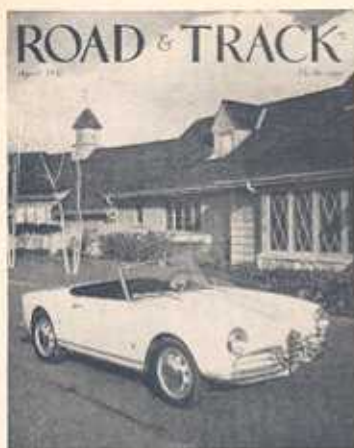


LATE NEWS



According to Poet T. S. Eliot, "April is the cruelest month . . ." but it brings to our cover Jerry Cheshbrough's color study of one of the most appalling small sports cars to reach our shores in a long time: the 1300 cc Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint.

SEBRING . . .

COMING up on March 24th, this is our only F.I.A. sanctioned event and points earned count toward the World's Sports Car Championship. In order to get foreign factory teams, the organizers are forced to put up prize money—which is standard practice in all important European events of similar stature. Fortunately (and wisely) the S.C.C.A. has elected to allow its members to participate, so long as they do not keep any "green-stuff".

In addition to official and unofficial teams from Maserati, Ferrari, Aston-Martin, Jaguar, etc., a Chevrolet Corvette team is also entered, with John Fitch acting as team manager. Chevrolet says officially "we are out to learn," but privately they have high hopes.

LE MANS . . .

There is still confusion over the actual date of this 24 hr. event, with August fairly definite and some talk of holding the race one week after the Swedish G.P. scheduled for Aug. 5th.

S.C.C.A. ANNUAL MEETING . . .

James Kimberly is the new president of the SCCA, which boasts over 7000 members. One of the prime objectives of the new National officers will be to make a closer knit organization of its widely scattered regions, which now number 65.

THE RACING SCENE . . .

If any one had dared predict, even 3 years ago that such firms as Ford, Chevrolet and Pontiac would have racing departments, the laughs would have been heard as far as Stuttgart and Maranello. Now Ford has De Paolo, Chevrolet has Rose and Arkus-Duntov and Pontiac has Lou Moore. Racing kits are common practice, 225 bhp for Chev, 240 bhp for Plymouth, 250 or so for Ford, 260 for Dodge, 285 for Pontiac, 310 for DeSoto, etc. Where this will end nobody knows, but it does augur well for the popularity of auto-racing. Maybe G.M. will yet field a team of G.P. cars for International competition! ●

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ROAD TEST:

Alfa Romeo Giulietta Spyder

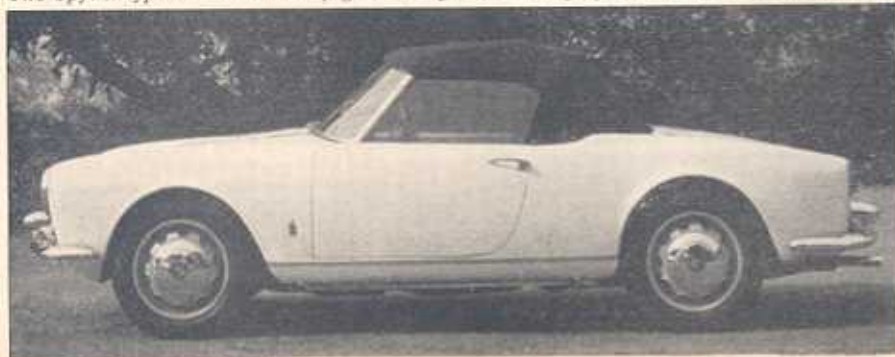
The interior views, below, show the roomy seating, the now obsolete column shift lever and the neat crackle-finished dohc engine.



So well proportioned is the Giulietta that a photo gives no clue to its size.



The Spyder-type convertible body gives a slight loss in top speed compared to the hard-top.



photography: Poole

PROOF that the Italian automotive industry is at last serious about entering the American market is offered by the long-awaited "\$3000" Alfa Romeo. Many of us have heard, read about, and occasionally seen one of the sleek, expensive Italian imports, but of the 1% of our population who could readily afford such a car only a few hundred have been willing to give up the luxurious floating ride and six passenger spaciousness of their \$5000 "prestige" automobile.

Now we have the "Giulietta" or more simply, the Alfa Romeo 1300, indicating the engine capacity in cubic centimeters (actually 1290 cc). The 1300 is available as a 4-door sedan with a unit frame and body structure and a "dreamy" double overhead camshaft engine developing 50 bhp. This car sells in the U. S. A. for about \$2500, but we are concerned here with the more specialized version of the 1300. This is a tiny car with a long name, the Alfa-Romeo-Giulietta-Sprint, available either as a 2-4 seater hard top coupe, or a 2-seater Spyder, the latter being actually a convertible coupe type body. The Sprint, or "1300-S," versions are, of course, smaller and lighter than the standard sedan, and minor engine refinements give an output of 65 bhp. The principal differences between the hard top Sprint Coupe and the convertible Spyder are the price (the coupe is \$1200 higher!) and the wheelbase, the convertible being 7 inches shorter.

Without a doubt the 1300-S Spyder is the most fascinating small sports car we have ever driven. With an engine of only 78.7 cubic inches displacement it provides a performance which approaches the modern American behemoth so closely that one wonders if claims of 300 bhp are not closer to an honest 150. An acceleration time of under 15 seconds for 0 to 60 mph, and an honest top speed of 100 mph were impossible less than 4 years ago, from our lowest priced "big 3" makes.

But performance data in this case is only a part of the story. The greatest charm of the Giulietta Sprint is its handling qualities. Much has already been written about the delightful road manners of this new car including a report on a prototype which appeared in R & T over a year ago (Nov. 1954, page 32). Every word of these glowing reports is true—the adhesion to the road is absolutely uncanny. In cornering there is moderate understeer, very light caster-pull on the steering wheel rim, no noticeable body roll and no squeal from the Pirelli tires until the absolute limit of adhesion has been exceeded. Even then the instant steering response (3.2 turns lock-to-lock) and a very small turning circle (30 ft) give easy and confident control of slides when a tight turn is taken too fast. This is strictly a fun car, either for the new-to-sports-car man or the I've-tried-them-all type.

Second only to the impeccable handling and roadability of the Giulietta must come the brakes which are close to if not absolutely the best we have ever experienced. Pedal pressure is light without being touchy and when applied hard the feel is very solid and deceleration approaches the magic one-g figure. The li-metallic drums have a most impressive look too, with 72 massive cooling fins per drum placed at an angle for positive air circulation. There's no fade here.

Riding in the car it is almost impossible to believe that the wheelbase is only 87 inches, so good is the ride. Credit for the smooth ride under any condition must be shared by the 4-coil suspension system and low tire pressures allowed by the 155 millimeter (5.99") tires. The only criticism which could possibly be made of the suspension was a tendency to judder when making "all-out" starts during the acceleration tests and this was not serious—only unexpected of a conventional rear axle well supplied with control arms, a pair of short radius rods on each side and a wishbone above, slightly to the left of center.

The engine is both a delight to the eye and a joy to drive. It sings along at any desired rate of revolutions very quietly and with no trace of vibration at any speed. The tachometer is redlined at 6200 rpm, but it reached and held 6600 rpm during the timed high speed runs with no sign of stress or strain. We used the recommended 6200 rpm rev limit during the acceleration checks, but there is reason to believe that 7000 rpm in each gear could be used safely, returning slightly better figures. However, this was the only Spyder west of the Mississippi and it had only 2400 kilometers (about 1500 miles) on the clock when we were handed the keys by Clem Atwater Motor Sales at their San Fernando Valley home. Needless to say, we returned the car in perfect condition and, incidentally, recorded 27.6 mpg overall including the performance testing, 100 miles of highway driving and considerable traffic work. (Continued on page 45)

ROAD AND TRACK ROAD TEST NO. F-4-56

ALFA ROMEO GIULIETTA SPYDER



SPECIFICATIONS

List Price	\$2995
Wheelbase, in.	87 in.
Tread, front	50 in.
rear	50 in.
Tire size	155-15
Curb weight, lbs.	1940 lbs.
distribution	56/44
Test weight	2220 lbs.
Engine	4 cyl.
Valves	dohc
Bore & stroke	2.91 x 2.95 in.
Displacement	1290 cc
Compression ratio	8.00
Horsepower	65
peaking speed	5500
equivalent mph	82.5
Torque, ft/lbs	79.5
peaking speed	4000
equivalent mph	60
Mph per 1000 rpm	15.0
Mph at 2500 rpm	76
Gear ratios (overall)	
4th	4.55
3rd	6.17
2nd	9.57
1st	16.3
R & T high gear performance factor	47.4

PERFORMANCE

Timed top speed	100
Max speeds in gears—	
3rd (6600)	74
2nd (6600)	47
1st (6700)	28
Shift points from—	
3rd (6250)	69
2nd (6300)	45
1st (6200)	26
Mileage range	27/33 mpg.

ACCELERATION

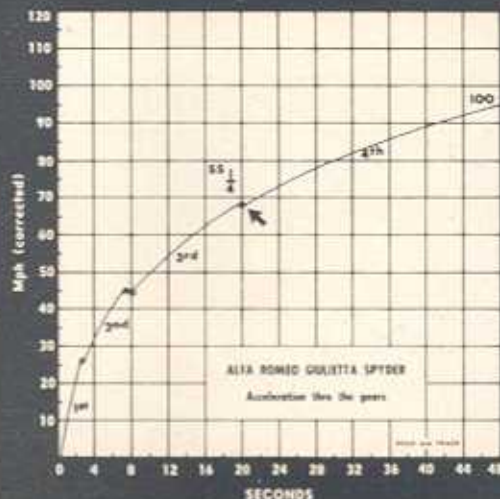
0-30 mph	3.8 secs.
0-40 mph	6.0 secs.
0-50 mph	10.0 secs.
0-60 mph	14.8 secs.
0-70 mph	21.9 secs.
0-80 mph	29.4 secs.
0-90 mph	41.4 secs.
Standing 1/4 mile	20.0 secs.

TAPLEY READINGS

Gear	Lbs/ton	Mph	Grade
1st	560 at 21		29%
2nd	430 at 30		22%
3rd	310 at 40		16%
4th	230 at 45		12%
Total drag at 60 mph,			78 lbs.

SPEEDO ERROR

Indicated mph	kph	Actual mph
30	48.3	25.0
40	64.4	35.2
50	80.5	45.5
60	96.6	55.1
70	113	64.3
80	129	74.0
90	145	83.2
107	172	100.0



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ALFA ROMEO - Cont.

This particular car was originally shown at the Fall Show in Paris. The body was built by Pinin Farina, and production models (also by Farina) show no important changes. The curb weight of 1940 lbs. was higher than expected (the unit frame and body coupes are said to weigh 1980 lbs.), but large box section body sills are an added necessity on a "roofless" chassis—which adds weight aplenty. The chassis felt adequately rigid and had none of the cowl shake so often encountered in open roadster type bodies.

On comfort, the excellent ride has already been mentioned. If we can accept the interesting theory that the T-Bird outsold the Corvette because 15 Americans want wind-up windows to 1 who prefers side curtains, then the Alfa Romeo Spyder's success is assured, for it alone in its price class has glass windows. On this car the cranking operation took an inordinate amount of work, but the windows are nice to have. The seating position is excellent, the seats themselves comfortable. However, one criticism must be made. The

The sealed cover over the gasoline filler cap is not being used on production models.



interior appears to have been designed only for drivers between the heights of 5'4" and 6' approximately. Anyone shorter than the lower limit will find himself (or herself) peering under the steering wheel rim, and our 6'4" staff member found that when the top was in place it fitted rather like a hat.

The less said about the column-mounted shift lever, the better. It was next to the worst we have ever encountered, especially on the shift from 2nd to 3rd. The travel on this shift was too short, and there was insufficient leverage to make the change quickly and positively. We estimate that all the acceleration figures from 0 to 50 and up could be reduced by one full second with the new floor-mounted shift lever, which fortunately is being supplied on all production cars. We examined this new feature on a car just off the dock but were not able to try it out. It appears to be a very serviceable and usable stick and is distinguished by a very large knob which feels just right to grasp.

For the production model with floor shift, our highest tribute lies in the triviality of the only criticism left to level at the car—in the roar of U.S. traffic, the Giulietta's feeble "beep-beep" horn is like a mouse squeaking among lions. Now, the question remains: when is the factory going to come through with enough Spydors to fill orders?

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