

ALFA ROMEO'S NEW STAR IS OUTLINED IN MILAN

Milan 24 June 2008 - Last night Alfa Romeo introduced the new MiTo to the world's media during an impressive press conference held in the stunning grounds of the Castello Sforzesco, Milan's famous centrepiece historic symbol. In a specially constructed glazed structure sandwiched within the towering ancient walls, Alfa Romeo CEO Luca De Meo and the management team that headed the project outlined the new sports coupe and its virtues.

De Meo kicked off the presentation by stressing the importance of the MiTo in the brand's plans, "the first step in the Alfa Romeo comeback," he affirmed. And he was keen to emphasise the apt setting for the launch, Milan, which also helped inspire half of the name. "It all starts here where Alfa Romeo was born. It pays homage to the industrial culture of Milan, a spirit which Alfa Romeo has contributed to." MiTo-he said-was conceived and designed in Milan and built in Turin; and that its unusual name also symbolises Alfa Romeo brand values as 'Mito' means 'myth' or 'legend' in Italian.

De Meo also looked to the inherent strength of the brand, commenting that there were more than 300 enthusiasts' clubs worldwide, and with a nod to future plans, he pointed out that 100 of these were in the united states. He said that they were "following as script" drawn up by "authors of the past" and that they were "Alfisti working for Alfisti".

A huge new plan is called for as in 730 days time on 24 June 2010 Alfa Romeo will celebrate its centenary-said de Meo, "We hope to bring this brand back," he emphasised, adding that in the next three years they will introduce more new models than has been the case in the last 10 years.

Fiat Group engineering chief Harald Wester featured in an incisive film that delved into the technical merits of MiTo. "The sportiest compact car ever," stated Wester, pointing out its sporty credentials in some detail and highlighting the agile and direct steering, excellent power-to-weight ratio (more than a third better than the class average), the innovative new damper rebound springs, and the c-section rear torsion bar. On top of this-said Wester-came impressive features including Electronic Q2, Dynamic Steering Torque and the DNA system. He also added that MiTo would become a technological showcase for Alfa Romeo in the

future and features to be incorporated into the model would include Multiair and double shift transmissions.

The MiTo team emphasised just how different the new sports coupé is to the Fiat Grande Punto, on whose architecture it is based, with more rigidity, better handling, lower centre of gravity, "we found the performance we wanted," said De Meo. Dario Sacco, Fiat Gasoline Engines Technical Director, pointed out the work that had been done by Alfa Romeo's engineers' on the 1.4 turbo engine to take it away from the T-Jet base, including new materials, reduced weight, new steel for the turbo, and higher torque curve.

De Meo also revealed that a GTA model would join the MiTo range next year, boasting an impressive 230 bhp. It will boast the "best dynamic performance ever from a 4 metre long car," he predicted, and revealed that it would use a new 1750cc turbocharged, direct injection, twin variable valve timing, engine.

Marketing Director Sergio Cravero took to the floor and said that the overriding idea had been to keep the range simple with two specification levels: Progression and Distinctive. Slotting in on top of these would be two additional packs, 'Sports' and 'Premium', as well as a raft of options including 5 interiors, 10 exterior body colours, 8 alloy wheels plus extras such as Bi-Zenon headlights and sumptuous Frau leather.

In Italy the MiTo will be priced from 17,950 to 20,350 euros for the 155 bhp petrol version, and 18,950 to 21,350 euros for the 120 bhp diesel. A 'MiTo Junior' will also be launched, costing just 15,350 euros. "Deliberately low in horsepower for young drivers buying their first car," said De Meo. It will include Blue&Me Nav and could attract 50 percent lower insurance (up to 800 euro savings) as well as being offered with a low repayment instalment programme and an Alfa Romeo insurance scheme.

All Italian dealerships will have at least one MiTo in their showrooms by the end of this month, with all the major European markets getting their hands on the new model by the end of July, except for the UK where the MiTo launch will take place in October with big events planned.

The Alfa Romeo CEO wrapped up the well received presentation by touching on safety

issues, stating that MiTo has been designed to be "the safest car in its class". He added: "Safety often sets the pace for product development," and that crash tests would come in November.

- Edd Ellison