



1005 ALFA ROMEO GIULIA SPRINT SPECIALE

This year, 2010, Alfa Romeo celebrates its centenary. One of the great sporting marques, over the last 100 years, Alfa have been one of the venerated companies of the European car industry.

After the Second World War Alfa Romeo committed itself to mass production as distinct from its pre-war policy of low volume high performance road cars and racing cars. This policy was essential to survive.

This led to a succession of models with characteristics that set them apart for most enthusiastic drivers, some of them in the tradition of the great Alfa sports cars of the 1920s and 1930s. The ranges have sometimes included fairly unsuccessful models, strategies have been uncertain in times of business stress, and racing fortunes were mixed. But the bread and butter cars have always been complemented by more sporting models which have contributed enormously to the lustre that surrounds Alfa Romeo's name. The car featured in this article is one of the latter.

Alfas have soul, the reasons for this being their styling, their engines, and the way they handle. Traditionally, Alfa Romeo have gone to the great Italian styling houses to have their body shapes drawn up. The majority of enduring designs have come from Touring of Milan, Zagato, Pininfarina, and Bertone. Alfa Romeo engines were designed by engineers with racing experience, all race proven and honed to something like perfection there. Similarly, the chassis and suspension set-up of an Alfa has always been sports oriented, so overall you get a car which is entertaining and rewarding to drive.

The Alfa Romeo Sprint Speciale (or SS) was one of those beautifully bodied Alfas produced in limited numbers in the 50s and 60s, i.e. about the middle period of Alfa's 100 years.

It was designed by Bertone's chief designer, Franco Scaglione (who built the famous BAT concept cars in 1953-56)

and appeared in prototype form at the 1957 Turin show. It was built according to aerodynamic principles and had an estimated Cd of 0.25. It was the most curvaceous of all production Alfa Romeos.

The car, called the Giulietta Sprint Speciale, was fitted with a 1300cc twin cam engine developing 100bhp and a five speed gearbox. Due to the fantastic aerodynamic efficiency the car was incredibly fast at 124mph which was unknown for a 1300cc car in the late 50s. It had a good competition history but was eventually outpaced by the similar Zagato bodied car which was much lighter with its alloy body. A total of 1,366 Giulietta SS cars were built in 1958-62.

In 1963 the car was upgraded. It was given a 1600cc twin cam engine with twin double-choke Weber 40DCOE

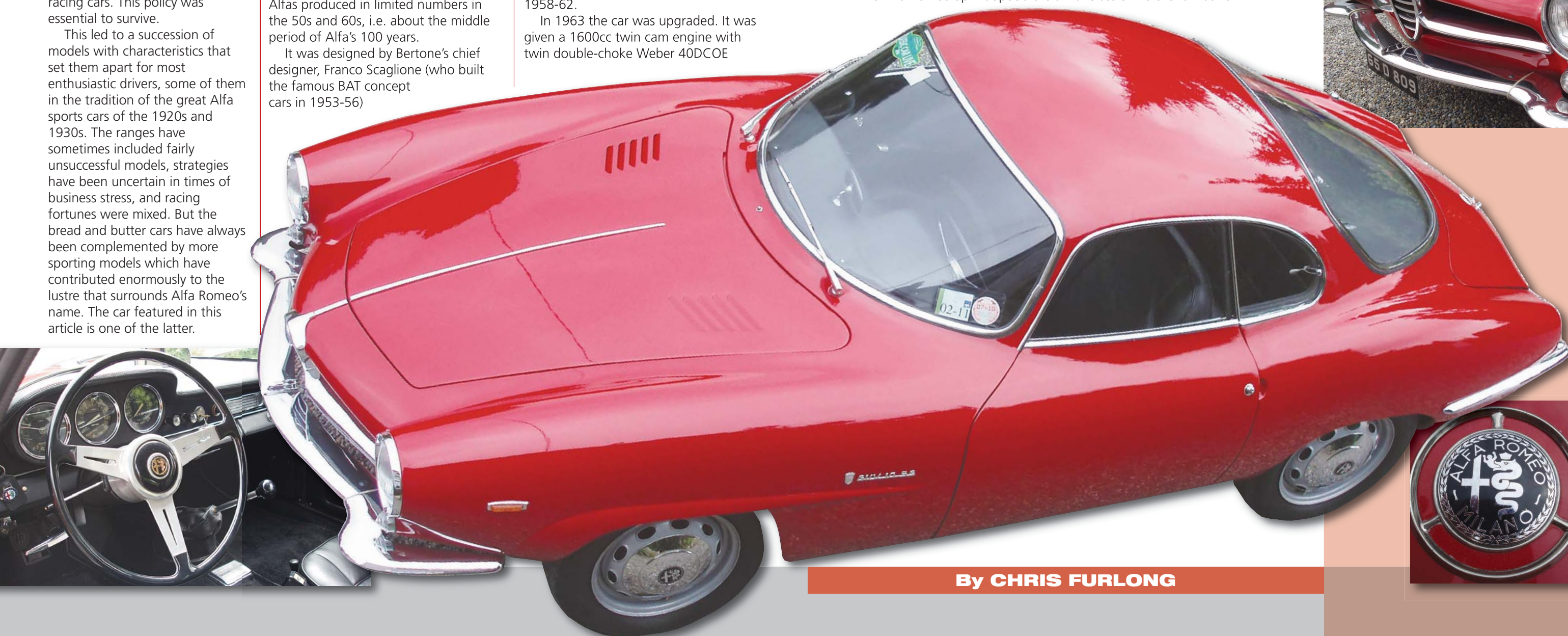


Carburettors which developed 112bhp. It was also fitted with front disc brakes. It had a marginally better performance, particularly better torque in the lower speed ranges. It was now called the Giulia Sprint Speciale. (Giuliettas had 1300cc engines while Giulias had 1600cc units). A total of 1,400 Giulia SS units were built in 1963-65.

The Alfa Romeo Sprint Speciale is a

remarkable car which was designed 53 years ago, and with its long flowing lines was called the most perfect streamlined car. To many collectors it is one of the most desirable smaller Alfas of all time.

The car illustrated here (a 1965 SS) is owned by Chris Furlong and it appeared at the Alfa Romeo Centenary Exhibition at the Mondello Classic Live event in June.



By CHRIS FURLONG