



It's Italian! One of the holding tanks at Stone Bluff Winery, site of our September wine tour. A spring tour is scheduled for April 12. (Photo by James Perlingiere)

Events

MARCH

29 Hi-Perfor
mance Tour and
Jewelry Tech
Session. 1:00

APRIL

12 Wine Tour
26 Top Installation
Tech Session

MAY

2-4 Spring Fling,
Washington,
MO. St. Louis
Club.
17 Talimena Trip

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CASA DI MACCHINA ROSSA

HOME OF THE RED CAR

UNA NOTIZIA

VOLUME 22 , NUMBER 2

THE ALFA ROMEO OWNERS CLUB OF OKLAHOMA MARCH, 2008

Spring!

Finally! Polish and tune your Alfa. Put the top down on the Spider. Fasten your seatbelts. We have a calendar full of fun events just made for you and your Alfa—and a Significant Other, in case your Alfa isn't the only SO in your life!

The fun starts March 29 with a tour of Hi Performance, owned by Greg and Misty Gordon, with a concurrent jewelry tech session led by Robin Kernyansky. Hi Performance is located at 10763 Sahoma Lake Road, Sapulpa. We have dinner reservations at Toscana in Sapulpa at 5:30. Be sure to RSVP to Autumn (kuhawk4life@hotmail.com) for dinner and the jewelry tech session. There will be a materials fee for the tech session.

Mark your calendar for two Alfa events in April. The wine tour is scheduled for April 12 and the top installation tech session for Saturday, April 26.

But wait! There's more! Our indefatigable social director has been a busy woman. Thanks to Autumn, we have a block of rooms reserved at the Queen Wilhelmena Lodge at the top of the Talimena Drive for May 17. RSVP to Autumn and she'll give you reservation information.

As you schedule your spring activities, be sure to include some Alfa fun. Join us on one of our Alfa Adventures or create your own by finding a wonderful Alfa road and just driving for the fun of it!



End of the line. A line of Alfas crosses a bridge during a pre-running of the 2006 Alfa Deco Street Autocross. The AROC Board of Directors banned street autocrosses during the 2007 Detroit business meeting. See story on page 3.

Chapter election news

AROCOK Secretary and Florida native Keith Kelly reports that the ballots have been tallied, all hanging chads accounted for, and the results of our 2008 election are in. The Officers and Board of Directors candidates have been re-elected

- President - David Simmons
- Vice President Tulsa- Alan Oswaalt
- Vice President OKC - Russ Neely
- Vice President Arkansas - Robert Bumpas
- Secretary - Keith Kelly
- Treasurer - June Mustari

Board members:

- Larry Johnston
- Scott Fowler
- James Perlingiere
- Jamie Perlingiere
- Steven Kenyansky

AROC Election

The ballot for the National Board of Directors is an insert in the March *Alfa Owner*. Don't forget to retrieve it and vote, especially since AROCOK member Les Neidell is on the ballot.

Don't forget to write your membership number on the ballot before you mail it. If you've already voted and forgot to do that, email Jolene Justus at adm@aroc-usa.org and she'll send you another ballot.

Ballots must be postmarked by April 30.

Wine Tour Itinerary

Our Spring Wine Tour goes west and takes us over Route 66. We'll have lunch around noon at the Rock Cafe near Stroud, a Route 66 landmark.

We'll visit the Stableridge Vineyards at 1:30 and Territory Cellars at 3:00. All stops are within a few miles of each other, Autumn says.

She has a reserve winery to fill extra time or for those who want to do one more on the way home.

RSVP to Autumn (kuhawk4life@hotmail.com) if you plan to attend.

A spring day, Alfas, food and wine—irresistible!

Top Tech Session

Alfa gurus James Perlingiere and David Simmons will lead the Top Tech Session, April 26 beginning at 10:00 a.m. The session will be at the Simmons, 922 S 263 W Ave, Sand Springs. Lunch will be included.

If you're not installing a top, you're welcome to come by, see how it's done, talk Alfas and enjoy the company of other Alfisti.

RSVP (simmons5@cimtel.net) to let David and James know a) how many tops will be installed and b) how many to expect for lunch.

Our top tech session will be the subject of an *Alfa Owner* article.

What kind of top?

If you're looking for a top for your Spider, here are suggestions from David Simmons.

He strongly suggests a Robbins top, available from most Alfa vendors. Accept no substitutes, he says.

A vinyl top is the least expensive and most durable for day-to-day use. If you're looking for more of a show-quality appearance, David recommends a canvas top. They're more expensive and harder to install, but they look better.

Talimena Drive

If you missed the 2007 Alfa Adventure on Talimena Drive, you miss a perfect Alfa weekend. Don't let that happen this year!

This year's event is scheduled for May 17. If we follow the usual schedule, we'll leave Tulsa around 9:30 a.m., stop in Krebs for lunch at Roseanna's. After lunch, we'll head to Lovera's to stock up on Italian sausage and cheese, made there, and other goodies for a cook-out on the groups of the Queen Wilhelmina Lodge at the top of the Talimna Trail.

Some Alfisti may decide to visit the Stateline Tavern, a/k/a Deliverance Bar and Grill.

Autumn has our name on a block of rooms at the Lodge. Call or email her to RSVP and to get reservation information if you're interested in going.

National Board Bans Street Autocrosses

Acting on a recommendation to require prior approval for street autocrosses, the AROC National Board of Directors instead banned them in action taken August 1, 2007 at their meeting in conjunction with the Detroit convention.

The recommendation reads as follows:

Proposed changes to AROC Competition Code
Presented to Board of Directors
August 1, 2007

Proposal #3

Current Wording Page 1, Paragraph C2 says:

2. "Competition Event" means any non-racing test of driving skill in which finishing position is determined solely by the ability to execute the course in the shortest time. This includes such events as hill climbs, autocrosses, time trials, slaloms and gymkhanas, as well as practice and training sessions for such events. Wheel-to-wheel racing is not covered by the National insurance policy and is not permitted under any circumstances. No competition event may take place on a public road, unless legally closed off for the duration of the event and safely blocked off.

Proposed Wording:

Break the above into two paragraphs, moving the last sentence and adding wording as below:

No competition event may take place on a public street or road without prior approval of the Competition Chair and the AROC National President. The venue must be legally closed for the duration of the event and safely blocked off. Police protection to prevent entrance to the area by the general public may be required. A letter granting permission for the event must be secured from the governing body having authority over the road or street.

Public roads lined with Armco, concrete or similar

edges are relatively safe. Streets having curbs, traffic or light poles, etc. that could be impacted by a vehicle or that could cause a vehicle to roll over require additional protection. A detailed course map, including safety precautions, flagging stations and spectator areas must be provided to and approved by the National Competition Chair at least two months prior to the event.

According to the Board minutes, the following action was taken:

Proposal #3 – Changes to wording on proposal in attachment were made. The existing wording in Section 2 is broken into two parts. The current sentence reading "No competition event may take place on a public road, ..." is changed to read "No autocross may occur on public streets or roads. Other competition events may take place on a public road, ..."

Motion made by John Justus

2nd by Eric Storhok.

Passed unanimously.

A copy of the Board minutes is being placed on our website www.arocok.org. The recommendation can be found in an attachment on page 56; the Board action on page 7.

Meet Me in St. Louis

Well, close to St. Louis, anyway! The St. Louis Chapter sponsors Spring Fling, a fun Alfa event the first weekend in May every year. A number of Oklahoma Alfisti have expressed an interest in attending the event in Washington, MO.

The weekend includes an autocross, rally, concours and art exhibition. The art exhibition theme this year is "Wheelin' Around."

To register, go to our website, www.arocok.org, and click on the link to the Spring Fling registration form.

Driving in Sicily: The Neidell Report

Last September, Les and Joan Neidell spent a few weeks in Sicily. Les sent his report of his driving adventures in southern Italy.

Especially for our Alfa and Jaguar club members – but perhaps interesting for anyone contemplating a driving trip to Italy. Sicily might be a little crazier than the mainland but not by much.

Best way to begin is to paraphrase from some of our guidebooks, with *(comments)* as necessary. ...putting up with Sicilian motorists, an absurd amount of traffic in towns *(the towns were all designed in the 14th – 18th century – for limited horse traffic. Many streets are one-way – perhaps all should be. I have had to reverse down or up a street many times, attempting not to do battle with the cement truck or other large transport that seeming scrapes the buildings on both sides of the streets. Joan has often been on the verge of bailing out. I always ask her if she wants to drive – after all the SMART car has a sometimes working automatic transmission, but so far she has declined – willing to shout “Oh my god!” or the milder “Look out!” as necessary.)*

There are often only a few through streets – in any town of more than 20,000 that means traffic jams at least 8 hours per day – 10AM-1PM, and 4-9PM. Do not try to navigate the center of towns. *(Parades and demonstrations also create chaos.)* Parking is possible in the central piazza *(there’s always one around the duomo – main church)* or one of the badly posted parking lots. *(These are NEVER free. One must search for a tobacconist shop, and purchase a scrape-away ticket for hour increments. All the towns have parking policewomen (ONLY – sexist stereotyping) – they each patrol a section of streets and carry a whistle which they use*

when they spot an infraction. The evil-doer then has 30 seconds, give or take, to correct the situation. Budget car rental desk was very explicit – pay your parking tickets or when they come back to Budget there will be a 50 euro charge for each in addition to the actual ticket price.)

The authorities do try to mark paths through the medieval streets – take one wrong turn and you will be descending a cobble-stoned street straight into a quarry. A special delight of old towns is their ancient black paving of volcanic rock, which will shake your car to pieces and be treacherous in the wet.

ITALIAN RED

In the cities, a red light usually means go into second gear; stop at one the locals have ignored for years and you will have your ears hooted off. *(Not only will horns toot, but you will get the nastiest glares and hear some very loud swear words, This author somewhat overstates the situation – traffic lights are SOMETIMES observed. What’s NEVER observed are STOP signs. I think they are placed strategically in areas where accidents might happen – such as pulling onto a highway – so blame can be placed in case of an accident. Since there are NO ramps onto any of the highways, coming to a full stop will ensure that you will never enter that highway. There are many damaged cars – all seem to have been low speed – of the parking variety. We have seen only one road accident – this on the highway. In the cities & towns school kids on scooters are absolute menaces.)*

SICILIAN DRIVING RULES

What seems at first to be murderous anarchy turns out to have an impeccable logic: The first rule is: Keep Moving, no matter what. Assume that everyone else is on their toes, and that when you barge into their space they will make way – if they see you in time. As aggressively as they drive, Sicilians are much more courteous about letting you in than northern Europeans.

The second rule is: Cars are only projections of their drivers, so traffic proceeds like a crowd of pedestrians, only faster. *(There actually are a very simple set of rules: (1) vehicles in the roundabouts have the right of way. Of course that doesn’t mean that your fellow Sicilian motorists will wait to enter*



Parking ticket lady. Notice the white whistle in her hand.

a round-about. (2) vehicles on the “main” road have the right of way. One’s interpretation of a “main road” may differ from that of your neighborly Sicilian.)

Everyone has their own peculiar way of reaching their destination, so constantly look out for other vehicles approaching from every direction, at every moment. The only problem with this way of doing things is that it requires everyone’s total attention (*which is difficult when you’re looking for directional signs*) at all times. One mistake and there’s carnage.

READING THE SIGNS

Road signs – carry little if any meaning. They will caution you to 10km/hr for a tiny bump, and neglect to mention that the paving ends, or that traffic is merging from 6 directions. Little blue arrows pointed leftward are installed randomly, as if to say “do not drive off the road into the trees.”

Enough of the paraphrasing and commentary. Road signs are a major issue; Joan likes to KNOW where she is at any point in time, and when an intersection occurs she would like the signs to point in the proper direction. Well, the Italian sign system is more like a road rally – you keep going on the same road (which admittedly is often difficult to determine) until a change in direction is necessary.

Whenever we forgot this cardinal rule we became lost. Signs are USUALLY posted so that a driver can see them – which means at a 45 degree angle to the street. Turn signs too are at a 45 degree angle so some confusion can – and for us – often occurs. Luckily, the not-so-SMART car has about a 20 foot turning radius and U-turns (likely illegal – we have seen no one else do them) can be whipped virtually on any width roadway.

It’s not that there aren’t signs – at virtually every intersection there may be as many as a dozen signs. All look like road signs – same shape and similar colors – but they are actually billboards advertising tourist attractions, hotels, B&B’s and restaurants. Once we had it figured out that different colors were used to distinguish among these – but just after reaching that conclusion the brown sign advertising the mosaics of Plaza Armerina changed to yellow, then black & white – and then stopped completely! SIGH!! Try finding the correct road sign when whizzing by

at 30 kph. I’ve often (Joan says not often enough) stopped the car, and gotten out to try to decipher where we want to go.

ROADWAYS have been generally good. Posted speeds are totally ignored, as are no-passing zones. There are a large number of VERY SLOW MOVING 3-wheeled trucks, and some tractors. Only a very few horse-drawn conveyances – some seemingly of the sporting buggy – like those used by trotters at racetracks. The tertiary roads can get somewhat dicey – as large sections around Mt Etna seem to have collapsed into sinkholes. Speed bumps materialize randomly placed around curves so you cannot see them until you hit them, and railroad crossings are a nightmare. Five mph rocks our teeth. There are amazing tunnels and bridges – long and often curving - especially on the autostrada.

CARS – Jaguars are virtually non-existent. We have seen a couple of XJ sedans (no V-8’s), about a half dozen each of the S-type and X-type. We did see an S-type decked out as a wedding car – with a lace bouquet on the radiator and strewn with ribbons. Unfortunately we didn’t get a photo. Wedding cars are used to transfer the bride and groom from the church to where we know not. Except for the lone Jag they are all big German sedans.

New Alfas are plentiful – basically the “Buick” for the middle class. It’s strange to see Alfas in various states of ill use. Almost all are sedans and hatchbacks. There have been a few lovely Alfa 33’s, which are smaller versions of our Milano. We’ve only seen a couple of spiders and coupes. In fact, we have seen very few convertibles of any kind and few vintage cars – a lone Mercedes 190SL (1960 roughly) and a Porsche 356 B or C (1962 or thereabouts).



An Alfa police car

POLICE – as one of our guidebooks says – “come in 31 flavors.” The Carabinieri and State Police ALWAYS drive Alfas, as do the more

affluent local / town cops. If not Alfas then Fiats – one exception – we saw a Subaru Forester police car. The Carabinieri staff seemingly arbitrary check points and appear to choose cars randomly for inspection. So far we have not been stopped, although we have muddled through and around several of these checkpoints. The other LARGE police force is the Guardia d Finanza (tax police) whose job it is to make sure that taxes are paid on all transactions.

All stores are REQUIRED to give a receipt, and ALL PATRONS ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE THE RECEIPT AND CARRY IT FOR 300 YARDS. We have been asked by ice cream stands to take our receipt and not leave it on the tray. “It’s true they stop people outside bars and ask to see their receipts – they once fined an 8-year-old boy on a beach for buying an ice cream cone and not taking away the receipt. The case was dismissed because the boy hadn’t any pocket in his swim trunks.”) Only in Italy!!



Joan and the not-so-SMART car.

THE NOT-SO-SMART CAR

The SMART car. We first rented one in Cyprus and it proved capable – as is this one. Various exceptions – this one has been abused for over 50,000 kilometers (32,000 miles). The dashboard service indicator lights up minus kilometers when started – indicating that the service is overdue. At first I thought it was counting down TO the service interval, but the number is going up – now reading about 28,000 kilometers PAST DUE.

The SMART car was proposed by the guy that invented the Swatch watch, and is made by Mercedes in a French factory. In fact, some SMART cars carry Mercedes badging (we don’t have a clue why). It is completely computer controlled – a “drive by wire” car as are many of the new German cars. That means no physical connection between anything I do as driver

and what the car does. It’s all up to the car’s computer. Fundamentally, each start requires “rebooting” the computer – which sometimes decides it doesn’t want to respond. This is always after I have made a mistake in shutting it down – such as not having the car in neutral when the key is turned off. No headlights work except the brights, so I get continually flashed by oncoming drivers. We have seen a number of SMART cars with the same problem – so I guess it’s endemic. The best solution would be not to drive at night, but that makes it difficult to eat dinner – since the evening meal begins at 8PM. In fact, we were told by one of our hostesses that no proper Italian would consider sitting down to the evening meal before 9 PM. There’s a very small (about 900 cc) turbo motor that actually gives amazing performance. Our turbo whistles constantly – so at least we know it’s working. The automatic transmission is a real weak link – shifting (when it occurs) in automatic mode is a herky-jerky affair because the engine always goes to idle between the shifts. I mostly drive it as a stick shift – slap the shifter forward to go to a higher gear and back for a lower gear – and I keep my foot on the accelerator at all times. Like paddles on a Ferrari! It can cruise comfortably at 120 kph (72 mph) – which is perfectly adequate except for the autostrada where I am confined to the slow lane.

One interesting design issue also helps keep the speed down. The flexible radio antennae – which appears original – whips against the driver’s side window at speeds over 100kph. It’s a constant drumming, and it’s created a large scratch – as if someone used emery paper.

YOU THOUGHT \$4.00 GASOLINE WAS RIDICULOUS?

Gasoline runs \$6.50 - \$7.00 per gallon (Euro 1.24 – 1.34 per liter), and we figure the not-so-SMART averages about 45 mpg. Not quite sure how much fuel the little bugger holds. We have driven until the little fuel symbol begins flashing – and then added 27 liters. Had an amazing experience with “benzina” that summarizes our experiences. While on remote southeast coast the low fuel symbol began to flash. We headed for the nearest water front town, Marzamemi, assuming that where there are boats there must be “benzina.” After driving for 15 minutes in and about town

we finally asked a woman just getting out of her car where the nearest benzina supply was located. She tried to explain in broken English and with wonderful flamboyant gestures, but finally gave up and signaled us to "follow her." We sped through town, passed a police car, ran a red light, and finally – after 7 or 8 minutes – pulled into a station. She just kept going – whipped a U-ey through the station and waved at us.

We chanced on the Lake Pergusa auto racetrack high in the mountains – just below the city of Enna, at 3375 feet. It's basically a circle track that hugs the shore line around an entire lake! Large grandstand – track appears to be about 12 kilometers per circuit.



The racetrack. Notice the neat garages!

2008 EuroMotor Extravaganza Schedule of Events

Nothing is more beautiful than an Alfa in action—the gracefulness on the road, the engine sound only an Alfa can make. A close second is an Alfa polished and glowing and on display. The next three months offer Alfisti the chance to do it all: drive your Alfa, work on it and show it off.

The 2008 EuroMotor Extravaganza, which AROCOK co-sponsors with the Tulsa Jaguar Club, is scheduled June 13-14 in Sand Springs. It's a charity event, benefitting the Sand Springs Home.

Here is the schedule of events:
Friday, June 13

- 3:00 p.m. Hotel check in begins at the Hampton Inn, Sand Springs. Special room rates available.

- 4:30 p.m. Registration begins. Front room of the Hampton Inn.

- 6:30 p.m. Tailgate party. Hampton Inn parking lot.

Saturday, June 14

- 8:00 - 10:00 a.m. Registration and setup, downtown Sand Springs. Around the triangle.

- 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Participants choice judging.

- 1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Autocross in K-Mart parking lot, Charles Page Blvd. Or self-guided tour of Coyote Trail, Keystone Dam, Osage Hills.

- 7:30 p.m. Catered awards dinner, Sand Springs Home.

You can register by going to our website www.arocok.org and clicking on a link to the event website.



Our Alfas lined up at the 2007 EuroExtravaganza in downtown Sand Springs. The 2007 event was limited to British and Italian cars. The 2008 event is open to all European marques.



Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ email _____

Tell us about your Alfa(s) _____

Dues are \$65.00/year, renewable on anniversary. Send check and application form to June Mustari, 4128 E. 37th Place, Tulsa, OK 74135.

Plan now for your Lovera's shopping trip May 17 in Krebs.

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