

JUNE 1991



Alfacionada

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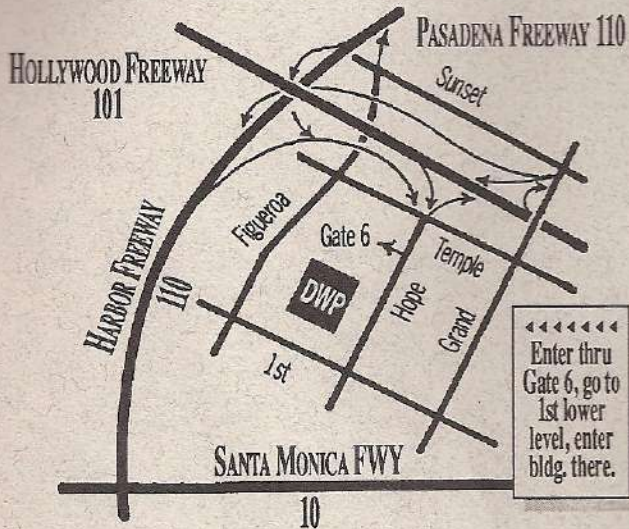
Monterey Historics P.12

THE
JOURNAL
OF THE
ALFA ROMEO
OWNERS
OF
SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA



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 \$47.00 membership fee paid to AROC, Inc. Meetings are held monthly on the **LAST FRIDAY** of the month at 8 p.m. at the Department of Water and Power Auditorium, located at 111 N. Hope St., Downtown Los Angeles, unless otherwise noted in the newsletter.



IMPORTANT DEADLINE:

Please send articles, letters, classified ads and photographs to the editor by the tenth of the month for publication in the **next** month's edition. **Photos and manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage.** Photos, use b/w or color prints—no slides except professional photographers. Send SASE to editor for copy of editorial guidelines, hints, etc.

Classified ads are available as a free service to members and at a nominal \$10.00 charge to non-members advertising Alfa related items.

This newsletter and its authors and editors assume no liability for the accuracy or legality of any technical information appearing herein.

MODIFICATIONS DISCLAIMER:

AROSC is not responsible for the safety or practicality of modifications performed by individual members and described in these pages. The Club suggests you check with your mechanic before modifying your car in any way.

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Newsletter

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Cover

Henry Manney III, adapted from a photograph by Wm. A. Motta

Editor's Note

Louise Velazquez

This issue and our July issue will feature a reprint of two-part article by the late **Henry Manney III** on his adventures during his Mille Miglia run in 1957. Club member and GTA pilot **Henry Manney IV** and his mother have also located a stash of photos that we are fortunate enough to print for the first time with the article. We are forever indebted to them for their help in putting this together. From all that we've heard Henry was quite a character and harbored a life-long fondness for Alfas. The 1957 race was the end of the era for the original Mille Miglia and we are excited to share Henry's humorous experiences in running around Italy in his own Giulietta Sprint Veloce. Our next issue will include the second part of this feature as well as the highlights of this year's Mille Miglia Retrospectiva which ran in Italy from May 2-5th.

CALENDAR

June 23	Picnic and Car Show —12 noon Crystal Springs area in Griffith Park
June 28	Meeting, Yokohama Tire Rep, DWP Aud.
July 26	Meeting, speaker TBD.
Aug. 8-11	AROC National Convention San Diego Details, Page 5
Aug 15-18	Monterey Historic Races For Rooms, Corral info, etc. See Rerun Article Page 12 RSVP before July 15 or no go to Lynn Fitzsimmons (415) 430-8844
Aug 18	Pebble Beach Concours

No August Meeting

President's Column

William J. Pringle

The annual San Antonio Winery concurs/tour/dinner was a great success. Turnout was pretty good, the weather was great and the company was the same. **Phil Guiral** won "Best of Show" for the second time in a row, with **Fred Biba** coming in a close second. Thanks once again to **Chris Mayring** of Kennedy Coachworks and **Warren Caswell** of Alfa Ricambi for their time in judging. A very big thanks goes to **Gene Jacob** and his wife for organizing the whole event and to **Tina Van Curen** for promotional mailers.

As this is written, coming up on the AROSC calendar is the picnic in conjunction with the Miata club at Crystal Springs in Griffith Park. The date is Sunday, June 23 at 10:30 on. If the picnic hasn't already occurred by the time you read this, please RSVP to **Tina Van Curen** (213) 666-4500. I will not be able to attend this event as I will be testing il Signore Schueddekopp's "bella macchina" and hopefully VARA people will find me worthy of a license. So, go and have some fun!

On June 28, there will be a guest representative from Yokohama giving a nice presentation on high performance tires. This is always a well-received show, so get there early for the best seats.

I would like to take this moment to invite any of you out there to actively participate in AROSC activities by bringing any ideas you may have to the next board meeting. They occur on the Tuesday a week prior to the general meeting at 7:30 pm at a site to be determined. Remember, these board meetings are always open to anyone who may want to attend. Discussion is always colorful and the food is usually excellent. Anybody wishing to attend a board meeting please call me at (818) 956-7933 days or (818) 797-0248 eves.

Good News, Bad News & Just News

Stu Schaller

Tom Zat, of Alfa Heaven has got the old 200 Cast Iron/2600 register up and going again, and I am trying to help him. If you have one of these cars, or know of one, please contact me or Tom with the serial number and condition. He is also the keeper of the Junior Zagato, Giulietta, Giulia and all other registers on cars from Post-1900 series up to the 105 GTVs and Duetto's. Tom can be reached at 111 Zagato Lane, Aniwa, WI 54408 (715) 449-2141. Any new information that we can gather is of great help in keeping track of the types of cars still out there.

Vintage Racing Services Concours

APRIL 27, 1991

Fred Schueddekopp

Photos by Fred Biba

It was obvious to all that things were a bit disorganized, this being my first stab at running a concours. **Tony Krivanek** got things rolling with a very enlightening tour of his well-equipped facility. For some people it must have been an eye-opener to see cars reduced to just a shell. Now perhaps they can begin to realize what a "total restoration" means and why they cost so much. Many thanks to Tony for essentially turning over his shop to us for the day and we look forward to future visits.

We had a good 14 car turnout and excellent (if a bit slow) judging. Our own president, **William Pringle**, teamed up with **Warren Caswell** and **Chris Maying** of Kennedy Coach Works to do the honors and all three of them deserve thanks as well.

A glance at the results will tell most of the story, with **Phil Guiral's** lovely '72 ex-Briggs Cunningham GTV leading the way with Best of Show (a brand new re-spray certainly didn't hurt). The open class was topped (bad pun) by **Carl Tronco's** very attractive sunflower yellow '78 spider. A close finish in the GTV 6 category was just reward for **Fred Biba's** immaculate preparation. Special mention goes to three novices (who all finished in the ribbons). This category included a Montreal, always nice to see and I'm sure a real bear to get ready for a concours—good job **Frank Panto!** Personally, I would like to see the novices come out—it's great fun and can really help you get some direction on making your Alfa look and run better. Hopefully novice turnout will continue on this strong start.

Lastly we must mention the two race cars, just because they are such a frigging pain to load on and off their little trailers. The high winds made the journey interesting and, frankly, I kind of enjoyed just looking and leaning on my car

knowing I didn't have to work on it all day. Good excuse to stand around with the boys and do some good old fashioned bull-shitting!

Anyway, thanks to everyone for turning up, thanks for being so patient...see ya next time.

Footnote from Phil Guiral: I would like to thank Fred for taking over the April 27th concours. I was unable to attend because of a last minute schedule change, but he did a splendid job. I have had to cancel the national convention as a points event because they are not having a concours. (hard to believe but true). The Barwinkle's concours will be in Sept. and the concours at Charlie's place will be in Oct. This leaves July and August open. My wife and I are expecting our first child July 6th I will be needing time to attend to that event. If anyone would like to give it a try, please give me a call as I'd be happy to help all I can.



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1. Tony Krivanek
2. SRO at the tech session
3. John Ireland's Car
4. Bill Pringle Judging Biba's GTV 6



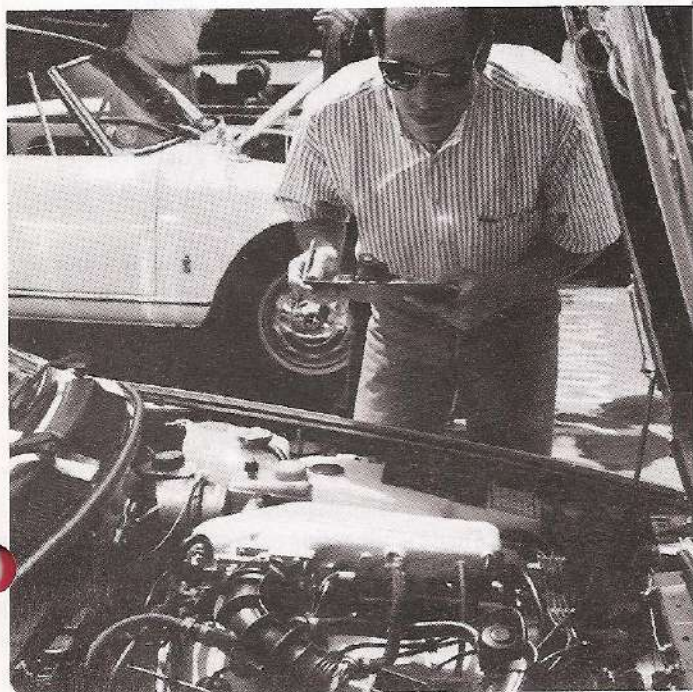
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Alforia '91

THE NATIONAL MEETING OF THE
ALFA ROMEO OWNERS CLUB OF AMERICA
San Diego August 8-11, 1991

The AROC National Convention is coming to Southern California this August and it looks like the San Diego chapter is planning a great event. Hotels will be filling up soon so if you're planning to attend you may want to register right away. Below is a brief listing of events. For details, see the national newsletter.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Wed. Aug. 7 | Registration & Hospitality suite open |
| Thurs Aug. 8 | AROC Board of Directors meeting
Pool Party |
| Fri. Aug. 9 | Technical sessions,
Malibu Challenge
Cornes Cocktail Party |
| Sat. Aug. 10 | Pancake breakfast
Gymkhana/Peoplekhana
Rally/Treasure hunt
Technical session
Cocktails, Banquet & Annual Meeting |
| Sun. Aug. 11 | Car show on the green
Awards luncheon |



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Si Non Risica Non Risica

Or, My Life Among the Abruzzi Bandits, Part I

Henry N. Manney, III

Photos from contemporary Italian sources,
courtesy Manney family

Editor's Note: Henry Manney III wrote this personal Mille Miglia account in 1957. It originally appeared in the June and July 1986 issues of Road & Track and is published here for only the second time. He died in 1988.

The editor and members of the AROSC would like to thank Mrs. Henry Manney III and Henry Manney IV for their generosity in allowing us to reprint this article. We are grateful to be able to share this in print once again.

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“Well,” I thought as I sat on the curb with my feet in the gutter watching the Ferrari team go by on their way to collect the first five places in the 1957 Mille Miglia, “this is a helluva note.” My Giulietta’s component parts were spread thinly but widely over the floor of the Alfa Romeo agency in L’Aquila, my co-driver was moodily chain-smoking Gauloises, and I, after several hours of being mortally terrified while said co-driver slid broadside through the Italian night at umpteen miles per hour, was hors de combat without having hardly snapped a shift in anger. What had I done to deserve this? Just listen.

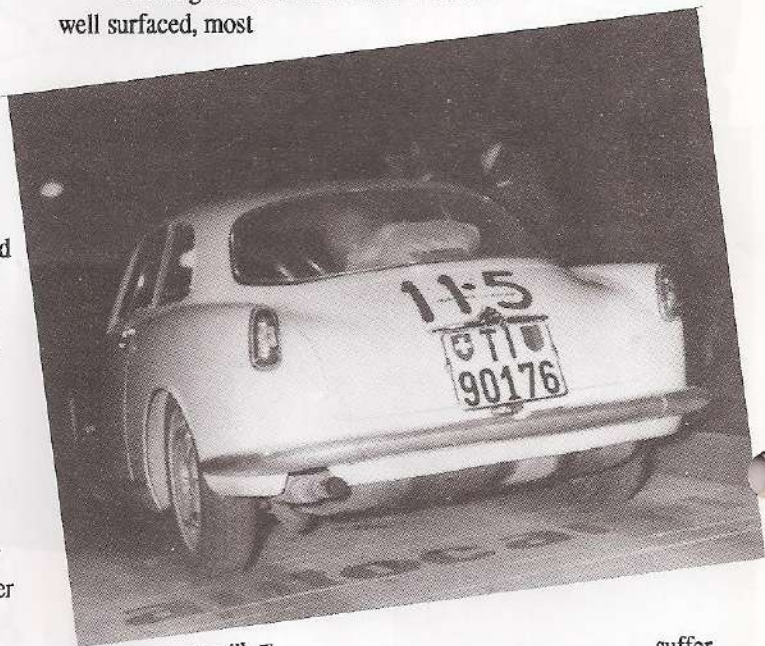
The year before, with a 250-lb co-driver, I had planned to do the Mille Miglia in a Dyna Panhard sedan that I owned. Looking back on the subsequent history of this unsanitary vehicle, I can only assume that Providence was watching over me when difficulties over the competition licenses became insurmountable and we could not start. When March came around this year and the entry blanks appeared, I had something a little more suitable for the job, to wit, an Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint Veloce.

This little gem was nicely broken in and I was used to it and it to me. I knew by this time that it had no nasty little tricks whatsoever and if inadvertently stuffed into a corner too fast could be relied on not to commit any heel-clicking shenanigans at the rear; all one had to do was go light on the steering and heavy on the throttle. All I was worried about was rain, as the windshield wipers, for some inscrutable Eytalian reason, are incapable of cleaning the glass well enough to enable one to drive over 40 mph. Nothing I have tried, from new blades to Kirsch in the squirt bottle, had improved this in the least. Bearing in mind the difficulties from 1956, I had thoughtfully prepared myself by taking out both entrant’s and competitor’s FIA licenses with the Swiss Automobile Club. Therefore, when the regs arrived (and after I had found somebody who could read Italian to decipher them), I tore down to the bank, got a check for 40,000 lire (about \$64) and sent the whole shebang off to the head office of the ACS in Berne. They, in turn, checked my driving record for squirreldom and, satisfied, “visaed” the blank and forwarded it to the Automobile Club of Brescia, the organizers of the Mille Miglia.

From then on one just sat and chewed one’s nails until notified, as this year the entries were limited to 300.

If the Editor will hold still for it, perhaps a short description of the race would be in order for those who only have read the highly colored accounts in the dailies. The last survivor of the great town-to-town races that developed the automobile from a costly, fragile plaything into a bigger, more expensive and scarier plaything, it carries all shapes and sizes of vehicles a good thousand miles around Italy on normal everyday highways.

Although some stretches are wide and well surfaced, most



Giulietta with pillow

suffer from a combination of old age, lack of maintenance and extreme narrowness due to the reluctance of the Italian peasant to give up any more of his farmland than absolutely necessary. In a good portion of the asphalt highway, the gravel has long since subsided to the bottom, thus leaving a black, polished surface that can catch you out even when dry; when soaked, besides affording a convenient mirror to read racing numbers in, it is slick enough to send you waltzing on a mere downshift.

The routes themselves appear to have been laid down directly on top of the old Roman ones (or lacking that, a cow path). This policy paid dividends in the Po valley, where the Via Emilia is ruler-straight, but in the mountains one is reminded of the military nature of the original track as it runs along the ridges, ascending and descending in switchbacks engineered by mule train.

With the advent of the more rapid wheeled traffic, the local Nuvolaris, following a custom that has persisted to this day, would depart from the correct route while racing each other and descend with depressing regularity into the fettuccine field below. The farmers, not appreciating this unscheduled plowing, complained to the proper authorities; the bureaucrats appreciated the problem but they

Obviously could not afford to build a concrete wall along both sides of every road in Italy. Appealing to the sporting sense of the lottery-loving Italians, therefore, they caused to be set out a series of concrete bollards, each about 2 ft high and 1 ft thick, dotted along the shoulder at intervals (2.75 times the wheelbase of a Fiat Balilla) and rooted deeply enough to arrest the headlong flight of the most exuberant Mouse. There being a chance both ways, the sports were more or less satisfied.

The odds being uneven on some of the interesting corners, though, because it was easier to avoid these objects, the road people put up sort of a running guardrail made, it is reputed, out of old Re Umberto olive oil cans. This turned out to be rather springy, and in cases where a triple S-bend was found, wild and unsubstantiated tales have been heard of times when the highway seemed to be littered with squashed olives and wagers were seen being taken on the number of caroms, etc. Many other citizens, tired of Tom and Jerry cartoon noises in the middle of the night, simply put up a big dry-stone wall and let it go at that. But I digress.

The race starts at Brescia in northern Italy, continues over roads closed for the occasion through Verona to Padua, and there turns south to Ferrara, Ravenna, Forli, Rimini, and down the long Adriatic straights to Pescara. From this point one turns inland in the direction of Rome, detouring by L'Aquila and Rieti the better to utilize the Abruzzi mountains. From the focal point of Rome, the boys head north through Viterbo, over the Radicofani to Siena and Florence, then over the Futa and Raticosa passes to Bologna.

The stretch from Rome to Bologna seems one constant wiggle; by comparison, from Bologna to Piacenza, Cremona, Mantua and Brescia is largely straight, with some section-line turns and bypasses around certain towns to break the monotony. The racers go right through most villages, where they naturally attract great crowds; even on the open road, though, the farmers drop everything and come to watch. Since it is inevitable that access roads are often blocked, gifts of vegetables and fruit are sometimes offered to the drivers in the more remote sections; these are awkward to refuse gracefully.

As the Giulietta was showing signs of lassitude compared with others around here, a valve job and general tuneup seemed to be in order. Second gear was beginning to grit its teeth a little after 15,000 miles of mountain driving so its synchromesh was replaced and the clutch was relined, more as insurance than anything else. The shocks were also replaced although they would not have been just yet, for touring. The addition of a pair of large and healthy Lucas driving lights completed the vetting; if it had been entirely up to me I would have fitted landing lights off one of our larger members. As far as I am concerned, there is no such thing as seeing too well at night but then some form of penalty would have to be paid in the form of a trailer full of batteries or a generator occupying the entire engine compartment.

On an impulse I looked up the past performance times on Giuliettas and the fast boys were getting around in 12 hours and something. Being rather a rabbit I figured on 13 ditto and mebbe if the crick rose, 14. This is a helluva long time to drive by yourself at speed and, as a previous reconnaissance had showed, there were precious few places where you could lose concentration and get away with it. Furthermore what about eating, drinking and, er, necessary bodily functions? Not that I need my hand held but it is always easier to stop if two people have a horrible urge whereas if you are by yourself it is sometimes difficult to find justification. With all this in mind I sent off feelers to simpatico types who, I felt, had the necessary qualifications of sanity and enthusiasm; unfortunately, either I got no answer at all or polite refusals, these last obviously concealing mortal fear for the life.

Now, there are two logical ways to drive the Mille Miglia and survive, both of which add up to taking it easy. You can rely on your abundant talent and go Jack-the-Bear the whole way and you may even win; chances are, though, that mechanical ennui will set in or you will depart through the decor. The wise ones practice for a few years, get the feel of the thing, and then go moderately fast and wait for the enthusiastic opposition to blow up. The rank-and-file like myself simply treat it like a fast 1000-mile tour of Italy, made easier by the lack of opposing traffic and the incredible collection of junk that clutters up Italian roads, hope to enjoy ourselves, and keep inside the time limit. Very few people actually hurry . . . at least not for long.

With this in mind I prevailed upon Robert Jenny, garage owner and sometime champion of Switzerland in a sports category, to come along as he had never done it but seemed to have a rational attitude about the whole business.

The Thursday before the race I set out in Giulietta, laden with spare parts, plastic water bottles, a small jerrican, and the indispensable brain basin. Approaching Brescia along the autostrada, lots of special and not-so-special equipment was to be seen already bearing numbers and darting among the normal traffic like the brighter sort of tropical fish. Brescia was en fete with all manner of colorful advertising banners strung over the streets plugging oil and gas; the song of the Supercortemaggiore, that peculiarly Italian 6-legged beastie, was heard in the land, as his black-and-yellow form seemed everywhere.

All the larger gas stations seemed to be preempted by various scuderie as a gathering and replenishing point for their member cars; which, in turn, drew vast crowds of yearning Italians to spectate and discuss. As it was about 5:00 p.m., I had worried about making scrutineering in time, was it severe, etc . . . I needn't have stewed at all. The Piazza Vittoria, in front of the Automobile Club of Brescia, was seething with masses of people and cars, lined with the arrowed beach umbrellas of the officials and dominated by the colossal scoreboard. Attached to every available surface were flags, signs and, just

to remind you of your historical insignificance, large plaques bearing the names of former winners.

I was directed by an impassive cop in his bluebell helmet into an apparently solid mass of people; a tentative peep on the horn produced, at first, little result. With the second, several Carabinieri sprang into action with shouts and vilifications; the milling crowd parted like the Red Sea and slowly I drove down an avenue of snow fencing to where several people expectantly stood waiting. I sprang out, brandishing the documents requested by the club, but nobody took the least notice except a smarmy young lady who requested me to Sign Here. I did so, assuming it to be something official, but then I was requested sweetly to hand over 3500 lire . . . for what? . . . pictures, no less. They would document my progress through "stamping," start and finish for this measly sum; did the Signor wish? The Signor didn't as he had enough things to worry about and besides he had no Italian money with him. Curling her rather prominent mustache, she withdrew, just as I was being accosted by an enormous man from Esso in a blue Pirelli suit to sign up with him for the race.

Right now I would like to point out that not only the fuel in this race is not free but, to use an Irishism, you have to buy it. Obviously you cannot stop at any old gas station to fill up as there is no telling how many unauthorized substances would find their way into the tanks, so there are refueling pits at certain designated cities only. To buy Italian premium gas at the normal price (around \$1.00/gal.) would break even Ferrari, so the contestants are allowed to purchase vouchers at about 30 percent off; thus you haggle your best deal with the Shell man, for instance, and after taking the money he hands over vouchers that you give to the stations en route. He also donates a decal for the car's side window to identify you to your refueler so, presumably, they won't waste time sluicing gas into an "Esso" car and have to suck it all out again. Robert had worked a shiny deal with the Shell people for free gas and oil for the Giulietta; bearing in mind the possibility of their advertising my success at the speeds I generally go versus the certain consumption of 70¢/gal. gas at racing speeds for a thousand miles . . . well, they could even use my picksha.

Fluffing off M. Esso, I almost tripped over a latter-day Giotto who was slopping large black numbers on the side of my nice white Veloce. One hundred and fifteen, huh? Migawd, that means we leave at 1:15 in the morning, ghastly hour to commence racing. Better check those lights.

From there I was waved around in a U through howling mobs of small autograph fiends into the other lane of snow fence. There the important officials preside under their beach umbrellas with the Mille Miglia arrow motif that is seen all around the course. The scrutineering, mechanically, would make a cow laugh; busy little men just look underneath to see nothing is falling off and then put little seals on here and there to make sure one doesn't switch engines en route.

On the paper side, I had to produce my entrant's license (FIA ACS), my driver's license (ditto), the pink slip for the car, the carnet de passage, my acceptance slip from the AC Brescia and certificate of insurance. Normal I had already, but this year they wanted all foreign competitors to carry third party for the benefit of the Great Italian multitude (Italian drivers take it out with their license). This little item set me back a fancy 70,000 lire, which, at 625 to the dollar, gets on toward expensive. Bookwork done, they handed all my papers back to me with one hand, shook my paw with the other, meantime the beautiful young lady interpreter (furnished by the club) was inserting the red-and-gold Mille Miglia pin in my buttonhole. That bijou and a fiber disk, which got punched at Rome and Bologna, wired to the steering column, were the only signs that I was A HERO.

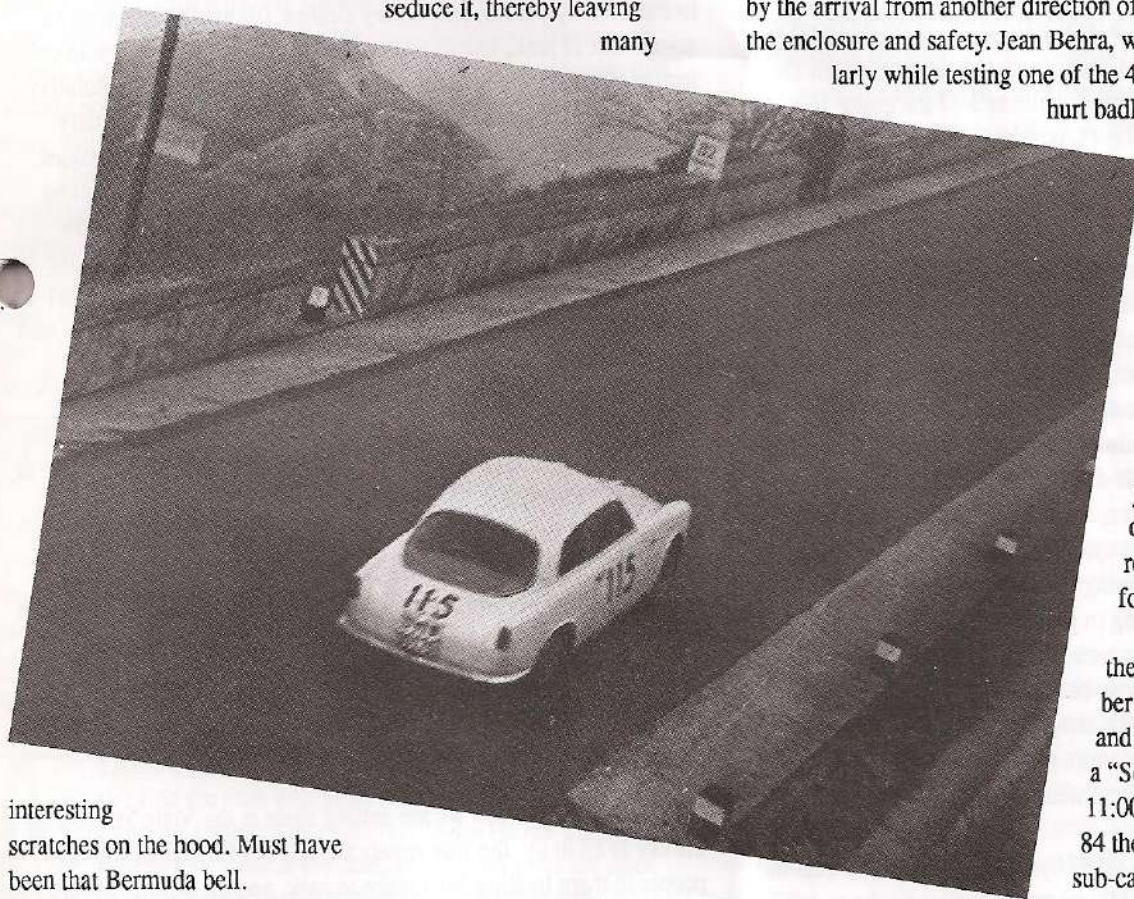
And here I was to all the small boys and girls armed with autograph books who milled outside of the scrutineering area. They swarmed all around the Giulietta like drones around the Queen bee as we trickled slowly along hunting for a parking place; noses on the windows, noses on the windshield, noses everywhere. Place found, we stop; noses immediately change to round eyes brown eyes pleading eyes and hands with grubby books. The pecking order is fairly definite; those with ballpoint pens get to come before pencils, who get their turn before the urchins who have to borrow somebody else's pencil. We sit a while to sweat them out but they roost there like screech owls and watch me unwinkingly. If a window is opened even a crack, many arms are thrust in carrying notebooks and pleading voices ask for "uno solo" and with a shy smile, "I won't tell anybody"; laughable, as heads are under the speaker's arms and chins resting on shoulders. I don't like the bit as I am mighty small beer but fortunately I am saved; a mighty banging, popping and sounds of lions caught in a threshing machine herald arrival of a mixed bag of Ferrari and Osca. My tormentors are gone in a flash and quickly so am I.

Walking around, I see some of the competition in my class and wonder just how elastic Grand Turismo is and whatever did they do to the cars that run modified? Starting shortly before mine is a Zagato-bodied Giulietta, a beautiful thing about 3 in. lower and with lowered nose and double-bubble roof, a shape that gives another 10 mph without touching the engine. Not only that, it's lighter. Another SV has a fiberglass false nose on it to give better penetration and is festooned with windshield wipers. A beige one has the bumpers removed and little aluminum plates fitted to the holes left in the body; still another a veritable Christmas tree of lights. Well, that's the way the ball bounces.

Some of the other classes are fun: It's a riot watching the open sports cars like the Stanguellinis and Oscas put up their "tops." Full fashioned to mold around the headrest and incorporating a piece of the windshield, they remind you of nothing so much as the white duck snoods complete with ears and ball fringe worn by the horses that pull tourist fiacres in Monte Carlo.

One of the 1100 Oscas has mag wheels and an immense searchlight on the front; it is a works car, No. 325, and is to be driven by Morolli. No. 336, an 1100 Stanguellini, goes the ultimate in weight saving and has little bent sheets of red-and-yellow plastic in its tailfin lights instead of heavy glass. A couple of the Ferrari GT coupes arrive with much rapping of pipes and arm-waving by the Carabinieri; lovely, lean and businesslike, their sharklike appearance is heightened by the "gills" behind the side windows.

Wandering around, you meet everybody interesting and those of the working press who are not barstool journalists. I see Jesse Alexander shepherding Ak Miller around and through his Roi-Tan the good Akton allows that the lead sled's running along pretty good although hopping about a lot at 130 mph. Burton Harrison of R&T shows up disgruntled, as a Swiss bull had become enamored of his 300SL on a narrow mountain road and attempted to seduce it, thereby leaving many



interesting scratches on the hood. Must have been that Bermuda bell.

Next day is occupied by tightening up hose clamps here and there and stowing tools, baling wire and string in odd corners of the trunk. We run down to the Alfa agency to get the seatbelts put in; the joint is jumping with Veloces and Millenove Sprints getting everything from last-minute screwdriver-engineering to a new gearbox.

Because we are proudly bearing numbers, in a shake three mechanics are produced and inside of 20 minutes the belts are in. How much? The Dottore of Motore seems surprised; no charge, no

charge. Naturally we leave something for vino anyway, thinking it's too bad we didn't need something expensive.

Outside, Brescia is really boiling, with those of the populace who are not gaping on the corners out whizzing around the streets. As a "racer," we are continually getting "choosed-off" by Seicento Fiats and their smaller brethren. We also see very unsanitary old Mice with loving-hands-at-home bodywork and counterfeit racing numbers being hurled around the squares by their grinning owners. What you have to do to get arrested I don't know, as I was passed at easily 70 mph down the main drag by a Lancia coupe; the cop on point duty simply made himself as small as possible and placidly watched it go by.

We visit scrutineering to be greeted by what sounds like a herd of elephants playing squat tag . . . the Maseratis have arrived and the crowd's enthusiasm knows no bounds. Utilizing the vacuum caused by the arrival from another direction of Stirling Moss, we slide into the enclosure and safety. Jean Behra, we find, has crashed spectacularly while testing one of the 4.5 Masers and although not hurt badly, cannot drive in the race.

Characteristically, when they pulled him out from under, his first action was to hunt for his wallet and his plastic car . . . what bad luck he has. Moss is talking softly into a tape recorder, calmly and confidently predicting 300 km/h from his Maserati. Quel snow job. Robert and I look at each other . . . better get a bigger rearview mirror. And so to bed for a little sleep.

Sleep? What's that? I lie there listening to the jabber jabber from the street outside and everybody rapping his pipes, a "Seicento" (Fiat 600) starts at 11:00 p.m. He is No. 1; until No. 84 the smaller cars, comprising the sub-categories Turismo Preparato, Turismo Speciale and Grand

Turismo of the 750- and 1000-cc classes and containing such basically production cars as Seicentos, Saab, Panhard, Renault 4CV and Dauphine, DB and the Zagato and Abarth versions of the Seicento, leave 30 seconds apart.

At 11:41 the first of the Millicentos (1100 Fiats) shoves off and from that time on the car number is also its departure time, the interval now being one minute. This rather curious method of numbering is so that the roadside spectator can tell how the respective

cars are doing; for instance, if you are watching a collection of 2.0-liter GTs like 259, 306, 311, and a Porsche 349 suddenly arrives among them, it's plain that Umberto Maglioli has got his foot well in it. As much as the 1100 class is the province of Fiats, the 1300 category is overwhelmingly Alfa Romeo; out of 58 runners (of which 47 are Veloces in the GT class), the only strangers are two Porsches and a Peugeot.

Directly after our class, at 1:33, come the biggest-hearted guys in the world, the 750 sports, who, if it rains, must conduct their 9000-rpm hip baths over 1000 miles of streaming road. Yet 28 Oscas, DBs, Renaults, Stanguellinis and other variations on a theme by Fiat are ready to risk it. Snapping at their heels, but not too closely, come the 1600 and 2000 touring and GT classes, bearing a mixed bag of Porsches, Citroen DS 19s, Alfa variations, Fiat V-8 variations, Triumphs and English family cars hot-rodged by the works.

10

Just to keep the 2-liters on their toes, one minute later, at 3:22, leaves the first of the Osca-dominated 1100 sports, which also contains Gregor Grant's Lotus, while at 3:47 the going 1500 sports is turned loose. This category, besides several brave MGs, boasts three Oscas (two of which, Isabelle Haskell and Giulio Cabianca, don't start), a couple of Alfa spiders, two private 550 Porsches plus the works RS of Maglioli, and two Maseratis.

After them is a motley collection of over-2-liter touring and Grand Touring in which nine Mercedes 300SLs are pitted against 10 Ferraris with Healey, Lancia and Salmson spear carriers. Directly behind, and not very much faster, is the 2-liter sports class, mostly Maserati and Ferrari; and at the very end, in order to have the maximum amount of light and the minimum amount of darkness, commencing with Ron Flockhart's D-Jag at 5:18 and finishing with Moss at 5:37, come the big-bores.

I lie there feeling as if my eyes are becoming bigger and bigger like saucers and my hair turning into feathers while it seems that both feet are slowly commencing to grow three toes, claws and wrap around the foot of the bed like a barn owl's. The hiss of the espresso machine in the bar of the hotel can be heard intermittently through the hooting of the television in the shop window across the way, which has a crowd of silent spectators plastered to the glass around it, transfixed by one of those horrid weepy wailey soap operas so beloved to the Italian.

In the middle of the tenth set of hysterics a busy voice cuts in without preliminary, much cackle-tube music replaces sobs as an obbligato, and I know without looking that the mothlike spectators have pressed closer to the lantern's flame and the big show is gonna begin. Wonder if I can see from here what's on the TV? Nothing doing . . . stay in bed till 12:00, you bum, and try and get some sleep. No sleep. Maybe I can snooze in the back while p'tit Robert takes the first stage in the dark.

Snooze, ha. Much martial music from across the way and I bet it is that famous Carabinieri band that, while casually strolling out of

step, plays stirring marches. Try not to march in step sometime. T'aint easy. Somebody with an extraordinarily loud marmitta blots out the band for a minute and when it clears up they are playing the National Anthem, which sounds as if it had been written by Verdi for Bellini with Rossini looking over his shoulder. Much gabbling and then Signor Pola in light blue sweater, shirt and tie, in his light blue Seicento, back deck propped open to let the hot air out, Supercortemaggiore mascot dangling from the roof, drives up importantly onto the brilliantly lighted ramp on the Corso Venezia, surrounded by grandstands, press, soldiers, TV and movie cameras, and most of the drivers leaving after him, and at promptly 11:00 p.m. is flagged off into the waiting night by Director Catagneto. Each car moves up a place. And here I lie flat on my back. Two hours and 15 minutes to go.

Robert pounds on my door at midnight. I struggle up, tell him to meet me by the car, pull on my clothes, fill my pockets with an assortment of junk, blunder around the room like a miller moth collecting the more obvious things, and finally stand there irresolutely trying to decide whether to take toothbrush and razor . . . finally decide against it as admitting defeat and possibly bad joss besides. Pull the bed covers all the way down . . . if all goes well, I will be back in the kip sometime this afternoon. This afternoon . . . how peculiar; after having been all the way to Rome and back. Fill the water bottle, get the good Swiss chocolate, get the Leica, gettadri-nofwater; yes dammit Robert I'm coming, they are not going to start the race without us. We can always start last and get a tow from Moss. That would be all I would need. Him and his 300 km/h.

Halfway down remember I have forgotten the pillow and blanket, go back to fetch them. On the way out again, looking like one of Genghis Khan's lesser-known household porters, I am wished "Bocca del Lupo" by the hotel lady and offered a glass of Chianti. No thanks . . . later, maybe. We load up the poor Giulietta with all our junk and two visitors, pay off the toothless parking lady, who not only has presumably guarded the heap while we slept but also has cleaned the windshield with some greasy garment, watch the departures a minute on the TV, and shove off for the start. Wished "Bocca del Lupo," of course, by Fairy Carabosse and her crowd of attendant urchins.

We can tell when we are getting close to the Viale Venezia as the sky is all lit up, the side streets are full of Millicentos with 12 people in them looking for a place to park, and the density of "flics" approaches that of ants in the jam jar. At once we are waved into the inner sanctum and, narrowly escaping running down shoals of bicyclists and blue-suited gentlemen draped over the sports bars of their rhingdings, make the turn into the brilliantly floodlighted paddock area. What the A.C.B. has actually done is rope off the entire street that leads, via N11, to Verona and Padua and to Venice.

At the further end of the tree-lined avenue, surrounded by grandstands, timing stands, press stands and VIP stands, with

Carabinieri, photographers, ice cream peddlers and friends of the organizers crowded around it, crouches the famous ramp. Lit from every side and the focus of all eyes, it reminds you of nothing so much as the "coupe maison" for a latter-day French Revolution. A shining line of cars, like a multicolored caterpillar, stretches back from the start into the feeding area, where harried officials and splendid Carabinieri in their Napoleon Bonaparte hats try to stir order into the bubbling mess.

We park the Giulietta on one side and disgorge its contents; while Robert goes off to look for the gasoline man to get the coupons, I commence to rearrange the junk in the trunk so it will not beat itself to death in the first five km. For once before a race I am not particularly nervous but all the same it is nice to keep busy. As it is, most of the runners just now going or about to go are Italian and the air is full of fluttering hands and irregular verbs as some last-minute snag is dealt with. We see one runner from the 2-liter sports class, which doesn't leave until 4:48, stalking around grimly with helmet and goggles already on; he is well on his way to a state that already possesses the 1 o'clock drivers, repeatedly flitting behind the trees, which thoughtfully line the street.

Having wedged everything, I walk up along the line of Alfas, which becomes Fiats and Lancias, including a couple of Zagato models, as I get toward the ramp. Although I am not wearing any gear, nobody bothers me . . . I guess the chucker-outers are far too busy. Much last-minute tuning is going on and some apparently normal Millicento is being warmed up on the jack. Everybody who has anything at all to do with a car is strutting about importantly, forever conscious of the ghostly ring of eyes watching from outside the barrier.

The variety in costumes is enormous; some wear the ubiquitous Pirelli suit, others faded blue trousers with elastic waistband and sports shirt, and one resplendent gentleman is togged out in white shirt, tie, lizard-striped suit with narrow pants and tight 3-button jacket, winklepickers with Cuban heels, and matching driving gloves. Really cool. I suppose he feels if he gets on his head it's nice to be dressed for the subsequent ceremonies.

After a spell, I return to the car to find Robert in a snit because he can't find the man who gives out the gas vouchers, so we jump into the Giulietta and whirl off to the Piazza Vittoria to find him; naturally he's out at the start, so back we go to the track. No sooner has Robert disappeared than a Shell man appears spouting Italian . . . I gather that he wants to go back to the Piazza again so he leaps in and off we go through the 3-ring circus that is Brescia. The flic is getting used to us by this time and stops all traffic as we roar by, for time is getting short. We go to the main Shell station and I am shown a list with our name and number on it; everything is okay and smiles and handshakes all around. One more time through the Porta Venezia on the rims with scooters flying for their lives in every direction and back into the paddock.

Suddenly we remember that we really should have a full tank to start; Robert only has a few million lire on him so out I go to find the nearest gas station; feeling like Promenade Percy himself, I scatter the guards at the paddock entrance once again and this time the Law just puts hands on hips and stares at me. The nearest station is a Supercortemaggiore but since I have got to pay for it anyway, what dif? The help erupts out of the door as I skid to a halt; they dump in 30 liters, wipe the windshield, check the oil and water, run around and kick the tires, make change, and have me out of there (each one not forgetting to shake hands) in less than a minute. They all wave as I leave.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, my bug-eyed co-driver is getting nervous and nervous as it is around 1 o'clock. He has the Alfa mechanics, laid on by the factory, all ready as I sweep in grandly. All around the car little men prostrate themselves to check the tires, the hood flies open as a long arm snakes in my window and yanks the release, whereupon one serious fella with a Da Vinci profile listens anxiously to the engine while another (apparently assuming everybody has just had a valve job) goes methodically around the head studs with a torque wrench. Back of the car shakes madly up and down as somebody checks the shocks, then the front. Eyes peer into all vital orifices, hoses are wiggled, ignition wires firmly pushed home by tender yet firm brown hands. The hood slams shut, they all stand back, eyes hooded, all wishing they could go. Thanks, fellas . . . weatherbeaten faces split in wide smiles, then they fall upon the next Giulietta as the commissario beckons us forward.

We push up and take our place in line, moving a little bit each minute as another Alfa roars off the ramp. A saturnine gentleman with an armband comes by with a flashlight, checking the tires for sufficient tread; yet another flashes a beam in at the disks wired to the steering column; apparently "ringers" are not unknown. It is extraordinary how patient and understanding all the officials have been, operating with "nods, and becks and wreathed smiles," rather than the customary firebreathing.

Between pushes we clamp on our crash hats and drape goggles around the neck in case the windshield breaks, after which there is nothing left to do but watch the antics of the Carabinieri, hatted, as is the custom in Italy, by the Too Small Chapeau Co. They are all convinced that they could go much faster than all these squares and are demonstrating with gestures exactly how they would show that Argentinean fella . . . what's his name? . . . the right way around the course.

To Be Continued

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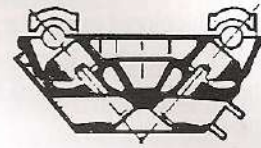
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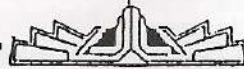
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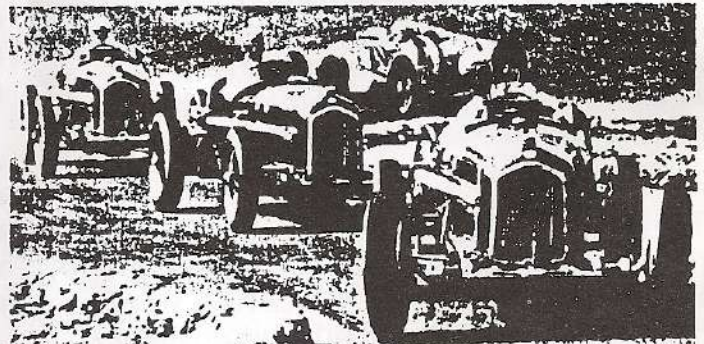


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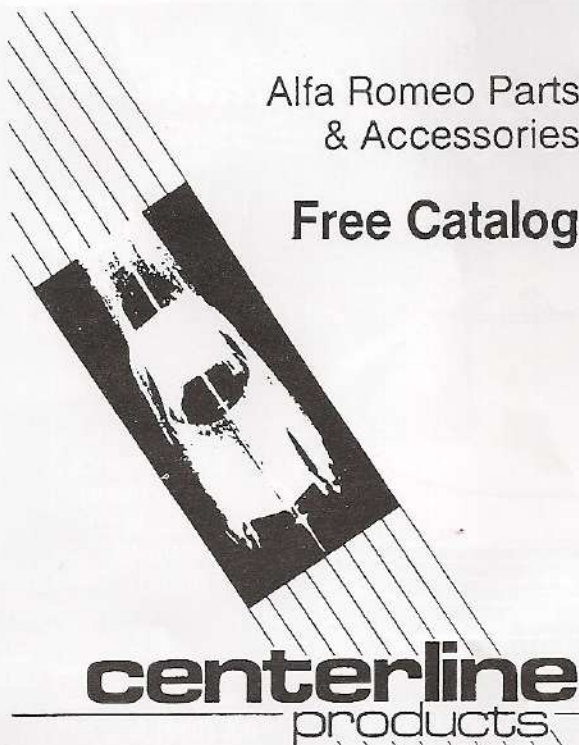


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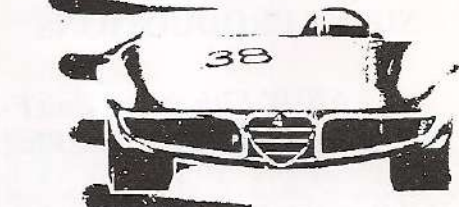
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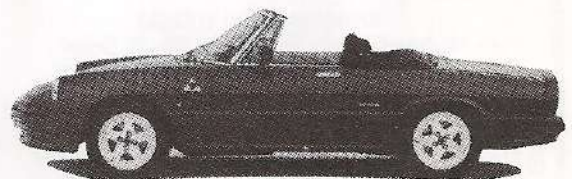
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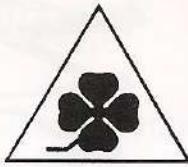
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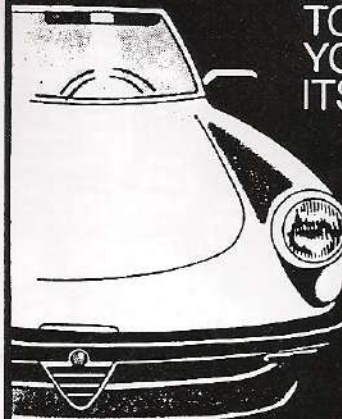
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