

ALFANATIC



The Alfanatic
Wishes All Alfisti and Their Families a
Very Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year

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Spend Saturday Afternoons With Alfa Friends

It should be no surprise to you that the collector car world has gone mainly virtual this year. With the imminent advent of the vaccine (during Advent season, no less), perhaps by late spring we will feel safe enough to meet in person. But, until then, opportunities for sharing our Alfa enthusiasm are a bit slim.

Last May, the Detroit chapter initiated Zoom meetings and launched a series of “Saturday Afternoon at 4” (eastern time - that’s 3 p.m. for us) Zoom sessions on various auto-related topics. The powers-that-be at AROC-USA knew a good thing when they saw it and soon the Saturday afternoon shows went national. The summer season’s shows are now archived on the AROC-USA YouTube channel.

The shows are back again for a second “season,” and so far have included a very engaging show about model collection, David and Andrea Hammond’s 245,000-mile Duetto tourer and a proposed August tour to northwest Michigan, and a recap/preview of “AROC Goes to Italy.” Additional shows are planned and will be announced via weekly email blasts.

Connecting via Zoom is simple and the sessions are usually interesting and can be fun. You can choose to

participate via comments or questions, or just listen. And, if you have a topic you’d like to share, Dave Hammond would like to hear from you.

So, if you’re stuck inside on a Saturday afternoon, give the sessions a try. If AROC has your email, you’re getting the announcements. Just respond as instructed and you’ll be sent a link. 🍀

AROC Goes to Italy Still a Maybe

AROC’s travel partner, Steve Austin’s Great Vacations, is still hopeful that the 2021 AROC Italy tour can go forward, although there is naturally a bit of uncertainty surrounding the May date that will probably not be resolved until early spring. If European travel is still constrained, a September date is the fallback option.

The trip is very popular and enjoys terrific feedback from past participants. Many of the travelers who signed up for the cancelled 2020 trip are still on the list for 2021, but there may still be opportunities to join the group. Interested parties can email Cindy Banzer at C.Banzer@aroc-usa.org for further information. 🍀

2020-21 Local, Regional, and International Events Calendar

Anything missing? Send dates for events we’ve missed and we’ll include them in the next calendar. email: rabhalter@att.net

December 6	GP Sakhir - Bahrain, Outer Circuit
December 13	GP Abu Dhabi - Yas Marina Circuit
2021	
March 4-7	Amelia Island Concours d’Elegance , Amelia Island FL
May 7-8 (t)	AROC-WI New Glarus Hill Climb
May 9-19	AROC Goes to Italy Tour
May 14-16	SVRA Vintage Festival Weekend, Road America
June 4-6	WeatherTech Chicago Region SCCA June Sprints, Road America
June 17-20	Indy Car Series Rev Group Grand Prix presented by AMR, Road America
July 1-4	NASCAR Cup Series, Road America
July 15-18	WeatherTech International Challenge with Brian Redman, Road America
July 18-25	AROC National Convention, Colorado Springs, Colorado
July 23-25	Concours d’Elegance of America , Plymouth, Michigan
August 5-8	IMSA Sportscar Weekend, Road America
August 8 (t)	AROC-WI 23d Annual ICAMS Show, Reina Intl. Auto. Brookfield, WI
August 15	Pebble Beach Concours D’Elegance , Pebble Beach, California
August 22	Geneva Concours D’Elegance , Geneva, Illinois
August 27-29	World Challenge (Sportscars), Road America
September 17-29	Ariens Art on Wheels Vintage Weekend, Road America
2022	
January 14-17	AROC Winter Retreat Palm Desert, California

Michigan Duetto Sets a BaT Record

Was featured on an AROC Detroit Zoom session



A 1967 1600 Spider restored by AROC-Detroit member Marc Trahan sold for \$67,000 on BringaTrailer.com October 22, setting a BaT record for the highest price paid on the site for a series-1 Spider. The three-year restoration of the car was chronicled on a May 29, “Saturday Afternoon at 4” Zoom session, which you can watch on YouTube, here: [AROC Detroit Saturday @ 4 Marc Trahan - YouTube](#).

Marc, an ASC-certified mechanic, who retired after a long and varied career with Volkswagen, bought the car out of long-term storage and embarked on the restoration, touching every part of the car, performing all the assembly and mechanical work, and supervising the bodywork and painting.

The result was a stunning restoration, put back to original condition and thoroughly deserving of the price paid. In fact, the amount paid was in my opinion a screaming deal. One could not duplicate the result for that money unless you, too, were capable of doing almost all the work yourself. This could explain why there aren't more condition 1– or 2+ Duetto's out there on the market. The price paid was top of market, but the cost to produce one given prevailing hourly rates is considerably more. 🍀

F1 Season-enders Get Seriously Weird

Last week's Bahrain Grand Prix was marked by the Romain Grosjean's horrific crash, the worst in recent memory. He was literally saved by the halo on his Haas. That he survived is a testament to the engineering that produced the cocoons that protect the drivers and the bravery of the F1 medical team.

Meanwhile, this week Lewis Hamilton tested positive for Covid-19, which in turn gave the opportunity for

George Russell to move from the rear of the grid to the front. Hopefully, he'll demonstrate his potential. Williams reserve driver and F2 driver Jack Aitken will take Russell's seat and regular Mercedes reserve driver and Formula E entrant Stoffel Vandoorne is understandably feeling left out. Replacing Grosjean for the next race will be Pietro Fittipaldi, *grandson* of Emerson—how time flies. This weekend's race, held on the faster outer circuit at Bahrain, should be interesting.

We also learned this week that Magnusson will be driving in IMSA next year for Chip Ganassi, and that next season's replacements for him and Grosjean are Mick Schumacher and Russian F2 talent Nikita Mazepin. Schumacher's signing was expected but apparently Haas team boss Guenther Steiner will be working with two F1 rookies next year, not a situation he was in favor of. Mazepin, however, brings along substantial financial backing with his driving talents. His billionaire father is said to be interested in buying into a F1 team. So now we have two father-son Grand Prix partnerships, the Strolls and the Mazepins. 🍀

A Sad Covid-era Story

Sent to me by a car-guy neighbor

Marcel was sick and tired of the world; of Covid 19, Brexit, Russian belligerence, global warming, racial tensions, and the rest of the disturbing stories that occupy media headlines.

Marcel drove his car into his garage and then sealed every doorway and window as best he could. He got back into his car and wound down all the windows, selected his favorite radio station and hit the car's ignition.

Four days later, a worried neighbor peered through his garage window and saw him in the car. She notified the emergency services and they broke in, pulling Marcel from the car. A little sip of water and, surprisingly, he was in perfect condition, but his Tesla had a dead battery. 🍀



The Alfa Romeo Story, Episode Eight

Published in Italian by Alfa Romeo, Italy, translated by Microsoft Edge, and edited by Bob Abhalter

Design, sportsmanship, and innovation – the extraordinarily successful 156 is a true Alfa Romeo.



- *By the numbers, the 156 was one of the most successful Alfa Romeos in history. One million people visited their dealerships on “introduction Sunday” and the model sold over 680,000 units over its run.*
- *Presented in 1997, it won over both the public and the critics, winning the coveted “Car of the Year” award in 1998.*
- *The style of the 156 was a surprising mix of strength, innovation, and classicism, and continued the chromatic research that had been a distinctive feature of Carabo and Montreal.*
- *It also was an extraordinary car from a technical point of view, with advanced solutions, capable of combining power, lightness, and control – characteristics typical of Alfa Romeo.*
- *Beautiful, fun, and winning, the 156 won 13 titles in 10 years of touring car competition.*

A Sedan with a Sporting Heart

Almost a million people visited dealerships on the Sunday the 156 was introduced. In a few months, orders totaled over 100,000, and 680,000 were sold between 1997 and 2005. Those were numbers that made the 156 one of the most successful Alfa Romeos in history.

The 156 was presented to the international press in 1997 at the Centro Cultural de Belém in Lisbon. The company’s stated goals were to create a sedan that combined style and excellence with impeccable dynamic behavior – a perfect balance between performance and handling. It was the typical Alfa Romeo

product formula. It was an ambitious goal, and the result was one of the best front-wheel drive cars ever.

Alfa Romeo and Front Wheel Drive

The car’s initial specifications called for rear-wheel drive, but Alfa’s designers had long been fascinated with the idea of front-wheel drive. The concept was initially examined in the early post-war period. Satta Puliga and Busso were convinced of the potential of this solution and began a development program, intending to make the 1900 Alfa’s first front-wheel drive car. However, management decided to go in another direction. In the early fifties, Alfa Romeo pursued “project V,” a front-wheel drive concept for which different power-trains were studied. None of these projects led to industrialization.



But the decision was only postponed. Alfa Romeo wanted to expand its range with a model below the Giulietta, a compact front driver, to sell in volume. To launch the project, the company assigned Rudolf Hruska, the “father” of the Giulietta, and entrusted him with a dual responsibility – to simultaneously design the new car and the factory in which it was to be built. This is how the Alfasud, the first Alfa Romeo front-wheel drive car, was born.

Alfasud was developed from scratch, with a clean sheet of paper as a greenfield project. It was one of the rare cases in which a car factory was designed and built to produce a specific model. The car had no technical constraints to comply with, other than to be faithful to its product objectives.

“It was obvious that it was to have front-wheel drive, and it had to be a luxury utility car, a 5-seater with a very large trunk.” So Hruska described the project a few years later.

The 1.2-liter “boxer” engine (flat, with opposed cylinders) was preferred to a 4-cylinder in-line design because it was lower and allowed for a more aerodynamic profile. The new two-volume body was created to improve access to the trunk, which reached 400 liters, (14.1 cu ft) thanks to the repositioning of the fuel tank, which was placed under the back seat in-

stead of between the seat and luggage compartment. It was an innovative, functional, and safe approach that was immediately adopted.



The design of the Alfasud was the newly independent Giorgetto Giugiaro's first important commission and proved to be a great commercial success. To respect the constraints of space and size the young designer invented the characteristic “high tail,” connecting it to the aerodynamic front with a simple, straight line.

The car went into production in 1972, the year in which Alfa Romeo marked the cumulative production of one million units since its founding. Alfasud production alone was able to double this record with a total production (not counting the Sprint versions) of 900,925 units between 1972 and 1984. It was the best-selling Alfa Romeo ever.

From Product Rationalization to Brand Identity

In 1986 IRI (owner of Alfa Romeo since 1933) sold the brand to the Fiat Group. As in all industrial integration processes, the first years were dedicated to the rationalization of production and supply chains. In the 1980s, the watchword for all enterprises was “synergy.” Process and product became increasingly standardized. Many components were shared for cost reasons. Designers were asked to respect strict constraints (such as the size of the door opening), which constrained creativity. In the following years, those rules were relaxed. Customers didn't like over-standardization and they longed for more distinctive cars. Brand identity was once again seen as influencing consumer choice. It was a turning point in the history of turn-of-the-century car design.

Racing, Performance, Innovation, and Style

For Alfa Romeo, it was a return to origins. The first step in relaunching the distinctive features of the brand was to revive Alfa Corse, the glorious team where the young Enzo Ferrari had taken his first steps. In 1993, the 155 GTA competed in the DTM, the German Touring Car Championship, and won it with Nicola Larini, who finished first in 11 out of 20

races, bringing Alfa Romeo back to the top step of the Nürburgring podium.



Even more important was the contribution of design. The 164 of 1987, the brand's first front-wheel drive flagship, was designed by Pininfarina, but from that point forward the role of Centro Stile (the Alfa Romeo Style Center) became increasingly important.

At Arese, technologies changed, people changed, and the process changed. New computer-assisted systems were introduced for design and prototyping. The style center team was integrated with platform design and participated in all technological choices, because what is functional must also be beautiful, and vice versa. Form and function always go together – that is the “necessary beauty” of Alfa Romeo.

Designing a New Range

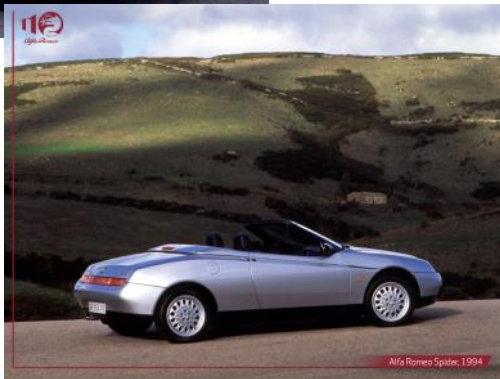
At this point, Centro Stile had not been commissioned to develop a complete range, but in a few years that dream



came true. In 1995 the marque introduced an unprecedented two-box “C” segment offering (the 145), followed the next year by the larger 146. The GTV and Spider sportscars, created in collaboration with Pininfarina, followed. But the real breakthrough was the 156.



The style of the 156 was a surprising mix of strength, innovation, and classicism. The traditional *scudetto* regained its importance and projected its lines onto the bonnet. In front view, the fenders “fall on the wheels,” flush with the bodywork, to communicate robustness and grip on the ground. The ratio of glass to metal was more coupe than sedan. The rear door handles disappeared, almost invisibly integrated into the window frame, and the clean side highlighted the slender and dynamic profile of the car. “It seems to move even when it stands still,” commented de Silva.



The 156 resumed the color research characteristic of Carabo and Montreal. Alfa Romeo designers found inspiration in the museum’s collection, preserved in the same building as today. Observing the color of the 1938 8C 2900 B, they invented “Nuvola Blue,” created with a multi-layered mica-flecked paint, giving the car iridescent reflections.

Advanced Sportsmanship

156 was also extraordinary from a technical standpoint. Designers were asked to develop the concept of “advanced sportsmanship” by combining power, light weight, and control – the typical Alfa Romeo driving formula. To achieve this goal, new materials (such as magnesium and tailored steel alloys) were introduced. Refined suspensions (such as the high double wish-bone front) were designed. Special attention was paid to mechanical tuning to enhance handling and tracking precision. The 156 brought everything together. It was the best driving sedan of its generation, and its racing version won 13 titles in 10 years in touring car competition.



The Birth of Common Rail Injection

There were six engine options at launch. The Busso V6 was flanked by three “Twin Spark” engines that for the first time combined dual ignition (a technology used by Giuseppe Merosi in 1914) with four valves per cylinder.

According to the demands of the European market at the time, gasoline engines prevailed, but the rules were about to change, with Alfa Romeo starting the revolution. The 156 was the first car in the world to launch the “common rail” diesel. Journalists trying versions 1.9 and 2.4 JTD in Lisbon were impressed. For the first time diesel engines offered performance, silence, and “gasoline” comfort.

Car of the Year

The 156 convinced the public and critics, and in 1998 brought European Car of the Year recognition to Alfa Romeo for the first time. Her younger sister, the 147, which shared both styling cues and platform layout, followed her a few years later, winning that same award in 2001. 🍀



Classifieds

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

Wanted

Your classified ads! Posted free! Let us know.

For Sale

Low Mileage '93 Spider Veloce



(From AROC Detroit Newsletter)

Alfa Romeo Spider for sale by the original owner: 1993 Spider Veloce, 4 Cylinder/5 Speed with 25K miles. This sweet car has been lovingly cared for. \$17,000 - will negotiate. Call Sue (248) 360-0786

Vintage Alfa Romeo Dealer Sign

This sign is 5 feet in diameter and in very good shape. There are 2 small cracks that can be repaired and the color is excellent. We had this sign mounted in our shop (Steve's British Connection) on a large pole for years. It currently is not lighting up but it should be an easy fix. Selling because we closed our shop. The sign is located in Lake Geneva. We prefer to sell the sign to someone who can come and see it in person and take it. We're trying not to have to ship it. I have more photos I can send direct. Asking \$3,500. Feel free to call 630-553-9023 or email sbcinc@aol.com Thank you.



Gary Tree is trying to clean out his garage. He is parting a **1980 Spider** and has many other parts to sell, too numerous to list. An S2 Windshield, fiberglass bumpers, engine, transmission, door latches, etc. Just ask! Contact Gary at 608-209-2352, or gjtreehouse@gmail.com

Four Used Cromodora Wheels for 72-74 Alfa Spider. Surface and finish would benefit from some reconditioning but otherwise ready for that rally! If desired, and strictly at my cost—no adder—I would be willing to get them E-Coated ready for paint refinishing. Make me an offer!



Also, **Rear Bumper** for 1972-74 Spider. Make an offer.

James Huff, 514 Simon Drive, Hartford, WI 53027, jphuff4@gmail.com

Alfa Romeo Literature. Ray Petry writes: I have a huge pile of Alfa Romeo literature and I think it is time I shared it with another enthusiast. It includes an Alfa Indy car poster, many copies of the *Alfa Owner* from the 1990s, some copies of *Quadrifoglio*, some parts catalogs, a SPICA fuel injection manual, some Alfa books, and the special 60th anniversary Pininfarina book. There are more items available. Please inquire. Prices negotiable, especially for the entire lot. Local pickup preferred but can ship if necessary. Alternately can meet in Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha area.

Contact Ray at flhwelder@gmail.com

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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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