

Iniezione

The newsletter of the Northwest Alfa Romeo Club

Skills and Spills Driving School

Words by Guests
Photos by Gordy Hyde

One of the highlights of NWARC running a Driver Skills School is that it involves a lot of students and volunteers. Lots of people, all having fun while learning something new, and improving safety. All of this sound like wins from my angle. Proving my point will be the feedback from a couple of the students who took either the morning or afternoon classes from this year's event at Monroe Speedway in November. — Fred Russell

Go Faster! By Taylor Russell

Having been a licensed driver for 10 years, I thought I knew everything I needed to know about driving. With a nearly spotless driving record, I thought it a bit useless when I heard my father had signed me up for the NWARC driving school thingy. Still, I agreed to go.

Portentously I pulled into the parking lot of the Monroe Speedway/Fairgrounds to find a

Photo by Paul Affolter



dog show in progress. I decided to skip the class and satiate my love for dogs. My sister, also there to attend the school, managed to pull me away and led me to the chilly room where Mirko Freguia gave us attendees a brief summary of what we were to do



Taylor Russell performs the braking exercise

that day. The diagrams and maneuvers looked intimidating – I, and others, thought for sure we'd accidentally flip our cars, asked clarifying questions about whether or not the volunteers had life insurance policies in place.

With an air of nervous excitement, we all headed to our cars and lined up on the track. In a series of exercises, myself and others learned the fine art of braking, steering, and car control. The rotating rodeo

Mirko explains driver concentration



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Next club events...

- * Holiday Party Dec 13
- * New Years Drive Jan 1
- * Club Meeting Jan 12

Skills School Cont'd...



Tom Anderson puts his GTV-6 through the slalom



of volunteer instructors gave helpful targeted advice to each of us and almost always told us "go faster."

Turns out, I did not actually know everything about driving and there WAS more to learn! I especially loved the slalom where we had to weave through a line of cones as quickly as possible without hitting any. The last exercise involved racing around an oval track and spinning out our back tires – finally we were all feeling much more confident and my sister even did some donuts in her little Ford Focus.



Dave explaining to Madi Russell, no extra charge for taking cones home

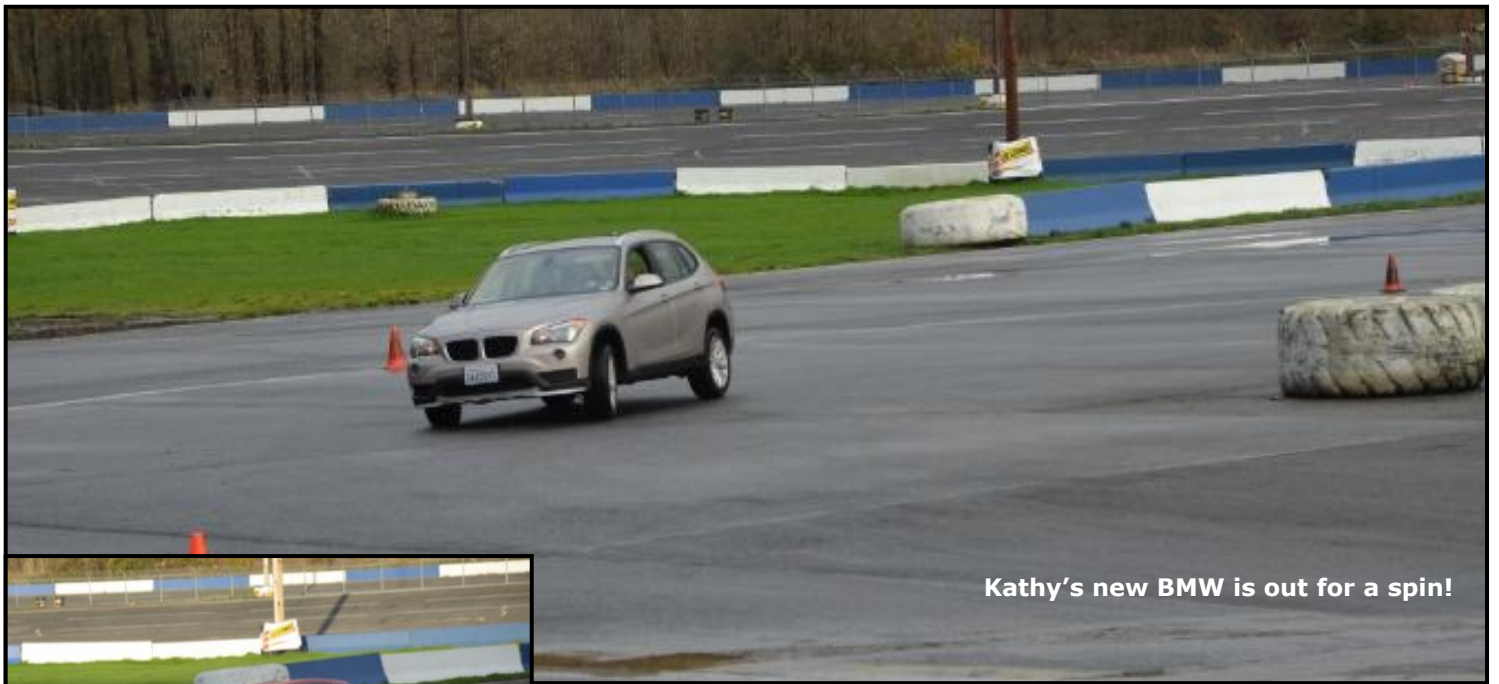
Driven Perspective By Mi Ae Lipe

As a veteran of numerous car control clinics put on by various area auto clubs, I was very impressed—and pleasantly surprised—by the format and content of NWARC's Driver Skills Clinic. It is quite different in that it emphasizes skills strictly for improving street driving, not preparing participants for driving high speeds on a track the way that the others tend to do. In fact, half of the challenge can be to get overconfident drivers out of their mindset of driving as speed and performance; to this end, NWARC instructors are careful not to mention racing-oriented vocabulary such as apexes, drifting, "the line," etc., which helps set a better context for driving safety in both the classroom and on the courses.

The exercises themselves teach many valuable skills, such as the proper use of antilock brakes (ABS) for emergency stopping and how to quickly and safely perform sudden collision-avoidance maneuvers. A central focus



Skills School Cont'd...



Kathy's new BMW is out for a spin!



The editor's daughter, Madi, driving like him.



of all the exercises is teaching drivers to keep their eyes up and looking as far ahead as possible—a very basic skill, but one that is absolutely critical to all safe driving and anticipation of emerging situations that could become life-threatening problems in a split second in the real world. Lockstep with this is smoothness in steering input and vehicle weight transfer (especially apparent in the slalom exercise), the need to be situationally aware, and to make good decisions very quickly while looking at the empty spaces you want to go, not at the hazards you should avoid.

One of the most valuable parts of this clinic is that drivers of all ages and abilities get to know their vehicles (whether it's a Honda Civic, a BMW M3, or a Ford Explorer SUV) by experiencing how they will behave and feel under heavy braking, sharp steering, and less-than-



John Barchasch preparing for ski season



Tom counter steers the lone Alfa

optimal driving conditions. Most people never experience the full effects of their ABS, oversteer, understeer, or sudden weight transfer until they're in an emergency situation, and that is precisely not the time to find out. With the help of NWARC's very skilled and very enthusiastic instructors, this clinic is a great way to explore all of this in a safe, controlled environment—and have a whole lot of fun as well!



It's another column with a wide variety of topics. I'll start with Ben, at Group 2, solving the problem of the Spider spewing its gasoline all over the garage floor. It is back on the road and after last month's column, I didn't want anyone to think I was disparaging Group 2, so I have to report their success. It was certainly a mystery for a long time, though. There was some discussion on the Bulletin Board but no solutions. Group 2 had the spider parked for weeks, but the problem could not be duplicated. Finally, at our November meeting, Octavian Popa, a former but now returning-to-the-fold member suggested replacing the hose next to the fuel pump. It has a braided cover that makes it potentially difficult to detect a leak. When I called Group 2 to ask them to do that, they decided to try one more time to find the leak, pressure tested the system at 95 psi, and found a loose clamp on the return line. They replaced that and hopefully all is well. Now it's time for the usual Alfa refrain, "We shall see."

You will read about it elsewhere in this issue, but I think the Driver Skills School was a huge success. At least I know it was from the viewpoint of a participating family member. Mirko Freguia puts in a tremendous amount of planning and coordinating and I am sure neither he nor his volunteer crew gets the acclimation they deserve. When you see him, be sure to give him a pat on the back.

Speaking of the holiday party, Festa di Amici, I hope you will be there. The location is a nice Italian restaurant, the food is good, and the list of the people already reserving their spaces guarantees it will be a good time. Since this was published prior to the Dec 3 event deadline, if you haven't committed, you should register. I don't know how our host would feel about last-minute additions, but if you read this after Dec 3, give Judy or me a call. We will certainly try to convince him to add you. (See page 3 for more info)

The silent auction is always a large fun part of the experience and good items are coming in for that, too. So far we are getting contributions from publishers, repair facilities, parts suppliers and people like you. The latter is the most important as the most fun and unique items usually come from individuals. They don't have to be Alfa-related, either. Gift baskets, home-made items, services, time at a vacation cabin, etc. are really appreciated. We even received another item as I am writing this. It is more convenient if you can tell us about it before the night of the Festa, but we will certainly welcome items that night too. We'll even arrange pickup if you prefer. Just send an email to bjgehring2@msn.com or give us a call at 425 822 4231.

I haven't seen much new car news this month. Can you believe Alfa already announced a six month delay in selling the Giulia sedan? It seems it is someway



related to the lack of Maserati sales in China. I'm not kidding. At least they had some Quadrifoglios at the LA motor show, claiming a 3.8 second 0-60 time as well as the fastest production sedan to lap the Nurburgring, at 7:39. We're still waiting for news of the commoners' sedan, but I hope they get organized soon, as the 2017 A4, as shown in this month's Car and Driver, may look pretty good. You probably saw pictures of the planned-to-be-Alfa which was changed to the Fiat 124 spider, too. I'm glad it was not an Alfa, as it did not shed its Miata-like proportions. I guess we will just have to keep our spiders on the road, even though the newest ones are over twenty years old.

Bill Gehring
NWARC President



Last Chance to Register for the Festa di Amici!

This is your **last chance** to join your fellow Alfisti for the good food and fun that is our holiday party, Festa di Amici!

The registration is \$50 per person (Club Members & their guests). Sign up at **Motorsportsreg.com** and search for Festa di Amici. (If you don't want to use Motorsportsreg, you can contact **Ron Calkins** to register at **Tip1Ring1@gmail.com**.)



Reminder! If you want to **donate items to the Auction Table** (ie: Alfa books, miniatures, art, services, vacation getaways at your cabin, wine, homemade biscotti or jam... Be creative), contact **Judy at 425 822 4231**.

What: Festa di Amici (NWARC Holiday Gala)

When: December 13, 5:30 PM— 9:30 PM

Where: Marianna Ristorante 310 Wells Ave S Renton, WA 98057

RSVP / Register by Dec 3, Noon at the latest.

Parkside Publications is pleased to announce the publication of

The Magnificent Monopostos

Alfa Romeo Grand Prix Cars, 1923 to 1951

By Simon Moore

Edited and Designed by Malcolm S. Harris



The amazing author, historian, and Alfa Romeo expert, Simon Moore has recently completed his third work on the pre-war Alfa Romeos. His previous books, *The Immortal 2.9* and *The Legendary 2.3* were both exceptional reads and extremely collectable, sharing details of each of the respective cars produced. These books grace the shelves of many great Alfisti homes and won many international awards. (Both still available from Parkside Publications.)

The latest book, **The Magnificent Monopostos, Alfa Romeo Grand Prix Cars, 1923 to 1951**, is now available and focuses on the fantastic Alfa Romeos that dominated racing for so many years. Not only that, you might recognize the Editor and Designer as our own NWARC member, Malcolm Harris! On the little bit I've been able to read, it is a fantastic book so far.

Info about the books at **www.parksidepublications.com** or buy from Simon via e-mail at **gpalfabook@gmail.com**. ISBN number is 978-0-9820774-2-9 (for two volume set in slip case, shipped to the USA = \$490 +/-)



Informazioni Generali

The **Iniezione** is the monthly newsletter of the Northwest Alfa Romeo Club, a non-profit organization of Alfa Romeo enthusiasts. NWARC is a regional chapter of the national Alfa Romeo Owners Club (AROC). Chapter meetings are typically held the second Tuesday of most months except December. Membership dues are \$68 per year, which includes subscriptions to either the digital and/or print versions of the Iniezione and the monthly national publication, *Alfa Owner*. For information about joining the club, contact the membership director listed in the right hand column. Opinions expressed in the Iniezione are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the club. (The author may simply be nuts!) Publication of articles describing technical procedures does not constitute an endorsement by the club, its officers, or AROC. It is the responsibility of the person performing any procedure to accept all consequences of his or her actions. Wouldn't it be nice if everyone would take personal responsibility?

Commercial advertisements in the newsletter are a win! During this tight economy, give your business added exposure while supporting the NWARC. Ad rates are: **5"x8" \$85/Qtrly \$200/Annu 4"x5" \$65/Qtrly \$170/Annu 2"x3.5" \$50/Qtrly \$120/Annu** E-mail a color tif, or pdf file (300 DPI) to **editor@nwalfaclub.com**

To subscribe to the digital newsletter: Send an e-mail to **info-subscribe@nwalfaclub.com** ...then when the automated tool sends you an e-mail message, simply reply to the msg and you're on the list.

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Photo by: Dave Emerson

**VOLUNTEER
POWER!**

Volunteer Corner

Early in November, I was asked to select a member whose contributions to NWARC could not be overlooked and feature that person in a short article thanking them for their voluntary efforts. Selecting a person for this first formal recognition article was easy.

At the NWARC Driver's Skill School on November 15, **Mirko Freguia** not only was Chief Instructor, he did most of the unseen work to reserve the venue, obtain sponsorship to pay for the instructors' lunches, bringing the club trailer with our track supplies, setting up registration through MotorSportsReg, and arranging for instructors and the necessary volunteers to chase cones and other less visible, but necessary chores. In 2013, Mirko and Chris Benny stepped up to co-chair the committee formerly referred to as "Corsa" as it evolved into what we have today. Our chapter began stressing education for everyday driving skills and the reduction of track days. Mirko's enthusiasm for driver education and safety is exemplary. The reasons, I am certain, can be attributed not only to his instructor role at ProFormance Driving School, his "playdays" racing his Milano, but also being the father of two teenage daughters.



Thanks Mirko! For ALL you do voluntarily for the NWARC!

Alfa News

Though the weather in the NW was stormy and amazingly wet on November 15, the same day was sunny and glorious in Palm Springs. That works well for this year's **Desert Concorso** and all the great cars and car fanatics enjoying the day. Our member, Shannon Low was one of those fanatics wandering and he spotted a couple Italian cars. Thanks Shannon!



There is a relatively new brand of miniature cars called **Otto Models**. The owner, Frederick, says he only creates cars in 1/18 scale (about 9 or 10 inches long), in very short run lengths, and made from poly-resin. They are very good, but being "plastic", they don't have opening doors or hoods. They are finished extremely well and are reasonably priced. I've held the "Milano" 75 Turbo Evoluzione, and the Alfesud Sprint in my hands and they are very cool. To check out these and the other Alfa Romeos (147 GTA, and 156 GTA Sportwagen) and the other fun cars they produce, go to Otto-Models.com but be careful, their great cars sell out quickly so if you snooze, your loose. As it's a French company, you'll notice they have a number of fun French cars... and they must love rallying as they have a few eclectic rally cars as well.



Save the Date! Our January club meeting will be on Tuesday, January 12th and we'll be hosted by **Chris Benny** at **Prova Motorsports**. He's been a friend and fan of Alfas and Alfisti for many years and his new business is looking like another step in that passionate path.

The **LA Auto Show** in late November was the launch point for the 505 HP USA version of the amazing Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio. Shannon Low was there, "Alfa Romeo returns in a big way to the USA in the debut of the all new Giulia sedan, all the examples on display had a proper 6-speed manual stick shift!!! Hale the Italian Gods for creating such a beautiful car. A big relief in a crowded segment of boring competitors."



Banner outside one of the buildings.



The new Giulia sits behind the 33 Stradale.

Always Looking For Another? *I Buy Another*

Words and photos
by Don MacKay

It was an impulse purchase. I didn't need a new car. However, the opportunity to acquire a brand new Alfa for the equivalent of \$24,733 USD was more than I could resist. That price doesn't tempt you? How about \$21,509 USD?

Those were the choices in Mexico in June and later in August 2015 as the dollar rose sharply relative to the peso.

The car in question appears in the photo above. It's the 2015 Alfa Romeo MiTo Quadrifoglio Verde Speciale. If you didn't need a sunroof, a premium sound system, leather seats, or 18 inch wheels, you could opt for the "Progressive Luxury" version for the equivalent of \$21,178 USD in June and then the equivalent of \$18,618 USD by August.

Yes, you could buy a 2015 Alfa for less than \$20,000 USD!

But the soaring dollar isn't what got me into the showroom initially. As we passed the Alfa dealer in June, Patricia noted a factory sale in progress. If you have followed Alfas for any time, you know that is a rare event.

Once inside, we discovered the "sale" only amounted to the equivalent of a \$2,000 USD reduction. Still, I had recently celebrated my 75th birthday and Patricia suggested I gift myself with a new Alfa.

Even though the reviews of the MiTo aren't very favorable, I didn't need much convincing. I've owned more than a half a dozen Alfas over the years. So, I bought another. An elevated dollar helped make it possible, but nostalgia sealed the deal.

Still, the truth is I would have preferred a Guilietta. I fancied its styling and larger size. However, there were two issues: (1) horsepower and (2) price.

While I forgot to tell her that the Alfa had a better power to weight ratio, I explained to Patricia that, with displacement of only 1368cc's and 170 hp. the MiTo had less horsepower than the Jetta we were diving. She liked that idea. I knew the 1742 cc's and 237 hp. of Guilietta would seriously dampen her enthusiasm.

What dampened mine was the equivalent of an \$8,200 USD price bump, or 33%, more for the Guilietta. So, picking the MiTo was easy. In a bow to Alfa folklore, we christened the car, "Junior."

What are my impressions after a few of months of ownership?

It's very rare. Alfa returned to México in 2012 and I live in a large city with a dealer, who claims to sell nearly twenty Alfas a year. Yet, my sightings of MiTo's are limited to four, including my car.

It's small. You are all familiar with the 105/115 GTV, so let's compare to that favorite. The MiTo is about 10% wider and taller with a wheelbase 7% longer. Still, the cockpit seems narrow. As I go through the gears I intrude slightly on the space of the passenger. It's a tight fit for the two (in Europe, they squeeze in three!) rear passengers, but they enjoy more space and easier access than they would in a GTV. They should. After all, the MiTo is a hatchback, not the graceful notchback of the GTV. At 277 cubic liters, the trunk of the Mito is barely adequate. By comparison, a GTV has 320 cubic liters. Fortunately, the trunk space of the MiTo can be significantly expanded by moving the rear seatback forward.

It's agile and the engine is wonderfully matched to a 6 speed manual transmission. With 184 lbs. of torque at 2500 rpm, the engine pulls strongly at low rpm. It prefers life above 3,000 rpm, but a rev limiter stops the fun at 6,000 rpm. The ride is precise and on the firm side. The exhaust note is satisfying and hints at a tone that should improve with age.

Rear vision is poor. The rear side windows don't provide adequate visibility for the driver and the large head rests in the front impede side and rear views. Thankfully, the door mirrors provide a wonderful panoramic rear view that partially offsets the poor vision from within.

It gets great gas mileage, as you would expect from a small displacement engine. I am averaging about 23 mpg in mainly city driving and the engine isn't broken in yet. With the Jetta I got 17 mpg.

The front seat belts are a problem. They are located out of easy reach. You must strain behind to reach them. That is just the start of the trouble. When released, the latch plate of the seat belt scores the door panel as it retracts. With time this will scar the panel. In fact, it has already started. On the 8C Competizione, Alfa had straps affixed to the seat top that snapped in place over the belt to arrest its retraction. I have seen a similar solution on other cars. The MiTo has been in production since 2007. Why hasn't the issue been addressed?

It has many gadgets: a switch to adjust the headlights depending on the load in the car; headlights that come on automatically in a darkened parking garage; wipers activated by the rain; a start/stop system only the Italians could have



2015 MiTo



The author in "Junior"

Another Cont'd...

invented; and so on. There is a "hill-holder" that holds the car stationary on slopes as you move your foot from the brake to the accelerator. The best gadget of all is the DNA system. With that you can dial in the performance character you want. "D" is Dynamic, or hot rod mode. "N" is Normale. "A" is all weather for snow and ice—something I'm unlikely to need in Querétaro.

It's styling is distinctive and perhaps the car's strongest point. The Alfa 8C Competizione served as the styling inspiration for the MiTo. While I love the front-end, I don't like the huge bug-eyed tail-lights of the MiTo. At 7 inches in diameter, they are the size of headlights and, in my opinion, out of proportion to the diminutive size of the car. See below photo.



Bug-eyed rear-end of "Junior"

So, while Junior has some warts, I am pleased with my purchase and it is a joy to be driving an Alfa again. I sold the Jetta, so Junior is our only car and its small size makes it a bit impractical. Friends think—as well they should-- I am eccentric to choose a small sports car as my sole transport for my old age.

If I were to do it again, I'd opt for the lower cost version of the car. That would have saved some money, but more importantly have given me 45 aspect tires on 17 in. rims instead of 40 aspect tires on 18 in. rims. The problem was I didn't like the styling of the 17 in. wheels. This is my first experience with ultra-low profile tires. They don't do well in Mexico's pot-holed streets. I think more tire height would offer better protection.

Next, I need to accustom myself to the requests of admirers to photograph the car.

Feel free to address your thoughts or questions to: dmexs@yahoo.com

Classified Ads Cars & Parts For Sale!



Car For Sale: 1975 Alfa Romeo Spider Very solid, straight, complete... It has a clear, original title, no rust on body except the bottom of the spare tire well which obviously trapped water and rusted out. Rockers, fenders, floorpans are all solid. Back in 2008, the owner took out the engine and then had the head & valves redone at Westbay in Port Orchard. Owner never put the engine back in, though its reassembled and all reassembly parts are included. Car has been repainted but it wasn't the best prep and the paint needs redoing. Top looks pretty good but needs a rear window. Let me know your thoughts or questions. \$1000 delivered to you, or best offer. **Call Tom at 360 355 8774**



Parts For Sale: Make an offer on Dellorto carbs with or without key parts, an oil pan from something soon after 101, some starter motors, a generator, a fly wheel presumable from 101 series car and center console. Call **Fred R at 425 308 6621** with your wish list.

Parts For Sale: 3 new '78-79 Alfetta Sedan doors with factory stickers on them. Also for sale- a 3L block for Milano/GTV6 new. Must sell-make offers. **Call Peter in Seattle at 239-292-4838.**

Wheels For Sale: 4 Alloy 5 spoke wheels from a 1985 Spider. These look really nice! **\$300**
Call Jeff at 206 300 6468

New Year's Anti Football Drive Friday, January 1st

Our annual drive has turned out to be a popular event, and why not? It gathers a bunch of nice people with a great bunch of cars to enjoy an off season wander around the Pacific Northwest. This year, we do it again and we'll explore the twisty roads of the Kitsap Peninsula, enjoy a lunch in Poulsbo, enjoy a scenic ferry ride, and still be home in time for a little football.

We'll gather just south of Southcenter Mall at the **Starbucks Super Center, 17480 Southcenter Pkwy, Tukwila WA 98188**. To find this start point, head south of the Southcenter / Westfield Mall on Southcenter Parkway, and turn left at the traffic light at "17500 Block", and find the Starbucks right next to Old Navy. Most of the area stores will be closed on New Year's morning so gathering for a coffee and driver meeting around 8:30 AM should be easy.

After handing out the route guides, going over a couple details, **we'll head out at 9 AM** heading south. Following smaller roads, we'll pass through Federal Way, Fife, Tacoma, Ruston, and across the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. Next, we'll stop in Gig Harbor before wandering backroads on the Kitsap Peninsula on our way north.

With traffic lighter than a normal Friday, or even a normal weekend, we'll drive through Bremerton, across the Manette Bridge, and up through the tiny communities with great names like Illahee, Gilberton, and Brownsville. We'll aim for a lunch stop in the town protected by the 12 foot tall Viking statue; Poulsbo. A few places, like Boehm's Chocolates, will be closed this day, but many other stores, coffee houses, and restaurants will be open so we can each go to the diner that fits us best... including the famous Poulsbo Bakery.

After lunch, we'll gather at the Poulsbo Heritage Center and with a small donation (\$5 per person holiday rate?) we can tour and learn about the history of the area and its strong Norwegian ties. The Maritime Museum may also be open for us, but we're still working that detail.

Once we've worn out our welcome, we have two return options: Option 1 includes back roads through Suquamish, past the Chief Seattle (Sealth) burial site, then north and east through Indianola on our way to the Kingston Ferry dock and finally, Edmonds. Option 2 takes us across the Agate Pass bridge onto Bainbridge Island where we can enjoy the wooded, twisty roads as we head towards Eagle Harbor and the Seattle ferry into downtown.

Of course, we can't control the weather but our record is fantastic so far and the mix of cars is worth the efforts to tag along. See you there!



Member Recommendation!

Have a parts or service provider you have found to be highly satisfactory? Share your wisdom at casekb@msn.com. With your help, we can all be better automotive consumers.

Muffler King - Kirkland Custom exhaust services

Dent Solutions, Mobile - Paintless dent removal 206 890 6456

Burien Upholstery, Burien - Upholstery, carpets

Classic Interior Restorations, Seattle - Headliners, seat coverings and seat rebuilds

Mark 2 Collision Center, Lynnwood - Collision repair

North Kitsap Auto Rebuilt, Poulsbo - Collision repair

Professional Glass Company, Seattle - Windshield Replacement

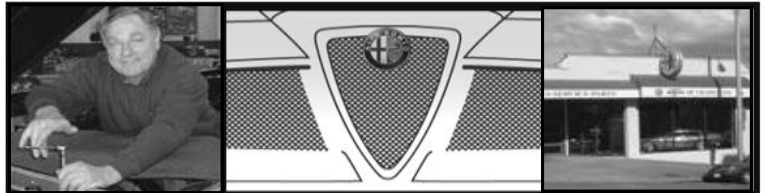
Security Safe & Lock, Inc., Bellevue - Lock rebuilding

Speedometer Service, Portland - Speedometer and tachometer repair and calibration

Tire Rack Internet - Tires, wheels and parts

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All the providers listed were recommended by one or more club members as being highly satisfactory but are not specifically endorsed by NWARC.



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2015 / 2016 Calendar of Club & Local Car Events

- **Dec 13** **NWARC Holiday Gala** Festa di Amici (See more info on page 3)
 Marianna's Ristoranti Renton
- **Jan 1** **NWARC Anti-Football New Year's Drive** (See more info on page 10)
- **Jan 12** **NWARC Club Meeting** Prova Motorsports **Seattle**
- **Feb 9** **NWARC Club Meeting** Wild About Cars Garage **Kirkland**
- **Mar 16** **NWARC Driver Skills School**
 Monroe (Evergreen Speedway)
- April 17 FEN All Italian Car Show Triple X Drive In Issaquah, WA
- **June 13-20** **AROC Nat'l Convention** **Nashville TN**
- July 17 Ducati / All Things Italian Show Summerian Brewery, Woodinville

Event ideas?

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*Sitting on American soil... the 2016 Alfa Romeo Quadrifoglio on display at the LA Auto Show.
Photo by Shannon Low.*