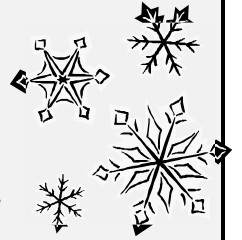


La Voce

Winter 2002



newsletter of the delaware valley alfa romeo owners club

Alfas Frolic in Fall



While any time of the year is a great time to drive an Alfa, fall is particularly special. The weather is perfect for top-down driving. The backdrop of autumn foliage makes a particularly pleasant canvas on which to plot winding routes. And, it is the last chance for many of our cars to stretch their legs before they go into hibernation. This past year, we held two special events to celebrate fall; the annual picnic and a tour of haunted haunts in Bucks County.

Fall Picnic In October, we made our annual pilgrimage to Brookside Farm to celebrate our favorite Italian cars in the midst of friendly faces and warm hosts. This year's special treat was a pair of Touring-bodied Alfa Romeo 1900s.

At a distance, these beautiful cars looked quite similar. Both Henry Wessells' '53 and Scott Klion's '57 were finished in silver which provided subtle accents to their lovely forms as they shimmered in the sun. As one approached however, the differences of four years of changing tastes became apparent.

From 1953 to 1957 automobile styling transformed from inconspicuous, subtle, and in some cases dowdy forms to bold, confident, and some times gaudy shapes. The Touring-bodied Alfas were no exception. While certainly, neither car could be considered dowdy or gaudy, their differences mirror the times in

which they were built. On the grassy hill at the picnic, the '53 1900 struck an elegant, mature pose. Its aluminum panels appeared as though their curves were lovingly caressed into a single, continuous shape. The '57, on the other hand evoked youthful excitement. It's taught, distinct lines were sculpted to be muscular and vibrant. The 53' looked content to sunbathe, while the '57 cried out to be driven. Both stood out as examples of the finest Italian coachwork and made it clear why Italy was (and maybe still is?) the center of design excellence. The pair provided a brilliant anchor for the receiving line of colorful cousins on display beyond them. (Continued on Page 4)

Mark Your Calendars!

February 23 – Winter Lunch

**Café La Fontana
Hatboro, Pa.**

Bob's Babblings

Bob Brady

Brrrrrrrr! It's been a pretty cold and snowy winter so far. I haven't even had the chance to wash my GTV from the fall tour. Both the Sprint and the GTV have gotten out once or twice, but listening to their starters strain against the carmel that fills their crankcases in these single digit temperatures makes me grimace. Remarkably, both cars manage to fire right up, once the engine turns. Both of these Alfas served duty as daily drives for me at one time or another. Their ability to start in the harshest weather the Delaware Valley has to offer is testament to how practical Alfas are as classics. If you can get past the fear of corrosion, there's really no reason not to drive an Alfa year-round. If you get a chance, take your's out. I think you'll immediately realize why you choose to own one of these Italian thoroughbreds. No other car that I know of can stir your adrenaline like an Alfa. Don't let winter get you down. Go drive a smile on your face!

Think Spring! Cold, snowy weather is not the best time to think about Alfa Romeos, but spring is just around the corner... really! In a few weeks, we'll be holding our annual winter lunch at Café La Fontana in Hatboro. I hope you can manage to make this event despite busy schedules. Not only is it a pleasure to enjoy a meal with other like-minded Alfisti, but it's the perfect excuse to get your car out for a drive. As always, we'll have an informal car show in the lot across the way. We'll also have a number of door prizes this year. So, if you can squeeze it into your schedule, please join us on February 23rd.

2002 Yearbook I am currently working on a yearbook for the DVAROC. I have many photos from last year, many more than I can publish. So, I'll be assembling them on CDROM for anyone interested. If you have any photos you can send me (I'll send them back), please do, so I can include them.

Thanks The DVAROC and La Voce can not function without your help and support. I want to thank Henry and Nancy Wessells for hosting our fall picnic, once again, and Jason and Holly Urban for organizing and running a great fall tour. Also, I want to thank Sam Stryker, Ed Jones, Jack Stoll and Jason Urban for their contributions to this La Voce.

Classifieds:

1989 Milano (Gold) 110,500 miles Silver/Tan cloth. Expertly maintained. New timing belt, water pump, brake pads. Recent battery, radiator, etc. Repairable rust on both rear wheel arches. Best offer. John Blankin - Tel (267) 250-6520.

1964 Giulia Sprint Speciale Restoration needs to be completed. Solid body, in primer. 95% of chrome redone. \$10,000 obo, Jeff Kollar, 610-746-0317

1962 Giulia Spider needs total restoration or for parts. \$1000 obo, Jeff Kollar, 610-746-0317

Giulietta, Giulia Spider, Sprint, SS Parts: Engines, Veloce bits, trim, body, interior. Call for details. Jeff Kollar, 610-746-0317

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. Just serviced. Priced appropriately at \$12,500. Also

willing to trade for a nice coupe. Dave West 610 240 0264, dave@shootersinc.com

1976 Alfa Spider: Restoration in progress. Engine and transmission rebuilt, seats upholstered, body work completed, ready for final paint, parts rechromed, new windshield. Over \$8,000. invested; asking \$6,000. Call 610-933-7171 or E-Mail: whiteleila@msn.com.

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.

Parts: 5/8" rear sway bar for 105/115 - \$144 from IAP, \$95 from me. 105/115 radiator w/small leak - make offer. Mark 610-989-0199

NOS Parts I have hundreds of NOS Alfa parts. Most of them are 105/115 series parts, but I also have some 101, 102 and 106 series parts. For an inventory and some prices, go to:

<http://members.bellatlantic.net/~mpbrady/newpartsinventory.htm>

In addition to the new parts, I have a couple 1750 and 1600 engines as well as some spare 5spd transmissions for sale. Contact Bob Brady 610-925-1837, mpbrady@bellatlantic.net for more information.

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

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

La Voce - is attempted to be published six times per year, in: winter, spring, June, July, September and December
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Classified ads are free to DVAROC members.

The DVAROC web address is at: www.dvaroc.org

Send web classifieds to: classifieds@dvaroc.org

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Events Calendar: * Indicates DVAROC Event

*February 23 - DVAROC Winter Lunch - Cafe La Fontana - Hatboro Pa.

Are you tired of the sub-freezing weather? Would you like to spend an afternoon in the warm comfort of fellow Alfa owners? If so, plan to attend our annual winter lunch. Our perennial organizer, Frank Gil has made arrangements for us at Café La Fontana, in Hatboro for February 23rd, at 2:00pm. Cafe La Fontana is located at 58 South York Road in Hatboro. Their phone number is 215-672-8118. The luncheon menu is the same as last year and is as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Appetizers: | Cozze - Mussels in marinara, white wine and garlic with grilled bread, Gamberoni al cognac - sautéed shrimp w/cognac and light pink sauce, and Mozzarella ala Caprese - Mozzarella and roasted peppers. The appetizers will be served buffet style. |
| Soup or Salad: | Crème of Roasted Pepper Soup, or Caesar Salad, or Mixed Greens Salad. |
| Entree: Your choice of: | Penne Pollo - penne with sautéed chicken, mushrooms, garlic, onions and herbs in a white wine sauce Penne al Salmone - penne with smoked salmon in a light pink sauce, or Penne Puttanesca - penne with diced tomatoes, garlic, olives, capers, herbs, peppers and anchovies. |

The cost for the above will be \$25 per person and includes soda, iced tea, or coffee. Desserts, should you still have room, will be available at extra cost. A children's menu will also be available for \$8 per child, consisting of chicken fingers with fries or penne pasta with butter or tomato sauce, soda, and cake. Dress is casual. Parking will be in a lot close by, off the street, behind Gamburg's Furniture. As always, we'll have door prizes and will spend some time after lunch showing our cars. Please bring any ideas for events you'd like to see with you. RSVP with your selection by February 21st or direct questions to Bob Brady (610)925-1837 or mpbrady@bellatlantic.net.

*April 5 - DVAROC Tech Session - Nick Falcone's - Bala Cynwyd

Get your car back on the road. Come to our annual tech session at Nick Falcone's on Saturday, April 5, at 10:00 am. Falcone's is located at 161 Rock Hill Road, Bala Cynwyd, Pa. Their phone number is: (610) 664-0944. No topic has been selected yet. If you have a preference, please contact Bob Brady at (610)925-1837 or mpbrady@bellatlantic.net.

April 25-26 – CTAROC Driver School and Time Trials – Lime Rock, Ct.

The excellent CTAROC Driver School and Time Trials will be held on April 25-26 this year. Lime Rock is a great, beautiful track. No experience is necessary to enjoy this liberating experience. For more information, contact Bob Brady at 610-925-1837.

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

In the Garage...

Projects Projects Projects

Projects

Bob Brady

A Two Year Restoration?! Back in the days when my life was simpler, I used to be confounded at stories of cars taking years to restore. I couldn't fathom how someone could take so much time to finish a project. Of course, now I understand completely.

The days when I could spend twenty or thirty hours a week on a car have long since past. My garage is full of reminders of my shrinking free-time. In one corner lies a mostly white GTV. Its roll cage is 90% complete. Its rust-free, but very incomplete body work are probably 80 optimistic hours away from completion. And then, there's the mechanical, electrical, and interior work that have yet to be started.

I trailed this diamond in the rough home in September 2000. At that time, I thought I was being pessimistic when I said it would be on the track for the 2002 season. Now, I'll be happy if it makes it on the track in 2004. On the positive side, I recently started work on it again.

It had been in a state of paralysis. A seemingly complicated patch around the front windshield had sapped my ambition for a year. Every time I walked into the garage, my eyes were drawn to it. I spent countless hours daydreaming how to fabricate that piece. Each daydream turned into nightmare as I contemplated the complex wooden buck that I'd need to get it just right. And so, it sat there, collecting dust and mocking me...until recently.

Just after the holidays, I made myself an ultimatum. Either the car would be on the track in 2004, or I'd cut it up. Maybe that was all I needed, or maybe I was struck with an unusual spurt of ambition. Whatever it was, within a couple of hours, the void around my windshield was again filled by metal. Twelve months of stagnation was swept away in one afternoon. In the end, the piece wasn't even that difficult to fabricate. Now, with the mental hump that had impeded progress for so long behind me, I'm back working on it.

There's a lesson in this somewhere. Often we get stuck working on projects. We hit an impasse and turn it into a chasm. Sometimes it's best to let some time pass. The trick is not to let too much time pass. Setting a deadline and sticking to it is one way to get that restoration back on track. (Continued on pg. 8)

Fall Picnic (con't from Front Page)

The cars on the lawn included the usual complement of GTVs, and every generation of Spider. In addition, a Sprint, 164 and GTV6 were peppered in for contrast. In the garage above, a trio of red Alfas spanning nearly thirty years peered down. Perhaps the most unusual Alfa to make a showing was Vince and Ruth's latest acquisition, a rare four wheel drive Alfa van. Clearly ahead of its time, its styling was almost exactly duplicated by Ford. But while everyone came to see the cars, they stayed to cultivate their friendship. It was great to enjoy a picnic lunch with so many wonderful people. Before it was over, we held our annual formal meeting with elections. In a close race of one, Bob Brady was re-elected president. As the meeting adjourned, so did the picnic.

Once again, the Delaware Valley Alfa Romeo Owners Club extends its most sincere appreciation for our hosts, Henry and Nancy Wessells. Their kind hospitality always make this event truly special.

For those of you who could not make this year's picnic due to the schedule change, we apologize. We hope you can make it next fall.



The 1953 1900 CSS Evokes a Mature, Subdued Style



The 1957 1900 SS is the Extrovert of the Pair

On The Road...

DVAROC Fall Ghost Tour

Bob Brady

The air was crisp, but the sky was so beautiful that even Jack Stoll couldn't resist bringing out his Giuletta Spider for a final drive before winter set in. That's how the day began for the wonderful DVAROC fall tour in November.

Austin-Healy aficionado-turned Alfa Owner Jason Urban led one of the best executed driving events in recent memory. As the cars gathered outside Doylestown, Jason and his wife handed out bound tour books to the intrepid travelers. This year's theme was Haunted Houses in keeping with the post-Halloween timing. In addition to the extensive directions and maps, each tour book included photos and a brief history of each scary landmark we would pass. This one was clearly a notch or two above the usual DVAROC tour.

As each car arrived, the excitement grew along with the crowd. We passed time getting to know one another and admiring our vehicles of choice. The bulging aluminum V-8 stuffed under the hood of the Triumph TR-8 convertible captured everyone's attention. While Jason's wife Holly attempted to stay warm inside the Sprint, others donned their hats and gloves in preparation for a wintry top-down drive. Our Porsche Spyder owner couldn't resist the peer pressure from Jack Stoll and dropped his top in kind. With the ancillaries complete, our parade of Italian, German, English and Japanese sports cars began.



Bucks County offers some of the finest roads for spirited driving in the Delaware Valley. Driving those roads in the midst of autumn's colorful brilliance makes them all the more pleasant. Our tour took us down winding lanes, past architectural treasures, along creeks and rivers, and under canopies of painted leaves. There were slow gravel roads, some fast smooth roads and every surface in between. Those more inclined towards leisurely Sunday drives could amble along with ease. Those chomping at the bit for some g's got their fill as well as there were ample opportunities to explore the limits of tire adhesion. Remarkably, the group remained coherent throughout.

At about the half-way point, it was time for a stop for some much-needed hot chocolate. Our caravan of automotive art transformed the lot at the dairy bar in Kintnersville. (Continued on Next Page)

Boo! Fall Tour (From Previous Page)

When the hands of our roadster passengers had thawed, it was time to resume our trek. Once again, we journeyed past some more of Bucks County’s famous haunts. Left and right, up and down, upshift, downshift, brake, turn, and turn again, our drivers built up an appetite while their navigators soaked up the views and kept them on course. By the time we hit Riegelsville, we were all ready for some warm drinks and a hearty lunch. A couple of blocks later, we arrived at our destination, the Riegelsville Inn.

Nestled between the canal and the Delaware River, the Riegelsville Inn is a warm, cozy spot for a meal. General Washington would feel right at home in the colonial atmosphere inside. Our hungry travelers sat at a long table near the front window. While we ate and shared our perspectives on the tour, we could watch more than a few interesting automobiles make their way past the inn and over the bridge to New Jersey. Lunch at the snug inn was a wonderful conclusion to an exciting Sunday morning.

Many thanks go to our organizers, Jason and Holly Urban for leading such an outstanding event. The tour and lunch were a great way to get one last drive in our Alfas before winter weather set in. Maybe this will become a fall tradition for us?



The parking lot of the Riegelsville Inn never looked so good.



Our chilly “al-fresco” drivers and passengers enjoy a warm rest at the local dairy bar. Hot chocolate, not ice cream was the treat of choice.



A view out the rear window of the Urban’s Sprint. Jack Stoll and passenger Matthew Brady are in the Spider. Note the GTV nipping at the heels of the 300ZX.

Joe Vasta Will Be Missed

It is with sadness that we report the passing of long-time Alfa owner and AROC member, Mr. Joe Vasta. Joe passed away at his home on November 18, 2002.

Joe was a member of AROC since 1978. He will be remembered, by this writer at least, for his charm, outgoing personality, up-beat nature, and sense of humor. We will miss him.

We offer our deepest condolences to his family. Joe is succeeded by his wife Jo, two children, Fred and Nancy, and two grand-children, Allison and Freddy.



- Jack Stoll

Always Looking For Another...

Caving into Pressure

Bob Brady

As any reader of La Voce knows, I've been searching for a decent daily driver for some time. The last time I wrote here, I was convinced that that car would be a GTV-6. Well, much has happened in the last months of 2002. Probably the most significant event was that my lovely wife sat in a GTV-6. Her not being able to see over the dash killed that as an option. So, I was back to the drawing board.

The next car I targeted as "the perfect compromise" was a Porsche 911. 1984-89s can be found in nice shape, at reasonable prices. They have seating for four, a requirement of mine, and offer good performance and reliability. I did my homework, reading a couple of books and talking to a number of owners. Finally, with much excitement, I stopped by Holt Motorsports to take a test drive. My eyes rolled and I chuckled to myself as the salesman offered me the keys to my "first Porsche experience." The blue '89 was nice enough inside. It had all the modern creature comforts and fit well. On the road, it proved to be a competent, quick and confidence-inspiring. There was only one problem. It had no soul. When my drive was over, I thanked the salesperson and hopped back into the GTV for a ride home.

My GTV is clearly a beast compared to the 911. It's also slower, has less ultimate grip and lacks any creature comforts. But, it does have soul. As soon as I left the parking lot, I cracked a smile that remained the whole drive home. The GTV is an extension of my body. It begs to be driven hard. Its little four cylinder engine has no respect for its redline. It would gladly bury its tach needle, if I'd let it. Through the steering wheel, my hands feel like they are touching the road. At every moment, I know exactly how the rubber is interacting with the surface of the road. That intimate feedback allows it to be driven on edge with poise. It's the positive action of its steering, brakes and shift linkage combine to allow you to drive in a state of heightened awareness. Driving the GTV is reflexive. Your concentration is on your path down the road, not on controlling the car. As competent as the 911 was, it just couldn't compare. So, it was back to the drawing board.... again.

A month passed by and my sights turned towards new cars, with considerable influence from Marie. In one day, I test drove a Subaru WRX, a MINI Cooper S, a Civic SI and a GTI 1.8T. If one listens to the motoring press, you'd be led to believe that any of these cars is the next best thing to sliced bread, particularly the WRX. Apparently, none of those writers own Alfas. I found the WRX slow and numb. The MINI was okay, but not the go-kart I expected. The Civic was an embarrassment to previous generation Hondas; heavy and ponderous. The GTI was fun, but had no composure. I had one front wheel spinning the entire test drive. The day after, I took the GTV out for a short romp and vowed to buy none of them. "I'll stick to the cars I have," I declared to Marie. She was not pleased.

Well, 24 hours of spousal silence later, I caved in. Disgusted, I put the decision in the hands of my children. While they wanted the MINI, it just couldn't fit two children and a hockey bag in it, another requirement. So, we settled on a silver WRX wagon. A couple of hours later, the Subie was home.

While I'm sure the WRX will never be a keeper, it has grown on me in the last few weeks. I'm still not impressed with its linear power; I prefer peaky engines. But, it is fun off the line and is easily the quickest car I've ever owned.... though my Milano Verde still felt faster. I haven't gotten used to its handling yet. AWD does weird things when you try to make it dance. Its numb steering makes you rely on your sense of equilibrium to figure out what the car is doing. That slows my reflexes and makes the car much less intuitive to drive. Still, the 50/50 front/rear torque split gives it some entertaining manners. It can readily do donuts in the snow, something Marie's Subaru wagon can't accomplish no matter how hard I try (shhhhh, don't tell!). It is also

pretty neutral in the dry. If you dive into a turn, it behaves much like a front-driver and wants to plow. Stomp on the accelerator, however, and the front wheels bite, rotating it in a very neutral way. Lifting brings the rear around even more, but not too far. Over-steer appears to have been engineered out, as it has in nearly all new cars. All in all, its handling is predictable and somewhat responsive to the driver, though certainly not anywhere close to **any** of the Alfas I've owned. On the other hand, it is comfortable, has air-conditioning, a good stereo and a warranty, and can easily fit two children and a hockey bag. Perhaps most importantly, Marie can drive it without adding pillows to the seat. I guess it will have to do until Alfa returns. At least now, with a new car, I have some time to tend to the "real" cars in my stable.

In The Garage (from page 3)

While a particular problem might be why some projects stall, there are other reasons. Take the '63 Giulia that had been taking up space in my garage for a year or two.

In February 2001, I bought the Giulia. Really, I bought a '60 Sprint. The Spider just came along as part of the package. (Sound familiar?) While the Sprint was not too far from roadworthiness, the Giulia had a number of barriers standing between it and warm summer drives. It was rusty, but not too rusty. Its engine was out. What remained was in a sorry state. But, through my rosy eyes, it "had potential." Anyone who has been around the auto restoration hobby for any period of time knows that the number of cars that "have potential" is countless. Yet, time after time, dreams override our reason and we wind up with someone else's forgotten project only to let it languish ourselves. Some of us have rational spouses to help us make the decision to pass it to another dreamer. For those who don't, this exercise might help.

First, find an example of the same car for sale, in the condition you'd want yours to be in. Then, take the asking price of that car and subtract out the price you paid for your lump of rust. Keep subtracting the costs of all the parts you'll have to buy. If you haven't priced parts lately, check current prices. You might be in for some sticker shock. If you haven't convinced yourself that your "treasure" is worthless yet, start figuring out the days of work it would take to finish it. Multiply those days by at least two. That is how many **weeks** you'll be waiting to see your car on the road again, at minimum. Not factored in is any time waiting for that critical, yet unavailable piece you need. Double your estimate again to be more realistic. If you're not now convinced to trade your anchor for a nice, drivable example, you might be one of the rare owners who either has a very valuable car, or who has countless hours of free time on your hands. In either case, consider yourself fortunate. For the rest of us, it's time to clean out the garage. At least that will be one less stalled project to contend with. No tears were shed when I waved good-bye to that rusty Giulia. I don't miss it one bit.

Now I can walk into my garage without getting anxiety pains. The White GTV is back on track...sort of. The red GTV and the Sprint are drivable, though could always use some attention. And that spot where the Giulia Spider sat rotting is now full of boxes, a pile of them. In fact, the pile is so large that a car could be lurking underneath. If you look close enough, you might see it, a beautiful Duetto, just waiting to emerge from its sleep. It really doesn't need much work. It's far to nice to part with. I'll bet I could have it on the road this spring. Yea, that's it. All it needs is a little body work... I could probably whip it out in a weekend or two. The previous owner said the engine was just rebuilt, so I'm sure it will fire right up with no trouble at all. And the rest, well just a couple of hours here and there, and it will be like new. I can see myself now, screaming down the road on a warm summer night, just like Dustin Hoffman.

In this issue: Fall Picnic, Fall Tour,
Winter Lunch, Events Calendar.... and more



For some Alfa owners, winter is the time to drive!



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