

ItalianCar.com.au **FEATURE**

# Alfa 147 JTD

**Testdrive** by David Bateson



The Alfa 147 JTD marks a watershed for Alfa Romeo in Australia, a toe in the water for what many will see as a bold move – marrying the sporty Alfa image with a diesel engine. Is this a marriage made in heaven, or hell?

# CAN YOU MARRY **DIESEL** WITH ALFA?





**C**all it coincidence if you like – our first test drive for ItalianCar Premium was the new version Alfa 147 – our second Alfa test drive also a 147, also red, the only differences – 5 doors instead of 3 – and a completely different engine under the bonnet.

In fact, as Alfa Romeo Australia stress at every opportunity, Alfa Romeo and diesel have a long, and successful, history together. In Europe 49% of all new cars sold are diesels - and 76% of all Alfas sold - period - are diesels. There are many factors at work here – European countries largely have tax regimes that assess cars on engine size and very high taxes on petrol – with lower taxes on diesel fuel. Those advantages do not (currently) exist in Australia but Alfa Romeo Australia are currently banking on a couple of trends continuing – rising fuel prices, increased interest in smaller cars, and perhaps a change in the car tax regime.





**The real advantage of the diesel engine in the Alfa is that it delivers better performance than its petrol equivalent.**

The diesel engine in the Alfa is a new breed developed by Alfa's parent company, Fiat. Called the 'Common Rail' diesel engine, it will feature in other Fiat group cars as well (Fiat and Lancia) and this engine type is also built under licence for GM and Hyundai among others. But only Alfas will be equipped with this particular variant, the MultiJet (M-Jet) turbodiesel unit. The 147 JTD is the first model (for the Australian market) to receive this engine, the 159 will follow and Fiat - due

to return to Oz later this year – will have diesel versions available in its new Punto range.

The real advantage of the diesel engine in the Alfa is that it delivers better performance than its petrol equivalent, at the same time reducing fuel consumption by 34% (official figures). Having driven diesel cars before – but not the latest generation – we were very keen to see if the 147 JTD could deliver on its promise.



# THE DRIVE

**W**e had the JTD for just under 4 days – we picked the car up from Alfa in Sydney on the Friday, tested it on Sydney’s Northern Beaches and in the city on the Friday and Saturday, then headed off to Auto Italia in Canberra in it on the Sunday. By default it occupied prime position at the show (a spot reserved for a Pagani Zonda Roadster that didn’t show up – but that’s another story!). After the show we then took it around Canberra’s sights (all three of them) for some photos, and then drove back to Sydney. So we had a good combination of city driving, long distance driving and some interesting driving around the windy and hilly roads of Sydney’s Northern Beaches.



## OUR VERDICT

This test report is really only about one thing – the diesel engine. In all other respects the car is identical to the petrol version (for comparison purposes we have included the tech specs on the petrol and diesel variants in this article) – even the handling seemed exactly the same! One difference to older diesel cars – no need to wait for the engine warming light to go out before turning the key. But turn the key and that instant you know it’s still a diesel – that distinctive engine rattle is not removed by the modern technology. Perhaps quieter than older diesels, but it’s still there.

Once you get going you realise the engine is quite powerful – put your foot down and there seems to be a slight lag before the car takes off. As was mentioned earlier, performance-wise the JTD matches or even outperforms its petrol equivalent: top speed and 0-100 are the same or slightly better, but in one area – torque – the diesel variant delivers more than even the top of the range 3.2l V6 GTA version. Pretty impressive.

At this point the diesel is married to a 6-speed manual gearbox. As a diesel the rev range (ie power range in each gear) is more limited than in the petrol version – hence the extra gear.





But the high torque means you can sit it in sixth and leave it there knowing the engine won't labour and you have a power reserve if you need it. Apart from these differences the car behaves in every other respect as a normal 147. The big difference – 873 kms on a single tank – Sydney to Canberra and back without a refuel stop. The only thing that doesn't carry over to the JTD is that delicious roar and power surge in the petrol 147 when you put your foot down and take it to 6000 rpm!

### SHOULD YOU BUY ONE?

Well – as always – it depends what you're looking for and what's important to you. Let's face it you pay a premium for driving an Alfa anyway so you should make sure you do get what you want.

### OUR FOR AND AGAINST LIST

- ⊕ Great looking car  
(indistinguishable from the standard 147)
- ⊕ Pretty good fuel economy
- ⊕ Drive an Alfa with great enviro credentials
- ⊖ You just don't get the same Alfa driving experience. It's still a diesel and you can still tell

### NOTE

Incidentally – even though we weren't able to do a full test on the car in the time available we did notice a bit of a puff of smoke coming out the exhaust when the car starts up and moves away. Alfa Romeo Australia confirmed after our test that this has since been corrected on the JTD by a re-program of the engine management system.

### INFORMATION YOU NEED

**On Road Price:**

\$43,870

**Warranty:** 3 years / 100,000kms;

6 years anti corrosion

**Service Interval/Cost:**

20K/\$503 - 40K/\$737 - 60K/\$503

**Insurance**

\$718.34 (based on comprehensive policy; 44yr old male; personal use; 65% no claims)

**Fuel Consumption** (diesel)

7.03L/100kms / 40.16mpg

(measured over 781 kms)

Information courtesy Alfa Romeo Brisbane;  
insurance quote from NRMA

# Alfa 147 Characteristics

## PETROL

## DIESEL

### ENGINE

Cylinders	4 inline, front transverse
Capacity	1970 cc
Power	110 kW at 6300 rpm
Torque	181 Nm at 3800 rpm
Fuel	Premium unleaded, minimum 95 R.O.N.
Transmission	5 speed manual 5 speed Selespeed

Cylinders	4 inline, front transverse
Capacity	1910 cc
Power	110 kW at 4000 rpm
Torque	305 Nm at 2000 rpm
Fuel	Diesel (EN 590)
Transmission	6 speed manual

### PERFORMANCE

Top Speed	208 km/h
Acceleration	0-100 km/h in 9.3 sec

Top Speed	208 km/h
Acceleration	0-100 km/h in 8.8 sec

### TRANSMISSION

Front wheel drive		
Gearbox	1st	3.545 : 1
	2nd	2.238 : 1
	3rd	1.520 : 1
	4th	1.156 : 1
	5th	0.919 : 1
	6th	
	Reverse	3.909 : 1
	Final drive ratio	3.866 : 1

Front wheel drive		
Gearbox	1st	3.800 : 1
	2nd	2.235 : 1
	3rd	1.360 : 1
	4th	0.974 : 1
	5th	0.763 : 1
	6th	0.614 : 1
	Reverse	3.545 : 1
	Final drive ratio	3.353 : 1

### WHEELS

Wheels	17 inch Super Sport Alloys
Tyres	215/45

Wheels	17 inch Multispoke Alloys
Tyres	215/45

### WEIGHTS

Kerb weight	1250 kg – 3 door 1270 kg – 5 door
Max. towable Weight	Braked 1300 Unbraked 400

Kerb weight	– 1310 kg – 5 door
Max. towable Weight	Braked 1300 Unbraked 400

### FUEL / EMISSIONS

Fuel tank	60 litres
Fuel consumption	8.9 (combined litres per 100 km)
CO2 emissions	210.9 g/km

Fuel tank	60 litres
Fuel consumption	5.9 (combined litres per 100 km)
CO2 emissions	157 g/km

# Standard Features

## PETROL AND DIESEL



<b>STEERING</b>	<b>Front</b> Independent, dual wishbones with double trailing arm and anti-roll bar mounted on ball joints	<b>Rear</b> Independent, McPherson struts with lower side levers and reaction arms, anti-roll bar mounted on ball joints										
<b>BRAKES</b>	<b>Front</b> 284mm (ventilated) discs	<b>Rear</b> 251mm solid discs										
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>No. of seats</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wheelbase (mm)</td> <td>2546</td> </tr> </table>	No. of seats	5	Wheelbase (mm)	2546	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Luggage capacity (litres)</td> <td>Rear seat upright</td> <td>292</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Rear seat folded</td> <td>1042</td> </tr> </table>	Luggage capacity (litres)	Rear seat upright	292		Rear seat folded	1042
No. of seats	5											
Wheelbase (mm)	2546											
Luggage capacity (litres)	Rear seat upright	292										
	Rear seat folded	1042										
<b>INTERIOR</b>	Cruise control, Premium 8 speaker CD Player with RDS radio, Automatic dual-zone climate control air conditioning, Leather covered steering wheel with audio controls, Steering wheel with height and axial adjustment, On-board instruments with multifunctional display, Trip computer, Electric windows, Heated electric door mirrors,	Adjustable front armrest with storage compartment, Outside temperature sensor with dash readout, Intermittent front wipers + rear wash/wiper assembly, Particle pollen filter, Height-adjustable driver's and passenger's seat, Split folding rear seat (60/40), Black sport interior (black cloth)										
<b>SAFETY / SECURITY</b>	Driver, passenger, side and curtain airbags, Antilock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Brakeforce Distribution (EBD), Anti-Slip Regulation Traction Control (ASR), Vehicle Dynamic Control (VDC) and Brake Assist, Front & rear fog lamps, Remote central locking (doors & boot),	Front seat-belts with electronic pretensioners and load limiters, Fire prevention system (FPS), Children's safety locks on rear doors (5-door), Electric headlight adjustment, Laminated windscreen, Height-adjustable front and rear head-restraints, Alfa Code (Immobiliser), 'Follow me home' lighting										
<b>TI PACK</b>	Standard features include (3 door Petrol only): 17" Toora alloy wheels, Sports leather trim, Rear spoiler, Sports tuned suspension,	Sports brake pads, Black interior trim, Ti Badging										