) 6.17:1
2nd (1.99) 9.06:1
1st (3.30) 15.05:1
Synchronesh on all 5
Differential type hypoid
Ratio 4.56:1

CHASSIS & SUSPENSION

Frame type unit with body
Brake type discs
Swept area, sq in 422
Tire size 155-15
Make Pirelli Cinturato
Steering type worm & sector
Turns, lock-to-lock 3.75
Turning circle, ft 33.5
Front suspension: independent
with A-arms, coil springs, tube
shocks, anti-roll bar.
Rear suspension: live axle with
trailing arms & transverse link,
coil springs, tube shocks.

ACCOMMODATION

Normal capacity, persons 2
Seat width, in 2 x 17.5
Head room 38.5
Seat back adjustment, deg 40
Entrance height, in 46.5
Step-over height 16.0
Door width, front/rear 36.0
Driver comfort rating:
Driver 69 in. tall 85
Driver 72 in. tall 80
Driver 75 in. tall 70
(85-100, good; 70-85, fair;
under 70, poor)

GENERAL

Curb weight, lb 2195
Test weight 2560
Weight distribution (with
driver), front/rear, % 56/44
Wheelbase, in 88.6
Track, front/rear 51.6/50.0
Overall length 167.3
Width 64.2
Height 50.8
Frontal area, sq ft 18.1
Ground clearance, in 5.8
Overhang, front/rear 36.8/41.9
Departure angle, deg 14
Usable trunk space, cu ft 7.5
Fuel tank capacity, gal 12.2

INSTRUMENTATION

Instruments: 8000 rpm tachometer,
140 mph speedometer, trip
odometer, fuel, oil pressure,
water temperature.
Warning lights: generator, heater,
directionals, high beam, fuel
level.

MISCELLANEOUS

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

CALCULATED DATA

Lb/hp (test wt) 20.5
Mph/1000 rpm (5th gear) 19.3
Engine revs/mi (60 mph) 3110
Piston travel, ft/mi 1675
Rpm @ 2500 ft/min 4650
Equivalent mph 88
Cu ft/ton mi 67.2
R&T wear index 52.2

EXTRA COST OPTIONS

Chrome wheels, radio

MAINTENANCE

Crankcase capacity, qt 5.8
Change interval, mi 3600
Oil filter type full-flow
Change interval, mi 3600
Chassis lube interval, mi 3600
(U-joints only)

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Normal driving, mpg 21-25
Cruising range, mi 256-305

ROAD TEST RESULTS

ACCELERATION

Time to speed, sec:
0-30 mph 3.5
0-40 mph 5.7
0-50 mph 8.3
0-60 mph 11.3
0-70 mph 15.6
0-80 mph 20.2
0-100 mph 35.6
50-70 mph (3rd gear) 6.2

Time to distance, sec:
0-100 ft 3.8
0-500 ft 9.9
1/4-mile 18.5
Speed at end, mph 76.5
Passing exposure time, sec:
Car ahead going 50 mph 6.5

SPEEDS IN GEARS

5th gear (6000), mph 113
4th (6300) 93
3rd (6300) 69
2nd (6300) 48
1st (6300) 30

BRAKES

Panic stop from 80 mph:
Deceleration, % G 84
Control fair
Parking: hold 30% grade yes
Overall brake rating good

SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph indicated actual 26.7
40 mph 36.4
60 mph 55.3
80 mph 73.5
Odometer correction factor 0.966

ACCELERATION & COASTING

