

1964

GIULIA SPRINT GT

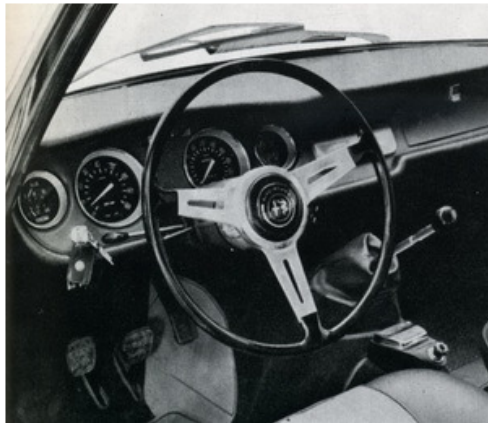
Written by Chris Savill

Photos Alfa Romeo Archives



Production History

The new model was shown to the press on September 9th 1963 and then appeared at the Frankfurt Show shortly afterwards. 848 cars were produced in 1963 but few were registered before 1964 (The first in the UK in April '64). The aluminium 1570cc engine, with cast iron cylinder liners, hemispherical combustion chambers and sodium cooled exhaust valves, along with the 5-speed gearbox, were proven items from the 105 series Giulia Ti and 101 series Giulia Sprint and Spider which had been in production since 1962, but the Sprint GT had the additional benefit of a pair of Weber 40DCOE4 carburetors, improved camshafts and a Bosch JF4 distributor. The combination not only contributed to the additional power but made for a much smoother running unit than the single Solex predecessors. Twin Solex C40PHH2s were a listed and unsatisfactory alternative which had a horrible and incurable flat spot. Some arrived in the UK with these but most were changed to Webers under warranty). Goetze pistons and liners were used and these proved to have a short life so buy one today and you are likely to find that a set of the later Borgo, Mondial or possibly Mahler pistons will have been fitted.



Enthusiasts looking under the bonnet may spot an oil cooler which was an option and should notice the dip in the cam covers to take the air filter trunking so that the bonnet line could be kept low. If you have a really early example the fusebox will be mounted on the right inner wing, where it was exposed to damp, and not on the bulkhead, and the bonnet support will be a jointed hinge rather than a rod. The front suspension was independent with double wishbones, coil springs and dampers with an anti-roll bar. The rear suspension consisted of a live rear axle well located by trailing arms and a reaction trunnion.

The car sat on 155x15 Pirelli Cinturato tyres. There were servo assisted Dunlop disc brakes all round which became notoriously unreliable and difficult to maintain. The body, penned by Bertone's young rising star, Giorgetto Giugiaro, was built at Arese and not at the Bertone factory, while the engines were still made at Portello.

Distinguishing external features included a step front bonnet and vertical front corner side/indicator lights which were to remain common to all models till the arrival of the 1750 GTV in late 1967; rectangular wing repeaters; multi-bar side grilles and a six bar centre grille; Giulia Sprint GT in cursive script on the bootlid, which was the only lettering on the earliest cars (Disegno di Bertone badges were added to front wing panels early in the production run), and plain hubcaps with an unscripted black inner circle.



The bumpers were single piece in chrome. A quirky but endearing feature were the carefully choreographed overlapping, arms folded wipers. Inside we find a plain fabric covered dash with smaller circular dials flanking the larger 140 mph speedometer and 8,000 rpm rev-counter; a black plastic rimmed three alloy-spoked steering wheel; dash mounted ignition switch and relatively flat all vinyl seats (or vinyl with cloth centres on the earliest cars); a bench rear seat was standard (have you ever seen one?)

The Sprint GT was succeeded by the uprated Sprint GTV in 1966 after a total run of 21,850 cars of which 1,043 were right hand drive.



Stephen Parry's Sprint GT

Specification		Performance	
Bore/Stroke	78mm/82mm	0 – 50 mph	7.9 secs
Capacity	1570cc	0 – 60 mph	11.2 secs
Compression	9.0:1	0 – 80 mph	19.1 secs
Fuel	Weber 2x40DCOE	0 – 100 mph	38.1 secs
BHP	106 bhp (net)	50-70 in 4th	9.8 secs
Max. torque	97.5 lb.ft	70-90 in 5th	19.8 secs
Final Drive	4.55:1	Standing ¼ mile	18.5 secs
5th @ 1000rpm	19.6 mph	Max in 5th	112 mph
Length	13ft 5ins	Max in 4th	96 mph
Width	5ft 2ins	Max in 3rd	75 mph
Kerb weight	2140 lbs	Fuel Overall	22 mpg
1964 price	£1849	Fuel Typical	24-26 mpg



Sprint GT formally owned by Ed McDonough

A Problem Recalled

The Giulia sprint GT had not been in this country long before a serious fault appeared in the front suspension causing seizure of the bottom wishbones, resulting in some cases in front suspension collapse on the road! The problem was caused by the bottom wishbone pivot pin bushes seizing and ripping the pin from the cross member. The bushes were of the 'sealed for life' variety with two spongy rings installed at the bushing end to prevent foreign matter from entering them. Not only did the rings dry out but the bushes tended to seize very quickly. Cars which gave audible warning of seizure (squeaks and groans) were recalled to have their bushes lubricated with Shell Dentax initially and later Calypsol AE grease inserted by a syringe.

Alfa was quick to recognise this embarrassing fault by offering a repair kit, including a set of modified bushes, for use in instances where lubrication failed to unseize the bushes or if the suspension broke completely. Fitting the repair kit was a major operation as it involved a brand new main cross-member complete with a pair of revised wishbone pivot pins. It was rather a hush-hush job for obvious reasons with clients being informed that their Sprint GT required a 'suspension operation', with Alfa bearing the brunt of the cost. Alfa's test for seized suspension was as follows: stand by the front wheel and lift the wing/ suspension up as far as it will travel, then let go. If it stayed in the up position the bushes required renewal or lubricating, but if it sunk slowly back down then all was well. (David Edgington)

What the Papers said

The number of cylinders does not become apparent until one reaches about 4,000 rpm, and even then the engine does not sound as though excessive demands are being made on it, unlike some of its pushrod contemporaries, but for those who are enamoured of gear shifting, the pièce de résistance of the whole car is undoubtedly the 5-speed transmission. (Road & Track, December 1964)

There's this stretch of road that goes from your joint to someplace very groovy. 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.

Now you need a car, a very special teeny-weeny sort of grand touring car, Ferrari Lusso or Aston Martin or Mercedes 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 just about 1.3Gs 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 yyyooo www-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. And big brakes, don't forget big brakes, so that you can go yyyoowwww-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. (Car and Driver, April 1965)

The Sprint GT appeared in England for the first time at Earls Court in 1963, and since then it has established itself as a popular high performance model with perhaps the nicest appearance of any car from the Alfa Romeo stable, certainly since the war. (Sporting Motorist, April 1965)

In an era where 'Gran Turismo' is one of the most bastardised terms in the automotive world, the Alfa Sprint GT is a refreshing return to reality (Sports Car Graphic, May 1965)



Bill Earham's Sprint GT
by Chris Savill

ALFA FACT FILE

UK Model Range

Giulietta TI	£1265
Giulia TI	£1397
Giulia 101 Spider	£1397
Giulia Sprint GT	£1796
Giulia TI Super	£2250
Giulia SS	£2394
2600 Berlina	£2272
2600 Spider	£2498
2600 Sprint	£2900
Ford Lotus Cortina	£992
Austin Healey 3000	£1107
Jaguar 3.8 Mk 2	£1558
Jaguar 'E' 4.2 Coupe	£1993
Gordon Keeble	£2903

Used Car Selection

1956 1900 Super	£345
1962 Giulietta TI	£795
1962 Giulietta Sprint	£925
1962 Giulietta Spider LHD	£695
1963 2600 Berlina	£1745
1963 2600 Sprint	£2100

UK Dealer Selection

Thomson & Taylor	Cobham
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Chipstead Motors	Kensington
Halsales	London SE20
Rudds	Worthing
Dove	Northampton
F.K.Sharpe	Lincoln
Bengehill Garage	Evesham
B.S.Ranford	Malvern
Mist's garage	Birmingham
E.L.Bouts	Wolverhampton
Mangoletsi	Knutsford
Charles Garages	Liverpool
County Garage	Manchester
Sandersons	Leeds

Show Stoppers

Giulia 1300 Saloon	Monza
Bertone Canguro	Paris

Track Record

Giulia TI Super (Andrea de Adamich)	Portuguese Rally (outright win)
Giulia TI Super (Baghetti, MunaronDe Adamich)	ETCC Monza (1-2-3 finish)
TZ (Rolland and Augias)	Alpine Rally (outright win)
TZ (Bussinello/Todaro)	Targa Florio (3rd overall)
2600 Sprint (Andrea de Adamich)	Criterium d'Apertura (outright win)

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