

AlFacionada!



ALFA ROMEO OWNERS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



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ALFACIONADA is the monthly publication of ALFA ROMEO OWNERS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, a regional chapter of ALFA ROMEO OWNERS CLUB, INC. Subscriptions to this newsletter are included as part of the \$35.00 membership fee paid to AROC, Inc. Meetings are held monthly on the fourth Friday of the month at 8 P.M. at Alondra Park Clubhouse located at 3850 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Lawndale, Ca. Please send articles, letters, ads and black and white photographs to the newsletter editor by the first of the month for publication in that month's edition. Classified ads are available as a free service to members and at a nominal \$5 charge to non-members advertising Alfa items. This newsletter and its authors assume no liability for the accuracy or legality of any technical information appearing herein.

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♣ CALENDAR

1986

FEBRUARY	28	General Meeting
MARCH	5	Board Meeting @ Irelands 7:30 PM
	21	General Meeting
	22	Pre Tech for Time Trial #2
	25	Board Meeting at Zettles?
	29/30	Time Trial #2 at Willow Springs
APRIL	19	Rally (tentative)
	25	General Meeting
	26	Brake Clinic/Diro
MAY	17	Concours/Lutheran High School/Burbank
	24	Oil Clinic & drive Milano/ at Wegge
	25	Time Trial #3 at Carlsbad
	30	General Meeting
June	27	General Meeting
	?	Rally
JULY	12	Concours/Will Rogers Park/Fuel Injection Clinic
	25	General Meeting
AUGUST	2	Pre tech for Time Trial #4
	9	Time Trial #4 at Riverside Raceway
	23/25	Laguna Seca Races/ Pebble Beach
		NO GENERAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER	26	General Meeting
	27	Suspension Clinic Ward & Deane (Tent.)
	?	Rally
OCTOBER	18	Concours/Briggs Cunningham Museum
	26	Swap Meet/General Meeting

♣ COMMERCIAL AD RATES

	HALF YEAR	FULL YEAR
1/8 Page:	\$ 45.00	\$ 75.00
1/4 Page:	\$ 90.00	\$150.00
1/2 Page:	\$180.00	\$300.00

Prices are for camera ready art. Please contact the advertising director if you need assistance in formulating your advertisement.

JAN CALIFORNIA 86

ALFAS GO

by Joel Hoffman

Last month's Alfa Romeo activities began with the L.A. Auto Show at the Civic Center. Making a big showing was Alfa Romeo with six cars; a GTV-6, a Graduate, two Spider Veloces and two Quadrifoglios. They also played a 15 minute videotape the Milano with Eddie Cheever aboard. Next was the January 24th meeting at which EVERYONE enjoyed the question and answer session with John Dinkel of Road & Track magazine. His terrific sense of humor had all 125 of us laughing frequently. Ken Kinton, Alfa Romeo Service Rep told how Alfa Romeo had redesigned the oil galleys and the cam belt tensioners to eliminate head gasket problems. New for the V-6 engine is a single plate clutch. The year end awards were presented, 12 raffle prizes were won and we enjoyed the Italian cookies brought by Randy and Lisa Van Daalen Wetters. The month concluded with 60 Time Trialers and Novices and 40 Special Intro drivers speeding around Riverside Raceway on the 26th.

New this year will be 5 Clinics. The first one, a Brakes Clinic on April 26th will be held at Diro Alfa Romeo in Harbor City. It will include a demonstration on changing brake pads on the 105 and 115 series cars as well as on the later Alfetta and GTV-6 cars. Members are invited also to test drive the new Spider Quadrifoglio and Milano. On May 24th in Pasadena, Wegge Motor Cars will be hosting AROSC members at an Oil Clinic where we'll see a demonstration on changing the oil and oil filter. After it we will

buy oil filters at Wegge's Parts Department and use the lifts. No dealer stocks all brands and grades of oil so be sure to bring your own. We have also been invited to test drive the new Milano, GTV-6 and Spiders. The July 12th Spica Fuel Injection Clinic will be held in conjunction with the Concours at Will Rogers Park. Competition Director Charlie Thieriot will be the instructor. The Suspension Clinic, tentatively scheduled for September 26th will be held at Ward and Deane Racing in Gardena. Famed AROSC racer Alan Ward will be the host. We are coming close to a date for a Dyno Clinic where we can put our Alfas on a chassis dyno and get a rear wheel horsepower number.

The philosophy behind these clinics is that the members and dealers have a common interest. The dealers will sell some cars and some parts and the members will have a fun and informative day. It's been written before but needs repeating: the dealers and members either hang together or hang separately. The big push with the Milano very well might determine if Alfa Romeo stays in the American market. So talk up the Milano, GTV-6 and the Spiders. Invite your friends and neighbors to the Clinics.

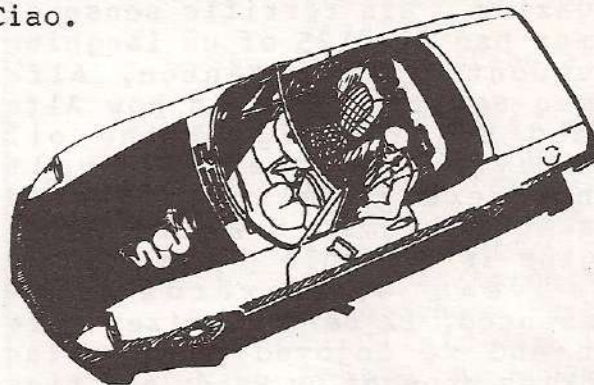
The motoring press has been very positive about the Milano and the Alfa Owner has shown its many performance, comfort, and convenience features. All of this has gotten to Jim and Teri Wood. They are going on an April tour to the factory, Museum, etc. led by AROC Director Fred DiMatteo (617) 443-6031. A special feature of this tour is the opportunity of picking up a Milano at European Delivery prices. Details are a phone call away.

continued next page

Autoweek in its Jan. 20th issue has finally lumped Alfa Romeo and Porche owners together. In it, and in past issues they have spoken of the gold chained set who own Porches, Maseratis and Ferraris. Here they write "The wrong people are going to buy the Spider Veloce." What's with Autoweek and their holier than thou attitude that makes THEM say who should or shouldn't be able to buy an Alfa or these other cars? It isn't the only publication which has implied that wealthy people and those who know nothing about a marque's history shouldn't be able to buy them. In 1974 when I bought my first Alfa I was just taken in with the looks and performance of the GTV. I wasn't an Alfa fanatic like I am today. I'm sure there are no Alfa owners who bought their cars solely because Alfa Romeo had a famous racing heritage. Even if someone were to buy an Alfa for status reasons doesn't mean that in time they wouldn't develop a pride in the marque and become an Alfista as we have.

At Alondra Park on the 28th we'll be seeing the videotape of the Milano and hear John Ireland's plans for the rallye program. March brings the start of the busy season for AROSC. We'll see an Alfa seat being reupholstered on the 21st. Then on the 29th and 30th at Willow Springs Raceway Charlie Thieriot has arranged for two days of time trialing, Easter Sunday church services and an Easter Egg Rolling event. Bring the whole family.

All those tool kits, fire extinguishers, oil and filter changes, and Alfa pillows will be back as some of this year's raffle prizes. In closing, I'm happy to announce the arrival of Beverly Hills Alfa at 3074 Robertson Blvd. Ciao.



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elections!

Elections for Directors of AROC, the national club, are coming up! We on the Board are appealing to you the members to support the candidate from our chapter! That means filling out and returning your ballot when you receive it instead of filing it in the circular file. We have a very enthusiastic and knowledgeable candidate in AL CORTES and we will support him in his representation of us! DO IT!!!! Ed.

TIME TRIALS

AUTOSPECIALTY TIME TRIAL

January 26, 1986.

Everyone said it was too early in the year. Not only that, but sacrilege of sacrileges, you can't have a Time Trial on Superbowl Sunday! Certainly no one will come...

Well, it seems that about 270 people are spirited enough to prefer a day of speed at Riverside Raceway to staying home and throwing empty beer cans at the TV. Of the 63 cars entered in the Time Trial itself, it is interesting to note that 27 people are novices. Additionally there were another 38 people entered in the Introductory Group. Despite the large turnout, the crowds were handled very efficiently. The only delay was at the gate, where Riverside Raceway assigned only one person to collect everyone's signatures and five dollars. Alan Zimmerman's Registration line took five minutes or less, Bill Pringle's Late Technical Inspection line never exceeded two cars, and Mike Sperry had the first group of Introductory drivers on the track before 7:45 - slightly ahead of the almighty schedule. Good work! The only incident of the morning happened when student Ilona Shillman and instructor Rex Chalmers disagreed as to whether Turn 6 was a right or left turn. As a result, Ilona's car has been renamed "Salvador Dali Special", and Rex is rumored to be driving in the next Time Trial with Jackie Chalmer's "super" vision. Although we fell a bit behind in our schedule, Skip Farnsworth managed to rotate the corner workers quite quickly. We still need more cooperation from drivers in this area however.

Chiefly because of post-lunch tardiness, afternoon practice and timed runs commenced one-half-hour late. The mid-afternoon worker switch cost even more precious time and timed runs finished in the dark. However, this didn't stop the veteran Dave Vegher from winning Top-Time-of-the-Day (Night?). In an heroic effort, Mike Sperry was only .3 seconds behind Dave, shattering the Class B lap record by one full second. Competition in Class D was quite heavy, with software ace Dale Farmer turning a very fast time on his third run, before succumbing to physics and spinning on his last lap. John Green, in his GTV/6 equipped with new cams, exhaust, and telephone, managed to drive his first lap quickly, before falling victim to his own enthusiasm. Nevertheless, he edged out third-place winner Andy Steban and veteran Alan Ward by fractions of a second. This is certainly a class to be watched closely, especially at Willow Springs next time, where experience can often overcome youthful enthusiasm. Rally and Program chairman John Ireland was quite fast in his new '86 GTV/6, after a long and not-restful layoff from Time Trials. Watch also first-time novice Fred Nemecek, who threatens closely in his 19-year-old Alfa.

Class E is another very competitive class, and at the last Time Trial Bill Pringle won easily with a time of 1:56.94. This time, that would have yielded a fifth place! Bill's time improved by an impressive 3.32 seconds, but Rex Chalmers got 2.59 seconds faster, enough to win over Bill and break the lap record set in November of 1982 by .41 seconds. Another dramatically improved driver, Skip Farnsworth, took third place. Michael Leum also cut over two seconds off his previous lap time. This is another class that will be fun to watch throughout the year.

Club Vice-President Harold Rich won Class F by a bunch, going over three seconds faster than last time. Registration Director Alan Zimmerman grabbed second, in a 29-year-old Alfa. Dan Ritter was the only driver in Class G, but he went fast enough to break the lap record established by myself in February of 1977 by over one second!

In the Renault class, seven R5 Turbos entered, three for the second time and four for the first time. Last time Tom Cahalane edged out Mark DiBella by .2 seconds, and this time he did it again. The difference is that both cars went about seven seconds faster due to experience and a power increase from 185 horsepower to 250 hp. Lee Benson went much faster than last time to beat out the other Renaults. These cars are quite fun to watch and most of them are well-matched.

There were twenty-one other entries in such bewildering diversity as to defy any logical attempt at classification. David Kruse and Dave Bouzaglou entered very pretty Porsche RSR's, with Bouzaglou's sporting Miami Vice-like graphics. Sean Randall's car was a beautiful Sports Racer turned "street car". Together with John Storey's Pantera, these cars were much faster than their lap times show, because they had to run in near-darkness with no headlights! (We have unusual ways of equalizing competition.) These cars entered on a "demonstration" basis and were not eligible for trophies because they were so fast and unmatched to anything.

The remaining seventeen cars were divided into two classes by approximate speed. While Bob Reynolds decisively won Class M, Larry Vollum's "shoebox" Peugeot and Marshall Buck's '84 Corvette proved to be a good match. In fact, if Marshall had gotten four runs, he might have won second place. Stay tuned for next time. Tom(?) Krivanek and Len Frank entered a Camero of mysterious origin, and Krivanek edged out Larry Armi's psychedelic Renault by .02 seconds. Again, if Larry and Len had two more laps, the result could have differed.

George Kranen had a close battle with Les Cooper in a nice MGB, but not before George tried to get his T-Bird to take off in the esses. An unusual subgroup of cars had a close set of times also in Class N. Imagine a class with a Ford Fiesta, a Triumph TR-6, and a Stranguellini Formula Jr.! Almos Sarvari, Ed Smith, and Franci Seiniger were within .18 seconds of each other in these three cars. (Now you try to figure out logical classes for this

group). It was also nice to see VARA honcho Fred Lake and his pretty Jaguar XK-120 running strong.

The day was capped by a demonstration of our new computer-enhanced time calculations. Director of Timing Dan Hake had been assured that we could have a complete printout ten minutes after the last run. Oh well, when was the last time you ever heard of software working the first time out? Two hours later a flustered Dan arrived with the slightly flawed results. Please note corrections in Classes D, E, and N. I might note that these mistakes were all due to improper or missing paperwork on the part of entrants. Please fill the forms out fully and properly.

It was my feeling that the day was very successful in many ways. We have a number of rough edges, but even after announcing the results at 7:00 P.M., everyone was still enthusiastic. Fantastic spirit. Let's do it again!

See you at Willow Springs!

Charlie Thieriot

Get behind the wheel

ENJOY A WEEKEND IN THE DESERT

Time Trial #2 will be held on Easter weekend, March 29th and 30th at Willow Springs Raceway. It will be a fun weekend for entrants and spectators alike. (See last month's article) If you wish to come as an entrant or spectator you need an application. Applications will automatically go to anyone who has run with us before. All others interested should contact Charlie Thieriot @ (213) 476-8812. Applications will be mailed out before the end of February. Entries will be accepted on a first come first served basis.

ENTRY DEADLINE - MARCH 15TH

SCREEEEECH!

AUTOSPECIALTY
RIVERSIDE SHORT COURSE
TIME TRIAL RESULTS : JANUARY 26TH, 1986

1986

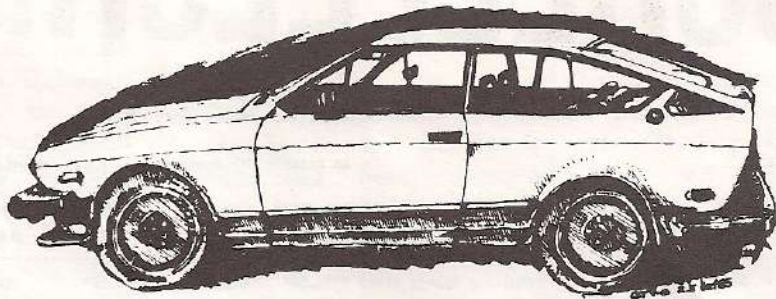
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Program
John Sampson
Director at Large
Phyllis Gaylard

C L C A S R S	drivers:		FASTEST TIME	1st LAP	2nd LAP	3rd LAP	4th LAP
31	Sean Randall	5000 Randall A Sports Racer	1'36.09"	1'36.09"	1'36.59"	N/A	N/A
52	Dave Bouzoglou	Porsche RSR	1'37.76"	1'37.76"	1'38.07"	N/A	N/A
5	John Storey	86 6000 Pantera IMSA GTO	1'39.18"	1'39.18"	1'42.36"	N/A	N/A
45	David Kruse	Porsche RSR	1'39.52"	1'40.31"	1'39.52"	N/A	N/A
48	A Dave Vehger	66 2000 GTA	1'42.14"	1'48.92"	1'42.14"	N/A	N/A
62	B Mike Sperry	66 2000 GTV	1'42.57"	1'42.90"	1'42.57"	N/A	N/A
195	B Charlie Thieriot	66 1750 GTA	1'46.05"	1'47.03"	1'46.05"	N/A	N/A
9	D Dale Farmer	84 GTV6	1'51.81"	1'54.41"	1'52.41"	1'51.81"	2'05.64"
75	D John Green	84 GTV6	1'53.48"	1'53.48"	1'55.90"	1'56.00"	1'55.18"
5	D Andy Steben	73 2000 GTV	1'53.93"	1'56.94"	1'56.06"	1'54.09"	1'53.93"
31	D Alan Ward	73 2000 GTV	1'54.33"	1'54.58"	1'54.33"	1'54.90"	1'54.57"
1	D John Ireland	GTV6	1'55.72"	1'57.16"	1'55.72"	1'56.27"	1'56.43"
196	D Fred Nemcek	67 1600 Guilia Spider	1'55.98"	1'56.44"	1'55.98"	1'57.23"	1'58.09"
48	D David DeRosier	69 1750 GTV	1'56.65"	1'58.93"	1'57.55"	1'56.65"	1'57.29"
96	D David Hobbs	67 1600 Guilia Spider	1'58.15"	1'59.57"	1'58.15"	N/A	N/A
3	D Phyllis Gaylard	73 2000 GTV	1'58.18"	1'59.83"	1'59.67"	1'58.18"	1'58.96"
74	E Rex Chalmers	65 2000 Guilia T1	1'52.82"	1'52.82"	1'53.61"	1'53.45"	1'53.13"
4	E Bill Pringle	74 2000 Berlina	1'53.62"	1'55.72"	1'54.08"	1'53.62"	N/A
57	E Skip Farnsworth	74 2000 GTV	1'55.50"	1'56.63"	1'55.66"	1'55.50"	1'55.77"
13	E Michael Loum	Alfetta GT	1'56.74"	1'58.02"	1'56.74"	1'57.36"	1'57.95"
132	E Larry Harvey	74 2000 GTV	2'01.23"	2'01.23"	2'04.16"	2'07.87"	N/A
12	E Carl Buffa	74 ALFA 2000 GTV	2'12.75"	2'15.54"	2'12.75"	2'19.77"	N/A
2	E Pat Gillis	74 ALFA 2000 gtv	2'14.37"	2'14.37"	2'16.98"	2'22.63"	N/A
91	F Harold Rich	76 Alfetta GT	1'52.77"	1'53.61"	1'53.00"	1'53.04"	1'52.77"
82	F Allan Zimmerman	57 1300 Spider Veloce	1'55.47"	1'55.93"	1'55.82"	1'55.81"	1'55.47"
45	F John White	72 2000 GTV	2'04.00"	2'04.08"	2'04.00"	2'05.71"	N/A
6	F John Cote	74 2000 Spider	2'07.89"	2'07.89"	2'10.10"	2'09.13"	2'12.41"
99	G Dan Ritter	66 Guilia Super	1'57.40"	1'58.41"	1'58.63"	2'04.23"	1'57.40"
8	R Tom Cahalane	Renault R5 T2	1'46.39"	1'52.01"	1'46.39"	1'48.50"	1'49.36"
81	R Mark DiBella	Renault R5 T2	1'46.63"	1'50.42"	1'47.82"	1'46.63"	1'47.98"
43	R Lee Benson	Renault R5 T2	1'52.17"	1'52.17"	1'53.14"	1'52.52"	1'52.82"
74	R Frank Profera	Renault R5 T1	1'53.22"	1'55.06"	1'55.95"	1'53.22"	1'57.88"
47	R Eric Stein	Renault R5 T2	1'53.89"	1'56.70"	1'55.95"	1'55.32"	1'53.89"
44	R Ray Voye	Renault R5 T7	1'57.95"	1'59.25"	1'59.39"	1'59.01"	1'57.95"
71	R Chris Romine	Renault R5 T2	2'01.28"	2'02.28"	2'01.28"	N/A	N/A
17	M Bob Reynolds	68 350 Camaro	1'43.19"	1'47.63"	1'44.58"	1'43.53"	1'43.19"
205	M Larry Vollum	Peugot 205 Turbo 16	1'45.34"	1'46.32"	1'46.04"	1'45.84"	1'45.34"
84	M Marshall Buck	84 Corvette	1'45.96"	1'46.38"	1'45.96"	N/A	N/A
150	M Tom Krivanek	Camaro	1'47.86"	1'47.86"	1'47.99"	1'47.95"	1'56.36"
88	M Larry Armi	SCCA Renault Sports Racer	1'47.88"	1'48.67"	1'47.88"	N/A	N/A
150	M Len Frank	Camaro	1'50.87"	1'51.36"	1'50.87"	N/A	N/A
61	M Tony Seiniger	Lotus 1100 Model 20 F-Jr	1'52.55"	1'57.36"	1'55.33"	1'54.38"	1'52.55"
6	M Bud Clark	73 1700 Saab Scinet :11	1'59.61"	2'01.15"	2'00.83"	1'59.61"	N/A
41	M George Kranen	85 T-Bird Turbo	1'54.35"	1'54.35"	1'55.00"	1'55.55"	2'24.03"
13	M Les Cooper	74 1800 MGB	1'54.52"	1'55.94"	1'54.52"	N/A	N/A
113	M Robert Trotter	74 1800 MGB	1'57.90"	2'00.43"	1'59.89"	2'02.13"	1'57.90"
15	M Jim Lasko	82 Toyota Supra	1'57.97"	1'58.70"	2'03.57"	1'58.54"	1'57.97"
120	M Fred Lake	52 Jaguar XK-120	1'59.51"	2'03.55"	2'00.71"	1'59.52"	1'59.51"
21	M Jonathan Haines	85 1800 VW GTI	1'59.96"	2'00.31"	2'00.76"	1'59.96"	2'02.61"
11	M Almos Sarvari	Ford Fiesta	2'03.26"	2'03.53"	2'04.54"	2'04.27"	2'03.26"
59	M Franci Seiniger	1100 Stanguellini F-Jr	2'03.38"	2'35.90"	2'04.52"	2'03.38"	N/A
44	M Ed Smith	74 Triumph TR6	2'03.44"	2'05.01"	2'03.44"	N/A	N/A
1	M Jeff Deifik	68 Oldsmobile 442	2'11.61"	2'11.61"	2'14.53"	N/A	N/A



RALLYE ROUND



NOW IS THE TIME FOR ALL GOOD DRIVERS TO COME TO THE AID
OF THEIR ALFAS

Rock and roll...hoochy coo...you say that time trialing isn't your speed...but neither is the double nickel? You say the romance of the "good ole days" is getting harder to find? You say what this country needs is a good \$10.00 date? Well you may just find the answer among the ranks of the A.R.O.S.C RALLYE TEAM. And all it takes to get started is for you and your Alfa to show up at the February General Meeting.

This will be a hot program, with videos of the new Milano sedan being driven with alfissimo at Alfa's test track, plus a video of one of the best Rallyes anyone could hope for... a rallye you can enter...a rallye in the tradition of the famous Monte Carlo Rallye.

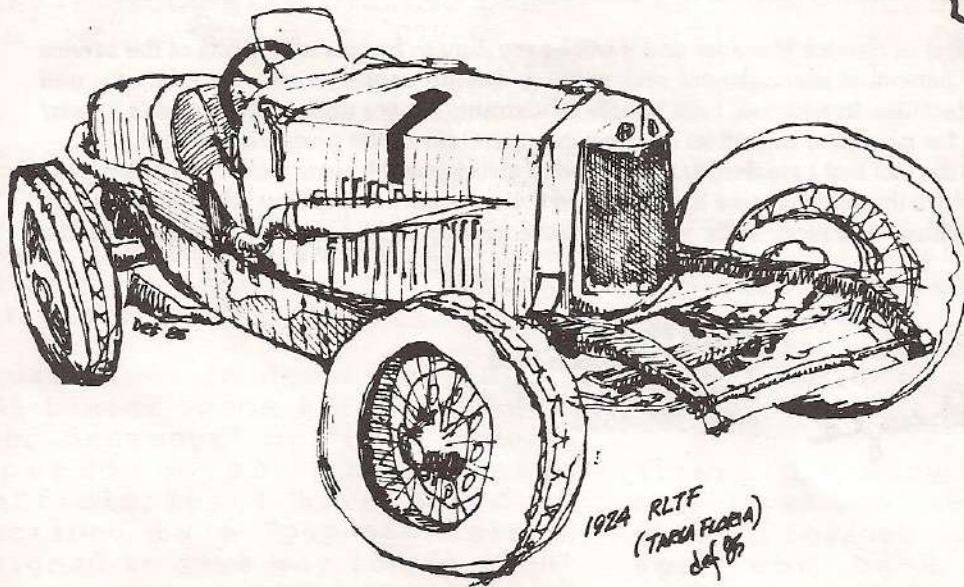
Rallyes are the kind of event that offers something for all most everyone...lovers, husbands and wives, buddies...and even strangers. At the Feb. meeting, you'll learn all you need to know to get started in this exciting form of street recreation. It doesn't take a computer and it doesn't take 400 horse power and it doesn't take nerves of steel...all it takes is the desire to have fun. But there's more...you can earn points toward year end trophies, you can become a member of the official A.R.O.S.C. RALLYE TEAM, and you can earn the right to help represent A.R.O.S.C. in the 1986 Pan Am and Starlite Rallyes.

The part about Rallyes that Alana and I like is that even when we came in dead last, we had fun together, even when we came in dead last, we had a great ride over fantastic roads, even when we came in dead last, there were still a lot of people behind us.

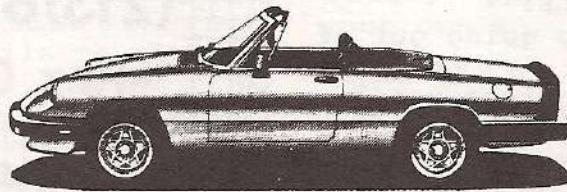
I hope all of this has your oil warm and your gas tank full. This is the beginning of a program that will see Alfias taking all comers in Rallyes from Santa Monica to Orange County plus some side trips to Santa Barbara, San Diego, Las Vegas, and all points in between.

To quote the invisible Rick Clamente..."be there or.... be square!"

Alfa Romeo



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To Our Valued Customers:

As of March 3rd 1986, our entire service organization will merge with Wegge Motor Cars, the local Alfa Romeo dealer here in Pasadena. My 6 years of highly personal service as an independent service shop will combine with Wegge's expertise in running automotive dealerships in Pasadena — spanning over 60 years!

My position will be that of Service Manager and it will be my duty to handle *all* aspects of the service department including personnel management and training, *quality control*, customer relations, and upgrading the service facilities. In addition, I will handle all warranty service under Alfa Romeo's 3 year/36,000 mile warranty for new cars, as well as oversee the operation of the parts department.

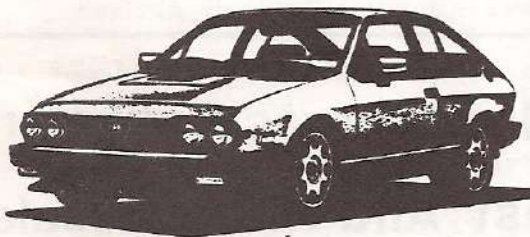
I would like to stress the fact that I am deeply committed to giving you the same personal attention as I have in the past. To help in this endeavor we have retained the services of David Gay, who has been with us for 4 years and whose technical skills will contribute greatly to the overall efficiency of the organization.

Sincerely,



William J. Pringle
Service Manager

Wegge Motor Cars
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PERFORMANCE

"AS THE WRENCH TURNS"

by Bill Pringle

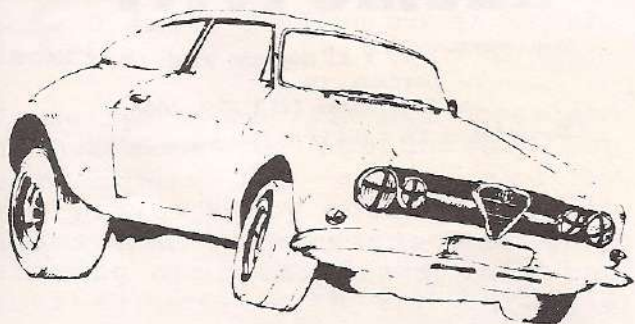
QUESTION: What the hell is that funny-looking grey plastic panel doing on the hood of my GTV-6?

J. Green
Los Angeles

ANSWER: In case you haven't heard, Mr. Green, Alfa Romeo equip the GTV-6 with a GM Roots-type blower (a-la "Big Daddy" Garlits) and it's designed to fit through that plate on the hood!

Actually, it is described in the 1985 Dealer Parts Price List as a "hood ornament" or "hood panel", depending on the part#. Unofficially, I have heard it described as a "pop-off valve", designed to give way in the event that the plenum chamber should be popped off the top of the engine due to an intake backfire. Hmm, sounds logical. (Remember though, these are Italians we're dealing with!)

A phone call to a local dealer produced some "huh's" and "I dunno's". Now a call to ace parts manager Mike at Alfa of Santa Monica who never fails to give me the straight cold facts. He acknowledged the "pop-off valve" rumor but agreed that officially it was identified as a "hood ornament" or "hood panel".



In quest of the ultimate "truth", I put i a call to Alfa Romeo in Carson, California. I figured someone must know the answer there. Boy was I wrong - I got more "I dunno's" than the dealer. Maybe I interrupted their lunch. They were nice enough to give me the phone number of Customer Service in New Jersey. Wow! The next step up must be the Pope himself!

Well, if John Paul greeted the people like this guy did me, the Catholic Church would have to move out of that swank place in Rome and into some chicken-wire and gunnite condo! I mean this guy was borderline rude, especially when I told him that I was an independent Alfa service shop.

After informing the guy that I have lived and breathed Alfa Romeo since I learned to drive (15 years ago) and have amassed more knowledge of the same than the entire Service Network combined, I got a half-hearted apology and a thank-you of sorts - "Alfa Romeo appreciates the support that independent shops have given to uphold the marque here in the states." Kinda like saying thanks for keeping our ass out of hot water, but we don't acknowledge your presence!

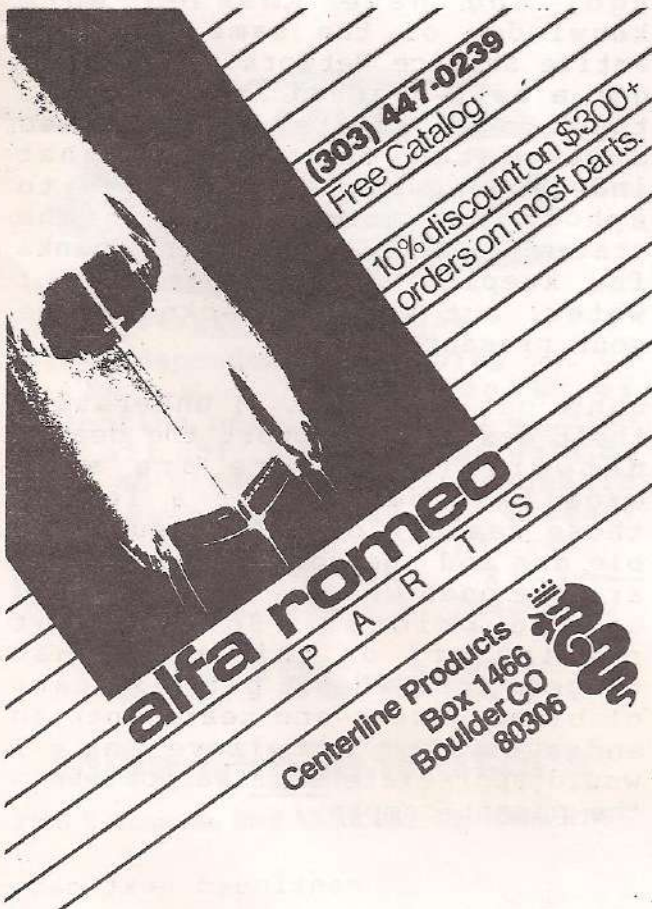
Don't get me wrong. I understand their desire to support the dealer network (and there are some excellent ones), but a lot of those dealers out there suck the big one and the good independents are the ones who are there to hold up the bridge! Sorry about running off on this emotional tangent, but when I put six years of blood, sweat and tears into an endeavor that I believe in, I would appreciate some support from the parent company!

continued next page

Alfa Romeo

Anyhow, the executive chair warmer in New Jersey assured me that this funky hood plate was nothing more than an ornamental styling exercise with no other function.

So there you have it! As the proud owner of an Alfa Romeo GTV-, you can rest assured that the stylists weren't compromised one iota in the creation of your automobile. Yes, that goddamn grey or black plastic plate is smack-dab in the middle of your hood for aesthetic appeal and nothing else! Well, that may be true but the plenum does knock the plate off occasionally, thereby saving a big dent in your expensive hood. Hmmm, could it be that function follows form??.... (See this month's "V-6 Corner" for further discussion.)



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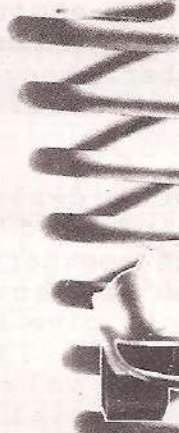
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V-6 corner

by Bill Pringle

Subject: A backfire through the intake tract which can blow the plenum chamber or the air intake rubber duct (no, not duck) off, causing the car to run poorly, if at all. Severe backfires can damage the air flow sensor as well.

Cause: A lean-start condition

Remedy: This can be as simple as the idle CO being set too lean. Have this verified by a competent mechanic who has an infra-red HC/CO meter, because it will be next to impossible to adjust it "by ear". Idle CO should be about 1.0 - 1.5%.

Assuming that the ignition system (plugs, cap, rotor, wires and ignition timing - as well as vacuum advance) is OK, and cylinder compression isn't low-then the next possible cause could be an air leak somewhere between the air flow sensor and the individual intake ports. A call to the Robert Bosch technical advisor verified this as the most common fault leading to an intake backfire.

Visually inspect all air hoses and connections for soundness. You can check for air leaks by applying a soapy solution to all hoses and connections and then blowing compressed air into the intake duct, with the throttle

plate open. Any foaming or bubbling will indicate an air leak. It should be noted that the fabric covered hoses on the idle by-pass and auxillary air valve can leak air even though they look OK. Also, look carefully at the six short rubber pipes that connect the plenum to the engine itself. They can have a hairline crack that is difficult to see. Keep in mind that the system is based on the measurement of air flow into the engine - any vacuum leak is going to give a false signal to the control unit - resulting in a weaker than normal mixture!

Finally, if you start the car cold (which is when the lean-start backfire usually occurs), it helps if you keep your foot off the gas pedal as you crank the starter. This does two things. First, it keeps the throttle plate closed, thereby giving the engine a richer mixture. Secondly, the closed throttle plate will contain the pressure of the backfire within the plenum. While this may result in the plenum popping off, it will probably save a damaged air flow meter (About \$60 vs. \$300).

Remember that this backfire is usually a cold-start condition. When experiencing the common hot-start vapor lock it will be alright to open the throttle all the way while you crank to facilitate starting.

**** LATE TECH TIP!! (Courtesy of Charlie Thieriot) Leave the rubber intake duct loosely clamped at all times. That way in the event of a backfire, the air duct is harmlessly popped loose - kinda like a safety valve.

P.S.: Don't let this backfire thing bother you - Porsches do this all the time - with expensive results!



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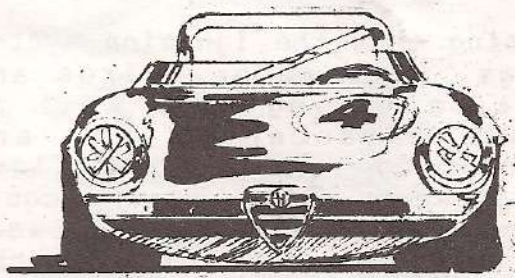
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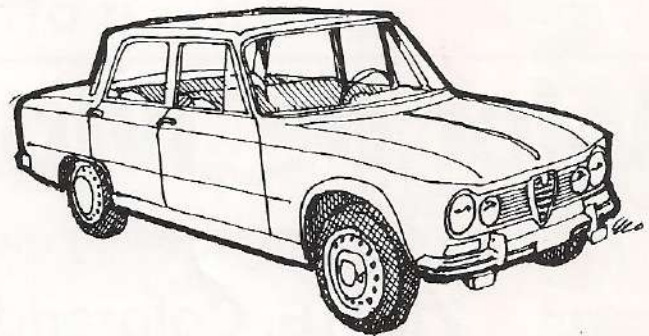
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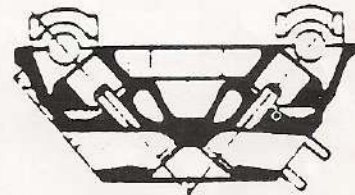
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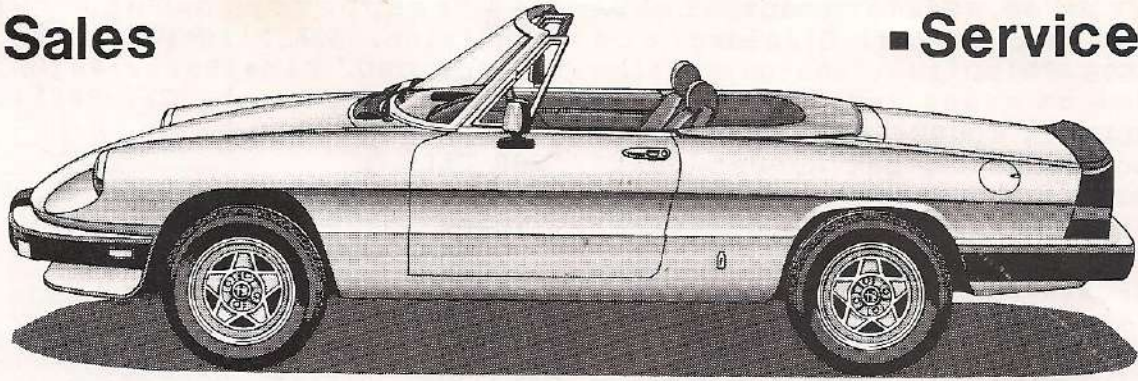
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