

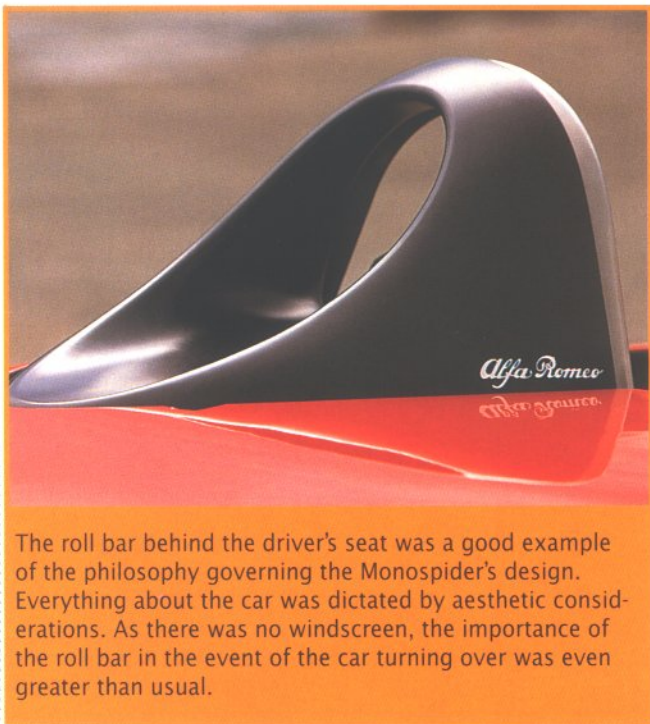


Dream Cars
ALFA ROMEO
MONOSPIDER



ALFA ROMEO MONOSPIDER

Alfa Romeo's Monospider concept car was intended as a vision of what a future spider might look like. Alfa gave its stylists free rein in carrying out this objective. The result - which was in full working order - managed to be both highly original and remarkably practical.



The roll bar behind the driver's seat was a good example of the philosophy governing the Monospider's design. Everything about the car was dictated by aesthetic considerations. As there was no windscreen, the importance of the roll bar in the event of the car turning over was even greater than usual.

Racing cars, do-it-yourself kits and modern reworkings of vintage classics – concept cars can be any of these. But the Alfa Romeo Monospider was none of these. It was in fact a parting shot from the great Italian marque's head stylist, Walter de Silva. It was de Silva who had created Alfa's latest technological marvels, the 156 and the 166. De Silva decamped from Milano-Arese to Barcelona at the end of 1998, where he joined the Volkswagen subsidiary Seat. Whereas his 156 and 166 were designed for commercial success, the Monospider was purely and simply a concept car. The idea, at Alfa's headquarters, was to create a modern re-interpretation of one of the Milan-based company's abiding passions.

No roof, no windscreen

The Monospider was – and will remain – a one-off creation. While this may seem regrettable, it is probably as well to try to assess the concept's realistic chances of success on the open market – somewhere in the region of zero. But the Monospider was still a brilliantly original car. Its styling was superb, as were its performances. That said, it was

Technical data

Dimensions and weight:

Length 4.29 m; width 1.78 m; height 1.32 m; weight n/a.

Engine:

Six-cylinder V-shape; bore x stroke 93 x 72.6 mm; capacity 2959 cc; maximum torque 270 Nm at 5000 rpm; power output 230 hp (169 kW) at 6300 rpm.

Performance:

Maximum speed 150 mph; acceleration (from 0 to 60 mph) 7 sec.

hardly a vehicle suited to everyday use – you would search in vain for a boot, or even a windscreen. Driving the Monospider required considerable courage: even on a still day the wind whipped over the bonnet like a hurricane. It was probably best reserved for days when the weather forecast was perfect.

The Monospider was fitted with a sturdy roll bar designed to provide some measure of protection for the driver's head in the event of a rollover. Happily this was a fairly unlikely event, thanks to the prototype's chassis and suspension, which were taken from standard production models. The suspension featured wishbones, elastic struts and stabilisers at the front, and wishbones, coil springs and stabilisers at the back.

Anyone driving the Monospider needed to be used to handling a very lively engine indeed. The Alfa Romeo concept car's four-valves-per-cylinder V6 engine, taken from the standard production GTV, had been retuned to bring its maximum power output up to 230 hp.

The handsome V6, with its burnished inlet pipes, is well known from its use in production models. The engine, which had four valves per cylinder and a capacity of 3 litres, was tuned up to 230 hp for the Monospider.

