



ARCC UPDATE

November 2008

Alfa News

by George Beston, Cobourg

To the surprise of no-one, the much anticipated re-introduction of Alfa Romeo to the North American Market has been postponed. Mr. Marchionne is quoted as saying that it would be simply crazy investing for returning Alfa in such a depressed U.S. market. Now we're waiting for 2011.

One piece of good news is that the MiTo has been named 2009 European car of the year. The 1.4 L turbo version with 153 hp must be a lot of fun!

Toronto Chapter Fall Tour

by Ron Thiel, Toronto

Elio and I announced the October 4th Fall Tour a month or so in advance to give everyone ample time to plan on attending. The response was underwhelming. I suggested if there were only four cars we should cancel. Elio persisted and followed up with a one day event instead of the usual two days. I was in France at this time enjoying fine wine and cheese and exchanging emails with Elio. Each email had another suggestion and interest grew. The final new and revised plan was met with a nice response – 9 participants. Thank you for supporting this club event.



Photo by Fabio Venier

On Saturday Elaine and I led off in the only GTV followed by seven other Italian cars and one SUV. We were blessed with good weather as we left from Hornby. We drove on well paved smooth back roads to Elora where we had refreshments at Tim Horton's. Then we parked and walked over the bridge and along Main Street to view the falls and to window shop. Although the stop was only a half hour, at least one enterprising professional shopper found time to buy shoes and still enjoy the scenery. Next stop – the old covered bridge at West Montrose. The route chosen gave us a panoramic view of the valley in brilliant fall colors.



Photo by Ron Thiel.

The sign at the bridge bears this inscription. *“This structure, the only remaining covered bridge in Ontario was designed by John Bear in 1880, on the authority of Woolwich Township Council, to replace an earlier bridge over the Grand River. Built a year later by John and his brother, Benjamin, the 198-foot bridge was covered to protect the wooden flooring and frame against the elements. Known locally as the Kissing Bridge, it later came under the jurisdiction of Waterloo County.”* We staged the cars so that a picture of each car could be taken as it emerged from the covered bridge.

Upon arrival in St. Jacobs smaller groups formed and found a quick lunch before a walk-about. The

four women enjoyed the shopping and found some real bargains. Some of the men went to the Home Hardware museum, the maple syrup display and the broom factory while others gathered in the parking lot to solve technical problems like how to change alternators. (*Editor's Note – a full tech article to follow!*)

When Elaine and I test drove the route on Wednesday, we saw eight Mennonites travelling in horse drawn carriages as we travelled from St. Jacobs to Baden, however we only saw one at a crossroad today.

Everyone enjoyed touring Castle Kilbride which was built in Baden in 1877 by James Livingston and named after his birthplace in Scotland. Seen from the road it dominates its surroundings with its clean Italianate design capped by a towering belvedere. Its attractive external appearance, however, is overshadowed by its amazing interior decor, which in its own right classifies it as “artistry of international significance”. It is an amazing mansion and we all enjoyed wandering from room to room full of antiques and reading about the highlights and history.

It was back into our cars and off to Petersburg and the historic Blue Moon restaurant for ‘schmecks’ good German food. ‘The Moon dates to 1848, when it began its hospitality life as a stagecoach stop and watering hole. Once owned for more than a half-century by members of the Schmalz family, the venerable landmark was purchased by John Bennett and Bev Finnegan a year or so ago. It's only minutes from Kitchener and Waterloo. One of the specialties of the house is pig's tail. Some of the more venturesome amongst us enjoyed this delicacy as an appetizer. I had the pig's tail and stuffed ribs as a main course. Wow, what a plate full!

It was time to head home before darkness set in. It was a full fun day. The company was great, the scenery awesome, the cars performed well, and we left with a full stomach. What more could you ask?

Vintage Racing in Alfa Dogs

#105

by Christopher Creighton, Toronto.

I purchased Fil, my 1972 GTV about 8 years ago. He was rough and I didn't have the resources to consider restoring him to show car condition so he would spend his time with me as a summer daily driver. It took many years and a lot more work than I thought it would before he was reliable.

In late 2003, Geoff Layne informed me that we were going to go vintage racing. A year later, he acquired Giulie, a 1965 Giulia Spider and the journey began. She underwent a pretty thorough restoration the first winter and in 2004 we began a full season of competition. Racing that car was a real thrill for me but always, in the back of my mind, was the realization that if I pushed too hard, then something could happen. The thought of selling my house to pay for race car repairs was pretty unappealing.

In 2007 Geoff decided that he wanted to sell Giulie in the hopes that he could find a GTV race car. To that end, she didn't see much track time. It's very difficult to sell a broken or squashed race car. It dawned on me that this was the time to have my own car. I began Fil's conversion to a 'Road & Track' car – useable both on the street and on the race track.



Photo by Robert Creighton.

Beginning in the fall of 2007 and continuing into the late spring of 2008 I had the necessary work done. For safety, he needed to have a 4 point roll bar installed. As well, I had to replace the existing fuel tank with an FIA approved racing fuel cell. A master 'kill' switch was wired in, a racing seat and 6 point harness fitted and a plumbed fire suppression system added. Hood pins are required (even with a front hinged hood) and a safety hoop was installed to contain a broken drive shaft, should that ever happen. All of these modifications were mandated by CASC, the sanctioning and licensing authority for racing in Ontario for the safety of me and others on the track. They are not negotiable, nor should they be.

Performance modifications included a set of mild race cams (small steps...), velocity stacks and Piper Cross free flow air filters, race valve springs, headers, electric radiator fan and oil cooler. An Accusump and rev limiter were installed in the hopes that they may prolong engine life. Money saving modifications are important too.

The suspension was stiffened with beefy sway bars front and rear, race springs and a drastic lowering. I had planned to keep Fil street legal for the odd outing with the Alfa Romeo Club but with 3" of clearance between the oil pan and disaster, that plan was quickly scrapped. The difference in handling between the stock and modified suspension is remarkable.

I race on Hoosier Street TD tires. They are the tires of choice for many of the VARAC drivers and although not inexpensive (about \$200 each), they are plentiful and they stick like glue. I have an old set of Turbina magnesium wheels that I use. Not the most current design but they are extremely light and at \$100 for 5 wheels, a difficult deal to pass up.

If my budget allows, I plan to have Joe Cannella (our team mechanic, fellow racer and font of Alfa knowledge) port and polish the head, install big valves, replace the stock upper control arms with adjustable units and add a Panhard bar. Eventually the bottom end will receive (slightly) higher compression pistons (to avoid the switch to *very* expensive race gas) and the transmission will have to be rebuilt – downshifts into second at high revs are currently a ballet of double clutches.

My first race season went well, I think. Fil was ready for the 29th Annual VARAC (Vintage Automobile Racing Association of Canada) Vintage Racing Festival in late June and although, sadly, the weekend was marred by the death of a racer, he ran well, finishing all sessions intact. One thing was glaringly obvious though. He is slow.

Almost all of the cars that I race against have highly tuned race engines. While I can hold my own with most competitors in the corners, they run away from me on the straights. Horsepower is what I need. Horsepower is expensive. Small steps...

Fil and I ventured west with Joe Cannella and Doug Paraschuk in early August to attend the Waterford Hills 50th Anniversary Vintage Races. Compared to Mosport, the track is very tight and technically challenging and a lot of fun. I fought chronic under steer all weekend only to discover afterward that I had a broken sway bar mount up front, effectively disconnecting the bar. That explained the inside rear wheel lift on pretty much every corner on the track.

The next event was the BARC regional weekend. With the sway bar repaired (thanks Joe), Fil ran very well, was very predictable – even in the rain – and finished the weekend with a second place in group finish in the feature race. What made it even better was that the podium finish came after a race long battle with the third place car.

The final race of the season (for me, anyway) was the Celebration of Mosport held on the last weekend of September. Joe had lowered Fil almost 2 inches from the last race and he is pretty much at the terminal height now. I also bought a very small resonator from Joe and had it installed and what a difference it made. The increase in horsepower was remarkable!

My goal for the weekend was to break the 2 minute lap barrier and with the extra power and handling, I was able to lower my time to 1:58.673. As Ken Lee reminded me, 1:55 will be the first challenge for next year...

The ride has been fun. I had never intended to turn Fil into a full time race car but competition has gotten the better of me. Watching everyone drive by me on the Andretti Straight is acceptable for this year but it's already getting a bit annoying. Power is speed and speed is good!

If you've ever thought that you might like to race, consider vintage racing. It's relatively inexpensive, great fun, likely the only chance that you will have to drive your Alfa the way that it was meant to be driven and it's civilized. The racing is intense and you don't have to worry about another driver 'dive-bombing' you into a corner. For more information go to www.varac.ca

Finally, I'm proud to be part of the effort to bring Alfa Romeo back to racing in Canada. Our team, the "Alfa Dogs" currently consists of Geoff Layne (on the search for a new car), Joe Cannella (1969 GTV), Doug Paraschuk (1972 Spider), Andre Gagne (1972 GTV) and myself (1972 GTV). We're looking for more racing Alfas.

The next time you are at Mosport for the Vintage racing Festival or a regional race weekend, drop by the Alfa Dogs paddock for a visit. With luck, we'll have the espresso maker working.

First 8C Competizione in the US? from Jalopnik.com



This beauty has been parked at the commuter train station in Rye, New York. Its owner is apparently using it as part of a daily commute to the Big Apple.

Upcoming ARCC Events

Alfa Romeo Club of Edmonton

Date	Time	Event
May 30	6 pm	Go Karting
June 7	12 noon	Spring Road Trip
June 13	6 pm	Eurasia Show & Drive
June 21		Solstice Rally
September 7	1:30 pm	Concours / BBQ
September 9	7:30 pm	Meeting – Royal Pizza
September 27	11 am	Fall Colours Road Trip
October 25	8 pm	Italian Dinner
November	TBD	Meeting at Santos

Ottawa Chapter

Date	Time	Event
May 25	10 am	Drive to Oxford Mills
June 8	12 noon	Canadian Grand Prix viewing - Tifosi Lounge
June 18-22		AROC Convention
July 15	TBA	Movie Night
July 19	10:30am	Drive / Cottage BBQ
August 7	7:00 pm	Pub Night
August 24	TBA	Zig-Zag Tour
September 24	TBD	Drive to Wakefield
October 25	7:30 pm	Pot Luck Dinner

Toronto Chapter

Date	Time	Event
April 2	7:00 pm	AGM – MiniGrid
April 19	TBD	Tech Session
May 1	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
May 4	TBD	Sunday Drive
May 24	9:30 am	TZ Restoration tour
June 5	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
June 8	TBD	Sunday Drive
June 18-22		AROC Convention
June 22	TBD	Vintage Festival
July 3	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
July 6	TBD	Sunday Drive
July 18-20	TBD	Shell Historic Races, Mont Tremblant
July 19	1:00 pm	BBQ, Ottawa
August 7	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
August 17	TBD	Picnic, BBQ
September 4	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
September 14	TBD	Sunday Drive
September 21	TBD	Wine Tour
September 28	TBD	Club Rally
October 2	TBD	Cruise Night
October 5	TBD	Fall Tour
November 6	7:00 pm	Pub Night
December 6	TBD	Holiday Dinner
February 28	10:00 am	Directors' Meeting



Photo by Alma Beston. Stopping to take it all in.

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ARCC Update

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