

# ALFANATIC



## AROC Wisconsin Holds Fall Color Tour

By Bob Ludwigson

AROC-Wisconsin held its fall color tour Saturday, October 15. Entrants assembled in the parking lot of the Basilica of the Shrine of Mary in Hubertus on a somewhat cool and dreary morning. Fortunately, the weather improved as the day wore on. The small but enthusiastic group consisted of club president Randy Swanson driving his Berlina, tech advisor Al Pinkowski with Julianne Douglas in his Turbo-GTV6, Colin Comer and daughter Remy in his pristine Dino 246, *Alfanatic* editors Bob and Chrystal Abhalter accompanied by their navigator, Willow the Corgi, in their 164LS, yours truly in my trusty Giulietta Spider, and tour organizer Gary Schommer in something non-Italian. Bill and Corky Siegfriedt made the trip from Evanston and joined us enroute.



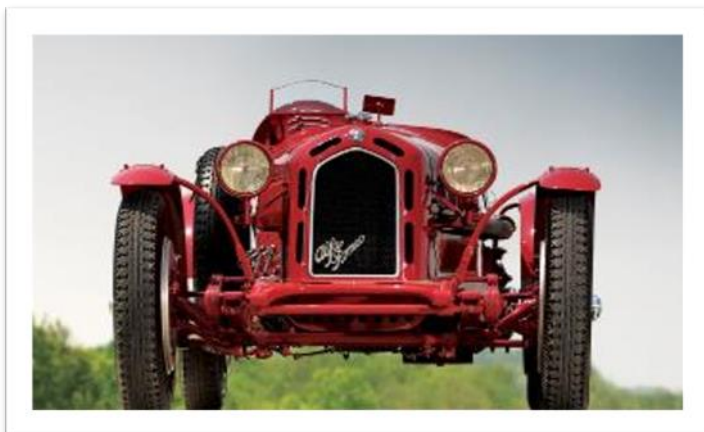
*Enjoying Lunch at the Mineshaft*

Cars departed at 9:45 a.m., and the route wound through the lower Kettle Moraine area, through Monches, Neosho, and Iron Ridge, ending in Hartford at the Mineshaft Restaurant for lunch. Joining us for lunch were Cana Comer and family who,

while not car people, added a nice balance to the group. After lunch several of us toured the Wisconsin Automotive Museum in Hartford, with its collection of Hartford-made Kissels and other interesting cars. *More photos inside.* 🍀

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## Saab Story

By Bob Abhalter

On the second floor of the Wisconsin Automotive Museum in Hartford, tucked along a side wall, is a pretty ordinary looking Edwardian Gray Saab, a 1989 900 SPG. What's special about it can be found on the odometer: 1,001,385 certified miles.

The Saab was owned from new by insurance salesman Peter Gilbert, who spent 17 years worth of customer calls amassing the mileage. His feat was verified by Saab in September 2006 at the Saab Owners Convention in Lake George, NY. The 900 still had its original engine and turbo, the transmission was rebuilt after 200,000 miles, and the hood had to be replaced after the eighth deer collision. Following the convention the car was to have been donated to the museum.

That might have been the end of the story had not considerable favorable media attention convinced Saab that *they* could get some good mileage out of Mr. Gilbert's 900 by using it to advertise the durability of their vehicles. Saab showed the car on their

stand at the 2007 Detroit Auto Show and awarded Gilbert a brand new 2007 9-5 Aero. "I am on cloud nine right now. This is exactly the car I wanted," Gilbert said.

Saab offered to make the same swap for anyone else who could produce a one-owner million-mile Saab. It is unknown whether anyone else took them up on the deal nor how much of the new Saab's 100,000 mile warranty Peter Gilbert used up before GM sold Saab off in 2010. 🍀



*The million-mile Saab*

## Local, Regional, and International Events Calendar

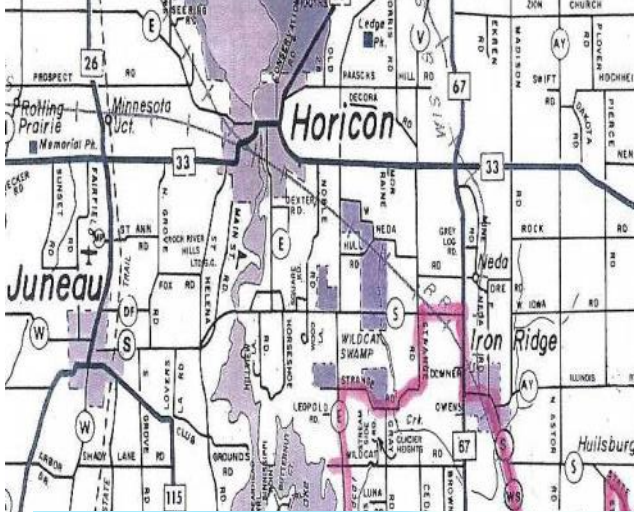
Something missing? Send dates for events we've missed and we'll include them in the next calendar. email: [rabhalter@att.net](mailto:rabhalter@att.net)

### 2023

January 4-15	Mecum Kissimmee Auction, Kissimmee, Florida
January 21-29	Arizona Auction Week, Scottsdale/Phoenix, Arizona
March 3-5	<a href="#">The Amelia</a> (Concours), Amelia Island, Florida
March 18	12 Hours of Sebring, Sebring, Florida
<b>May 5-6 (T)</b>	<b>Das Kurze Klausenrennen, New Glarus, WI</b>
May 19-21	SVRA Vintage Weekend, Road America
June 2-4	MotoAmerica Superbikes, Road America
<b>June 5-15</b>	<b>AROC Goes to Italy, 6th Annual Tour</b> <a href="http://www.aroc-use.org">www.aroc-use.org</a>
June 10-11	24 Hours of Le Mans Centenary Race
June 15-18	NTT Indycar Series, Road America
<b>June 17-20</b>	<b>AROC-USA Pre-Convention Tour, Asheville, NC</b>
<b>June 21-25</b>	<b>Alfa del Piemonte, AROC National Convention, Concord, NC</b>
June 23-25	SCCA Chicago Region June Sprints, Road America
July 7-9	TransAm Speed Tour, Road America
July 13-16	WeatherTech International Challenge, Road America
July 27-29	NASCAR Xfinity Series, Road America
Aug 3-6	IMSA Sportscar Weekend, Road America
Aug 18-20	Fanatec GT World Challenge, Road America
Aug 20	Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance
Aug 27	<a href="#">Geneva Concours d'Elegance</a> , Geneva, Illinois
Sept 15-17	Ariens Art on Wheels (VSCDA), Road America



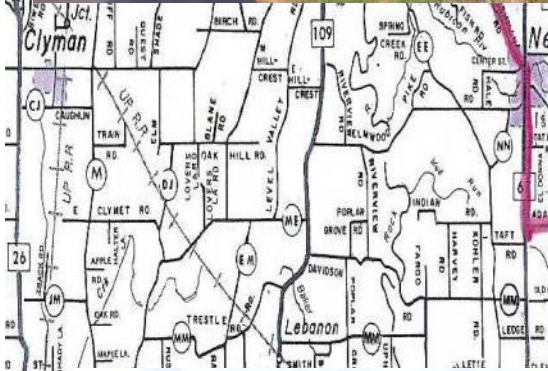
**2022 FALL COLOR TOUR**



**GATHERING AT THE CHURCH AT THE START OF THE TOUR**



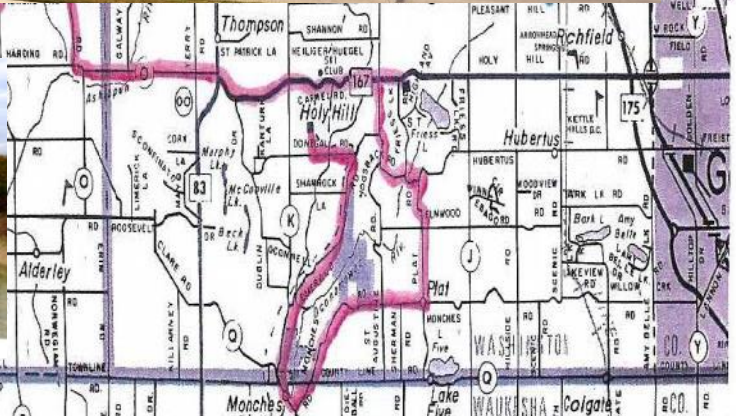
**TYPICAL FARM SCENE**



**NEOSHO POND**



**WIND FARM NEAR HUILSBURG**



## Hartford’s Auto Museum Has an Alfa Connection



Sitting on a plinth just off the aisle on the second floor of the Wisconsin Automotive Museum, adjacent to some Ford products and not too far from a rank of Nash, Metropolitan, and other orphans, is the Alfa Romeo engine donated to the museum by the late George Meikrantz, a well-remembered early club member. The cast iron block 2000, with its two Solex side-draft carbs, is in largely original condition. It’s identified as a 1958 vintage. I’m sure someone knows the origin of the motor. If you do, we’d be glad to share it.

## Wanted: GTA Photos from 1994 SCCA Milwaukee Region Events

A Portuguese member of the AlfaBB contacted me recently, looking for photos of a GTA that might have competed in Milwaukee Region SCCA events in 1994. He’s not specific about the car he’s looking for, hinting that it may have different bodywork now but that “he’d know it when he sees it.” He sent along a photo of the sticker (see above, right column) that appears to be on a windshield. From that, I gather that he’s restoring the car connected with this sticker. He doesn’t seem willing to share much information. I gather his English is limited, so perhaps that’s the problem. I’d be happy to pass along any information you have.

## Alfa Sells 3,440 Units in 3rd Quarter

Third quarter sales of Alfa Romeos declined 24% year-over-year and 31% year-to-date versus last year. The Giulia showed the biggest decline, delivering 3,662 units for the year-to-date, a 40% decline from last year. The Stelvio made up 6,151 of the 9,814 to-



*Mystery Event Sticker on the Mystery GTA*

tal units sold year-to-date, a decline of 23% from 2022. The 4C is out of production, although one sale was recorded for 2022. Stellantis is counting on the new luxury compact SUV Tonale to rev sales in the early spring, and a facelift is scheduled in the near term for both the Giulia and Stelvio.

## Giulia and Stelvio U.S. Lineup Tweaked for 2023



*The 2023 Giulia Veloce—same as 2022?*

It appears that for 2023, the U.S. will get much the same cars we’ve been getting in 2022, with some re-badging and option shuffles. That may change later in the year, though. The standard lineup consists of the variously optioned Sprint, Ti, and Veloce models, plus the Quadrifoglio, of course. The models are all well-optioned. While the Sprint is pretty much the

“base” car, the Ti is more luxury-oriented, while the Veloce is biased towards sport. To these option packages are added the Estrema and Lusso trim levels for the Veloce and Ti, respectively.

The Lusso package adds “Crema” Cannelloni-design leather seating surfaces, standard leather-upholstered dashboard and upper doors, and standard 14-speaker Harman Kardon audio system to the standard Ti package.

The Estrema package is an add-on to the Veloce trim, adding standard adaptive suspension and a limited-slip differential to the already-comprehensive Veloce package.

All models get front and rear heated seats, a nav system, wireless charging pad, an auto-dimming rear-view mirror, the air quality system (aka, cabin air filter), and trunk-mounted grocery bag hooks. The Ti and Veloce models throw in a cargo net, and Sprint and Veloce models have paddle shifters as standard. Exteriors remain pretty much the same, except for badging. Xenon headlights are standard. They’re fine but LED headlamps are now the thing. (They’re coming with the facelift). Inside, the electronics have been upgraded. Level 1 and 2 autonomous driving is supported, and Apple Car Play and Android Auto are standard. There is more leather everywhere. The 2023 models are on the dock and in their new owners’ hands as you read this. 🍀

### Facelifts Are Coming, but When?



*Facelifted Giulia*

While next year’s Giulia and Stelvio are coming to our shores looking pretty much the same as before, details of the impending facelift are circulating on the internet. According to AlfaRomeo.com, Europeans will get the facelifted models beginning in February.

The physical changes center around new LED adaptive matrix headlamps, similar to those on the new Tonale. The nose and grills have been refined to accommodate the new lamps. Inside, a new TFT dashboard replaces the mechanical gauges, and the infotainment systems have been further updated.



*Revised Dash*

The cars will be issued with their own unique NFTs, same as the Tonale. The new European Competizione option package sounds much like the Estrema package the U.S. is getting, but with larger wheels, distinctive badging, “privacy glass,” and a unique shade of gray paint. Similar changes extend to the Stelvio range.

There is much speculation as to when the U.S will see the facelifted models. The official Alfa Romeo U.S. web pages offer no clues. Some say they will appear in mid-2023, while others say they will be introduced later as 2024 models. Stay tuned. 🍀

### Sauber: Goodbye Alfa Romeo, Hello Audi

Audi has announced a deal to supply engines to Sauber beginning in 2026. Alfa Romeo’s current contract with the team expires at the end of 2023, and although Sauber will continue to use Ferrari engines through 2025, the team will not be Alfa-branded. Audi also considered partnerships with McLaren and Williams but chose Sauber as their partner for the introduction of engines conforming to the new regulations. The new engine regulations require the use of 100% sustainable fuels and will place emphasis on the use of electric power. Audi has a team of 120 people working on the power plants, while Sauber will be responsible for the development of the chassis and will handle race operations. Audi will also be taking an as-yet undetermined equity position in the Sauber organization.

Audi’s choice of Sauber was influenced by the relative proximity of the team’s Hinwill headquarters to Audi’s engine development facility and the availability of its state-of-the-art wind tunnel, which Audi employed in the development of its winning World Endurance Championship cars. Sauber’s facilities are

top-notch, thanks to massive investment by Audi rival BMW when they owned the team from 2006-2009. That period was the highpoint of Sauber's history in F1, producing its sole win and several podiums.



Stellantis CEO Jean Philippe Imperato, in an interview with French sporting newspaper *L'Equipe*, stated: "We must look at things objectively. The partnership we had with Sauber was a quality agreement, negotiated very well by my predecessor. We exploited it very well during the period of Alfa Romeo's market recovery. Today, the brand is very profitable and in full recovery. Conditions are changing and we absolutely do not want to match the enormous resources put into F1 by some of our competitors. So we retreat, cleanly and kindly. In our partnership with Sauber, we have used F1 more than they have used us. From that point of view, everything that has happened is rational. The job is done."

We will return to another discipline that has not yet been decided. Jean-Philippe Imperato, the head of Alfa Romeo, will present me with his options. One thing is certain: the brand will still be present in motorsport after 2023 when our agreement with Sauber ends. Given the history of the brand, there is no doubt that this is the case."

The Sauber-Alfa Romeo partnership has had its successes and its disappointments, but mostly never managed to deliver on its promise. From its inception in 2018 through 2020, the team placed 8th in the constructor's championship, despite the best efforts of rising star Charles Leclerc and later, veteran Kimi Raikkonen. Reliability issues kept the team on the back foot. In 2021 the team sunk to 9th, behind even the perennially last place Williams team. This year, with drivers Valtteri Bottas and Zhou Guanyu behind the wheel, the team is in 6th place, a slim 4 points ahead of the improving Aston Martin team. Valtteri Bottas has voiced his enthusiasm with the Audi part-

nership and would like to be a part of the developing team, stating that, despite the current trend toward hiring youthful drivers, experience has always been respected. 🍀

## Alfa Romeo Isn't Happy About the Dodge Hornet: Source

*"Dodge took advantage of the [Tonale] to make a compliance car."*

By Kevin Williams

From [TheDrive.com](https://www.the-drive.com), August 18, 2022

The all-new 2023 Dodge Hornet crossover debuted this week, becoming—perhaps somewhat shockingly—the first product the Dodge brand has released in a decade. Yet, a source inside parent-company Stellantis tells us that not everyone in the company is happy—namely Alfa Romeo.



It doesn't take a rocket scientist to notice that the Dodge Hornet and Alfa Romeo Tonale are basically the same car with minimal changes. According to a source within Stellantis who spoke with *The Drive* on condition of anonymity, the Tonale started as primarily an Alfa Romeo project; but internal politicking, and a desire for Dodge to raise its low average fuel

economy numbers, saw the Alfa Romeo Tonale morph into the Dodge Hornet. And now the Alfa Romeo side of the house is none too happy about it. “Dodge took advantage of the [Tonale] to make a compliance car—their Aston Martin Cygnet moment, if you will. Suffice it to say internal politics won the day, and Dodge needed to up their CAFE numbers, so Hornet was born.” said the source.

The two crossovers appear to share many of the same body stampings, like doors, fenders, and underlying unibody structure; in short, all pieces that are probably too expensive to change. For many, the similarities between the two cars are unignorable, and they’ve let Stellantis know in the comments sections of articles, and on social media. “It’s annoying to have to be on the defensive,” said the source, frustrated at seeing folks rightly calling out the two cars for looking so similar.

To add insult to injury, the source said that the budget just didn’t exist to meaningfully change more sheet metal on the Dodge Hornet and distance it from the Tonale, at least visually. “Margins are thin in the C-segment, particularly in non-lux, so an OEM is pretty limited on all new sheet metal as that’s a major investment from a tooling perspective,” said the source.

To be fair, Alfa Romeo’s hyped-up return to the North American market in 2016 after 20 years away hasn’t exactly been a roaring success. The company invested billions of dollars into the Giulia sedan and Stelvio crossover, but neither vehicle has lit the sales charts on fire, no matter the country they’re sold in. Yet, the small, lux-ish crossover is a hot class internationally. The segment could use more good-driving, enthusiast-oriented choices—Alfa Romeo is generally good at creating a car that drives well.

Thus, when the Alfa Romeo Tonale was unveiled, many Alfa Romeo enthusiasts and news outlets alike called it “Alfa’s most important car in recent memory.” In theory, the Tonale should have all the right stuff to muscle its way to the top of the sales charts. It promises a good driving experience and attractive styling. The Tonale is aimed upmarket, playing against crossovers like the Lexus UX, Mercedes Benz GLA, or BMW X1, and could have the same level of sales and strategic importance that the Macan does for Porsche.

Yet, a nose job, new lights, and a very slight restyling of the interior have the Tonale seeing service as a downmarket Dodge, undermining the Alfa Romeo’s

upmarket intentions. The merger between Fiat Chrysler Automobiles and France’s PSA Group has a whopping 16 brands, many of which have product lines that vastly overlap.



*Hornet Interior (l) and Tonale Interior (below)  
All photos: Stellantis*

Still, a representative for Dodge says that interest in the Hornet is strong.



“Customers seem to be very happy with the Dodge Hornet, with more than 14,000 orders received in less than 24 hours after its reveal,” a Dodge spokesman said via email. “The Dodge Hornet features unmistakable Dodge DNA with characteristic Dodge styling cues, such as a ‘mail slot’-style grille opening and a vehicle-width taillamp with center illuminated Dodge Rhombi logo, and unique performance features such as on-demand PowerShot for Hornet R/T, which supplies a burst of 25 additional horsepower.”

The spokesman added that the Hornet’s pricing should undercut its Alfa Romeo sibling by some \$10,000. “Pricing for the Hornet GT starts at \$29,995, with the Hornet R/T starting at \$39,995 and the vehicle will be marketed to performance lovers who want a vehicle that drives like a Dodge, looks like a Dodge and sounds like Dodge,” the spokesman said.

Media drives of the Alfa Romeo Tonale and Dodge Hornet haven’t happened yet, so only time will tell if Stellantis has figured out a way to distance the two cars in the driving experience. Dodge seems confident that its iteration will be unmistakably Dodge, whatever that means.



## 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

**Jim Thiel** is looking for a new home for his red **1982 Spider**. He's had it since 1989 and is the third owner. The car has traveled a little more than 67,000 miles and has always been garaged during Jim's ownership. The paint is original and the top in good condition, with a clear back window. According to Jim, the tires are in good shape. He says the leather seats and the dash have no cracks. If you're interested, you can contact Jim by email at [jthiel28@wi.rr.com](mailto:jthiel28@wi.rr.com)

**Gary Tree** is still 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](mailto:gjtreehouse@gmail.com)



*Willow enjoyed the Color Tour*

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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](mailto:rabhalter@att.net) and share with your fellow Alfisti.

## SCAM WARNING

No one legitimately representing AROC-WI will ever contact you to request you purchase gift cards or otherwise loan money on behalf of the club or its officers. Any such request should be presumed to be fraudulent.

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