



# ARCC UPDATE

April 2016



*The author's Spider 1300 Junior. Photo by Margit Duncan.*

## ***Fifty years of the Round Tail Spider, a.k.a. Duetto***

**by George Beston, Cobourg**

I've read a few articles on the 50th anniversary of the introduction of the round tail Spider – the “Giulia Spider 1600” to quote its original name. All have left me wanting for something more, so here is my take on it.

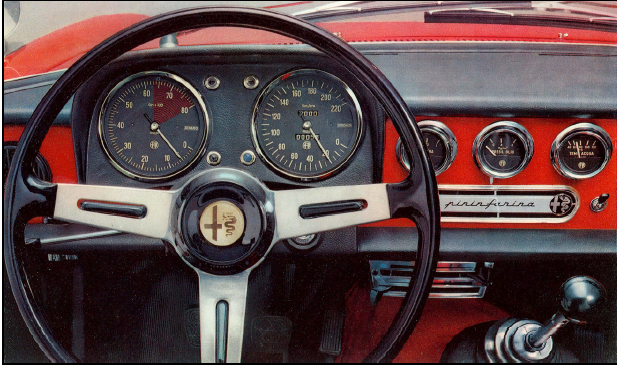
First and foremost, the appeal of this wonderful car is that it's an Alfa Romeo. Fifty years ago, that meant it was equipped with an array of very advanced features for the time. These included an all aluminum twin cam engine with dual side draft carburetors, an all synchromesh five speed transmission, four-wheel disc brakes and a sophisticated suspension system consisting of A-arms at the front, a three link rear axle and coil

springs all around. These features left most of its competition decidedly out of date, if not historic by comparison.

Second, the styling of the bodywork was radically different than its conservatively designed peers and predecessors. This was controversial amongst the pundits of the day, and the design is still dismissed by some who base their judgment on that controversy. I say, Nonsense! Yes, it was different, and different enough to remain unique to this day. To my eye that means it is uniquely beautiful. The styling themes in the Duetto seem to have evolved from the Disco Volante and, more clearly, the series of Superflow styling exercises in the fifties and early sixties. Reportedly it was the last design project lead by Batista (Pinin) Farina and I believe it is a credit to his talent. The fact that subsequent production series endured with many of the same design elements

for another twenty-five years is also a credit to the original design.

Another long-lasting feature of the original design is this dashboard. Although it was changed in the early seventies for the 1750 and 2 litre square tails, it was kept in use in ongoing 1600 Junior production well into the eighties.



*Photo from Spider 1600 brochure.*

Third, as sporting convertibles go, the round tail spider is one you can live with. It has satisfying performance, nimble handling and strong brakes. The interior is comfortable for a driver and passenger and there is plenty of luggage space for two people. I particularly enjoy the experience of top-down cruising in my Spider as long as I can endure the elements.

Fourth, I like to play with the mechanical aspects of my Alfas. They all make good playgrounds, especially this one. All of the mechanical elements are accessible and straightforward to work on for anyone who can arm themselves with the necessary knowledge, tools and energy to tackle maintenance and tuning.

You will hear a number of different names applied to these cars. Duetto was the winning entry in a contest to name the new spider when it first went on sale. The name has stuck despite the fact that Alfa Romeo never formally used it. The issue was that a biscuit manufacturer had already trademarked the name. However, it seems that various enthusiasts use the name differently. On this side of the ocean, many have used it to describe only the original Spider 1600, others use it to describe only round tail Spiders, and now a lot of enthusiasts use the name to describe all of the 105 and later 115 series Spiders.

Some refer to the style as a “boat tail” as often as you hear “round tail”. Take your pick.

Another name we hear is “osso di sepia” which is Italian for “cuttlefish bone”. The cuttlefish is a mollusk from the same family as squid and octopus. This creature has an internal shell structure that is also a buoyancy organ. This

“bone” has a sleek shape with tapered and rounded ends. Check out the cuttlebone inventory at your local pet store if you’re curious.

It's fairly easy to refer to all of the round tails by their engines: 1600, 1300, 1750, and 1750 Iniezione. Of course, they did have factory names, Spider 1600, Spider 1300 Junior and Spider Veloce. Including the right hand drive versions there were actually seven unique type numbers for the round tails:

Type No.	Model
105.03	1600 Spider LHD
105.05	1600 Spider RHD
105.57	1750 Spider Veloce LHD
105.58	1750 Spider Veloce RHD
105.91	1300 Spider Jr. LHD
105.92	1300 Spider Jr. RHD
105.62	1750 Spider Iniezione LHD

Oddly, the type numbers for the last series of Spiders were carried over into the first series of square tailed spiders. I have no idea why that would be, but it's a fact. Strange but true!

Like everything else, the round tails have had their detractors. Early cars without anti roll bars in their suspensions and skinny 165/75x15 tires were reportedly prone to understeer, and the driving position causes some concern.

In my experience, later cars with anti roll bars front and rear and meatier fourteen inch tires are pleasantly neutral and will tend to slight over steer with enthusiastic power application under track day conditions.

Anyone who is uncomfortable with the relative positioning of the seat, steering wheel and foot controls should at least try holding the steering wheel at the 4 and 8 o'clock positions. To me, the control positions make a lot more sense when I do that. I can move the seat back a bit to give my legs more room to stretch and still reach the steering wheel comfortably.

No discussion of round tail spiders seems to be complete without making reference to the 1967 movie *The Graduate*. It was a great product placement, and to this day gives the car some recognition amongst those of my generation. Having said that, this film has very little to do with my interest in round tails. Younger generations may be aware that some scenes from *The Graduate* featuring the Spider were reprised

by Mike Myers in *Wayne's World II*, although the round tail used was a 1750 Iniezione, not a 1600.

Today there are still lots of round tails around in great shape. The best place to see them is at AROC conventions where they seem to come from everywhere. Many of them are the original 1600 version, reflecting the fact that Alfa was actively selling them in the U.S. from 1966 until the 1750 Iniezione came out in 1969. Canadian cars include very few 1600s in my experience. All the 1600s I see here seem to have come from the U.S. market. There are some of all of the LHD versions in circulation here, largely because the Spider Jr. was sold in our market, and because Canada lagged behind the U.S.A. a bit in those days with regard to imposing and enforcing emission control standards.

My sense of today's market for these cars is that they lag GTVs in price, and not many of them are being offered for sale. My guess is that owners like them enough to keep them at current values.

The round tails did indeed have a factory hard top. These are seldom seen today. In fact the only one I've ever personally seen installed was on a 1600 Spider that showed up at the 2010 AROC convention. Aside from the change in outward appearance and the rear side windows, which provide vastly improved rear quarter visibility, the hard top opens up the interior if the soft top and its hardware are removed for the occasion. This makes the cabin look and feel very spacious.



*Photo from Spider 1600 brochure.*

Another feature seldom seen is the factory tonneau cover. Like the hard top, you never see one for sale!



*Photo source unknown.*

Finally, have you ever wondered what could have been if Alfa had stuck with and developed the shape of a round tail spider, and also developed the car as an all out modern sports car?

Doug Paraschuk, one of the most talented Alfa enthusiasts I have come upon, not only wondered about it, he has done something about it. He has used his design and artistic skills to pen the following design study, and create a prototype that we saw at the 2012 *Alfa Canadese* convention. Dubbed *Velocetta*, it will be available at some future date as a custom built vehicle using a moulded fibreglass body, a tube frame chassis and a customer-selected power train. The current prototype has a Maserati V8 in it!



*Images from Doug Paraschuk.*

## ***President's Letter***

**by Alex Csank, Vankleek Hill**

April sure is a funny month for weather in our country. While Easter Sunday in Montreal was a beautiful balmy day with temperatures well into the double digits, and motorcycles and convertibles out in all their glory, here, a bit more than a week later, and well into April, the mercury has dropped and we are back into the negative numbers ... with snow! However, winter cannot hang around forever, and I am sure that by the time you are reading this, we'll be enjoying the warmer temperatures and sunnier days of spring.

On 6 April, I had the great pleasure of attending the ARCC Toronto annual meeting. I was there to present the current status of our plan for the convention in 2017 – *ALFA EXPO '17*. Thanks to Anthony and the rest of the Toronto club for making me feel so welcome. I had a great time!

Over the past month or so, I have been pleasantly reminded of an unusual, but wonderful side-benefit of being a long-time Alfa Romeo owner and a club member. Over the many years I have been involved with Alfas, I have met and made friends with a whole “hockey-sock” full of terrific people. And, although I have moved from place to place as frequently as a clown in a traveling circus, I have somehow been able to retain my friendships with most of the eclectic Alfisti I have encountered all over North America and beyond. These relationships are terrific, and they help me rationalize my “Alfaholism” ... I mean, after all, there are many folks just like me!

Recently, I was happily surprised to receive an e-mail from Russ Baer of rural Maryland, who has been driving, repairing and restoring Alfas since the original Giuliettas were brand spanking new. I first met Russ when I was living just north of Baltimore. He and his better-half Diane share a gorgeous home and acreage in the countryside, where most of the roads should have “For Alfa Romeos Only” signs posted everywhere. Russ and another long-time Maryland Alfisti friend named Frank Salemi have been known to read this newsletter, as they are both ARCC members. They have helped me with my cars in various ways over the years; getting me the best available tires, a better steering wheel, or providing superb mechanical assistance and advice. Another terrific long-time Alfa friend from Norfolk, Virginia recently got in touch while recovering from a bit of heart trouble he encountered while visiting his brother in Florida. He’s a magician with Alfa mechanicals, and I have never laughed as hard as I have while spending time under a greasy Spider with Skip ... what a hoot! Closer to home, George Beston and I have been exchanging e-mails and conversation since about 1999 or so, and that makes us among the more ‘recent’ Alfa friends.

These fellows are just a few of the great folks I have been lucky enough to have gotten to know because of our shared interest in a rare brand of Italian cars. I consider myself truly blessed to have such terrific Alfa friends from all over. Though they may be as far away as Australia, the UK, Italy, or the US West Coast, or as close as a short drive from my home, I cherish our unique brand of camaraderie. I am sure that my experience isn’t unique. Sharing our love for these interesting little cars with similar minded folk and enjoying each other’s friendship is fortunately quite common among Alfisti all around the world. And that is OK from my perspective. So, I encourage you to reach out to your Alfa friends, old and new.

A while ago, I sent out a request to see if anyone had a spare, running 1750 or 2L motor that could be installed in my son’s 1971 GTV project car. Frankly, he and I have been overwhelmed with your terrific responses! I have passed him the information, but since then (as often happens with young folks), he has made different plans – including a move to Halifax to be closer to his girlfriend. So, instead of working on this project, he has decided to sell it, as moving the car and storing it in Nova Scotia aren’t the easiest of options for him. Thank you for responding.

Now that most clubs have put together their plans for the upcoming driving season please read the published calendars on the back page of this *ARCC Update* as it is time to get our Alfas out on the road with our local clubs. There is strength in numbers ... or at least spare parts, special tools, mechanical help and plenty of free advice! And please do invite your friends along as guests ... the Alfa virus is contagious.

As I do every month, I ask you to please keep sending your feedback, photos, articles and ideas for the newsletter. George Beston is always looking for your input for upcoming editions.

Get out on the road and ... Rev high!

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## ***CARM News / Mise à jour*** by Jean Michel Reysset, St-Hubert

Le printemps hâtif qui nous avait été prévu par Mère Nature se fait bien attendre. Certains chanceux (comme moi) ont déjà réveillé leur bête tandis que les autres égrènent les jours sur le calendrier.

Mars a été de notre côté absent d'activité mais maintenant qu'avril vient d'arriver l'on peut se dire que la saison 2016 est partie. On débutera ce samedi matin du 30 avril 2016 avec une petite randonnée sur la Rive Nord de Montréal pour une visite chez un concessionnaire amateur et collectionneur de voitures européennes, incluant les Alfa Roméo. Cette visite matinale sera suivie d'un déjeuner-brunch dans un restaurant avoisinant.

Aussi une charmante invitation nous est lancée. Notre ami concessionnaire LaSalle Alfa Roméo nous ouvre ses portes à tous les 1er samedi du mois pour notre plaisir et celui de sa clientèle à prendre le café, jaser et visionner des vidéos tous ensemble.

Bon début de saison à tous et au plaisir de se voir bientôt au volant de nos bolides.

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With the ups and downs of Mother Nature the expected early spring is quite slow to come. Some lucky ones (like myself) have taken their ride out of storage while others still count the days left on the calendar.

With no activity made in March, we can say now with April that the season is opened. On April 30th, 2016 we will start with a small ride to visit the European car collection of a small dealership on the North Shore of Montreal. This morning visit will be followed by a brunch at a nearby restaurant.

Also our good friend LaSalle Alfa Romeo dealership for all our pleasure and their customers' nicely invites us in every 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month to chat and check some videos with a good coffee.

Have all a nice season and see you soon behind the wheel.

## ***Toronto Chapter AGM***

**by George Beston, Cobourg**

The Toronto Chapter AGM was held at Ocean Drive Motors on April 6. Our Treasurer, Ken Lee, reported that we are solvent with a healthy bank balance. We had our usual reviews of the year past and the agenda for the season to come. There are many interesting days planned, so mark your calendars! Another item of discussion was that we are down a director or two so if anyone is interested in a deeper level of participation please talk to our President, Anthony Tersigni or our Vice President, Frank Scalesi.

The feature event of this meeting was a presentation by our National President Alex Csanik regarding the status of the 2017 joint ARCC/AROC convention, *Alfa Expo*. There is a lot of work still to be done, so we should be prepared to help if we can, and just as important, plan to attend the convention in 2017. It will be a great event commemorating the introduction of the Montreal prototype at Expo '67, and there will be many opportunities to enjoy the city of Montreal and its environs.

We enjoyed visiting with Alex a bit after the meeting and looking over the cars in the Ocean Drive show room. Many thanks to Danny Polumbo for allowing us to use his facility once again.

## ***Lost and Found—1932 Alfa Romeo 8C 2300***

**by Royal Automobile Club**



*Photo by Tim Scott.*

It seems almost unbelievable that an example of one of the great pre-war cars, a straight eight supercharged Alfa Romeo 8C similar to the type that won Le Mans four times and the Mille Miglia three times, could be lost from sight for many, many decades only to be discovered about five years ago. Even more amazing the long-term owner, who is approaching his personal century, received the car as a 21st birthday present from his father back in 1937.

The 1932 Alfa Romeo 8C 2300, chassis and engine number 2211079, was bodied in France by the coach building firm of Figoni, the only short chassis to be bodied by that famous house. It was completed in time for first owner Mr. Weinberg to compete in the Paris-Nice rally in March 1933, an event in which he competed in 1934 as well.

According to the existing French registration records the car passed to Count Francois de Bremond in May 1935 and he ran the Grossglockner Hillclimb that year finishing 5th in class. He may have used it for other competitions but he sold it in August 1937. The agent or broker in the sale was Luigi Chinetti who was then resident in Paris but later became the first agent for Ferrari in North America based in Greenwich, Connecticut.

The new owner had just graduated and his father gave him the car as a present — and he owned the car for over 70 years. During the war, it was hidden from the occupying forces and used for some years after the war before being garaged but well looked after until being acquired by the current owner. The car was then taken to restoration specialist Blakeney Motorsport in the UK a year and a half ago. The car has not been restored but has been made safe to run as far as the engine, fuel system, dry sump oil system, brakes, steering, electrics and so on are concerned.

## Upcoming ARCC Events

Regional representatives are requested to send your 2016 events calendars to the secretary or the editor for inclusion in the next issue.

### Club Alfa Romeo de Montréal

| Date        | Time | Event                                  |
|-------------|------|----------------------------------------|
| January 10  |      | Tech Session                           |
| February 21 |      | Valentine's Dinner                     |
| March 20    |      | Bistro Lunch                           |
| April 16    |      | Pizza Night                            |
| May 9       |      | Springtime Tour                        |
| May 15      |      | Gimmick Rally                          |
| May 29      |      | Road Adventure                         |
| June 11     |      | Grand Prix Barbeque                    |
| June 19     |      | Fathers' Day Veterans Tribute Car Show |
| August 21   |      | Wine Tour                              |
| Sept 10-11  |      | Lake Placid Road Trip                  |
| October 3   |      | Vineyard Tour                          |
| October 17  |      | Fall Colours Drive                     |
| November 28 |      | Holiday Party                          |

### Regional Events – Eastern Region

| Date         | Time | Event                       |
|--------------|------|-----------------------------|
| June 17-19   |      | Italian Car Day, Ottawa     |
| June 12-19   |      | AROC Convention, Nashville  |
| July 3       |      | FIAT Breakout               |
| July 15-17   |      | Raduno Estivo, Kingston     |
| July 27-31   |      | Fiat Freakout               |
| August 6     |      | Italian Car Day, Woodbridge |
| September 25 |      | Raduno Montebello           |

### Alfa Romeo Club of Edmonton

| Date | Time | Event |
|------|------|-------|
|      |      |       |

### Calgary Alfa Marque Society

| Date | Time | Event |
|------|------|-------|
|      |      |       |

### Toronto Chapter

| Date         | Time  | Event                      |
|--------------|-------|----------------------------|
| April 6      | 7 pm  | AGM                        |
| May 3        | 7 pm  | Cruise Night               |
| May 8        | 9 am  | Go-kart Event              |
| May 23       | 9 am  | Victoria Day Pancake Drive |
| June 5       | 10 am | Canadian Warplane Drive    |
| June 7       | 7 pm  | Cruise Night               |
| June 17-19   | TBD   | Vintage Festival & Drive   |
| June 26      | 10 am | Rattlesnake Run            |
| July 5       | 7 pm  | Cruise Night               |
| July 10      | 10 am | Sun Collision Event        |
| August 2     | 7 pm  | Cruise Night               |
| August 21    | 10 am | Italian Gathering          |
| September 6  | 7 pm  | Cruise Night               |
| September 11 | 10 am | Wine Tour & Drive          |
| October 4    | 7 pm  | Cruise Night               |
| October 16   | 9 am  | Fall Colours Drive         |
| November 26  | 6 pm  | Holiday Dinner Party       |

### Alfa Romeo Club - Ottawa

| Date | Time | Event |
|------|------|-------|
|      |      |       |

## Alfa Romeo Club of Canada

### National Executive

|                     |            |                |                                                                                  |
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