

# Ufficialmente

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



January 1998

**In This Issue: Fall Swap Meet, "Driver of The Year!",  
Replacing *Milano* Power Steering, "Alfa-Porsche  
Challenge '97", "Unsung Heroes of AROSC", & more**

### Meeting Information

General Meetings are held the last Friday of each month except November and December at 8:00pm in the Uruapan 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

*Alfa Romeo Owners of Southern California*  
Post Office Box 3621  
Granada Hills, CA  
91394

### 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

A photo from Randal Higa gives us a glimpse of the Woodley Park event which combined the AROSC Fall Swap Meet with the "Best of France and Italy Under 3 Liter Car Show". David Gooley's Giulietta Sprint is in the foreground.  
Event coverage starts on page 8.

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### Disclaimer (a.k.a. Lawyer Repellent)

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# **AROSC Previews**

*What to expect at coming events*

## **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.

In addition, for this month only, the meeting will be in the Rotunda room at Veterans' Memorial Park, rather than the usual room. 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.

The AROSC Annual Meeting will feature as Guest speaker, John Retseke, originator of the "Car Show" on KPFK, and Automotive Commentator and production designer for KCET's "Life and Times". He will talk on how one becomes an automobile lover, along with many "tall" and other related tales.

John was actually the man who gave the unstoppable Len Frank his first job on radio, and together John and Len became L.A. institutions for over twenty years on the best automotive show in California. John also test drives and reviews many current European, Japanese, and domestic automobiles, often providing "uncommon sense" glimpses into many of our flawed perceptions of "Performance Cars".

AROSC annual meetings are a High Performance Gas. Don't miss this one. Join us at the AROSC meeting on 23 January.

## **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!

## **AROSC Time Trial at Sears Point Raceway - 21 & 22 February**

If you've never been to Sears Point, you don't know what you've missed! As a big change from our usual list of tracks, the second AROSC Time Trial of 1998 will be held on this Northern California course, which is a blast to drive!

## **AROSC General Meeting - 27 February**

Join us for February's general meeting and an evening of Alfa-related fun. Come see what you've been missing in the way of club activities. Along with the usual period for tech questions, "For Sale" and "Wanted" announcements, etc., we'll have a special program. As usual, the meeting time and location are located on the top of page 2 of *Alfacionada*.

Please note that our regular room for the general meeting has changed from the one which we had last year. We now meet in the Uruapan room at Veterans' Memorial Park.

### **Special Notice**

**The January meeting will be held on the fourth Friday, 23 January, rather than on the last Friday of the month.**

**Also, although the meeting will still be at Veterans Park, it will be held in the Rotunda room.**

## **AROSC General Meeting - 27 March**

Join us for March's general meeting and an evening of Alfa-related fun. Come see what you've been missing in the way of club activities. Along with the usual period for tech questions, "For Sale" and "Wanted" announcements, etc., we'll have a special program. As usual, the meeting time and location are located on the top of page 2 of *Alfacionada*.

Please note that our regular room for the general meeting has changed from the one which we had last year. We now meet in the Uruapan room at Veterans' Memorial Park.

## **"In Search of the Wildflowers" Tour - 29 March**

Join us for the first AROSC Tour of 1998. Once again, Jay Negrin will lead us on back roads and over hill and dale in search of the elusive California wildflowers. Will 1998 be the year in which AROSC finally traps these mythical creatures? Join us and see!

# Down the Road

*Comments from the outgoing AROSC President*

*by Jay Negrin - AROSC past-President*

My time has come. . . I have decided to step down as President. The reasons are simple and several. I want to continue to help AROSC, but in perhaps different capacities. I want others to share in the continual building process that helps define the nature of our organization.

As this is being written, the new officers of the club have not yet been elected. The members of the board were announced at the November general meeting, but the President, Vice-president, Treasurer, and Secretary have not yet been decided upon. By the time you read this, they will have been chosen, and that announcement will be made on the evening of our Annual Meeting, January 23rd.

I will not try to tell the future of our club. My fortune-telling skills aren't that good. With a new President, someone with his or her own ideas of where the club should be going, I don't even think that it is my place to make any predictions of who we will be in the coming year or years.

I can, however, reminisce over the past couple of years. I have seen several noteworthy changes, most of them good. We have witnessed the re-emergence of a serious concours program. Dan Ritter sowed the seeds in 1996, and we have all watched them grow. A few tentative steps at first, and two events last year which were well attended.

Dan, citing a lack of time to devote to doing a proper job, has stepped aside, and let a new Concours chair step in. He is Ron Avery, the owner of that shiny black *Montreal* we all (OK, many of us) saw at the Woodley Park Car Show in November. Ron has promised us new venues for our concours, and more of them, too.

At the end of 1995, we saw the inevitable happen. ARDONA, after several years of disappointing new car sales, pulled the plug on the North American market. Without getting into the whys and wherefores of that decision, suffice it to say that the national club, now over 4500 strong, is now the backbone of support for *Alfa Romeo* owners in this country. AROSC is the local Los Angeles chapter.

We are seeing a resurgence of membership on our local level, and that is heartening. I have talked to many new *Alfa Romeo* owners, explaining who we are, and what we can do for them. Most of those whom I talked with have joined our club, and that feels good, too.

I have also discussed issues via that wonder of modern technology, email and the internet. Whether it was a matter of visiting web sites, reading the volumes of information, both good and bad, on the *Alfa Digest*, or discussing issues more specific to *Alfettas*, I have come to realize that the electronic media is a force with which to be reckoned.

For those of you plugged in, you may already have noticed that most of the members of your board of directors have e-mail addresses listed on the mast head. That I have received precious few letters via this medium, I take to mean that the Internet is still in its relative infancy. It may be a big baby, but it is young, still, and immature in many ways.

We have many good, intelligent people in this club, and I see them trying to help AROSC tie into this electronic network to our benefit. Without trying to forecast our role, I await the outcome with baited breath, as the old cliché goes.

**You all have one thing in common, and that is the love of the marque**

And the people. The members. You are the ones who make this whole thing a reality in the first place. In the last two years, I have met more *Alfa Romeo* owners, of so many different varieties, types and sorts, that it is hard to keep the names and faces straight. The time-trialers and racers. The spit-shine concours folks. Those who bought the car because it was a nice looking car.

Some have come into the fold almost by accident. Some have joined even before they owned a car (like myself, I might add). But you all have one thing in common, and that is the love of the car. Maybe not the heritage of the marque, which is rich and varied, spanning ninety years. Maybe not the design and engineering, which always seemed to be near the leading edge of the industry. But the essence of the cars; Spiders, Coupes, and Sedans, all seems to come through. And that is reflected in the owners.

My crystal ball shows a shadow in the future. It says not to hold your breath waiting *Alfa Romeo* to come back to this country. It won't be in the immediate future. But when, not if, *Alfa Romeo* re-enters this market, it must be ready to do battle with the likes of Audi, BMW, Lexus and Infiniti, all established, premier marques. Passion and enthusiasm from a dedicated core of loyal owners may be nice, but will be insufficient to fuel a long-term commitment to stay here.

That decision has to be made on a sound financial basis. Our hearts desire the newest and the best to be available to us on this side of the pond. I am no different there, but I recognize the

*continued on page 18*

# Pocher and Alfa Romeo

*With an Alfa Model Concours on the schedule for this year's National Convention . . .*

by John Hertzman - from the Internet

In recent issues of *Alfa Digest* Keith Kum-Tuck Wong, Simon Favre, Godfrey DiGiorgi, and perhaps others I have missed, have written about the 1/8 scale Pocher *Alfa* kits. I agree with all that has been said: they are magnificent, astounding, complicated, challenging and in some respects (fits, proportions-) disappointing.

The Pochers have been around for at least forty years—I saw one on my first visit to Italy in 1959—and they were the ultimate when introduced, but kit technology (and standards, expectations) have advanced radically in the interim. Pocher also got maximum mileage out of tooling by doing 'families' - their 1935 Mercedes 500K cabriolet, 1936 500K Sport, and 1938 540K are the same car with detail differences; ditto the three 'different' Rolls Phantom IIs; ditto six versions of the *Alfa 2300*, the most recent being the Touring coupe. This involves lots of fudging and approximation and getting-away-with-its. The first of the old-line Pochers, the 1907 Fiat GP, and the last of the old-line Pochers, a Bugatti 50T, are the least compromised.

One other element complicated the Pocher story in the USA: Their US distributor bought large numbers (on credit, I gather) and then went bankrupt (shady dealing?) and a large inventory was picked up by K-Mart who priced them at pennies on the dollar and sold out in about one day. So there are many of the *Alfas* and Rolls kits of that particular vintage under beds, irresistible buys to people who had no pre-existing interest or experience in building complicated kits.

Many are opened, partially built, with parts missing, on the third or fourth owner. Don't pay too much for one of them.

The old-line Pochers were initially produced when respect for the older classics was rampant. More recently the trend has been to want the newest and fastest on the block, so Pocher has collaborated with Testors to produce less expensive die-cast Ferrari F-40s and Testarossas, the T in both coupe (red) and Spider (white) versions, pre-painted, less complicated, fewer parts, easier built, with better proportions and poorer fits.

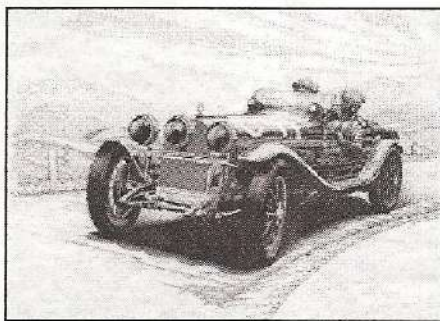
Most recently they have been retrofitting more recent kit technology to the most popular of the old kits, the Mercedes, simplifying construction, improving quality and lowering the price about 60%. Unfortunately this has not reached the *Alfas* yet. Perhaps later-

Warped plastic and out-of-proportion parts are a dismal picture, but the bright side is that plastic kit building (and salvaging)

techniques have been developed by serious amateurs and (unlike the die-casts) the kits can be simply starting points for splendid refinements. On the Touring *Spider* the doors and seat-cushions, for example, are seriously underscale, but with Fusi's *Jano* book the correct sizes can be established and the parts easily modified. Beyond that there is what is called 'kitbashing': mining existing kits, mixing kits, altering parts, making new parts.

A great *Alfa* example is a fine model of the *Tipo A Bimotore Monoposto* (which had two 6C1750 engines side-by-side); the builder put six hundred hours into cutting up two Pocher *Monza* kits, modifying many parts, fabricating new parts, and building a unique model of one of *Jano's* more remarkable cars.

None of my Pocher *Alfas* (when I get to them) are to have Pocher's stock bodies; the *Monza* will become the Nuvolari-Siena 1934 Mille Miglia car, which was a modified version of the standard *Monza* equipped with windshield, long fenders and a sidemount spare, while one of the standard Touring *Spiders* will be rebodied as SF31, the Zagato-bodied 2300 which DNF'd with Nuvolari and Guidotti in the 1931 Mille Miglia, took second in 1932, and again with Nuvolari took first in 1933 as a 2600.



If I live long enough, one of the Le Mans four seaters would be next - just lengthen the chassis, build most of the body out of styrene, and cast (or carve) a few small parts. Any of the Pocher *Alfa 2300* kits would supply most of the really hard parts for any of *Alfa's* prewar eights or sixes.

Of course if one does not already have great experience (and confidence!) the prudent thing is to subscribe to a magazine, read, get suppliers' catalogs, learn, and make mistakes on expendable cheap kits of Fords, Chevrolets, even Volvos. (Pocher makes a great kit of a Volvo turbocharged COE semitrailer tractor, expressly for Minnesotans). If you are going to screw up your first attempt at airbrushing, better the \$5 kiddy-kit than a \$600 *Alfa*.

There are three highly recommendable articles on building Pocher kits in purchasable back issues of 'Scale Auto Enthusiast' magazine. The *Tipo A Bimotore* is in issue #105, October 1996; a fine article on building the 8C2300 *Touring Spider* is in issue #92, August 1994; and an almost equally interesting and useful article on building the Bugatti 50T is in issue #85, June 1993.

The publisher's on-line customer service department is at <http://www.kalmbach.com/>, or you can email them at [customerservice@kalmbach.com](mailto:customerservice@kalmbach.com), or fax 414-796-1615. Another address they also use for back issues is [www.scaleautomag.com](http://www.scaleautomag.com).

# Unsung Heroes of AROSC

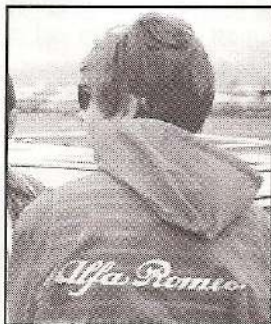
*A personal "thank-you" to some people who have helped bring you Alfacionada*

by Tom Suter - *Alfacionada* Editor

In any organization such as AROSC there are always a number of people whose efforts may be almost invisible to the general membership, but whose contributions are critical to the activities and the success of the club. As the Editor of *Alfacionada* for the last year, I've benefited immensely from the help of some of those people, and want to take a moment to publicly acknowledge that help.

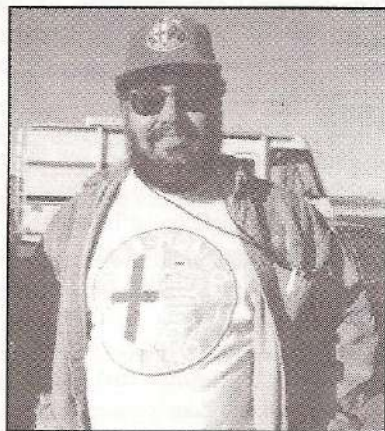
Please understand that there are others who have also been unsung heroes of AROSC in many other ways, such as the planning and conduct of events, and that this brief article is not intended to be even a complete list of everyone who contributed to *Alfacionada* in the last year. The people I want to acknowledge right now are those who have helped the most to keep the head of your novice Editor above water.

The order in which they are listed has no relationship to the magnitude of their contributions, but is essentially random, and the only reason that current photos do not appear for each of them is that I didn't plan ahead to make sure that one would be available. For this I owe an apology to everyone affected.



*Phyllis in 1969*

Another rock of support has been Jay Negrin, who not only has submitted his President's column well ahead of time each month, but has provided a number of articles and photos for *Alfacionada* covering various AROSC events. If one had to describe Jay's contribution in a very limited number of words, that phrase would have to be "Mr. Dependability".



*Jay Negrin*

First, a very big thank you has to go to Phyllis Gaylard, who has handled not only the task of working with our advertisers but has been responsible for the maintenance of the membership database and the addressing and mailing of *Alfacionada*. The latter task has been even more help than would have been the case if I had not spent the year working in Seattle.

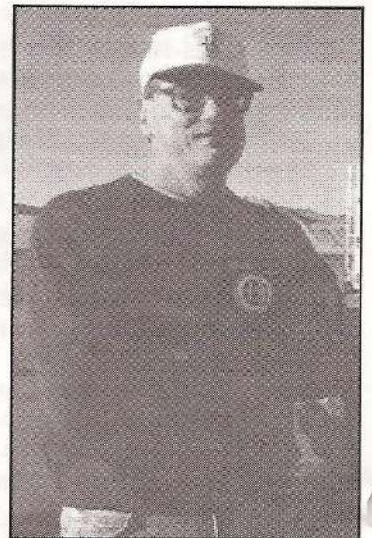
compiled which does not include Randall Higa. Anyone who has been reading *Alfacionada* will remember his Time Trial articles and his many photo essays. One of my major regrets as Editor of *Alfacionada* is that, in spite of my best efforts, you have not been able to see how good Randall's photos really are.



*Randall Higa and his wife Janice*

This man is an awesome photographer! If you thought that his Monterey "centerfold" picture looked nice in the October issue of *Alfacionada*, you should see how fantastic it looks in color. And, as the cover of this issue shows, Randall's eye for composition is as good as his other photographic skills. *Alfa* enthusiasts from elsewhere in the country who have seen *Alfacionada* have commented how fortunate we are to have his contributions.

A "two for the price of one" award has to go to the dynamic duo of Paul and Mary Blankenship. This couple has contributed both articles and photographs to *Alfacionada* on several occasions. One photo which you may have special cause to remember is the great "centerfold" picture in the December issue's article on the AROSC Fall Concours. Mary, I apologize for not planning far enough ahead to make sure that I had a picture of you.



*Paul Blankenship*

No list of major contributors to *Alfacionada* could possibly be

Special recognition should also be extended to Rob Poetsch, whose series of articles about the Internet have provided us with an introduction to a new perspective on the *Alfa* experience. A good indication of the value of his contribution can be found in the number of other *AROC* Chapter newsletters around the country which have reprinted Rob's writing.

Rob also deserves recognition for another reason. He stepped forward and volunteered to contribute to the club without even being asked, which is rare enough to deserve mention all by itself. Rob also deserves an apology for my failure to include his picture here.

If you've read more than one issue of *Alfacionada* this year, you will recognize that we also owe a vote of thanks to the *Alfa* community as a whole. In addition to reprinting Tech articles from the newsletters of a number of other *AROC* Chapter newsletters, we've benefited from direct and indirect contributions from individual *Alfa* enthusiasts around the country.

### Special Acknowledgment

There is one very large exception to the statement above that the acknowledgments for help with *Alfacionada* are in essentially random order. There is one person whose help has been so significant that it deserves special mention, and accordingly he has been left until the last.

That individual is Fred Russell, who is not even a member of SoCal. Fred is a member and Director of the Northwest Chapter of *AROC*, whom I met shortly after coming to Seattle on my job assignment. He is the Production Manager for a large printing company in the Seattle area. Fred has been printing the Northwest Chapter's newsletter, *Iniezione*, and now prints *Alfacionada*.

Coming into contact with Fred was probably the best thing that could have happened to a neophyte Editor whose knowledge of the techniques, limitations, and problems of the printing process was minimal.

Displaying the patience of Job, Fred has spent the past year educating this novice on the various methods of printing, the most practical choices for our budget and printing quantities, and the capabilities and limitations of the production process.

He has also used his knowledge and expertise to enhance *Alfacionada* beyond what others would have said is possible for the software and hardware we use.

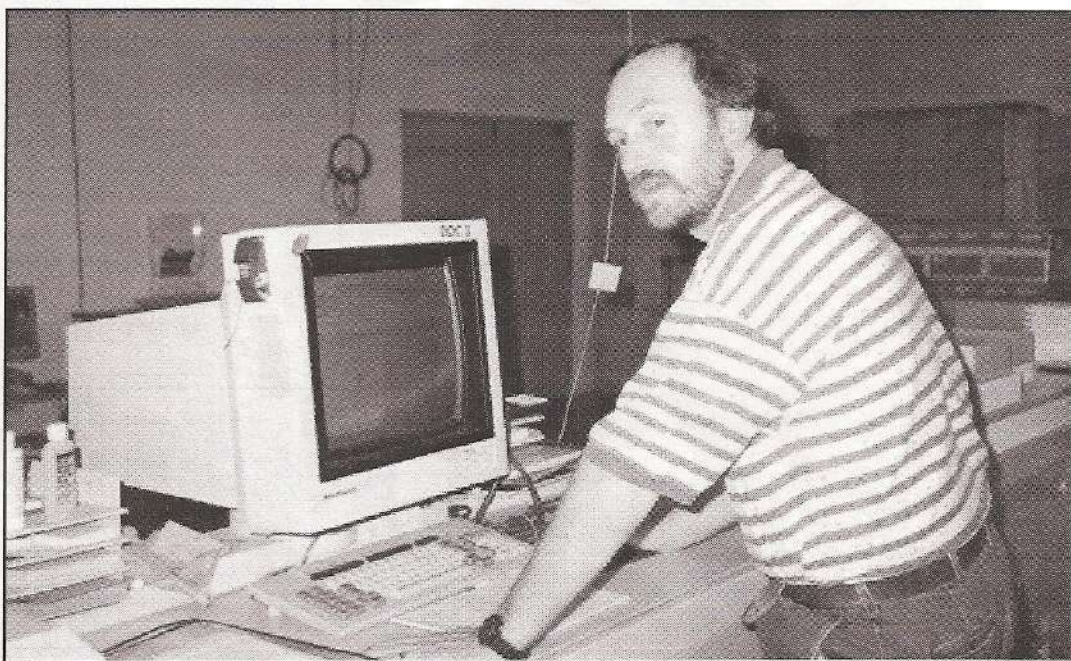
Until recently I was preparing each issue of *Alfacionada* with WordPerfect DOS, which in theory should not have been capable of doing some of the things which we have done with the newsletter. Fred's ability to do things with the DocuTech (the hardware used to print the issue) which are not in the manual has opened up horizons which would never have been available without his help and creativity. On every occasions his response to my "Is it possible to...?" questions has been, "Let's figure out how we can make that happen".

Fred's help has extended far beyond his professional expertise and his willingness to tutor a new and ignorant Editor. Who but a real *Alfa* enthusiast would work straight through the night to produce an issue of *Alfacionada* and then drive to my apartment at 4am with the copies. All of this "beyond the call of duty" behavior was done *without being asked*, just so that *Alfacionada* could be brought down as luggage on my 6:30am flight home, thus saving the club the cost of shipping and helping us get you the issue as quickly as possible!

Those who have seen the gorgeous 1998 *Alfa* calendar produced by the Northwest Chapter (and which we have for sale also) have seen additional evidence of Fred's drive and enthusiasm. He was a major factor in the production of that calendar and it is probably fair to say that, even though others also contributed, the calendar owes its very existence to Fred.

Since Fred has been such a major help with the production of *Alfacionada*, we've included a candid photo here of him at the control terminal of one of the DocuTech printers at his company. He would probably prefer to be seen behind the wheel of his *GTV6*, but the type of picture below would seem to be more relevant to *Alfacionada* readers.

Thanks Fred, it would not have been possible for me to have done it half as well without you!

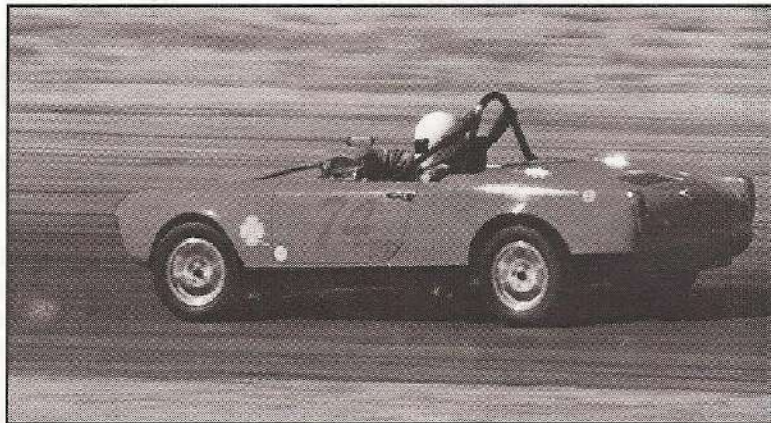


*Fred Russell in an unguarded moment during production of Alfacionada*

# **Alfa - Porsche Challenge '97**

*An Alfa enthusiast's photo essay of the local classic event*

*Photos by John Abbene of "Veloce Camera"*



*Rex Chalmers' 63 Giulia Spider - the first Alfa to finish*

Each year the October VARA weekend at Willow Springs Raceway includes a special race on Sunday known as the *Alfa - Porsche Challenge*. In addition to the competition among entrants, there is extra spice added by the competition among marques.

Unfortunately, the event was won by a Porsche this year. Last year's winner for *Alfa Romeo*, Alan Ward, was disqualified on Saturday for "over-enthusiastic" driving and was unable to compete in Sunday's event.

In spite of the disappointment for *Alfa* enthusiasts, John Abbene's great photos make it clear that it was still an event worth attending.



*Jerry Tinney and his '69 GTV argue with a Porsche*



*Kevin McKee heading through a corner in his '67 GTV*





*The GTV of John Samson, a former President of AROSC, leads a Porsche through a turn*



*John Samson's 67 GTV in action against a Porsche Speedster*



*Alfa versus Porsche - like turning back the clock 30 years!*

# AROSC Fall

(In Conjunction with the "Best of Italy")

## Photos and text by Randall Higa

The weather reports leading up to the weekend were filled with threats of "El Nino" storms. There didn't seem to be any chance of having a dry Swap Meet event. Yours Truly didn't even bother washing the *Spider* for the Show.

"There ain't NO way that it's NOT going to rain," I thought to myself. Well, on the morning of the event, there was no sign of rain so I gave *Spider* a quick spritz-and-wipe and motored out, to what turned out to be a truly wonderful *Alfa* event.



### Who says *Alfisti* will use any excuse to party?

Last year, it was reported that 30 *Alfa Romeos* showed up to the Swap Meet and Show. "Well," I thought smugly to myself, "there is NO WAY there are going to be half that many *Alfas* this year." I figured that most of the "fair weather" *Alfisti* would have already made plans for the day to sit at home in front of a roaring fireplace reading *Fusi* while sipping fine *grappa*.



Caution, *Alfa* enthusiast in training

Again I was proved wrong when more than 35 *Alfas* were shown on the grass, with many more in the parking lot. As usual, the *Alfa Romeos* easily outnumbered the other marques, which consisted of various *Fiat*s, *Ferraris*, *Lancias*, and *Peugeots* (somebody say pig-guts?). I sighed and thought of the wonderful newer cars that could have shown up if *Alfa Romeo*, *Lancia*, *Fiat*, *Maserati*, *Peugeot*, *Citroen*, *Renault*, et al, were still importing automobiles into this car-crazy country...



It's not an *Alfa Romeo*, but no one complained about it.

The Swap Meet vendors were in an adjacent parking area with boxes, bins, trunks, and crates chock full of *Alfa Romeo* parts, literature, and other miscellaneous "*Alfamobilia*." Parts and literature were also on hand for other Italian marques but didn't appear to be nearly as abundant as their *Alfa* "counterparts."

One of the special moments of the day was preceded by the roar of a minimally-muffled car driven over-enthusiastically. The words, "show off" were uttered by more than one onlooker, but were immediately retracted when the car and the driver were identified.

# Swap Meet

(aka "The Bad Italy Under 3 Liter Car Show")



*Not one, but TWO 2600 Sprint Zagatos!*



*ut that!*

It was none other than Jay Leno driving up in his Bugatti racer with his chin cutting through the chilly San Fernando Valley air. A crowd immediately swarmed the blue car and famous pilot.

Again, Jay proved that he is just another regular gear-head (only with a few more bushels of lira), out for a Sunday drive and a chance to mingle with other like-minded car-fanatics.



*"I thought that my Dad said a convertible is what the gals notice!"*

# Replacing the Power Steer

or... "How Much Do I

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

This article describes the difficulties in replacing the power steering rack on an '87 2.5L Milano (RH) and an '87 3.0L Milano (JR). Replacement of the rack was necessary because of excessive power steering fluid leakage.

## Preliminary

Work is a lot less unpleasant if the rack environs are cleaned up using something like Gunk to clean the grease and muck from around the rack a day or so before beginning. Disconnect the battery's negative terminal. Support the front of the car securely on jackstands. Put the transmission in neutral. Jackstands should be reasonably high since most work will be accomplished through an access port in the wheel well.

Remove both front tires. Siphon as much power steering fluid from the reservoir as possible. Place an oil catch-pan on the floor under the rack's valve. Check the perimeter of the access port for sharp edges. File down or tape any sharp edges. RH did not do this and consequently the backs of his hands looked like he had been attacked by a frenzied cat.

## Rack Removal

1. Through the access port, disconnect the rack's larger fitting. Catch any oil leaking from this fitting and dispose of it properly. Next disconnect the smaller fitting.
2. Turn the steering wheel until the castellated nut securing the rack to the steering column's universal fitting is visible through the access hole. Remove the cotter pin and then the nut and bolt. Carefully pry the steering column's universal fitting off the rack's splined shaft. It may help to pull up on the lowest part of the steering column from inside the car to facilitate this (first remove the bottom steering column cover).
3. Remove the four bolts securing the rack to the car body. Four bolts secure the rack to the chassis, two on the driver's side and two on the passenger's side. Of these bolts, three are very difficult to remove and one is extremely difficult to remove. On the passenger's side also remove the metal bracket and the rubber support block. Remove the rubber block first (it is split), then the bracket.
4. Carefully pull the rack towards the driver's side while rotating it 90 degrees clockwise to conform to the access hole. It can be removed, but not without difficulty. To remove the unit we had to twist, cajole, and finally, rearrange the sheet metal slightly to accommodate the rack's splined shaft. To make more room, RH disconnected the lower pipe from the exhaust manifold on

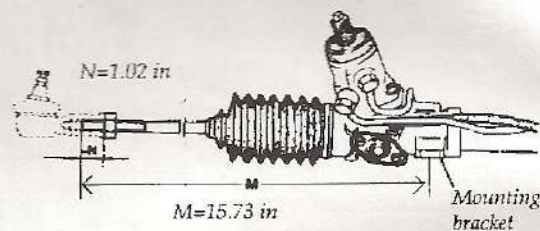
the driver's side. For the 2.5L Milano, this may not be necessary. On his 3.0L Milano, JR had to disconnect the lower pipes on the driver's and passenger's side.

Once all of the exhaust parts are pushed out of the way, the rack can be rotated so it almost clears the access hole sheet metal (sheet metal in this case means 1/4 to 3/8 inch of the inner fender/forward body structure which is spot welded forming the upper edge of the access hole). Minor bending of the sheet metal with a pair of ViseGrips provides the final clearance and the rack can be removed. One of the authors who was keeping track of the time noted that it took eight hours to get to this point!

## Rack Inspection

Compare the new and old racks and if necessary, reroute and secure with cable clamps any flexible piping on the new unit to match that on the old unit. RH purchased a ZF-remanufactured rack in '93 that was virtually identical to the old rack, except for the routing of the flexible piping on the rack. JR purchased a Pirelli-remanufactured rack in September '94 that was similar to the old rack, but lacked the flexible piping and contained two grooves in the splined shaft, rather than the one groove on the old rack.

5. Add power steering fluid to the new rack and then replace the plastic plugs which closed the fitting holes during shipment (not much fluid is accepted).
6. Set up the rack as shown in the figure below before installing. The distance from the end of the shaft to the center of mounting bracket should be 15.73 inches. This distance can be set by acting on the rack's splined shaft (above the spline) with pliers. Be careful not to damage the splines! The distance from the end of each shaft to each securing nut should be 1.02 inches.



## New Rack Installation

7. Thoroughly clean the chassis support for the rack, especially the four bolt holes (lots of WD40, compressed air). Also clean up the four bolts, preferably with a die to remove any dirt and corrosion. Make sure each bolt tightens easily in its hole.
8. Insert the new rack into the cavity through the access hole.

# Steering Rack in a *Milano*

*Really Love This Car?"*

Carefully guide it into position. Don't push on the shaft ends or you may disturb the centering alignment. You may once again have to coax the sheet metal into allowing the rack's passage, but the new rack should be much easier to install than the old rack was to remove. Once in place, attach the rack to the chassis with four bolts.

9. Replace all of the exhaust pieces that you previously removed either to improve access or simply out of frustration.

10. Attach the steering column universal fitting to the rack's spline shaft. Rotate the steering wheel until the universal fitting's bolt position lines up with the groove in the rack's splined shaft. Then carefully press them together working through the access hole and from inside the car, if necessary. It helped to apply gentle pressure on the universal fitting with a pry bar. Pressure was applied to the fitting while the steering wheel was rotated. After the fitting slides on, use a centering punch to position the fitting vertically along the spline shaft, so it will accept the bolt. Insert the bolt and screw on the castellated nut. Insert a new cotter pin and bend it around the nut.

The differences in JR's rack made assembly much more involved. There were two grooves on the splined shaft for the aligning bolt of the universal fitting. One of the grooves would align with the universal if the steering wheel were rotated 90 degrees, but the splines would not line up (part of the splined shaft is "unsplined" forcing the universal fitting to go on in only one position). The other groove would match if the steering wheel were rotated 180 degrees. Ergo, the steering wheel would be upside down!

JR then called the remanufacturer of the rack. "This has never happened before," he said. "It may be, that when remanufactured, the splined shaft was put in 180 degrees out" (WHOOPEE!). The choices were to get another rack (another eight hours?) or to remove, rotate 180 degrees, and remount the steering wheel.

Since remanufactured racks are all ZF (with or without flexible piping) and are interchangeable (HAH!) between the *Model 75* and *Model 90*, and the remanufacturer had no easy way of telling if the next rack would have the same problem, JR called Alex at West County Motors about rotating the steering wheel.

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Alex consulted with "the mechanics" and said that on a *Milano* the steering wheel could be rotated 180 degrees. Therefore, JR reattached the steering column universal and temporarily had an upside down steering wheel.

11. Attach the two fluid fittings to the rack. Make sure the nuts on the rack shaft ends are still each 1.02 inches from the end. Attach the steering tie rod ends to the rack on both sides. This is done by rotating the rack shafts coming out of the rubber boots using a 13mm wrench. (Remove the clamp and lubricate the rubber boots at their ends with power steering fluid before turning the shafts.) Turn the shafts until the lock nuts contact the faces of the tie rod ends. Tighten to 50 ft-lbs.

12. Fill reservoir and loosen the large fitting at the rack valve until fluid flows out it. Run engine, fill reservoir to "MAX" level. Do a few lock-to-lock turns, and make sure fluid level remains at "MAX."

13. If necessary, remove the steering wheel and rotate it 180 degrees. Carefully pry the horn "ring" off with your fingers. Disconnect the horn wires. Remove the nut and washer. Fiddle for two hours with the wheel puller until you can find some combination of the parts of the tool which will fit inside the center of the steering wheel.

Simply pop the wheel off. Rotate the wheel 180 degrees and reinstall it. Fortunately, the plastic "dogs" which are part of the turn signal on/off apparatus are so installed that the only possible reinstallation is the 180 degree rotation.

14. Take the car somewhere close to have the toe-in adjusted. In JR's case in spite of repeatedly checking the nut settings, the toe-in was sufficiently out of spec that the tires squealed all the way.

The following related notes appeared after this article was written:

**NOTE 1:** From *Alfa Ricambi Performance Quarterly*, Spring 1995, in the article "AR Ricambi Project Car, *Milano* 2nd Installment"

"Remember not to twist the rack end boots or to tear them open when adjusting the toe or else dirt may enter, thereby wearing out the seals prematurely. Also, if the rack develops a slow leak, be sure not to let the reservoir run dry or you will ruin the power steering pump as well!"

"When removing the rack assembly, it helps to loosen the driver's side motor mount and jack up on the underside of the engine carefully to gain extra clearance. It may also be easier to remove the exhaust manifold on that side to improve access to the hydraulic lines. Disconnect the battery as there are some hot lead junctions in that area which can cause some interesting fireworks. The rack easily slides out the driver's side wheel well (with wheel removed, of course)."

**NOTE 2:** From *Alfa Digest*, 23 November 1995, Vol 01, Number 210, by Jay T Hinton, [hinton@mail.loc.gov](mailto:hinton@mail.loc.gov)

"Being just back from a trip in France, I thought I would let out a couple of things. First, I had been trying to buy just the seals to rebuild a steering rack on a *Milano*, was told no way could I buy them in the US. So, my first day in France, I went to a local *Alfa* dealer and he said no problem, ordered me two sets and I paid 60 bucks total."

**NOTE 3:** From *Alfa Digest*, 10 July 1996, Vol 02, Number 302, by Colin Verrilli, [verrilli@vnet.ibm.com](mailto:verrilli@vnet.ibm.com)

"A couple footnotes on replacing the PS rack in my *Milano* (75). My car is an '87 Gold. I did not have a lot of problem with the 4 bolts. I used a variety of wrenches though. Offset and "bended" wrenches help."

"To make clearance to remove the rack, I had to remove the driver side exhaust manifold and loosen the passenger side one at the Y-pipe. I also loosened the driver side motor mount (single bolt) and raised that side of the engine slightly. I pried the Y-pipe down slightly and inserted a block of wood. With this done, I could remove the rack as stated in the article. Believe me, I tried first without doing this -not possible. (Note, I did not have to bend sheet metal!)"

"The rack I took out was the kind without the flexible tube and with the two notches in the splined section. The one I put in had the flexible tube and only one notch. It was remanufactured by ZF. I re-routed the flexible tube to make mounting the U-bracket easier."

"I replaced the outer tie-rod ends while at it (about \$22 each). I followed the setup measurements in the article, but ended up with a steering wheel way off center. The alignment shop couldn't get enough adjustment out of the tie-rod ends. I ended up having to pull the steering wheel and recenter. The steering column must have been put on the notch that's 45 degrees off of the standard one. I replaced the exhaust gaskets when I reassembled (3 at manifold, 1 at Y-pipe)."

"If you do this, plan on some serious time...10 to 20 hours. A lot of this time is spent cleaning the grease and gunk off all the parts."



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## Driver Of The Year !

*Long-time AROSC member Alan Ward receives the National AROC award*



*Alan at the Santa Barbara SCCA races in the late 60's*

Word has been received that this year's recognition by the National *Alfa Romeo Owners Club* as Driver of the Year has been awarded to Alan Ward. A member of the Southern California Chapter for over 35 years, Alan has been chosen for this honor based upon his performance in VARA vintage racing in 1997.

Active in *AROSC* for many years as a member and officer, Alan began competitive driving in his *Giulia Spider* in the early 1960's. His initial experience was gained in autocrossing, which was extremely active in the L.A. area at that time. In the mid 60's, he switched to *SCCA* racing, still in his *Giulia Spider*.

He then switched to a later model *Spider* which he ran under the "Ward and Dean Racing" banner. Alan was a major force in the *SCCA's* D production class, regularly qualifying for the National runoffs. After racing in *SCCA* during the 1970's and 1980's, Alan switched to competition in the VARA vintage racing events. He can usually be found at or near the front of his class in the maroon *GTV* owned by Phyllis Gaylard.

In the fall of 1996 he won the "Alfa- Porsche Challenge" race at VARA's Willow Springs event. This success was followed in 1997 by a season in which won or placed highly in every event in which he finished. We understand that there will be an article in the February issue of *Alfa Owner* announcing that the National club has given him their "Driver of the Year" award. Congratulations, Alan!



*VARA racing in the Alfa GTV of Phyllis Gaylard*

# Gasket Seal Use in Alfa Engines

*Comments on Alfa gaskets from a number of Alfa gurus*

*courtesy of i Saluti, AROC St. Louis Chapter*

**Q:** What kind of gasket sealant should I use when reassembling an engine? I recently stripped my V6 engine and found that almost half of the oil pump filter was covered in globs of RTV silicone sealant that had oozed out of joints and broken off over time. I definitely do not need to put the engine back in and find that some inaccessible gasket is leaking. back in and find that some inaccessible gasket is leaking.

**A:** The cylinder head(s) gaskets are never plastered with cement of any kind, they have a built-in adhesive that's activated by pressure. It is essential that the gaskets and prepared surfaces not be contaminated with oil or even your finger prints, do not handle head gaskets with bare fingers.

I find Permatex products best for other gaskets, paper type or cork or other material and then very sparingly. The cam cover gaskets are being put on with no adhesive but the older black semirigid type are generally cemented to the cam cover side only so that the cover may be removed and reinstalled without damage. People who use RTV in the rear main bearing caps instead of the "cigarette" seals are fooling no one, it's a very dangerous practice.

No leaks come from clean, smooth, scratch-free, non-pitted surfaces. A scratch is a valley and no gasket can fill that void and cements in those voids cannot withstand forces trying to push liquids past.

We are fortunate to have aluminum surfaces to work with where block sanders flatten out the uneven surfaces very easily. In some cases where the scratch or dent is too deep, an aluminum epoxy paste can be used to fill voids and then sanded smooth.

*-Fred Di Matteo, AROC Tech Advisor*

**A:** RTV (room temperature vulcanizing) silicone comes in many different flavors for many types of sealing jobs. Used sparingly, it is an outstanding sealant. This is not the only type sealant that can cause problems. Permatex #2 gets hard and brittle and also breaks off ending up in your sump. No matter what type you use, the key is using it with discretion.

RTV, and most other sealants, have their places. They will not make up for grossly mismatched surfaces and they should not be used where there is high pressure.

*-Jim Roth*

**A:** Excessive amounts of RTV can cause big problems, but any sealer used in excess can cause the same symptoms and assembling an engine without any sealer is a guarantee of leaks.

Here are a couple of techniques I use to make sure there are no bits floating around inside my engines.

1. Apply the RTV sparingly. Use the applicator nozzle supplied with the tube. Cut it on a 45 degree angle at the 6 mm diameter step. On the 'point' of the nozzle, remove a 1.5 - 2.0 mm triangular notch. Hold the nozzle flat against the surface to be sealed as the tube is squeezed-this way only a narrow ribbon of sealer is applied. One of the 'gun' type tools designed to squeeze the tube makes this operation easier.

2. Let the sealer sit for 5-10 minutes before assembling. RTV cures after it absorbs moisture from the air. If you immediately assemble the parts, the center of the joint may never completely cure.

3. Assemble the parts and pull the bolts/nuts up with about 1/2 the normal torque. Let sit overnight and then finish tightening. This puts a compressive force on the cured gasket.

4. Carefully inspect the inside of the joint for any traces of oozing sealer. In the unlikely event you find any, scrape and remove it. The timing cover surfaces are fairly narrow, and some 'oozing' may be found. The oil pan rail is wide enough that 'oozing' is unlikely (and inspection is impossible).

Obviously, it takes a couple days to assemble an engine. I use RTV in only a couple places-in all cases without paper gaskets: timing cover, oil pan cigarette seals (squirt some into the hole before installing the seal), rear cover - oil drain on back of block cylinder liners to the block (without the factory O-rings), and water pump.

A couple of other thoughts . . .

The surfaces must be absolutely oil free, use brake cleaner. If your car has an oxygen sensor use only 'sensor safe' RTV. Do not use RTV to seal paper gaskets. If you use RTV at the base of the liners, put all the liners in first (without crank or pistons/rods) and hold them in place overnight with the head (use your old head gasket) torqued to 30-35 ft-lbs.

Form-in-place gaskets (RTV, etc.) allow leak-free metal-to-metal joints in the engine. This produces a stronger structure, and precludes creep in the joints which shows up later as a leak. Most car manufacturers use RTV somewhere in their engines, any fluids collected during emissions testing are added to the tailpipe emissions when certifying a new car, so the OEMs are very picky about leaks.

*-Jim Steck, AutoComponenti*



## Electrical Non-connects

by Bruce Giller - courtesy of Alfantics, AROC  
Capital Chapter

Many times the reason that electrical components on your *Alfa* tend to become flaky, or non-working, is poor connections and grounds (at least the Prince of Darkness, Lucas, is not involved!). It doesn't take a too-loose fitting connection, or a bit of corrosion long to block the transfer of much needed electrons down the wire. Loose fitting connections only require the use of a wrench to tighten that nut, or pliers to crimp that slide-on connector a little tighter. Corroded connections, on the other hand, take a bit more work.

Loose fitting connections can occur anywhere on the car but I've found that corrosion will most likely occur outside of the passenger compartment where they are exposed to the elements. Although, the *Spider's* Bosch FI fuel pump fuse (located under the rear deck), it is notorious for corroding to the point where the fuel pump no longer works

For those connectors that you can easily separate into individual units, such as ones attached to a single post, use emery cloth, or a file on really bad cases, to remove the corrosion. Polish/file until the connectors are bright and shiny. It is also a good idea to remove all corrosion from around the connection post. Next, put on a coating of a dielectric grease that will prevent further corrosion so that you won't have to return at a later date and repeat all your work.

For those slip-on connectors, cleaning them out is quite a different matter. Usually, you can't get emery cloth or a file in there where it will do any good. I've been using an electronic cleaner spray from CRC, QD (Quick Drying) Electronic Cleaner. I pull the connectors apart, spray both connectors, and let it dry. I did this to every connector on the back of my fuse box and the lights seem brighter and my voltmeter reads a bit higher. You can apply the dielectric grease to the connectors for added protection.

International Auto Parts sells a 'NYK Corrosion Preventive Compound' which I have been using with great success. I cleaned up the connectors on the 'main block terminal' under the hood of my '86 *Spider* last year, put on the NYK Compound and they still look good. I use the stuff on all my electrical connections now.

I've also heard of other products from CRAIG Labs in San Diego (619-451-1799) one called PreservIT for new connectors, and DeoxIT, a "one step" cleaner/preservative for old ones. I've heard that these products have bits of copper in them to enhance conductivity. If so, you might have to watch out when using them on multi-wire connectors so that aren't any shorts. I've never tried them but the word on the Italian-car mailing list is that they work well.

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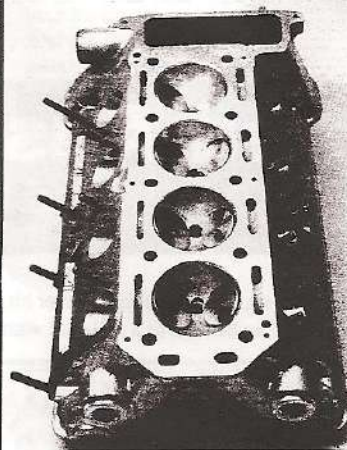
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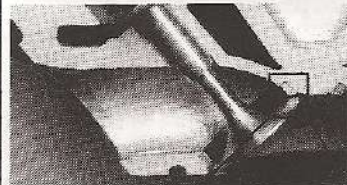


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continued from page 4

need for a viable corporate presence here, not just a cadre of enthusiasts. I will wait for the return of *Alfa*, though. They represent such inherent automotive goodness, and the United States market is so potentially lucrative, I cannot see the two separated for long.

As our club goes from strength to strength, remember that we approach not only the new century, but also the next millennium. Those numbers may not be magic, but they do signify to me, a new start, a new age. Let us all work together, to ensure that we enter that new age together, strong, and infused with the energy of our automotive loves.

Look for the Cross and Serpent on cars different than your own. Flash your lights and wave to other owners. Even if they don't respond initially, they will eventually. We all must recognize that we are the same underneath. We will face the trials and the joys of ownership together, in an elite fraternity.

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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 - 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

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*Alfa Romeo Owners Club - Membership for AROSC*  
2468 Gum Tree Lane, Fallbrook, CA 92028

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

AROC Member Number (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ Alfa(s) Owned \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to "Alfa Romeo Owners Club"