



Alfa Notizia August 2012

As the summer temperature and humidity increase in Florida the car events decrease. We did have one great event in July, the swap meet at the Alfa Romeo, Inc. headquarters and Alfa, Maserati, Fiat & Chrysler 500,000 square foot warehouse in Orlando. We were glad the place was air conditioned ! My article on the swap meet won't be published in Alfa Owner till the Sep or Oct issue so it's included here.

Into this month, on the 1st, Norm Sippel and I had lunch with the Sarasota Café Racers. They are a group of gear grinders who gather for lunch bi-weekly at Bogey's, a sports bar on the South Trail. They have no membership list, no dues and only one rule: you had best leave your ego at home. Norm and I went in his Maserati Marachino. Among the cars there were a couple of Aston Martins, near new and very low Jags, a BMW crossover Alpina, an Ultima GTR, half dozen nice Porsches, a cherry '68 Camaro SS350 and '63 Plymouth Fury convertibles and Martin Godbey, owner of the Sarasota Auto Museum, and his son, Blake, came in a restored 1966 Sunbeam Tiger for sale for \$65k. My favorite car was the 2012 MP4S12C McLaren that the salesman said got 30 mpg on the way down from Tampa. I hope Roger Cassin brings his restored '54 1900 CSS Alfa soon.

I sat across from Blake during lunch. After he graduates from high school next year he will attend McPherson College in central Kansas where he will major in business and automobile restoration. It is the only college in the world that confers a BA in Automobile Restoration. If you're an Alfacionado, it's a good place to send your son or grandson.

Alfa owners are always asking other Alfa owners, "Who's your mechanic ?" or, "Do you know of a good mechanic in such and such city ?" We have a forum here to help each other out and I'll start. I live in Sarasota; I know of three good Alfa mechanics here.

✚ Master Auto Tech: 5909 15th St. E. Bradenton, FL 34203 (941) 538-2538.

Italian born and raised Luciano Sanzogni and his son, Dino, are both Ferrari factory trained and they specialize in high-end Italian cars like Ferraris and Lamborghinis. They have a full shop including a complete alignment rack. \$110 per hour and don't be in a hurry. FAC member Ralph Cushing says he gets a "Fiat rate" for work done on his 850 spider.

✚ Jesse's Garage: 1123 Vilas Ave, Sarasota, FL 34237. (941) 914-2202.

Facebook.com/JessesGarage?ref=ts. Turkish born and raised and educated in Germany, Jesse Yuvali came to America and got his citizenship. He has owned an Alfa since 1979, including a Giulietta spider, a GTA and a 1994 spider. He specializes in electronics on complicated high end German cars but loves to work on Alfas. \$75 per hour and he doesn't keep your car long. Jeff Hanson is very happy with the maintenance work Jesse did on his '92 spider.

✚ Twin Cams Sportscars: 6085 Deacon Road, Sarasota, FL 34238. (941) 923-0024.

Steve Smith was born and trained in England and specializes in repair and restoration of British vintage cars. He builds and races four cylinder, twin overhead cam, Weber carburated Lotuses. Engine sound familiar ? \$70 per hour and has room to keep your car awaiting parts. He has been very good at finding and fixing clunks and leaks on my Giulia spider that others hadn't.

Please share your knowledge of mechanics you have used by calling or emailing me !

I try to keep this news letter about people in the club and events we go to. If you have FAC people or event news you would like to share with the club please call or email me. Download and send photos ! I do not have the time or energy to write or link about the history of Alfa Romeo or what is going on in the present or future of Alfa, Fiat or Chrysler. That is ably done by Peter DiMatteo at arocswfl.org and Richard Reel at alfalfa.com. Log on and learn !

August 9th, 7:00-8:30 PM, Business meeting at Jason's Deli in Clearwater. Paninis and wraps.

August 11th, 8:00-10:00 AM, Cars & Coffee at Ferrari of Tampa, Palm Harbor.

August 18th, 7:30-10:00 AM, Cars & Coffee at duPont Registry, St Pete. Get there early !

September 1, 8:00-10:00 AM, Cars & Coffee at Sun Coast Porsche, Sarasota.

September 8th, 8:00-10:00 AM, Cars & Coffee at Ferrari of Tampa, Palm Harbor.

September 13th, 7:00-8:30 PM, Business meeting, Jason's in Clearwater. Mmmm muffalettas.

September 15th, 7:30-10:00 AM, Cars & Coffee at duPont Registry, St Pete.

October 14th, 11:00 AM- 3:00 PM, Annual new Season Kickoff Picnic at Ft DeSoto Beach, St Pete. This is an intimate event, about 12~18 Alfas, some from the Mid Florida Club. We gather and chat under a big shelter by the beach with tables and barbeque pits provided. Good time and place to meet new members and get reacquainted with old. Cars are parked in sequestered area in front.

November 2-3rd, *Viva Alfa Romeo* at Celebration, Disney World. Mid Florida club takes over Market Street in Disneyesque Celebration and lines up 65-70 Alfas and Fiats on both sides. This is the largest annual enclave of Alfas in the South ! Dinner Friday evening, display all day Saturday.

November 4th, Winter Park Concours dElegance. As long as you're in Orlando for *Viva Alfa Romeo*, stay over for this very nice concourse in the park of nearby, picturesque Winter Park !

December 8th, 7:00- ???? PM, Florida Alfa Club Christmas Dinner at Alfano's Italian Restaurant in Largo. With a name like Alfano's, this place is made for us. Polly Greene puts on a great party !

Swap Meet in the 500,000 Square Foot Alfa, Fiat, Maserati, Chrysler Warehouse in Orlando.

If you own an Alfa you have spare parts in your garage. If you own an older Alfa, like a Giulia or prior, you have boxes of spare parts in your garage. If you are an “alfisti” you have more boxes of spare parts in bins and closets in your garage. If you are an “alfaholic” or “alfadictive” you have boxes and bins of spare parts for the spare parts you might someday need when you might someday buy the Alfa you dream of.



No better place to perhaps reluctantly sell some of those Alfa spare part treasures and make room for more Alfa spare part treasures than a swap meet, especially if it's in a half million square foot warehouse that is also the Headquarters for Alfa Romeo, Inc., USA. And that's exactly what the Mid-Florida AROC did on June 14th!

Delmas Greene of the Florida Alfa Club called Tony DiMuro at Alfa Romeo Inc. and got the ball rolling. Howard Bernstein, the perennial pres of the Mid-Florida club, picked up the ball and did all of the local coordination. Tony DiMuro's title is Parts/Marketing Operations Officer for Alfa Romeo in the US. Tony *is* ARI! He organized the swap meet space, lots of tables and chairs, in the 1,000 sq. ft. main conference room of the BIG Chrysler warehouse. He also set aside the lunch room, provided coffee and donuts, and provided a tour of the massive warehouse. He also provided a couple of unexpected surprises.

Tony came to New York, from Italy, as a child, with his immigrant family. He graduated from Lehman College (CUNY) with a degree in Poly Sci in 1979. Not sure of what to do next he heard from a friend that Fiat was hiring. He went for an interview, spoke with the Fiat HR person for an hour in Italian about everything except cars and was hired on the spot as a parts novice. In 1989 he transferred to Alfa Romeo and earned his MA at Fordham. Tony has never been a mechanic, always a manager. When Alfa Romeo stopped importing cars to the US in 1995 Tony stayed on and has been the only Alfa Romeo employee here for the last seventeen years.

About thirty people brought Alfa spare parts, books, magazines, clothing, bags and chatch-kas; they filled the many tables and overflowed onto the floor. Two people trailered in their parts, some as big as exhaust systems; there were at least four of those. Two complete sets of GTV6 taillights. Many wheels and rotors. Terry Rushbrook, from Alfa

Magic in Melbourne, had six 750/101 valve covers, most with bolts. He also had many rare badges and straps. Delmas Greene had at least seven bins of Alfa related magazines and tapes. Some women brought sweaters and shirts and there were even some intricately Alfa emblemed sequined vests, a la Elvis Presley. At least a dozen Alfa watches of all different qualities. And even wooden, Alfa croquet mallets!



Beginning set up for the swap meet in the Chrysler conference room. The smaller parts filled over a dozen tables and large parts sprawled on the floor.



Looking down from the second floor at 11.5 acres of warehouse with bins often stacked six high. They ship approximately 100,000 parts a week.

After a morning of bargaining, bartering and lunch Tony took us on a tour of the massive Chrysler warehouse ably guided by the man in charge of it all, Dwight Brubaker. His title is “Dealer Support Front Office” but I think his job is dancing with chain saws all day. The warehouse employs 67 people, ships 7,000 lines a day and 35,000 lines a week, (a line is one order, often of multiple parts). It is not automated. Dwight explained that it is more efficient and cost effective to have hand pickers than to pay for maintenance and repair for the automated system they had in the previous warehouse. This warehouse supplies Chrysler dealers and authorized shops in Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Puerto Rico and South America and Maserati and Alfa dealers throughout the U.S.

It also supplies fourteen new Fiat studios in the South. Danny Quinzy, the night lead supervisor, informed us that if a Fiat dealer orders before 7:00 PM the part(s) will be in his shop when he opens the next morning, guaranteed. This means people are working round the clock and the building, all half million square feet of it, has to be air conditioned round the clock for at least half of the year.

Dwight showed us the secure second floor area where the Maserati parts are kept under special lock and key because of their high cost per part. Only two people handle Maserati parts, one in the morning for incoming and one in the evening for outgoing. Tony

showed us the long bin rows, #85-#90, where the over 4,000 Alfa parts are stored. When asked about retailers like Alfa Ricambi, Vick's and International Auto Parts, Tony explained, "They are both customers and competitors. Some of their parts they buy from Alfa Romeo, here or in Italy, and some from other vendors. The public can buy direct from us by going to our website at alfaromeoinc.com."



Dwight Brubaker points up to where the over 20,000 Maserati parts are kept secure.



Tony DiMuro explains how over 4,000 Alfa parts are stored and that we can shop on-line.

After the tour we went out to the parking lot for the first surprise. There was a hot, new looking, red Alfa spider none of us had seen in real life. It had a triangulated hood bump melding down in to the always triangle grill and, on either side, a trio of menacing looking eyes. It was a Brera Spider. Tony explained it was a 2008 model and the only Brera Spider legal in the U.S. It was brought in as a test bed for Microsoft's "Blue and Me," a Blue Tooth system like Ford's SYNC. In the back lot, still with protective wraps on, were also a 159 berlina and Fiat Punto but Tony brought us the hot spider and dropped the top.

The car has an all aluminum, DOHC head with 24 valves and continuously variable valve timing. It's called the "JTS" which stands for Jet Thrust Stoichiometric; that's Alfa-speak for direct fuel injection. It has a six speed, dual clutch, automatic tranny with paddle shifts on the steering wheel. It develops 256 hp at 6,300 rpm and 237 lb torque at 4,500 rpm. That's enough power to get it to 60 mph in less than 7 seconds on its way to a top speed of just under 150 mph. It weighs in at 3,726 lbs.

"How much?" someone asked. "It sells for around 40,000 EU there which means around \$60,000 here," Tony replied, "but I can't sell it, it isn't permanently legal here."

"What are you going to do with it after the testing is done?" Barry Mann drooled.

"When its visa expires it, along with the other two, will have to be sent back to Italy or crushed," Tony explained.

Then came the second surprise: Tony held up the key and asked, "Who wants to drive it?" John Picot snatched the key like Evan Longoria snatching a line drive and he and Delmas were off. They came back fifteen minutes later with glazed eyes and handed me

the key. Rick Lovecchio and I jumped in and took off with Tony yelling, "Remember, I have to be the one to have it crushed!"

There are a lot of wide, open, empty roads on Saturday in the industrial sprawl around the Orlando airport. I found some long curvy ones. With the shifter on the left side of the pattern the car shifts automatically. With the shifter on the right side it can be over ridden with the paddles. The double clutch, six speed shifted so smoothly we couldn't feel it. The shifter went to the right side right away. I wasn't impressed with the delay in the paddle shifting but then, this was the first paddle shift driving I had ever done. I did like the comfort of the driving wind, a lot less than in my Giulia spider.



Left: menacing, the only legal Brera Spider in the USA.

Right: V6, 24 valve, DOHC, "Jet Thrust Stoichiometric" 256 hp engine.



Then it was Rick's turn. He owns RML Automotive in Daytona Beach where he sells, services and restores Alfas so he's driven a lot more of them than I. He put the pedal to the metal; the LS rear end and big, fat rear tires kept the traction and we were pressed against the seats. The heavy weight per HP kept us from being pressed into them. We were both very impressed with the stopping ability of such a heavy car.

When I got back home to Sarasota, after being drenched and cooled by an afternoon thunder storm south of Tampa, I did some research. The Brera was designed by Giorgetto at Italdesign Giugiaro and first appeared as a concept car at the 2002 Geneva Motor Show. Pininfarina produced 21,786 berlina and berlinettas from 2005-2010 and 12,488 spiders from 2006-2010 in their San Giorgio, Canavese, Italy plant. They were all built on the GM/Fiat Premium platform that was shared with the Alfa 159.

In 2008 a Brera 'S', a special edition, Alfa approved, British only, limited run, was developed by British engineers, Podrive, to address criticism of the handling of the standard car. In 2009 Italia Independent, an Italian design company, teamed with Alfa on a 900 limited edition with "titanium" paint, 18" turbine styled, alloy wheels and an aluminum fuel filler cap. I couldn't find prices for either of those models but neither would be legal here anyway.

The Mid-Florida AROC will surely hold the swap meet again next July. Put it on your calendar. What surprises will Tony have for us then? We're optimistically hoping for a 4C.

