

## RICHARD BANKS: THE RESTORER SPEAKS

Richard Banks has been rejuvenating 105 Alfas since the late seventies, and reckons the biggest restoration problem with these cars is rogue Alfa restorers.

"I spend my whole life sorting out other people's cock-ups," he says bitterly, "cutting out rubbish some other so-called 'restorers' have put in." More specifically, he cites the sills as a sticking point.

"Reproduction, full-length sills (being made in Europe) fit better on the left-hand side than the right and don't fit very well around the A and B posts. The sills are banana-shaped – they bow out in the middle – and, because most people don't notice it, you never get a sill-to-door match. They're critical because the car's not strong in the sill area. If you look at the side of the GTV it's absolutely flat – slab-sided – and 99 per cent of the people who restore these cars can't get the shape right. It's difficult to get the car looking as it



Master Alfa restorer Richard Banks with concours winning GTA

should because none of the panels are easy to fit."

Richard is a big fan of the 1750GTV ("Its poise and balance are in another league") but admits the 2000 engine can be rewarding if it's built carefully. Ride heights are "absolutely critical," says Banks: "A lot of replacement

springs are now too long, which jacks the back up, making the car oversteer and look silly. You just have to cut them down until the car sits properly, ideally dead level or 1/8in lower at the back than at the front – slightly squatting."

There are plenty of other problems on the suspension/

steering side for restorers: "The lengths of the outer and centre track rods are stipulated by Alfa and, as the steering wheel is on a keyway rather than a spline, you can work out for yourself that you have to change your track rod lengths to centralise your steering wheel properly." Over the years the track rod lengths get out of synch, and that really affects the way the car handles, especially on camber.

Richard is a great believer in replacing rubber suspension bushes and advises that they should all be changed at 30,000 miles: "You get tremendous rewards from the car when you do." Pay attention to what's written in the workshop manual too, says Banks: "Alfa was very conservative, bred through research, so when it wrote something down you want to pay attention to it because it does actually work."

propshaft which should have a rubber collar on it: if it doesn't this allows movement and generates noise. The rear gearbox mounting is also prone to breaking, allowing up and down gearbox movement. The centre steady bearing on the prop wears and allows too much movement of the centre of the propshaft on take-up.

Differentials don't give very much trouble, although the plates in the ZF limited slip device wear out after a time and are difficult to find replacements for: if the inside wheel lifts and spins on a turn you'll know it isn't working. Axle whine is a possibility, but it could be wheel bearings.

### Suspension, brakes

At the front, lower outer balljoints catch the weather and run out of lubricant. They'll be quiet on a wet day, graunchy when it's dry. Wear here will show up if the MoT tester is clever: dimmer testers won't bother to jack the car up off its rebound stops to check for wear in the balljoints. The castor control arm joints do wear, and if you get clonks under braking they're probably to blame, or possibly the connection to the upright. On cars of this age, look for broken springs and even broken spring mounting plates, which can rot through.

Rear trailing arm bushes were very soft on early cars, so soft the axle would wind up and judder under heavy braking. This badly confuses the brake-pressure regulator as it oscillates between one side and the other. Substantial rear end steer was another problem. Later cars had harder bushes from the Montreal. Rear trailing arms have been known to rot through – obviously dangerous



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– and rear axle limit straps can break or disappear. Top bushes on the "T" arm which deals with lateral location of the axle deteriorate (they're exposed to oil from a leaking diff) and let the axle move from side to side: don't be too upset by some side-to-side movement as this is part of the car's cornering/ride character.

The trailing arm mounts on the rear axle are better than on earlier 105 coupes, but are worth keeping an eye on for safety reasons. Rear springs go soft after a time, and bump stop can fall off. If you're lucky the bolts that hold them on come out; if you're unlucky, you have to drill them out which can be very awkward. Koni is Dooley's preferred shock absorber, and 185/70 tyres can give excellent results compared with the original, skinny, 165s, giving a nicer ride and more grip. Michelins, Pirellis and Uniroyals work well.

The brakes – ATE discs all round – should be powerful. If they aren't look to the twin Bonaldi servos: the front and rear brake circuits will have to be bled – together – with the engine running, to scavenge the servos. Some pad materials will start up corrosion with the discs in wet weather. Pedal spindles can seize, causing the brakes to jam on. Handbrakes don't usually give much trouble, but if they do the separate small drums in the rear hubs are fiddly to work on and aren't designed to stop the car when it's moving.

The GTV uses cam-and-peg or recirculating ball steering. Either way, it stands up quite well, although there may be an alarming clonking when you drive over rough ground. Nothing much to worry about here – just shim up the spring loading a touch more. The steering boxes can leak, but this is not common.

## WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

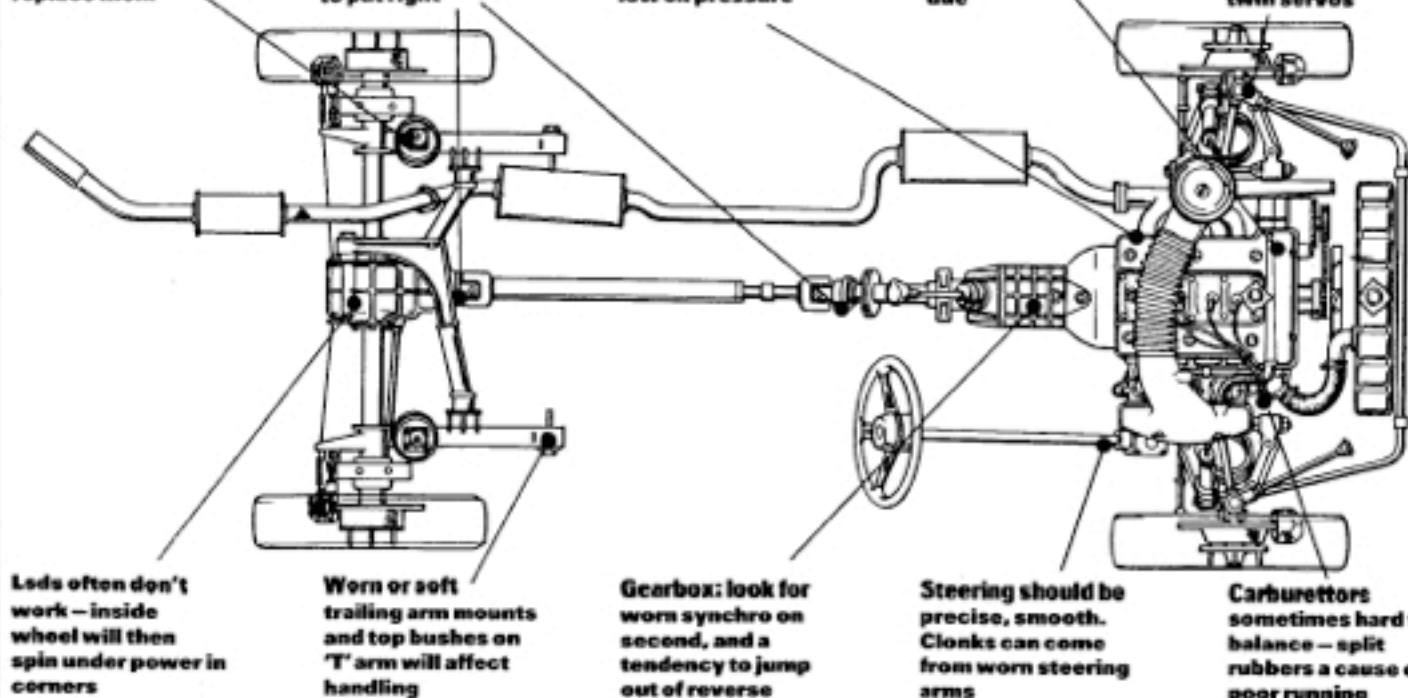
Rear bump stops can break off, leaving you with bolts to drill out to replace them

Worn prop bearing can cause vibration. All UJs will wear but easy to put right

Engine suffers head gasket problems. Otherwise strong. Don't worry about low oil pressure

Timing chain can be noisy, may adjust. If not, an engine overhaul may be due

Brakes should be superb: if rest of system all right, look to troublesome twin servos



Leds often don't work - inside wheel will then spin under power in corners

Worn or soft trailing arm mounts and top bushes on 'T' arm will affect handling

Gearbox: look for worn synchro on second, and a tendency to jump out of reverse

Steering should be precise, smooth. Clonks can come from worn steering arms

Carburetors sometimes hard to balance - split rubbers a cause of poor running

## Interior and electrics

Cloth interiors are reckoned to be the nicest but wear the quickest and are difficult to reproduce now. If you find a car with a good cloth interior, look after it. Vinyl interiors last quite well. Door knobs fall off regularly.

Relative to modern standards the electrics on the GTV are nice and simple. Problems come from earthing or poor quality connections. Starters are robust, as are alternators although over a long period the diodes will pack up.

Original Alfa bits for these cars are almost exhausted. However, new parts are now starting to appear: quarter light rubbers are

available again, somebody is making front grilles and even some panels are available.



2000 GTV Veloce SE was fitted with vinyl roof, carried extra gear

## Conclusion

The 2000GTV is not a difficult car to get to grips with. Among Italy's semi-exotics it's actually one of the more sensible buys given the level of technical back-up and the proven design. They go on forever mechanically (it's basically a Turin taxi in its essentials, don't forget) and, if truth be known, they aren't so much more afflicted with corrosion problems than other seventies cars. Find yourself a basically sound 2000GTV, keep it watertight - moisture traps have killed more of these cars than anything else - and you will have something that will give the keen, sensitive driver endless pleasure.

## SPECIALISTS

Brookside Garage, 55 High Street, Wrestlingworth, Sandy, Beds; tel: 076723 217.

Restoration, spares, performance and chassis tuning

Gatwick Alfa, Charlwood Garage, The Street, Charlwood, Surrey RH6 0DF; tel: 0293 862860. Sales, service and repairs on all models

Intaparts, Unit 15, Vulcan Road, Leicestershire; tel: 0533 519901.

New and secondhand parts  
EB Spares, 2 Washington Road, West Wiltshire Trading Estate, Westbury, Wiltshire BA13 4JP; tel: 0373 823856. Spares and tuning parts for all cars except Sud, 33 and Arno.

The Highwood Motor Company, 26 Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey,



Essex EN9 3AS; tel: 0992 760364 or 0831 160480 mobile. New and used parts for 105 series cars, remanufactured GTV body and repair panels including wings and front panels. Recon doors and bootlids

Lombarda 2-10 Railway Mews, London W10; tel: 071-243 0636/8. Sales, service, parts  
RW Banks, Commerce House, Wickhambrook, Newmarket CB8 8XL; tel: 0440 820291.

Concours standard 105 series restorations  
Bell and Colvill Classics Ltd, Epsom Road, West Horsham, Nr Guildford, Surrey KT24 6DG; tel: 04865 4671 ext.331.

GTV spares  
Cubleys, 609 Liverpool Road, Southport; tel: 0704 741 14/5/6. New and secondhand spares