



ARCC UPDATE

February 2014

Arizona Auctions, 2014

by George Beston, Cobourg

Tony Adams, our “man at the auctions” in recent years, opted to take his annual winter trip to Arizona a little later this year, so we won’t be treated to a first hand report; however, I’m hooked on knowing how Alfas performed at these possibly trend setting auctions. The star of the season was a very good Montreal, which sold for a \$160,000 bid price, plus the buyer’s premium of 10%. What’s most amazing to me is that this example was reportedly offered for sale about two years ago with an asking price of \$40,000! The pre-auction estimate of 80 to 100 thousand dollars is probably more indicative of the normal market price, but things do happen during the bidding process!



Image from Gooding & Co. web site.

Other Alfas that changed hands at the Gooding auction were as follows:

1954 1900 CSS Ghia Coupe	\$649,000
1964 2600 Spider	\$176,000
1964 Giulia Spider	\$121,000
1989 Spider Quadrifoglio	\$46,200

The RM auction also included some Alfas:

1949 6C 2500 SS Touring	\$324,500
1957 Giulietta Spider	\$68,750
1960 Giulietta Sprint Speciale	\$120,000
1962 2000 Spider Touring	\$121,000

Barrett-Jackson only listed two Alfas. Both sold, one very high and the other, not so much!

1939 6C 2500 Sport Touring	\$1,045,000
1987 Spider Veloce	\$13,200

It feels like this was a good year for Alfa prices. It’s impossible for me to relate this to every day sales of Alfas among enthusiasts, but it’s reassuring to see some strength in demand, and increases in apparent value.



Image from RM Auctions web site.

105 Front Suspension and Steering Overhaul

by Yves Boulanger, Chateauguay

Last fall, the front suspension of my 2000 GTV developed a squeak. A quick inspection did not reveal anything abnormal; everything was tight. I sprayed lubricant on the pivots as a temporary fix.

We Canadian *Alfisti* are fortunate in that we don’t have to drive our cars 12 months a year; we are provided with a generous winter period to perform extended maintenance on our cars. As soon as my Alfa was bound in the garage, I started dismantling the front end. This car has had an easy life. It was one of the last new GTVs sold in Canada in 1975; its original owner pampered it and never drove it in any kind of weather until he fell for a new GTV6. I bought it from the second owner in 2008 with 90,000 miles; the front end had never been taken apart, except for a new tie rod end installed when I got it.

Work on other areas of the car had shown a number of failed, 35+ year old rubber components, the most notable being the rear gearbox mount which had sheared to leave the tail of the box sitting on its cross member.

It was not a surprise when a steel sleeve from a bushing fell on the floor as I was removing one of the upper ball joints. The inner bushings were history, with the caster bushings not far behind.



Caster Bushings. Photo by Yves Boulanger.



Inner Bushing. Photo by Yves Boulanger.

Once removed, both of the lower ball joints turned out to have 0.020" of axial play. This cannot be felt once the suspension is assembled as the springs keep a permanent pressure in that direction. I checked another used ball joint I had, and it had an equal 0.020" axial play.

If you read the Alfa forums such as Alfabb, you will find lots of comments about the quality of the new Italian suspension and steering joints that are available today. Some people claim one make is not good, some others consider another to be garbage.

Alfa originally used German made Ehrenreich or Lemforder joints, which all the ball joints in my possession are. But Ehrenreich has disappeared, and Lemforder does not manufacture 105 Alfa ball joints anymore. I contacted a number of Alfa parts suppliers and they confirmed that 105 ball joints are now only available from two Italian makers;

Frap and Ocap. Anything else is NLA or repackaged products from either one of these two brands. Both of them are OEM suppliers to the auto industry and having nothing to do with low grade aftermarket parts of questionable origin.

My local Alfa stockist had a new Lemforder ball joint on hand: and sure enough, it also had 0.020" axial play – he remembered they always were that way!

The lower a-arms appeared tight and smooth before dismantling. Their inner pivots are actually ball joints, not bushings, a luxury few carmakers have used over the years. On all four joints, the felt discs that hold grease to protect the joints had rotten and fallen out. One of the joints was bleeding rust and had more side play than its twin; time for replacement. On the other side I had a real surprise. In spite of being secured by lock tabs, both nuts were only finger tight; the joints were turning on the spindle which was deeply gouged (photos). In spite of this one of the joints was stiff and jerky. More part replacements were required. My stockist came to the rescue with an a-arm from a 90's Spider.



Gouged Spindle. Photo by Yves Boulanger.

At this stage the greasy steering box was the only thing left on the car. It was taken off for cleaning, re-sealing and adjustment.

There is an interesting 15 page thread on Alfabb with step by step instructions on Burman steering box overhaul. Part of the discussion pertains to an alarmingly frequent occurrence of cracks in these steering boxes. It is quite disturbing to find out that the ultimate failure mode of a cracked Burman box is a total steering failure. The reported events all appear to have occurred while parking, but it somehow fails to cheer me up.

I was quite glad to own a rather low mileage Alfa, never hit and driven conservatively by its two

previous owners (and all of it on original size 165 tires), which should guarantee a crack free Burman box.

Then I looked at it!



Photo by Yves Boulanger.

I found tiny cracks adjacent to three of the four bolt holes on the input side. Close examination revealed cracks running right through the casting as in this example.



Photo by Yves Boulanger.

Sometimes cracks like this appear at the output side.

Now, what is the solution?

1. Finding an intact, second hand Burman box. It so happens I have another one in the basement. It's better. Only one small crack. Quite frankly, I don't trust these old Burman boxes anymore.
2. Welding the cracks. This has been attempted by some Alfabb posters – without success. The box seems to be made from a rather common grade of aluminum casting. And welding cracks does not bring the material back to new. It's still fatigued material.
3. Replacement by a ZF steering box. Alfa used both brands over 105 production; they seemed to favour Burman for US market cars until some point in the 80's where they switched to ZF. The ZF box has no known failure mode, but since it's not a recirculating ball mechanism it's more prone to wear. There are different variations in column length and finding a box for a pre 1971 Alfa on this side of the ocean could be a challenge. It also does not exist for the cars (such as mine) that have a u-joint in the steering column.
4. Reinforcement of the original box. On Alfabb, there are two or three examples of Burman boxes which have been reinforced with external steel plates to prevent failure.
5. A new steering box casting. Available from AFRA in Milano for 380 Euros + shipping + assembly. Seems to be a pure copy of the original ones.
6. A CNC machined, reinforced billet box. Available from Alfaholics at £695+ for the bare box.

Is there an interest for a reasonably priced solution? I'm turning the empty steering box on my bench on all sides, trying to design a standard bolt-on reinforcement kit and it's not easy. I also started looking into CNC machining a reinforced box; the cost of an aluminum billet and the intensive machining required justify most of what Alfaholics are asking for theirs. The logical solution would be to cast a reinforced box, but some volume is required to justify the development.

If you are interested, drop me a note.

C.A.R.M. News

by Alex Csank, Ste. Anne-de-Bellevue

It has been a very cold and snowy winter so far. But, we all know that eventually, it will begin to warm up and soon, we'll be putting our cars back on the road for another season of fun!

On Saturday, 25 January a small group of us got together at Elio's Pizzeria to discuss plans for our club's activities during 2014. Some of the activities on our 2014 calendar are specific to CARM, while other activities are sponsored and organized by other clubs or are multi-club activities, or organized in company with other clubs. Regardless, there should be plenty of group events to keep everyone busy with some sort of Italian car activity just about every week throughout the driving season!

Throughout the season, Euro-Tuesday at the Orange Julep is open to all. Just get in touch with other members via email and let us know when you plan to attend, so we can join you! Also, Auto-Slalom events (Auto-Cross) are hosted through the season by Club Auto-Sport des Laurentides. We will post more information when available.

Please remember to visit our website at www.clubalfaromeodemontreal.com for news and updates throughout the year.

Upcoming ARCC Events

Regional representatives are requested to send your 2014 events calendars to the secretary or the editor for inclusion in the next issue.

Club Alfa Romeo de Montréal

Date	Time	Event
Feb 16	1:00 pm	Valentine's Day Lunch
March 22	1:00 pm	Tech Session
April 12	TBD	Spring Lunch
May 10	TBD	VEA Rally
May 24	TBD	Eastern Townships Tour
June 8	TBD	Gran Prix Barbeque
June 14	TBD	Ottawa Italian Car Day
June 15	TBD	Fathers' Day Veterans Tribute Car Show
June 28-29	TBD	Raduno Estivo
July 6	TBD	Fiat Breakout
July 12	TBD	Sommet des Légendes
July 23-27	TBD	AROC Convention
August 30	TBD	Ride to Rigaud
Sept 13	TBD	Wine Tour
Sept 28	TBD	Raduno Montebello
Oct 18	TBD	Fun Rally
Nov 29	TBD	Holiday Party



The new 4C Spider is rumoured to be making its debut at the Geneva Auto show. Image from alfa4c.co.uk.

Alfa Romeo Club of Canada

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