

La Voce

June 2002

newsletter of the delaware valley alfa romeo owners club

Timely Tech Session Triumphs



Like many Alfa owners, you're probably happy with the way your car performs. After all, that's probably one of the reasons why you bought the car. Of course, things can always be improved upon. Alfas seem to cry out for "improvements." But, as we all know, so called "improvements" often have unwanted effects. Furthermore, it's not always obvious where to start. Well, if you were at this year's tech session at Nick Falcone Enterprises, you'd have come away with a pretty good idea of what to do. Drawing from the ready stock of subjects in the lot, Vince showed us how to incrementally improve on performance, from street cruiser, to track star. We started with tires.

Tires: Where the rubber meets the road As we all know, Alfa Romeos might not be the fastest cars on the planet, but their ability to keep the driver one with the road is legendary. Since the tires are the last interface between the car and the road, they are the most critical. For the street, a popular performance tire choice is the Yokohama AVS Intermediate. This tire offers great adhesion, a smooth transition from grip to no grip, and is reasonably priced. Another typical tire upgrade is to increase width and switch to a lower profile. For Spiders and GTVs, a 195/65 or a 205/60 is a good choice, in that it maintains the original tire circumference and isn't too wide. For those wanting even more grip, a DOT track tire such as a Kuhmo Victoracer fits the bill at the expense of greatly increased tire wear. Just remember, 60's and 70's vintage Alfas weren't designed with the bubblegum-like adhesion that modern track tires can produce.

Because of that, it is important to pay close attention to the suspension components and make sure that they are all in good condition. This includes the lower A-arm bushings which are often neglected.

Another important consideration for optimal handling is alignment. Vince showed us how increasing caster angle can help make exiting a turn faster as well as improve straight line stability. Toe, on the other hand, affects turn-in. Finally, increasing negative camber helps maximize the tire patch, further improving grip. (Continued on Page 4)

Mark Your Calendars!

- June 2 – Show your car at the New Garden Air Show and watch vintage planes fly**
- June 15 - Tour to the Concours d'Elegance of the Eastern United States – Lehigh University**

Bob's Babblings

Bob Brady

Thanks I'd like to start by saying thank you to Vince and Ruth for hosting another great tech session. Once again they entertained us with their hospitality and informed us with their extensive knowledge. If you didn't make it this year, make sure to attend next year.

Past Events There were quite a few events on the calendar for April and May. I was only able to make it to the Tech Session and the CTAROC Time Trials at Lime Rock. If anyone attended the Hershey Hill Climb, Artistry in Motion event, Swap Meet, or vintage races at Summit Point, drop me a line about it. Better yet, if you have pictures, I can easily fabricate a story for the next LaVoce!

Upcoming Events The next event on the horizon is the New Garden Air Show. Each year, the New Garden airport holds this show which includes local car clubs and a transportation museum, in addition to the vintage planes. Unlike the larger exhibitions, this show is intimate and low key. But, like the larger shows, this one includes some very impressive displays such as a P-51 Mustang, a Gypsy Moth, and a B-24. There's really nothing quite like the sound of those big WWII bombers flying close overhead. The cars on display are also an interesting mix. Last year, there were some lovely duPonts (the cars) among the crowd.

If you choose to participate, you'll get free admission (I think) as long as you stop by my house on the way to pick up your pass. The forlorn Spider that sits in my garage came from a hanger at that airport. It's stable mate, the Sprint came from the same owner. So, bring the Sprint to this event will be like homecoming for it. I'm really looking forward to it. I hope you can make it. See the events calendar for more details.

Two weeks after the New Garden Air Show will be the Concours d'Elegance of the Eastern United States, held at Lehigh University. As is tradition, we'll tour en masse to the event. We're hoping to secure parking on top of the hill again this year. Again, if you've missed this event in the past, make every effort to attend this year. It's not only a great chance to see some truly spectacular vehicles, but it's also a great excuse to take a scenic ride in your Alfa.

More DVAROC Members in the News It seems like every few months, one of our illustrious members makes the news. The other day, I flipped open the latest edition of AutoWeek. As is typical, I went right for the classic car article. To my surprise, the featured car was a beautiful 1954 Alfa Romeo 1900 CSS. "That looks just like Henry Wessells' car," I thought. Well, after reading the article, it turns out it was Henry's car! Congratulations! It's great to see our local Alfas get national recognition.

Some Final Tidbits First, it appears that Alfa Romeo won't be returning to the US in 2005. AutoWeek just had a piece on how dire Fiat's financial condition is. It appears that one of the casualties is the new Alfa Spider, the one destined for the US. It also appears that GM might completely buy Fiat. Stay tuned for more information.

I'll finish with some positive news. It appears that the New England AROC will be putting in a bid to host the 2004(?) AROC convention. Having one that close would just about eliminate any excuse for not attending. Let's keep our fingers crossed.

I hope to see you at an event soon. - bob

Classifieds:

1988 Milano Verde Parts: Parting out '88 Verde. Engine, front Recaros and window switches gone. Many good parts left incl: doors, hood, trunklid, flares/skirts, spoiler, etc [Dan Scolaro](mailto:Dan.Scolaro), 215-782-1478

1958 Spider Veloce Matching numbers. A nice driver, but not a perfect car. Priced appropriately at \$12,500. Also willing to trade for a nice coupe. Dave West 610 240 0264, dave@shootersinc.com

1987 Milano Platinum: good Blue/Grey paint, no dents, slight rear wheel well rust, decent interior (sunroof headliner missing), everything works, 130kmi, tired motor and tired gearbox. Driven daily until recently. \$500 takes it. 610-838-9970 Domenick.

1974 GTV: disassembled, custom cage & flat floors with bars for seats and undercarriage bracing by S&W in Spring City, PA. All parts are boxed and will go with car. 5 new OEM steel wheels widened to 6" with Stahlflex 3011. In storage for 15 yrs. Rebuilt engine (Spica) with maybe 5kmi. Extras available incl: (will not be sold separately until car is sold): pair 45DCOE's w/manifold, Spruell headers (new), Switters close ratio gear box, SAFE fuel cell and Life Line Halogen fire system (both SCCA legal) Sparco seat Brembo lightweight calipers (new), Car is at Nick Falcone's, Bala-Cynwyd, PA, 610-664-0944

1963 Giulia Spider bare metal restoration, acid dipped body, all components rebuilt or replaced, completely original and correct, driven in '92 California Mille Miglia, '98 Greenwich Concours award, '98 Lehigh Concours award, \$25K. Josh Landsman (973)334-3360.

1963 Giulia Spider whole or parts. Windshield, Parish Plastics hard top, soft top frame and many body panels are in good condition. No engine or trans. Rockers and floor reinforcements shot. Make offers. Bob Brady, 610-924-1837 or mpbrady@bellatlantic.net

Car Storage: I have Barn Storage space available for rent. Winter storage for your Spider or that project car you don't have time for. Dry, clean and secure at \$95 a mo. Located south of Bethlehem just across the Bucks County line. Domenick Billera, 610-838-9970

Multiples: 1983 gtv/6 19K miles Silver/Blue, 1979 Alfetta 19K miles Ivory/ Chocolate. Bill Conway, 973-839-9239

Bill.Conway@neclease.com

1967 Duetto and Many Parts: New and used parts inventory plus a very restorable 1967 Duetto. The parts range from some 1300 & 1600 to a good quantity of 1750 and early 2000. There are 500+ new line items totaling over 1500 parts. Most are mechanical including a lot of engine parts and a new fuel injection unit. Included in the used category are 4 engines (mostly torn down)/transmissions, 3 fuel injection pumps complete, alternators, gauges, etc.. Also included are parts manuals for most models and a number of Owner's Manuals. I prefer to sell all as a package. \$3500. Dwight Timm, dtimm@crosslink.net.214 Piney Point Road, Lancaster, VA 22503

Wanted: 1967 GTV, prefer original car. The nicer the better. Will pay market price. Day(908) 686-8236, Evening(973) 635-1932, email MWSINC2426@aol.com

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Events Calendar: * Indicates DVAROC Event

*June 2 – New Garden Air Show – New Garden, Pa.

Enjoy an afternoon of vintage aircraft and vintage cars in the midst of beautiful southern Chester county. The DVAROC will show its Alfas among the other local car clubs that participate. In addition to the air and car shows, there is an interesting museum of transportation there with several oddball motorcycles and race cars. We will meet at Bob Brady's house at 8:30 and drive en masse to the show, a few miles away. Please RSVP to Bob before June 1, so we know to wait for you. You will need a display pass for your car, unless you want to pay for admission. To get to Bob's house, take Route 1 towards Kennett Square, PA. Take the exit for Route 82, North (away from Kennett). Take the first right as you crest the hill, Spottswood Lane. Bob's house is the third on the left. For more information or to RSVP, contact Bob Brady at (610)925-1837 or mpbrady@bellatlantic.net.

*June 15 – Concours d'Elegance of the Eastern United States – Bethlehem, Pa.

Once again, June in the Lehigh Valley is the time to celebrate the automobile. The DVAROC will drive en-masse to this wonderful event. Our tour will take us through scenic Upper Bucks County, over several covered bridges, on the way. It will start at Friendly's parking lot, at 168 Easton Road (Rt. 611), in Horsham, Pa. Their phone number is: 215-674-8677. We'll leave **promptly at 8:37 am**. We'll take the same route as the last two years, unless I, or someone else, hint, hint, gets a chance to make some changes to it. The concours is truly a spectacular display of automobiles. To find out more, go to their web site at: www.concourseast.org Please RSVP if you plan to tour with us, so I can make the right amount of copies. Contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@bellatlantic.net for further information or to RSVP. Hope to see you there!!!

June 28-1 – Le Bella Macchine d'Italia – Pocono, Pa.

Hang out with the gold chain set. Some very nice Alfas typically make a showing such as a 6C2900 and a 33.

July 3-4 – COMSCC School and Time Trials – Watkins Glen, Ny.

If anyone is interested, I am planning on participating in this track event. You need not have an Alfa and you need not have experience. Watkins Glen is a great track to drive. If you are interested in going, contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@bellatlantic.net

*July 21 – Summer Rally and Picnic – Someplace in Chester County, Pa.

We're in the midst of organizing this fun rally and picnic. It promises to be a lot of fun. Plan to attend now. Stay tuned.....

*August 11 – New Hope Auto Show – New Hope, PA

The New Hope Auto Show is always a treat, well, except for last year's torrential downpours. Nevertheless, plan to enter your Alfa in this great show of classics and antiques. Alfas will have their own class again this year. Your car need not be concours, just in generally nice condition and clean. In addition to the cars, there will be vendor and flea market areas. Also, the town of New Hope is within winking distance of the event. So, if your family wants to do more than ogle over cars, they can visit the diverse shops and restaurants there. Enclosed in this newsletter is a registration form. Entries must be submitted by July 31. Contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@bellatlantic.net for more details.

Other Events???

If you have a particular interest, know of an event that might interest other Alfisti, or just want to get involved, please contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@bellatlantic.net



Bob Brady's '60 Sprint brings down the neighborhood at the Willowdale Steeplechse next to Henry Wessells' 1954 1900 CSS. This same 1900 recently graced the pages of AutoWeek.



A sad picture of the Alfa Romeo Portello Works factory. For more photos, see: www.laverdajota.com/alfa%20gone.htm.

Tech Session (Con't from front page)

Unfortunately, most Alfas don't have the ability to adjust camber, unless adjustable upper arms are installed.

Shocks: Tradition and Technology The next most important variable in the quest for lateral g's are shock absorbers. While the stock shocks are adequate for the street, Konis are the benchmark upgrade. They come in three varieties: yellow (most aggressive), red (a mild upgrade) and black (the "classic"). While these shocks are adjustable, they must be taken off the car in order to make changes to them. Our subject car was fitted with Spax shocks which offer 14 increments of adjustment from a screw located on the outside. Unfortunately, Spax shocks seem to be difficult to obtain anymore. Another shock option is Bilstein. Like the Spax, they are gas charged. They are not adjustable, however, though many report excellent results with them.

Suspension Upgrades: Choices, choices At this point, one could easily stop making changes, and have a perfectly streetable, excellent handling car, and still have some money left over to buy some track time. Then again, if you wanted to be the star of the Autocross circuit, you'd have to do something about all that body roll a stock Alfa has.

While body roll is not necessarily a bad thing for handling, it does upset the driver's ability to feel in control. In addition, at the limit, it does reduce the ultimate lateral acceleration that the car can achieve. Fortunately, for Alfa owners, there are many options available for stiffer springs and anti-sway bars. The traditional source for these bits is AR Ricambi in California, who are the outlet for Shankle performance parts. That said, they have been undergoing some rough times in recent years and their ability to supply parts has been reported to be spotty. The Shankle approach to good handling is to dramatically increase the roll stiffness of the car with larger diameter anti-sway bars, while mildly increasing the spring rates. They offer three levels of upgrades: sport, super sport, and full race. The super sport and race springs not only are much stiffer than stock springs, they also lower the car from 1-3". The other traditional suspension upgrade source is Ward and Dean. They take the opposite approach, choosing much stiffer springs, but only mildly stiffer anti-sway bars. For comparison, the Autodelta approach to making the GTAs handle well was to fit stiff anti-roll bars in the front and lower the rear roll center at the back via the famous CRBB or sliding block rear suspension. With this approach, the rear anti-roll bar was typically not very stiff, if used at all. Because of this, these Alfas tended to keep their rear tires planted while lifting the inner front wheel up in hard cornering.

Deciding what spring and anti-sway bar combination to use is largely a matter of taste. A stock Alfa tends to either under-steer or have neutral handling. Stiffening up the rear springs and/or anti-roll bar will make the car tend towards over-steer. Softening will tend to make it under-steer. Performing the same modifications to the front suspension achieve the opposite effects.

When one makes the leap from street Alfa to track Alfa, there are two final steps to provide ultimate grip: replacing all the rubber suspension bushings with either polyurethane or spherical bearings, and installing a Panhard rod or other locating link at the rear to lower roll center. While the polyurethane bushings can be used in a street car at the expense of suspension noise and ride harshness, spherical bearings are a poor choice as road dirt will

wear them out quickly. The Panhard rod is a common substitute for the Autodelta CRBB rear suspension. Panhard rod kits are available from a number of sources including Orion Engineering. However, since they use spherical bearings, they too are not a good idea for a street Alfa. With our overview of suspensions complete, Vince then led us through the ins and outs of brakes.

Stopping with Confidence Alfas have always been blessed with excellent brakes. From the massive Alfin aluminum drums used in the early cars to the four wheel discs of the more modern cars, Alfa has always provided us with plenty of stop. Maximizing the braking system's performance, like any system, first starts with making sure the original components are in proper working order. This starts with the brake fluid. While changing the brake fluid periodically is a common maintenance item in Europe, for some reason it is nearly unheard of in the U.S. Unfortunately, most brake fluid is hydroscopic and therefore absorbs water over time. This water not only leads to corrosion of the braking system's components, it can also lead to a loss of braking force since the water boils at a lower temperature than the brake fluid.

When changing the brake fluid, you should first remove as much of the old fluid from the reservoir as possible. A turkey baster makes a great tool for this. Then, after the reservoir is filled with new fluid, the system should be bled to get all the old fluid and any air out. For the street and minor track events, DOT-4 brake fluid such as Castrol LMA is adequate. For more serious track time, ATE "blue" is commonly available which provides a higher boiling point than typical DOT-4 fluid. Once the brake fluid is freshened, the entire system should be inspected. Any rubber hoses that are cracked or any caliper seals that have hardened should be replaced. With the braking system in good working order, with fresh fluid, there is little need to do anything else, for street use.

For track time, there are two common modifications to the brakes that can improve feel and performance. First, replacing the rubber brake lines with braided stainless steel lines can improve feel. The rubber lines give a little and create a slight sponginess in the pedal. Braided lines don't give, and therefore provide a more positive feel. Be warned, however, that these lines are not typically DOT approved and some have reported that New Jersey state inspectors will not approve them for use on the street. I have not encountered this problem in Pennsylvania, or Texas. The braided lines also require periodic inspection. They can be damaged and can damage suspension components if they rub against them, acting like a hack saw! The second mod is to change brake pads to a more aggressive compound.

Brake pad compounds are designed to provide a compromise between friction (stopping power), operating temperature, wear, noise, dust and wear to the rotors. In general, compounds designed for racing operate at higher temperatures (at the expense of low temperature stopping) and wear faster. They are also typically more expensive. (Con't on next page)

Tech Session (Con't from front page)

Full-race pads are really not suitable for street driving since they won't stop well until they are hot. Unlike street compounds, however, they won't fade as readily at high temperatures and they can provide a noticeable improvement in stopping power, once they're warmed up. Most makers of "performance" brake pads

such as Porterfield, Hawk, and Performance Friction make compounds which can be effective on the track with only a slight compromise in cold stopping.



Ruth chats with Bill Conway and friend over a Cappucino and some 20W-50 Castrol

The final word on brakes is that no matter how much stopping force they can apply to the rotor, braking is ultimately controlled by the friction between the tire and the road. With our basic education in suspensions and brakes complete, our next subject was how to get more power.

The Quest for Power Everybody wants more power. Alfa owners are no exception. Maybe it's the long and illustrious racing history that Alfas have that drive them to want to hot rod them. Maybe it's the fact that Alfa has long had in-house racing organizations whose sole purpose in life was to make the cars faster. In any case, Vince and Ruth helped us understand how to transform our Alfa power plants from mild to wild.

The first step in any quest for engine performance is at the scale. While Alfa engines are generally smooth, the factory tolerances on weights of internal parts are far wider than can be reasonably achieved during a rebuild. Matching the weights of



Having Maseratis show up to Alfa events seems to have become the norm. Perhaps we need to become the DVARMOC?



Antonio Gil and Matthew Brady discuss the pros and cons of Webers versus Spica in the cozy confines of a GTV

the pistons and their connecting rods, helps drive vibration down and provides a longer lasting engine, regardless of application. Matching the weights of these components is done with judicious use of a grinder and a precision balance.

After the reciprocating parts are balanced, the rotating parts should be balanced, as well. This operation involves sending the crank shaft and flywheel assembly to a shop who has the necessary balancing machine. While at it, you might consider cutting down the weight of the flywheel. Doing this reduces the rotating mass of the engine, allowing it to accelerate faster. Like any modification, however, it is not without a downside. Take too much weight off the flywheel and you'll wind up with a car that doesn't have enough rotating inertia to keep running from a standing start. Neither balancing or cutting the flywheel help the engine produce more power. To do that, you need to attack the combustion and pumping processes.

To get an engine to generate more power, you need to get more heat out of the fuel you burn. The easiest way to do this is to increase compression. Stock Alfas have compression ratios in the 9-10:1 range. Pistons that increase compression ratio all the way up to 14:1 are readily available. Again, though, go much beyond 11:1 and you'll have to be sourcing your fuel from either an airport or a race track unless you want to turn your pistons into ugly lumps of aluminum, like the ones Ruth showed us. The stock Motronic pistons at 10:1 compression ratio are a perfectly reasonable upgrade. Another option to increase compression ratio is to shave the head. Either way, you decrease the space between the piston and the dome of the head. Because of that, the clearance between the valves and the pistons is critical. During assembly, this can be measured with solder or clay to ensure that pistons and valves won't catastrophically meet. Now that that the energy you've released from the fuel has been increased, the next trick is to get more fuel in.

It's the Head, Stupid It's been said by many that the key to horsepower in an Alfa engine is in improving the breathing of the head. While the hemispherical combustion chambers in Alfas are designed to make the flame front travel across the cylinder bore uniformly, they don't provide the increased level of turbulence, (Continued on next page)

Tech Session (Con't from front page)

and therefore mixing, that more modern designs have. In addition, their geometry makes it difficult to locate multiple valves, which ultimately means less area for intake and exhaust gasses to flow.

The GTA twin plug head attempted to solve the small valve problem by relocating the spark plug from the center of the chamber to the side. They also added an additional plug to make up for the increased distance the flame front would have to travel. So, the performance advantage of the twin plug head has little to do with multiple spark plugs, and much more to do with the larger valves that are installed.

Today, slightly larger valves are available for the stock Alfa head. Specialists such as Sperry Valve Works and Steve Haniford typically install larger valves in their hotter heads. While the larger valves allow the head to breath better, they are still relatively heavy compared with the smaller valves used on four-valve heads. The weight of the valves ultimately translates into a lower revving engine, due to valve train inertia. To compensate, stiffer valve springs need to be installed.

Alfa four cylinder engines don't typically have to worry much about revving. Stock 1300s can regularly be run to 8000rpm. Stock 2 liters are easily good for 7000. In racing applications, where 8000+rpm can be the norm, the valve train is still not the limiting factor. There, it is the connecting rods which stretch under the stress induced from reciprocation. The standard fix for that is to install Carello rods, at \$200 a pop! For most of us, the stock rods are just fine.

Bigger valves are all fine and good, but the cam profile still determines how much and how long they will open. Cams are a popular modification for Alfisti, probably because they are so easily changed. Before you spend your money on a set of 13mm cams, however, there are horsepower gains to be made by merely retiming your existing cams.

Alfa four cylinder engines are blessed with vernier adjustable cams. That means the timing of when the cams open the valves can easily be adjusted. Depending on the year, stock Alfa cam timing is optimized for emissions, drivability or performance. A half hour of wrenching can often transform a mid-70's Alfa from docile cruiser into a stormer. Of course, if that's not good enough, there are a wide selection of cams available to make even more horsepower. One consideration, however, is that when lift goes much beyond 11mm, the head castings near the cam followers need to be "relieved" with a grinder to provide enough clearance for the lobes to travel.

Enough, Already! By the time Vince and Ruth were finished our primer on cams, most in attendance were spinning from the volume of information. We still hadn't touched on carburetors, fuel injection, ignition, headers, transmissions, wheels, or safety equipment! Those subjects will have to wait until next year.

Once again, on behalf of the DVAROC, I want to thank Vince and Ruth for hosting another fabulous tech session and for taking time out to share their wealth of knowledge with us. We should consider ourselves fortunate to have such an excellent resource in our midst, to help keep our cars on the road.... and on the track!

On The Track... CTAROC Time Trials at Lime Rock Park

Bob Brady

Prologue Hydroplaning my Suburban with GTV in tow up the New Jersey Turnpike I began to wonder. "Do I really think I enjoy this?" I muttered to myself. I was down on sleep from spending long nights in the garage to get the GTV track worthy. I was worried sick that the brakes on my trailer would decide to stick again as they did the night before when I hitched it up for the first time in a year. My stomach was tied up in knots from the anxiety that I was either going to break something or stuff my car into a wall. I was also feeling guilty for going racing the same weekend as Marie's birthday, an event I remained unprepared for. And, to cap it all off, it looked like the event was going to be a wash out. Why was I doing this?

A few hours later, as I approached the Connecticut border, I started to remember why this trip was so important. It was a pilgrimage.

As the documentary states, Lime Rock Park is a magical place. Nestled in the Berkshires, among classic New England architecture is this simple, yet enormously challenging 1.53 mile stretch of asphalt. Just being there is a wonderful experience. Being there among legions of Alfa Romeos is that much better. **Driving** the track, flat out, in an Alfa, behind Alfas, in front of Alfas, passing Porsches is simply nirvana. That's why I was there.

The first day was a day of reacquaintances; reacquainting myself with friends; reacquainting myself with the routine; reacquainting myself with the track.

A small cadre of us established a camp in the infield. Eliot Shanabrook was parked next to me with his newly painted, and newly engined GTV vintage racer. Brian Shorey was next door, preparing "Mortimer" the "World's fastest Berlina" for its first drive in four years. Nick Fonte, who drives his Alfetta Sports Sedan faster than anyone would have thought possible parked in front. Surrounding us were Alfas of every vintage and every hue. Giulettas, Giulias, a GTA, Berlinas, Supers and Duetto dotted the infield. There must have been twenty GTVs of all condition and stance at the track. Spiders and GTV-6s filled in any remaining gaps. Sure, there were Ferraris, BMWs, the P cars and a number of other nondescript vehicles there as well, but hardly anyone noticed them.

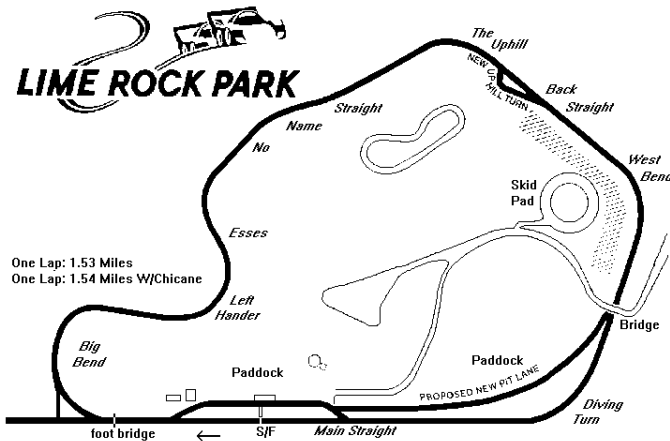
After check-in, technical inspection, and the drivers' meeting, it was finally time to get on the track.

Getting Back Into The Groove It had been over two years since I'd been on the Lime Rock circuit, but the moment I left the pit, everything seemed to come back.

Exiting the straight, I headed into the first turn, Big Bend. This is a long, decreasing radius turn that is typically driven as if it's two separate turns. At speed, this turn can be entered much faster than you might think. It is an excellent turn to practice trail braking. (Continued on next page)

Lime Rock (Con't from previous page)

By the time you hit the second apex, your foot is nailed to the floor and your car drifts wide. Even though you think you'll slide right off the track at this point, the concrete rumble strips that line the left side have much more grip than the asphalt. It feels like hitting a patch of dry asphalt after sliding on snow when you hit them. At that point, you aim for the turn in point for the Left-Hander, turn 3.



The Left-Hander is generally thought of as a “throw away” turn. your sole purpose of hitting this turn right is to set yourself up for the right turn that follows it, which leads on to a straight. The turn-in point for the Left-Hander can be difficult to hit properly. Your instinct tells you to turn in earlier, but if you do, you'll exit too wide from it and be poorly set up for the next turn. Done properly, your foot can be planted to the floor from the apex of this turn until the turn-in point of turn 5, the Climbing Turn.

To get from turn 4 to turn 5, you'll have to first drive down a kinked straightaway known as “No Name Straight.” It is a lovely drive, below a tree-lined grassy hill, made all the more so when your two-liter Alfa is screaming towards redline in fourth gear. This is also a great place to pass, especially if you've nailed turn 4.

The Climbing Turn can be the most invigorating turn of the course. Because it is banked uphill, you can take it much faster than you'd have thought possible. It can be a little intimidating though, since there is only a narrow run off area between the track and the many layers of Armco. Your reward for hitting this turn well is some wheel lift at the crest of the hill. If you can hear the momentary sound of your rear wheels spinning in air, you know you've gotten that one down.

The short back straight between the Climbing Turn and the next left, West Bend is another brief opportunity to pass.

Although you're still two turns away, what you do in West Bend determines your terminal velocity at the end of the front straight, particularly in a relatively low power car such as a GTV. It's tempting to go deep into West Bend, but doing so can make you drift too wide at the exit and force you off the gas. The best approach is to brake mildly, late apex, and keep your foot down, down the down hill.

It seems like everyone's goal is to keep their foot to the floor down the down hill and on to the front straight. Like the Climbing Turn, the Diving Turn that leads on to the main straight

can be taken much faster than you'd think. The key to this turn is to keep to the left and hit the late apex properly. Turning in early on this one can lead to a quick trip to the body shop. If all goes well, your little four cylinder Alfa will be screaming into its redline at the exit and demanding fifth gear as you head down the straight.

Driving Lime Rock leaves you with two impressions. First, it is a very short trip around. Even in a 30 year old Alfa, laps tick away every minute and a quarter. You hardly have time to check your gages when Big Bend comes up again. Second, it is a very violent track. With the great elevation changes and track surface differences, my little GTV gets quite a pounding, lap after lap. When a twenty minute driving session is over, you feel as if you've been on a roller coaster.

Where Are My Snow Tires? After the first session, I was feeling pretty comfortable again. The GTV was running well. My confidence was building. And, oddly enough, all those anxieties I had before arriving seemed to fade away. The only problem was the weather. It was cold and overcast.

On about my third lap of the second session, I noticed something odd. Drops of water were forming on my windshield, so I turned on my wipers. A little rain was not unexpected. I adjusted my speed down accordingly. A moment later, my instructor and I noticed that it wasn't raining at all. Those were not drops of water, they were melted flakes of snow. We were racing around Lime Rock in the snow!!

Fortunately, by the time lunch came around, the sun started to peak out from behind the clouds and the weather turned nice. Unfortunately, the cold track, and maybe the snow, caught a few drivers off guard. One Porsche went off into West Bend and smudged his bumper. Worse, a pretty lime green Spider went off on the Diving Turn and hit the tire wall hard. Fortunately, neither the driver nor the instructor were hurt beyond a couple of scrapes. Unfortunately, the Spider was a total loss. The impact was hard enough that the engine hit the brake booster and dented it! At least that was the last incident involving sheet metal for the weekend.

Some Track-side Civility After lunch, the instructors held a mandatory review of the Spider shunt for all the novice and intermediate drivers. It gave them a close up view of the potential seriousness of making a mistake. Our crew took the opportunity to sip espressos courtesy of Nick Fonte's gas stove, in the cozy confines of Brian Shorey's spacious enclosed trailer. For a moment we thought we'd be out of luck as the stove didn't have a proper rest for the pot. Eliot came to the rescue, however, with a spare exhaust flange he happened to have in his spare parts bin. People bring the strangest spares to races.

Mortimer Lives.... and Dies One of the more interesting cars to attend this event was a '73 Berlina owned by Brian Shorey. This is one interesting car. Originally put together by some crazies at a driver's school, this Berlina sports Ferrari F40, carbon fiber seats, Tilton master cylinders, a “Sperry Stage 5” engine, and brakes that look more at home on a NASCAR stocker than an Alfa. (Continued on next page)

Lime Rock (Con't from previous page)

Back from a four year hiatus, it made it through two sessions in the morning without much fanfare. Brian was completely unimpressed with the huge brakes that seemed to offer little

stopping power. Maybe it was the rust on the rotors? At any rate, mid way through the third session, I saw a cloud of dust as I crested the hill. On the right side, in the grass, was Mortimer, undented, (except for the baseball bat rolled fenders that it started the session with) but steaming. After the tow in, Brian revealed his adventure to us. Apparently, the car burped anti-freeze on to the ground, letting his rear tires loose grip and making for an exciting journey through West Bend. Upon closer examination, we noticed that not only was his #3 fuel line leaking, but his coolant overflow tank was bubbling when the engine was running. He'd be needing a head gasket. Although we tried to convince him otherwise, Brian opted to call it quits for the weekend instead of performing an emergency head gasket transplant on site.

The World's Fastest Alfetta The other sedan in our group had much better luck. Nick Fonte was driving his '79 Alfetta Sports Sedan on the track, which is also his daily transportation. Running in the fastest group, Nick was consistently turning in blazingly fast lap times.... in an Alfetta! Although his car sported Milano front hubs and transaxle, it maintained the stock 2 liter engine, although it had been warmed over a bit. One of the best done details on this car were the fender flares that Nick made. He sectioned each fender and widened them by about two inches. You had to look at them for a while before you realized that they were not the stock bodywork.



Mortimer- Brian Shorey's Berlina complete with F40 seats and NASCAR brakes

The Sun Will Come Out Tomorrow... Bet Your Bottom Dollar Our second day at Lime Rock was picture perfect. Unlike the overcast, dank, **snowy** weather we had the day before, Saturday was beautiful. On this day, even more Alfas showed up to watch the festivities. Former DVAROC member John Jeffries drove from his new residence in Connecticut to add his GTV to the fray. His son even got a chance to "experience" Lime Rock during the lunch time parade laps, open to.

The warm sun and crisp air made for fast laps. The increase in grip from the hotter asphalt was a welcome change from the slick conditions the day before. I had a couple of great sessions in the morning, dicing with a Giulia Super and a GTV-6. The three of us were remarkably evenly matched. The only time one of us could get by the other was when someone made a mistake, or was held up by traffic.... or when one of us had a problem.

Not Again! I was pretty pleased at how my GTV was holding up after the first day. So far, everything was holding together. When I checked my car before the first session on Saturday, I was startled to find that my fuel-cut-off solenoid had backed nearly all the way out of my fuel injection pump! A few more turns and it would have been lost. As these seem to be a common part lost at track events, I have made it habit to safety wire mine in place, and carry a spare. But, in the scramble to get to the track, that was one item I didn't finish doing. On the positive side, the fuel/air ratio meter I installed the week before the event made readjusting the fuel injection a five minute task.

All went well again on the first session. The second session was going fine, as well. Just as I passed the bridge to take the checkered flag however, my engine died with my foot to the floor. "Not Again!" I shouted. Two years prior, on that very spot, my GTV died in exactly the same manner. At that time, I discovered that the bell crank that attaches to the fuel pump broke. So, as I coasted around Big Bend to stop on the grass and wait for a tow, I started the car to confirm my diagnosis. The car idled fine, but as soon as you gave it gas, it died, exactly as it had done before.

As soon as the tow truck dropped me off at our compound, I threw open the hood to investigate. Much to my surprise, the long rod connecting the throttles to the fuel injection pump had become disconnected. What I thought was going to be an hour long repair turned into a five minute job. What a relief! (Continued on next page)



Brian Shorey waits for his Latte as Nick Fonte fires up his gas powered espresso maker

Lime Rock (Con't from previous page)

Wrapping Up The last session out was uneventful. I continued to dice with the Super and GTV-6 as we continued to lap the Porsches in our group. There's nothing quite like lapping modern, high dollar super cars in decades old Alfas to inflate your ego.

The time trials went off without much of a hitch. A 914 dumped oil on the track making things slick for a few cars. But, by the time I did my timed runs, the track was pretty clear.

Unfortunately, my time trial laps were pretty sloppy. I joked that my best driven lap was the cool down lap. When the times were compiled, I was a second and a half behind the Giulia Super I was playing with before. At least I made it into the 1:10s, which was my goal for the event; that and to bring the car and myself home in one piece. The fastest Alfa of the day was Jonathan Kirschstein from the New England chapter in his very potent, 3 liter GTV-6. He turned a 1:05.59. Jonathan seems to get FTD every year at this event. Nick ran a 1:07.71. Who said Alfettas were slow?

The drive home was beautiful. I was anxiety-free. My stomach felt great. My head didn't hurt anymore. New England in the spring is a great place to be. Everyone should make an annual pilgrimage there.



A quick and pretty Giulia Super – my track playmate



The gang waits between sessions next to Nick Fonte's potent (I mean it) Alfetta Sports Sedan



The mountains surrounding Lime Rock Park make the setting that much more beautiful. Here, Bob Brady's GTV awaits another crack at the track



Eliot Shanabrook Christened his GTV's new engine at LRP



Bruce Fernie's beautiful and FAST Duetto is up for sale

In this issue: Tech Session, Time Trials at Lime Rock
Events Calendar.... and more



The world's fastest Alfa Romeo Sports Sedan? See the Lime Rock report inside.



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