



# ARCC UPDATE

February 2012

## ***4C Development Continues***

by George Beston, Cobourg



*Alfa Romeo press release image*

Lots of snippets have been flying around on the web and in newspaper articles regarding the progress being made in bringing the 4C to production-ready status. Talk of aluminum sub-frames and sheet moulded composite (SMC) pieces has had me scratching my head. Thanks to Elio Comello, I finally found a report that brought it all together. It seems that the carbon fibre tub is still part of the design, and that front and rear aluminum sub frames will be used to carry the engine and suspension components. The SMC enters the picture as the material for body panels. The best news of all is that overall weight is being kept low (target is 900 kg) by using an aluminum-block version of the Giulietta-derived engine. This will allow stellar performance given the 200 plus horsepower lurking under the hood.

The next best part of the picture is that perhaps we finally have an Alfa that will really be a difficult challenge for the tin worm.

The first road going prototype is scheduled to be in service by mid-year, and the current plan calls for production versions to be available in late 2013.

## ***Detroit Auto Show***

by Elio Comello, Camlachie

Like the doubting St. Thomas I wanted to see and touch! Lured by the good weather, close proximity and cheap US gas, Jan 18, I headed to Detroit, aka "The Motor City" for the 2012 North American International Auto Show. I wanted to gauge the health of the company that may bring Alfa back to North America. I was intrigued when FIAT met a requirement to produce a car that met the 40 mpg criteria in order to gain the final chunk for 58.6% ownership of Chrysler. In truth, it was the Alfa Giulietta DNA that the 2012 Dodge Dart contains that drew me to COBO Hall.

If size matters, the Chrysler Group display was central and comparable to Ford and GM's footprint. FIAT was well represented with every Cinquecento model including the soft-top Abarth versions. A single Maserati SUV completed the Italian family's presence. Ferrari, Lamborghini, Jaguar and Chinese automaker BYD were absent. Brochures and specs for many vehicles were short on detail or not available at all.

You could see some electrics, much hyped for zero emissions and great acceleration/torque specs and Hybrids. For an electrical engineer, seeing 300 or so individual interconnected batteries, managed by a computer, lining an aluminum box under the floor pan along with elaborate cooling represents "bleeding edge" technology. "Pie in the sky" economics, concerns about reliability and who will fix them have not dampened the hype, but big advances in gasoline and diesel technology challenge the fuel economy of the greens.

***2013 Dodge Dart (With Alfa Romeo DNA) available this spring!***

Two "complete" cars were on display, one on the rotating podium and one on the floor. In addition there was an angularly raised "cut open" example. You could not get into the cars and a request to take a picture under the hood was politely rebuffed; "these are preproduction models".



Photo by Elio Comello.

The Alfa DNA of the Dart is from a stretched version of the current EU Giulietta platform (12" longer, 4" more wheelbase and a 3" wider track) and the Alfa engines.

The "gold" for me was the 3 versions of 4 cylinder Alfa engines. These were displayed as cutaways under glass: (you will have to guess which delivers the 40 mpg US, since fuel figures are not given).

Dart engine choices are as follows:

- 2.0L with wide range dual independent VVT, 160HP @ 6400rpm, 145 ft-lbs @ 4800 rpm.
- 1.4L intercooled Turbo MultiAir with individual electro-hydraulic activation of intake valves (no intake cam), 160HP @ 5500rpm, 184 ft-lbs @ 2500-4000 rpm.
- 2.4L MultiAir 2 with individual electro-hydraulic activation of intake valves (no intake cam), 184HP @ 6250, 171 ft-lbs @ 4800 rpm.



MultiAir Intake Cutaway. Fiat image from Dart-Mouth.com

The Dart utilizes an active grille shutter system that automatically opens or closes based on engine coolant temperature and vehicle speed. This greatly

reduces aerodynamic drag at highway speeds by stopping airflow through the lower intake opening.

Transmission options include 6 speed manual and automatics, and a 6 speed dual clutch version!

From the raised, angled cutaway car it was interesting to note that the underside of the car was completely flat and "enclosed", including the engine compartment. So changing oil would require removing panels!



Photo by Elio Comello.

Talk about personalizing your Dart? Imagine this, there are 100,000 choices. There must be an app for that! There are five model trim versions: SE, SXT, Rallye, Limited and R/T. The dual exhaust look of the top three versions is deceiving; a single exhaust pipe runs the length of the car to the center of a cross mounted rear muffler and "voila", from each end appear separate tail pipes! Features like blind spot monitoring, rear view camera, heated steering wheel, six wheel choices and push button start firmly establish the Dart as a Dodge sedan.

Seriously, I feel that this car was well done, well finished and at the US starting price target of \$15,995, (reflecting Sergio's low cost idle capacity in the Illinois plant that made the Neon). I think it will rank high against its competition and will succeed. I take solace that success for Fiat/Chrysler may bring cars worthy of the Alfa engines to North America. Do I think that there will be many (any?) Darts ordered with a 6 speed dual clutch? Not likely, but then I digress. The engines are works of art, the Turbo should be a winner and there is hope of some "real" Alfas coming, not just some "wild oats" DNA in a Dart that replaces the Caliber.

I could not ignore, next to the Dart, the big presence of Fiat Cinquecentos or their Abarth cousin (on sale in the "first half of 2012") so I include some pictures. The Cinquecento is small, but a 4 door version is planned! At a Canadian starting price of

\$23,995 for the Abarth with 1.4L Turbo MultiAir, 160HP, 170 ft-lbs, 5 speed, between the Dart or the Abarth there is no doubt in my mind which car would be more fun to drive! However, I'm hoping, praying and saving for a 4C Euro spec.



*Image from blogspot.com.*

## **Collier Collection – 8C2300**

**by George Beston, Cobourg**

During a winter trip to Florida, I did a little internet research on what I might find there that would be of interest to an Alfa enthusiast. I came across a couple of references to the Collier collection in Naples, one from the web site of the South Florida chapter of the AROC which said that the collection is not open to the public, and another from a tourist information site that gave hours of operation for the "Collier Museum". Faced with conflicting information, I decided to seek out the location while my spouse explored the retail therapy opportunities on Sanibel Island by bicycle.

I arrived at the address listed to find out that the tourist information I found is out of date, big time. It turns out that the collection has been closed as a museum since 1994!

Just to prove that not all my luck is bad, when I arrived two mechanics had the collection's 8C2300 outside and were working on starting it for a shakedown run. After some spectacular backfires through the carburetor, and some fiddling with ignition wires, the 8C came to life and ran splendidly. After a few moments one of the mechanics took it around the parking lot a number of times to warm it up, and then parked it to "let it heat soak" while he prepared to take it for a longer drive by adding fuel (along with a good shot of stabilizer) and checking for fluid leaks.

The mechanic who was not driving the 8C explained to me that the collection is only open for pre-arranged group events these days. The collection now consists of somewhere between 150 and 160 cars and includes five Alfas, the 8C2300, an 8C2900 coupe, a TZ, a TZ2, and a Giulietta Sprint Veloce.



*Photo by George Beston.*

The cars in the collection are all started and run at least once a year, and many of them are transported to events around the United States and Europe. Watch for them at places like Watkins Glen and Lime Rock.



*Photo by George Beston.*

I think it would be geographically inconvenient for us to organize a club visit! I was extremely lucky to see anything at all when I was there. Going there with the expectation of seeing any of the collection and without prior arrangements is quite certain to be futile. The best approach would be to find out when the collection is open for a group tour, and try to join that group.



*Another day at the office. Photo by George Beston.*

I have since gone back to the AROC South Florida website to gather more information. This collection has its origins with Briggs Cunningham who had a large collection and ran the Briggs Cunningham Automotive Museum in a 30,000 square foot facility in Costa Mesa, California. Due to its location, the museum never drew enough visitors to be a paying proposition, and in 1988 he sold most of the collection in his museum to Miles Collier, the nephew of his long-time friend and racing partner, Sam Collier.

## Upcoming ARCC Events

### Toronto Chapter

Date	Time	Event
March 29	7:00 pm	AGM, Scarlett Road
April 21	TBD	Tech Session
May 3	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
May 6	TBD	Sunday Drive
June 3	TBD	Sunday Drive
June 7	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
June 15-17	TBD	Vintage Festival/Drive
July 7	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
June 17-24		<b>Alfa Canadese</b>
July 5	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
July 8	TBD	Sunday Drive
August 2	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
August 4-5		Toronto/Detroit Party
Sept. 6	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
Sept. 15	8:30 am	Creemore Drive
Sept. 23	8:30 am	Europa Rally
Oct. 4	7:00 pm	Cruise Night
Oct. 14	TBD	Fall Tour
Nov. 8	7:00 pm	Pub Night/Directors' Mtg
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 Canadese

**Toronto, June 17-24, 2012**

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

**Registration now open!**

<http://alfacanadese.ca>

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

## Alfa Romeo Club of Canada

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