

# ALFACIONADA

ALFA ROMEO OWNERS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



VOLUME 18 NO. 5    MAY    1979 P.O. Box 261, Los Alamitos, Ca. 90720

## the ROAR of the BEAR

by Rick "Bear" Clemente

Well, spring has sprung, and it's time for Alfisti to hit the road... only one drawback. That magic potion, that elixir of the internal combustion, that rare and getting rarer juice of life - gasoline - is in short supply!!

My only suggestion is that if you must stockpile your own weekend supply, PLEASE keep in mind that the stuff stores more energy per volume than dynamite. So DO NOT carry it in your trunk (if you wanted to drive a Pinto presumably you would have bought one). Storage around the home front is a tricky business also, what with water heater pilot lights and gas fumes....BOOM!!!

On to better things...Tom Suter has already reserved our LBGP seats for next year. There is a method of reserving space for your group right now. First come, first served - so hurry up. (See details on Page 4). This is one activity we can carpool to if necessary.

June offers another in the Time Trial series. See you all there. Rumor has it that I may bring the "Flying Icebox" out of retirement for this one.

We also are looking forward to the May meeting where Dave Vegher will

wax eloquent about the workings of the front end. Be there or be square. We start at 8 o'clock sharp so be on time.

.....

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| May 19-20 | Lone Pine Time Trials   |
|           | 25 General Meeting, Alondra Park  |
| June 29   | Board Meeting, Gallo's  |
|           | 1 Alfacionada articles due  |
|           | 3 Championship Slalom, Lion Country Safari  |
|           | 10 Championship Slalom, Lion Country Safari   |
|           | 10 Ambassador Concours d'Elegance Ambassador Hotel  |
|           | 16 AROSC Time Trial, RIR  |
|           | 22 General Meeting, Alondra Park  |
|           | 24 Newporter-Invitational Concours d'Elegance Newporter Inn, Newport Bch. For info call: (213) 530-2198 or (213) 646-8257 |
| July 22   | AROSC Tour and Summer Picnic  |
|           | 28 IMSA Races, Sears Point  |
| Aug 9-12  | ALFANTASY '79, AROC National Convention, San Diego  |
|           | 18 Historic Auto Races, Laguna Seca   |
|           | 19 Pebble Beach Concours  |
| Sept 29   | AROSC Time Trial, RIR   |
| Oct 28    | AROSC "Son of Hollywood Hills Mille Miglia" Rallye  |
| Nov 10    | AROSC Time Trial, RIR   |

## THE TURN OF THE WRENCH

Dear Mr. Wrench:

My Alfa Spider of '74 vintage normally runs at about 190 to 200 degrees on my water temperature gauge. This is what it runs at no matter what the ambient temperature. However, the last week or so, the temperature of the car seems to not venture over the 150 degree mark, and the heater seems to have lost its ability to keep my popsicle toes warm on these chilly evenings. What is my car's problem; how can I fix it; and what do you think it will cost? By the way, my car has approximately 55,000 miles on it, if that makes any difference.

Yours truly,

Cold Toes in Costa Mesa

Dear Toes:

It sounds like you have a stuck thermostat (that is, the valve located at the very front of your intake manifold which regulates your engine temperature). This valve, which is supposed to open and close as engine temperature rises and falls, maintains your engine temperature at a constant level. This level is a predetermined amount per each type of engine. Earlier cars had a slightly cooler thermostat than the later types. You never want to run an Alfa engine without a thermostat (except in racing conditions) because you need about 180 to 190 degrees of temperature to insure proper combustion and efficient operation. A cold engine will have less power, will burn more gas, and will become dirtier inside more rapidly than a normally temperature-controlled engine.

To solve your problem you need to go to your nearest Alfa Romeo dealership (don't use an American thermostat even though they fit) and give the Parts man your particular

model and he should have for you the thermostat tailor-made for your particular Alfa. At this time, also get a thermostat gasket, because the old one will invariably be destroyed in replacement. The whole operation should cost you less than 30 minutes time and about 10 to 12 dollars. While you are at it, flush out the radiator system with some fast flush or have a competent radiator shop do this for you before you do the job. Remember to always install coolant in your engine, never just water, in a 50-50 mixture with distilled water. You won't believe the difference this will make in the inside of your engine. Also inspect all of your hoses, and don't forget the two small heater hoses which go through the firewall. These are particularly susceptible to chaffing, and a leak in either of these lines will quickly empty your cooling system with terminal effects to your engine. Be careful how you route these hoses because they run in very close proximity to sharp airbox corners and throttle arms.

A couple of last tips: Take off your fanbelt and inspect its condition. Any fraying or nicks should cause you to replace it. Normal belt life on your car should be about 24,000 to 30,000 miles. While the belt is off, grab onto the end of your water pump (where the fan mounts) and gently try to wiggle the pump. There should be just the slightest amount of play. A lot of play means the pump bearings are going, and that it is only a matter of time before replacement. Planning ahead in a situation like this will save you lost time and possible serious engine damage. Good luck and happy motoring.

Send your technical questions to: AROSC, Dave Vegher, 2012 W. 234th St, Torrance, CA 90501. If you would like a personal answer, include a self-addressed envelope. Questions dealing with common technical problems will be published.

# Angel's Flight RALLYE



by Ana Maria Gallo

As I scraped Gingerino into the parking lot, the shine of sparkling Alfas already lined up and set to go was really blinding. Jack Becronis would have beamed at their beauty.

With a final reminder that a live lizard would score perfect time, the Bernsteins' Spyder scraped its way out - the rallye was on! Only Sel Ramsay was missing. As I packed my things to go, I thought, "Is this the first rallye he'll miss?". A hum and a scrape later, his orange Spyder pulled in. Eight cars out on narrow twisting roads.

The faces that not even the sun could brighten at the Beechwood checkpoint were smiling after their jog through Griffith Park. A welcoming party cheered each Alfa as it pulled into Dundee Street. One, two,...eight cars! No one lost yet!

On my way to visit the Chevy Chase checkpoint, I got lost!! Only as Philippe de Palmaert's Duetto cruised by, going the other way, did I know. I took a short cut and was fortunate enough to catch the leaders at the last checkpoint.

At Philippe's Original French Dip, a cozy dive downtown, the conversation was lively...laughs, a raspberry, requests for more, and furious work at computing the winners.

Thanks to everyone: Ken, Rick, Tovah, Tom, Lou, Ed and Courtney. Above all, thanks to the ralliers who made it so much fun for me.

The final results of the rallye are as follows:

- 1st Place: Tom Lipkis/Skip Eastman in a '74 Berlina
- 2nd Place: J. Scott Carter/Dorah Wylie in a '77 Alfetta GT
- 3rd Place: Sel Ramsay/Joanne Foley in a '69 Spyder
- 4th Place: Philippe de Palmaert/Al Nowatka in a '67 Duetto
- 5th Place: Dan Bernstein/Sue Bernstein in a '69 Duetto
- 6th Place: Nancy Averill/Steve Averill in a '74 Spyder
- 7th Place: Robert Perales/Linda Perales in a '74 Spyder
- 8th Place: Rick Alfvin/Diane Alfvin in a '74 Spyder.



## MAY MEETING

"ALL ABOUT FRONT SUSPENSIONS"

The May general meeting will feature Dave Vegher, our club's technical authority, who will be presenting an in-depth study of the front suspensions of the 105 and 116 (Alfetta) series models.

He will be holding forth on such topics as:

What you should get out of a front alignment.

Often-seen tire wear patterns and what they mean to you.

He will also conduct a question-and-answer session.

So, don't just stand there helplessly watching your expensive CN-36s wear out. Come on out to the meeting and find out how to get Alfa back on the straight (and narrow?).

# the SONG of the ALFA

by John Ireland



I was sitting in my Alfetta, the rain beating down a nasty tattoo, the smoke from my cigarette (one of those low tar kind) was doing more damage to the inside of the windshield than to the inside of my lungs. My name? They call me.... Johnny Alfa. My business? I'm an undercover speeder for the Department of Transportation. My job? Chase Porsches and BMWs until their emissions systems fail. That takes a special kind of man and a special kind of car. I have three ears. My car is an Alfa Romeo.

The two of us were staked out near the apartment of a Sunset Blvd. exotic dancer. Rumor had it that she had already squashed six poodles and a water spaniel with her Turbo 924. I could hear her P7s digging in as she took the corner at eighty-five and headed straight for me. Using a watermelon, a blonde wig, and two passes to Disneyland, I pretended I was a couple of teenagers necking after a big date. As soon as she passed me, I traded the watermelon for an Aqualung and followed her, posing as an asthmatic.

She wouldn't let up as she raced into the canyons leading to Mulholland Drive. It was a mistake I knew she would make. Darkness surrounded us, traffic thinned to a trickle of VW buses, Dodge Coronets, and Omnis. She caught me napping and knew that I was following her when I ran the light. I could hear the whine of her turbo in angry response. The rain got heavier, the sky blacker, and still she was pulling away from me. She had the power, but I had something just as important. As soon as I made the left onto Mulholland, I hit my Cibies. The road exploded with brilliant white light. I could see where I was going..... and was able to go fast. She had all the power, but her sealed beams just couldn't cut it. Above 50 miles per hour, she was driving blind.

The Porsche fishtailed and hopped all over the road. There was no way to regain control. The turbo whined its farewell song as the P7s spun in midair and the Porsche smashed through the barrier. I watched it sail out over Van Nuys.

I added a quart of oil to the Alfetta, watched the raindrops soak my unlit cigarette, and wondered about the exotic dancer I'd barely gotten to know. She was fast all right, but nearsighted. She had great lines, but no coordination. She had an iron will, but no soul. Later I discovered her real name was Eva Audi. The Porsche was just a front for a Fox. My laughter joined the raspy song of the Alfetta's exhaust. Looking out over the city, I began beating my chest and shouting a challenge. "I'll blow your doors off!".

I found Doggy's left front foot on my right eye, and her right front foot in my mouth. Alana walked in with a cup of coffee and said, "isn't that cute, she's waking you up".

John, Alana, Doggy and Marcello.



## LBGP '80 TICKETS

AROSC has reserved a block of 300 seats in Grandstand 28 for the 1980 Long Beach Grand Prix. And for only a \$10.00 per ticket deposit, you can now reserve your seats for next year's race.

So, send your name, address, PHONE NUMBER (this is very important!) and number of tickets you want reserved, along with your check, made payable to AROSC, to: AROSC/LBGP, P.O. Box 261, Los Alamitos, CA 90720

Do it today!! Don't be left out!!

## the IMSA 6 Hour

by Dave Vegher

Imagine yourself hurtling down the long straight away of the well-known Can-Am course of Riverside International Raceway close to your projected top speed of 147 mph. Then you glance in your rear view mirror and see bearing down on you like a guided missile a Porsche 935 driven by Peter Gregg or George Folmer. The overtaking car, or should I say, "low flying aircraft", seems far away, then it is next to you, and then it disappears in the distance. It is truly the experience of a lifetime. It gives you a far greater respect for the drivers behind the wheels of the turbo Porsches and BMWs.

Our Alfa did not qualify for the six hour Riverside race for a number of reasons. It was not for the lack of horsepower; the engine on the dyno put out an indicated 208 bhp at 7600 rpm. The water and oil cooling systems worked perfectly, keeping our "thumping" motor happy. However, as with all new cars, things went wrong. The differential ratio was too high, a figure being 3:23, where probably something in the neighborhood of 3:96 or even a 4:10 would have worked. We ended up going through Turns 6, 7 and 8 in first gear when we should have been at the top of second. Secondly, our handling was incredibly bad. The car had the annoying habit of trying to swap ends in a lightning-fast manner in the high speed corners of the track. This very dangerous handling problem severely limited our ability to enter the corners at the normal rates that we would have. This of course hindered our exit speed from the corners and our qualifying times reflected these problems. I feel confident that the car with these problems solved could turn consistent laps in the two minute range, possibly into the high 1:59s. All it takes now is some time, work and money.

The only other Alfa at the 6 hour event was the Griswold Alfetta sedan that was competing in the Radial Challenge series. This car was beautifully prepared; however, it being its first time out, suffered more serious problems. The injection pumps on both engines shook themselves to pieces internally. This is a usual problem on the injected race cars using stock Spica pumps. What is needed to help the Alfas over this stumbling block is for IMSA to allow the RS cars to run with the dual Weber setup which is available on all European models. This would allow the Sport Sedan to show its heels to a lot of the very fast RS cars.

FLASH: On April 29th, the Griswold Sedan, going much faster at the Laguna Seca raceway, reportedly turning in the 1:21 and 22s, got a tire off the track exiting Turn 2 (which is a very high speed left hand corner); the tire dug into the soft dirt and the car flipped over about 3 or 4 times. The driver (1977 "G" Production national champion John Anderson) was unhurt, though it is not known at this time if the car is a writeoff.

The next IMSA race on the west coast will be at Sears Point on the weekend of July 28 & 29.

## Slaloms & Such

by Barry Klein

The championship slalom held at Lion Country Safari on May 6th was enjoyed by 4 AROSC members along with over 100 other drivers. The course was a little longer than usual, which everyone appreciated. On two of the straight aways, 3rd gear could be used for a brief period - REAL brief!! Two of the turns required 180 degree turns and were at the end of the straight away.

Cont on P. 8

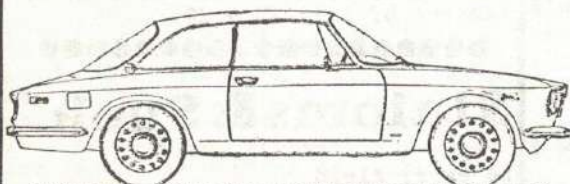
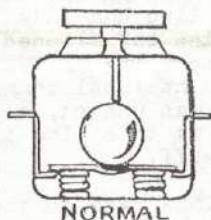
# TECHNICAL TIPS

## FUEL PUMP IMPACT CUTOFF SWITCH

by Phil Lindsay

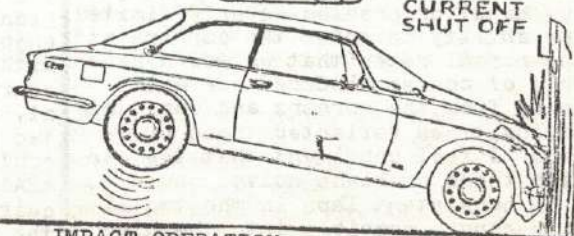
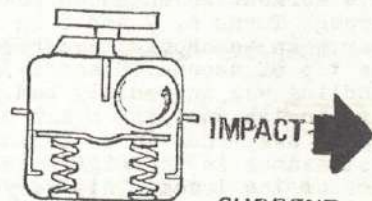
Both the Spica and Bosch fuel delivery pumps feature an incredibly high flow rate (approximately 1 gallon per minute) which can quickly empty the gas tank during an accident. Apparently Alfa Romeo recognized this problem at the time of Alfetta design and incorporated a fuel pump switch which turns off upon impact (I understand from several Alfetta owners that the Alfa switch has been known to turn off without impact!)

For us pre-Alfetta owners (and unhappy Alfetta's), there is an after-market impact cutoff switch which can be adapted to the Alfa. I installed the unit 3 years ago in my 1974 Spyder and have experienced no problems. The unit is marketed under the tradename of "Killspark" and is distributed by Rotary Imports, 3570 E. Cerritos, Los Alamitos, CA 90720 for approximately \$20.00. The unit is designed to sense impact only in the horizontal direction and is unaffected by vertical impacts arising from road bumps. The sensing element of the switch is a steel ball which provides electrical continuity when located in its center rest position as shown in figure 1. An impact in the horizontal direction knocks the ball off its seat which breaks electrical continuity and turns off the switch as shown in Figure 2. Resetting the switch requires a  $\frac{1}{2}$  turn of the loading knob located at the top of the unit.



NORMAL OPERATION

Figure 1

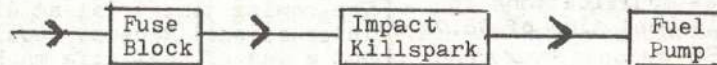


IMPACT OPERATION

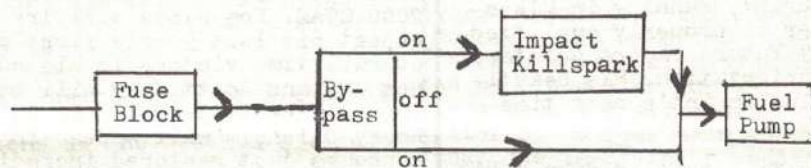
Figure 2

I located the unit on the engine side of the firewall in an area close to the clutch master cylinder. The wiring of the unit is simple and requires only two wires. The electric fuel power wire normally runs between the fuse block and the pump. The Killspark is connected across this wire.

My installation is slightly modified in order to provide a driver-operated by-pass switch. This device enables the driver to quickly by-pass the impact switch and reactivate the fuel pump in the unlikely event that the Killspark should fail at an inopportune time (like stalled on a railroad crossing!). The modification is also simple and features a single pole, double throw switch (on-off-on type). The power wire from the fuse block feeds into the switch. One side of the switch is connected to the Killspark and the other side is connected directly to the fuel pump. With the by-pass switch in the center-off position, the fuel pump is off and an anti-theft effect is achieved.



STANDARD KILLSPARK WIRING



MODIFIED KILLSPARK WIRING

## ALFA ROMEO 12 Cyl. V 60° Engine

Construction of the engine developed for the Brabham-Alfa BT 48 cars that will take part in the 1979 Formula 1 World Championships is the most recent evidence of the remarkable ability of the men of the Alfa Romeo racing department whose sport vocation was born historically with the company itself. The new 60-degree V power plant, one of the most sophisticated products of automotive engineering, capable of developing over 520 horsepower, was designed and built in only four and one-half months, thanks to the long experience, determination and enthusiasm of the workers who unstintingly lavished their efforts to make Alfa Romeo reconfirm its sporting image.

Each time the Formula 1 car has to be reduced to practical terms on the drawing board and in the shop they say this motor sport specialization is a severe form of accomplishment mania. Indeed, the designers of these extremely fast cars with uncovered wheels are called on to use their ingenuity fast, and to find engineering ideas capable of gaining even a hundredth of a second. Sometimes these ideas are applied so fast that race fans don't have time to get used to the car or the shape of the body because from one race to the next its appearance changes by increments, and from one season to the next can even change radically.

"Slaloms" Cont from P. 5

In Class "Q" Gino DiFabio drove his GTV all out on his first lap. Sometimes a car will go sideways longer than it's supposed to with this kind of enthusiasm. At the end of his 3 laps, Gino took 3rd Place in his very competitive class with a time of 1:02.05.

A new visitor to this year's slaloms is Kermit Theis with his Alfa Spyder in Class "I", a prepared category. He took off over 5 seconds of his lap time at the end of his last lap. Considering that he has only done a few modifications to his Spyder, his best time of 98.71 was a good show.

Another new AROSC participant in slaloms was Gardner Hoch, with his '78 Alfa Sprint, running in Class "Q". Gardner is properly qualified to give any future racers pointers on course orientation. His beautiful dark blue Sprint's best time was 1:10.39.

As for myself, I settled down a bit during my runs and decided to use the brakes a little more often and keep the car on the track. The 1300 Prodiged Spyder appreciated it and gave a time of 97.02 for Class "F".

It was good to see club members come out to the slalom despite the lack of gas availability. We all enjoyed discussing track conditions and driving techniques.

The up and coming slaloms are as follows:

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| May 19-20 | Lone Pine Time Trials (SCCSCC Sponsored event)  |
| June 3    | SCCSCC sanctioned championship slalom at Lion Country Safari. Run order: AMSD, BCNH, PURQ, KVTL, EFGIJ (Speed trap on main straight away) |
| 10        | SCCSCC sanctioned Championship slalom at Lion Country Safari. Run order: BCN,HPR,QIJ,AMS, KGE,DF,UVLT                                     |

I will have flyers on these events at the May meeting, or call me after 7 PM at (213) 790-6369.

**AROSC**  
**TIME TRIAL**



Preview

THE  
HOLLYWOOD AUTO IMPORTS Time Trial  
June 16th, 1979

by Dave Vegher

The coming time trial at Riverside International Raceway should bring out a lot of neat Alfa machinery. John Samson will be out with his hot IMSA GTU 2000 GTV, and I will bring out the similarly classed 2000 GTAM. Tom Hines will try to repeat his last year's first place overall time victory in his super hot GTA and Scott Gray will be trying to take it away in his GTA. Rocky Chisholm will appear in his concours just restored incredibly quick Twin Plug 1600 TZ. Bill Henry will again be there to awe us with his spectacular driving talents, and Charlie Thieriot and Rick Clemente are going to star in a grudge match in their identical 1978 Alfa Sports Sedans. Jordan Harris is once again going to dazzle us with his SCCA honed skills in his 2000 Spyder and Andy Steben should have his car back from the body shop and ready for battle.

This promises to be one of the biggest time trials of the year and everyone is invited. Corner workers are always needed and it should be an interesting day to walk in the pits with all the splendid machinery about. So, get out your wrenches and have your cars ready for the June 16th time trial at RIR.

This event is to be sponsored by Hollywood Auto Imports, without whose participation we couldn't hold these happenings.



"Alfa Engine" Cont. from P. 7

The new Alfa Romeo Formula 1 engine is the product of a highly complex project involving a huge number of mechanical parts that had to be designed, built and assembled. It's worthwhile recalling the steps that led to its building and the progress achieved in automotive engineering that will be translated into improvements in stock car production.

On June 17th, 1978 Niki Lauda at the wheel of a blower-equipped Brabham-Alfa Romeo BT 46 won the Grand Prix of Sweden, the eighth contest for the Formula 1 Drivers' Championship. Television, radio and newspapers of the world acclaimed the clamorous performance that marked the return of Alfa Romeo to Formula 1 victory after 27 years, the return of Brabham after three seasons, and of Niki Lauda after exactly 10 months.

With the Austrian driver's exploit there were varied comments on the objections of the Brabham's direct rivals who asked the race authorities to disqualify Lauda who was guilty of having used the magic blower, a device which, in their judgement, was dangerous and, in any case, prohibited by the rules. The controversy dragged on until the International Sport Commission gathered in Paris delivered the verdict: "The device (the blower, Ed.) cannot be used for Formula 1 races because it violates the safety regulations and because it is contrary to the spirit of the regulations governing aerodynamic devices". But the Swedish Grand Prix was not cancelled and Niki Lauda lengthened his record with one more victory, his second at Anderstorp.

The Brabham's competitors were satisfied. At this point Chiti, Ecclestone, Murray and Lauda had to recognize that the superiority of the Lotus couldn't be touched by the BT 46 which is not a "wing car" aerodynamically as is the Lotus. The blower idea was set aside for rea-

sons of force majeure and an alternative was sought capable of reaching a high level of competitiveness. Chiti suggested abandoning the 12-cylinder opposed-piston engine because its width makes it difficult to satisfactorily exploit the wing-effect that makes a winner of the model designed by Colin Chapman. He suggested a 12-cylinder 60-degree V engine which would make possible an overall width even smaller than that of the Ford-Cosworth 8-cylinder itself. The idea was accepted, though with some hesitancy due to too-little time to complete a new 12-cylinder engine.

On July 15th, 1978 Chief Engineer Chiti and his associates agreed to an operation program for development of the new engine. On July 28th, just before the German Grand Prix, he delivered to Gordon Murray the first drawing of the power plant so Murray could make the necessary changes to the already advanced BT 48 single-seater for which it was intended. The Alfa 3000 cc was narrower by no less than 40 cm (15.3/4") than the 12-cylinder opposed-piston engine. The Brabham can therefore make use of 45 cm (17.3/4") side wings, 5 cm more than those of the Lotus.

On September 15th the last component of the power unit came off the drawing board when the final crankcase pattern was already being made. On November 29th the engine was assembled and given the finishing touches. Niki Lauda himself started the new 12-cylinder engine at the test bench and its first powerful reassuring roar was heard; first at low speed, then accelerating gradually, then a determined thrust to full power where the needle indicated 515 hp at 12,200 rpm. It had taken 138 days to put together a power plant that, six months earlier, nobody had thought of building.

The trials of the Autodelta men were finished for the time being. At the end of November all that was

Cont. on P. 14

## Alfa Milano, Inc.



We offer you the expertise of  
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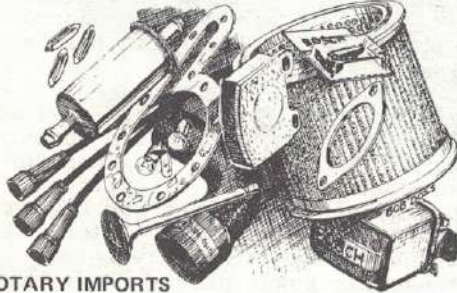
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"Alfa Engine" Cont. from P. 11 left to do was to tune up the engine, increasing performance and reliability - a challenging task - but less than the one just completed. Starting the next day, six engines would have to be made ready to face hard battles in Argentina and Brazil.

On December 21st at Brands Hatch, Niki Lauda tried out the Brabham BT 48 equipped with the new 525 hp engine. He approved it. The year ended after further testing in France with the driver becoming convinced that it would be worthwhile to take a chance in Buenos Aires.

With the New Year the last engines were completed in frenzied activity. Two BT 48 60-degree V engines for Lauda and two BT 46 12-cylinder opposed-piston engines for Piquet departed for Argentina. Autodelta planned to have 12 to 14 interchangeable power plants ready before the Spanish Grand Prix, when Formula 1 races follow one another in quick succession.

SINCE 1967

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Articles, letters, and personal ads are always welcomed and should be received by the editor 20 days prior to the monthly meeting. Meetings are normally held on the fourth Friday of the month at the ALONDRA PARK CLUBHOUSE, at 3850 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Lawndale, just east of the San Diego freeway. Date or location changes will be posted in the newsletter prior to the meeting. Meetings start promptly at 8:00 PM. For more information call:

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