

ALFANATIC

Fall Color Tour Closes Out 2014 Events Calendar

Saturday, October 11, was a near-perfect day for driving the back roads of the Southern Kettle Moraine. Eight cars, with drivers and companions, assembled in the Holy Hill parking lot in preparation for the run organized by Gary Schommer. The fall foliage was near its peak and the temperatures were comfortable. The course covered some great county roads, and after a slight issue with a brand-new construction zone, everything went smoothly. Stops along the way included the Cedarburg area's last covered bridge, an area nature preserve, and a cheese shop. What could be more Wisconsin? Those free for the entire run assembled at West Bend's Riverside Brewery & Restaurant for a pleasant lunch and conversation. 🍀



Pre-tour parking lot line-up.

Photos: Bob Abhalter (above), Gary Schommer (right).



Lunch in West Bend at the Riverside Brewery



Drivers take a break at nature preserve



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Super Sidelined by Mysterious Malady

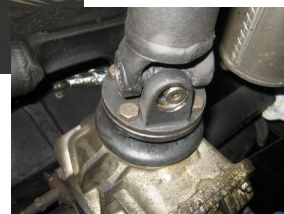
As enjoyable as the fall color tour was, things did not end well for your editors. After lunch and a little shopping in West Bend, we were headed home on Route 45 without a care in the world when suddenly there was a large bang followed by a vibration that sounded like we'd run over a set of king-size rumble strips. Panic ensued in the passenger's seat, and I wasn't too thrilled either. We quickly headed to the shoulder to assess damages. A walk-around showed all four wheels where they should have been and my thoughts quickly went to the driveshaft. Just about that time who should happen by but Gary Schommer in his GTV. Together we assessed the problem, eliminating the drive donut but finding that the rear universal joint had inexplicably lost one of its bearing caps. We were just shy of Good Hope Road. Gary was able to guide us to a safe haven just off the freeway where we were able to get refreshments and call the Hagerty Insurance Emergency Road Service for a ride home.

Back home, a close examination of the joint gave no clue to the reason for the failure. Obviously, the circlip had worked its way out of the yolk, allowing the bearing cap to work free and fly away, but the reason for the circlip failure was not obvious. Could it be that the Super just doesn't like color tours? Two years ago the brakes locked up on our way to Holy Hill due to a brake servo failure. Coincidence? Who's to say?



Above, Going home. The Super gets a ride for the last 50 miles.

Below, if your U-joint looks like this, you have a problem.



2015 Local, Regional, and International Events Calendar

January 10-18	Phoenix and Scottsdale Collector Car Auctions, Phoenix, AZ area
January 17-25	Detroit International Auto Show, Cobo Hall, Detroit, MI
February 4-8	Retromobile Salon, Paris, France
February 14-22	Chicago Auto Show, McCormick Place, Chicago
February 21-March 1	Greater Milwaukee Auto Show, Wisconsin Center
March 5-15	85th Annual International Motor Show, Geneva, Switzerland
March 13-15	Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance , Amelia Island, FL
May 2	AROC-Wisconsin, Das Kurze Klausenrennen , 27th hillclimb and tour, New Glarus, WI
May 2-3	SCCA Majors Tour, Blackhawk Farms Raceway, S. Beloit, IL
May 15	SVRA Spring Vintage Weekend, Road America
June 11-14	SVRA Brickyard Vintage Racing International, Indianapolis, IN
June 11-14	WeatherTech Chicago Region SCCA June Sprints, Road America
June 13-14	The 24 hours of LeMans
June 24	105th Anniversary of the founding of A.L.F.A.
June 24-28	Alfamiglia Nordest, Alfa Romeo Owners Club National Convention, Rhode Island
June 26-28	Pirelli World Challenge, Road America
July 10-11	21st Annual Millers at Milwaukee, Milwaukee Mile, West Allis, WI
July 12	Indycar ABC Supply Wisconsin 250, Milwaukee Mile, West Allis, WI
July 16-19	The Hawk with Brian Redman, Vintage Racing, Road America
August 2(t)	AROC-Wisconsin, Italian Car and Motorcycle Show , Milwaukee, WI
August 6-9	Continental Tire Road Race Showcase, Road America
August 16	Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, Monterey, CA
August 16-20	Ferrari Club of America International Meet, Monterey, CA
August 27-29	NASCAR XFINITY Series, SCCA Pro TransAm, Road America
August 29-30(t)	Milwaukee Masterpiece, Veterans Park, Milwaukee
September 18-20	VSCDA Elkhart Lake Vintage Festival, Road America

Alfanatic Goes to an Auction

The Mecum Auction circus visited suburban Chicago Oct 2-4 and in the interest of furthering our coverage of Alfas at auction, your editors felt obliged to drive down to the Schaumburg Convention Center to check things out first hand.

We picked Friday afternoon for our visit. Schaumburg is home to the Chicago area Ikea Store and the giant Woodfield Mall, so there is no lack of things to do and see in that area. This means that the area is quite congested and parking in the vicinity of the convention center is at a premium. To address this, Mecum arranges for free remote parking and a shuttle from the mall area, a mile or two away.

Admission for spectators is \$20. If you want to bid, admission is \$100 for two, once you have established your credit. As we had no intention of bidding, we were prepared to fork over the \$40 required for our two admissions; however we found that if we subscribed to the *Mecum Monthly* magazine for only \$25 we could have two admissions free. Easy choice. We filled out the subscription blank.

If you have watched the auctions on TV, you may have noticed that every Mecum auction looks pretty much the same, with the identical auctioneer's podium, TV commentators' desk, background, and lighting. That's because Mecum carries everything along with them from auction to auction in three or four semi-loads, just like a traveling stage show, which, of course, is exactly what it is. The whole thing was laid out across one side of the auditorium. Cars are wheeled in one large overhead door and out another. Floor seating and grandstands hold the bidders and spectators. A VIP section with an open bar for high rollers anchors one side of the bidders-only grandstand. The auction area is lit for television, so everything sparkles. The sound and graphics are bold and clear, or at least the audio is as clear as a fast talking auctioneer's voice can be. Also, just like on TV, founder Dana Mecum is highly visible on the floor, acting as ringmaster, even in the off-TV hours.

Outside the auction area, the other half of the hall is ringed by vendors, concession stands, and the automobilia selections being offered at auction. In the center are the feature cars, set to be offered during prime time. At the Chicago auction you could have



The auction in progress

had your choice of three different colors of Ford GTs, several late-model Ferraris, and an eclectic mix of hot rods, customs, and show-quality muscle cars. After all, Mecum's theme is "muscle cars and more." In this case the "more" included a group of vintage motorcycles.

The bread-and-butter auction offerings are parked outside under several tents, orderly arranged in auction sequence, tidily labeled, numbered, and available for inspection. A cadre of marshals insure that the cars are herded into line at the proper time for their run across the block. The entire operation is designed to maximize the flow of merchandise. Buyers and onlookers poke and prod the cars for sale, some right up to the point of them being wheeled past the scrum of onlookers and onto the block. Some cars are accompanied by the owners who do their best to represent their treasures; others are obviously just commodities, cut from the herd and destined to be sold that day.



Cars lined up for their turn on the block.

On the auction block the action is nonstop, something one may not appreciate from watching the proceed-

ings on TV. As a car is rolled in, the commentator reads the specs, shown simultaneously on several large screens, and the auctioneer starts his patter. The asking price appears in large numbers above the auctioneer's podium and in three other currencies on the other screens. The floor men work the crowd, identifying bidders. The bids go forward and at a set time the car is rolled off the block as the bidding continues and the next car is rolled in. When it's obvious that the bids have gone as far as they can, the auction is either closed with a sale or "the bid goes on" and the cars roll out the exit door. By that time the auctioneer has started on the next car. It just goes on and on...

Out in the tents, your editors searched for Alfas, of which we found three—a '74 GTV and two '91 Spiders. None were must-have cars but at least two were pretty good if you could make allowances for a few shortcomings. We talked to a couple examining the GTV as a possible sporty car to take with them to Florida to drive when they weren't using their Viper.



The body seemed sound and the shiny blue finish was disturbed only by a prominent door ding on the driver's door style line. The upholstery was intact but faded and had seen better days. The factory air conditioning was questionable and Webers with aftermarket air cleaners replaced the Spica system. It sold for \$19,000 later that evening. The price seemed fair for what it was.

The first black Spider seemed very clean and well-maintained and sported new leather upholstery in the correct style, but different materials. It sported a new top and aftermarket spoked wheels. The engine compartment was clean and sported some Reina stickers. The single anomaly in the whole package was an un-

usually small diameter Momo wheel replacing the stock air-bag wheel. It just didn't look right. It was a no-sale at a top bid of \$17,500.



The other '91 Spider, also black, was claimed to have new paint and top in September. They also could have changed out the grubby upholstery and maybe it would have been nice to clean up the engine compartment while they were at it. It sold on Saturday for \$7,000—about right, I guess. We missed seeing two other Spiders that were auctioned on Thursday. A nice looking red '79 Spider sold for \$9,000 and an equally nice looking Ivory '79 Spider, "rumored to have been purchased by Sophia Loren" (*right!*) was a no sale at \$10,000.

The other cars we saw under the tents ranged from showpieces to sad used cars. Chrystal was taken by an Isetta "Limousine" fitted with a rear seat and side door—rarely seen in that configuration—and a couple of VW beetle convertibles. I was puzzled by a 1955



This Isetta "Limo" was Chrystal's pick.

Corvette roadster "titled and tagged as number 458 of 700 built, but not a factory body" with a 350 cubic inch motor, a 1979 frame, big custom wheels, non-original seats, and custom everything else. Now how

was this a 1955 Corvette? Whatever it was, it sold for \$28,000.

It was entertaining to sit and watch the parade of cars crossing the block and wonder at the range of pricings for seemingly similar cars. I'm sure muscle-car fanciers can tell me why a nut-and-bolt restored 1970 GTO with prime equipment sells for \$80,000, while a good-looking Olds 442 of similar specification merits only \$18,000. All I know is that I wouldn't be scared to use the Olds, while the GTO would have to sit under wraps to maintain its value. Considering fun-per-dollar, I think the Olds wins, at least for me.

Anyway, the next time the old-car circus comes to town, get on down there and (maybe) pull out your check book. Better yet, travel someplace warm this winter and visit one of the big-bucks Scottsdale or Amelia Island events. It's fun, whether or not you intend to play. 🍀

Bring-a-Trailer Follow-Up

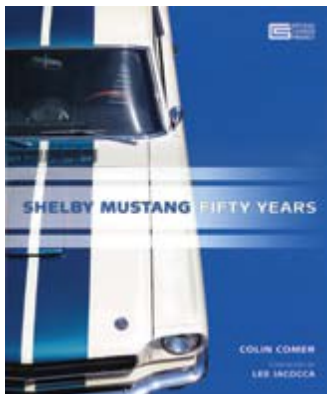
Last month I suggested that Bring-a-Trailer might be a prime place to find good Alfas at auction. Of course, immediately after that, the supply of Alfas seems to have dried up, as not one was offered this past month. Oh, well. I'm sure the situation is only temporary and we'll be seeing more in the future. In the meantime, the site is still great at finding interesting cars, including Alfas, for sale all over the 'net. 🍀

Local Boy Makes Good (Once Again)



An item in the December 2014 issue of *Sports Car Market* magazine takes notice of member Colin Comer's latest work:

SCM Editor at Large Colin Comer has just published a terrific new book: ***Shelby Mustang Fifty Years***. Comer, who is also the author of *The Complete Book of Shelby Automobiles* and *Shelby Cobra Fifty Years*, is an expert on all things Shelby. This new book is a must-buy for all gearheads. Comer, who also is a columnist and Editor at Large for our sister magazine, *American Car Collector*, is a noted collector, restorer and vintage racer. Comer also wrote *Million-Dollar Muscle Cars*. Motorbooks (www.motorbooks.com) is the publisher. The book is available at www.colincomerbooks.com.



Tech Corner—V-6 Longevity

Founding father and long time supporter of the club, George Meikrantz, shared some correspondence last week. He had queried Brian Davis about the higher – than-normal oil consumption seen on Randy Swanson's GTV6. He feared that guides or seals might be the culprit and asked Brian if he might be able to document the process of renewing a V-6 head for the benefit of Randy and the club in general. Brian is the owner of George's former Red Milano Verde. He replied with the following:

George,

I had Al Pinkowski replace my valve guides/seals and head gaskets at 140,000. That made a big difference in the amount of oil I was using. I am not planning to redo that service anytime soon.

Today, I have 200,000 miles and am doing my 60K interval service - timing belt, resetting the valve gaps.



Cylinder 3 was ticking louder than the others and sure enough, I found #3 and some of the other intake gaps were too narrow. All the exhaust gaps had reduced out of spec. Beyond that, I found excessive wear on both #3 tappets, so I bought replacements. Photo shows old corroded (#3 exhaust) and dented (#3 intake) tappets next to the new replacements.

While at it, I am replacing all of the oil seals...(cam shafts, oil pump gear, and seal behind the crankshaft pulley/timing sprocket. Removing these after 26 years of being stubbornly put was nerve-wracking.

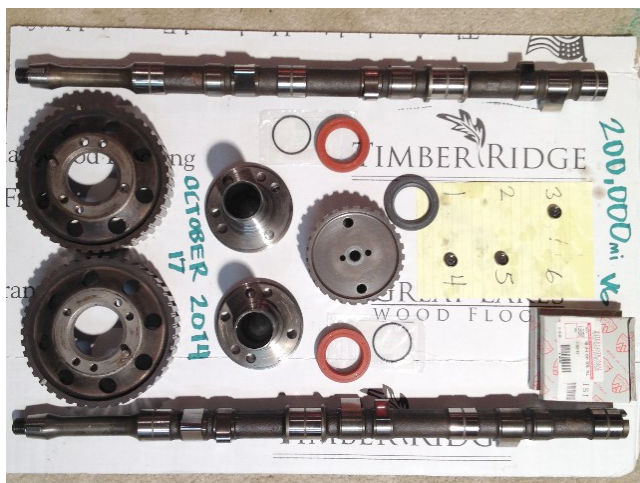


At left is a picture of the main shaft without the pulley, after much cleaning, ready for a new oil seal and reassembly. See, this is what some people do for entertainment.



The oil pump gear seal appeared to be leaking oil badly. So were the cam sprockets, which were in need of new o-rings. The bottom of the car may actually become dry now first

time since I have owned it (until the rear seal can't hold up any longer)... In which case, the whole engine comes out of the car and the entertainment value goes exponentially higher. 🍀



Alfa News—Hell Freezes Over! First U.S. 4C in Private Hands!



This Red 4C Launch Edition was sold for \$125,000 in a charity auction at the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show on Thursday, October 30, and (presumably) delivered to its new owner, Dean DeSantis. The funds in excess of the \$71,895 m.s.r.p. will go to the Broward County Special Olympics organization. The auction was organized by Rick Case,

owner of the Rick Case Automotive Group and holder of the Alfa Romeo franchise in southern Florida.

But don't run over to your local Alfa dealer just yet as you most likely won't find a car to look at, much less buy. The hawk-eyed contributors to 4C-forums.com have been tracking the painfully slow progress of the U.S. 4C rollout for months now. Correspondents in Baltimore have recently documented the arrival of at least 100 4C Launch Editions, all red, at the port. The latest information says that they will be available for sale at dealers on or about November 15. If you aren't number one on the wait list or didn't want a red car, it is most likely you are out of luck for a while longer.

I'm sure this writer is not alone in thinking this rollout is one of the longest and most-teased events in recent automotive history—also one of the most frustrating. It most resembles the initial rollout of the Fiat 500, from which the organization presumably learned nothing. Most every automotive writer has heaped praise on the 4C and that praise has presumably generated significant interest and demand for the car, yet the FCA organization has been unable or unwilling to provide any supply. Let's hope the subsequent reveals in the great Alfa re-launch go more smoothly or we'll all be too old to enjoy the new cars when they finally arrive. 🍀

Speaking of New Models...

We have a little more than 7 months left until June 24, the 110th anniversary of the founding of A.L.F.A., the day that Sergio Marchionne in September announced would mark the re-launch of the Alfa Romeo brand. And we still have very little idea what the first mainstream Alfa model will look like. It seems that every month brings a different artist's concept. Last month's



Not the new Alfa Romeo (from Autoblog.it)

rendering made it to an AROC Facebook posting and was represented as “the new Giulia.” Fortunately it’s not. The designers of this concept took styling clues from many sixties and seventies models and cobbled them into a plausible, if kind of dull looking, whole.


One thing Alfa Romeo seems to be good at these days is rumor control. To date there have been *NO* reported sightings of the actual new sheet metal—only the chassis running under a shortened Maserati Ghibli body. 🍀

Concept Cars at Indianapolis Art Museum

If your travels take you to Indianapolis between May 3 and August 23 next year, you may want to visit the Art Museum to view their first automobile exhibition—“Dream Cars: Innovative Design, Visionary Ideas.” It will feature more than 15 concept cars ranging from the 1930s to the 21st century. Companies represented will include General Motors, Bugatti, Chrysler, and Alfa Romeo.

Automotive author and historian Ken Gross is the guest curator of this collection of cars on loan from private owners and museums and staged at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, which last year opened galleries that focus on design from the 1980s onward, with emphasis on design as industry and design as art. The exhibition was previously in Atlanta at the High Museum of Art where it attracted 180,000 visitors. From [The Indy Star](#) 🍀

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Classifieds

Alfanatic will post brief non-commercial classifieds for members and friends at no charge. Email the [editors](#) to make a submission.

For Sale

1974 Alfa Romeo Spider

Sadly I must sell my everyday summer car. Runs super and looks great inside and out. Some work needed on lower panels. Personally owned 2 years. Previous owner also used daily in the summer for many years. 89,000 miles. Asking \$6,200.

Contact: Kristine Fauerbach, 1-608-877-0562, or kristine.fauerbach@gmail.com



1985 Corvette

Red/Red, 4+3, removable hard top. 51k miles and stored inside since new. All original. Body and interior in great shape. This car is move-in ready and is a nice ride. Blue Book value \$12,000.

Contact: Jim, 262-642-5068 or jzyla@wi.rr.com

Two Engines

1987 2.5l from a rusted out Milano. Approximately 90k. Make Offer.

1991 3.0l S motor. Approximately 200k. Make Offer. Steve Wirtz, West Bend, WI

262.306.8238 Home swirtz@charter.net

Parts - Make offer

Several Milano parts—Engine parts, Oil pans, valve covers, heads, small interior parts, hood, and sunroof. Don't have a Milano so I don't need the parts.

1974 Spider Hood, Cowl, Doors, Transmission and interior parts. New Left rear quarter panel and lower nose pan.

Steve Wirtz, West Bend, WI

262.306.8238 Home swirtz@charter.net

Welcome New Member

Joseph Golichnik of Neenah, Wisconsin, joins us this month. He is the owner of a 1973 GTV. Welcome, Joseph.



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SUBMISSIONS

Do you have a story you'd like to share? Have a restoration in progress or finished? Taken a memorable road trip or have a funny car story? Pictures, lessons learned, maintenance tips? Whatever. The *Alfanatic* is always looking for material to publish. Email your submissions to the editor at rabhalter@att.net and share with your fellow Alfisti.

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