

ALFA ROMEO GIULIA SPRINT GT

Or, 122 large Italian horses
rushing you toward where you're going
(with a sidelong glance at stream-of-
consciousness social critic Tom Wolfe)

There's this stretch of road that goes from your joint to someplace very groovy. Uh, no man, not to beautiful downtown Topeka or to the big Rotary International Convention in Atlantic City. It has to swing and it has to be at the end of this wild road that's all kinky and twisty and blacktop with white guard rails to protect you from the scenery. You'll need a girl. One with tawny Breck-Shampoo hair that shines like an illuminated waterfall and lavender eyelids and the right kind of pants, the kind that aren't, you know, *lower-class* tight but sort of expensive-tight, the kind that hang right without those terrible-looking stirrup things that go under the arch of her foot, and boots that reach clear to her knees and pile up around her ankles like the ones cavalry officers used to wear.

Okay, you have a destination and the lavender-lidded, Tawny Girl is beside you and now you need a car, a very special teeny-weeny sort of a grand touring car. Ferrari Lusso or Aston Martin or 230-SL or Maserati 3500-GT? Come ON, they're too big and they're only for wealthy illiterates and young greaseballs anyway, right? This has to be an exquisite little jewel box car that you can fling around corners at about 1.3 Gs with your arms out straight and your head cocked just like Innes Ireland's in all the pictures and an engine that goes eeeeeee-yyyoowwww when you accelerate and

yyyyooowww-eeeeeee when you downshift with a nutty shift lever that's just like a long toggle switch.

Make sure the engine has lots of aluminum pieces on it and, oh yes, double overhead camshafts. Double overhead camshafts are very big because they look so nice, I mean they just KILL gas station attendants and guys who try to be friends because they owned an MGA once. They also allow you to get some very impressive-sounding eeee's without breaking the valve gear and leaving you at the mercy of some well-bred English bandit who does you a favor and fixes it for about nine zillion dollars. And big brakes, don't forget big brakes, so that you can go yyyyooowww-eeeeeee into the corners and save the downshift until just before the Tawny Girl unbuckles her belt to bail out.

Say hello to the Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint GT; 161 inches of Romanesque coachwork all gathered to spring, complete with instruments straight out of a Piaggio 166B and a steering wheel that you can hang your thumbs on and look bored while wailing along at a steady ninety, and vinyl bucket seats that would be comfortable for anybody from Jackie Gleason to Wilt Chamberlain and make them look like Froilan González with his elbows pointed skyward. Very racey.

Talk about your aluminum. This Alfa's engine is some kind of 1600cc aluminum paradise. When you open the hood, you can almost hear the whine of lathes and milling machines stroking long ringlets of Mother Lode Bauxite off and dropping it on the floor, THE FLOOR, of the Anonima Lombarda Fabbrica Automobili. That's the WORKS, Jim, and it's in Milan, Italy, where they understand aluminum the way Sebring, Florida understands grits. There is a lot of this properly-understood aluminum in the engine compartment.

A gigantic aluminum air duct runs from the filter on the left side of the engine, across the cam covers, and down into a pair of aluminum 40DCOE4 Weber carburetors. That's right, Webers, straight from Bologna, the kind that have mixed air and gasoline for all your favorite heroes. They're beautiful, hanging on the side of that great little aluminum engine, covered with wing nuts and cap screws.

Lay the Alfa into a fast bend in third gear and push the accelerator pedal to the floor; Edoardo Weber's carburetors drop open like trap doors in a haunted house and the stuff pours in and explodes like mad and the revs start to climb. Six-thousand, sixty-five hundred, Omigod I can't stand it, there are 122 large Italian horses rushing you toward where you're going. Shazam!

What is that thing about cornering on rails? Shiny flanges on big steel wheels hammering clickety-clack on endless rails won't get a boxcar full of flannel bathrobes and oatmeal around a bend half as fast as this Alfa's near-perfect suspension—suspension that sprang tried-and-true from the Alfa GTZ racing car (C/D, Aug., '64), a car that managed to shake up the troops wherever it ran.

Impress the Tawny Girl with the fact that the static camber setting of the front wheels is slightly negative with the tiniest bit of toe-out so that the wheels practically never adopt any positive camber. Tell her that the rear axle—which has a heartbreakingly lovely aluminum differential case—is mounted to the chassis by two parallel trailing arms that also provide a mounting base for the vertical coil springs. Whisper that wind-up and lateral movements are prevented by a new T-arm linkage that replaces the A-bracket of earlier models. She'll love it.

Wrap that Jim Clark driving glove (\$10.95 from Vilem B. Haan) around that rich black shift knob, and move it. Click. There's first. Click-click. There's second. Click-click. There's third. Click-click. Well, there's

fourth. Wait a minute—click-click—fifth? FIFTH! FIVE FORWARD. SPEEDS! It's too much—it's too beautiful—O rapture unbearable! That is some nice transmission (oops, when it has five speeds it's a gearbox—sorry about that).

Not to sound like nit-pickers, but you might say it needs a five-speed gearbox. Nobody is going to get a bloody nose from the low-end performance, but 118 lbs/ft of torque is not meant for use at your friendly neighborhood dragstrip anyway. What you do with this one is you never get below about 3500 rpms, then when you want to accelerate you change gears. Besides, with that nutty chrome toggle switch shift lever you'll want to shift gears as often and as fast as you can. It feels so good. And it sounds so nice. Shazam!

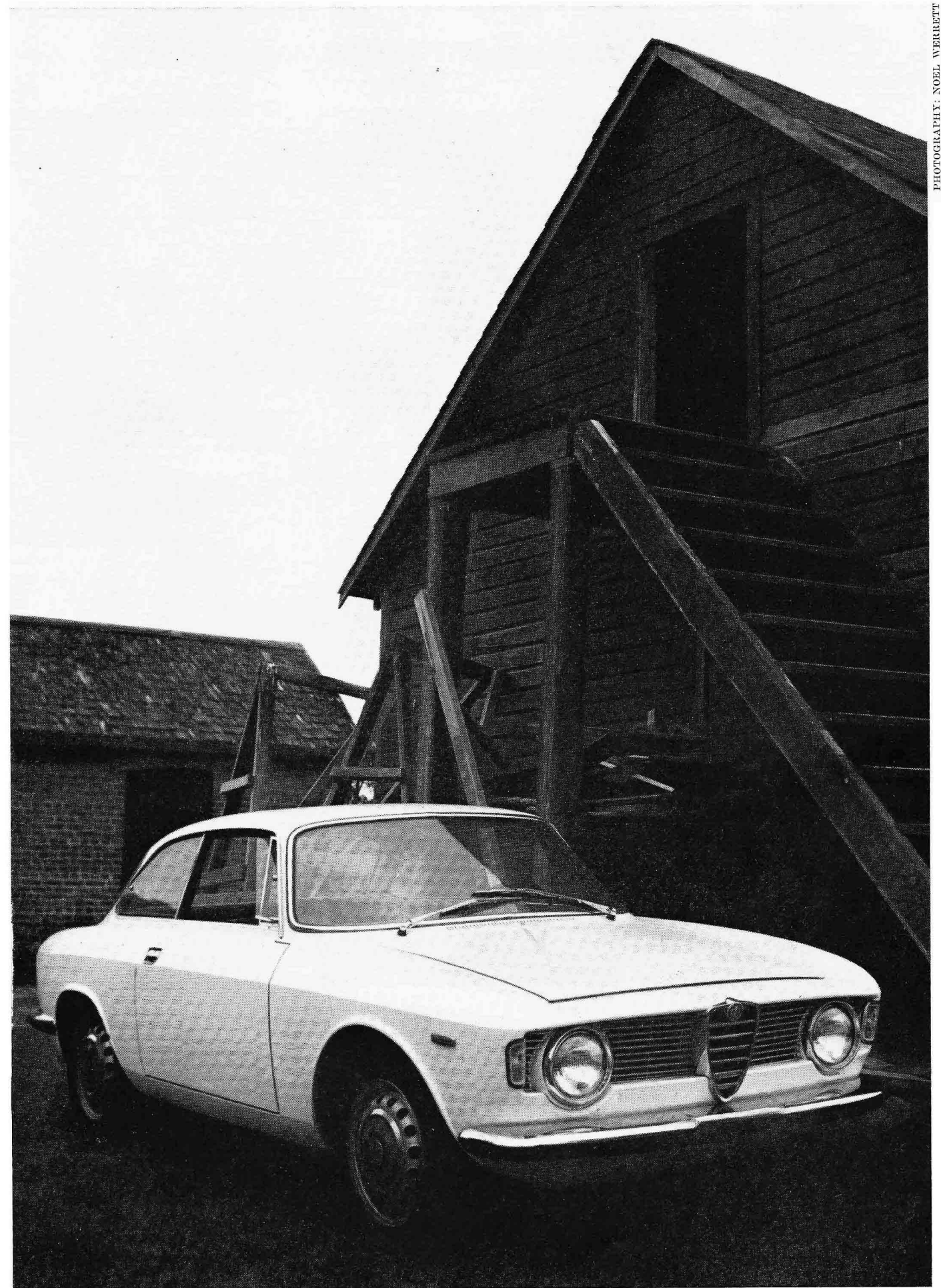
Fifth gear is a little hard to find sometimes, but fifth gear is for going a hundred-twenty-two eeeee-yyy-ooowwwing miles per hour. The ratio is a long, tall 0.791 overdrive-thing, and if you're planning to run down to the shopping center at one-twenty-plus with the windows open, you really shouldn't mind taking a little extra time to find fifth. Anyway, don't mind too much, Scooter—John Surtees and Graham Hill and ALL those guys miss fifth once in a while, and they get paid.

Enough dry fact, let's get on that road we talked about. It's smooth and fast and kind of elusive as it loops over the tops of hills and disappears to one side or the other behind the scenery. You're singing along at about ninety in fifth on this wonderful no-speed-limit road when you top a hill and—HOLY MACKEREL—the road you loved so much has turned treacherous and dived off in exactly the opposite direction from what you expected. O Lordy me it's the Karrusel and Thillois and Lesmo and the first turn at Indy all combined in one big slide-for-life. On the brakes! Come on O faithful Dunlop discs, retarders of Archie Scott-Brown and Juan Manuel Fangio and other famous studs of the racing world, retard this eager, sensitive steed, protect us from the Great Thump that lies at the out (wrong) side of this sixty mph bend in the road. Down to fourth with a great yyyyooowww-eeee. Down to third with a similar shriek. Cut the wheel and aim at the apex, sweep past and mash the throttle as the corner opens ahead. Open go the Webers and "I love it, I love it" goes the Tawny Girl. Cam lobes are hammering on valve cups and Michelin X tires are locked in silent combat with the asphalt and Paradise is found!

What you just did is why you must be driving a car like the Alfa—a Porsche 911 or a Lotus Elan or an ASA Mille, maybe—but an Alfa certainly. Disregard American car dealers with pleats in their pants and larceny in their souls who would tell you that the Alfa's electrical system couldn't run an electric hand-warmer. Close your ears to the rumors concerning the Alfa owner who rose from theological student to Monseigneur while waiting for a replacement part to arrive. Forget Ethiopia. Remember only that Alfa Romeo distribution in this country has been taken over by the parent organization and now everything, including the new Bosch electrical system, is wearing a rosy aura of success and well-being. (You might also take heart from memories of the drained Pontine Marshes and the trains that run on time.)

Take the trip we described. The road, the Tawny Girl, and the Alfa Romeo are beautiful. Each moment spent with them is one more mile between you and dull cares and thermonuclear foolishness. Stomp on the accelerator. Punch the brakes. Fling it around the next bend. Shift through all five gears, fast. Tear down the road to The Destination. Shazam!

C/D



PHOTOGRAPHY: NOEL WERRETT

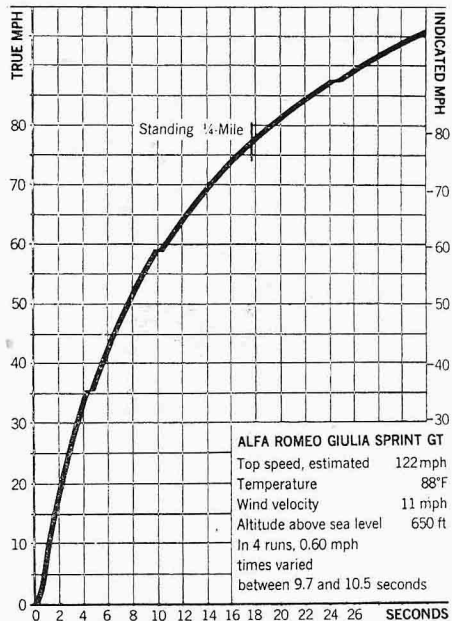
ALFA ROMEO GIULIA SPRINT GT

Importer: Alfa Romeo Inc.
231 Johnson Ave.,
Newark 8, New Jersey

Price as tested: \$4195 POE East Coast

ACCELERATION

| Zero to | Seconds |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 30 mph | 2.9 |
| 40 mph | 4.9 |
| 50 mph | 7.1 |
| 60 mph | 10.2 |
| 70 mph | 13.9 |
| 80 mph | 18.7 |
| 90 mph | 26.0 |
| 100 mph | 38.0 |
| Standing 1/4-mile | 78 mph in 17.7 |



ENGINE

Water-cooled four-in-line, aluminum block, 5 main bearings
 Bore x stroke 3.08 x 3.23 in, 78 x 82 mm
 Displacement 95.7 cu in, 1570 cc
 Compression ratio 9.0 to one
 Carburetion 2 Weber 40 DCOE/4
 Valve gear Twin chain-driven overhead camshafts
 Power (SAE) 122 bhp @ 6000 rpm
 Torque 97.5 lbs-ft @ 3850 rpm
 Specific power output 1.28 bhp per cu in, 78 bhp per liter
 Usable range of engine speeds 900-8000 rpm
 Electrical system 12-volt, 60 amp-hr battery
 Fuel recommended Premium
 Mileage 21-26 mpg
 Range on 14-gallon tank 295-365 miles

DRIVE TRAIN

Clutch 8-inch single dry plate
 Transmission 5-speed all-synchro gearbox

| Gear | Ratio | Over-all | rpm | mph |
|-------------------|-------|----------|-------|--------|
| Rev | 3.01 | 13.72 | 5.25 | 39.5 |
| 1st | 3.304 | 15.05 | 4.8 | 36 |
| 2nd | 1.988 | 9.06 | 7.9 | 59 |
| 3rd | 1.355 | 6.17 | 11.7 | 88 |
| 4th | 1.00 | 4.56 | 15.8 | 118 |
| 5th | 0.791 | 3.60 | 19.9 | 122 |
| Final drive ratio | | | 4.555 | to one |

CHASSIS

Unit construction, all-steel body.

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Wheelbase | 94 in |
| Track | F 51.75 R 50 in |
| Length | 161 in |
| Width | 62.5 in |
| Height | 52 in |
| Ground clearance | 6.5 in |
| Dry weight | 2080 lbs |
| Curb weight | 2140 lbs |
| Test weight | 2350 lbs |
| Weight distribution front/rear | 56/44% |
| Pounds per bhp (test weight) | 19.3 |

Suspension: F Ind., unequal-length wishbones & coil springs, stabilizer bar.
 R Rigid axle, trailing links and upper T-arm, coil springs.
 Brakes Dunlop 10-in discs front, 9-in discs rear, 380 sq in swept area
 Steering ZF worm and roller
 Turns, lock to lock 3.33
 Turning circle 35 ft
 Tires 155-15
 Revs per mile 869

CHECK LIST

ENGINE

Starting Excellent
 Response Excellent
 Noise Good
 Vibration Very good

DRIVE TRAIN

Clutch action Very good
 Transmission linkage Excellent
 Synchromesh action Excellent
 Power-to-ground transmission Good

BRAKES

Response Excellent
 Pedal pressure Excellent
 Fade resistance Excellent
 Smoothness Excellent
 Directional stability Excellent

STEERING

Response Excellent
 Accuracy Excellent
 Feedback Fair
 Road feel Good

SUSPENSION

Harshness control Very good
 Roll stiffness Good
 Tracking Excellent
 Pitch control Excellent
 Shock damping Excellent

CONTROLS

Location Very good
 Relationship Fair
 Small controls Good

INTERIOR

Visibility Very good
 Instrumentation Excellent
 Lighting Very good
 Entry/exit Fair
 Front seating comfort Excellent
 Front seating room Fair
 Rear seating comfort Poor
 Rear seating room Unacceptable
 Storage space Poor
 Wind noise Excellent
 Road noise Very good

WEATHER PROTECTION

Heater Good
 Defroster Fair
 Ventilation Excellent
 Weather sealing Good
 Windshield wiper action Fair

QUALITY CONTROL

Materials, exterior Good
 Materials, interior Very good
 Exterior finish Good
 Interior finish Very good
 Hardware and trim Good

GENERAL

Service accessibility Excellent
 Luggage space Fair
 Bumper protection Poor
 Exterior lighting Excellent
 Resistance to crosswinds Very good

