

MAVERICK-FORD'S NEW COMPACT

SPORTS CAR

UK 4'3 Sweden KR 3.95 InKL moms

GRAPHIC

APRIL 1969

50c

Apr 3 '69

FORD MAVERICK

Look Out Volkswagen!

FIRST TESTS:

Pontiac Trans-Am
Volvo 3-Liter
Opel's New 1.9 GT

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R WEIS
142 VASSAR ST
ROCHESTER NY 14607

1970

DAYTONA

Chevrolet Does, Ferrari Doesn't!

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, ALFA?

You can keep your hairy honkers...I'll take class

IF FOR NO OTHER REASON, YOU BUY AN ALFA ROMEO BECAUSE OF ITS NAME — just so you can hear the smart alecks ask how Juliet is. It's not very funny after about the first time, but you grin and bear it. Politely, you listen while they tell how great this and other French cars are and how the French people are great lovers and have the most beautiful women. They ask about acceleration, and you speak proudly about the five-speed and 17.5 seconds in the quarter mile. With this, they smirk and their interest wanes, so you watch as they pile into a 427 whatever with wheelie bars and 30-inch ground clearance, laughing at you because no idiot would pay \$4200 for something that couldn't turn at least 13 seconds on a drag strip. You look on as they leave, trailing two black strips, followed moments later by a speeding black-and-white sedan.

French car, huh, you scowl, rinsing the slopped gasoline from the rear fender. The French wouldn't know a good car if it had mammary glands — and don't give me that Citroen-Renault stuff again, please. You trade with the attendant, a signature for a handful of stamps and a couple of contest coupons. French women! Well, let me tell you something, baby: Sophia Loren makes Brigitte Bardot look like an underfed 12-year-old. So don't put me on. Take your quivering clatterboxes with the 11.13 rear ends and cram 'em!

Suddenly you remember something and reach over with your right hand to touch Gina's knee. "Sorry I've been so quiet," you say, "but I guess I was thinking about those kids back there." You sit back, relax and smile while thinking about those spotlight dragsters who probably frighten their girls into early menstrual cycles.

You wonder a little why you ever got a sports car in the first place. After all, any Mustang with a handling package would beat hell out of the Alfa on anything but the windiest road. Funny... it wasn't too long ago that an MG or Austin-Healey or Triumph could whip any of this Detroit iron. And, of course, the Ferrari was then



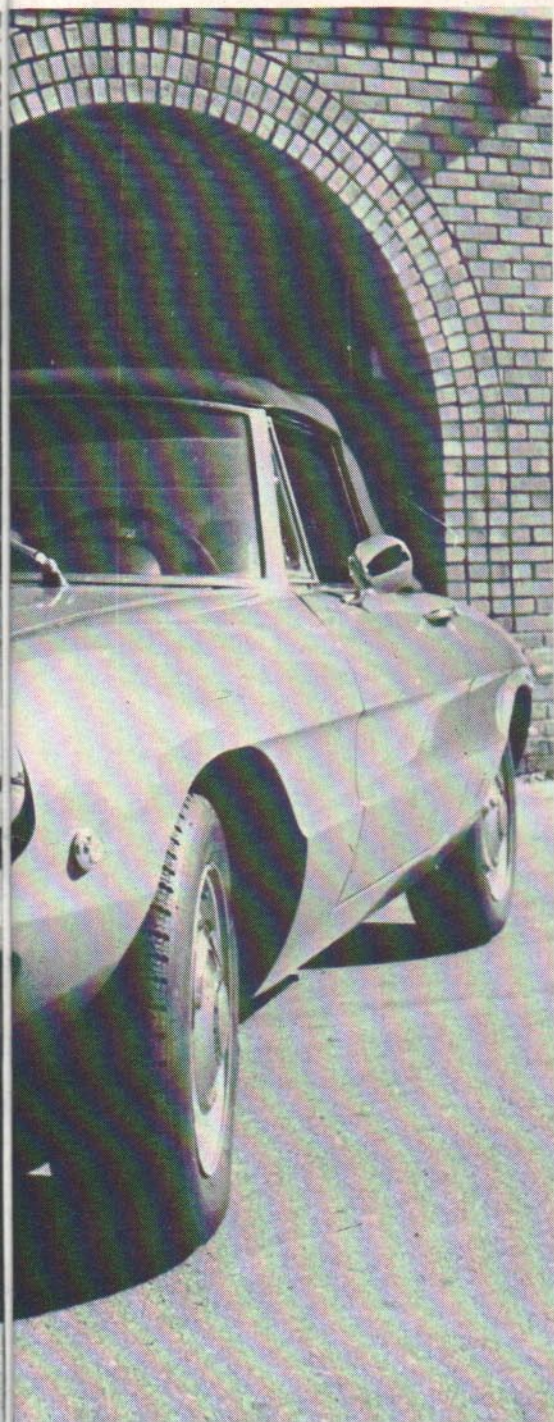
unbeatable. Yeah, but no one notices a Camaro or Javelin. They sure spot these imported sports cars though, don't they? You turn, and Gina smiles between delicate lipstick strokes.

Once on the freeway you push the shift up to fifth gear and the engine settles to a soft hum. You reach for a cigarette, drop the tobacco end into the lighter and push down. Some seconds later it clicks and the cigarette emerges, automatically lit. Maybe that's why you like it. One of those unique features that isn't even an option on Cadillacs. And the quietness, even with a rag top. And that extra bit of standard equipment you describe as rattle-freedom.

Remember the first time you saw the Spider — it was called Duetto then — in *Quattroruote*? It was kind of sleek and saucer-shaped, and as nonpractical as only a two-seater can be. When you wanted to buy one, your ex-wife filled your ears with tart demonstratives and said you'd better stick with the Chevy II. Remember?

No, you didn't buy one of those 1600s. That was before smog laws and safety laws and divorce court. But it was about a month ago that you picked up this one, with *Iniezione* — fuel injection — scrawled across the trunk in italicized chrome letters.

"How long have we been going out,



Gina?" you ask.

"Oh, about 30 wonderful days," she says, resting her cheek against your shoulder and rubbing your arm. "Why do you ask?"

"Just curious. Doesn't seem that long, does it?"

There's something about a red Italian car, you think. Somehow, no one can duplicate Italian engineering. Not that the Spider is anything exotic, but it's the starting rung of a ladder that climbs to Iso, Maserati, Ferrari, Lamborghini. There's that combination of ride and handling unequalled in anything but the highest-priced automobiles. As in France, some

of Italy's car manufacturers are government-subsidized. But what have the French done on their side of the Alps?

Hey, how about stylists — Ghia, Pininfarina, Bertone, Vignale? Italians, right? The Michaelangelos of the automotive industry. All you ever hear of in this country is a guy named Fisher Body, whose designs best resemble the appearance of a crash-tested Espada.

You flick the bright-lights lever with your left hand as the traffic subsides, and the blue light on the dashboard glares to life, reflecting off the dainty, clutching fingers on your right forearm. The car sways slightly, but not abruptly, as you casually return your driving hand to the steering wheel.

Wonder why they took off those plexiglass covers on the headlights of the Spider? you ask yourself. Sure looked good in pictures. Seems it had something to do with refraction of light and federal laws. Europeans call this version the "Federal," because of its many compliances to American safety standards. Federal. What a grotesque name for any sports car! Didn't they once, years ago, make a truck called Federal?

"Where are we going for dinner?"

You're startled from your thoughts. "Uhhmm . . ." you stammer. "Gee, glad you mentioned it — here's our turn-off." With your left hand you flip the turn signal, accidentally touching the dimmer lever, too, and stab at the brake pedal, easily stroking the accelerator pedal with the side of your foot while downshifting. "Good thing it stops quick — we might not have made that off-ramp," you say.

"Yeah, I know . . ." and you feel an icy glare from across the car as the Alfa jerks to a halt at a stop sign. "Okay, Dan Gurney, save your racing for the track!"

Your lips thin with aggravation as you think back to another someone who used to tell you that when you were driving the Chevy II.

Parking attendants leap from all directions as you slow to a stop at the *Fog Cutter* entrance. "Gosh, a new Alfa, huh, sir?" one of the attendants blurts. "Those Italians sure know how to make cars, eh?"

Well, thank God. Somebody knows! But it means another five minutes of explaining the bigger 1750 engine, the diaphragm clutch and that funny post-ignition that's caused by a lean mixture and maladjusted injection control.

"Boy, these are sure smooth, man . . . er, I mean, sir," the young fellow stumbled through his words. "I drove one once. Boy!"

"Let's go in while we still can," you whisper, reaching for Gina's elbow while departing patrons stop to follow your partner's leg line, which almost never ends in that dress!

When the vodka martinis arrive, Gina says, "You know, I kind of like your car,

too. I guess maybe it's because of things like those parking-lot fellows. People notice you, and I like to be noticed."

"And here I thought it was me all the time," you reply, grinning. The silence turns your expression to a frown.

I guess maybe I'm that way, too, you say to yourself. A mediocre job with the company and not much recognition until I've done something wrong. It's different with the Alfa, though. I'm immediately transformed into a different world — one of attraction and adulation.

You recall how you studied — all night sometimes — about Alfa Romeo, so that you could answer any question with authority. There was Alessandro Darracq, who founded a small auto company in Portello in 1906. He was bought out by Anonima Lombarda Fabbrica Automobili (ALFA) three years later, and even later by Nicola Romeo. And there's that great heritage of race victories, with Campari, Ascari, Varzi, Nuvolari, Farina and Fangio at the wheel. (Not all at the same time, dummy!)

Following numerous drinks, a gourmet entree and physical conversation with Gina's appendages, the evening nears an end. But you haven't proven your manliness behind the wheel yet! You drive slowly down Sunset, headed toward Laurel Canyon, preparing yourself for the twisting road ahead. You'll show her that Caracciola had nothing over you.

Winding through the residential area of the canyon road, your tempo increases — at first a deceleration before each turn, then hard braking and a down shift. Soon the curves arrive quicker, the car hugs the pavement through each weight-transfer moment and your confidence builds. Here comes the tight one you were looking for, and you're really going to show your adroitness now! The car drifts across both lanes and to the pavement's edge around the blind corner. You feel lucky no one approached from the opposite direction. Gina sits at your side, motionless, an outstretched arm pressing against the padded dash, knuckles white.

How dumb, you think, and remember the dragster's girlfriend's biological condition. Neither of you speak as you settle back to a reasonable speed and head toward Gina's apartment. On the way you pass two cars pulled off the roadside, one with flashing red lights and the other an orange-colored Plymouth Road Runner. Standing beside them, flashlight in hand, a policeman eyes you suspiciously as you slow and pass.

"Coffee?" she asks when you stop in front of her place.

"Sure, I think I could use it," you say, hopping around to open her door. Exiting, she leans up and kisses your cheek. "Let's go in," she whispers.

You can't help looking back as you both climb the stairs, "Thanks, Alfie," you say.