

How do they do it?

Ian Lamming drives the new Alfa Giulietta

THERE are times when I'm left scratching my head – how do they do that?

Drove a German car the other day; it was good. Drove a Japanese one as well; it was fine. Then there was the Korean one; nothing wrong with that either.

Then I drove three Italians and look what happened. The Maserati was always going to be mind-blowing, but then it was £91,000. The Abarth is mine and I love it like a son or daughter. Then there was the Alfa; oh yes.

So may cars do the job. They go, they stop, they accommodate, but they don't stir the soul. That's left to the Italians.

Here's the most ridiculous thing. As I'm driving, yes, driving, the latest Giulietta and enjoying it so very, very much, I didn't even realise it was a diesel until I turned up at the pumps.

The 1.6 diesel is just so refined, so perky, so willing, that I could have sworn it was a petrol

turbo; I wondered why the trip computer was reading 60mpg?

Despite only a modest 120BHP under the hood, Giulietta is strong and willing, sporty and fun. Mate this with a fine and splendid chassis, sharp steering and tremendous brakes and it is a dynamic recipe difficult to match, especially if you change the driving mode to dynamic.

So the Alfa is a truly brilliant drive and it looks unique too in a sector where too many hatches look very similar. It is curvaceous and stylish, cool and designer. It's Italian, so what do you expect?

The interior is dark but it fits and feels just right. It features all the modern bits and pieces we now demand, such as infotainment, touch-screen and Bluetooth. All good, all great.

But wouldn't the world be a dull place if technology took precedence over character?

Thankfully that's not something the Italians will ever let that happen.

Fact File

- Alfa Romeo Giulietta
- Engine: 1.6 diesel
- Power: 120HP
- 0-62mph: 10 secs
- Top speed: 121mph
- Combined MPG: 74.3
- Transmission: Six-speed manual

