

Spirited animal

BY JOE SAGE

It was late in the year for us to receive a 2019 model for review. But we had recently driven a red Alfa Romeo Stelvio Quadrifoglio AWD on a 24-mile segment in the high plains of central Oregon at NWAPA's Run to the Sun (where it won its Performance SUV category). And we had *just* driven this exact same white one at the Southwest Lifestyle Media Drive event here in Arizona (a non-award event this year) for about 20 minutes of in-town wheel time. So the opportunity for a good weeklong dose seemed irresistible. And it's a relatively low-volume vehicle, so it seemed unlikely to change a whole lot for the 2020 model year.

A few weeks *after* this full week with the Alfa, we happened upon an online conversation among media peers, in which someone had asked what vehicle anyone drove for a week this year and just did not want to give back. A notable number of people had the same answer: Alfa Romeo Stelvio.

We had indeed found a lot to like before even leaving the office parking lot—setting up AC and presets and such, we found the Alfa to have one of the most intuitive interfaces we've seen lately—a quick operation, but better still, it provided

zero frustration, even more important than speed.

On the other hand, we repeatedly noted hair-on-fire chirping and beeping from its assist systems; the occasional oddity in its shift setup (an electronic unit that can slow you down between R and D when you need it fast); and a wish that its DNA (Dynamic, Natural or Advanced Efficiency i.e. eco) drive modes allowed for a custom profile combining the more aggressive power curve of Dynamic with the friendlier suspension of Natural.

But then we recalled our first ever week with the Stelvio. We had not been enjoying it that much around town, but then took it out to Bartlett Lake Road and opened it up, and it liked that, as did we. Like a thoroughbred horse, it may whinny and jerk at the reins in the corral, but let it loose and it's a stunning performer. The Alfa Romeo Stelvio Quadrifoglio has 505 hp for a reason. Use it. Enjoy it.

As it turns out, there are a number of changes for the 2020 model year. Inside are a new 8.8-inch touchscreen, style and finish upgrades, and some updated controls. Outside, you can get an optional flare, sill and fascia kit in body color or in a Dark Miron finish; a carbon fiber grille, mirror cap and badge kit; and two new paints. Oh, and—despite at its core being an exotic Italian sports machine—it adds more driving assistance electronics. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

FACTORY	Cassino Assembly Plant, Cassino, Italy
STRUCTURE	midsize SUV; longitudinal front engine; unitized high-strength steel body; alum front & rear vehicle frames, front shock towers, brakes, suspension components, doors, fenders, roof and hood; composite rear cross member; carbon fiber driveshaft
ENGINE	2.9L twin-turbo V6, 90°, direct inj; alum alloy head & cover w integrated cam carrier, alum alloy crankcase w wet steel liner, alum alloy bedplate w integrated blow-by control reed valves, super-finished forged nitride steel crankshaft w single con-rod pin, forged aluminum pistons w twin oil jets
HP / TORQUE	505 hp / 443 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION / DRIVE	8-spd auto, paddles / AWD
SUSPENSION	F: dbl wishbone w semi-virtual steering axle; R: Alfa Link w vertical rod link; active damping
STEERING	rack & pinion w variable elec assist
BRAKES	F: 14.2x1.26 vented, six-piston monoblock; R: 13.8x1.1 vented, four-piston monoblock
WHEELS	F: 20x9.0; R: 20x10.0 dark 5-hole forged alum
TIRES	Pirelli P Zero: F: P255/45R20; R: P285/40R20
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	185.1 / 111 in
GROUND CLEARANCE / TURN CIRCL	7.9 in / na
HEADROOM (F/R)	40.2 / 38.9 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	36.6 / 31.9 in
CARGO CAPACITY	18.5 / 56.5 cu.ft
WEIGHT	4360 lb
TOW CAPACITY	3000 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	91 oct prem / 16.9 gal
MPG	17/23/19 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$80,245
PAINT: Trofeo White Tri-Coat	2200
DRIVER ASSISTANCE DYNAMIC PKG	1200
CONVENIENCE PKG W LIFTGATE	350
DUAL PANE SUNROOF	1350
HEATED REAR SEATS	350
CARBON FIBER STEERING WHEEL	400
WHEELS: 20x9 & 20x10 dark alum	500
COLOR CALIPERS: red w/ white script	350
DESTINATION CHARGE	1595
TOTAL	\$88,540

