



2016 Fiat 500C Abarth Cabrio Automatic Surprises and Delights

By Bob Long, www.AutoWorldRadio.com

So I am looking out the window at my home admiring and analyzing the 2016 Fiat 500 C Abarth Cabrio that just was left for me to test drive for a week. Walking down the street are a young 13-14-year-old what perhaps couple walking home from the local junior high school together talking happily Oh...to be young and do it all over with the knowledge you have now. I my humble opinion that would be great.

Everything is fine then the boys head turns and starts checking out the Abarth and his young female friend or maybe more slugs him hard. Through the window I heard him say out loud WHAT?

I wanted to say to the boy you did nothing wrong you just need choose your time when check out a car. Little does the lad know it is only the beginning of lessons to learned in the world of relationships.

Subtlety is not one of the Fiat 500C Abarth's virtues. I tested a manual-transmission Cabrio a while back and found it good but with not the best body structure I would expect in a 2016 vehicle.

This Abarth Cabrio's six-speed automatic transmission provides an interesting alternative to the five-speed manual in the Fiat 500C Abarth. It turns out that the Aisin six-speed automatic—a \$1350 option—is well matched to the 1.4-liter turbo's power curve. Fiat tunes the MultiAir four-cylinder differently for the automatic application: Compared with the manual version, power is down 3 horsepower to 157 but torque jumps by 13 lb-ft to 183. The added grunt, peaking 100-rpm lower in the rev range, makes this engine way less boggy in fact, the automatic Abarth outran the stick-shift 500C, hitting 60 mph in 6.9 seconds versus the manual's 7.3 seconds.

No wonder that the very smart automakers are offering these new generations of automatics or dual clutch gear boxes. In traffic clogged Orlando FL, Boston MA or LA no matter how much you might love three pedals in your ride it gets tiring and in most cases better performance. available with the automatic.

As with all Abarth vehicles the auto-equipped 500C Abarth's chassis is bolstered with performance-tuned anti-roll bars and dampers, oversize brakes, and big wheels and tires. The electrically boosted steering is quick and manages to deliver small rivulets of tactility transmitted through the meaty, leather-wrapped steering wheel. At speed, the 500C feels stable and as planted as anything with just 90.6 inches between the front and rear axles can. The little fella does, however, bound enthusiastically over bumps, and expansion strips, so hang on. When pushed hard it can feel nervous and darty.

Amazingly, considering the minuscule Fiat's big tires and stiff suspension, not to mention the obvious lack of steel in the roof, structural rigidity is much better than the manual Cabrio I checked out a while back. It must have been a problem with that particular manual Abarth Cabrio.

The 500C's interior is a riot of shapes and functions, and virtually no switchgear Engage the sport button and everything gets more interesting and faster the dash cluster transforms and you are ready for liftoff in this tiny pocket rocket

The ease of opening the "convertible" top is simply brilliant. It's really just a rather large fabric sunroof, one that operates with surprising precision. and the canvas like material accordions neatly as it rolls back in channels along the door tops very slick and, at least during our week, free of wind noise and water leaks.

The only downside to opening the top is the ever-present exhaust sound enhanced by Abarth four-cylinder buzz-growl. Or as I call it an exhaust built for a delinquent teenager. It is not a muscle car sound something totally unique. But the almost inappropriate level of enthusiasm doesn't matter in this tiny performance machine.

The 500 C Abarth zips in and out of traffic and is loads of fun around town. Not only does the Cabrio version let more of the outside world in, it also radiates more of the Abarth attitude to the world.

During my week behind the wheel young people are especially drawn to this tiny high performance machine and Carl Abarth who must have one very cool guy would be very proud.

My loaded test vehicle was a little over 32K but delivered 24 MPG city and 34 MPG highway. plus, a ton of smiles per mile. Lots of cool subtle Abarth styling touches inside and out makes this a special ride.

Front Engine-FWD-6 speed Automatic

Highlights

Performance

Unique Convertible Top

Lots of cool Abarth special features

Lowlights

Hard Ride

Tiny Trunk

Feels a little Nervous when pushed hard

The Long Drive Ratings

Scale 1 low-10 High

Exterior Styling 7

Interior styling and quality 7

Handling 7

Braking 7

Fuel Economy 8

Beats Stereo System 8

Performance 7

Trunk-Cargo Capacity 2