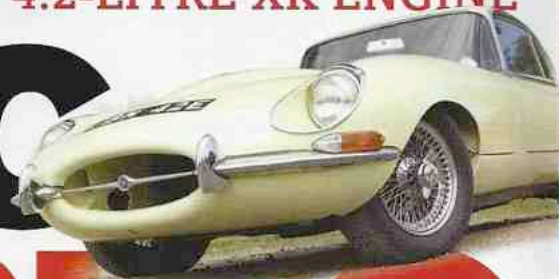


**BEAULIEU: OUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE**  
TO THE WORLD'S GREATEST AUTOJUMBLE

**50 YEARS**  
**OF JAGUAR'S**  
4.2-LITRE XK ENGINE

classiccars4sale.net



# Classic MOTORING

INCORPORATING CLASSIC CARS FOR SALE MAGAZINE

BUYING ADVICE ▶ RESTORATION ▶ NEWS ▶ EVENTS ▶ AUCTIONS

## SUPER Sportsters OLD AND MODERN



### BMW Z3

Why not have one instead of a Mazda MX-5? **Buying guide inside!**



### TRIUMPH STAG

Remembering when Stags were snags...



### ALFA SPIDER

Now's the right time to graduate to this iconic Italian – read why



### BIG HEALEY

Beefing it up special! Latest mods revealed



### MG ZR/ZS

Modern MGs that are brilliant bargain buys



### ELITE & ECLAT

Bargain 70's Lotuses you should own NOW!



### HILLMAN IMP

How to mod and mend Rootes' radical rascal

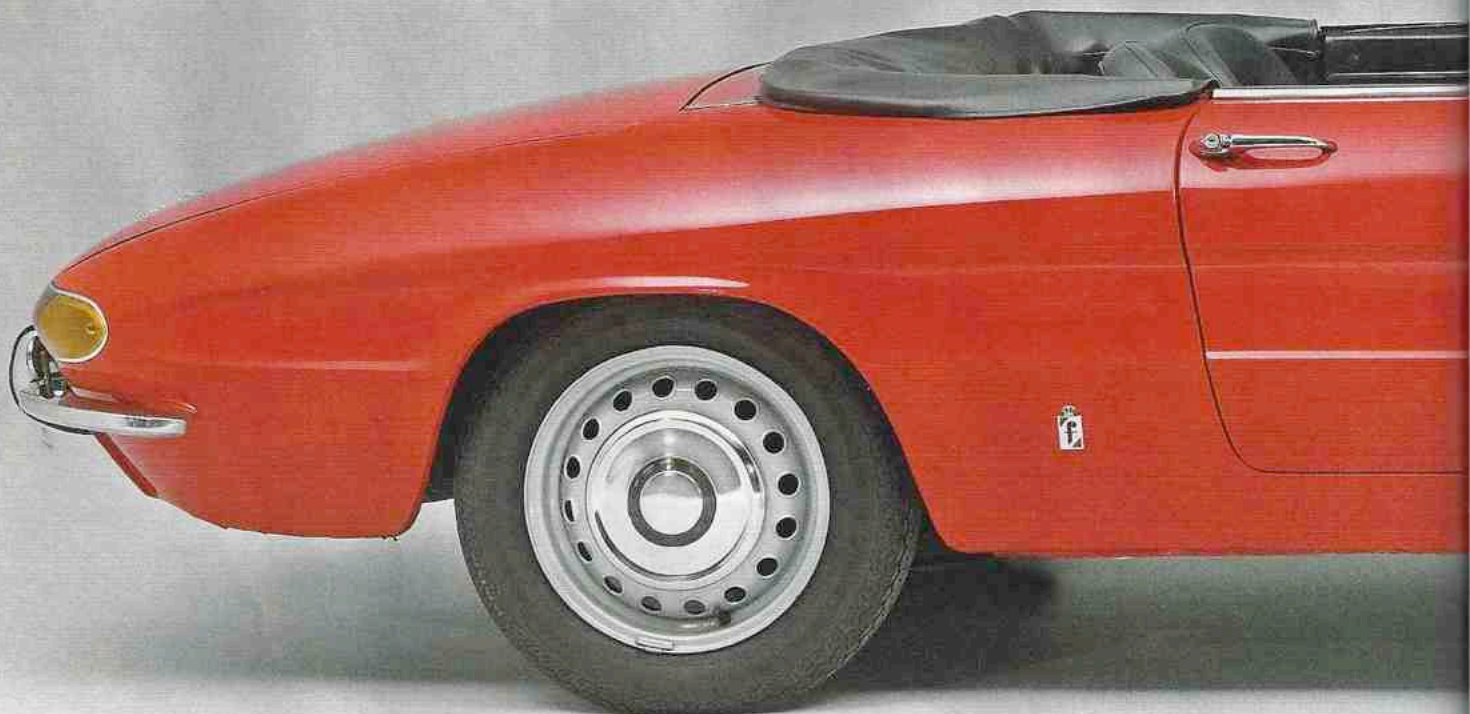
**SHADOW vs SPIRIT: WHAT BUDGET ROLLS-ROYCE FOR YOU?**



SEPTEMBER 2014 £3.99

# SPIDER MAN?

Alfa's iconic sports car that was advanced in its day and still comfortable on today's roads. Full of character and an easy car to own yet far classier and more sophisticated than an MGB or TR Triumph



If you define a classic as a vehicle that was ahead of its time and a trailblazer then the Alfa Romeo Spider is up there with the best of them. Introduced in the mid 1960s when sports cars were by nature crude, Alfa rewrote the rule books with its Duetto (later renamed Spider) sporting such niceties such as overhead (twin) cams, sexy dual Weber carburettors, wind down glass windows, disc brakes all round, a five-speed transmission – the sort of spec that you'll find on a Mazda MX-5.

The Spider was a world away from our homespun efforts such as the MGB and Triumph's TR but there again, when new, this Italian was closer to a Lotus Elan and E-type price-wise.

A top Spider can still command Elan money but lesser average cars remain good value. Best of all, the Alfa remained in faithful production for almost 30 years,

meaning you can buy a comparatively new classic and effectively get the best of both worlds if you buy right. Here's how.

## HISTORY

**1966** Alfa Romeo ran a competition for its new sports car, in search of the most appropriate name. Many entries suggested the name 'Duetto', and so it was. However, Pavese's biscuits protested and so Alfa Romeo quietly dropped 'Duetto' from all literature and references to the car, at the first available opportunity, which came a year later. The Duetto (of which over 6300 were made) featured a chassis based on the earlier open-top Giulietta and Giulia models powered by Alfa's new twin cam engines.

**1967** Alfa Spider 1750 Veloce arrives. This was identical to the Duetto in everything, apart from the engine. The Italians had, however, already re-christened the original

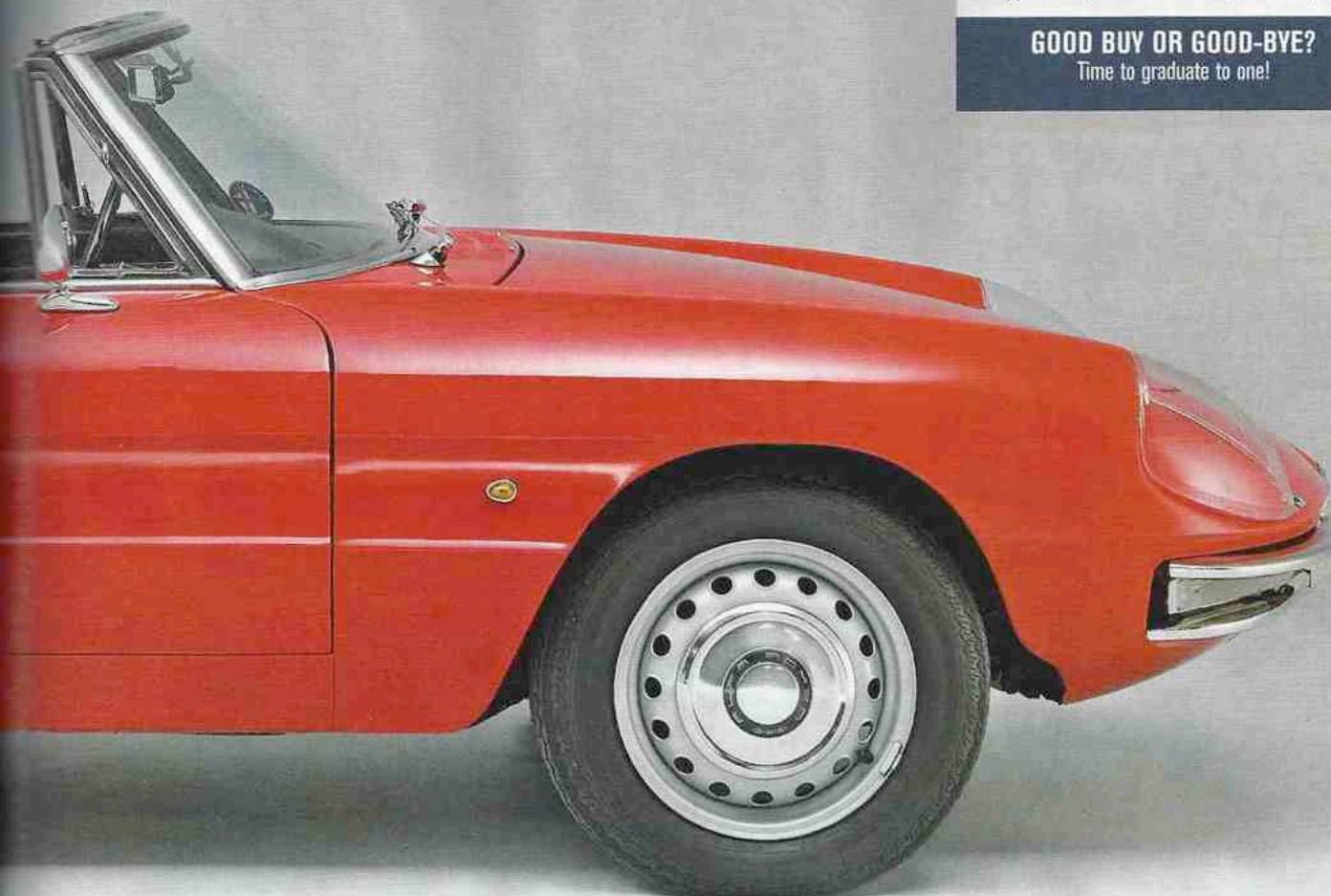
1.6 model 'osso di seppia' (cuttlefish bone) because of its shape, with the rounded back ending in a sloped point. The nickname was to apply to all Spiders, regardless of their engine size, until two years later, when the new 'Coda Tronca' (cut or square tail) Spider was introduced.

The Spider 1750 Veloce, sported a hydraulic clutch, and an optional ZF limited slip diff. Almost half the production was destined for the USA market where even a special Gradute model was marketed after the film rocketed the car to stardom.

**1968** The following year a Junior version joined the range, with a happily-revving 89bhp 1.3 engine and a lesser braking spec but overall it was a similar car.

**1969** The original and much loved 'osso di seppia' shape (of which less than 1000 UK cars were made) was retained by the Junior until 1969, and then underwent the first

**"The later the car the better it became and yet they remain the best value Spiders of them all"**



## THE FACTS

■ Best model:	Boat tailed cars
■ Worst model:	S3 (US cars)
■ Budget buy:	S3/S4
■ Ok for unleaded?:	Usually
■ Will it fit the garage?:	L 4250mm x 1630
■ Spares situation:	Overall excellent
■ DIY ease:	Mechanically no worries
■ Club support:	Excellent
■ Appreciating asset?:	Yes, top ones soaring

## GOOD BUY OR GOOD-BYE?

Time to graduate to one!

styling development that many felt was retrograde even though the squared-off tail was more modern looking – the earlier tail is now more preferred. The 1.7 also had flush door handles and changes to its instrument console. The overall length was increased which improved boot space.

**1971** It was only a question of time before Alfa fitted its new 2.0 engine. This model became a huge hit in the United States, with more than half its production (over 22,000) being shipped there.

**1972** The 1.6 originally fitted to the first Spider (Duetto) made a comeback this year, joining the 1.3 (dropped in 1977), 1750 Veloce (which would be phased out soon anyway) and 2.0 versions.

**1983** After almost a decade of stagnation, a substantially revised Spider was launched and boasted moulded front bumpers (which incorporated a spoiler and front indicators),

a rear spoiler and a three-spoke steering wheel. It was a useful shot in the arm.

**1986** The plushiest Spider ever, a 2.0 Quadrifoglio Verde (Green Cloverleaf) hits the showrooms, complete with wider tyres, front and rear spoilers, new side skirts and revised interior and trim.

**1990** Pininfarina got to pen the last version and got rid of the fussy design, hailing a return to simpler, better integrated, chic lines. Power steering, fuel injection and three-speed autos (for the USA) were among the goodies lavished upon the restyled car, available in 1.6 and 2.0 guise, which lasted until the mid 90s.

### DRIVING AND PRESS COMMENTS

This Alfa was – and is – streets ahead of say an MGB or TR and still feels relatively modern even though the chassis wasn't

quite as sophisticated as the spec initially suggested; its real rival was the Jensen-Healey. By today's diesel standards, Spiders aren't particularly quick; even the top fuel injected (133bhp) 2-litre takes a ten second jog to 60, while the 1750 is slightly slower albeit sweeter – it's the purist choice. If you find one, don't overlook a 1300 as it's a gem of an engine although fairly sedate (0-60mph in around 14 secs).

In terms of fun, the early Spiders are best and most wanted but later LHD (mostly US cars) the most usable and retain much of the original character. The S4 with its standard power steering may be beneficial, even if it loses out on precision to the earlier set ups.

It has to be said that, today, a determined Fiesta driver would show a Spider the way home, but speed isn't everything and the controllability of the

### WHAT TO LOOK FOR

#### TRANSMISSION

■ Don't worry if you can't select second gear from cold – it's an old Alfa/Ferrari trait. But watch for weak synchromesh once warmed up – expect a £500 bill for a recon 'box. Clutches are usually okay as are rear axles although S3 and S4 designs appear to be less strong than the earlier types for no apparent reason.



Later cars benefited from more comfort and toys but quality not as good



Early cars have painted dash and simpler trim which many purists prefer



Classic twin cam is robust although 2.0 has weak heads. Many early cars are fitted with larger, later engines

RWD Alfa, with that twin cam bellowing out such happy tunes is compensation and then some. Five-speeds always came as standard although the gearing is more titled at go rather than a restful cruising gait. It is Italian, after all.

As is the cockpit. The cabin is roomy enough for two although tall drivers will need the seat right back, using up the limited leg-room provided for back-seat passengers (yes that's right it was an optional 2+2). And although that rear seat was fully trimmed until 1979, Alfa then replaced it with a simple parcel shelf.

The steering wheel is a long way off in the best Italian tradition, but it was heavily dished from the introduction of the 1750. The pedals on RHD cars were all floor-hinged (LHD versions got the more modern hanging pedals from the Kamm tail revisions). They are set close together and some people will find that they take some getting used to. They are also offset to the right meaning a skewed sitting position.

In its day the Alfa was considered to enjoy 'superb handling' according to the *Motor* test of May '67: "The Duetto (*this was before the name was changed-ed*) is a supremely checkable car" while it added that, "Duetto scores over most other genuine sports cars in having a softer and more comfortable ride". Five-speeds are mandatory these days but a rarity some 45 years ago. "It's not merely in having a five-speed gearbox that the Duetto is head and shoulders above most other sports cars, but in having a five-speed that is so superbly pleasant to use," it added. Mind you with a top gear ratio giving under 20mph/1000 rpm it's not an overdrive cog.

### PRICES

When new, the Alfa was only a couple of hundred shy of an E-type. In general, today, a Spider is dearer to buy than an MGB but not by much. Older cars are the most valued and £20k+ for a top one is common although ten-to-fifteen is more the

### WHAT TO LOOK FOR

#### GENERAL

- Look beyond the gloss as there are many nice looking cars out there which aren't. If given a choice, always buy a car with a good body - the oily bits can be far more easily sorted out.
- Beware of US cars. On the one hand, they may be free from rot, but the interiors don't fare as well in the hot sun. Worse still, they feature detuned engines and softer suspensions.
- It's reckoned that S2 cars are best served for parts; boat-tailed cars the least with some panels now virtually extinct new. S4 cars okay and even came with a standard hardtop. Is it still there however?
- Usual Italian electrics of course but easily fixed. Much harder is to replace the trim especially cracked dashboards and blistered fabric.
- Hood frames can be a pain as replacements are becoming scarce although only on early cars.

### WHAT TO LOOK FOR

#### BODY & CHASSIS

- Rust will always be a worry and it's odds on that some repairs will have been carried out. Biggest concerns are the front crossmember and the double-skinned sills, A pillars, inner wings, bulkheads, front anti roll bar location points and similar at the rear.
- According to Alfa specialists, draw a mental line six inches up from the ground and look for rot everywhere; door bottoms, wings, valances, arches and so on.
- The wings, especially the rear ones, are notorious rotters but repair panels are available. One tip at the front is to check for a seam where the front wing meets the sill. If it's been smoothed over by filler then expect the worst; remove wheel arch splash guards, if poss, to gauge condition.
- It's reckoned that, while being the least desirable and so cheapest buys, the later S3 and S4 cars are best protected against rot although are the worst in terms of build quality so it's swings and roundabouts...



WHAT TO LOOK FOR

ENGINE

■ The twin cam is an all time great and well known. Oil pressure gauges fluctuate and can drop to zero at idling but it's nothing to fret about. The units can leak oil so check. A rebuild by an Alfa expert will cost around £3000 upwards.

■ The 1750 is the sweetest and the 2000 the fastest, but the latter unit can suffer from head and head gasket woes - can you see evidence of fresh gaskets?

■ Depending on model and year either twin choke Webers or Solex carbs feature - the latter are sexier and the Solex are the least liked. Common to all will be wear and tear and expensive rebuilds if you want the car to run right.

■ Fuel injected Alfas used Bosch systems or the earlier Spica, which was unreliable although a good Alfa expert can sort it out fairly cheaply.

**"Strangely, for the Spider's many charms, the standard out there is, at best, only average"**



THREE OF A KIND



LOTUS ELAN

These were partners in price when new and similar in mechanical make up as well, although the Italian is usefully roomier plus always boasted five speeds. Today, a compatible Elan is far costlier to buy, unless you're talking about Plus2 coupés. An all time great that's a better buy now than when new thanks to dedicated specialists developing the car and making them reliable but Elans are an extremely expensive classic to properly restore even if parts aren't.



MAZDA MX-5

People say the MX-5 is a 'modern Elan' but it's also a latter day Alfa Spider, launched a few years before the Italian was finally dropped. Lacks the character of the Alfa as you'd expect, but has one of its own as well as reliability for 24-7 dependability and user friendliness. Good Mk1s are now making tidy money but the Mk2s are better drivers while the Mk3s are currently fine value on the second-hand car forecourts which is where you should look.



JENSEN-HEALEY

Launched just as the Alfa was getting into its stride, the Jensen-Healey is the closest rival to the Italian and a rapidly improving sportster in its own right - if you get a good one. Facelifted Mk2 is said to be the better car although so much depends upon condition but spares and club support is ever improving. More a tourer than road burner, a J-H is far more civilised than a TR or MGB and yet usually significantly cheaper to buy.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

## RUNNING GEAR

■ Tired springs are common but a nose down stance could be more due to body and chassis rot at the spring pans – so check them! Ride height is sorted by shims and special overhaul kits are available.

■ The sophisticated all disc set up is reliable and usually any problems stem from lack of use, such as callipers sticking and rusting. That said the handbrakes are always marginal even when adjusted correctly. On twin servo cars check their state along with the master cylinder, which can play up and is dear to repair or overhaul.

■ Rear hub bearings let go but are straightforward to replace. The steering, which isn't rack and pinion, may feel slack due to ball joint and wishbone wear – the latter are expensive units. Anti roll bar bushes wear; replace with poly types.



mark and around £6500 for a fair one. The Series 2 cars can be up to £5000 less and an easy ten grand buy; the 80's models the least valued, and little more than £5000 for a peach. Series 4 cars can sell for around £1000 extra as these are starting to be liked for their better interiors, and equipment levels such as power windows and power steering. Right hand cars ceased along with the 1300 in 1977.

Given the undoubted desirability of the Spiders, it's extremely surprising to learn from Richard Norris of Classic Alfa that the overall standard of cars out there is at best only average.

Original boat-tailed cars are the most wanted, preferably with the sweeter 1750 engine and it's expected the gap between these and later Kamm-tailed cars to widen significantly, which in turn will harden S2 values believes Norris who adds that Kamm-tailed values have soared by some 30 per cent during the last two years alone.

The S3 seems universally least liked due to the crass body kit; the S4s are better bets all round, especially with their reliable fuel injected variable valve-timed engines and easy-to-live-with power steering although condition can cancel a lot of the above out. Talking of which, basket cases can be had for around £1500 but may not be the bargain they purport to be...

## IMPROVEMENTS

Advanced for its day, this twin cam engine is already well tuned and certainly the standard Weber or Dellorto carbs can withstand a fair chunk of added breathing just by re-choking and jetting. For a mild tune, the first step is a session on a rolling road to optimise the carbs and ignition (fit an electronic set up if possible) followed by a tubular 4-2-1 manifold. Next step are a change of cams, suggests Classic Alfa but, a nice cheap tweak on the 1.3 and 1.6 is to fit ones from the 2000 engine.

If you can find a 2000 Berlina, nick its rear axle because it's a limited slip affair with a rare 4.3 rear axle ratio.

Harder and adjustable damping along with better springs and a thicker (29mm) front anti-roll bar are the best mods and the company markets a dedicated kit for those who want to go the whole hog. You can, for more than £700, fit Classic Alfa's complete braking kit but if you have a 1300 or 1600, then using brakes from the Alfa 75 is a cheaper upgrade. There's no rack and pinion conversion known but late LHD Spiders came with PAS which will fit other LHD models with some graft.

## VERDICT

The Spiders just seem to mellow and get better with age and top ones will soar in value. All are easy to run and maintain while the later S4s make a fine alternative to the almost mandatory MX-5 and is almost as dependable to run every day.