



ARCC UPDATE

September 2012

RM Auctions visit

by Elio Comello, Camlachie

Officially, RM Auctions only hosts the public at its "Classic Car Exhibit". It was my good fortune to contact Mario Van Raay, the restoration shop manager and brother-in-law of founder Ron Myers, and be able to arrange a private tour. Seventeen fortunate folks assembled for the extensive and very comprehensive tour. Kathleen Schweiger and I were indeed doubly fortunate; we very narrowly avoided a serious collision on turning left into the RM facility (an idiot passed us on the left at high speed missing us by centimetres). Photos were restricted in the restoration facility, since owners want control of images of vehicles undergoing restoration going into the public domain.



Photo by Elio Comello.

RM is one of the world's premier restorers. It was breathtaking to see up close a Talbot Lago just freshly restored and about to be taken to Monterey. One of a kind in the world and expected to fetch millions at auction; a hopeful candidate for "Best of Show". Surprisingly, a second example was discovered when restoring a rebodied project Talbot! Tucker cars are rare... but then, we saw two in the process of restoration.

Surprisingly, RM's shop rates are as attractive as a local body shop at less than \$80/hr! They not only

restore, but they maintain and service classic vehicles. They will even complete a project; we saw a "project" Cadillac whose owner had many years on it, wanted it finished so he could drive it in his remaining years. A very fine Dino Ferrari was nearing completion. We saw under construction, a customer ordered true replica of Ford's 99 ice racer.

A complete woodworking shop with stocks of rare woods, metal shaping apparatus and paint facilities capable of \$60,000 paint jobs were in evidence. Use of water based and metallic finishes and the secrets of multi pass clear coating and wet sanding were explained. Laser body imaging, upholstery and interior crafting were extensive. They even make aircraft interiors for Diamond in London ON.

They have a complete dynamometer with a very advanced exhaust gas analyzer. This facility not only dynamically tests the finished project, but it is used to "set" fuel systems to compensate for characteristics of fuel of the past. Today's fuels cause older engines to run hotter. After touring the many buildings of the restoration facility, we visited the Museum. Here was an overwhelming collection of customer and RM owned cars and motorcycles, over 100 in all. Several Bugattis, Talbots, Ferraris, Maseratis, Duesenbergs and other classic and rare cars were on hand, too many to go into detail. Alfa's presence on the day of our tour consisted of a customer's blue 6C2300 and a Red S3 Spider.

Mario indicated they do all cars, however "muscle cars not so much". In conversation with Mario, he lamented that the many craftsmen/women he employed were highly skilled but all aging. He had three apprentices in training, but was concerned that the future would see a severe skills shortage and limit the ability to restore cars as the industry does at present.

This was a blockbuster tour of about 3 hours and I was at a loss as to how to thank RM. They were generous to the extent of providing refreshments and some catalogues of the imminent August Monterey auction that normally sell for \$100 a copy.



6C2300. Photo by Pat O'Reilly.

Subsequent to our visit, the 6C was presented at the Monterey auction with an expected sale price of 2.2 million but did not sell. The Talbot Lago, with its custom LV luggage sold for \$2.6 million. A 1960 Plymouth XNR, on the floor at the time of our visit, sold for \$935,000, an amazing price for a car with a "slant six" engine.

Club Alfa Romeo de Montréal: Giro Inaugura

by Alex Csank, Montréal



Photo by Alex Csank.

The newly reborn Montréal Alfa Romeo Club (Club Alfa Romeo de Montréal – CARM) held its first event; a *water-themed* driving tour on a beautiful mid-August day. Meeting at a West-Island breakfast restaurant in Kirkland, a group of 18 Alfisti and family gathered early on a sunny Saturday morning in August to prepare for a lengthy, but scenic inaugural driving tour. In all, there were eight vintage Alfas participating. These included one GTV, two Alfetta GTs, one GTV6, three Spiders (a series II, a series III and a series IV) and one Montréal. The only non-Alfa was driven by me – the organizer – because of a broken hood-release cable on my GTV6.

Departing at 9:00 am, we followed the contours of the shoreline around the Northwestern side of Montréal Island, passing by the park and beach at Cap St. Jacques and some beautiful historic homes and churches dotting the shore. Taking the first available bridge off the island onto Isle Bizard, the group meandered along the river's edge until embarking in two groups on the small six-car ferry to the island of Laval.



Photo by Alex Csank.

Once the second group made it across, we checked out the views of the ultra-modern and very expensive homes speckling the area known as Laval-sur-le-Lac. The group stopped for a quick restroom break, before driving across the bridge and onto the mainland – passing through the village of Vieux-Saint-Eustache, Deux-Montagnes and Ste-Marthe-sur-le-Lac, as we continued along the shoreline towards Oka. As luck would have it, we didn't have to wait at all, and were just able to squeeze the entire group onto the next ferry across the lake towards Hudson. It was a great day for a ferry trip or two, with light winds and plenty of sunshine and the temperature remained perfect for an Alfa drive throughout the day. Turning onto Main Street and through the picturesque township known as Hudson, we eventually found our way into the busy parking area at Finnegan's Flea Market, where we stopped for a 45-minute shopping and leg-stretching pause. Finnegan's Market is a very large and very busy flea market, which has been in continuous operation on Saturdays throughout the summer season for over 30 years. I don't know what the others may have bought, but I had some tasty and fresh locally produced cheese curds. Re-starting our cars, we made our way along the shoreline again towards Vaudreuil and into Dorion, crossing the Ottawa river and onto Ile Perrot. Once over the bridge, we zigzagged our way back to the road that runs along the shore of the St. Lawrence River, where we could view the ships on the Seaway, plenty of historical homes, churches and other buildings, and even a few houses where the cars in the driveways and

garages were complimented by private docks with yachts and airplanes (sea-planes).



Photo by Alex Csank.

Stopping at a local park to capture a few photos by the water, we eventually turned inland and weaved our way across the farmland and growing suburbs into the parking lot at Pete's Smoke Meat, a popular Deli-style Restaurant and Blues Bar for a late lunch.

Overall, we had a great turnout for our first event, especially considering that I had – unintentionally – planned the event to coincide with another event held by the Vintage European Automobile Club (VEA). We covered about 100 km of distance, with about 80 km of that having a view of the waters surrounding the island of Montréal and area. Although we encountered some traffic, a few construction areas, detours, and plenty of typical Quebec bumpy roads with very bad pavement, we had an otherwise smooth drive, with no breakdowns or other events to distract us. Everyone seemed to have had a good time and we are now working on our next event, a driving tour from the South Shore to Lake Placid, NY for the month of September.

And so, there you have it ... like an old Alfa which has been sitting for a few years: Drain and change the fluids, put in a new battery and add some air to the tires and *voooooon-voooooon*, we're off and running again! Stay tuned for more events and activities. We also have a Facebook Page, located at www.facebook.com/ClubAlfaRomeoDeMontréalcar. Please join us anytime ... all Alfisti are welcome!

Club Alfa Romeo de Montréal: Next Event

by Alex Csank, Montréal

Join us for a trip which combines the thrills of rolling hills, winding roads, mountain roads and all the beauty nature can throw at you in 400 km (round-trip) of some of Southern Quebec's and New York's Adirondacks' most scenic roads. The drive takes us through the beautiful Chateauguay Valley, with most of the route along the winding historic Chateauguay River. Once in Huntingdon, we stop for breakfast at the popular Leonidas Restaurant

along the banks of the Chateauguay River. Then we're back on the road headed for the US border. From there, our route will take us across the Adirondacks and on to Lake Placid.

The date is Saturday, September 22. Rendezvous at 8:00 am (we leave at 8:20 am) at Tim Horton's, 17 Boulevard Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Chateauguay, (Pont Mercier-Chateauguay direction). Check Google Maps for your best option.

For those planning an overnight stay, you can reserve with the Comfort Inn <http://www.lakeplacidci.com>. They have a same day before 4:00 pm cancellation policy. In case of rain, the outing will be cancelled. I will advise everyone by email the day before.

Please let us know by email reply quickly if you plan to participate as the event will be limited to 10 cars - alfaromeodriveralex@gmail.com.

Ralph Stein – An Appreciation **by Russ Baer, Monkton, Maryland**

Many car guys know of the late Ralph Stein. *Most* Alfa Romeo car guys *should* know of him – he was one of the early *cognoscenti* – both from his writing and from his love (and ownership) of significant pre-war Alfa Romeos. His early published automotive works – “The Great Cars”, “The Treasury of the Automobile”, and “Sport Cars of the World” are important high water marks in a field now glutted with opportunistic offerings by less talented authors. But few know that Mr. Stein's early career path was in the world of art. He was a skilled and accomplished cartoonist – successful at a time, unlike today, when cartoon artist was not an oxymoron.



Ex-Ralph Stein 6C. Photo posted recently on AlfaBB.

Ralph Stein was art director of the “New York World-Telegram” during the mid 1930s. He also worked as a free-lance artist for various magazines prior to WWII. During that war he started his military training with the U.S. Army Corps of

Engineers, but contrary to many accounts of classification misadventures, he was wisely transferred to the staff of the weekly Army publication, 'Yank' as ... a cartoonist!

Some of his work for 'Yank' was collected in hardbound books, two of which I have acquired: "It's A Cinch Private Finch" (1943 McGraw-Hill) and "What Am I Laughing At" (1944 McGraw-Hill). While some of the captioning (not his responsibility) may not be considered funny in today's world (is the 'laugh' or the 'laughter' to blame?), his pen and wash work is superb! The pictorial scenes as represented, the human characters and their roles in the action, and the detail work on the inanimate objects are an integrated whole; humorous, artistic and finely crafted. I really like his work (I guess it shows)! Somehow it feels very familiar to me despite the fact that published examples are almost non-existent and I have found no other cartoonist - in my fairly large accumulation of volumes by artist, and anthologies of both single panel and pre 1960 panel strips - who resembles his style. I also have found no one who might have been an inspiration, nor have I found anyone whom he might have inspired. The only reason he may seem familiar to me could be that his work is familiar in a way.



"Work, Obey, Fight" by Ralph Stein.

In the mid 40's as a kid in a car-less family, (and one who wanted to be a cartoonist or to own a gas station) I remember seeing Ralph Stein cartoons in the Sunday "This Week" newspaper supplement. His subjects almost always involved automobiles. I seem to remember that personalities or human characteristics (frequently perverse) were evident (I may be groping here due to my knowledge of Stein's Alfa connections.). Based on what I see in recently acquired Stein works (the Alfa caricatures) I know that many of the cars I saw in "This Week" were Alfa Romeos. I just didn't know at the time what an Alfa Romeo was. Are we talking subliminal direction?

I once met Ralph Stein. At the 1976 AROC convention in Connecticut, I drove 'Sunshine' - my 1962 Giulietta Spider - on what was her maiden voyage as a 'restored' concours entrant. I had done all the work - including the 14-coat lacquer finish that had its last elbow grease applied just days before. After visiting the dusty Lime Rock infield, 'Sunshine' needed a bath. While I was involved in the wash work, a rather short somewhat round man stopped to watch. It was Ralph Stein. WOW! A kid-hood cartoonist hero in the flesh!

He was surprised that I knew of him as a cartoonist, but what I really wanted to tell him (and I did) was that his article in Issue No. 1 of "Automobile Quarterly" had influenced the purchase of my Giulietta.

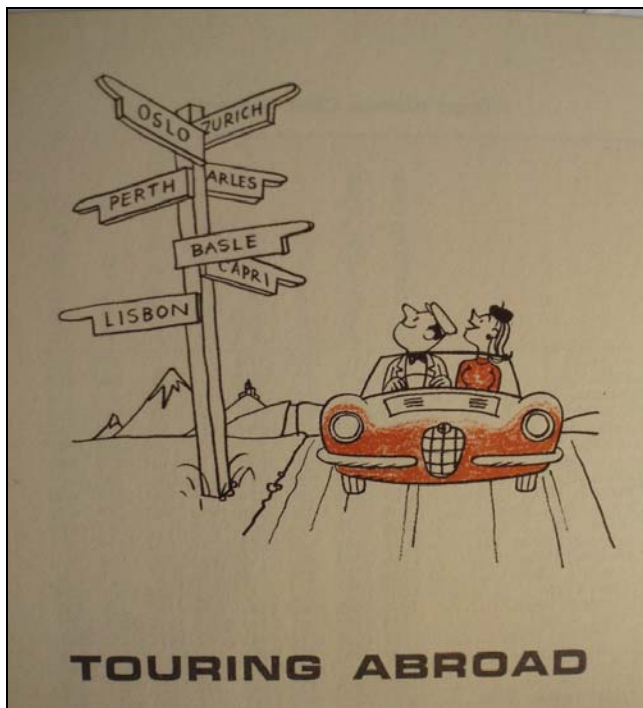
I bought my first Alfa - a 1959 Spider Veloce - in 1961. Its convertible top stowed ... correctly. When I was shopping for the Alfa, I drove several from the 1960/1961 model years. Their tops stowed ... not correctly. Sadly, my '59 Veloce only lasted a few months. It was 'totalled' in a horrible accident (see my column 'Giuliettcetera' in the April 1983 Alfa Owner) and I was without a car for nine months. After all the legal issues were settled, and I was cleared of liability, I wanted another Alfa; but not one with a top that stowed ... not correctly. The photo in the Ralph Stein article - comparing the Giulietta and 6C1750 - was the first I had seen of the long tail light Giulietta with the top that stowed ... correctly! I immediately went shopping.

Oh, in the course of our conversation, I gave Mr. Stein details about my 'shade tree' restoration. I had no idea that the next day he would be judging my car!

I had made the acquaintance of a nice young couple (Howie and Marsha Jones) and was with them when the judges approached 'Sunshine'. Marsha wanted me to go with her to "listen in". No way would I want to go near the judging. She went, and after the judges moved to another car she came

back and said “see that little guy? He said to the other judges ‘But he did it all himself’ or ... ‘and he did it all himself’”. I said “Marsha, think carefully, did he say ‘but’ or ‘and?’” She said “I think he said ‘and’”. He had said “and” and ‘Sunshine’ took her first ‘first’ – perhaps with a little help from Ralph Stein.

So anyway, back to the carton topic. In addition to the books from 1943 and 1944, I scored a fabulous Ralph Stein book from 1964 “This Week” magazine’s “Glove-Compartment AUTO BOOK”. It gives good information on all aspects of driving as well as giving tutorials on maintenance, how an engine works, buying and selling, and a long funky “SEND HELP” foldout (If you find a copy for yourself make sure that the “SEND HELP” foldout is included.). Stein’s illustrations are delightful and of course there is an Alfa Romeo shown in the chapter regarding touring abroad.



“Touring Abroad” by Ralph Stein.

There are no automotive drawings in “Private Finch” but in “What Am I Laughing At?” there is a trove starting with the pictorial map of the USA on front and rear end plates. In the book there are cartoons of a Mercedes 540K, a helicopter, cars, jeeps, Alfa Romeo (G.P. and 1750), a ‘Mechanized Foxhole Mark III’, a Rolls Royce and various planes, trains, tanks and naval vessels. I recommend that everyone with an interest in art, cartooning (in particular during WWII) or the real Ralph Stein, stop - look - and acquire “What Am I Laughing At?” (Amazon or Alibris always seems to have copies). The book’s forward by Sergeant Joe McCarthy (managing editor, “Yank”) should have

been re-printed as Ralph Stein’s obituary. McCarthy painted a warm and humorous picture of a really cool guy.

Ralph Stein died late in 1994. At age 85, he lived in Westbrook Connecticut. His New York Times obit mentioned other non-car books and his illustrations for the King Features weekly, “Here’s How” (sic). I recall this series, but the name was “Here’s Howe” by Pete Howe. According to the NYT, Ralph Stein also drew and wrote the “Popeye” comic strip for five years just after WWII...Artists also have to eat!

Here is a list of Ralph Stein publications. It is probably an incomplete list. An asterisk indicates there is a copy in my library.

Automotive Books – Authored

Sports Cars of the World	1952
The Treasury of the Automobile*	1962
The Great Cars*	1967
The Automobile Book	1968
The World of the Automobile *	1973
The American Automobile	1978
Vintage and Classic Cars	1978
The Greatest Car	1979

Automotive Books - Authored and Illustrated

This Week Magazine:	
Glove Compartment AUTO BOOK*	1964

Cartoon Books – Illustrated

It’s a Cinch Private Finch*	1943
What Am I Laughing At? *	1944

Periodical – Illustrated

Johnny Takes a Wife (Planned Parenthood, 24 pp)	
Illustrations/Cartoons for “This Week”	
Illustrations for “Here’s Howe”, Pete Howe, King Features	
Popeye Comic Strip	c. 1945-1950

Other

The Great Inventions*	1976
The Pin-Up From 1852 To Now	1984



“Alfa at the Arc de Triomphe” by Ralph Stein.

Upcoming ARCC Events

Alfa Club of Edmonton

Date	Time	Event
April 28	11:00 am	Ron's Grease Pit Blowout
May 7	7:30 pm	Speedsters Racing
June 16	TBD	Reynolds Museum
June 23	TBD	Easy Solstice Rally
July 10	TBD	St. Albert Casino
June 17-24		Alfa Canadese
August 7-11	TBD	Rockin' Horse, St Albert
Sept. TBA	TBD	Concourse
Sept. 30	TBD	Pie Run, Stony Plain
Nov. TBA	TBD	Great Italian Eating
Dec. TBA	TBD	Christmas Tree Hunt
January	TBD	Christmas After Party

Toronto Chapter

Date	Time	Event
March 22	7:00 pm	AGM, Scarlett Road
April 21	10:00 am	1 st Choice Garage Tour
May 3	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
May 6	TBD	Sunday Drive
June 7	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
June 15-17	TBD	Vintage Festival/Drive
June 17-24		Alfa Canadese
July 5	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
July 8	TBD	Sunday Drive
August 2	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
August 5	1:00 pm	RM Tour
Sept. 6	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
Sept. 9	TBD	Europa Rally
Sept. 15	TBD	Alfas and Sevens
Oct. 4	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
Oct. 14	TBD	Fall Wine Tour
Nov. 7	7:00 pm	Pub Night
Nov. 24	6:00 pm	Holiday Dinner

Other Events of Interest

- Members' **Tech Sessions**, whenever possible
- **Italian Day Parade**, June 16, Ottawa
- **Italian Car Day**, July 21, Boyd Park
- **Concorso Canadese**, August 25, Mississauga
- **Grand Prix of Mosport**, ALMS series, July 19-22
- Non-official **Cruise Nights** happen every Thursday evening May to October at the La Paloma location.

Alfa Romeo Club of Canada

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ARCC Update

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