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Sleeping Beauty №23: Alfa Romeo 2600 Touring



A car which captures the truly stunning yet simple Italian styling of the early 1960s, but doesn't yet carry a price-tag to match, is the Touring-bodied Alfa Romeo 2600 Spider.

This 6-cylinder model first appeared at the **Geneva Salon** in 1962 as a replacement for the 4-cylinder **2000 Spider** (styled by the same carrozzeria). The Spider had two sisters, a **2600 'Berlina'** saloon and a **Bertone-bodied 2600 'Sprint' coupé**.

Each of the three models was the product of a different styling house. It seems likely that **Touring** was awarded the commission for the 2000 Spider at least partly as a result of its much-applauded cabriolet version of the **Alfa 1900**, from 1957. The **2.0-litre Spider** was stunning in its own right but the 2.6, while similar, was simpler and less 'fussy'. It had less chrome and just one, large, relatively plain bonnet scoop, leaving the lines of the car uninterrupted by superfluous details.

But the styling tweaks were not really the point. Disappointing sales of the 2.0-litre model were thought to be largely due to the lack of performance, so in went a seven-bearing, six-cylinder 2584cc engine with an alloy block. Both bore and stroke were reduced, allowing higher engine speeds. Maximum power rose from 115 to 145bhp, with maximum speed up from 111mph to a claimed 124mph. At last, here was an Alfa Romeo with the performance to match the image.

Under the bonnet, the large block and six carburettor chokes suggest it's a heavy engine; and indeed it is. The extra weight is noticeable when driving and the handling is not quite up to the slower, lighter 2000 Spider which the car replaced.

Incidentally, if you're looking for an original, factory-built, right-hand drive version of the **2600 Spider**, the insiders' trick is to look at the bonnet hinges. If it's hinged at the back, it was lhd when built. The rhd versions all had front-hinged bonnets – but then so do the left-hookers from chassis number 192351 (made in late 1963) onwards. Nothing is ever straightforward...

The 2600 Spider's short production life ended in 1965, with just 2255 cars made. If you'd like to own one of them, check out... [the Classic Driver car database](#).

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