



# ARCC UPDATE

February 2011

## *Alfa Romeo Sprint*

by **George Beston, Cobourg**

In these sometimes dreary winter months, it can be useful once in a while to sit back and count our blessings. To me, one bright spot for Canadian Alfa enthusiasts is the fact that older automobiles can be imported into Canada with few restrictions as long as they're more than 15 years old. This opens the doors for those inclined to import Alfas of interest which in fact were never sold here.

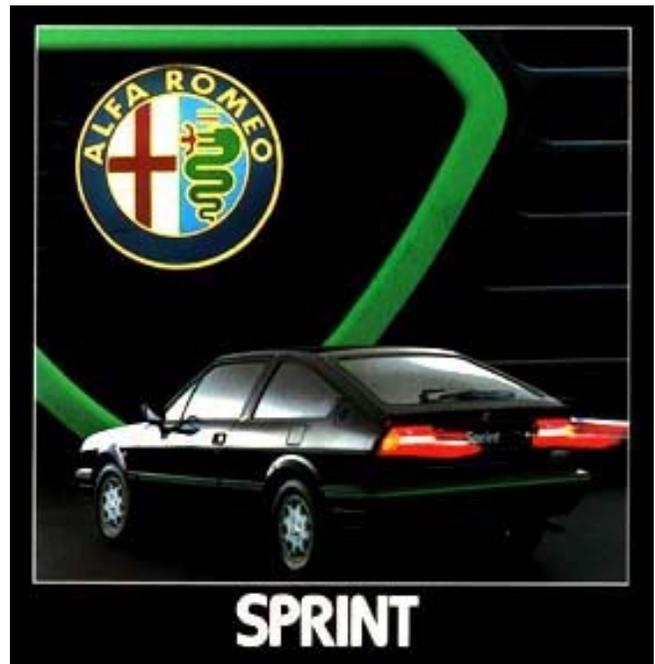
The Sprint started out in 1976 as the Sud Sprint, a sporty 3-door hatch based on the Alfa Sud with unique Ital Design bodywork. As the Sud matured it morphed into the "33" with a somewhat modified platform and a very different body style. The Sprint adopted the 33's platform, was re-named the Alfa Romeo Sprint, and carried on with slightly revised styling until 1989. As time went on, engine size increased from 1.3 litres to 1.5 litres and finally 1.7 litres.

I wouldn't call this family of Alfas exotic, but the basic design is quite interesting. The flat opposed four cylinder engine and front wheel drive make the Sud line very different from other Alfas. The engine has a cast iron block and aluminum single overhead cam cylinder heads, and twin double choke carburetors, one per bank. After Sprint production ceased, four valve twin cam heads and fuel injection were available in the 33 as well as the later 145 and 146 models which were in production as late as 1997. These engines have been finding their way into Sprints whose owners are intent on getting more power.

The suspension is also advanced, with McPherson strut / lower A-arm front suspension, and a trailing arm beam axle out back with a Panhard bar for location purposes. Disc brakes were used all round until 1984, but then the rear drums of the 33 were adopted. Notably, the weight of the Sprint was fairly low at a little more than 900 kg.

Bob Whitehouse, a Toronto area enthusiast, imported the Sprint that caught my attention late last year. Bob is an individual who has lived and

worked in Australia, Canada and the United States over the years. It comes as no surprise that his enthusiasm for the Sprint is a result of his experience with road going and racing examples of the beast.



*Cover of dealer sales brochure.*

Bob found his Sprint via the Internet. The previous owner lives in the Netherlands and advertised his Sprint for sale in mid-year. After the expected inquiries and negotiations, the sale was finalized in September. It took a while, but Bob persevered and finally found a shipper who would pick the car up, load it in a twenty-foot container and put it on a ship bound for Montreal. Five weeks later the sprint arrived on Canadian soil. Bob immediately received an official notice from CFIA, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, demanding that the Sprint either be returned or be sent to a contractor in Montreal to "sanitize" the underbody at the importer's expense. With no other choice, Bob allowed his Sprint to be sanitized in Montreal, and it was then put back into its container for the rest of the journey to the Toronto area. It turns out that

the CFIA restrictions on used vehicles apply due to concerns about foot and mouth disease in the country of origin. The extent of sanitation required includes a high-pressure wash with hot water and detergent, and in some cases, an additional application of germicide.

Bob's Sprint has since passed its safety inspection and emissions test, and is now in storage for the winter. It will be great fun to see it on the road and hopefully at Club events next season.



Photo by Bob Whitehouse.

## ***Auto Auction Week, Scottsdale, Arizona 2011***

**by Tony Adams, Toronto**

What better time to visit Arizona than in January when the temperature reaches 70-75 F, with clear blue skies – and the auto auctions are held! Barb and I were able to rent a house for January and February in Sun City West, (West of Phoenix) and headed Southwest on December 29th. Road and weather conditions were reasonably good until we approached St Louis, Missouri. As there was a severe weather front advancing from the West, we stopped early on December 31, in St Louis, to wait out the storm. It was a significant storm front with thunder, lightning, wind, rain & hail, not to mention the tornadoes that passed to the North and South of St Louis. So much for New Years Eve celebrations! The next morning the skies cleared and we continued our journey passing, in the next three days, through Oklahoma City Oklahoma, Amarillo Texas, Albuquerque New Mexico, Flagstaff Arizona, and on to Phoenix. For the last 1000 miles the skies were clear and sunny and the road seemed to go on forever. However, with the PT Cruiser on cruise at 75 mph, we covered ground quickly (but not quick enough for a few semis that passed us!).

Every year about the third week in January is auto auction week in Scottsdale, Arizona. From January

17th to 23rd, there were five main companies holding auctions of classic cars, American muscle cars, European cars and exotic sports and racing cars. This year was the 40th anniversary of Barrett-Jackson's Collector Car Event. This is the granddaddy of them all (often seen on Speed Channel) with about 1,300 cars and motorcycles for sale. The other auction houses were Russo and Steele Collector Automobile Auction from Phoenix, the RM Auctions: Automobiles in Arizona with headquarters in Blenheim Ontario, Gooding & Co from Santa Monica, California and Silver Auctions based in Spokane Washington. In total some 2,500 cars were auctioned with the smaller auction houses such as Gooding & Co putting up 130 cars and RM with 180 cars. The differences in the auctions were aptly put by Max Jarman of the Arizona Republic: *"The ambience ranges from the high-testosterone theme park atmosphere at the Barrett-Jackson Collector Car Event at Scottsdale's WestWorld to the subdued elegance of RM Auctions event at the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix."*

Having checked the listings for each of the auction houses, I opted to go to Gooding & Co as they had three Alfas listed and to visit Barrett-Jackson just to see what it was all about. While it would have been nice to visit all the auctions, the admission is not cheap – Gooding & Co was \$70 which provided a very glossy, collectable two-volume catalogue and admission for two. Barrett-Jackson was \$40 general admission. Also, the only other auction to have an Alfa listed (a mid eighties Spider) was Barrett-Jackson.

Before Auction Week I checked out eBay and saw a listing for a 1964 Giulia Sprint Speciale at Brighton Motorsports in Scottsdale. As a 1966 SS was one of the Alfas listed for auction by Gooding & Co, this was an excellent opportunity to do some comparison shopping! I drove over to Brighton Motorsports and met the Sales Manager, Vince Bodiford, and Owner, Shane Mustoe. There was an eclectic collection of cars on display – an Allard K3, a Pantera, a Scarab, a Jaguar XK 150, a Ginetta G4, two Porsche 356s, an Aston Martin DB6, a Ferrari F355 Spider and a Lamborghini Gallardo, not to mention a couple of Ford Roadster hot rods and other American muscle cars. Vince showed me the SS. The red painted body work was flawless, as was the chrome; all the lenses appeared as new and the interior was re-upholstered. The gauges were all fresh and clean. The engine compartment was nicely detailed and mechanical work had been carried out. Looking under the car I noticed that the lower engine and suspension could do with some detailing/cleaning. However, the car was really beautiful – a Sprint Speciale I would be very pleased to own (when I win the lottery!). Shane then offered to take me around

the rest of the operation to show me what was “out back”. Among other cars for sale or owned by Shane were a second Giulia SS, a Giulietta Sprint (ex Keith Goring of Alfas Unlimited), a beautiful grey XKE coupe, various other exotic and muscle cars and (my favourite), a lovely yellow 1750 Spider race car that Shane campaigns. As Shane put it with a grin “It is great fun to race!” To see their inventory, go to [www.brightonmotorsports.com](http://www.brightonmotorsports.com). If in the Phoenix area, Brighton Motorsports is well worth a visit. When I had checked out eBay the night before I went to see the SS, the bid price was at \$54,500 US. But when I went to check on the car the next night the car was no longer on eBay; Brighton’s web site confirmed that it had been sold.

On Friday, January 21st I went to the Gooding & Co Auction. They had three Alfas listed: Lot 16, a red 1966 Giulia Sprint Speciale listed at \$60k to \$80k; Lot 41, a silver 1957 1900C SS Tipo IV Coupe listed at \$150k to \$180k and Lot 102, a white 1958 Giulietta Spider listed at \$65k to \$85k.



The SS was a nice car. According to the catalogue it had undergone a full restoration 20 years ago. Thus the bodywork and paint showed more age than the one at Brighton Motorsports. The chrome was in good condition, the upholstery was in good but lightly worn condition, the gauges and lenses appeared to be original. On the whole, it was a very presentable car. Bidding opened at \$30k, quickly rose to \$60k and closed at \$72,500 (excluding buyer’s premium of 10%). Of the two, I would say that the car at Brighton Motorsports was the slightly better car – but then I am not an expert on Sprint Speciales.

The 1900C SS Tipo IV was an elegant three-window coupe by Touring. This car underwent a complete restoration in 1991. Subsequently the car had various upgrades under different owners. In 2002 it was awarded Best of Class honours at the Amelia Island Concours d’Elegance. Finished in brilliant silver paint with red interior and fitted with Borrani wire wheels, this was an impressive car.

The car sold for \$160,000, right in the estimated pre-auction range.



The 1958 750 Series Giulietta Spider was a smartly presented car. Finished in white over black with red carpets and piping, the car underwent restoration about 10 years ago and was meticulously detailed. Included with the car was the instruction book, tool roll and the original build card, an item not often seen. This car sold for \$45,000, significantly below the pre-auction estimated range.



*All photos by Tony Adams.*

Although Gooding & Co had the smallest group of cars, it was a very fine collection. Gooding & Co also achieved the highest priced, single sale of all the auctions with the sale of a 2006 Ferrari FFX Evoluzione from the estate of Benny Caiola, for \$2.09 million.

On Friday afternoon I drove to the Barrett-Jackson auction just for the experience. While the admission was \$40 at that time, the admission varies from day to day and is cheaper in "off-peak" times. The noise and the crowd are in marked contrast to the refined atmosphere at Gooding & Co.! There are many vendors selling a range of items from auto themed art, to neon signs, to clothing (did not see anything Alfa related,) to jewellery, to cars, to car hoists and equipment, to garage flooring panels to mattresses (?). I walked through the whole complex and spent most of my time in the tents where the auction cars were parked. Most were American classics and muscle cars, although there were some nice European cars such as a couple of Austin Healey 3000s. The finish and workmanship on a lot of the muscle cars, classic cars and hot rods are to be admired and enjoyed. Barrett-Jackson was an experience, but I may pass on this venue in another year.

What better way to spend a day (or two!) in a sunny, warm climate, in mid winter looking at lovely cars? Just head for the Auto Auction Week in Scottsdale, Arizona!

## Upcoming ARCC Events

### Toronto Chapter -- Preliminary Schedule

Date	Time	Event
Feb 5	9:30am	Directors Meeting
March	7:00 pm	AGM – date TBD
April 16	TBD	Tech Session
May 5	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
May 15	TBD	Sunday Drive
June 2	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
June 5	TBD	Sunday Drive
June 17-19	TBD	Vintage Festival / Drive
July 7	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
July 12-17		AROC Convention
August 4	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
August 6-7		Toronto/Detroit Party
August 21	TBD	Brewery Tour
Sept. 1	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
Sept. 25	TBD	Europa Rally
Oct. 2	TBD	Fall Tour
Oct. 6	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
Nov. 8	7:00 pm	Pub Night/Directors' Mtg
Nov. 26	6:00 pm	Holiday Dinner



### Alfa Canadese, June 17-24, 2012

The 2012 National Convention for the Alfa Romeo clubs of Canada and the USA.

Early details: <http://alfacanadese.ca>

Volunteers wanted: [info@alfacanadese.ca](mailto:info@alfacanadese.ca)

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