



# ARCC UPDATE

November 2012

## **Toronto Chapter Wine Tour** by George Beston, Cobourg

Well, your humble servant was away on a long-anticipated trip to California for this occasion. I have it on good authority that the event did indeed take place. Attendance was good with about a dozen Alfas and over 20 people attending. The day included a drive from the 401 at Trafalgar Rd. all the way to the Glendale Avenue exit off the QEW in St. Catherines. Events of the day included lunch at the Benchmark Restaurant of the Canadian Food and Wine Institute followed by a winery and vineyard tour put on by the Niagara College Teaching Winery. Based on the picture below, I think it's safe to presume that the lunch was thoroughly enjoyed by one and all!



*Photo by Anthony Tersigni.*

## **CARM Montréal News** by Alex Csank, Montréal

October 13th was a bright, crisp autumn Saturday in southwestern Quebec. It was a perfect day for the Montreal Alfa Romeo Club's last drive of the season. Meeting for a relaxed breakfast at a locally owned restaurant in the small village of Saint Louis de Gonzague, just a little bit southwest of Montreal, eleven Alfisti gathered for a "Fall Foliage

Fun Foray" through the Chateauguay River Valley, a rural area known for its many orchards and historic towns.

The group consisted of seven Alfas: 2 GTV6s, an Alfetta GTV, 3 Spiders and a modern-era FWD Spider. Alfisti are known to drive some pretty long distances just to be able to drive together, and this event proved the point. Luc and Gail Pomerlau had to leave their home in Magog at 6AM to make it in time for our breakfast at 9AM!

Getting underway, we meandered along the surprisingly well-paved old country roads, which loosely follow the Chateauguay River in a generally southward direction as the river winds its way north from New York State. Enjoying the rainbow of colours of the trees as we drove through a canopy of golden leaves, passing through a few quaint old towns like Ormstown and Huntingdon, we made our first stop at the 151 year-old 'Percy' covered bridge in Powerscourt. This beautiful and historic one-lane bridge was a great place to stretch our legs and get a few photos. As we were preparing to leave, the Ferrari club arrived ... of course, as always: we were there first! Continuing our little driving adventure, we turned to the east and began to parallel the USA-Canada border, just a few hundred yards to the south.



*Photo by Alex Csank.*

Around noon we stopped for some home-made chili and soups, served with fresh rolls and apple pie and other desserts at the 'Blair Orchard' in Franklin, where many in our group also bought baked goods

and freshly-harvested apples. We also visited their small petting zoo of farm animals, and – of course – talked about our Alfas. Once we had rested up, stretched, filled ourselves with food and hit the bathroom, we mounted our rides and headed back out for some more driving fun. Heading uphill, we ventured east along the ridge known as Covey Hill. From the crest of Covey Hill, we were treated to spectacular views of the Montreal skyline, the ski hills and mountains of the Eastern Townships and the broad and flat area of Montreal's south shore. We made a short stop as we descended the hill to take a few more photos at a spot known for its use as a romantic 'Lover's Lane' (the author has sweet memories of parking here more than thirty years ago). Back on the road, we continued eastward, eventually ending our drive across from the entrance to Hemmingford's 'Parc Safari Africain', where we said our goodbyes and departed individually for home ... until our first Alfa drive of 2013 next Spring!

Ciao ... and rev high!

## ***Alfa in North America?***

**by Russ Baer, Monkton, Maryland**

Why all the fuss? Is Alfa returning to North America – in '00, '05, '08, '11, '12 – ever?, never? If you guessed “never” you would be correct.

Much has been written about the plans, machinations, complications, and hopes regarding the “big event”. But everyone is missing the point. Alfa will never come back. There is nothing left of Alfa Romeo to make the return trip: no factories, shop workers, engineers, designers – no Alfa real DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) – just a badge (oh, I forgot, ‘brand’) without ‘Milano’ to balance ‘Alfa Romeo’ and keep it from rotating belly up. The flagship ‘Competizione’ is really a Maserati with an Alfa badge – not much different from the traditional AROC convention autocross rental car with an Alfa grille taped on. But that’s ok. Maybe it’s even better than ok because those of us who really love what used to be Alfa and Alfa cars can be free from any brand allegiance. If something called Alfa Romeo ever hits these shores, I won’t feel bad about not buying one. I now own nothing but Alfas (five including one bought new in '62). Why buy a ‘non-Alfa’ Alfa?

Cars are different now anyway. It’s no one’s fault really. When Alfa was Alfa their cars were about passion – soul. Car companies now care about production numbers, market analysis, platform and engine sharing, bottom line, and worst of all – stockholders. But they have to. The primary concern is not the product, but survival of the

corporation. Ok, the car cannot be made if the company dies, but the car is not the most important thing. The company doesn’t exist for the car: the car exists for the company. The cars themselves have changed: they now are only about gimmicks. There is not much room for soul with auto trans, front drive, air con, cruise control, sat-nav, seat heat, auto park, ‘Bluetooth’ (blue teeth?), power this, power that, and as the ad folks say: “much, much, more”. Oh, and I almost forgot, except for the grilles and badges, they all look alike!

Not that the early cars weren’t technical masterpieces – they were. But the technology was the means to an end and not an end unto itself. Alfa Romeo always made the cars it wanted to make and was surprised if people didn’t want or like them. I was told that there was no sales division until the 1970’s. Adverts I guess, must have been generated regionally (?).

Think about this. During almost all of the Glory Years, Alfa Romeo was owned by the government. The *GOVERNMENT!* Alfa was like the US Military Industrial Complex only the products didn’t blow up (except in a certain movie).

And now? Forget about ‘Alfa’ returning. Raise a glass and toast the past – to the cars we were, and are, privileged to own and drive. Let us toast the great engineers and designers (isn’t it cool that we actually know who they were?). Cent’anni! As a toast it means “100 years of good luck”. And in a few years, we may actually believe that Alfa Romeo did live to be 100 years old.

## ***All I Ever Wanted was a 4-Wheel Motorcycle***

**by Dave Willis, Ottawa**

First of all, I apologize to you *Alfisti sangue-puro* for what I’ve done to your car, a 1974 Spider Veloce. You see, I have never been a collector, interested in preserving originality and value; but a hot-rodder, or improver, raised amongst hot-rodders in Olde Easte Yorke.

Johnson’s Drugstore, corner of Sammon and Coxwell, had what would today be an amazing selection of magazines, as well as 10¢ comics and a soda fountain. The magazines included the weekly *Autosport*, arriving late in batches by sea, covering in black and white the enviable British amateur sports car competitions, introducing me to:

1. Cooper-Norton Formula 3 500 cc single seaters made from WW II aircraft fuel tanks.
2. 750 cc ‘Clubman’ racers: especially the Lotus 6; yes, and Abarth.

I was hooked on 4-wheel motorcycles. My dream car became the Lotus, later Caterham 7 kit car. Somewhere in my extensive automotive archives, there is a letter from Lotus – not from Colin Chapman Himself, as I would later claim – answering a 14 year old's enquiry about availability in, or shipping to Canada.

My chance came four decades later, when my Dad's Alfetta Berlina was on its last rusty legs, raising the possibility of an Alfetta-powered Caterham 7: mid-engine forward, with the transaxle for even better balance! However, a fitting in a Caterham convinced me my right knee would never fit between the steering wheel and the driveshaft tunnel. A Westfield was no wider. I actually found a Caterham dealer in Saskatchewan, but it was too late.

So the Alfetta went to Bernie for – he claimed at the time – ice racing; and I bought a running 1974 Spider Veloce in Markham from *The Autotrader*. That was September 1991. It continued running, under the unoriginal working title Alfie II, until the starter Bendix refused to release from the flywheel in October 1997. That was the signal for a teardown. The drive train went onto my bench, and the remainder to the late lamented MiniMan in Stittsville. It wouldn't be on the road again for 13 years, to the month.

Customizing is the most visible part of a hotrod. My aims were:

- Replace expensive, inefficient original equipment: bumpers, light assemblies, seats
- Get more cooling air through the radiator
- Get rid of unnecessary weight
- Cover as much of the chrome as possible.



It does look a bit 'boy racer'. What do you want me to do, uglify it? MiniMan being a Mini man (Rob Stark, where are you?) the requested nerf bars became bumperettes from a Triumph Spitfire. Attempts last year to replace these with nerf bars [design available on request] resulted in Bruce McConville and I being rudely dismissed by Ottawa's premier welding shop, so the bumperettes remain. Ed at Wicked Garage thinks he might be able to do some nerf bars over this winter.

I would never hear a radio over the engine and wind, and the console had to be truncated to fit the seats, so Bruce Pratte fabricated a switch panel for ENGINE FAN, COLD START and CHOKE, the latter being better known to Alfisti as the thermostatic actuator.



Alfie II came home in January 1999. I rebuilt the engine, and a 1750 gearbox left over from Alfie I, in a corner of the late lamented Frank's Auto Centre. A Stage III head arrived in the mail from the also late lamented Sperry Valve Works. Jim Duncan and I got it all back in the car one night in 2000.

The Editor has asked for the Sperry HP Street 3 camshaft specifications, so here goes:

Lift:	11.1 mm
Duration at 0.050" Lift	233°
Duration Seat-to-Seat	286°

He'll have to ask Giovanni Centofanti about the timing. I set timing according to Sperry's instructions – cam marks line up with #1 and #6 cam caps at #1 piston TDC – but I'm sure Giovanni tweaked them. Before the teardown, Andy Petschenig put in the Stebro exhaust system, installed the one-inch lower springs and Koni adjustable shocks, but didn't have time to design headers before leaving town.

The Recaro Designer Touring seats are far more comfortable than original equipment. They are bolted to the floor as far back as possible, for legroom and to clear the roll bar. This makes the steering wheel a bit high, but lowering it would get me into Caterham 7 territory.

### **Problems**

The Alfatross wasn't ready for Alfa Canadese, but damn it was fun! I thought my major problem was



brakes, but the 300 miles – yes, miles – to Beautiful Downtown Mississauga showed me that we had an overheating problem. I frequently saw 240° F – yes Fahrenheit, 30° over boiling water – and had to pull over for a bit. I replaced the thermostat, which had been installed upside down; but the cure was a flush and refill, removing an air lock. To be certain, I also sealed around the radiator with foam.

Summer 2012 has been spent in incremental improvements. I still believe something is wrong with the vacuum brake booster, making the pedal very soft on first application when the engine is running. Perhaps the booster is blowing instead of sucking ...

*All photos in article by author.*

## 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		<b>Alfa Canadese</b>
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 <sup>st</sup> 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		<b>Alfa Canadese</b>
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

## Club Alfa Romeo de Montréal

Date	Time	Event
Oct 13	TBD	Chateauguay Valley
Nov 13	7:00 pm	Italian Dinner
December	TBD	Holiday Party

## 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

### National Executive

vacant	President	
Harry Hamilton	Western VP	(403) 463-2235
Tony Adams	Eastern VP	(905) 642-3749
Jack Thompson	Past President	(780) 481-1708
George Beston	Treasurer	(905) 372-3552
Christine Pickering	Secretary	(416) 498-6553
	Messages	(416) 499-7129
	Fax	(416) 499-4517

### Regional Contacts

Don Best	Vancouver	(604) 939-5056
Mark Willis	Calgary	(403) 668-0379
Chesley Wells	Edmonton	(403) 963-9199
Anthony Tersigni	Toronto	(905) 918-0457
Jack Livingstone	Ottawa	(613) 232-6335
Yves Boulanger	Montréal	(450) 692-7478
Alex Csank	C.A.R. Montréal	(514) 771-9513

### ARCC Update

Editor: George Beston  
 Telephone: (905) 372-3552  
 E-Mail: [gbeston@eagle.ca](mailto:gbeston@eagle.ca)

### ARCC On Line

Our Website: <http://www.alfaclub.ca>  
 Webmaster: David Munro  
 E-Mail: [djwmunro@yahoo.ca](mailto:djwmunro@yahoo.ca)