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## 1985 Alfa Romeo GTV6: Ensemble player

By ERIC TEGLER



**ZOOM**  
1985 Alfa Romeo GTV6

ERIC TEGLER

On many evenings as Bernie Robier sits in the trombone section of a big band, his Alfa Romeo GTV6 waits for the gig's end outside. The other musicians dig its wedgy 1970s style and realize that it has the verve of a great ensemble player.

With its manual transaxle and 50/50 weight distribution, the Giugiaro-designed Alfetta GT had plenty of handling chops. But Alfa also knew that it would take more power. Once the gasoline crisis of the late 1970s subsided, Alfa called a new tune and put a V6 in its coupe.

Debuting in the States in 1975, the Alfetta GT might not have had the subtle curves of the Giulia GTV

that it replaced, but it was completely new from the chassis up. Its five-speed transaxle allowed for tighter packaging forward of the rear seats, and its favorable weight distribution was complemented by a double-wishbone/torsion-bar front and de Dion rear suspension. U.S. market GTs came with a 2.0-liter four-cylinder making 124 hp. Rev-happy though it was, the four never had much oomph; Alfetta drivers had to wait almost 12 seconds to reach 60 mph.

But Alfa's contemporary luxury sedan, the Alfa 6, possessed an excellent 2.5-liter, 60-degree SOHC V6. It fit right into the Alfetta. The only telltale changes to the Bertone body were a bulge in the hood to accommodate the top of the engine intake and minor side molding and trim alterations.

While the look remained the same, the driving experience was transformed. The fuel-injected V6 made 154 hp and 152 lb-ft of torque. Zero-to-60-mph times dropped about 3.5 seconds. Reviewing the GTV6 upon its 1981 introduction, American magazines praised its handling, power and relative comfort. More than 22,000 were produced worldwide through 1986, including limited-production U.S. Balocco and Maratona models (largely trim packages) and twin-turbo Callaway GTV6s.

A drive near Robier's Parkville, Md., home reinforced those decades-old impressions. Robier's 1985 GTV6 has some subtle interior improvements, including an aftermarket wood steering wheel and gearshift knob. Visibility is excellent, front passenger room is good for sub-six-footers, and the controls are easily accessible.

At 150,000 miles, Robier replaced the original 2.5-liter with a 3.0-liter six from an Alfa 175 sedan, a common upgrade. With 188 hp and 184 lb-ft of torque on tap, the car digs harder out of the hole but revs a bit slower than stock. The brakes, four-wheel discs with inboard rears, slow the coupe satisfactorily. The car turns in with a slight delay, and there's considerable body roll, but once it's set, the Alfa is quite steady.

Only the transmission detracts. Shift slowly (or double-clutch), or you'll beat the synchros, annoying when the bit is in your teeth. Still, in the early '80s, there were few sports cars as complete as this.

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A 1935 Aston Martin MK II Tourer

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SUBMIT

exceeded its estimated sale price by more than \$30,000 at RM Auctions' Pate Collection sale on June 5. (06/09/10)



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