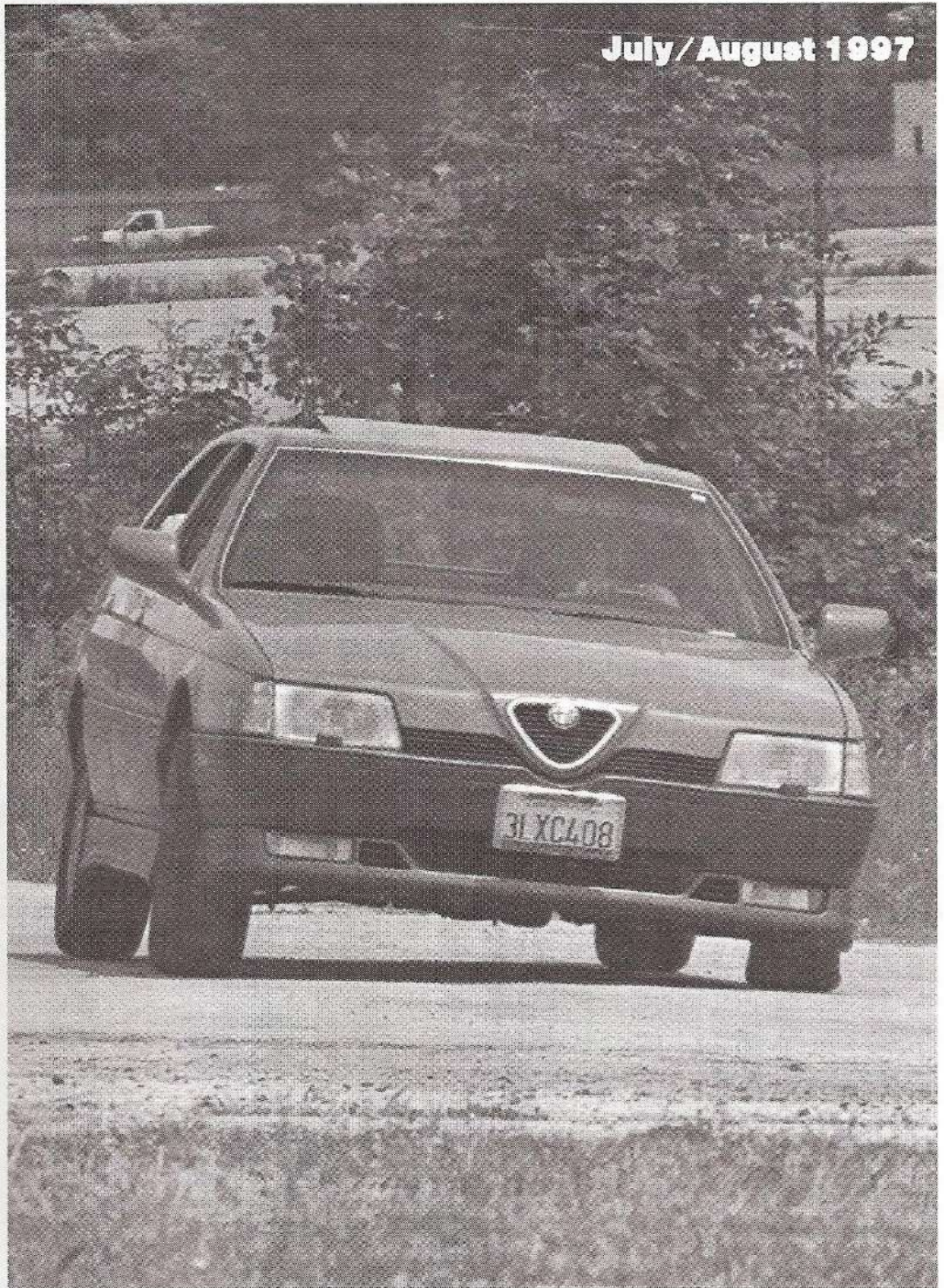


*Yaccioneada*

Newsletter of the  
**Alfa Romeo Owners  
of Southern California**

July / August 1997



**In This Issue: "It's A Mericle", Alfa History Meets CD-ROM, The AROC Grand National Convention, Letters to AROSC, and more ...**

## Meeting Information

General Meetings are held the last Friday of each month except November and December at 8:00pm in the Kaizuki Room at Veterans' Memorial Park in Culver City. In November the meeting will be held on the last Friday if there are two Fridays after Thanksgiving, otherwise it will be on the Friday prior to Thanksgiving. A holiday party is held in December in lieu of the General Meeting that month.

Numerous special meetings and events are also held throughout the year. Check the Calendar information on the outside back cover for an overview of the year and review *Alfacionada* for details of events planned for the near future.

## AROSC Mailing Address

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## Membership Information

See the inside back cover of *Alfacionada*.

## Important Deadline & Info!

Please send classified ads, articles, letters, and photographs to the Editor in time to arrive before the 20th of the month to permit publication in the next month's issue.

## General Information

*Alfacionada* is the monthly publication of the *Alfa Romeo Owners of Southern California*, a Chapter of the *Alfa Romeo Owners, Inc.*, a national non-profit organization of *Alfa* enthusiasts. Subscriptions to this newsletter are included as part of the annual AROSC membership fees.

## Classified Advertising

Classified (non-commercial) ads are available as a free service to members and for a nominal charge of \$10.00 per insertion to non-members. Ad content must be *Alfa*-related.

## Commercial Advertising Rates

Full page	\$500 per year
1/2 page	\$275 per year
1/4 page	\$150 per year
Business card	\$100 per year

## This Month's Cover

Phyllis Gaylard and her *Alfa 164* in action during the autocross at the 1997 AROC National Convention in Columbus, Ohio this June. It appears that Phyllis does not agree with those who say that the *164* is too big and heavy to drive with enthusiasm! Just for the record, Phyllis drove this car to the Convention from California, ran the Time Trial at Mid-Ohio Raceway as well as the autocross, competed in the Concours, and then drove the *Alfa 164* home to California.

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# AROSC Previews

*What to expect at coming events*

## **AROSC Driving School at the "Streets of Willow Springs" - 20 & 21 September**

Want extensive and expert training in car control of track time? Think that the AROSC Time 1 like fun, but you don't want to jump into that without preparation? Have we got a deal for you. Come to one of the best bargains in driver training you can find anywhere.

Not just for would-be and real racers, the AROSC Driver's School is the ideal way to learn how to handle your car in emergency highway situations in both wet and dry conditions.

For additional information and registration, call Steve Hamilton at (310) 214-5110.

## **AROSC General Meeting - 26 September**

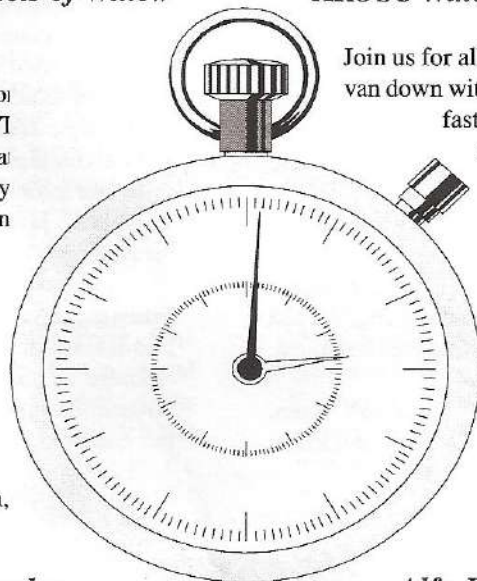
Come on down to the general meeting and see what you've been missing in the way of club activities. Along with the usual period for tech questions, "For Sale" announcements, etc., we'll have a special program. As always, the meeting time and location are located on the top of page 2 of *Alfacionada*.

## **AROSC Wine Tour '97 - 27 & 28 September**

Join us for all or part of a fun weekend in Temecula. Caravan down with other Alfisti, or meet us there. Enjoy breakfast, wine tasting, a picnic lunch, wine tasting, dinner, wine tasting, partying, and . . .

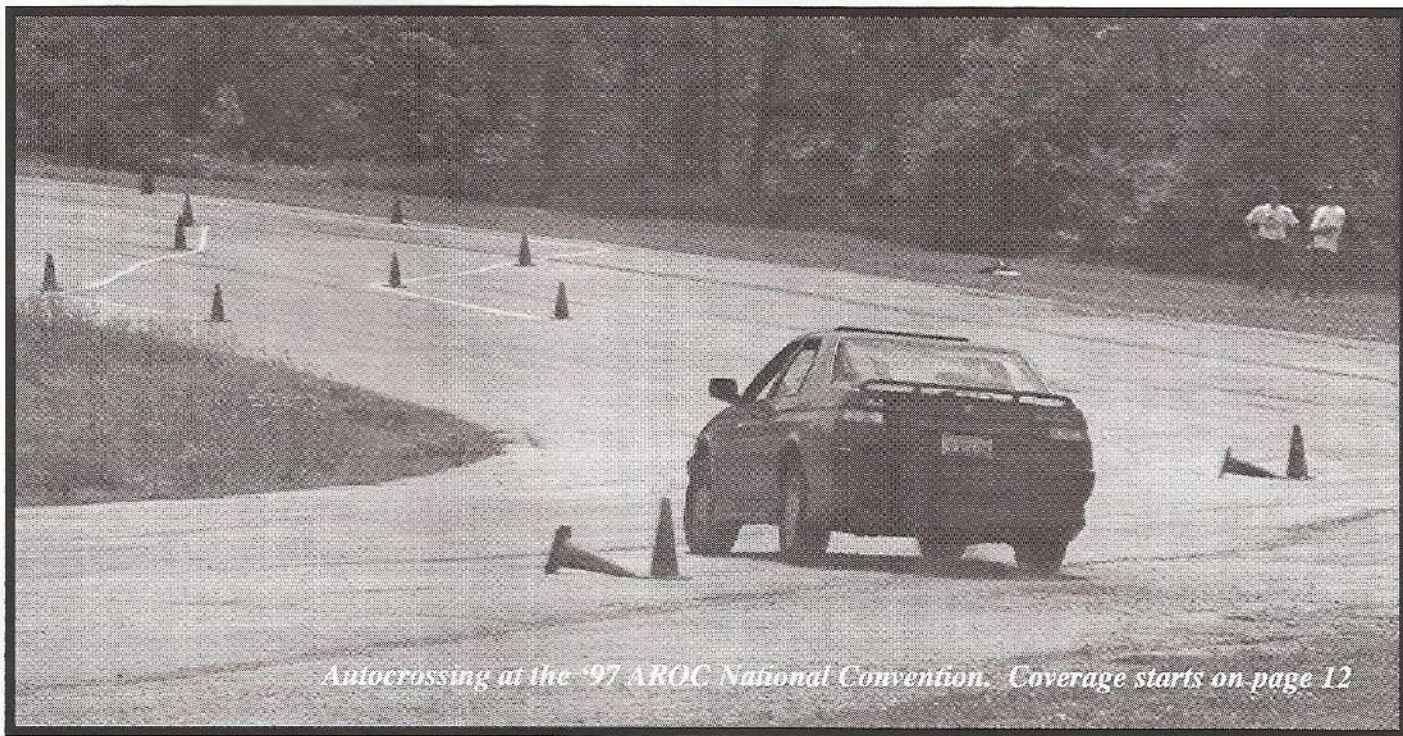
If you want the whole Enchilada, you can join the caravan down Friday night after the General Meeting and stay at the Fallbrook Country Inn. Next comes breakfast Saturday, a Winery Tour and Tasting at Filsinger Winery, a Picnic lunch at Mt. Palomar Winery, and more.

For additional information, call Paul and Mary Blankenship at (818) 883-0266.



## **Alfa-Porsche Challenge - 26 October**

Plan now to attend a very special vintage sportscar racing event at Willow Springs, held once each year. *Alfa* won last year; will history repeat this year?



*Autocrossing at the '97 AROC National Convention. Coverage starts on page 12*

# One for the Road

Three very different Alfa-related subjects

by Jay Negrin, AROSC President

Yes we had a meeting, the last Friday in June, like most other months. Almost as important as the subjects covered by our guest speaker was a small comment that many of us have heard, I would wager. We may have heard the words, but have we really listened to what was being said?

We started a discussion about driving school and the benefits to be derived therefrom. The talk ranged around a bit, and vintage racing ended up being the topic. What models were eligible, and what level of participation one could relate to were mentioned.

All seemed like a "normal" discussion for us "Alfa club" types, whoever "we" are. One of our newer – I think – members then chimed in with a question like, "What in the world are all you guys talking about? I don't often interrupt, but you all lost me a while ago!" I then realized that we – a majority of the members present – had done "IT" again.

"What is 'IT'?", I hear you asking. Very simple, but worth apologizing for. We, the knowledgeable and informed, assumed that everyone one else in the room was on our level. A corollary (isn't that a model of Toyota?) is that we assumed that everyone else was also on our level of interest. Bad form; and for that I do sincerely apologize.

I think that we all have to approach others in the club with a "kinder and gentler" attitude. Just because a member may be female doesn't mean she is a shy, delicate type who bought her car because it was cute. Ask Tess or April, whom I have only met through the Internet, courtesy of the *Alfa Digest*. They are both outspoken, willing to work on their own cars, and not above getting digs in on those who offend.

Conversely, don't bet that just because the member may be male that he is eager to get under the car and get dirty and greasy to find out what the unusual noise was. Ask your President or Vice-President about that. They may be interested in what makes it tick, and small jobs may be just fine, but when it comes to larger stuff that requires more than what I have (tools, work space, knowledge), then a mechanic's help is sought. Old adage, "You can't judge a book by its cover."

Item two: Rumors and unsubstantiated stories. "Alfa Romeo is coming back to North America." All right, who started this one? Again? Yes, it is something that most of us would like to see happen. The new models, especially the glamour hogs, all look especially delicious. The reports coming back from Europe say that they are as good looking as they perform on the road.

I'm the skeptic. I'll wait. I'll believe it when I see it/them. Fiat has left this country three or four times, depending on how you count. Fiat tried to catch the wave of small car madness in the fifties and sixties (correct me if I am wrong here.) and left the US when they couldn't compete against the might of Volkswagen and the combined French cars manufacturers. They came back in the late sixties and early seventies with the 124 and 128 series. These were just in time to catch the small car fever inspired by the Arab oil embargo.

When the oil crisis caused by the oil embargo or whatever ended, Fiat-Roosevelt couldn't support the marque well enough to compete with the Japanese. Exit stage right; end of Act Two. Somewhere in the middle or fringes of all that, they tried to bring the Lancia name back to our shores, with Fiat engined cars.

Obvious results. End of Act Three. Act Four ended after Fiat decided they would not compete in the lucrative near-luxury market, populated with a variety of BMW's, Lexus', Infinitis and myriad others, by abandoning the *Alfa Romeo 164*, and the entire marque at that point. The stage was once again deserted.

Sorry, but like I said, given Fiat's track record, I will wait for the cars to arrive on these shores before giving any credence to rumors. The cars may be great. The idea of driving them may be highly desirable. Multiple dealerships in major metropolitan areas may sound too good to be true. Until I see the new cars, be they 166's (164 replacements) or 156's (*Giuliettas*. Replacements for the aging 155) I will reserve judgement. (Please let me be proven wrong on this one.)

Item three: Club participation. Yeah, I know, you are all tired of hearing of this. This is not a diatribe. Those of you who cannot make it to meetings because of distance or time constraints. . . well, suffice to say, I understand. Those who are content to learn of our doings either via our newsletter, *Alfacionada*, or the *Alfa Owner* from National. . . well, that is your business, and I am not going to try to tell you how to manage your lives.

What I can say though, is, "Thanks" to the many people who are showing up more regularly to various meetings and events. Thanks also to those who have written and even complained of items in the newsletter which have not met your expectations or desires.

At least it lets me know that you are out there, and that we are not playing to an empty house. What this boils down to is that those who did not make it to the club's picnic-in-the-park on June 29th will have to guess how good is my world famous (at least in two countries) Chili.

**I then realized that  
we – a majority  
of the members  
present – had done  
"IT" again.**

# Alfa History Meets CD-ROM

*How well does a Marriage of Alfa Tradition and High-Tech Publishing work?*

by John Hertzman

A while back a small ad appeared in *Autoweek*: an eye-catching view of the cockpit of Jack Becronis' 6C 1500, as the come-on for a CD-ROM titled *ALFA ROMEO: VIEW FROM THE MOUTH OF THE DRAGON*, published by the Velocity Group, a new name to me. I am not a CD-ROM enthusiast, using the CD drive on my computer for little beyond loading software, but when a friend mentioned that he had a copy I couldn't resist having a look.

The name of S. Scott Callan is the common denominator of the bibliographic information associated with *VIEW*; Callan and Kip Crosby wrote it, Callan and John Kent took the photographs (other than the many from *Alfa Romeo's* archives), Callan and Tom Ellis developed "all technologies embedded" in the product, which is an appropriately chosen prototype volume for a projected Velocity Media Interactive Automotive Library. As a non-enthusiast for the CD medium I am not qualified to rank the effort among its technological peers, but I did find it an interesting addition to the range of *Alfa* histories available in print.

The core story is a fairly straightforward account of *Alfa* history from 1910 to the end of the Jano era in the late prewar period, with the main emphasis on competition history and particularly on the glory years of the late twenties; there is plenty of material left for a possible later second volume. Within the core story numerous subfiles are signaled by colored drop-shadows on key words- the names of all of the major players, the various successive car models, opposing cars from other manufacturers, major events, the socioeconomic contexts, and some relatively peripheral tangents.

The reader navigates through the text and enters the embedded subfiles by mouse-clicking on various invisible 'hot spots' on each page or on three icons- the 'V' Velocity logo, a *Quadrifoglio*, and an *Alfa* badge, which serve a variety of functions depending on context or on where-clicked. The subfiles range from brief mentions, selected illustrations and timed animation sequences, to fairly extensive stand-alone chapters.

At the end there is an interactive index of some one hundred and fifty personalities, cars, events and other topics arranged in chronological subsets; click on Brescia-Zust, or on the Italian

Financial Crisis, or on Senator Agnelli, and explore a corner you might not have expected, and might not meet elsewhere.

Minimum system requirements are a 486/50 CPU, 16 MB RAM, 75 MB free disk space, and a 2X CD-ROM drive, 800 x 600 SVGA monitor and card, and Windows 3.1 operating system. Even with Velocity's generous tech help it would not load on my computer- some conflict with one of my peripherals, evidently- but gave no problem on my wife's less encumbered machine or on our previous-generation spare.

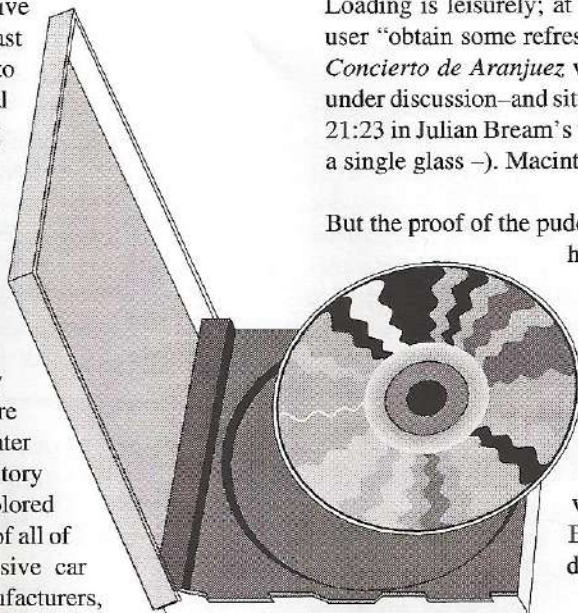
"Minimum" is pretty minimal; our obsolescent machines track the stated minimums except for having last year's medium-fast Pentium processors, and the combination was usable but a bit tedious. I expect that with a 1997 computer performance would be more brisk.

Loading is leisurely; at one point the instructions suggest the user "obtain some refreshment, put on some music-Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez* would be a good choice for the period under discussion-and sit back and relax-". (The *Concierto* times 21:23 in Julian Bream's version - so bring the bottle rather than a single glass -). Macintosh troglodytes need not apply; sorry.

But the proof of the pudding is in the viewing: how is it as *Alfa* history? Those who have seen me in action in the past know I am a picky, hypercritical, unforgiving, at times scathing, persecutor of perceived historical lapses. As history this is not completely without flaws in fact or in interpretation, whether real or imagined, but it stands up very well against anything short of the Borgeson/Cherrett/Hull/Fusi level - very decent.

Its greatest merit, in my eyes, is that the authors' view extends far beyond *Alfa* partisanship - they know what else was going on in the rest of the automotive world, and what was going on in the broader world beyond the automobile, two attributes somewhat lacking at times in enthusiasts' accounts.

This, then, is not yet a substitute for a five-foot shelf of *The Great Alfa Books*. And it is not convenient for dipping in the odd five minutes. But if you enjoy using your CD-ROM drive for entertainment and reference reading, and/or do not have a well-endowed *Alfa* history library already, this could be a worthy acquisition. The main automotive booksellers probably all have it, or can get it for you, or you can contact S. Scott Callan at <<http://www.gearshift.com>>.



# ALFANET

*This Issue: Web Sites for your Alfa*

by Rob Poetsch

## Ossi di Seppia: The Roundtail 1750 Veloce Page

<http://hem.passagen.se/veloce/>

Why do they call it a *Spider* anyway? According to Swedish *Alfisti*, the word *Spider* comes from the days of horse drawn vehicles, when a spider was a light two- or four-wheeled carriage. The Italians, on the other hand, say it sounds like "speeder." Whatever the case, when it comes to *Alfas*, it's *Spider* not *Spyder*. The National Federation of Bodymakers gathered in Milan and deemed it so in 1924. Besides, "y" wasn't part of the Italian alphabet at the time. This site is full of interesting anecdotes such as this, with an emphasis on the *Duetto*. It's a bit quirky to navigate, but you'll uncover great mechanical info, a register, parts sources and nice photos of the author's car.

## The Electronic GTV

<http://www.geocities.com/MotorCity/1806/105GTV.HTML>

This site was put together by New Zealander *Alfisti* Mark Battley and provides a good source of information for 105/115 *Alfas*. The author does a good job of demystifying the naming of the Bertone bodied coupes. Browse around and you'll find an online *GTV* register, a complete FAQ from a collection of notes off the Italian Car and *Alfa Romeo* Digests. The FAQ includes topics from gearboxes to gaskets. A helpful buyer's guide, compiled from magazines, articles and the author's experience, outlines typical trouble spots, rust being the hot topic here.

## The Alfa Romeo Montreal Home Page

<http://www.cern.ch/ITC/montreal.html>

Attention *Alfa* V8 lovers: bookmark this homepage now!

This site is big on the wow factor, not in terms of bells and whistles, just plain good information. It has to be one of the most complete *Alfa* web sites in cyberspace and must have taken years to compile all the information. If you're restoring a *Montreal* or are considering purchasing one, this site has everything you'll need. Includes detailed drawings and information on original equipment from seat belts to emblems to the exhaust system. Features lists of parts catalogs, technical notes, articles, service manuals. The lists and information goes on and on.

## Alfa Romeo GTV6 Web Site

<http://www.geocities.com/MotorCity/2075/alfagt6.htm>

Similar to the Electronic *GTV* homepage, the *GTV6* web site features an easy-to-navigate homepage with interesting bits of info. *Milano* owners will find relevant tech information on belt tensioner and water pump replacement, while first-time *GTV6*

buyers should check out the pre-purchase checklist. The site offers a good vendor list with links, as well as an Internet Registry and general *Alfa* links. The photo gallery is slow, but there are great photos of some of the cleanest *GTV6s* you'll see.

## The Alfa 75/Milano Resource

[http://reality.sgi.com/employees/sikand\\_mti/milano.html](http://reality.sgi.com/employees/sikand_mti/milano.html)

You won't find the history of *Alfa's* last rear wheel drive sedan here, but if you own a *n Milano*, you'll probably download every page of technical how-to's. For example, need to know how to remove your sunroof headliner? (if you don't now, you will eventually!) Tried of filling you back set with stuff because your trunk cable broke? Need to bleed you ABS brakes but don't know where to start? This is the place! I never thought I could rid my *Milano* of an obnoxious dash rattle, but this site had the answer. Thanks, Shiv!

## Alfa Romeo 164 Home Page

<http://www.geocities.com/MotorCity/4668/>

A very professionally designed site that almost appears to be an "official" *Alfa Romeo* site. Features complete articles, a Tech bulletin archive (covering timing belt inspection to power steering pumps), features, options and performance figures. By far the most enjoyable aspect of the *164* Home Page is the photo gallery, specifically the *164 ProCar*. For those of you who haven't seen this car, it's was a special project of Fiat USA R&D based on F1 technology including an *AlfaCorse* V10 in the rear seat. Wow!

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# GTV6 Transmission/Clutch Repair

## A Job Summary for Novice Mechanics

by Colin Verrilli - courtesy of Alfa Advocate, Mid-Atlantic Chapter, AROC

I recently replaced the clutch and synchros on my GTV6. Some people expressed interest in the procedure and outcome, so here's a rundown, with some tips.

*Note: I am not a professional mechanic. I don't guarantee that any of this is the correct way to perform the job, but it's worked for me. Twice. Use what you want and ignore the rest.*

*Note 2: The Milano/75 is essentially the same.*

### Removing the clutch and transmission

I did the job in my driveway with jacks and jackstands. If you have a lift, the procedure will be slightly different.

- \* Jack up rear of car on DeDion tube.
- \* Place jackstands (heavy duty) under tube right near the wheels. This will allow the DeDion triangle to pivot, allowing removal of the clutch and trans.
- \* Remove rear and center muffler sections. This could be a pain. I soaked the center/front junction with liquid wrench for a while. Then I placed a block of wood above the cat so that the front piece was fairly fixed. This allowed me to work the center section loose by moving it up/down/sideways while pulling.
- \* Remove the clutch slave. Be careful not to let the piston fall out of the cylinder. Have a clamp ready to hold it in.
- \* Remove the wires for the reverse switch and the speedo.
- \* Unbolt the rear donut. You may be able to leave the 3 bolts that attach it to the driveshaft (just remove those that attach it to the clutch spider. Mine was rusted on to the clutch spider, so I ended up removing all six bolts.
- \* Unbolt the 2 bolts connecting the shift connecting rod, let loose.

*Note: Mine's an '84, so it has the simple linkage. There are more bolts if you're post-'84.*

- \* Unbolt the six bolts from the rear crossmember.
- \* Jack up on the rear of the DeDion, the trans should lower. The donut should separate from the clutch. If it's not freeing up, remove all bolts from the donut (if you haven't already).

- \* Put another jack under the trans to support it. Locate it behind the flange (you'll be removing this).
- \* Unbolt the trans mounts from the trans (leave attached to the crossmember).
- \* Unbolt the crossmember from the dedion. Remove the crossmember.
- \* Jack up the rear jack, lower the front jack so that the clutch housing will fit through the opening. Don't overdo it - you could create too much stress on the Watts linkage.
- \* Remove the shift rod connection piece from the splined shaft.
- \* Unbolt the 4 bolts holding the clutch housing to the trans case.
- \* Pull out the clutch. You may have to adjust the jacks.
- \* Put a oil pan under the trans.
- \* Unbolt all the bolts connecting the trans to the differential. Oil will pour out.
- \* Remove the front case, leaving the gears and flange there. Pick up the reverse gear idler that will fall out.
- \* Remove the gears and flange section...carefully. It's heavy.
- \* Let the DeDion return to it's original position, to relieve stress on the Watts linkage.

### Clutch Replacement

- \* The whole clutch is replaced as a unit.
- \* Unbolt the spider (3-pronged thing). This can be a pain. First, you need the right sized socket (around 32mm, I forget exactly). Then you need to hold the spider while you loosen. I stuck two of the bolts in and held them in place with a bar.
- \* Pull the spider with a 3-prong gear puller.
- \* The clutch will pull out of the case.
- \* Check the 2 bearings in the case for "roughness". Not a bad idea to replace anyway (about \$16 each). I replaced the rear one that felt marginal.
- \* To remove the rear bearing, you have to remove 2 outside-thread locknuts, which is a pain. I didn't have a tool to do

this, so I used an air-chisel with a stubby end on it to loosen it. Then the bearing needs to be pressed or hammered out (I hammered since I had a new one).

- \* The front bearing has a lock-clip holding it in, but it falls out from the back end, along with a spacer.
- \* Replace the rear bearing by using the old one as a protector and hammering carefully around the edges a little one each side at a time.
- \* Replace the locknuts.
- \* Check the boot and bushing around the shifter shaft. Mine was OK.
- \* Put in the new clutch, greasing the shaft well, including the splines.
- \* Reassemble the spider along with the dust shield. Tighten the nut.
- \* Grease the clutch fork pivot. Grease the throwout sleeve-thing.

#### Synchro Replacement

This is the fun part. A large work surface is needed - one large enough to lay out the parts in sequential order. I ordered 4 synchro rings and 2 synchro sleeves ahead of time with the assumption that this was the minimum that I would replace.

Some definitions for this discussion, (using terms in the manual):

*Pinion shaft:* The shaft with the pinion linking to the differential

*Main shaft:* The input shaft from the clutch

I've heard the term "*layshaft*", but I'm not sure which one that is.

- \* Study the transmission gears. Understand how it works. Know which is 1st, 2nd gear, etc.
- \* Remove the locking balls for the shift forks. There are 3 square nuts on the flange. Remove these. Watch for falling marbles. There will be one ball in each hole.
- \* Disconnect the shift forks. Pull out the rods starting with 5th gear then 3/4 then 1/2. Retrieve the interlock pins from the holes in the flange between the shafts.
- \* Engage two gears at once to lock the shafts.
- \* Clear the pinched metal from the main and pinion shaft nuts. I used a punch.
- \* Remove the main shaft nut. This requires a large box-end wrench which I was lucky enough to have (30mm, I think).

- \* The next step can be enough to discourage you. Remove the pinion shaft nut. This requires a 1 7/16 deep socket...a rare find. I ended up borrowing the special *Alfa* tool from Peter Krause (local mechanic). I've heard that farm supply place might have them. It's also on there tight.
- \* Remove the gears on the nut side of the pinion and main shafts. Keep in order on the bench.
- \* Remove the pinion shaft from the flange. Continue removing the gears from the shaft. Careful not to drop the needle bearings. Also, be careful to note the placement of the two spacers.
- \* Check bearings for obvious wear. I didn't replace any of mine, but it might be a good idea if you have the time and money.
- \* Locate the 1st gear synchro. Remove the circlip retaining the synchro ring. Remove the ring. Note the position of the "quadrants". The one for 1st gear is different than the rest. It's asymmetrical, and it needs to get back together the same way it comes out. Clean the parts. Reassemble with new synchro ring.
- \* Replace 1st gear assembly on the pinion shaft, cleaning parts and coating surfaces with engine assembly lube. Use new synchro sleeve.
- \* Do the same with 2nd, 3rd, 4th gear synchros. These have symmetrical quadrant pieces. Careful about putting the spacers on the pinion shaft when reassembling (one between 2nd and 3rd and one between 4th and the flange race).
- \* Refit the pinion shaft into the flange.
- \* Do the 5th gear syncho if you have a new one. I did not. I just reversed the synchro sleeve when re-assembling, since the reverse gear side is not used.
- \* Refit the 5th gear and reverse gears to the pinion shaft. Also refit the gears to the main shaft. You kinda have to do these together to make them mesh.
- \* Put the nuts on, but not real tight. Check that the gears are aligned and meshing properly. Check that the synchros slide properly (will require some force). Tighten nuts.
- \* Reassemble shifter forks in reverse order. Careful with the interlock pins and the detent balls. Clean and lube parts.

At this time it's probably a good idea to replace the seals around



the main shaft and the shift rod where they enter the transmission case. See the "Don't Save the Seals" article for information.

### Refitting Clutch and Transmission

This is a little harder than removal, because you have to get everything to lined up right.

- \* Clean up all the casing surfaces. I used brake cleaner and a rag for most of it. A plastic scraper may help with the tough spots. The aluminum is easy to damage, so be careful if you use metal scrapers.

\* Put the gearbox in neutral.

- \* Give the gears a final lookover for dirt. Clean with brake cleaner, shoot with compressed air.

- \* Put a thin bead of casing sealer on the casing still in the car. I used a Loc-tite product ( 518, I think. It's red).

- \* Lower the DeDion back down using the rear jack.

- \* Before refitting the transmission, I ensured that the crossmember bolts would screw in with minimal torque (i.e., by hand). I had to loosen a couple with a tap. This helps a lot later when you're trying to line up the crossmember.

- \* Fit the gear shafts back into the rear gearbox section. It'll take some wiggling, turning of the input shaft to get it to slide into place. You shouldn't have to force anything...it'll just slide. It's not easy with all that weight though two people might help. You may want to somehow clamp the flange temporarily while you get the front case into place. The flange kept sliding back for me.

\*Put a bead of casing sealer on the front case half.

- \* Have the reverse idler gear ready under the car. Slide the front case over the shafts, but don't fit all the way on.
- \* Be sure that the fork for 5th, reverse is fitted into the synchro sleeve. Position the idler gear so that it fits into position on the fork extension. Hold there as you slide on the case. Hold the idler so that it slides onto its shaft extending from the front case. Double check this after sliding the cases to within 3/4" from each other. Use a flashlight to peek in. You don't

want to have to take it all apart to fix this.

- \* Slide the case together, bolt. Don't forget the clutch slave mount.
- \* Finally, slide on the clutch. Fix with 4 bolts.
- \* Attach the shift shaft piece on the spline with the single bolt.
- \* Attach the crossmember to the DeDion. Be sure to include the washer.
- \* Adjust jacks so that the trans mounts are aligned with the holes in the trans. Bolt crossmember to trans.
- \* At this point I switched the position of the jackstands to underneath the rear jack points. This frees the DeDion to ease alignment of the crossmember with the six holes in the chassis. However you perform this move, don't put too much force on the transmission mounts; i.e., support the DeDion by the crossmember, not the transmission if applying car weight to this support.
- \* Try out the crossmember bolts in the bolts in the chassis. Clean them off if necessary so that they go in with just your fingers (you'll see why below).
- \* Raise the crossmember with the front jack (lowering rear jack if necessary). As you do this, line up the driveshaft with the spider yolk on the clutch. I had the donut already attached to the driveshaft with 3 bolts (not tight). Be sure the bearing isn't cocked when you do this.
- \* Align the six holes in the crossmember with the six in the chassis. Put spacers in position. Put in bolts using fingers only. These are easy to strip! You may have to fiddle quite a bit to get them aligned properly. Once you get all the bolts started, tighten them down.
- \* Put bolts in the donut. Careful of clearance problems between the nuts and the driveshaft tunnel (chassis). I faced the nut heads away from the donut. Washers should go by the nuts. Also, my bolts were two different lengths. This is probably a mistake, but I was sure to use 3 equal length bolts all on the same side (front/back) for balance reasons.
- \* Attach the shift linkage.
- \* Replace the clutch slave. Grease the ends of the rod. You'll have to reach in with your fingers and line up the flat portion of the throwout slider-thing. This may take a while to get it lined up so that the fork fits in right.
- \* Hook up the reverse light wires and the speedo sensor wires.
- \* Fill the trans with gear oil. I used Castrol 80w90 initially. After a couple of hundred miles, I'll change to Redline 80w90. The Castrol will collect the dirt residue and also wear in the synchros a bit.

- \* Refit the exhaust. You'll probably want to clean the rust off first and lube the sliding fittings with lithium grease. You might need new clamps if they were on for a while.

#### Test Drive

This is where you get your reward (hopefully).

- \* First try the shift action. Try to get it into all gears. It may be tough with no oil. Mine went in with a little pressure and rocking.
- \* Be sure that the clutch is fairly firm. You may need to bleed if the piston came out of the slave. Be sure that there are no squeaks when depressing the clutch. If so, you didn't grease the throw-out sleeve. Get some spray grease and go to it.
- \* Start 'er up. Feel for driveshaft vibrations. Listen for driveshaft clearance problems. Listen for gearbox clatter.
- \* Try engaging 1st. Inch forward with clutch.
- \* Try reverse.
- \* Go out for a drive and enjoy!

Expect the synchros to be a bit "stiff" for a while, especially 2nd. They'll get easier after a few hundred miles.

## It's a Mericle!

(No, that's not a spelling error.)

We recently received the following message from local author, member, and AROSC Director, Dave Mericle. Dave writes:

Name: Paul Alexander Mericle

DOB: 7/7/97 1632 hours

Vital Stats:

- 8lbs.4ozs.
- 21 inches long
- 1 min. APGAR=9
- 5 min. APGAR=10.

He is a very strong little guy - and looks like his dad. Heaven help him if he's already contracted the *Alfa* virus since we brought him home to *Alfa Pacifica Spa*.

Our congratulations to Dave and his wife for their latest contribution to the world of *Alfa* enthusiasts.

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# Don't Save The Seals

## GTV6 Transmission Repair - Chapter 2

by Colin Verrilli - courtesy of Alfa Advocate, Mid-Atlantic Chapter, AROC

Well, the transaxle is out of my GTV6 again. This time the whole thing. Since rebuilding the gearbox and replacing the clutch a couple months ago, I was noticing a smell of transmission fluid (Redline stinks!). I traced the leak to two places:

- \* One of the front gearbox/clutch housing seals which I didn't replace when I had it apart.
- \* One of the differential stub-axle seals.

I decided to fix both because:

- \* I don't want to be running low on fluid and,
- \* I don't like the smell and,
- \* It's not fun when brake fluid gets on your rear rotors during track events.

Since I needed to disconnect the stub axles to get to the rear seals and since I needed to disconnect the driveshaft to get to the front seals, I decided to just take the whole thing out. And I'm glad I did. It's so much easier working on the bench rather than underneath the car. I would recommend it even if you're just doing the gearbox. The outer set of stub axle nuts are usually not too bad (it's the inner ones that can be a bear).

The only extra things you need to disconnect are:

- \* Stub axle nuts (6 each side).
- \* Single brake flex tube.
- \* Handbrake cable.
- \* Single rear mount bolt.

### Stub Axle Seals

With the unit on the bench, I removed the rotor bolts. I had previously replaced these with the hex/allen type bolts, so removal was not so bad. Loosening the caliper bolts allows removal of the rotors. Four more allen bolts hold on the inner stub axles. They come out as a unit. They are composed of a flange (attached to end of axle), then in order over the axle: shield, oil seal, casing, bearing and lock ring. As you can see, the unit has to be disassembled to get to the oil seal.

R&R of these units is tricky. A bench press is required and special Alfa tools make the job a lot easier. First, the lock ring has to be pressed off. Alfa provides some special plates for this, but a regular press clamp will work. Then the casing/bearing has to be pressed off. For this I used the special Alfa plates (different than the one for the lock ring). Now the oil seal and the bearing can be removed from the casing.

I replaced both. The bearing/casing/seal piece then needs to be pressed on with a 3rd special Alfa tool, but probably a pipe of the proper diameter would work. Finally, the lock ring needs to be heated to 190C (I used a fry daddy with motor oil) and then pressed on with the same pipe/Alfa tool. This whole procedure took me about an hour (with special Alfa tools available) to do both sides.

### Transaxle Front Seals

There are two seals in the clutch/gearbox casing. One is for the mainshaft and one is for the gear selector shaft. To get to these, you first have to remove the clutch front case. There's the four bolts holding the case. The arm on the gearshift selector shaft is probably already off. Now, you'll be able to see the two seals, but to remove them you need to separate the case and get the shafts out of the way.

Drain the fluid. Undo all the bolts. Separate only the front case from the center flange. Now the seals can be removed with a seal puller. The mainshaft bearing can also be removed by first removing one of the circlips. I replaced this too. I also replaced the pinion shaft support bushing which was badly marked. This required a special Alfa-tool extractor.

Just to be sure I covered all bases, I removed the spring-loaded thing on the side of the case. Some casing sealer between the case and the plate will keep the oil in.

### Ending

So the moral of this story is that you should replace all seals when you have the opportunity. Shortcuts will just cost you time later... The whole thing went back together ok. No more leaks. Just a couple of residual problems: an exhaust clunking noise and a driveshaft vibration. The story is never-ending.

Lancia

Alfa Romeo

FIAT

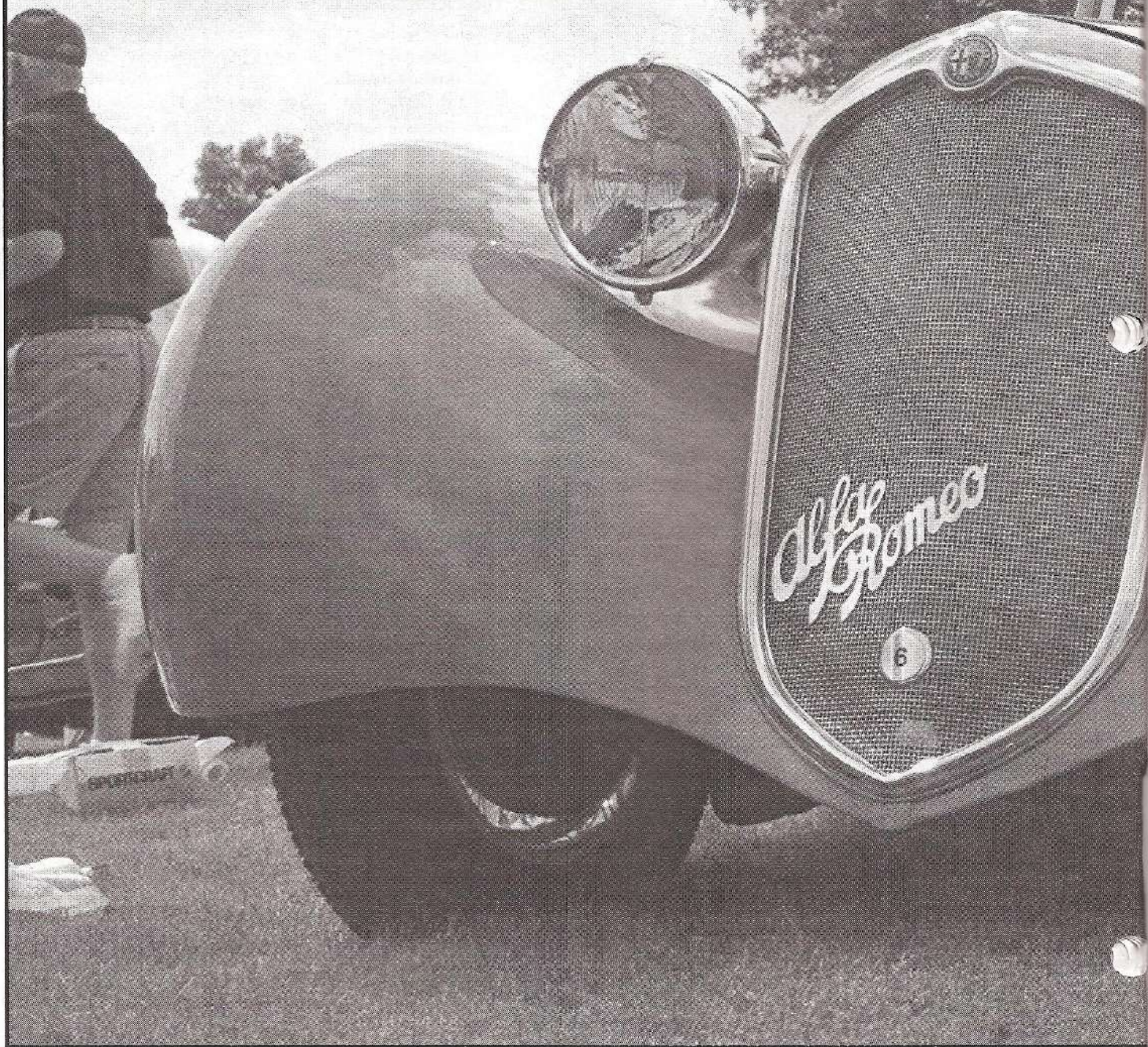
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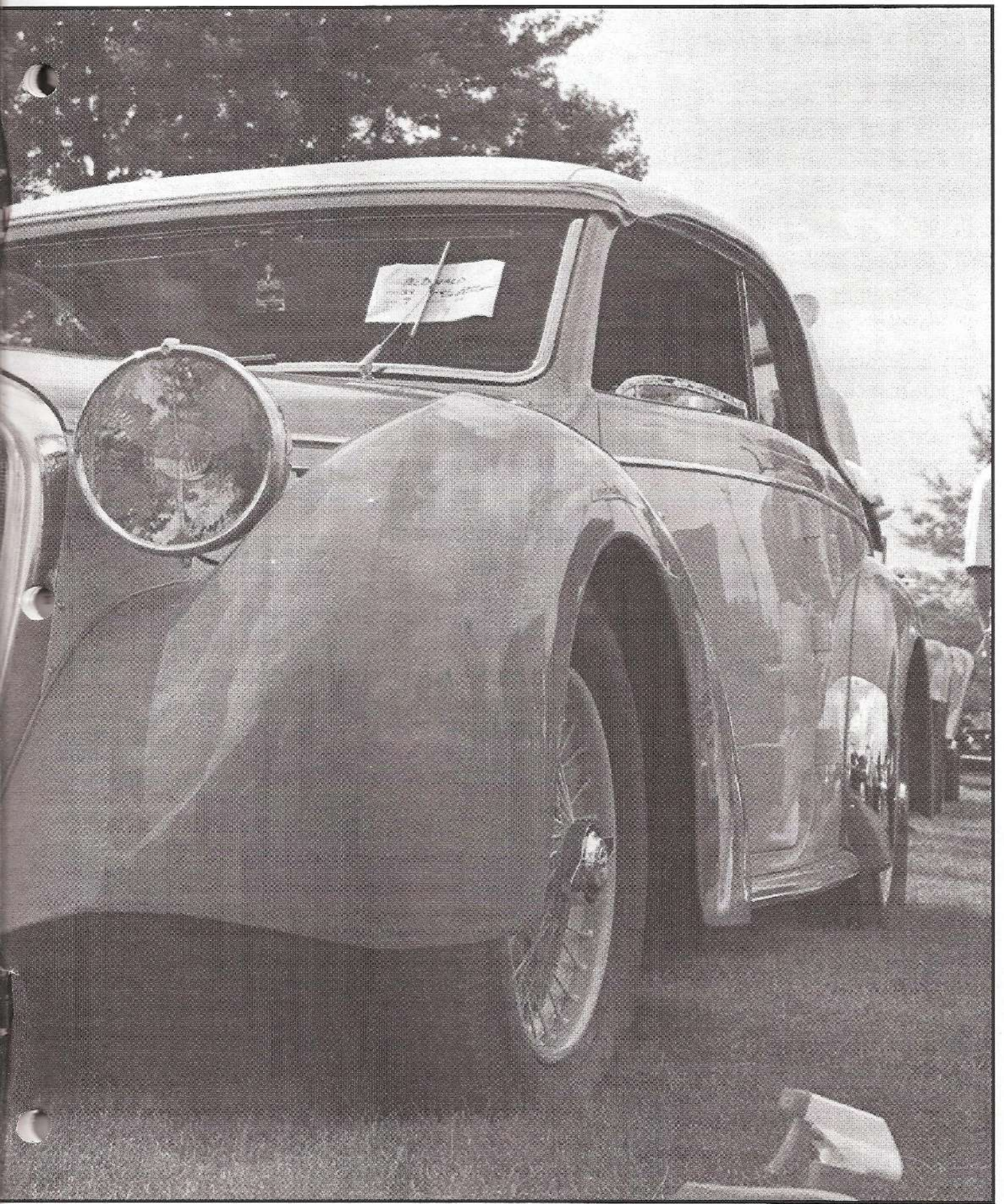
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# AROC National Convention '97





# Goodbye Columbus

## Memories of the National Convention

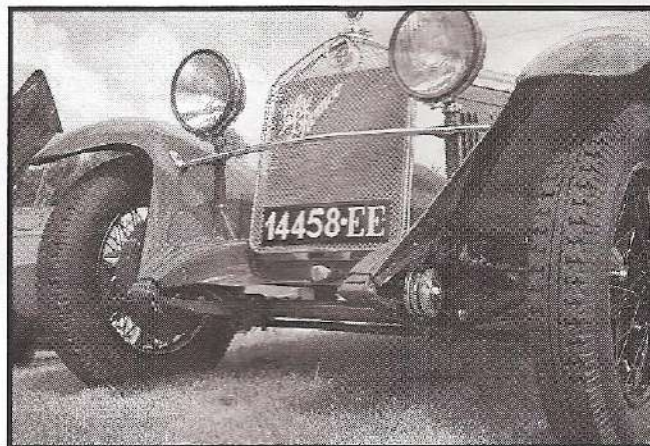
For an *Alfa* enthusiast, the annual AROC National Convention is normally a great way to spend a long weekend, and this year's event was no exception. The convention was hosted this year from June 19<sup>th</sup> through June 22<sup>nd</sup> in Columbus, Ohio by the Buckeye Chapter of AROC. I was somewhat surprised to see that apparently only four members of AROSC made the trek to the convention this year, and three of us were not really active participants in most of the events.

SoCal was represented most actively by Phyllis Gaylard, who drove her *Alfa 164* from Huntington Beach to Columbus. Phyllis ran the Time Trial at Mid-Ohio raceway on Thursday in the *164*, attended the AROC Directors Meeting on Friday as the *SoCal* representative, ran her *164* in the Autocross on Saturday, went to the banquet Saturday night, entered the *164* in the Concours on Sunday morning, and attended the awards luncheon following the Concours. Whew, what ambition and energy!

Other attendees from *SoCal* were Al Cortez, Joel Hoffman, and myself, all of whom flew in for the event. I must confess that I may have missed some other *SoCal* members who were at the convention, as the weekend drew such a heavy response from around the country that we filled the Marriott Hotel which was the official location and spilled over into at least two other nearby hotels. In fact, I never ran into Joel Hoffman among the crowds and only know that he was there from others who told me.

Although the turnout exceeded the hotel's room capacity, the folks at the Marriott did a good job of coping with the other needs of the convention. The banquet and awards luncheon were handled very efficiently with a buffet setup, in spite of the large number of people present, and the food was quite satisfactory by any standard. It did not match up to the quality of the meals at last year's AROC convention in Phoenix, but then that event happens to be the standard against which I judge every banquet meal I have ever attended.

The hotel also cordoned off several rows in their parking lot to be used exclusively for *Alfas*, which really whetted everyone's anticipation of the Concours. As always, it was great to see row upon row of *Alfas* of all vintages parked next to each other.



**Dean Butler's immaculate 6C1750 -  
What more can we say?**

Some were trailer queens but many were daily drivers. Some were in immaculate condition, while others clearly showed the ravages of exposure to salted roads in winter. Some were seemingly as original as the day they left the factory decades earlier while others were a tribute to their owners' creativity in searching for what they considered improvements in handling, power, looks, or all of the above.

Many of these cars did not enter the Concours, and some which did enter were not found in the parking lot earlier, so the hotel's parking arrangements provided *Alfa* enthusiasts with a *defacto* informal event to accompany Sunday's official Concours. Personally, I first discovered some of the most fascinating, albeit non-standard, *Alfas* in the hotel parking lot. Although I enjoy and admire pristine and original *Alfas* - particularly the older models - I have always been intrigued by the variety of ways which owners have found to improve their cars.



**A Giulietta Spint Zagato provided yet another  
reason for our enduring passion for Giuliettas**

One example of this was an *Alfa* with Georgia plates which had some additional chrome trim which read "3.5", located on the trunk below the "V6". I suspect that this trim came from one of the older Mercedes models, as it looked identical. This was the only thing which I spotted which gave a clue as to what lurked under the hood. At the Concours the owner put a sign in the

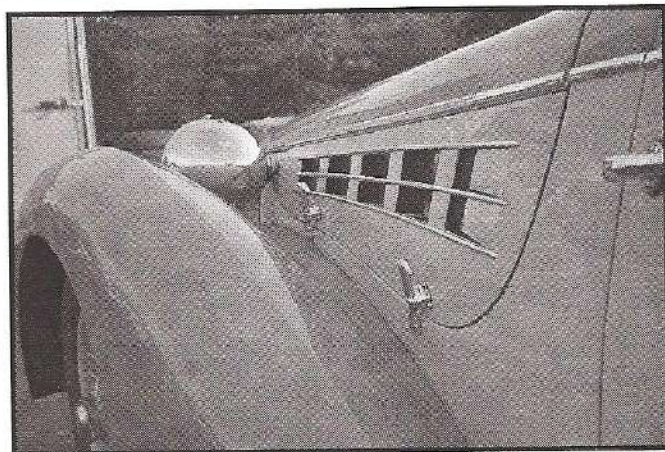
front window indicating that the engine cylinders had been bored out from 93 mm to 101 mm, thus enlarging the engine to 3500 cc. The sign in the window also specified the power as "adequate" and offered the car for sale. The price called out for this rather unique Alfa . . . ? "If you have to ask, you can't afford it."

Another very non-standard Alfa was a *Spider* belonging to a young man from Florida, who proved that there are always exceptions to the conventional images. I have never regarded a late model *Spider* as a serious contender at the stoplight Grands Prix, but I have now emphatically been proven wrong. This particular Alfa had been put through all of the usual go-fast preparation to bring the power up to the region of 180 hp. It had then been fitted with a new (additional) fuel injection system which comes into play only when large throttle openings are being employed.



**John Smallwood's London-to-Mexico Giulia Super, now Red and prepared for Africa**

This injection system is fed from two tanks located in the *Spider's* trunk, effectively cutting its luggage capacity by about 50 percent. One tank is filled with 114 octane gasoline (the high octane rating is needed to help prevent detonation), and the other tank is filled with Nitrous Oxide. The owner claimed that the



**Bernie McDonald's 6C2500 showed us the pre-war meaning of Grand Touring**

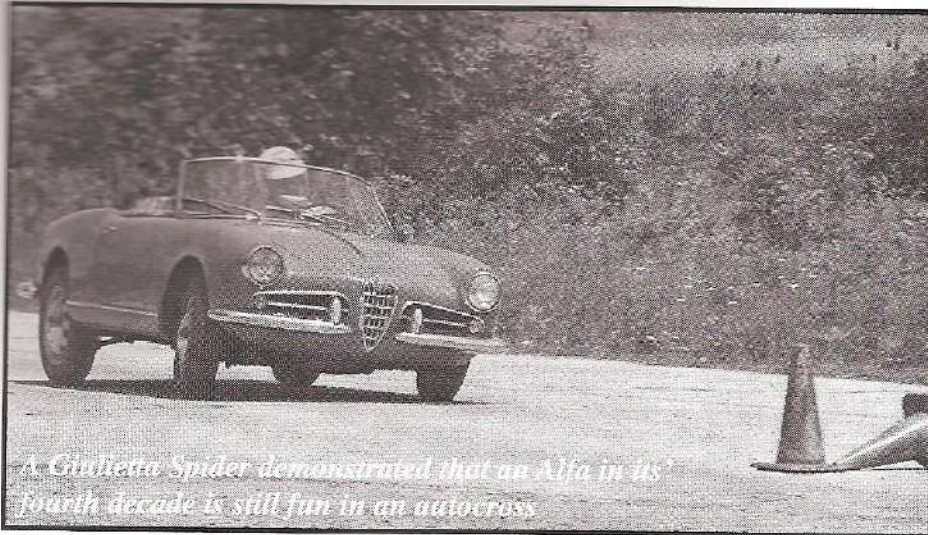
addition of this system boosts the power to 300 hp, which does not seem unreasonable. What *is* somewhat surprising is that the *Spider* reportedly has some 14,000 trouble-free miles since its massive injection of steroids. Since it's safe to assume that those miles include more than a few at full-throttle, this reliability is a tribute to the basic toughness of the Alfa hardware.

The victims of this Q-Ship have reportedly included numerous Porsches, Corvettes, and lesser makes - as well as at least one Viper. I originally saw the car in the late evening, when decent photos of the engine compartment and other modifications would have been chancy. I had intended to catch up to it again when quality photos would be possible, as I wanted to do an article on this unusual street warrior for *Alfacionada*. Unfortunately, between the crowds and the many other head-turning attractions at the convention, I failed to do so.

Yet another special Alfa seen running around throughout the convention was John Smallwood's *TI Super*, which you may remember from the articles in *Alfa Owner*. This is the car which ran the London to Mexico rally a couple of years ago. It has now been repainted in a new color (Red, of course) and prepared for



**Six Zagatos in a line - Two TZ-1's, a short-tail and long-tail Giulietta Sprint Zagato, a Junior Z, and a 2600 Sprint**



*A Giulietta Spider demonstrated that an Alfa in its fourth decade is still fun in an autocross*

entry in a rally through southern Africa. No one who has seen its roll cage, sump-guard armor-plate, and other mods would ever mistake it for a standard assembly-line model, but it was buzzing around the Columbus area as routinely as if it were a factory-original daily-driver. Not bad for a 30 year-old "family sedan"!

The official convention activities were similarly memorable. Although my arrival on Friday meant that I missed the Time Trial on Thursday and cannot report on the event at first hand, everyone with whom I spoke was pleased with Mid-Ohio raceway. This is hardly surprising, as the reputation of the Mid-Ohio track is so good that the Time Trial reached its entry limit within a few days after the event registration opened last March.

Phyllis Gaylard provided a stamp of approval from a veteran SoCal Time Trial entrant after running the event in her *Alfa 164*. She found the track a real blast to drive, although she felt that the severe demands on the brakes



*Fred DiMatteo of course - Who else?*

resulted in the *164* being less competitive than it would have been on many other tracks. The vivid green of the entire area also provided a marked contrast to most of the tracks on which SoCal runs its Time Trials. ("This is not a desert, folks - it's just hydraulically challenged.") In general, the organization and operation of the event was apparently handled fairly well, considering that the host Chapter had no prior experience with this kind of event.

Following the Time Trial, which was held on Thursday this year because of the dramatic increase in the cost of the track rental for its use on Friday or the weekend, the annual AROC Directors Meeting was held on Friday, starting at 9:00 am. As is common, this occupied most of the day, wrapping up around dinner time.

Of the variety of subjects discussed, there were two items addressed which are probably of the most interest to a typical SoCal member. These are the decision to increase the size of *Alfa Owner* by four pages a month effective with the January 1998 issue and

to provide a special fund for at least nominal payment to contributors, and the decision to hire the publisher of *Alfa Owner* to operate an official AROC Internet Web Site - with its content to be defined by a committee of club members chaired by Bernie Zelazny. If you have any opinions on what you think should be on the AROC web site, contact Bernie at the address in *Alfa Owner* to give him your thoughts.



*The parking area at the autocross provided its own entertainment for enthusiasts*

Other subjects covered in Friday's Board meeting which may be of interest were the selection of the locations of the AROC convention in 1998 and 1999. Next year's convention will be hosted by the New Mexico Chapter and held in late June in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The distinction of hosting the last AROC convention of the 1900's was awarded to the Kansas City Chapter, which will be holding the 1999 event in June of that year.

Next year, rather than holding a conventional Time Trial the New Mexico Chapter will be staging a Hill Climb as the traditional speed event. They also plan the usual gamut of convention activities, as well as additional events aimed at families with children. With all of the conventional attractions of Santa Fe added onto the special ones of an AROC convention, this looks like an ideal way to spend a family vacation next year.

At this year's convention, Saturday was a very full day, to say the least. The autocross (slalom) was held a few miles from the hotel on a course laid out on a small "double-oval" racetrack.

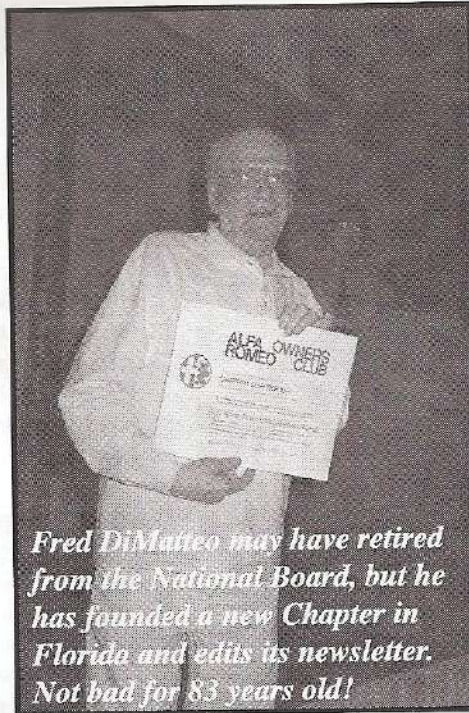


The racetrack itself consisted of what appeared to be a quarter-mile course inside of a half-mile course, with the two ovals sharing a portion of one straight. The autocross course was laid out to take the cars down the main straight, around the short oval and back onto the main straight, and around the large oval to the finish line. Traffic cones were located at various places on the course to alter the course to add additional challenge to the entrants' skills and the handling, braking, and acceleration of their cars.

Looking on as a spectator, it appeared that the autocross course probably succeeded in not only challenging the participants but providing them with a fun day. This represented a major achievement for the organizers, as the location of the event and the course layout were essentially a last-minute effort. The autocross was originally planned for another location, with a completely different course layout. However, the state Highway Patrol appropriated the original location for their own use at the time planned for the AROC event, forcing the host chapter to find another place to hold the autocross.

Also scheduled on Saturday was the rally/tour. According to those who participated, it was a very pleasant route, laid out to run through some of the Amish country in that area of Ohio. Unfortunately, the event scheduling essentially forced people to choose between the autocross and the rally. In theory, with luck and fancy footwork it might have been possible to participate in both events but - as a practical matter - the extremely long course of the rally and delays at the autocross precluded this. I was sorry to see this, as these were the two driving events which were mostly likely to have been entered by the average member, and the scheduling effectively limited their participation to only one of these events.

On Saturday evening the Convention Banquet drew a heavy turnout, which my uncalibrated eyeballs estimated as probably in excess of 400. The meal was served in a well-organized Buffet



*Fred DiMatteo may have retired from the National Board, but he has founded a new Chapter in Florida and edits its newsletter. Not bad for 83 years old!*

style and the food was quite good for an event of this type. The usual after-dinner activities included an autobiographical talk by one of the Editors of *Automobile* magazine, whose somewhat unconventional approach to life seemed to keep the audience entertained. Other activities after dinner included recognition of people who have contributed their efforts to the club.

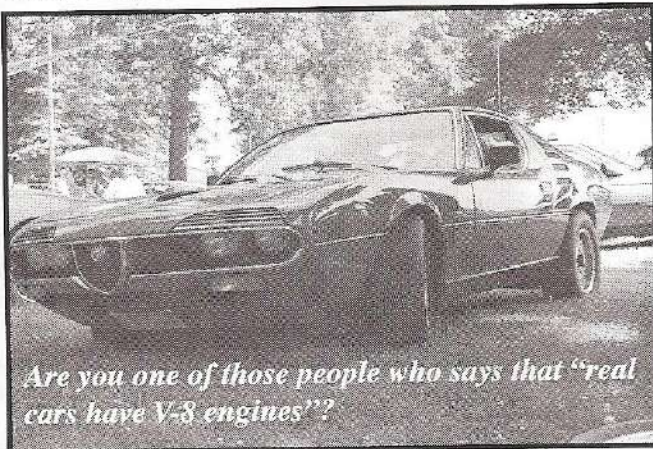
Among the people recognized was Fred DiMatteo, who had decided not to run for re-election to the National Board of Directors after serving on it for many years. However, you should not get the impression that Fred is planning to sit back and have others do all the work in the future. Since moving from New England to Florida, Fred has been instrumental in starting a new chapter there and is editing its newsletter. He drove his *Milano* from Fort Meyers, Florida to Columbus by way of New England, and competed in the driving events. For an 83 year-old who has had back surgery in the last year, Fred doesn't

seem to have slowed down very much.

On Sunday Morning, the Concours was held on a grassy area near the hotel. The organizers went to the trouble of grouping similar cars, so that we were treated to the sight of "blocks" of *Giuliettas*, *Giulias*, *Alfettas*, etc. One of the more interesting sights was a line-up of six Zagato-bodied *Alfas* side-by-side. There were two *TZ-1* models, a short-tail *Giulietta Sprint Zagato*, a long-tail *Giulietta Sprint Zagato*, a *Junior Z*, and a *2600 Sprint Zagato*.

Among the other uncommon *Alfas* present was a *6C1750 Grand Sport* and a 1939 custom-bodied *6C2500 Cabriolet* which had been brought to Columbus from Nova Scotia, where it had been restored by the owner. There were so many cars present that to fit them into the space available required the cars to be parked more closely together than was optimum for viewing and photography.

*Continued on Page 20*



*Are you one of those people who says that "real cars have V-8 engines"?*



*If you think this way - meet the Alfa Montreal!*

# Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Regarding the Herb Bridge headlight story in the April *Alfacionada*. Bridge mentions that the H-4 bulbs and their expense. J. C. Whitney catalogs have the whole headlight unit that fits right into the existing headlight buckets for \$15-\$25. The product description notes they are for off-road use only.

*Sincerely, Allen Gwinn*

## **A Comment From AROSC President Jay Negrin, who picked up the mail**

My 0.02 - Allen Gwinn and Herb Bridge are talking of apples and oranges. The lights that Mr. Bridge refers to are the "aero" lights that one typically finds on *Milanos* and *164s*. The prices he quotes are also for the headlamps, reflector and lens assembly, not just bulbs. I believe Mr. Gwinn is referring to the round, universal headlights as found on previous *Alfa Romeos*, e.g., *Giulias*, *GTVs* and *Alfettas*.

Economy of scale, when ALL cars had round lights, meant that headlights could be made relatively inexpensively. Now, each model has its own headlight, including design and manufacturing. Of course, costs increase. As Mr. Bridge's article was written a while ago, you can count on prices to have gone up since then. I would expect *Milano/75* headlights to be in the \$300-\$350, EACH, range.

In re dealing with J.C. Whitney - The headlights may or may not include a bulb. European H-4 bulbs are relatively expensive, especially when compared to sealed beam stuff on sale. The advantage of using European spec headlights, even when talking of the older round ones, is that they do such a better job of lighting the road, as compared to SAE (US) spec lights, even the quartz-iodine units. The QI are brighter, but still have the same lousy pattern. Only a small step better, in my opinion, and that of Mr. Bridge.

The other thing about J.C. Whitney is that unless they specify a brand of light, you may not get exactly what you are expecting. This is fine, perhaps if you are buying a pair of lamps, but not so hot if you are trying to match existing hardware. The other thing to watch for is shipping, which can be (relatively) horrendous, for small, relatively inexpensive items. J.C. Whitney charges for shipping based on price not weight.

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*Editor's Note: The following is an interchange of e-mail between AROSC member Lorenzo Gigliotti and Jay Negrin, the current SoCal President. It is printed here at Jay's suggestion, with Lorenzo's concurrence.*

---

Dear President Jay,

You don't know me - I have been an AROSC member for over 10 years. For various reasons I don't attend meetings and I don't attend club events. I did attend a couple of meetings way back when... But in any event, the only reason that I joined the *Alfa Romeo Owners Club* was because I bought a brand new *Alfa Romeo Spider*...in 1981. I had always respected the heritage of the car, but when I bought the car it was not because of any technical advances or for stock performance figures. Quite simply - it was simply an *Alfa Romeo*.

Ironically *Alfa Romeo* has not made what could be considered any major breakthroughs (concerning production automotive technology) in the last 17 years. They have adapted over-the-counter technology to somewhat improve performance but nothing of pure significance has come out of their production facility in that period. Suffice to say, *Alfa* has, for many reasons been forced to - and has been comfortable to - literally and physically rest on its laurels.

Back to the club... The only item I have always looked forward to concerning my membership in this club is the *Alfacionada* and the *Alfa Owner*. And I must admit, even that took a dive when numerous editorial opinions kept pouring out from one extremely discontented *Alfacionada* contributor (who today constantly picks fights in other car magazines). During that low point, another of the club's self-proclaimed gurus took it upon himself to totally destroy the 1981 *Spider* in the *National Alfa Owner* magazine. Though it is true my 1981 has morphed into something very far away from being a stock *Alfa* - it has offended many purists - I did find myself quite annoyed at Mr....'s comments.

When I wrote my equally abrasive reply to the *Alfa Owner* I made reference to the fact that his 1981 was his daily driver and his revered junk *Alfa* treasures were rotting away in his back yard. The reference was edited out and he was allowed to just "oops..." in reply. My main point was this: Today - because of *Alfa's* inability (whether *Alfa's* fault or Fiat's) to manufacture cars that are truly state of the art (even in Italy) *Alfisti* have now been forced to critique their fellow members and their cars. At present we cannot put stock *Alfa* quality or performance/price on the same stage as most other manufacturers and therefore we now turn within and begin to feed on our fellow *Alfisti*.

The U.S. clubs will probably become more and more esoteric. Eventually those who have chosen to remain will devour each other. Some may even take their current cliques and split off - others may try and hang on - the damage to members like me has already been done. It is only a matter of time until another *Alfa* guru will thrash and trash another model. The supportive response (to my printed, but edited, reply) from other local *Alfa*

clubs was quite surprising – many letters indicated their complete frustration in the fact that the original article ever appeared.

Now, in the current issue of *Alfacionada*, your reference concerning attitudes toward the 1981 *Alfa* in your editorial only adds more insult. Often, it seems that giving attention to an old wound only results in more inflammation. I certainly have not been any kind of contributor to the club since my membership began but I know that my membership fees were gladly accepted and I was one more statistic on the club's roster. I am currently looking at my renewal and wondering whether it is really something that I want – today the Internet is proving to be a more efficient method for me to maintain my *Alfa* awareness.

At the club level – every few months it appears that some negative reference to a 1981 *Spider* will appear – even a well meaning one, but none-the-less negative. I guess I'll just get in my "cute" little 1981 *Spider* and forget about clubs.

*Lorenzo Gigliotti – 1981 Spider Hybrid*

**In response Jay wrote:**

Lorenzo -

Please forgive me, but I did not mean to slam the '81 *Spiders*. I re-read my column for May, and I can see where you may have seen that thought creep in. What I was trying to do was to show how some people have purchased their cars (and yes I have met them personally) without knowing much about *Alfa Romeo*, or cars in general, simply because they are pretty little cars. No history. No heritage. No idea of the difference between a camshaft and a driveshaft. And then, if they are lucky enough to find out that there is a club dedicated to supporting the car they bought 2 years ago, coming to a meeting, only to find "The Attitude".

And that attitude is the one I was mimicking. One that says that only "true" *Alfas* have carburetors, or SPICA was a joke, or all *Alfettas* are junk. I could go on, but I hope you get the picture.

We, as the AROSC, have a duty to other *Alfa Romeo* owners, all other *Alfa Romeo* owners, to demonstrate that we are not all like "that". That we realize that every owner, whether he or she realizes it or not, needs a strong club that can help in the ownership experience.

Again, I apologize for perhaps not expressing myself as well as I wanted to. Please re-read my column and try now to see what I meant, and not necessarily what I wrote. I also want to thank you for what you wrote. I realize that it takes time, and the will, to respond to something, even if that response is showing less

than 100% satisfaction.

*Sincerely, Jay Negrin*

PS - I know you sent your letter to me, personally, but with your permission, I would like to have our editor include it in the newsletter, along with my response to you. Lemme know.

**Lorenzo's response was:**

Dear President Jay,

I understand that the intent of your article was not divisive however, I am still smarting a bit from the comments made by so&so in the National magazine. It was just plain lousy and now it seems that the mere mention of a 1981 *Spider* in any type of article seems tainted. Sorry for unloading it on you.

The gist of my original response had a great deal in common with your goal of a less divisive club – at the time of the response the local club appeared to be going through some kind of rebellious phase – continuously attacking the National club, which seemed more disorganized than usual. Between the two attacks (one at the political level and one at the members level) it appeared that the club truly was ready to feed upon itself at its many different levels.

Perhaps it was a result of all of the upheaval that allowed the article to be printed. (I know we have a free press but usually a certain amount of care is exercised as to not disenfranchise members of the audience.) Again accept my apology for being hasty. If you want to print the letter – with your response – that is fine but please don't chop it up...

By the way, I will be creating an *Alfa-Exotics-Race&Customs* Page – perhaps I will call it the PURIST'S NIGHTMARE PAGE. I hope to be

featuring photos of *Alfas* from all over the world that have been aesthetically tweaked – both race cars and street cars – primarily: flared, lowered, chopped, channelled, shaved, fibreglassed, leaded... However there will be no engine modifications section for the street cars (don't need a registry of illegal cars on the Internet).

I will be linking similar pages of interest as well. If you saw my car by clicking *Formula G* in my first message then you see what I mean. I do web-sites for a living and I've always wanted to put together an unusual *Alfa* page. Check out the following to see some simple pages that I've put together for an advertising client:

*BELLFLOWER CRUISE*  
*Ron's Drag Racing Team*  
*Formula G*

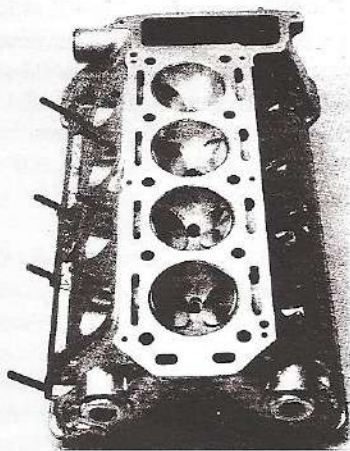
*Ciao – Lorenzo Gigliotti*

***I had always respected the heritage of the car, but when I bought the car it was not because of any technical advances or for stock performance figures. Quite simply – it was simply an Alfa Romeo.***

The Awards Luncheon was also served Buffet style by the hotel and was again handled well for a large-group event. A family commitment forced me to leave before the meal was over, so I missed the presentation of trophies and awards for the events at the Convention. In spite of having to miss some parts of the Convention, it was still a very pleasant and enjoyable weekend and definitely worth attending. The 1998 AROSC Convention in Santa Fe next June should be a great experience also. Start planning to attend!

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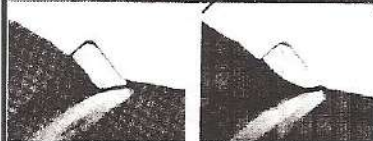
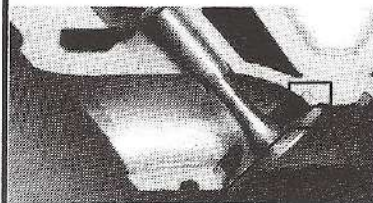
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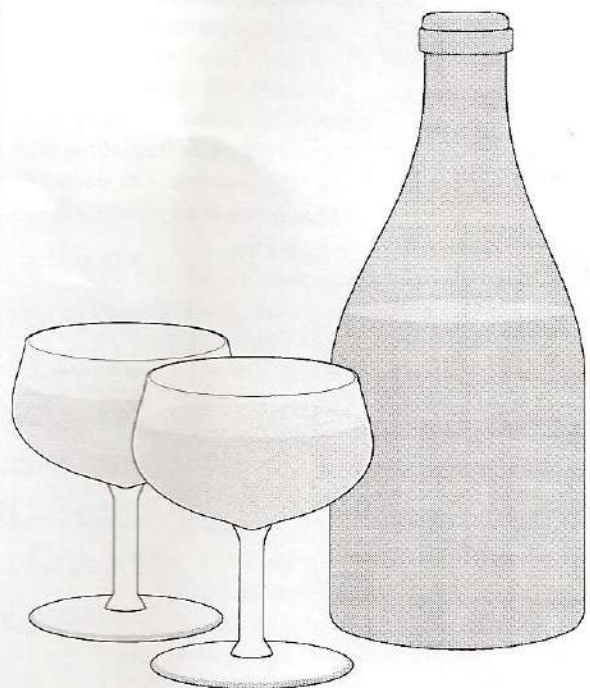


# AROSC

## Wine Tour '97

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# Spark Plug Fact and Lore

*An assortment of comments and opinions from the Internet*

*Courtesy of i Saluti, St Louis Chapter - AROC*

*[Loyalty to the brand of sparkplug one uses is similar to marque loyalty--everyone has an opinion. Some are based on experience, some are based on emotion, Ed.]*

## Lodge Spark plugs. A Ring of Fire

Let's talk about those OEM spark plugs! At the tech session I attended last weekend, I got to see some of the Lodge plugs used for *Alfa* engines. These have ring firing; there's the usual terminal in the center, with four small tabs placed equidistant around the circumference of the rim of the plug.

Instead of a single arc spark, a doughnut spark is created, with the idea of producing more efficient combustion in the cylinder. Carlo (one of the brothers who owns *Alfa of Tacoma*) indicated that the engines were engineered for the use of these plugs, and that the use of a regular, gapped single-arc plug would also require one to consider the orientation of the plug so that the cylinders would still be balanced during combustion.

--Tess McMillan

Why use a sparkplug other than the Golden Lodge which is recommended by *Alfa Romeo*? What could be the benefits? I have had no problems using 2HL Lodges.

--Hans de Kok

## A Short Lesson in Ion Physics

The ring spark eluded to for Lodge plugs is most unlikely. The spark you see is merely ionized gas molecules (plasma), particularly oxygen molecules. These ions transport the charge from the negative electrode to the positive electrode because of the fluid nature of a plasma, in much the same way water conducts electricity.

If the spark forms a ring (of plasma) there must be an external force, either electrostatic or magnetic to hold it in such a form. With large moving ferromagnetic objects (pistons, valves, etc.) this would be impossible, or at least highly unlikely.

My opinion is that the spark strikes from the center electrode to one of the tabs, the one with the best, shortest electrical "contact", when this contact gets fouled enough to make that not the case, the spark will strike between the center electrode and the tabs with the next best electrical "contact", etc.

--Stuart Thomson

## Sound Value at \$1.50

I don't use Golden Lodge in my modified 2L Spica injected *Spider* simply because they do not deliver sound value for the

dollar. I have used NGK B7ES for 15 years with extraordinary success. I can get them for about \$1.50 each and they seem never to foul. The B7ES is the proper heat range for my driving habits (roughly comparable to the Lodge 2HL).

Obviously, the reach of the plug into the cylinder a critical. Given the tight clearance between the top of the cylinder and the head at top dead center, if the reach is too long, the plugs will be damaged immediately upon crank over. A properly gapped B7ES has almost the exact same reach as the Lodge.

--Tom Muccino

There is no question that *Alfa* engines (the 4 cylinder at least) were designed to use Lodge plugs. Even my '67 *Duetto* owner's manual says to use them, so Lodge plugs are recommended by *Alfa* for best performance, not simply an attempt to decrease emissions.

Having said this, I don't use them. In my carbureted cars, I've found that they more easily foul and in the *Milano V6*, other cheaper, more readily available plugs such as the NGK BP6ES or BP7ES seem to work just as well.

--Rich Hirsch

It's a pain to have to mail order for something as common as a sparkplug. I've always been happy with NGK BP7ES in my *101 (Giulietta)* car. I did put a set of Bosch Platinums in my *GTV*, but everything else was disappointing, including regular Bosch. In my humble opinion, Champions are crap. Stay away from resistor plugs, too. You don't need to hear the radio anyway. ;=)

There are two potential advantages to the Lodge plug:

It provides multiple ground electrodes for redundancy. As one electrode wears, the others will spark more often, thus sharing the work load.

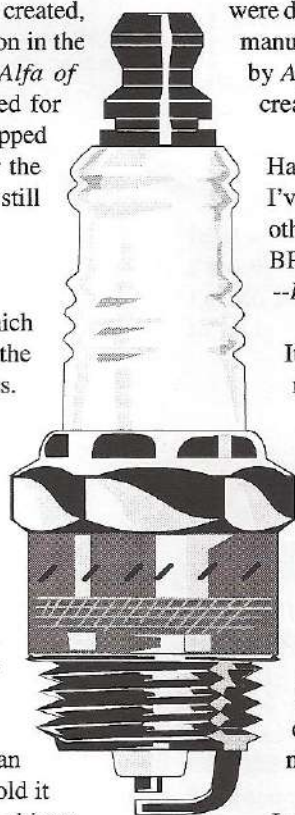
It allows the flame front to proceed directly down toward the center of the chamber. On a hemispherical head, the lack of directionality is a slight advantage.

I think what most people have found is that with modern GOOD plugs, the added cost of Lodge is not worth it. However, some cars with marginal valve to plug clearances need Lodge for survival.

--Simon Favre

## Say What You Mean Richard

I'd rather eat dirt than use Champions in a car I care about. Bosch and NGK both make a good plug; AC plugs are often overlooked but really of very high quality. I was trying Autolite platinums



the first time I burned a hole in a piston in my *Milano*; it probably wasn't the plugs fault but I've been skittish about Autolites ever since.

--Richard Welty

#### Spark plugs vs. Valves

I found that a spark plug's side-electrode can actually make contact with an oversized intake valve! I was adjusting the mixture on my Spica-injected '74 *GTV* by doing sparkplug readings when to my horror, I started noticing abrasion marks on the curved part of the sparkplug's side electrode.

A quick call to Wes Ingram at Ingram Enterprises, *AROC* Tech Advisor, saved the day. He said to try to index the gapped open end to face the intake valve, which would greatly reduce the chance of any contact. He also recommended the NGK BP7ES sparkplug. I was using NGK BPR6EY, which has a V-groove cut into the center electrode for added performance. Both plugs extend equally into the head, but have different electrode configurations.

It seems this problem can be caused by any side electrode plug and since the original Lodge plugs from the factory have no side electrode but are surface gap plugs, it must be real tight in there.

--Joe

I have a modified 2L with oversize valves. While the new head was off the car, I experimented. My new, big valves wouldn't even let a regular plug screw in! The short reach NGK doesn't even really reach the combustion chamber! The Lodge plugs fit as if they were really meant to be there...(duh!)

--Lorenzo Gonzalez

I would like to point out that a side electrode sparkplug can cause damage in *Alfa* engines with large valves. If the plug is fitted so that the side electrode ends up next to the intake valve -- watch out! That ticking sound won't be a tappet but the valve doing its best to break off the electrode.

When using such plugs, e.g., NGK B7ES, I use a marker pen to mark the position of the side electrode on the outside of the plug body and then ensure that the electrode ends up away from the intake valve and preferably both valves. I have a photo of a Champion N7GY (gold palladium extended nose type) showing a flat machined on the side electrode as the intake valve tried to chop it off!

--Les Singh

#### And Finally...

I think that Tess got the Lodge plug's "ring firing" mixed up with the Johnny Cash Ring'O-Fire spark plugs that are marketed on TNN.

--Bruce Giller



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## Our 1997 Calendar

January	February	March	April
14 AROSC Board Meeting 25-6 Time Trial - Las Vegas 31 AROSC Annual Meeting 8pm, Culver City	11 AROSC Board Meeting 28 General Meeting - 8pm, Culver City	8-9 Time Trial - Willow Springs 11 AROSC Board Meeting 28 General Meeting - 8pm Culver City	4 SMCCC Rally 6 Tour "In Search of the Wildflowers" 8 AROSC Board Meeting 25 General Meeting - 8pm Culver City 26-7 Time Trial - Laguna Seca
May	June	July	August
2 SMCCC Rally 11 Swap Meet - Tustin Alfa 13 AROSC Board Meeting 18 Concours at Pomona VARA meet 30 General Meeting - 8pm Culver City 31-1 Driving School - "Streets of Willow"	6 SMCCC Rally 10 AROSC Board Meeting 27 General Meeting - 8pm Culver City 29 Picnic & Tech Session - Culver City	4 SMCCC Rally 8 AROSC Board Meeting 25 General Meeting - 8pm Culver City 26 Nethercutt Auto Museum Tour - 1pm, Sylmar	1 SMCCC Rally 12 AROSC Board Meeting 29 General Meeting - 8pm Culver City
September	October	November	December
5 SMCCC Rally 9 AROSC Board Meeting 20-1 Driving School - "Streets of Willow" 26 General Meeting - 8pm Culver City 27-8 Wine Tour to Temecula	3 SMCCC Rally 5 Concours - Location TBD 11 AROSC Board Meeting ?? Time Trial 24 General Meeting - 8pm Culver City 26 Alfa-Porsche Challenge, Willow Springs Culver City	7 SMCCC Rally 14 AROSC Board Meeting 16 Swap Meet at "Under 3 Liter Meet" at Woodley Park 25 General Meeting - 8pm Culver City. Elections, "White Turkey Auction"	6-7 Time Trial - Willow Springs 13 Holiday Party ?? AROSC Board Meeting