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The Stelvio is a family-friendly crossover that carries classic Alfa Romeo mystique. It makes the driver feel intimately connected to the road, a rare trait even in pricey upscale SUVs.

A Crossover That Sings

Stelvio Has Spiritual Feel, Surprising Survey Results on Reliability

By Derek Price

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If you're looking for the antidote to boring crossovers, this is it. It's the Alfa Romeo Stelvio, a vehicle that's friendly for family transportation but also drips with personality, a rare trait in a category of look-alike, feel-alike, drive-alike vehicles.

Even if you're lucky enough to have the budget for a fast Porsche, BMW or Mercedes SUV, the Stelvio stands out for its distinctive look and its focus on the details of the driving experience, not just horsepower and gadgets.

Like an exotic supercar, some aspects of the Stelvio don't make a lot of sense. Its touchscreen is on the small side, for example, when most of its competitors have screens that look like they were heisted from pro football stadiums.

Where it stands out is in the driving feel, which is nothing short of spiritual.

The Stelvio feels different from every other crossover for sale today. Its brake system seems like it's carved from rock, and when you take it on a winding road, its steering and suspension sing Verdis to your fingertips and backside.

Alfa knows how to sprinkle magic on vehicles, and it reserves a heaping dose for this one.



Italy's reputation for high fashion holds true in the Stelvio's stylish cabin. It offers seven different leather combinations to let owners express themselves.

Strangely, though, I'm hesitant to bring up my biggest reservation about Alfa vehicles because the data doesn't back it up. Like a lot of Italian cars, Alfas have a reputation for being persnickety and unreliable. That was my experience when I owned a 1980s-vintage Spider many years ago.

But in the most recent J.D.

Power Initial Quality surveys, Alfa Romeo was the No. 1 rated premium brand. The Stelvio topped the list of premium compact crossovers, too.

Go figure. The world has turned upside down, apparently.

Being a niche vehicle, the Stelvio doesn't face a whole lot of competition from other upscale

Italian SUVs here in the United States.

It was pretty much the only choice in that lonely corner of the auto world until it got competition from its own brand, the new 2024 Alfa Romeo Tonale.

As one of the few people in the world who's driven a Stelvio and Tonale back-to-back for a week at

a time, I can offer this first person observation: buy the Stelvio if you want something that drives like an Alfa. Buy the Tonale if you want better gas mileage and newer technical gadgets.

Unlike the more eco-focused Tonale with its plug-in hybrid powertrain, the Stelvio has classic Italian gasoline power.

A 2.0-liter turbocharged engine sings a throaty song through the exhaust while making 280 horsepower. If you want more, you can opt for the Quadrifoglio that belts out 505 horses from its V6.

Pricing starts at \$46,575 for the Stelvio, which is about \$3,600 more than the new Tonale.

I prefer the Stelvio, personally, and would happily pay the extra cost for a vehicle that feels like it drives with more of the Alfa mystique.

The Quadrifoglio tops the lineup at more than \$88,000, but this year Alfa has added a new model to bridge the gap between it and the rest of the Stelvio lineup.

The new Estrema model comes with an adaptive suspension and limited-slip differential but lacks the best selling point of the Quadrifoglio, its V6 engine.

The Estrema is priced at a much more palatable \$59,825, still not cheap but a lot better than paying close to \$90k for the next step up the ladder.

A CLOSER LOOK



AT A GLANCE

FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

What was tested? 2023 Alfa Romeo Stelvio Veloce (\$53,325). Options: Premium interior and sound package (\$2,225), active assistive plus package (\$1,595). Price as tested (including \$1,595 destination charge): \$58,740

By the numbers

Wheelbase: 110.9 in.
Length: 184.6 in.
Width: 74.9 in.
Height: 66 in.
Powertrain: 2.0-liter turbocharged four cylinder (280 hp, 306 lbs.-ft.)
Fuel economy: 22 city, 28 highway

Ratings

Style: 10
Performance: 8
Price: 8
Handling: 9
Ride: 8
Comfort: 7
Quality: 8
Overall: 8

Why buy it?

The Stelvio is ideal for people who want a premium crossover that strays from the pack. It looks and drives like no other SUV for sale today, with svelte Italian style and muscular power.

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