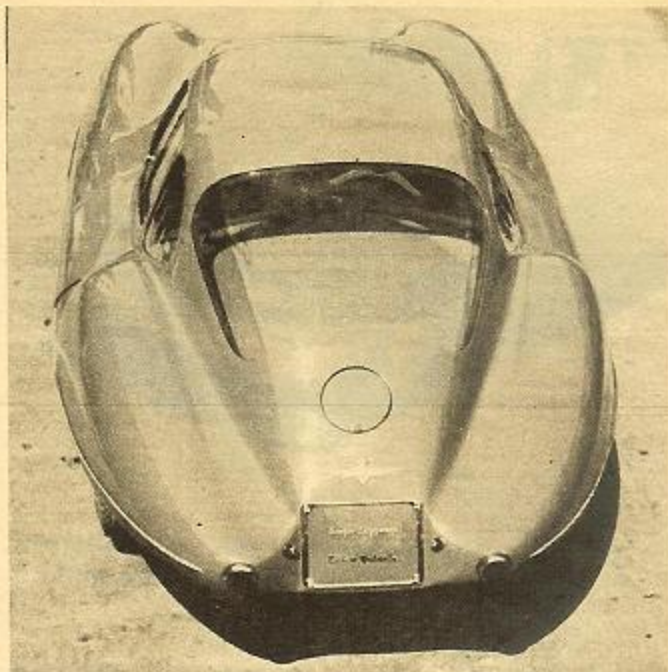


ITALY'S "FLYING SAUCER" COUPE....



Rome:
NEWEST and most startling of Italy's sports cars is Alfa Romeo's coupe version of the "Flying Saucer." The body of this two-litre car looks as though it had been designed on Mars but actually was created by Touring of Milan.

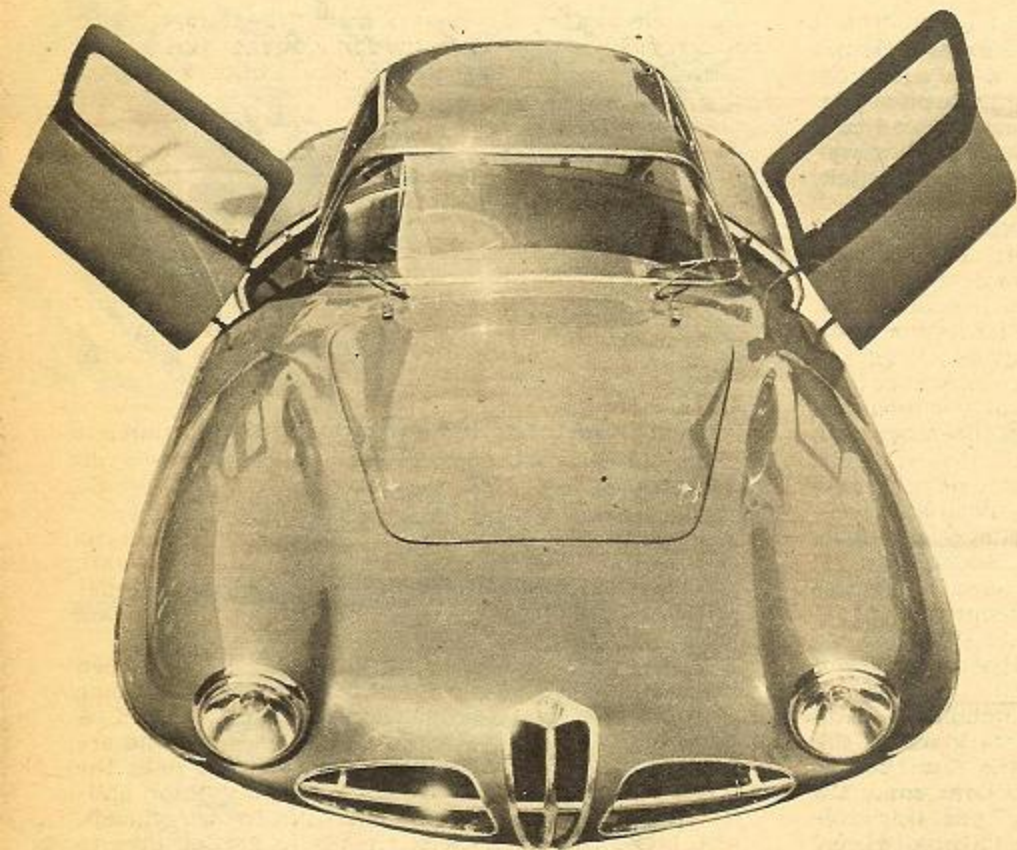
It makes use of the aerodynamic principles which inspired the original ultra-light roadster model of the "Disco Volante" but it is a completely re-designed automobile—and the proposed price is \$6000 in Italy.

The engine is identical with that of the open roadster but this addition of a roof and coupe bodywork has not resulted in a hybrid model. Instead, this is a harmonious combination of the lines of both. The windshield is constructed so that driver has greatly increased field of vision.

The engine has four cylinders with a total displacement of 1997cc, just under two litres. Bore and stroke is 85 by 88mm, over square; compression ratio is 8 to 1; maximum brake horsepower is approximately 130.

The chassis has a tubular framework, with body panels welded to it. Front suspension is independent coil spring; rear has a normal axle with radius arms to take braking and torque loads. The transmission is four-speed synchromesh and the brakes have forced ventilation. Wheelbase is only 87½ inches; height (loaded) is a shade under 47 inches.

Top speed—and this from only two litres—is in the neighborhood of 138 miles per hour! ●●●



Because of the marked "tumble-home" of the body sides, the "Flying Saucer" coupe must swing its doors up at a sharp angle. Side view (next page) shows exhausts along side.

By Melton Davis



... AND ALFA ROMEO'S "DAY OF THRILLS"

IN ONE of the most cock-eyed public relations stunts any auto firm ever thought up, Italy's Alfa Romeo organized a "Day of Thrills" a few weeks ago. The varied and unconnected events took place in the pine woods of Castelfusano, near the sea a few miles outside of Rome.

The idea for this wild-eyed automobile circus came from a somewhat similar display developed at Monza, where the Portello firm has been bringing "personalities from the world of art and culture together with champions from the sporting world and auto technicians."

The number of spectators was limited to one thousand. The mere public was allowed to watch from the side of the track, but the visitors' enclosure was clearly marked. This was a specially constructed grandstand halfway along the straightaway of a three-mile track.

The guests included the diplomatic corps, representatives from the Vatican City, politicians, writers, painters, sculptors, big shots from business, and from other sports. The big names from films, radio and theater showed up, and of course most of Rome's title holders, phony and otherwise. Some newspaper and magazine writers managed to get in.

The show was billed as original. That was an understatement.

First, the mayor of Rome, Signor Rebecchini, officially opened the festivities. The next part of the program was a parade of all the old Alfa Romeo models, beginning with the Darracq 1906. Then came the firm's pride-and-joy, the Grand Prix Type 159, twice world champion, and four types of the "Flying Saucer" (the 3500 and 2000 coupes, and 3000 and 2000 Spiders). The Alfa Romeo team of drivers ran these through their paces, whizzing by at about 160 miles an hour.

The pretty ladies who were in the invited guests' enclosure greeted the passing of the champions with small screams of pretended terror. Some nice lapping

was done by Guidotti, driving the "Flying Saucer" 3500 which came in second in the Mille Miglia, and a good performance was put up by the Swiss, Zehender, driving the 2000 "Saucer."

About ten world champions were then presented. They included top experts from motorcycle and speed-boat racing to skiing. Fourteen special body types of the Alfa Romeo 1900 rolled up with 24 mannequins showing the same number of styles, all based on the theme "Fashion and Automobiles." The color of the dresses matched the machines, which were by Pininfarina, Boneschi, Colli, Castagna, etc.

A guest of honor was Anthony Quinn, who said he'd order three of the "Disci Volanti" if they'd throw in the models.

THEN came the climax. Italy's racing champions took some of the guests for a top-speed whirl around the track. Diplomats, stars, poets, painters and so on.

Ascari, Villoresi and Farina from Ferrari took turns driving the stock cars as did Fangio from Maserati.

The whole was topped off by a block-long buffet with everything available from Scotch to ice-cream in fancy shapes.

All in all, quite a show, including some unforeseen excitement. Discipline on the track was bad and some of the guests just wouldn't get off when warned. A jeep-load of tough Italian cops, the "Celere," who are used to breaking up political riots, zoomed onto the track uttering sharp cries and wielding their shill-laghs. No one moved except the Alfa Romeo officials, who broke the day's speed records in getting over to the police and calling them off.

Everybody went home, tired, replete with thrills and food. The next day I got into my weary Fiat 1400 rather shamefacedly. After all, it makes 65 mph with some difficulty and the body is by Sturm and Drang instead of Vignale, Ghia or Bertone. ●●●