



# ARCC UPDATE

January 2008

## Alfa News

by George Beston, Cobourg

The biggest news I've come across lately is that the first retail customer deliveries of the 8C Competizione have begun. I haven't seen any advertised for resale – yet, but it will be interesting to follow what happens in the next year or so.

Road tests and reviews abound in the current glossy magazines, and they are almost entirely positive. *Motor Sport's* article did point out that despite its name, the 8C is a grand touring automobile, not a competition car. They also had a few issues with handling at the limit, but quickly pointed out that the car is more than up to the job required of it – that is a dream car to boost the image of the brand and to drive the product range up-market.

Another British magazine *Octane* prefaced its one page driving impressions of the 8C with a multi page companion article including driving impressions on three 8C Alfas from the 1930's. These included an 8C 2300 Touring spider, a Monza and a Tipo B (aka P3) monoposto.

Other news is more like rumour. The biggest one is that the upcoming rear-drive Alfa 169 may be a derivative of current Jaguar products (the XF, perhaps?) or a jointly developed new platform with Jaguar. This is all based on the fact that there is a relationship between Fiat and Tata (of current fame for its Nano golf-cart-with-windows that will sell for \$2,500 in India), and Tata is negotiating the purchase of Jaguar from its current owners. Concurrent rumours are that Fiat will be bringing Alfa Romeo, Maserati and Ferrari to India.

Another story is that Fiat and Alfa will be introducing camless engines in the near future in the Junior and Fiat 500. The article going around says nothing about how valves might be actuated, but makes reference to technology currently being used in Formula One. As far as I know, this involves pneumatic closing of valves rather than using conventional springs, but cams still dictate

valve opening and closing events. Furthermore, F1 rules require camshafts!

In musing about a possible North American launch of the Alfa Romeo brand, Sergio Marchionne is quoted as saying that North American production might be necessary to make the launch profitable in the long term.

A recent news item stated that Alfa's introduction of its regular production cars may be delayed until 2010 due to the present lack of an appropriate dealer network. Another delay – this sounds all too familiar.

There's no sign of Alfa Romeo at the North American International Auto Show. The name Alfa Romeo is not on the official floor plan. I was hoping that the 8C might make an appearance at the Maserati stand, but there's been no mention of it in press or news coverage of the event so far. Perhaps some of our members will get to the Detroit show and prove me wrong.

Here are a couple of pictures of the new Alfa Junior from an Australian source. There are some familiar styling themes here!



It seems that the winning name from the contest Alfa ran in the fall of last year was "Furiosa". Apparently, no one likes that name enough to use it on the car. To me, it sounds like a spell cast by Harry Potter or one of his gang.



I think it could be really exciting to have a high-powered version of this car in the North American market.

## ***EFI Conversion?***

by George Beston, Cobourg

The tantalizing possibility of converting an Alfa from the 1960's to electronic fuel injection has been eating at me for some time now. I'm inspired when I see well-done and nicely integrated upgrades on other people's Alfas. I'm thinking of Doug Paraschuk's series 4 spider with its V6 conversion, John Justus' GTV with numerous mechanical upgrades, and Bill Gillham's Hooligan, an amazing Giulia Super with many modern features built into it. Even when you examine them closely, all of these cars look like they were built that way from the beginning and then maintained at a high level ever since.

I'm thinking that it might be possible to do an EFI conversion on my Spider Junior and yet maintain the look of the original engine to the point that most casual observers wouldn't even notice the change. If I could pull this off, the benefits to me would be a lot of learning about fuel injection and engine management, a real sense of accomplishment, a significant decrease in fuel consumption, and further opportunities to tune the engine (I'm thinking cams and intake runners) in the future. While I'm at it, there might be some bragging rights to be had.

In investigating the subject, it is apparent that many changes would have to be made to the car to make this conversion possible. Significant modifications would be required to the electrical, fuel and even the exhaust systems. Furthermore, the carburetors would have to be replaced with some sort of throttle bodies, and an engine management computer would be required.

The good news is that the aftermarket is rife with hardware and systems that make the conversion hypothetically possible. There are a few Alfa EFI conversions out there, but none I've seen that have done exactly what I have in mind.

Watch this space!

## ***Upcoming ARCC Events***

This year's event schedule has been completed. Watch this space for coming events as they are planned.

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