



Odds

## THE PRODUCTION ALFA 8C COMPETIZIONE TAKES CENTRE STAGE AT THE SYDNEY MOTOR SHOW

Alfa Romeo are out in force at the Exhibition Centre in Darling Harbour for the Australian International Motor Show, with the production 8C Competizione displayed alongside examples from the full range, including the 159, Brera and Spider.

Following on from their market launches in the middle of the year, Alfa has brought examples of its 159 and 159 Sportwagon to the show. The car is presently selling to expectations, with 220 examples sold so far this year, an excellent result considering the present unavailability of an automatic gearbox option. The Sportwagon, decked out in a combination of Alfa red paintwork and tan leather, is powered by the 185bhp 2.2 JTS four-cylinder, whilst the 159 sedan (in vesuvio grey, with red leather) acknowledges the ever-increasing importance of diesel powerplants in the Australian car market, being powered by the 200bhp 2.4 JTDM five-cylinder turbodiesel.

In January next year, the diesel range (which accounts for three-quarters of all Alfa sales worldwide) will be expanded with the addition of the 150bhp 1.9 JTDM 16V for both the 159 sedan and Sportwagon, paired with the six-speed automatic gearbox recently launched in Europe. Alfa Romeo expects this variant to quickly establish itself as the most popular version in the range. The first few months of 2007 will also see the availability of the Q-Tronic automatic on the 2.4 JTDM and 3.2 V6 Q4 versions of the 159, as well as on the Brera and Spider V6, whilst an upgraded version of Alfa's Selespeed robotised manual gearbox will also land here at around the same time as an option for 2.2 JTS models. With the addition of these variants set to broaden the 159's appeal enormously, Alfa Romeo are quietly optimistic that the present rate of sales can be doubled.

Nevertheless, in terms of the present, Sydney marks the first show appearance for the new Spider, already present in dealerships. The example at the show is a 2.2 JTS model, resplendent in Kyalami black paintwork with black leather. The successor to a proud tradition of Alfa Romeo convertibles, the Spider has attracted much favourable comment throughout its time on display, and is set to continue the devoted following that its predecessors have long enjoyed here. As striking as it is, however, the Spider is playing second fiddle to the true star of the stand.

Alfa Romeo are out in force at the Exhibition Centre in Darling Harbour for the Australian International Motor Show, with the production 8C Competizione displayed alongside examples from the full range, including the 159, Brera and Spider. Mounted on an angled plinth the Alfa 8C has proven one of the true stars of the Australian International Motor Show how, garnering a similar reaction to the concept which appeared at this show two years ago.

This is the production version of the 8C Competizione, air-freighted in from the Paris Show just a day before the show opened. Mounted on an angled plinth which unfortunately somewhat detracts from onlookers' ability to take in the stunning design as a whole, the 8C has nevertheless proven one of the true stars of the show, garnering a similar reaction to the concept which appeared at this show two years ago. Speaking on the sidelines of the show, Press Officer Edward Rowe confirmed that, despite its left-hand drive only status, half-a-dozen or so serious enquiries had been made about the 8C from Australian collectors, with pricing expected to be around A\$300,000.

Elsewhere on the stand, the venerable 166 has had a final upgrade. With right-hand drive production having ceased, the final batch of 166s have been upgraded to Ti specification, for the same recommended retail price as before of A\$84,950. Just fifteen examples remain in the dealer network, and in addition to the now-superseded 166's equipment levels, add unique Ti 18-inch alloy wheels, black leather sports seats, satellite navigation system with colour screen, sunroof, rear parking sensors, and Xenon headlamps. The mechanical package remains the same as before, with the 220bhp 3.0 V6 hooked up to the five-speed Sportronic automatic gearbox. The example displayed features marostica grey paintwork, with black leather. It is not the only 'Aresé' V6-engined Alfa at the show; alongside it is an example of the stylish GT Coupe in a combination of stromboli grey/red leather, equipped with the flagship 240bhp 3.2 V6. Finally, the range is rounded out by an example of the 147, a five-door 2.0 Selespeed in novona grey/black leather, and a Brera 3.2 Q4, displayed (as at the Melbourne Motor Show earlier in the year) in a combination of blue misano/blue leather.

by Shant Fabricatorian





#### New Logo For Fiat

Text & Photos edited by F. de Leeuw van Weenen

Source: Fiat Group

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#### Debuts on new Fiat Bravo

In recent months, the Fiat brand has implemented a new strategy, which is underlined by the many new products that have been presented: from the Croma to the Grande Punto, the Panda and the Fiat Sedici, and they will soon be joined by the new Bravo. As Luca De Meo, President of the Fiat Brand, explained, "In this important, dynamic context, we have decided to acknowledge the progress achieved so far, by changing our logo, as a tangible sign of the new impetus that is projecting us towards future challenges. This is why the new logo will make its debut on the front of the new Bravo, before being gradually adopted on all Fiat models."

Created jointly by RobilantAssociati (an agency specialising in Brand Advisors & Strategic Design) and the Fiat Style Centre, the new symbol is derived from the famous shield that decorated the front of Fiat cars from 1931 to 1968, with the vertically elongated letters of the word 'FIAT' standing out against a ruby red background, encased in a chromed round frame. It has a three-dimensional effect which conveys an idea of technology, Italian design, dynamism and a strong personality, while it also harks back to the round logo (white wording against a red background, surrounded by laurel leaves) that identified powerful, high performance Fiat models for many years.

The essential, strong new logo therefore conveys 'ongoing change', a sign of the past re-read in a modern key which is particularly representative of Fiat today, a brand projected towards the challenges of the future but also proud of its historical identity. The two main elements of the new logo (the shield shape and the colour red) immediately bring to mind the Fiat 524 of 1931, which was the first to use a rectangular logo that blended into the new grille, designed with stylistic but also aerodynamic pretensions, in the shape of a shield with vertical elements.

The new FIAT logo is designed to sum up the mission of an Italian company that for over one hundred years has been building good-looking cars that are accessible and capable of guaranteeing the best quality of everyday life.



## Caparo T1 Makes US Debut

Text & Photos edited by Clinton Deacon

Source: Caparo Vehicle Technologies

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The Caparo T1 technology flagship – a high performance and highly aerodynamically efficient track car – will make its debut in the US at the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) show running Tuesday 31 October to Friday 3 November 2006 at the Las Vegas Convention Centre.

The T1 track racer will be displayed by Michelin (booth 42912) as part of an agreement with the French tyre manufacturer for it to become the car's exclusive supplier of tyres. As a focal point on their stand, the T1 will help draw attention to the tyre maker's own technical prowess and innovation skills.

When the show opens on Tuesday morning, the T1 will be officially unveiled by Oscar Pereda high performance marketing manager for Michelin North America and Chad Mann president of Mann Motor Company, whose company will import and distribute the car.

"I believe the Caparo T1 project has the potential to redefine the track going sportscar," said Pereda in the run up to the show. "Michelin is the most committed tyre company in the world for sportscar racing and is in the vanguard of sportscar evolution. Therefore, collaboration between our two companies has great potential."

"SEMA will be the first opportunity in North America for 100,000 business and trade visitors to see close-up this phenomenal car developed using Britain's world renowned motorsport engineering expertise," said Caparo Vehicle Products chief executive Richard Butler. "The US already offers the world's largest tuner aftermarket for high performance vehicles, and with private race tracks springing up all over the country the T1 is ideally placed to meet the needs of enthusiastic weekend racers."

"In addition, the fast growing corporate hospitality market has a need to provide clients with the ultimate ride and drive experience with a professional race driver at the helm. For this you need a two-seater similar to the demonstrators developed by the Formula One teams for their sponsors and VIP guests. This altogether makes the US a strong potential market for the T1."

Commenting on the car and the most frequently asked question from prospective US customers Sean Butcher commercial director at Caparo Vehicles Technologies, said:

"The T1 has been designed with aerospace and F1 technology know-how to meet the needs of privateer race drivers wanting to experience the maximum possible track performance, but without incurring the cost or reliability issues of running a high formula racecar.

“In the UK, where weekend events have long proliferated, customers have been expressing their desire for an affordable high performance track day experience. Technically, you can only go so far in extending the performance of a road car to the track, so instead we designed the ultimate track car that could be driven on the road. It’s obvious really.

“In its home market the car will be street legal through the well-established process of obtaining single vehicle approval and I’m frequently asked whether we can similarly make it street legal in the States. At this stage we’re not sure. In the US, the comparable approval process is far more complex, varies from state to state and ultimately may prove simply too expensive. The advice we’re receiving from our US distributor Mann Motor Company is to focus on the track opportunities and possibly a race series, especially given the car’s exclusivity and extraordinary performance.”

Commenting on the next most commonly asked question Butcher added: “Given its performance and the fact that many supercars can reach stratospheric prices, we think the Caparo T1 offers exceptional value for £165,000 which is approximately \$311,000 at current exchange rates. This excludes sales and value added taxes, which vary from country to country. Most of our prospective customers are probably in a position where they don’t even need to ask the price; the fact they do simply shows their understandable desire to extract maximum performance value for each dollar they spend, which we think the T1 offers in abundance.”

The Caparo T1 is a 2-seater that delivers 1,000bhp-per-tonne, which is twice the power to weight ratio of a Bugatti Veyron. The high power to weight ratio has been achieved by applying the principles of lightweight vehicle design resulting in a compact 2.4 litre V8 engine delivering a high specific output of 480bhp to a hybrid aluminium, steel and carbon composite car whose entire vehicle mass is no more than 465kg (1,025lb). In other words, the Caparo T1 shares the same power output of a typical American muscle car, but has only a quarter of the weight ... and much better performance on the track.

Not surprisingly T1 promises the customer phenomenal dynamic agility with exceptionally rapid acceleration, braking and cornering. The combination of high engine output and ultra lightweight design endows the car with extraordinary performance characteristics including 3g cornering and a 0-60mph time of 2.5 seconds. Proving the point that reducing vehicle mass is the best way to enhance performance the T1 can accelerate from zero to 100mph and then brake down to rest again in approximately 8.5 seconds.

The idea for the car comes from Caparo Vehicle Technology design director Ben Scott-Geddes and engineering director Graham Halstead. The two honed their design talents with Gordon Murray, who in turn was inspired as a teenager by the genius of vehicle lightweighting guru Colin Chapman.

Professor Murray, who has recently joined Caparo Vehicle Products as director of advanced concepts said: “Ben and Graham both worked with me as young engineers on the McLaren F1 project. They represent the next generation of designers able to carry forward the principles of lightweight vehicle design. This is clearly demonstrated in their T1 project, which 14 years on from the F1, is less than half its weight. That’s progress for you.

“As a technology demonstrator the Caparo T1 is a new beacon for the automotive industry for the simple reason that whether you’re racing on the track or picking up the groceries from the supermarket, vehicle mass is the single biggest enemy of so many aspects of vehicle performance – not the least being carbon emissions. And the same principles of lightweight vehicle design applied to the T1 can be similarly applied to the average family car.”

Caparo has embraced the T1 project to highlight its ambition to become a leading supplier of advanced composite materials to carmakers needing to reduce CO2 emissions.

“The point is you can reduce carbon emissions without compromising vehicle performance,” says Caparo group chief executive Angad Paul: “Irrespective of where cars are designed, manufactured and sold – whether that’s North America, Europe, India or China - our view is that the global automotive industry really has no alternative but to embrace lightweight materials technology. It may take 15 to 20 years to achieve, but in the end we will see an increasing number of carbon composite applications in series production vehicles as material costs are driven down. Already, we’re seeing it in low and medium volume vehicles.”