



# ***Alfa Romeo Tonale Veloce Review***

***By Jeremy Chua, sgcarmart***



We've all heard that familiar refrain about Italian cars being attractively styled and a pleasure to admire, but are a pain to own because they're 'temperamental'.

Such a reputation leads to consumers staying away from brands like Alfa Romeo. Acquiring a car is expensive enough and nobody wants to deal with the inconvenience of repeated visits to the workshop because of things going wrong.

However, Capella Auto, Alfa's official dealer here, says those days are long gone. In fact, it's so confident in the cars' quality that each one comes with a seven-year warranty. But will buyers bite?



All business

If your impression of an Alfa Romeo is a car that's full of bad drama, then the [Tonale Veloce Mild Hybrid](#), its first electrified model, can change your mind.

Walk up to this crossover and the first surprise is that the car is lower in real life compared to what you see in photos. It's essentially a raised hatchback, and a handsome one at that.

The triple daytime running lights and new 'Scudetto' shield are elements that give the Tonale its squinting mien. The car's flanks feature clean lines, while the front and rear windscreens are steeply raked for a sporty silhouette. Meanwhile, the Tonale's taillights, which mirror the front with their triple sine-curves, make for a distinctive rear.



The interior is where the Tonale's 'normalness' really shows. Devoid of badging and logos, the cockpit wouldn't look out of place in another European model. Perhaps those expecting to see Italian passion might be disappointed, but what most buyers will appreciate is how relatively user-friendly everything is.

For instance, the infotainment's widgets can be customised, the climate controls are physical toggles on the dashboard, the DNA (driving mode) selector dial is placed higher up on the centre console, and there's a USB-A and USB-C port for connectivity. Even the bonnet release is located below the right side of the dash - in the Giulia, it is above the driver's left knee!



For occupant comfort, the front seats are equipped with heating and ventilation, functions that neither the [Stelvio](#) nor the [Giulia](#) have.

The only quirks are the relatively narrow footrest, and the fact that the button to swap between dashboard layouts is on the tip of the wiper stalk. It sounds strange at first, but since the button to turn the Lane Support System on and off is on the tip of the indicator stalk, perhaps it's not so strange after all.

The Tonale is a compact crossover that measures 4,528mm long and has a wheelbase length of 2,636mm, or slightly longer than that of the [Volkswagen Golf's](#). So, the backseat isn't particularly roomy, but at least the floor protrusion is lower than expected, so the middle occupant doesn't have to feel awkward.



The rear bench is reasonably comfortable and useful, with taller than expected seat backs catering to occupants over 1.75m tall. There's also decent space beneath the front seats for passengers to park their feet under, along with rear air vents and USB ports.

Behind the rear seats is a 500-litre boot, whose square-shaped load space makes organising luggage easy. Users who are shorter than 1.7m, however, won't like the tall loading height, as it makes loading/unloading heavy items more tedious.





## Electrified Alfa

Powering the Tonale is a turbocharged 1.5-litre four-cylinder that produces 158bhp and 240Nm of torque, with the latter figure available from just 1,750rpm. This is paired to a 48-volt mild hybrid system.

However, unlike other 48-volt mild hybrid systems that merely smoothen the stop-start process and enable a 'coasting' function when the car cruises with the engine switched off, Alfa's mild hybrid goes a step further.

When its 0.77kWh lithium-ion battery has enough charge, the electric motor can put out 20bhp, thus enabling the Tonale to be driven in pure electric mode at up to 30km/h. The driver doesn't need to push any buttons; as long as there's enough charge, it happens automatically.



On the go, the Tonale's powertrain performs seamlessly, but those hoping for a fast and dynamic drive should look elsewhere.

That's because the car feels slower than the claimed zero to 100km/h time of 8.8 seconds. You'll have to use the manual override function to help things along, for although selecting 'D' or Dynamic mode does improve responsiveness, manual override lets you use those wonderful aluminium paddle shifters and rev the engine closer to redline.

That's probably why after a day of driving, the Tonale was only averaging 8.0km/L, which is far from the claimed 15.9km/L. A longer drive would undoubtedly yield better figures.



To help ensure that the Tonale handles well, it has balanced weight distribution and is equipped with Dual Stage Valve electronic suspension. In Dynamic mode, the dampers



are set to the firmer Sport setting. However, you can select the more compliant Comfort setting by pressing the button on the DNA dial.

Whichever damper setting you opt for, you'll find the Tonale light and easy to manoeuvre. It's a delight to pilot in built-up areas, especially since the helm feels effortless. This makes driving and parking in tight carparks a piece of cake.



Surprisingly friendly

The Tonale suits the everyday driver who wants a stylish compact crossover with punchy performance. It's also equipped with a long list of standard safety features, such as Adaptive Cruise Control, Interurban Emergency Braking, and Drowsy Driver Detection.

I only wish the Tonale had more zing. It could also use more flair in the form of a better engine soundtrack or a more responsive powertrain, though I recognise these are things that only a minority of keen drivers hanker after.

That said, the Tonale offers Italian style without the stereotypical Italian temperament. If you aren't keen on rivals such the Volvo XC40 B4 or MINI Cooper S Countryman, then this contender would be an appetising proposition to consider.