



Given the chance, most classic cars rust, but few hide their rotten metal quite so well as old Alfa Romeos. When Phil Rowe of Vintage Classics bought this 1972 Spider to join his fleet of classic hire cars he was already a keen Alfa enthusiast. The eBay listing said the Spider had undergone a bare metal respray in 1989 and various engine modifications in 1990; it had also been off the road for 15 years when he got the car in December 2005. Apparently some welding was required to repair the front crossmember but otherwise it needed minimal work.

First off, Phil decided to get the engine running. The carburettors and starter motor came out for reconditioning and new ignition parts were sourced from EB Spares. With the old fuel drained from the tank, new filters and new plugs, there was still no joy, although Phil confesses that he then tightened the battery lead and at least got the rebuilt starter motor to spin.

Time and cost

Time
Work was completed piecemeal, beginning in March 2006 and ending in February 2008.

Cost
Around £19,000 including parts and labour plus the £2000 initial purchase cost of the car from eBay.

Screwed up

Phil took the carburettors to local specialists Benalfa, where proprietor Alan Bennett realised the mixture screws on the Dell'Ortos were

Red not dead

All restorations have their ups and downs, but this Alfa Spider almost proved to be a rollercoaster ride too far...

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RESTORATION TIMELINE

Phil Rowe's Alfa Spider

"We've restored a lot of Alfas over the years," says Alan Bennett of Benalfa. "The one thing you learn is that the worst of the rust is usually well hidden." The biggest problem with this example was the amount of bad work done by previous owners, meaning Benalfa spent a lot of time putting someone else's mistakes right.



March 2006



The Spider had its front valance cut out and work began to replace the rotten front crossmember – a very involved job.