

ALFACIONADA

APRIL 2021



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NEWSLETTER OF THE

Alfa Romeo
Owners of Southern California

Alfa Romeo Owners of Southern California

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Submissions

Please send classified ads, articles, letters and photographs to the Newsletter Address above, to arrive no later than the 25th of the month prior to publication.

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About This Newsletter

Alfacionada is the publication of the Alfa Romeo Owners of Southern

California, a chapter of the Alfa Romeo Owners Club, Inc., a national non-profit organization of Alfa Romeo enthusiasts. Affiliation with AROSC and a subscription to this newsletter are included in your annual \$68 AROC dues. Visit aroc-usa.org to join. Visit arosc.org for additional details on our Chapter.

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Meeting Information

While events and meetings have been on a pandemic hiatus, now that Southern California is re-opening, we are planning a return to live events. Please watch the website www.arosc.org for updates on meetings and activities. Email your questions, comments or concerns to info@arosc.org and a Director will respond.

On the Cover This Month

Yes, 2021 has been quiet for the most part, but our competition division has carried on with distanced track weekends. They had a careful New Year's celebration at Laguna Seca where a number of Alfas had their own run group as well as a midday lunch cruise, portrayed by the CaliPhoto photo of the cool 1900 Sprint heading down the Corkscrew. Val Dietrich's photo of his impeccable Touring-bodied 2000 Spider became a delicious center spread in the March Alfa Owner. He also contributed some amazing factoids about the spinner models used in the film, Blade Runner. Go re-read your March issue (page 8 and 24-25) and see the gallery of AROSC centerfolds elsewhere in this Alfacionada. You're welcome! – Elyse Barrett

AROSC Board of Directors, 2021

Your entire Board is available at one point of contact: info@arosc.org. We welcome and encourage your thoughts and feedback. This central email address will allow us to respond, at home or on the road, through our computers and smart phones. Leave your telephone number and request a call-back if you wish; we will be happy to contact you personally.

Don't forget to check our website: <http://www.arosc.org>

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Previews ...*What's coming up and when.*

April 9 - Zoom Happy Hour. RSVP to Jim Barrett at eddinab@verizon.net to get the link.

April 10-11 - TT & Race, Laguna Seca

May 14 - Zoom Happy Hour, all members are welcome!

May 16 - Board of Directors Meeting via Zoom.

June 11 - Zoom Happy Hour, y'all come!



In our recent Activities Survey, many of you voted “comfortable doing now” to independent day drives, distanced museum visits and country drives with picnic lunches. Let’s put our safety thinking caps on and make these happen this summer! See page 10 for the Survey Synopsis and give us more feedback!.

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Avanti e Verso l'Auto!

Hope Springs – On Friday, March 12, we held our ninth monthly AROSC Happy Hour, and we all enjoyed seeing friends from whom we have been isolated for a year now. It was great to catch up, hear live music (!), and learn how everyone's lives are progressing in these weird times.

I was particularly struck by how many of us had successfully had their COVID inoculations (although I'm sure it had nothing to do with our respective ages). Thinking about this fact later really encouraged me to look forward to a more positive future, and when we can resume our get-togethers again. Thus, this column's intro phrase is not referencing some film by the same name (nor a nifty mid-century retreat in Desert Hot Springs), but that we humans tend to foster hope during adversity. This phrase ("Hope springs eternal") was first used in print by Alexander Pope in 1732, and it still applies today.



I think that we have been successfully re-centering our priorities while cooped up, and that when we're released from our respective captivities, we will better focus on what really matters. And that focus can and should easily apply to the improvements to our Alfas, right?

As of this writing in mid-March, several California counties have moved from a constrained activities tier status (purple) to less dramatic tier (red), a really good direction. Your Board of Directors will be looking for a rule of thumb for getting active again; looking at what tier is deemed most safe to resume gatherings of 10 or more people indoors.

In other hopeful news, there is currently a bill in the California Assembly, AB220 (https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB220) that could help some of us who own classic Alfas. The new law would move the smog test exemption year cut-off from the 1976 to the 1983 model year. Other than collector cars, how many 1976-'83 cars are still on the road? Not that many, and those will likely be collector cars, running better than if they were beater daily drivers. If you agree that your car could benefit by this opportunity, please contact your state legislator and ask for their support for this bill.

Another bright point of light is the AROC National Convention in Colorado, September 7-12. Even though this is months away (but we all know how time flies when we're having fun, right?), once travel becomes safe again, there will be a mighty explosion from all of us who have missed traveling, and the convention scheduling will be affected likewise. Elyse and I are now planning our own route

and lodgings to get there so we can be ahead of the impending wave of demand for bookings. If you want to attend, visit the convention website www.alfa2021.com hotel booking site https://doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/groups/personalized/C/COSP-DT-ARO-20210905/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG

Earlier this month we hope you responded to our email AROSC Activity Survey that asked what events you are interested in attending. If so, you were part of the tremendous response. Your Board will be using this data and that from a second survey in May to plot our course for the rest of 2021. See page 10 for a synopsis. If you have other thoughts, concerns, ideas, and/or dislikes, please send them to info@arosc.org, so we can consider them along with those in the survey.

*Ciao, Jim and Elyse
Copresidenti*

Yup, No 2021 Events Yet

Yes, you still don't see a Calendar of 2021 Events in this newsletter or on our website.

We took up the topic of self-led tours and distanced events at our first-quarter Board meeting on February 7. A calendar could not be produced at this meeting, but a membership survey was generated and circulated March 5-12. Another will be sent in late May.

We have good input from you for possible activities, but AROSC is strictly observing state and local COVID protocols for if and when staging any group gatherings may resume, and will be considering the use of a COVID Hold-Harmless Waiver.

At this time, there are still additional Chapter members who have contracted the disease. And more of us have relatives and friends who have fallen ill. We must continue to practice what we preach.

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The Mailbox

Hello AROSC –

We'd like to say thank you to everyone who made our traditional AROSC End-of-Year Party a great success on non-traditional Zoom! It was fun to participate in the photo contest [to show off and see decorated cars and swell sweaters] as it allowed my artist's imagination to run free. Thanks also for the winner's recognition and the gift card.

Hope we can soon gather sometime soon, lift a glass and celebrate being together. Best regards to all,
Tina and Fred Firschein

Twin Spark Technicalities

Hi Gene,

Recently I purchased a 75 twin spark engine. I don't know what year it was made. Is there some way I can tell from the engine itself?

Thanks,
Harry White

Hello Harry,

Alfa Romeo made their first twin spark engine in their 1914 Grand Prix car. There were also versions of the 1600cc 4-cylinder engine in the early 1960s as used in the GTAs and some TZs.

The first use of the twin spark in a production car was in the 1987 Alfa 75 (Milano to us in North America) and available through end of Alfa 75 production in 1992. The same basic engine was available in the 164 from 1987 to 1997, and in the Alfa 155. These were all based upon the Alfa Nord engine and were all two-valves-per-cylinder engines in 1.6l, 1.7l and 2.0l displacement. This engine was replaced with a new twin spark engine based upon a FIAT block with four valves per cylinder and introduced about 1995.

It seems that you are asking about an engine out of an Alfa 75, an 8V twin spark, which would make the year range 1987 to 1992.

As far as I can tell, there were only two variants of the 2.0l twin spark in the Alfa 75. The first, from 1987 to 1989, was fuel injected; the second, from 1990 to 1992, which is called the 2.0l TS Catalytic. Both are listed with the same power output.

This information came from the internet, mostly Wikipedia. A better source could be online at the AlfaBB, particularly the Engine Conversions forum.

Hope this helps,
Gene



THIS JUST IN!

Dateline April 1, 2021

Stellantis, Alfa Romeo Brand Expands

Alfa Romeo announced today that it will expand its line-up with a new mode of transportation by introducing an electric motorcycle named the 2C (affectionately to be known as the “Twozie”).

This follows previous historic models like the 6C 2900, the recent 8C, and the current sports car offering, the 4C.

The fabulous Twozie will be unveiled at the 2021 Geneva Motor Show, later this year.

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SURVEY SAYS: LET'S ROLL!

Those of you who remember the TV game show, “Family Feud” will smile or scoff at the headline above, but I actually competed on the show and know that the statistics were gathered legitimately and the game was based on actual counts of things, trends, facts and popular thought.

On the one-year anniversary of the U.S. acknowledgment of the COVID-19 pandemic and California’s subsequent lockdown, AROSC sent an eight-question questionnaire. You were asked what you felt most comfortable and were most interested in doing with your Alfas. Here is a synopsis of the results of this 2021 Activity Survey, to which an astounding 50 of you (among a 255-person membership) contributed. THANK YOU!

It is heartening that the six counties in Southern California where most us live (Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, San Diego, Riverside, Santa Barbara) have now come out of the state’s most restrictive lockdown tier. We definitely want to be ready to roll when we can do so safely. (Visit covid19.ca.gov “Blueprint for a Safe Economy” to read the fine print.)

Through the year, we observed other chapters across the country holding distanced lunches on patios and in gardens; doing drives in the country to privately reserved wine tasting rooms; sending members on independent treasure hunts; conducting lapping days at private tracks. These activities all seemed to work well. They emulated our standard fare, weren’t very spontaneous and featured having participants sign COVID hold-harmless waivers. Our competition division carried



Paul and Mary Blankenships’ Kovid Kafe Pandemic Relief Garden, an oasis fit for our troubled times.

out its schedule of two High-Performance Driving Education schools and four open track weekends for the motorsports community without incident (The program involves less than 1% of AROSC members.).

Our survey aimed to gauge personal preferences about tried-and-true activities with three levels of response to each question (Interested, Comfortable Doing Now, and Not Interested) and invite fresh ideas. All questions received at least 40 answers. Thirteen of you put forth or enthused about others' ideas.

The three questions garnering the most votes for “Comfortable Doing Now” are:

Q1: 52.50% Take yourself (and bubble-mates) on an independent/distanced day tour with AROSC-provided driving instructions (2-hour; 4-hour; 6-hour duration)

Q5: 42.50% Go for a country drive to a picnic location (self-provided, distanced dining optional)

Q4: 37.50% Spectate at, or enter your Alfa in, a distanced morning conorso

The top three questions with the most votes for “Interested” are:

Q6: 65% Attend a 1-2 night overnight tour and private wine tasting at up to 4 venues

Q2: 62.50% Attend a museum tour and distanced outdoor lunch

Q4 and Q5: 40% Spectate at, or enter your Alfa in, a distanced morning conorso and Go for a country drive to a picnic location (self-provided, distanced dining optional)

Your Board of Directors will act on the “Comfortable Doing Now” responses immediately and publish four day cruises with driving instructions for you to enjoy. We will also follow up on the suggested activities, and at our mid-May meeting, sketch out a “new normal” events calendar for the Chapter.

We also plan to circulate the survey again in late May, and take a close look at where our region sits in the California color tier for where we may most safely go.

- Elyse Barrett



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ALFA ITALIA IS ALIVE AND VERY WELL!



1923 Lancia Lambda Torpedo and a 1972 Fiat Cinquecento share a bay in Alfa Italia's refurbished shop. The 500 is getting additions to its Abarth content. Will Owen photo.

Art Wright, Gary Rand and Chuck Schwartz are three longtime, long-term car restoration hobbyists-turned-pros, working together as Gasoline Alley Garage for over nine years while looking for a good shop to use as their base of operations. In the meantime the Di Leonardis brothers, Onofrio and Vittorio, had been planning for their retirement, while looking for a new owner that would allow Alfa Italia to continue its 39-year tradition of fine craftsmanship and friendly customer service.

It all started to come together at Best of France & Italy, the annual car show in Woodley Park in 2009, when the three Gasoline Alley men decided that Alfa Italia would fit perfectly into their long-time plan, not to mention keeping alive and in many ways updating a vital part of many Alfa owners' repair and maintenance program. And before any longtime customer starts to panic here, the head mechanic, Luis, is still the head mechanic, while Vittorio is staying on part-time, and Onofrio remains available for special projects.

It must be said that the shop itself had become both cluttered and in need of updating to current working standards. Besides clearing the floors of parts and equipment that could be relocated, air and water lines have been lifted to overhead pull-downs and the floors cleaned extensively, and the spotty shop lighting has been fully replaced with a large number of LED tube units. The new owners have also been inventorying the large assortment mostly of Alfa parts packed into the overhead storage, including, to this guy's delight, a good stock of Milano items.

For much more in the way of explanation and reassurance, the best thing I can recommend is that you go to alfaitalia.net, where you can see both what's been

shown and mentioned here, plus a fine gallery of the restoration work these fellows have been doing over the years. I know that the Milano is looking at a long-needed refurbishing; I am grateful that I can still give the work to a shop I've used for a while, ever since Bill Werner recommended it to me when he was shutting down Alfa Only, his Atwater Village mainstay of many years. I don't think it's any poor reflection on Bill to say that this is what Alfa Only would probably have been like if he'd had three times the workspace and a bunch more employees!



One thing that's unchanged is that not all of the "patients" are Italian. English cars, like the occasional Jaguar, Lotus, or that Morris, are not uncommon. Will Owen photo.

When AROSC sent polite inquiries about their intentions, Chuck seemed eager to reassure the *Alfisti* that their intentions are not only honorable but actively friendly as well. As a patron of the shop for three Alfas and not quite 10 years, I had what you'd have to call a Vested Interest, and I was invited to a sit-down with the three guys. It was a friendly, informal and very reassuring conversation, mostly because they are all obviously hard at work at protecting what is great there and upgrading whatever needs help.

Some time after this I asked Chuck what he'd want to say in writing to the *Alfisti* about their goals and intentions, and he summed it up like this: "The AROSC and its members continue to bring this community together to share our passion for Alfa Romeos. As long-time Alfa owners ourselves, we're happy to play our part by helping to maintain and promote the enjoyment of these wonderful cars. We're committed to continuing the legacy of Alfa Italia while refreshing its look and expanding service and restoration."



From Alfa Italia "back when": A Giulia 1600 Spider at the shop, in an undated photo found in shop files. Photographer/car owner unknown as well, but some things do not change, including the demand for this level of work.

Good to know, though hardly surprising after visiting the shop and seeing both the differences and similarities in outlook and attitude. We have pulled two images of the new owners' restoration work and dropped them onto the next page. While we are not all trying to make concours champions out of our weekend rides or daily drivers, it is very reassuring to have a shop nearby that can make sure your power windows will keep going up and down, or turn your humble commuter into a track-burner, or restore it to a level of finish it never had reached in the showroom. Or ... just pass its smog test again! A lot of us are good with that.

– Will Owen



Here are two examples of the new owners' restoration work. Above, why be red is a good question, given how good this Spider's Verde looks. Below is a rare Morgan Plus Four tourer (4-seater?) in blue.

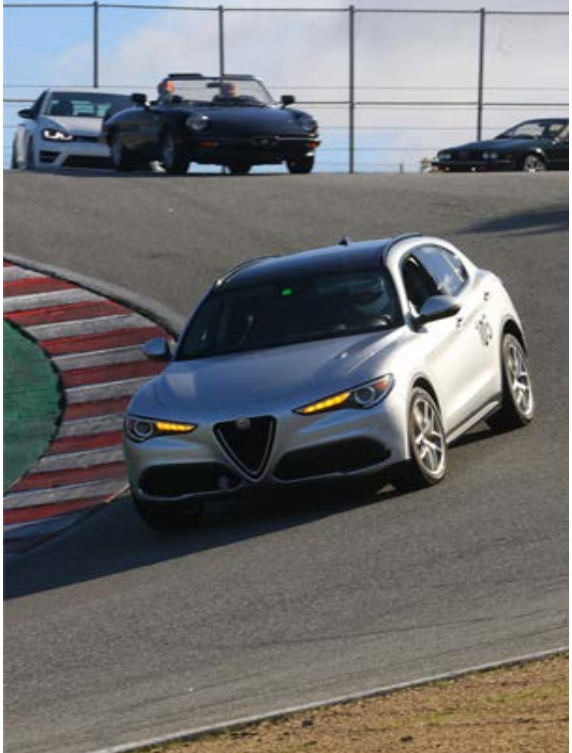


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IT WAS A LOVELY LAGUNA WEEKEND

AROSC rang in 2021 with a track weekend at Laguna Seca Raceway, December 30-31 and January 1. We ran regular TT and Race activities and had a well-attended midday all-Alfa parade session, led by Norm Silverman with his still-new Stelvio (at right).

Here are a few views of the action shot by Cali-Photo. Feel free to contact them at www.caliphotography.com and instagram: @caliphotovideo or facebook: @caliphotography to see if your car is among those they photographed at the event.. We are so pleased that these beautiful days in NorCal could be enjoyed by all.





Above, the competition participants love Laguna Seca. Below, 4C enjoys the Corkscrew.





A nice mix of Alfas comes out of Turn Three on the midday drive.

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2021 Schedule

Apr 10-11 Laguna Seca, TT & Race, with NCRC

Sept 11-12 Streets of Willow, HPDE Driving School

Oct 9-10 Willow Springs, Big Track, TT & Race



You can sign up for our track events at
www.alfaclubracing.com
or at motorsportreg.com

My Angel Is the Centerfold *in the best possible way*

In the past five years, AROSC member cars have been featured as centerfold pinup darlings in the national magazine, *Alfa Owner*, eight times. Let's appreciate them again here in *Alficionada* and give them all a round of applause! – *Elyse Barrett*



December 2017: Art Russell's 1963 Giulia Spider graces PCH during a cover shoot of Highway Magazine. Photo by Evan Klein.



July 2018: Fred Firschein's 1973 GTV out for a winter drive near his former home in Mesa, Arizona. Photo by Fred himself.



February 2019: Pat Quilter's 1965 Giulietta Sprint, taking in the view at Laguna Beach, for another Highway Magazine cover. Photo by Evan Klein.



August 2019: David Sydorek's 8C 2900B being celebrated as the overall best of show at Villa d'Este Concours d'Elegance. Photo courtesy Villa d'Este.



November 2019: Jeff and Margaret Srinivasan's 1974 Spider at Bella Luna Winery during our 2019 AROSC Wine Tour. Photo by Steve Edelman.



February 2020: Peter Norman's two gorgeous Giulias, vying for driveway space at home. Photo by Peter Norman.



October 2020: Rich and Barbara Priebe's 1974 Spider at Cottonwood Canyon Winery on the 2018 AROSC Wine Tour. Photo by Steve Edelman.



March 2021: Val and Monique Dietrich's 1960 Touring-bodied 2000 Spider, near home in the Los Angeles area. Photo by Val Dietrich

Happy New Year – Membership is Now Just \$68!

A dues news reminder: Your Board has reduced our dues by \$10 for 2021.

Because we aren't spending as much as we did in pre-COVID days, have a well-funded treasury, and expect that activities and events will be largely on hold through early 2021, we reasoned the Chapter can operate with less income.

Your annual dues will now be \$68 instead of \$78.

This reduction has been implemented on the aroc-usa.org website, so when you renew your membership there, you will see no additional charge for affiliating with AROSC, or as the site calls us, "CA (Chapter 20)".

We anticipated that members paying AROC by check may still receive a 2021 dues statement showing the \$78 rate. At least 30 of you were sent renewal notices in late December, and we apologize for any confusion or inconvenience.

If you haven't yet paid, you should write your check for \$68! While AROC administration is aware of the change, feel free to add a note reminding them that this chapter no longer charges the additional \$10. If you have paid the extra \$10 and wish a refund or have questions, please email treasurer@arosc.org

Jay Mackro
AROSC Treasurer

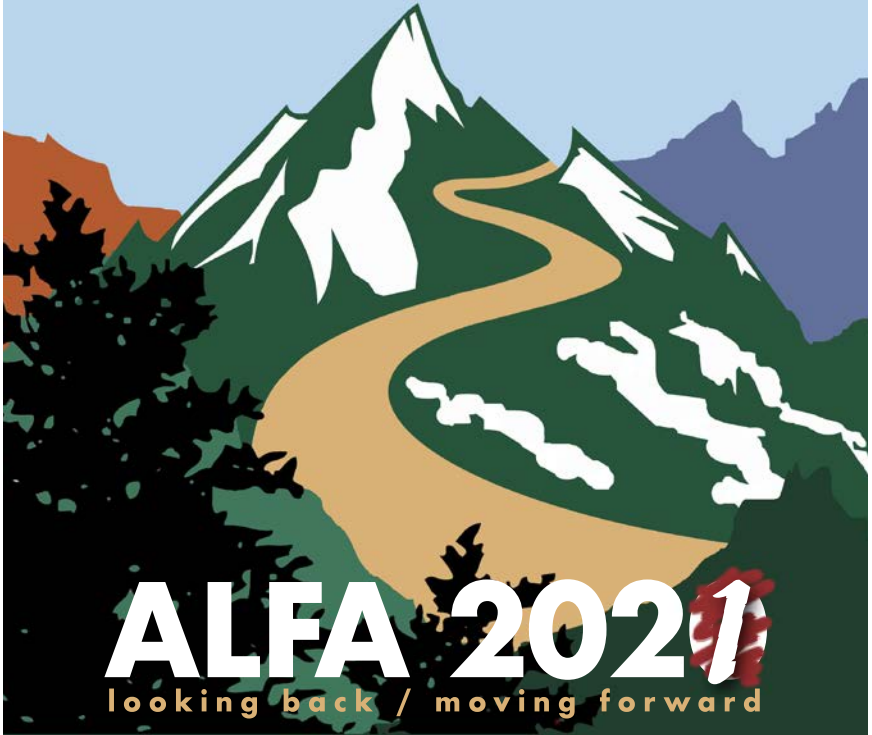


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looking back / moving forward

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