

CLASSIC DRIVER

[We ride shotgun over Passo San Marco in the AGTZ Twin Tail prototype](#)

Lead

It's one of the hottest cars of the year. After the AGTZ Twin Tail was launched at FuoriConcorso, we hopped in the passenger seat for a first test drive on Alpine roads.



As the more eagle-eyed among our readers might have noticed, we have followed the development of the shape-shifting Alpine A220 tribute car created by La Squadra and Zagato very closely [since the first renders were shown to the public earlier this year](#). Now it's getting real for the AGTZ Twin Tail. And after seeing it in the metal during [Como Car Week](#) - where it was displayed for public scrutiny [for the first time during FuoriConcorso](#) - we simply couldn't resist the invitation of an early morning Monday wake-up call to follow the team during the car's first-ever dynamic photoshoot.



We were particularly excited for two reasons: first, Classic Driver was the only media allowed on set during the day, which was quite an important honour. And second, the car – both, in short and long tail guise – looks exceptionally good in reality. Much better than in any of the photographs we have seen so far. Somehow pictures do not seem to be able to capture the AGTZ's unique proportions. While images suggest a seemingly endless front overhang, this styling 'problem' seems to disappear altogether when seen up close. We were therefore curious whether seeing the car on the move, especially as the plan was to shoot it together with the original Alpine A220 Short Tail racing car that inspired it, would make us fall even more in love with this particular project. And we even had a third, top-secret reason: trying to find out how the car actually drove – before our pals from Top Gear, who have booked an exclusive first drive later in the year, would be able to get their hands on it.





And so we departed from Cernobbio on a sunny Monday morning towards Passo San Marco that links Val Brembana with Valtellina in the Bergamo Alps, and the snowy alpine peaks. Other passes like San Gottardo were still closed, as winter did not want to let go of its icy grip this year. Both cars hidden on closed trailers, we joined a mysterious convoy on a mission. We expected to be greeted by early morning sunlight, but when we arrived in the mountains three hours later, a completely different reality unfolded: rain, fog and low, grey clouds. Not ideal for the hired gun of the day, photographer Mark Riccioni and his equipment. But somehow it was fitting our purpose - driving a prototype on public roads, together with a 55-year old racing car. But my anxiety was quickly put to rest: we had permission to form a rolling roadblock. And as the designated drivers unloaded the vehicles, the sound of engines quickly filled the morning silence.



"Please remember, it's still a prototype," La Squadra's founder Jakub Pietrzak told me. "We are not running some of the final components on the AGTZ. We need to lower it slightly, and there will be other upgrades available. So the sound you're hearing now, for example, is the standard A110 active exhaust". He answers my next question before I can even ask it, as the modern Twin Tail seems awfully quiet sitting next to the unrestricted, V8 racing car. "And while we are talking upgrades," Jakub adds, "We are working closely with the French performance atelier MP Rezeau to add extra oomph and performance to the car so that our clients can also expect it to be even faster and sharper than the base car. The dream is to be able to go faster than 300 kph with the long tail." Meanwhile, we are shooting the car in its short-tail guise today, as this was the spec intended for hillclimbs.



As we start shooting, Jakub fires up the priceless racing car and I hop into the cabin of the prototype. For now it looks like a standard A110, with the exception of the different windscreen shape, doors and side windows, but Mateusz Widuch, the projects CMO who is driving the car today, assures me that many options will be available. "We recognise that at this level, even if we priced our car quite modestly at 650,000 euros including the donor car, we need to offer our clients the maximum amount of opportunities to make their car unique. We offer 19 different exterior colour options, the ability to have exposed carbon parts on some body panels, like the roof for example, four different types of wheels bespoke to the car, nine different trim levels for the interior, with the availability of extra choices like adding carbon, alcantara or leather in different spots around the cabin." Also in terms of livery, the sky is apparently the limit and La Squadra will put its customers in touch with the best graphic designers to personalise their cars according to their wishes.



We make our way up the mountain slowly, driving in formation with the photographer strapped to the back of the camera car. At some point he signals that he's done with that

particular set of shots and Mateusz steps on the throttle for an overtake. We blast past the crew - and for a brief moment and a few corners I am reminded why the Alpine is such a great little sports car! It's fast, pointy and direct, but the production version of the AGTZ - even though some 40 kgs heavier with the long tail attached - should be even better, especially if specced with one of MP Rezeau's performance-enhancing packages named PERFPACK and HIPERFPACK. They will include not only a different kind of active exhaust, but also adjustable dampers, adjustable stabilizers, bigger discs and calipers, a revised fuel pump, airbox and reprogrammed ECU and can even a front-end lift system amongst many other options.



At the end of the shoot, I hop out of the car enthusiastically. It was well worth waking up at 5 am to be able to witness the Twin Tail on the move and experience it firsthand, even if it's not yet exactly the finished product. We'll have to wait until the Goodwood Festival of Speed for that pleasure, where it will have it's official dynamic premiere. As a Classic Driver team member, I am of course very attracted to the original Alpine V8 racing car, which is making a hell of a racket while ascending the pass with Jakub at the wheel. Somehow it feels muscular and cute at the same time. But if I had to choose one of the two to run on a daily basis, it would definitely be the reinterpretation.



It will hopefully be as exciting to drive but also way more useable, with all the possible comforts offered by modern automobiles. Now I cannot wait to be able to actually drive the AGTZ Twin Tail later in the year!

Photos: Mark Riccioni

Gallery

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