



The new Alfa Romeo Spider made its official African debut yesterday afternoon at Auto Africa 2006, being held in Johannesburg, the stylish new convertible model making an impact ahead of its arrival on sale in South Africa set for early next year. Auto Africa is the most important motor show on the continent and Alfa Romeo South Africa clearly emphasised its intentions for the local market with a large stand packed with its highly sporty model range: as well as the Spider the Alfa 147, Brera and Alfa 159 were all on show, along with a collection of glamorous catwalk models on hand to compliment the cars.

Alfa Romeo South Africa held the launch of the new Alfa Spider in Auto Africa Hall 6. The full press unveiling took place at noon while a VIP launch got underway at 4:30pm. The new Alfa Spider will go on sale in South Africa from January 2007. The South African general public will be able to see the Spider close-up when Auto Africa 2006 opens its doors tomorrow. The show - now in its 10th edition - will run until 5th November.

The first public viewing of the new Spider in South Africa went very well for Alfa Romeo SA with strong interest being shown in it by the media all day. Two examples were on display yesterday: a red and a silver model, both were fitted with the new 3.2 V6 engine and in Q4 (four wheel drive) specification. Pricing has yet to be confirmed by Alfa Romeo SA but the current estimate is that it will be around the R520,000 mark. Also on show, fresh from its local public launch last month, was the Brera sports car. Both examples at Auto Africa 2006 are in 3.2 V6 Q4 trim. The Brera has been priced at R480,000 for the 3.2 with the only additional cost options available being metallic paint and larger alloy wheels. Joining them, and further representing the "new breed" of Alfa Romeo models in South Africa is an Alfa 159 1.9JTDM which is on show, although unfortunately there is no Alfa 159 3.2 V6 Q4.



The new Alfa Spider is expected to do much to restore Alfa Romeo's image in South Africa where the brand has a very long history and tradition; and along with the new Alfa 159, Brera, and the 159 Sportwagon when it arrives next year, it heralds a new era. The Spider was created by Alfa Romeo Centro Stile in conjunction with Pininfarina and it features advanced multilink suspension as well as high safety equipment.

On the local market both petrol engine options will be available: the 136kW 2.2-litre 4-cylinder 16v engine with continuous variable valve timing and the 191 kW 3.2-litre V6 "Twin Phaser" unit. The latter option sees the Spider able to hit 100 km/h from standstill in around 7 seconds while it can achieve a top speed of 235 km/h. Pricing and options haven't been announced yet but equipment levels will be similar to the Brera, including front, side and knee airbags, rain/headlamp/mist sensors, hill holder, cruise control and parking assist.

For the first time at Auto Africa Alfa Romeo have their biggest and most direct competitors right next to them, in the form of the two German brands, BMW and Audi. Audi have the new TT model on display but as yet they not fixed local pricing. Around R430 000 is expected for the manual version but no indication as yet on the options list.





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