

Giornale

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

November 1997



**In This Issue: It's Party-Hearty Time,
One For The Road, "The *Alfa Romeo
Giulietta* is Over Forty?", Tires For Older
Alfas, "If It's November, This Must Be..."**

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

In terms of time, only about 20 years separate this variation of "The Alfa Grill" from the version on last month's cover of *Alfacionada*, but a comparison of the two makes a dramatic contrast.

In this photo taken at this year's AROC National Convention in Columbus, we see how the *Giulietta Sprint Speciale* interpreted the traditional shape.

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AROSC Previews

What to expect at coming events

AROSC Fall Swap Meet - 16 November *In Conjunction with "Best of France and Italy Car Show"*

Fall is one of the busiest seasons for local *Alfisti*, with a very full schedule of events nearly every weekend. For our annual Fall swap meet, we've decided to try something new. Last year was the first year for the "Best of France and Italy Under 3 Litre Car Show" at Woodley Park in Van Nuys, and it turned out to be such a success — and to draw so many *Alfas* — that AROSC has decided to give you another reason to attend this year's bash: it will also be the location for the AROSC Fall Swap Meet.

Those who attended last year remember the *Alfa* contingent was by far the biggest, with as many as 30 *Alfas* out of about 100 cars in the show and many more in the parking lot, far outnumbering all other marques (of which there were quite a few, including some genuine rarities not soon forgotten). This even really draws a crowd, so what better place to look for those must-haves and to sell those must-dumps?

Best of France and Italy (and man, they're not kidding!) is an open event for all owners and admirers of Italian and French cars that includes a non-judged car show in the tradition of the British "meets". If last year is any indication, there will be some remarkable cars on the large grassy area where the event is held. Surrounding the cars are picnic tables, trees, restrooms, and parts and espresso vendors. It's the perfect place for a Sunday picnic! And when your hamper is empty, you can fill it up with car parts!

The event, publicized throughout Southern California, gets going around 9 am. There is a modest entry fee for cars participating in the show, and off-street parking is free. Since the AROSC Swap Meet is one of the club's most popular activities, and judging by the turnout in the first year of the Woodley Park event, this will be THE place to be on Sunday morning, November 16. See you there!

AROSC General Meeting - 21 November

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the General Meeting will take place a week earlier than usual this month. Along with the usual period for tech questions, "For Sale" announcements, etc., we'll have a very special program.

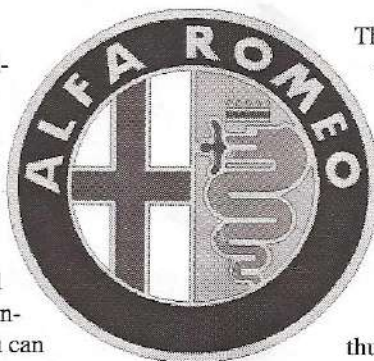
What do you call it when you cross a stand-up comic with an *Alfa* parts sale? It is - of course - the incomparably entertaining annual AROSC White Turkey Auction! As always, the meeting time and location are located on the top of page 2 of *Alfacionada*.

AROSC Holiday Party - 13 December

As usual, our December General Meeting will be replaced by a holiday party. This year the party will be held at the home of Dave and Erika Herting at 7:30 PM on Saturday, 13 December. For only \$7.50 per person, you will get some great food, door prizes, and a fun evening with fellow *Alfisti*. As is traditional, we ask that you bring canned food for distribution to the homeless. Complete details and directions to the Herting's home in Los Angeles can be found elsewhere in *Alfacionada*.

AROSC Annual Meeting - 23 January

Please note the change from our normal date for the meeting. Due to a schedule conflict, this month the meeting will be held on the fourth Friday evening of the month rather than the last Friday evening. Remember, January is the month for the AROSC Annual Meeting.



This is a special occasion in many ways. We will have trophy presentations to those who finished high in the AROSC points standing for 1997 competition in the categories of Concours, Rallies, and Time Trials, as well as trophies for total points in all categories combined.

In addition, if we can turn a tentative commitment into a firm one, our featured speaker for the evening will someone calculated to bring *Alfa* enthusiasts out in record numbers. Since it's not a completely firm commitment yet we won't mention any names here. However, just to help you plan ahead to keep that evening open, we'll toss out a tidbit right now . . .

Would you be interested in seeing a former Formula 1 World Champion driver who has owned a 6C1750 *Alfa Romeo* for decades and who runs a business specializing in restoring classic cars to the level where they win at the Pebble Beach Concours?

If so, plan to join us at the AROSC meeting on 23 January. As always, the meeting time and location are located on the top of page 2 of *Alfacionada*.

AROSC Time Trial at Willow Springs - 31 January & 1 February

Believe it or not, the 1998 AROSC Time Trial series will be getting underway before the month of January has ended. This event will be held at Willow Springs Raceway and - as usual - will be a two-day event. Whether you come as a participant or as a spectator, this is a great way for an *Alfa* enthusiast to spend a weekend. Come join us!

One for the Road

Comments from the AROSC President

by Jay Negrin - AROSC President

While driving on the roads connecting the wineries in the Temecula area, I came upon an obvious truth. It may seem so obvious that perhaps it sometimes gets overlooked. This truism, simply stated, is that the *Alfa Romeo Owners of Southern California* isn't about cars.

Sure, they are the glue, the common reason, which has managed to collect us all under one banner. And, that happens to be a rather special reason. But, no, the real reason we gather is that AROSC is about people.

Don't misunderstand, the cars themselves are wonderful mechanical contrivances and conveyances. That was once again brought home on the wine tour, and just normal driving around. Not to mention, of course, the head turning from the "great unwashed" in the vicinity of Randall Harris' sparkling and magnificent example of a *Giulia Spider*.

But if it weren't for the people who make up this club, what good would the cars be? The cars exist, and we have collected them, because we are interesting people. It is no small reason, then that we choose to own, cherish, drive, and adore interesting vehicles.

If our favorite brand of car had pushrod motors, Hotchkiss rear axles (would you believe that Ford once had an ad campaign bragging about that!), and other related bugs that get passed off as features, we would still like hanging out together. To be sure, the group would have a different complexion, due in large part to the less interesting nature of the vehicles, but there would still be a crowd surrounding the marque.

What I may be leading up to is that as long as there are people involved, there should be people-related events for us to all share in. The wine tour was a good example of that. The central theme was a people thing, but our cars were there to get us from one winery to the next. Similarly, parties, picnics and museum tours allow us to get together without delving into the greasy bits. (That may have something to do with the way some people cook their chicken, but I digress...)

For those who just can't get enough gear lube in their veins, there are a number of motoring events, where the car, and the driving of it, remains the focus of attention. Time trials and driving schools give us events which help the soul with a necessary, periodic infusion of hydrocarbons. These events are geared almost exclusively to the car.

You could say these events provide a ground for us to worship them. There are still people at those events, though. And as much

as they seem focused and unwavering in their pursuit of lower lap times, they still have time to smile, wave and say hello to the occasional passer-by or spectator.

It's been nearly two years now since I took office. In that time I have ventured out and partaken in more, and different types of events than perhaps I would otherwise have done. This is as close to an unqualified good thing as I can believe. It has removed me from my little cloister. It has allowed me to grow, by meeting all different sorts of people, who make up the active membership of this club.

To those who choose to sit on the sidelines, and not get involved, all I can say is that I am sorry I did not get a chance to meet you personally during my tenure in office. Even though I am stepping down from the presidency at the end of this term, I will stay active in the club, and hope to remain on the board of directors, so there is still a good chance that we will run into each other. All it takes is the desire to find out who else owns and drives all those wonderfully intricate sporting vehicles we call our own.



Special Offer!

**Announcing the availability of the
1998 Alfa Romeo calendar,
produced by the
Northwest Chapter of AROC.**

**This is a professionally produced,
four-color calendar, filled with color
photos of *Alfas*!**

**See a sample and place an order at
the November General Meeting.**

**Place your order at either in person
or by mail to our Post Office Box.**

**The cost is \$12.00 if you pick it up,
or \$14.50 each if we ship it to you.**

It's **AROSC** Party-Hearty Time !

Join us at our annual holiday party

It's time to again celebrate at the traditional **AROSC** holiday party and Italian dinner. This year's party will be held at the home of David and Erika Herting at 107 South Highland Avenue, Los Angeles.

Don't miss this opportunity to see all your old friends and make some new ones. This is the time when ALL *Alfisiti* gather together to celebrate the season and renew the warmth and camaraderie that makes our club so special.

The fun begins at 7:30 PM. Contributions of \$10.00 per person or \$15.00 per couple will be collected at the door.

For this modest cost per person, you can enjoy a terrific dinner along with the evening's social activities. While the food will be plentiful, only soft drinks will be provided; it is BYOB for anything else.

In general, bringing children to the party is not recommended as there are no special pro-

visions to entertain them. As we have done in past years, please bring canned food for distribution to the homeless. There will be door-prize gifts, no need to bring one for the exchange.

The Hertings live at 107 Highland Avenue, just south of 1st Street, on the west side of the street. They recommend that you park on 1st street because of the heavy traffic on Highland. There will be a security patrol watching the cars. Highland is parallel to La Brea, and about 5 blocks east.

From the I-10 Fwy, take the La Brea exit and go north past Wilshire, to 1st street (about 3 miles), and turn right to Highland. If you get to Beverly Blvd., you have gone 1 block too far north (just turn right to Highland and turn right again for 1 block).

Please RSVP to Dave or Erika Herting at (213) 935-6118.



The Times, They Are A-Changing !

Special dates for some upcoming AROSC meetings

Special Notice #1

Due to the Thanksgiving Holiday, the November *AROSC* General Meeting will be held on Friday, the 21st

Special Notice #2

In December the *AROSC* General Meeting will be replaced by our holiday party. See the article above for details.

Special Notice #3

The *AROSC* Annual Meeting (the January General Meeting) will be held on the fourth Friday - the 23rd - rather than the last Friday - the 30th

A Switch In Time

Lighten the load on your Alfa's column switch

by Rich Hirsch - courtesy of i Saluti, AROC St. Louis Chapter

Why should I do this?

If you own a car that uses a one-piece multifunction column switch that doesn't use relays to control the headlamps, the contacts in that switch suffer about a six-amp surge whenever the headlights are turned on. Over time these contacts pit and corrode and their resistance increases. With increased resistance comes heat and further deterioration. In time the contacts will fail. New column switches will become increasingly more difficult to come by and more expensive, so protecting these assemblies is worthwhile.

To protect a column switch and extend its lifetime, you can fairly easily add a relay (or relays) to decrease the current these units must carry. Adding a relay will drop the current carried by the contacts from 6 amps to ca. 0.15 amp. And in at least one case, Alfa recommends adding a relay to a column switch. Early Milanos were recalled by Alfa to add a low-beam relay to prevent switch failure at night which could leave the car without headlights.

This article describes adding two relays to the high and low beams of a '67 Duetto, but is applicable to more recent cars as well, since Alfa consistently used the same color codes for wiring their cars.

I used Hella 87106 relays since they were more readily available and have mounting tabs. (There supposedly is a Hella relay that incorporates two relays into one body that may make this procedure easier, if you can find it.) The relays were mounted 1 inch apart on a 2.5" x 0.75" aluminum strip which was then

secured to the chassis under the dash by the screw that holds the flasher unit to the chassis.

This is close to the terminal strip on the steering column. It's advantageous to attach the relays close to the terminal strip, since the terminals can simply be unplugged from the strip and connected to the proper relay terminal. None of the original wires are cut.

General Guidelines

1) Figure 1 shows the wiring before relay installation, Figure 2 shows the wiring after relay installation, and Figure 3 shows a relay's internal and external connections. It should help to refer to these figures while reading the instructions given below.

2) Disconnect the battery before you make any connections, since some of the wires are "hot".

3) For constructing jumper wires, use wire of sufficient girth to carry the load. OEM wire is 2.5mm and stranded—try to use a similar gauge. Also, follow Alfa's wiring color-code, if possible, i.e., use red, black, gray and green wire.

4) For maximum security don't use solderless connectors. Crimp and solder every connector. Also, most connections should be insulated with heat-shrink tubing of the proper size (obtainable from Gateway Electronics in St.Louis). Use electrical tape if you must, but I think heat-shrink tubing is better and certainly looks neater.

5) Build the simple "wiring harness" and connect the relay assembly to it before going under the dash. You want to spend as little time as possible under the dash.

6) Optional, but recommended: Before making a connection, smear each connector with Truck-lite NYK Corrosion Preventive Compound (from International Auto Parts) to help exclude moisture and retard corrosion.

Specific instructions

1) Make four jumper wires to attach the relay assembly to existing connectors:

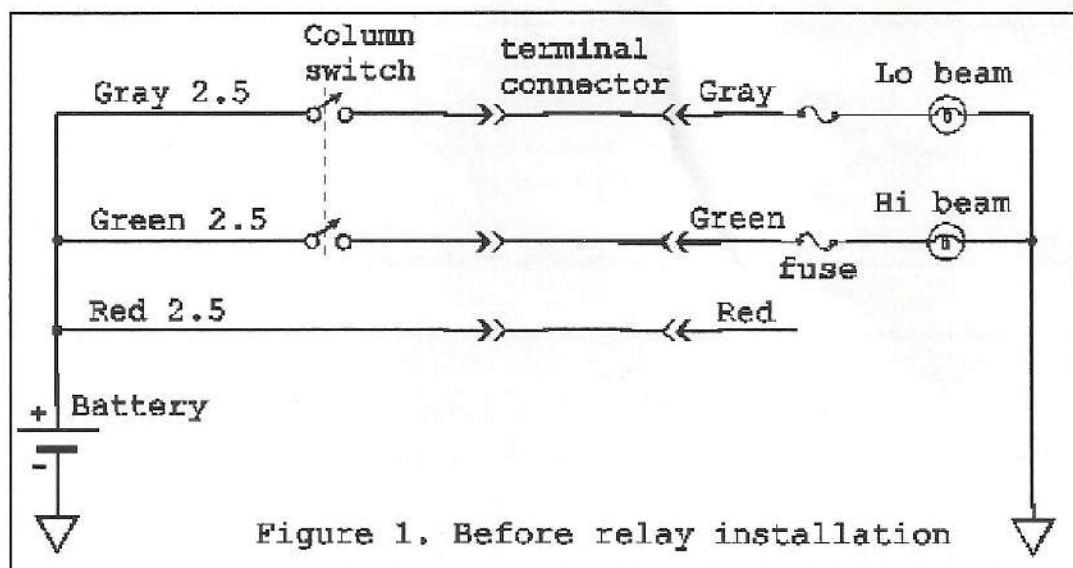
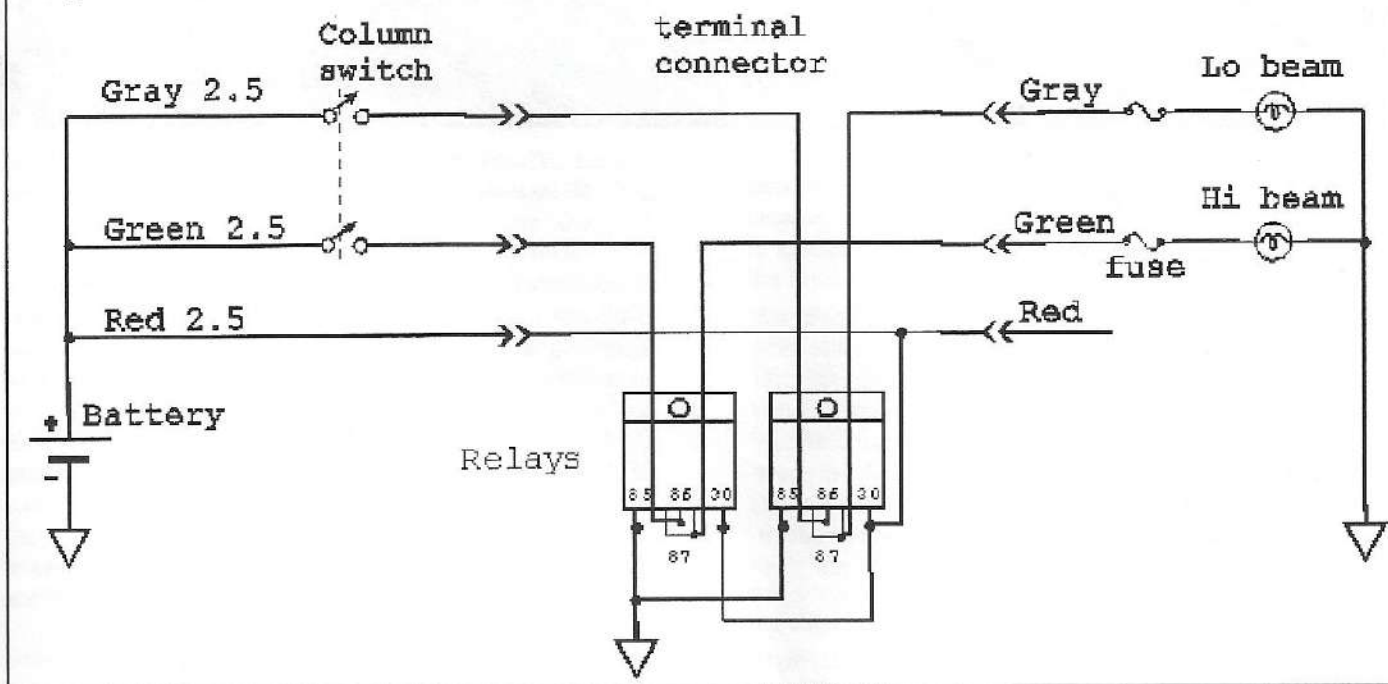


Figure 1. Before relay installation

Figure 2. After relay installation



Red jumper: FC-3"-FC-8"-FC-1"——MC
 Black jumper: FC-3"-FC-3"-RC
 Gray jumper: FC-8"-FC
 Green jumper: FC-8"-FC

FC = female spade connector
 MC = male spade connector
 RC = ring connector

- Connect one end of the gray jumper to terminal 87 of Relay 2.
- Connect one end of the green jumper to terminal 87 of Relay 1.
- Connect one end of the red jumper to terminal 30 of Relay 1 and the next connector to terminal 30 of Relay 2 (see Figure 2). Other connections will be made later.
- Connect one end of the black jumper to terminal 85 of Relay 2 and the next connector to terminal 85 of Relay 1 (see Figure 2). The ring connector will be attached later by the mounting screw to provide circuit ground.

2) Attach the relay assembly to the body. Make sure the black jumper's ring connector is under the mounting screw.

3) Find the gray, green, and red 2.5mm wires connecting the column switch (CS) to the terminal connector (TC).

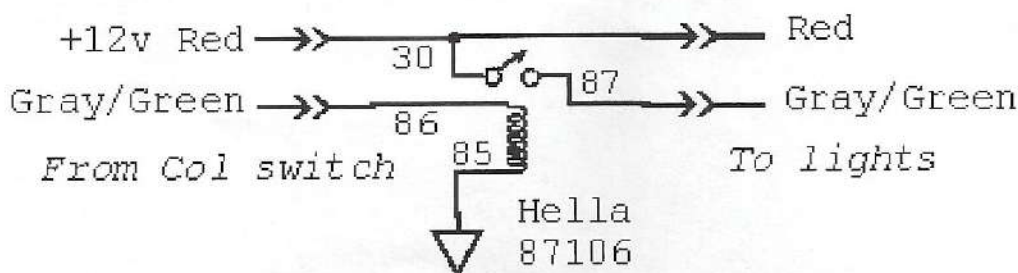
4) Disconnect the gray wire connecting the CS to the TC from the TC. Connect the wire to terminal 86 of Relay 2 and connect the TC to the gray jumper from terminal 87 of Relay 2 (see Figure 2).

5) Disconnect the green wire connecting the CS to the TC from the TC. Connect the wire to terminal 86 of Relay 1 and connect the TC to the green jumper from terminal 87 of Relay 1 (see Figure 2).

6) Danger! Remove battery terminal! Disconnect the red wire from the TC. Connect the wire to the male spade connector of the red jumper connected to terminal 30 of Relay 2. Connect the TC to the red jumper also, using the next connector (see Figure 2). Make sure these connections are well insulated (use heat-shrink tubing) and keep them away from ground sources!

7) Reconnect the battery terminal and test the headlights to make sure the wiring is correct.

Figure 3. Relay connections



The Alfa Romeo Giulietta Is Over F

Comments on Alfa heritage by Oregon's Old Spiderman

by Bob McGill - courtesy of Alfa Bits, AROC Oregon
Chapter; photo by Tom Suter, AROSC

Hard to believe it all started that long ago.

I remember well the excitement of my first look (1956) at this "Giulietta" that the world press had been raving about since 1954 - the first affordable Alfa Romeo. It was pretty stunning for folks brought up on U.S. machinery. Twin overhead cams (a near-perfect combustion chamber)... a stiff, solid (and beautiful) unit body, that together with all that aluminum (block, head, transmission-case, differential housing, etc.) gave you a serious sports car with a weight under a ton. Sophisticated suspension under it, too, that kept those radical new radial tires tight to the pavement.

Are you yawning? You contemporary characters raised on high-performance DOHC engines, four-wheel independent suspension, 50-series radials, microchip-monitored fuel and spark. Does all this sound like deep-freeze geezer-wheezes from the Ice Age? Are you like the guy at last year's *Old Spider Tour* who said: "My god, all these cars were made before I was!"

Hey, so was a lot of other good stuff. Our whole modern generation of performance cars owes an enormous debt to Alfa Romeo whose Giulietta first showed that you could mass-produce an engineering masterpiece at a price just a whole bunch of us could afford.

Let me tell you how it was in 1954. In the U.S. the overhead valve pushrod cast-iron V8 was the newest engineering triumph. In Germany Ferry Porsche's namesake car was a hot-rod VW push-rod boxer. In England the beloved MG T-series was powered by a cast iron pushrod four designed a generation back, before they really understood things like pressure-oiling.

Sure, there was the new Jaguar with its double overhead cams but you had to be a high-roller to afford it (especially to maintain it). Japan in 1954 was mechanically mute with domestic cars based on English pre-war imports.

Alfa Romeo had staggered back from WWII. It had been a legendary builder of great racing cars and elegant wheels for the wealthy in the Twenties and Thirties - really hand-built cars and they never made very many. Alfa's pre-war car production tallied only a few hundred per year. They were classic cars, though, whose brilliant engineering led the pack and whose cars won most races they entered.

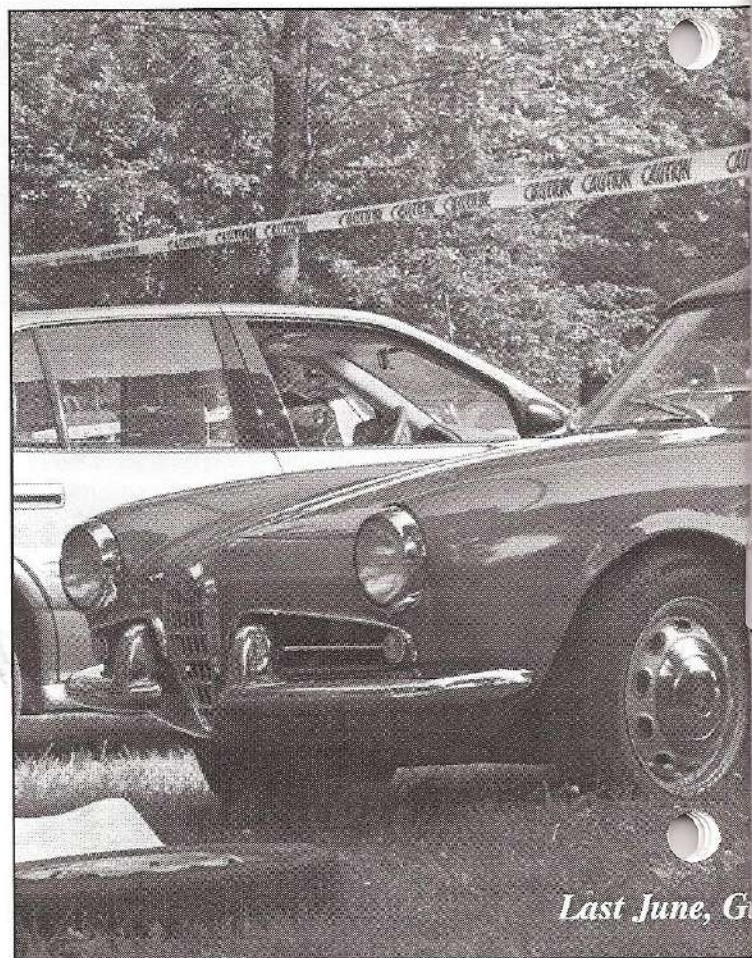
But the post-war car market in Europe was different. Great personal fortunes had been fragmented. Ditto the aristocratic classes. The market for exclusive cars was shrunken. However a large

new Italian middle-class with money in its pocket was growing fast. Alfa Romeo set out to design an Alfa they could afford...one that would keep the production lines rolling.

Orazio Satta Puliga (hereafter "Satta") was the guiding genius of the new mass-produced Alfa Romeos. Head of experimental design, Satta already had some landmark cars to his credit: the enormously successful *Tipo 159* Grand Prix racer, among others.

His first mass-market project in 1950 was an all-new 1900 series car - light, monocoque unit chassis/body with a four cylinder double overhead cam engine and a finely-tuned suspension, all remarkable in a mass-production car. It was expensive, but not for an Alfa and they sold very well in Europe in the early Fifties.

But Satta and Alfa Romeo saw another, even larger market for a small, light Alfa that would embody state-of-the-art engineering from the 1900: the monocoque body, double wishbone front suspension with coil springs and telescopic shocks, light-weight



Last June, G

Party ??

live axle center-mounted with radius arms, and huge brake drums with cooling fins. The power plant, though, was to be all new.

The Satta-designed 1290 cc engine moved far beyond the 1900 in its elegant simplicity: chain-driven double overhead cams with cup-type tappets and shims for valve clearance stability, aluminum head and block with wet-sleeve steel liners for superb cooling, short stroke for quick-revving, massive bearings and journals, honeycombed with elaborately drilled oil passages plus a powerful oil pump, all for longevity. It was sturdy machinery and beautiful to look at, too.

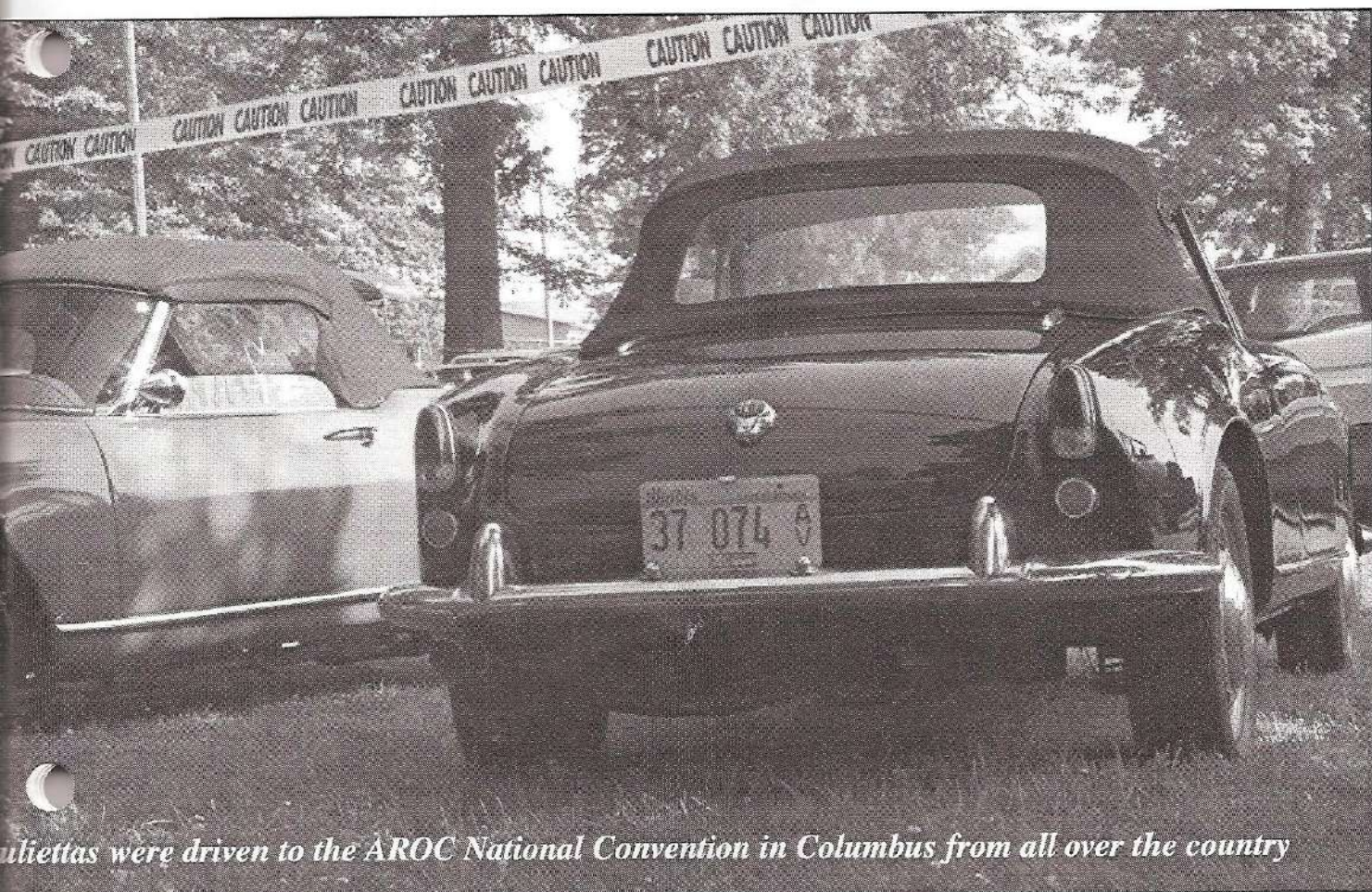
Satta had created an engine that would become the classic benchmark for small twincam four-banger performance cars - an engine design so good and so versatile it would live through 40 years of development in the *Alfa* line alone, forget the worldwide imitators.

But it's 1954. *Alfa* had needed funds to produce the new car. So they went to the car-hungry Italian public and sold them debentures

notes with the added gimmick of a lottery for the first 1,000 cars produced. But regular production was delayed. Investors became hostile. *Alfa* went to Bertone, a small shop experienced in special bodies, and contracted for a one-off coupe body for the Turin Car Show (the standard body was to be a four passenger, four door *Berlina* - the bread-and-butter model).

The 1954 Turin Auto Show was historic. The hit of the show was the Bertone *Sprint Coupe* on the new 1300 running gear (now called "*Giulietta*"). *Alfa* was swamped with orders. Bertone was suddenly a major body builder. And the *Alfa Romeo* we know and love (and could afford) was born.

In 1955 the four-door *Berlina* debuted on the same chassis and was enormously popular in Europe. In 1956 Pinin Farina bodied a *Spider* version that U.S. car nuts fell in love with by the thousands and *Alfa Romeo* became a household name. Some of us have never gotten over this *Giulietta* affair. We've enjoyed later, stronger, faster *Alfas* over four decades. But the *Alfa Romeo Giulietta* was where it all began.



Giuliettas were driven to the AROC National Convention in Columbus from all over the country

If It's November, It Must Be . . .

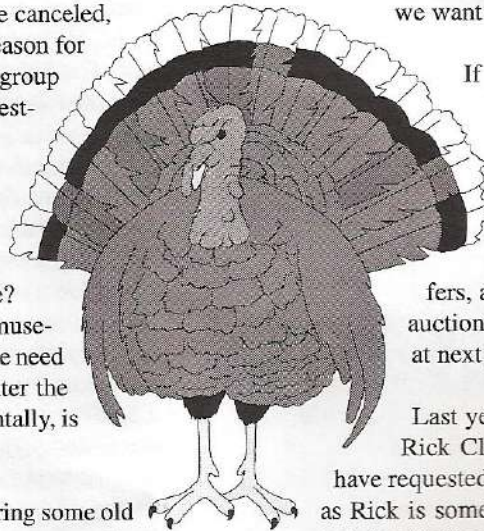
Time for the annual AROSC White Turkey Auction

We warned you earlier, but you didn't listen. Now, it is nearly upon us, and it is up to each and every one of us to help. In addition, with the Palm Springs vintage race canceled, if my information is correct, there is little reason for you not to attend. I am not talking about a group car wash here, although that could be interesting in its own right.

I am talking about the wild turkey sale. Make that the White Turkey Sale. This is a combination fun, make some money, get rid of parts, fun kind of event. Did I say fun twice? Sure, that is because it will provide the amusement for our November meeting. After all, we need some light-hearted, care-free times to counter the heaviness of election night which, coincidentally, is the same evening.

The premise of the sale/auction is simple. Bring some old Alfa parts, or Alfa-related items which may have some value left in them, and see if we can raffle it/them off to the highest

bidder. If we succeed in auctioning off your parts, the club gets to keep 10% of the sale price for our troubles, and because we want to make a few dollars for the club.



If we can't make the parts go away for you, you are still responsible for them. Your trunk or the trash, it's your choice. We, the member of the Order of Elders, or some such great, grand exalted name, may bring some items also. The proceeds of what we bring, that gets auctioned off, go to the clubs coffers, all of it. If we bring them, and they don't get auctioned off, you may be lucky enough to see again, at next years White Turkey Sale.

Last year we had a very cooperative, and amusing, Rick Clemente doing the honors as auctioneer. We have requested him to act as the auctioneer again this year, as Rick is someone who can sell ice to Eskimos, and do it such fine fashion that everyone present enjoys the transaction. See you the Friday before Thanksgiving for festivities and fun.

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**1221 Fourth Street
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The Art of Alfa Tool Making

How to make a Differential Pinion Nut Removal Tool

by Bruce Giller - courtesy of *Alfantics*, AROC Capitol Chapter

Ever since I have owned my 1986 *Spider*, the differential has slowly leaked gear oil; the bottom becoming covered with a gummy substance made up of oil/dirt/sand/bugs - something like almost-hardened Jell-O. Over the years, the leak has slowly but steadily increased in volume. I was topping it off twice a year, which is way too much for me. Last summer I decided it was time that I fix this pesky problem.

At a recent tech session a friendly *Alfa* mechanic pointed out the problem areas on the underbelly of a late model *Spider*. I asked about rear end leaks. He said that 99.99% of them originated at the seal where the drive shaft is bolted to the rear end. He said that it is usually caused by worn U-joints which cause an oscillation of the drive shaft and distort the seal. I had already replaced these U-joints, but I think that the previous owner allowed worn U-joints to remain in service a bit too long.

I asked how hard it was to replace the seal. He said it was EASY (a four letter word!); unbolt the drive shaft, remove the pinion nut and flange, pull out the seal, replace with a new seal, replace the flange, and torque down the pinion nut. He said that it would be even EASIER (there it is again) to remove the pinion nut with an air wrench; and I had a new one - just waiting to be tried out.

I ordered a seal, bought some Mobil 1 gear oil and on a warm spring day, I drove the rear wheels up on ramps and started to work. I unbolted the drive shaft from the differential and had a look at what was underneath the flange.

What kind of strange nut was this? The sides were smooth without flats, instead there were notches cut out (see Figure 1). I could see why; there just wasn't enough space to get a regular socket in.

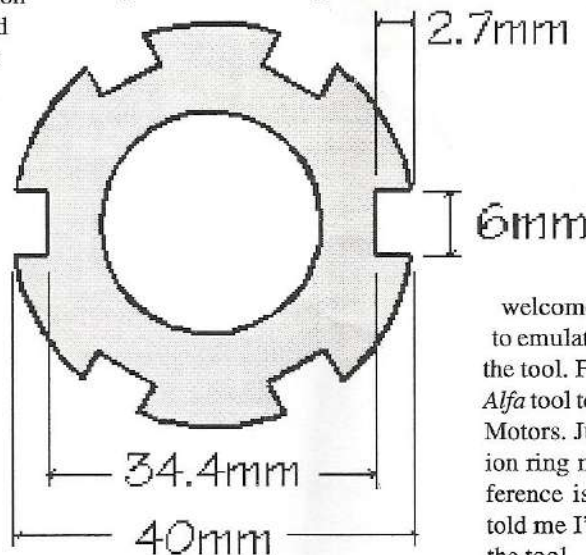
I discovered that the strange nut was called a ring nut. I looked it up in my manual and saw that there was a special *Alfa* tool needed to remove the nut; I assumed that it was just a socket of a certain size that I could buy at Sears or an auto repair store.

I began my Hunt (another four letter word) for the Elusive Ring Nut Socket. I knew that I couldn't rent this tool anywhere, so I inquired on the Italian-cars-digest on the Internet, if anyone had

such a tool. No one did, but one guy said that he had made one from a large, castellated nut; he ground down the castellations until they fit. I bought a replacement ring nut (bloody expensive) to use as a template and scoured the hardware stores for such a castellated nut. I never found one of the correct size, they were all too small.

Then I decided I might as well buy the socket. I called a local *Alfa* dealer and placed an order for one. A week or so later I received a call from them saying that *Alfa* no longer sells that tool! Then I called some other dealers on the Eastern Seaboard to see if they might have one in stock, but to no avail; they all came back to say that *Alfa* no longer sold it.

Figure 1. Ring Nut



I called a few mail order places, but they never carried the socket in the first place. One guy said that maybe I'd get lucky and find a mechanic who was willing to sell it me...on his deathbed maybe!

Next, I canvassed several people about the socket and only found one person who had one and he had made it himself. He said that I was welcome to borrow, but I decided that I'd like to emulate our Neanderthal ancestors and make the tool. Finally, I was able to borrow a genuine *Alfa* tool to use as a template from Julio at Milano Motors. Julio told me that there are several pinion ring nuts based on model and the only difference is the spacing of the notches. He also told me I'd have to leave town if I broke or lost the tool.

I measured the diameter of Julio's socket and then went to Trak Auto with my trusty calipers. It turned out that a \$6, 30 mm, 1/2" drive, chrome socket was the right size (well, just a bit smaller). I placed the two sockets together, opening to opening, and transferred the location of each "tooth" as well as its' height.

To ensure that each tooth had enough thickness, I made sure that each tooth was located on the center of one of the socket's flats. I could have used the ring nut as a template, but it was easier doing it this way (see Figure 2 for an illustration of the tool and the critical dimensions).

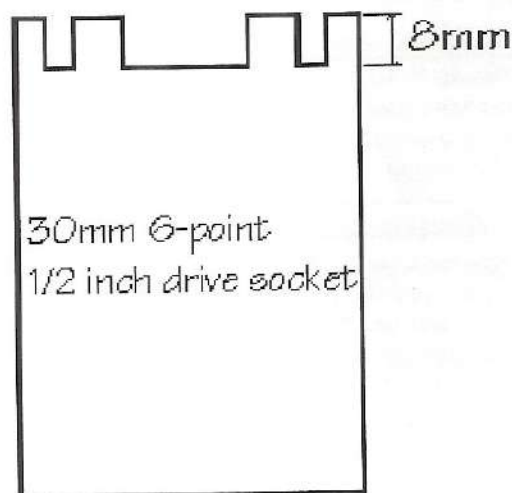
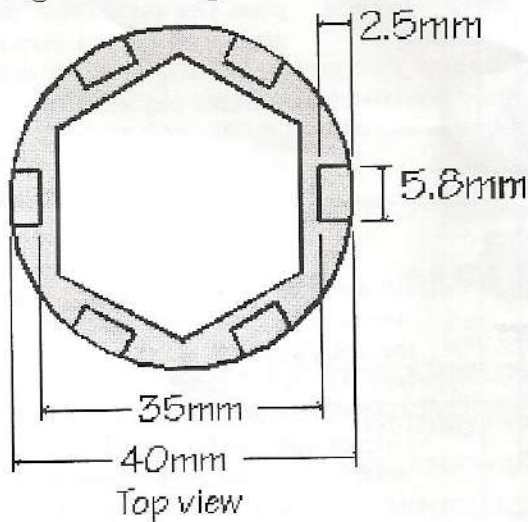
Using a 4", right angle grinder, I removed the waste between each tooth. I thought that I'd be grinding away for a while, but it went pretty quickly. The grinder wasn't able to get into the corners, so I used a metal file to square up the sides and bottom of each tooth, as well as the gap between each tooth.

The socket wall thickness was greater than the depth of the ring nut's notches, so I chucked a small grinding cylinder in my drill press and ground away the extra thickness from the inside of the socket (the original socket appeared to have been done the same way). I then trial-fitted the ring nut to the socket, using the file on the teeth until a smooth fit was obtained. I spent about 3 hours total making the socket.

The next nice weekend, the car was again up on ramps. And with the ring nut exposed, I was ready to put my new tool to the test. I attached it to my air wrench and the old ring nut came off as nice as you please. After replacing the seal (and getting coated with dripping gear oil), I torqued the new pinion nut into place (58-101 ft. lbs.).

Now my *Spider's* rear end is clean and dry - as it should be. I returned Julio's socket and mine is resting in my tool case, ready to be called to service in the future. It is nice working with a tool that you made; it makes me feel more like a mechanic and less like a part-replacer.

Figure 2. Ring Nut Removal Tool



Side view

RHH, 4-86

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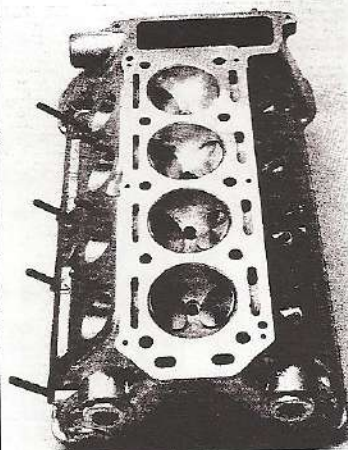
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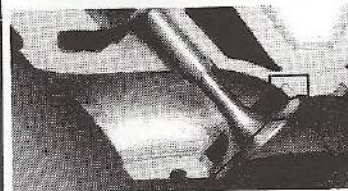


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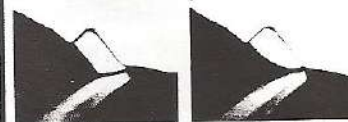
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Tires For Older Alfas

A personal view of what belongs on an older Alfa

by Dana Loomis - courtesy of i Saluti, AROC St. Louis
Chapter

The definition of good handling is subjective and personal, so one person's preferences are as good as another's. But it's important to recognize that there is a spectrum of opinion, and not everyone accepts the "bigger is better" approach to tires for *Alfas*. Also, there are a couple of technical problems with fitting large tires that should be pointed out.

In the 70s, the stock tires for 105/115 series *Alfas* were 165/80-14s. I made a long search for tires in this size and learned that they are essentially unavailable in the US now. Coker tire in Tennessee has Michelin XZXs in the proper size for about \$100, and has been saying for six months that they will eventually have XAS, too. I like the way the *GTV* handled with the XASs, which were a factory tire for it, but did not wait to wait for them or pay the price Coker is asking (\$155 each).

Nowadays, 185/70-14 seems to have become the new default size for original equipment-type tires for 105/115 *Alfas*. I believe this was also the size originally fitted to later *Spiders* at the factory. The overall diameter is the same as stock, and they fit on the standard 5.5"-wide wheels of earlier cars, as well as on the 6" wheels of late *Spiders*.

Quite a few manufacturers make tires in this size, so there are a number of choices and price options. However, they tend to be garden-variety passenger car stuff. Performance tires have moved on to lower aspect ratios.

The next larger tire that preserves the stock rolling diameter is 195/65-14. These will still fit on 5.5" or 6" wheels without problems. Unfortunately, there aren't many choices in this size. I'm using 195/65-14 Yokohama AVS intermediates on my *GTV*. They are wider than I had wanted initially, but they are excellent tires, and I have not seen any adverse effects of the 30mm of added width relative to stock. Dunlop D60s are also available in the 195/65-14 size.

Some people have resorted to 195/60-14, a size which offers many more choices in performance tires. One tire that gives excellent performance for the money is the Yokohama A509. How-

ever, be aware that this size does reduce rolling diameter substantially, which will throw off the speedometer and odometer, and change ride height. It also changes appearance, if that's important.

Going up to 205/60-14 the diameter is about 3/4" less than stock, and on an unmodified street car with 5.5" wheels, sidewall flex and clearance are real concerns (spacers are required behind the rear wheels for clearance with the bodywork). Personally, I would not use such a wide tire on a stock, street-driven spider.

In a street car, the usual approach is to preserve the original diameter of the tire/wheel combination so the gear ratios and ride height are maintained and the speedometer remains accurate.

With 195/70-14 tires the overall diameter would be about 0.50" larger than stock, with 195/60-14s, it would be about 0.75" less, and with 195/50-15s 1.2" less.



Fitting a tire that increases overall diameter effectively makes the final drive ratio longer, while reducing the diameter makes the ratio shorter. A sequence of tires sizes that more or less preserves the original diameter is:

185/70-14, 195/65-14, 205/55-15

These are the only sizes I would consider, unless I had well defined reasons that dictated doing something else.

Perhaps by modern standards, the tires originally fitted to the 60s and 70s cars were too small. But by the standards in effect when these cars were built, something close to the original tire size would provide the correct handling. Evolving technology has changed not only the behavior of cars at speed and the techniques used to drive them (when was the last time you saw a four-wheel drift in an F1 race?), but also

our perceptions of what is good.

Big, sticky tires that stay planted to the road may be faster on the track, but on the street, less capable tires that run at greater slip angles can give a lot of fun at much lower speeds. If you want a classic driving experience to go with your classic *Alfa*, the original size tires are the ones to use.

Mini Tech-Tip

A replacement battery for your 164

by Fred Di Matteo, AROC Tech Advisor - from the Internet

My 164 was built in 1990 and the battery in it is the original, 7 years old now. I will be pleasantly surprised if it lasts much longer even though it's as strong as ever. However, I feel it wise to know which replacement will be best for it.

I found the perfect battery made by Interstate which has the special vent hose to outside the car. If you look at the battery compartment of my car, there is no sign of any corrosion or even crud around the terminals. The Interstate number is 31P-PHD vented, made for 164s.

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Jan 31 & Feb 1	Willow Springs	Time Trial
Feb 21 & 22	Sears Point	Time Trial
May 2 & 3	Streets of Willow	School
June 13 & 14	Buttonwillow	Time Trial
Aug 29 & 30	Laguna Seca	Time Trial
Sept 26 & 27	Streets of Willow	School
Oct 31 & Nov 1	Willow Springs	Time Trial

We are not fond of the proximity of the first two dates, but felt it better than dropping one.

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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 - Long Beach 11 AROSC Board Meeting 24 General Meeting - 8pm Culver City 25-6 Time Trial, "Streets of Willow Springs" 26 Alfa-Porsche Challenge, Willow Springs	7 SMCCC Rally 14 AROSC Board Meeting 16 Swap Meet at "Under 3 Liter Meet" at Woodley Park 21 General Meeting - 8pm Culver City. Elections, "White Turkey Auction"	6-7 Time Trial - Willow Springs 13 Holiday Party 14 AROSC Board Meeting