

First drive: Alfa Romeo Tonale: the change

 By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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Alfa Romeo is delighted to present Tonale, the model that marks the brand's metamorphosis. While the Tonale remains true to its DNA of noble Italian sportsmanship since 1910, it is a radical evolution for Alfa Romeo, which is looking ahead to a new era of connectivity and electrification. And that change is most welcome. It's a clear forward vision: Reinventing sportiness for the 21st century. Unmistakable Italian design is faithful to its initial concept, state-of-the-art technology, software and electrification systems created to serve the brand's DNA, and a host of innovative, customer-focused services. It's an Italian beauty of note and I have been waxing lyrically ever since I drove the Tonale.



Here are some quick take-outs:

- Cutting-edge technology and unprecedented levels of automation.
- Record-breaking technology in the Tonale is aimed at enhancing the driving experience, the customer experience and the protection of residual value.
- Top-level connectivity and an all-new infotainment system, Including two large full TFT screens totalling 22.5": best-in-class in the segment.
- Technology in the name of safety and onboard comfort, paired with a constant quest for the highest quality.
- State-of-the-art electrification: unique and exclusive Hybrid technology created by Alfa Romeo to enhance its DNA and guarantee best-in-class performance.
- Alfa Romeo offers a true electrified driving experience: the brand-new 48-volt Hybrid propulsion system can propel the wheels even when the internal combustion engine is turned off.

The Tonale drive

It's one thing checking out the tech, but it's another behind the wheel, driving the Tonale. The route was carefully chosen to bring out the best in this SUV. The newly tarred Bain's Kloof pass was a tester. Steep inclines and declines and twisty left

and right turns showed the prowess of this Italian beauty. It just hugged the road with aplomb. My driving partner 'gave it stick' on the Du Toit's Kloof pass. He really put pedal to the metal at speeds around 120kmph, yes, on the Pass. And again, The Tonale stood up to this rigorous test very admirably. Only the flat straights, we 'gunned' it but it was as if the Tonale was saying to us, "Is this all you got?"

Designed to inspire

Intended for the metropolitan and dynamic customers, the Alfa Romeo Tonale offers a sensual and forward-looking design, including distinctive points of reference in the development of the Alfa Romeo line-up: five-hole wheel rims, the cluster in the "telescopic" instrument panel, the three-spoke sports steering wheel.



All encompass the uniqueness of Italian design and Alfa Romeo style, blending a prestigious heritage while looking forward to the future.

3+3 equals?

The "3+3" headlights with the new Full-LED adaptive matrix evoke the proud look of the SZ Zagato or the Proteo concept car. The three modules make up a unique frontline for the car and simultaneously provide daylight, dynamic turn signals, and a "welcome and goodbye" feature (activated every time the driver turns the car on or off), to ensure the best lighting conditions.

“Adaptive driving beam” constantly adjusts the dipped headlights according to speed and specific driving conditions while “glare-free high beam segmented technology” automatically detects traffic in front and/or travelling in the opposite direction to avoid glare from other cars.

A third module automatically activates when turning corners to ensure the best lateral lighting. These technologies offer greater efficiency. The taillights take on the same design cues as the headlights and form a sine curve that fully wraps around the rear of the car.

Inspired by Alfa Romeo's racing history, the interior is strongly focused on the driver, with easy access to all controls for a safe, unparalleled driving experience. The same care is reserved for the passengers, who are given the ideal space to travel in comfort. This results in an environment designed for and around the occupants, characterised by meticulous attention to detail paired with a constant quest for the highest quality.

Electric and ICE

The Tonale debuts the 118kW Hybrid VGT (Variable-Geometry Turbo) engine exclusively for Alfa Romeo. Its 1.5l variable-geometry turbocharged internal combustion engine paired with the seven-speed Alfa Romeo dual-clutch transmission combines with the 48-volt 15kW, 55Nm electric motor to allow Tonale to be driven only on electric power at low speeds and when parking and cruising.

Verdict

Alfa Romeo has really done their homework on the Tonale. Everything about the car is just impressive. All three derivatives come with battery electric power as well as the internal combustion engine. They did not think about one thing. They have really thought about everything. A complete SUV.

Tonale pricing

- Ti - R739,900
- Speciale - R799,900
- Veloce - R819,900

All include a five-year/100,000km warranty and maintenance plan.

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