



### Cooling system

The aluminium cylinder head calls for the use of quality antifreeze containing corrosion inhibitors all-year round. Maintenance should include regular checks on the heater control valve (mounted under the dash), which commonly fails. The water pump is easy to change without removing the cam belt.

### Transmission

High mileage cars suffer wear in the propshaft's centre bearing; some have greaspoints which should receive attention at every service. The Rotoflex type coupling in the propshaft should be renewed if cracked.

Synthetic oil should never be used in the gearbox. If the 'box starts to make ominous noises in any gear, it needs early attention – often it will start to jump out of ratio. For best long-term results a full overhaul is preferable to replacing individual parts.

The final drive unit of pre-1978 cars (with the differential bolted into the axle casing) is easier to work on than later examples (with a differential integral with the axle assembly).

### Suspension and steering

Check wishbone pivots – if one fails, the front wheel will tuck up beneath the wing... Check all ball joints too (attend to greaspoints, if fitted). Replacing ailing bushes will transform the car's handling. Watch for corrosion in the wishbone arms; if in doubt, renew!

Worm and roller steering boxes were used

in all but the last Spiders (which had rack and pinion systems). These can be rebuilt.

### Brakes

The front sliding caliper assemblies can seize. Dismantling, cleaning and re-assembly with a little anti-seize compound helps stop this. If the handbrake mechanisms integral with the rear calipers seize, replace them. Changing worn front brake discs is easy.

### Electrics/Interior

Only electrical problems are poor connections due to dirty/corroded terminals, while the interior trim simply needs regular cleaning.

### Body Structure Preservation

Anti-rust precautions are essential as no new doors, bonnet or boot panels are available. Preservative must be injected once a year under pressure into all hollow cavities around the body shell. Generously treat the vulnerable inner wheel arches, pillars and floor pans. Remove the screwed on cover-type outer sill panels and check within for rust; coat all surfaces before re-fitting panels.

Check that the bolts securing the under-engine crossmember to the chassis rails are fully tight. If they loosen the resulting movement can crack the chassis. US-spec Spiders suffer chassis damage from impacts to the front energy-absorbing bumper. The mountings move rearwards, kinking the chassis causing unusual handling characteristics.

## SPECIFICATIONS

■ Fiat 124 Spider (1.8-litre)	
<b>Engine</b>	1756cc in-line four, DOHC
<b>Power</b>	114 bhp @ 6000 rpm
<b>Transmission</b>	Five-speed manual
<b>Brakes</b>	Discs all round
<b>Suspension</b>	Front: Double wishbones with coil springs. Rear: live axle, coil springs, anti-roll bar. Panhard rod. Telescopic dampers
<b>Tyres</b>	165HR13in
<b>Wheels</b>	5x13in steel or later alloy
<b>Performance</b>	Top Speed:110mph 0-60mph: 10.5sec

## REFERENCE DATA

■ Fiat 124 Spider (1.8-litre; carburettor-fed)	
Check manufacturer's literature for data specific to different models	
<b>Spark plugs</b>	Marelli CW8LP or equivalent.
<b>Points gap</b>	0.5 to 0.6mm, dwell angle 55 degrees +/- 3 degrees
<b>Fuel Feed</b>	Weber or Solex twin choke carburettor
<b>Fuel pump type</b>	Mechanical
<b>Engine oil capacity</b>	4 litres (7 pints), inc filter
<b>Engine oil</b>	Semi-synthetic multigrade 10W40
<b>Gearbox oil</b>	Conventional mineral type SAE80/90

## IMPROVEMENTS

- Use semi-synthetic engine oil
- Fit stainless exhaust system

## EASY JOBS

- Ignition system maintenance
- Changing cam belt (if you have access to air wrench to release crankshaft pulley nut)

## DIFFICULT JOBS

- Valve clearance adjustment (takes time)
- Changing front suspension bushes

## TOOL BOX

- Trolley Jack
- Axle stands
- Metric socket set
- Selection of Metric spanners (open-ended and ring, or combination types)
- 17mm Allen key (for gearbox)
- Selection of screwdrivers
- Pliers
- Penetrating oil
- Antifreeze strength tester
- Special tool for removing/fitting valve gear shims (available from Middle Barton Garage)
- Air wrench (for crankshaft pulley nut removal)

## CLUBS SEE PAGE 114

- **Fiat Motor Club GB** S Robins, 118 Brookland Road, Langport, Somerset TA10 9TH Tel: 01458 250116.
- **Sporting Fiats Club** J Whitmarsh, 29 Hazelrigg Close, Castle Donington, Derbs DE74 2XE Tel: 01332 391105, www.sportingfiatsclub.com

**1979** New 2-litre model; long stroke 1995cc engine; three speed auto transmission option. Wider, flatter bulges in bonnet.

**1980** Bosch L-Jetronic fuel injection for California models.



**1981** All versions fuel-injected. Turbocharged variant 1981-82.

**1982** Pininfarina take over assembly of Spider – now called 'Pininfarina Spider Europa'; standard-fit alloy wheels.



**1985** Spider models dropped.

1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985