

**-McClarenDesign's-**

## **Very Serious SLS AMG Review of the Car of the Week N Stuff**

### **Week 1: 2001 Alfa Romeo Spider 3.0i V6 24V**

Before we begin this week's review, I feel I need to mention a few things about this review. First off, it's opinionated. So just like you, it's right. Second, Jeremy Clarkson once said that in order to be a true petrolhead, you have to own an Alfa at least once. This week's choice of car couldn't be more fitting.

The car that was chosen for the test, in this case the '01 Spider, was quickly found within my garage, covered with roughly the same amount of dust that Scarface had in his nose. Beneath the dust lay a layer of dirt the Italians call "Salvia", but it actually looked like something found in a baby's diaper. Obviously, this had to be the first thing to go.



**According to Polyphony Digital (via Translator-san):**

#### **Translator-san**

*When the new Alfa Romeo Spider was unveiled at the 1994 Paris Motor Show, its body style produced a media buzz all over the world. It looked nothing like the cars that preceded it, taking the classic 2-seater in a completely different direction than its predecessors, whose roots can be dated back to 1927. To say that the new car looked radical would be an understatement. Penned by Pininfarina, the Italian*

*designer mainly associated with Ferrari, the Spider's exterior styling featured wide fenders, a low-slung body and a radical new face, making it look sportier than before.*

*The car was also spiritually different in that it now adopted a FF layout (Front engine/ Front drive) rather than the traditional FR. Initially, it came powered by a 145-ps 2.0 liter DOHC inline-4, but in 2001, a 3.0 liter DOHC V-6 boasting 215 hp was added. A 5-speed manual gearbox came mated to the former engine, which later evolved into a 6-speed unit for the V-6.*

*Despite being front-wheel drive, the new Alfa was a competent performer on twisty roads as it demonstrated excellent balance through corners and little chassis flex, inherent in most convertibles of its day. The Spider underwent significant changes in 2003, in the form of a redesigned front grille and a bigger V-6, going from 3.0 liters to 3.2.*

So, what we've got is a klutzy Italian supermodel with big hips. What could possibly go wrong?

First things first. A quick trip to the paint shop, and 2,000 Cr. later the car has a fresh shade of Rosso Corsa red. That color certainly compliments the car, the maker, and the designer. I mean, Pininfarina and Rosso Corsa are like peanut butter and chocolate. Salvia looked like something left for dead in the 70's, but with the Rosso Corsa, it's like Julia Roberts in Pretty Woman.

Hot, but still a hooker inside. I like that.



One thing to remember when painting a car; be sure to know who is doing the car. It was at that

moment that I began to look around me, and realize I may have stumbled upon an illegal chop shop. Our 2,000 Cr. paint job bought us an idiot that doesn't exactly know what he's doing. "Somehow" our convertible top managed to get a matching coat or two of Rosso Corsa. We weren't mad at him for doing this (and because we thought he might murder us), we were enraged because he couldn't tell us how to prevent the paint from cracking or chipping from the top (actually, he was fascinated while we were plotting our escape). His mistake actually looked pretty good, and we wanted to make sure it stayed that way for years to come (and get the hell out of there alive!). Thankfully, he's agreed to pay for the damage by ordering and installing a proper top that's been made with that shade.

...and we're still alive.

**Performance As Purchased:** May 24, 2011, Salvia (Green)

Displacement: 2,958 cc

Max. Power: 204 hp @ 6,000 rpm

Max. Torque: 187 ft-lbs. @ 5,000 rpm

Drivetrain: FF

Length: 4,290 mm Height: 1,315 mm Weight: 1,450 kg

Tires: Comfort (Soft)

Performance Points: 388

Mileage: 23,471.8 mi.

Next up was a complete rebuild of the engine. 23,471 miles of damage, and it's been sitting around collecting dust. I could measure the performance as is, but you have to remember... it's still an Alfa, and prone to break whenever feels like it. In order to do the car, and in this case the designer some justice, we ripped everything apart, rebuilt it, and were rewarded with 21 hp and 23 Performance Points... whatever the hell those are. Total cost: 15,000 Credits and lunch for the crew, and just for the hell of it we threw on some BBS RE-MG wheels for an additional 3,500 Cr.

*For those keeping score at home, other notable data includes: Max. Power: 225, Max. Torque: 207 ft-lb., Max. Performance Points: 401 PP*

*Phone rings. Accountant. .... Decline call. Moving on....*

After repairing the previous owner's poor taste in color and treatment, we headed over to our secret test track. It's so secret, Google had one of its satellites blown to bits the minute they tried snapping a shot of the area. Of course, no government would take credit, but one has to wonder exactly how far Polyphony's power cou.... Anyway, our racing driver was able to extract a 0-60 mph time of 0.07.585 with a Maximum G-Force of 0.52G. Not exactly promising, but you work with what you've got. 1/4 mile time of 0.15.826 puts it three tenths-of-a-second behind a comparable year V-6 Mustang, with the Mustang having the benefit of 0.8 liters more displacement AND an FR.

*For those keeping score at home, other notable data includes: 0-1 mi.: 0.38.728, 0-100 mph: 0.17.869 mph, Top Speed: 148.7 mph*

Being an Italian supermodel, we simply had to take her to Monaco. She's Italian, and would love the food, yachts, and shopping. You, however, are man, and would love Formula 1, exotic cars everywhere, and more supermodels to gawk at. It's perfect.

Driving on the streets of Côte d'Azur, the car's flaws immediately take hold the minute you dive

into a corner. Much like any supermodel, you have to be delicate, and it requires a deft touch. Not that you know, because you're too busy playing video games, hacking the interwebs, and being a general lazy menace to society... but trust me on this.

When entering a corner, our died-from-a-box redhead plowed through corners as predictably as any FF, however... and I'm sorry this has to be said but don't tell her... her fashionably flared posterior seemed to just go on and on right into the wall like Courtney Love on a bender. It was pretty brutal.

But like any supermodel, when you can calm her down, get her to put down the alcohol, and start talking sense, she can be reasonable. It isn't always pretty, but in the end you both wind up better off for it.

Thrashing around the streets of Monaco at a frantic pace, it quickly sinks in. I'm in a convertible on the streets of Monaco in an incredibly out-classed Italian car... and I simply don't care.



Convertible motoring is all about the glitz and glamor of driving with the top down. Sadly, this was impossible, because like every other Alfa, my top is broken. And I love her for it. With her new paint, I love the way she looks. When we actually took time to get to know each other, and talk, I got to see who she really was. Despite her faults, she's gorgeous.

That's what makes her a supermodel.



Sure, at the end of the day you may be splattered along a wall somewhere, but you're absolutely guaranteed to be the best looking corpse on the evening news for at least a month. Unless, of course, there's another Alfa driver somewhere, but even that in itself is a rare occasion. I've seen more California Condors than I have Alfa owners, yet everyone proclaims to be a gearhead.

After giving the keys back to the angry Alfa Romeo rep (his name is Julian, but around the office we just call him Julie), I headed home with a sense of adventure, glamor, and accomplishment. A quick check of local car ads didn't turn up any of the cars for sale, yet I've seen one driving around town. Shame, really, because America could learn something about building a crappy car, but I guess that's why the Cobalt is still around.

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