

Alfa Romeo Association

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

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The Alfa Romeo Association (ARA) is dedicated to the ownership, maintenance, preservation, operation, and enjoyment of the wonderful vehicles produced by Alfa Romeo. The ARA is based in the greater San Francisco Bay Area of California, but welcomes members from everywhere.

Alfa Romeo Association PO Box 1458 Alameda, CA 94501

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**On the Front Cover** Alfas in the 1000 Miglia 2020 Photo © francescophoto/123RF.COM On the Back Cover Tipo 33 TT12 motor at the Museo Storico Alfa Romeo Photo by Bob Goldberg

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# **The Steering Column**

It's still wet, one has to admit, but ARAers are not letting that detail dampen their desire for fun and frolic on the highways and byways of our wonderful home turf here in NorCal. Clichés aside, the evidence of alfisti ardor for driving enjoyment was clear again on last month's "rain or shine" Green Hills of Earth tour, led as always by the indefatigable Hutson Hart, ARA's tenacious Membership Director. This year's exquisite tour escaped any suggestion of atmospheric moisture up until the tour's very end at our lunch stop, thereby providing participants a splendid drive through Marin, Sonoma and Napa Counties before sending us all on a rather soggy drive home afterwards. (See recap in this issue.)

Weather has been a bit of a challenge for car enthusiasts this year to be sure, but local reservoirs have been the obvious beneficiaries, so it's easy to see the obvious bright side of the recent patterns. And things are starting to look clearer and sunnier by the week, so we can start marking our calendars for upcoming events.

First up is the "Through the Woods To The Ocean" West Bay drive on March 9, which will led by Board Secretary Andre Adamski. ARA is then invited to join with DSARC on April 6 for their One-Day Gold Country Driving Tour; this joint event will include a lovely morning drive through the Eldorado Hills Gold Country, starting in Granite Bay and finishing with a midday lunch at the Moonraker Millhouse Restaurant in Cameron Park. Continuing in April, the Spring Fling South Bay drive ramps up on April 20.

May gets even busier, starting on May 11 with the next installment of the now-annual joint ARA/SFIAC 3-part event: The Club will again pair up with the San Francisco Italian-American Club for a short drive from the Marin Headlands (or from the South Bay to SF for those coming from that vicinity) to Washington Square in North Beach, SF, where we'll have a show on the closed street in front of the Club followed by a terrific Italian buffet lunch. Next, Dick Gale reprises his famous One Lap of Marin drive on May 18. Then, for AROC members who are really ambitious, there's the national AROC convention in Petoskey, Michigan if you want to mix with alfisti from parts near and far.

The summer promises lots more fun, including Blackhawk cars & coffee (June 22), One Lap of the South Bay (July 20), a return to the Mozart Collection (July 27), and Monterey Car Week August 11-18). Details for many of these events can now be found on the website events pages; some events, however, are still in development and so information will be posted there in the near future as details are finalized. Meanwhile, mark your calendars and be sure to check back on the website if the event you're looking for isn't up yet.

One avenue we're pursuing for the future is combining ARA activities with other car clubs, something we've done in the past to a limited degree. Putting different clubs together for drives, tech sessions or other events is always a great way to expand our knowledge of and appreciation for classic (and also newer) cars, so we hope to coordinate more such happenings. I'm talking now with the Northern California MG folks about pairing up for something in the coming months. (As it happens, I have skin in the game on both fronts and am looking forward to showing up with my '58 MGA in order to revel in the recent completion of a conversion from the stock transmission to a new 5-speed gear-box.)

We'll keep you posted as all these plans develop, of course, so check the Cams calendar and the website events pages for the latest. This is gonna be another great year of Alfa hijinks!

Andiamo!



#### MONTEREY COUNTY NIMBYS

We live in an era of NIMBYism. No one wants anything in their backyard or even within a kilometer from their backyard. The latest NIMBY action of interest is the lawsuit filed by the Highway 68 Coalition in Monterey County who want to shut down Laguna Seca. Seriously.

(This group shares some of the blame for the stupid configuration of Hwy 68 which has two westbound lanes merge into one that makes it oh-so-much-fun to drive to Monterey and Carmel. This group was formed in 1974 to oppose the expansion of Hwy 68 into an expressway.)

Hagerty recently published an article not just dripping but overflowing with sarcasm about this lawsuit. The article has a wonderful title: *"Laguna Seca Lawsuit: Homeowners Perplexed as Iconic Race Track Materializes Overnight"* (www.hagerty.com/ media/opinion/laguna-seca-lawsuit-homeowners-perplexed-as-iconic-race-track-materializes-overnight/).

"Imagine the shock if, after moving into your home, you discover that a popular and world-renowned race track had materialized overnight in your general vicinity. The horror. You'd rightfully be confused, possibly even enraged at such a happening, and keen to pursue a lawsuit. Believe it or not, this is exactly the phenomenon that unfolded recently. Based on our deepest reporting capabilities, we can find no evidence that WeatherTech Raceway at Laguna Seca ever existed before 2023.

As expected, this sudden and unexpected conjuring has local residents incensed, as the noise and traffic from the venue came out of nowhere and was a shock to those who had moved into the area over the preceding handful of years. Naturally, residents have banded together to get rid of this nuisance that definitely has not been in the same location since 1957. The group, the Highway 68 Coalition, filed suit against Monterey County, which operates the fledgling track, on December 12, 2023, seeking to curtail racing at the venue."

So, what's this lawsuit really about? Money. Should the coalition's lawsuit prevail every house along the Hwy 68 corridor would immediately get a boost in valuation.

I speak from experience having lived for decades in houses located near "nuisances." My house in Illinois was right across the street from the village swimming pool, which yielded noise during the summer along with the added joy of other people's cars blocking my driveway. My California house was two houses away from a Hwy 85 sound wall, so it suffered from both road noise and dust. Both were known nuisances, and the houses were priced accordingly. We understood the impact of the nuisances before buying these houses. And, yes, my kids enjoyed the public swimming pool.

What I cannot countenance is the lack of honesty from this coalition. Their lawsuit surely brims with weasel words that cannot mask that these people are just trying to game the system for financial benefit. Shame on them.

#### MARCH EAST BAY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Ed Adams continues to schedule great speakers for the East Bay Membership meetings. This month he has arranged for Ivan Zaremba to speak. Those of you who attended the Phil Reilly and Company tech session some years ago will remember Ivan as being a fount of car knowledge.

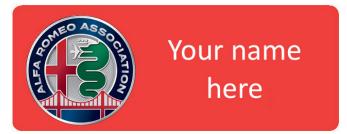
**Important**! North Beach Pizza, the site of the club's East Bay meetings, has moved to a new location. Their new address is 2420 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley.



# **Club Merchandise Available in the ARA Store**

Click any photo below to be taken to the merchandise page in the club's online store. The new club keychain, *top right*, is now available.











## **ARA Monthly Meetings**

The club typically meets at 8 PM on the first

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### **ARA Membership**

### Welcome new members

Bryan M Ballard, Garla Kay Ballard James R Chaskin, Chris Harges Kimberly Merritt, Oscar V Mulder Alexander Rudeen, Simon Timms Dennis P Towne

### Thank you to renewing members

Mari R Balestrazzi, Suzan Brucato David Buchanan. Audrie Court, Greg Court Robert E Dyer, Paolo J Giordano Adam Gochnauer, Kurt Guttenberg Joe Hensler, Lawrence P Meyer, Susan Mueller David Perry, Linda Perry Mel S Ryan-Roberts, Sarah Ryan-Roberts James Treadwell, David Van Lue Jack Weldon

# **ARA Tech Support Lines**

Jim Allen • Nipomo, CA 750, 101, 102 and 106 series cars (805) 929-6113; evening answering machine

Wes Ingram • Burlington, WA Spica fuel injection (360) 707-5701; wing@nwlink.com

Tom Sahines • Milpitas, CA Giuletta and Giulia cars Mon to Fri: 12 noon–9pm (408) 262-6279; tsahines@gmail.com

> Remember that our tech team members are volunteers.

Please respect their time and thank them for all they do for the ARA!





Click on this page to go the club's online calendar. See the following pages for direct links to specific events.

		1		1		
January		February		March		
13 13	Annual Meeting & Members Lunch [Sunnyvale] DSARC Annual Meeting &	6 18	ARA NorthBay Members Mtg Green Hills of Earth Tour/Lunch	5 9	ARA EastBay Members Mtg West Bay Through the Woods to the Ocean Drive	
	Holiday Pot-Luck Dinner [Sacramento]					
21	Q1 ARA Board of Directors Mtg					
April		Мау		June		
2 6 20	ARA SouthBay Members Mtg DSARC One Day Driving Tour Spring Fling South Bay Drive	7 11 12 18 28-Jun2	ARA NorthBay Members Mtg ARA-SFIAC Tour and Lunch [SF] Q2 ARA Board of Directors Mtg One Lap of Marin AROC National Convention/ Tours [Petoskey, Michigan]	22	ARA EastBay Members Mtg AROC Goes to Italy #7 Blackhawk Cars and Coffee Northwest Classic Rally [Oregon]	
July		August		September		
2 20 tbd 27	ARA SouthBay Members Mtg One Lap of South Bay Drive Summer Party [Roaring Camp Rail- road - Santa Cruz Mtns - tbd] Mozart Collection Tour [tentative]	6 11 11–18 17 17	ARA NorthBay Members Mtg Q3 ARA Board of Directors Mtg Monterey Car Week +++ Concorso Italiano [pending] Post-Concorso Dinner [pending]	3 7 21-22 29	ARA EastBay Members Mtg East Bay Drive [tbd] DSARC Overnight Driving Tour [tbd] All Italian Day Car/Motorcycle Show [SONC benefit event!]	
21		17				
October		November		December		
1 18–20 20	ARA SouthBay Members Mtg AROC Goes to USGP COTA [Texas] Members Lunch Social [tentative]	5 16 17 21-23	ARA NorthBay Members Mtg Patrick Ottis Shop Tour [tbd] Q4 ARA Board of Directors Mtg USGP LasVegas [Nevada]	8	ARA 2024 Holiday Luncheon [tbd]	



# **2024 Monthly ARA Member Meetings**

- Location, registration, and speaker information vary by meeting.
- Updates will be posted in both future issues of *Cams* and on the club's website, but please check the website for the latest info about an upcoming meeting.
- Some months may have two meetings running concurrently in different regions.

### January/April/July/October

### South Bay Membership Meetings [ARA]

Tuesday evenings\*: January 13<sup>th</sup> [\* lunch], April 2<sup>nd</sup>, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, October 1<sup>st</sup>

Location: Giovanni's New York Pizzeria, 1127 Lawrence Expwy, Sunnyvale

Registration is not required.

Questions? Please contact Kurt Delimon at <u>kurt@alfaromeoassociation.org</u>.

### February/May/August/November

### North Bay Membership Meetings [ARA]

Tuesday evenings: February 6th, May 7th, August 6th, November 5th

Location: Aurora Ristorante Italiano, 8 Commercial Blvd A, Novato

Registration is strongly encouraged but not strictly required. Questions? Please contact J. Hutson Hart at <u>memberships@alfaromeoassociation.org</u>.

### March/June/September

### East Bay Membership Meetings [ARA]

#### Tuesday evenings: March 5th, June 6th, September 5th

Location: North Beach Pizza, 2420 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley

Registration is requested due to the layout of the new location. Questions? Please contact Bill DeGolia at <u>vp@alfaromeoassociation.org</u>.





# **Event Details**

### **March**

### **East Bay Membership Meeting**

5<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) 6:30 рм – 9 рм Location: North Beach Pizza, 2420 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley [map <u>here</u>] North Beach Pizza has a new address!

The speaker for the March meeting will be Ivan Zaremba, who will talk about racing with Alfa Romeos.

Ivan bought his first Alfa in the early 1960s and since then Italian cars and racing have been a big part of his life. He worked at Griswold's in Berkeley and at Phil Reilly and Company in Marin. Ivan has worked on, driven, and raced the best Italian cars.

At our meeting Ivan will talk about his experiences with Alfas. Ivan has been associated with the supercharged road cars of the 1930s and the GP cars of the late 1940s/early 1950s. He has worked on these cars, sourced rare parts, test driven them, dealt with the owners, and raced the fabulous cars produced by Alfa Romeo This will be an evening of stories about the cars, the drivers, the racers, and the people who keep racing these cars today.

Registration is requested <u>here</u> so as to have a count of attendees for the new location. Organizers: Ed Adams and Bill DeGolia.

Questions: Please contact Bill DeGolia at vp@alfaromeoassociation.org.



### **March**

### West Bay "Through The Woods To The Ocean" Drive

### 9<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) 9:00 АМ – 1:00 РМ

START Location: Los Gatos Shopping Center, Starbucks/Aldo's Cafe, 440/442 N. Santa Cruz Ave., Los Gatos, CA 95030

We will meet in the parking lot outside the Starbucks/Aldo's Cafe at 8:30 am.

At 9:00 am we will leave the parking lot and start the drive, heading towards Los Gatos-Saratoga Road and then turning right onto Los Gatos-Saratoga Rd. and drive for 3.6 miles. We will turn left to CA-9/Big Basin Way and drive for 7.3 miles. Next, we will turn slightly to CA-35S/Skyline Blvd. and drive 13.6 miles to Portola Valley to CA-84W/La Honda Rd. We will make a left turn by Alice's Restaurant and continue to go through La Honda and San Gregorio towards HWY 1. At the end of CA-84W, we will turn left on HWY 1 and head south for about 15 miles to Davenport.

At the Davenport intersection, we will turn into the parking lot by the Roadhouse Restaurant, where we will have lunch. This is our final destination point, and you are welcome to return home on whichever route you choose.

• Advance registration for this event is required. Please register <u>HERE</u>

Questions? Please contact Andre Adamski at andre\_adamski@yahoo.com



### <u>April</u>

### **DSARC One-Day Driving Tour** – Eldorado Hills

#### 6<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

START Location: Granite Bay Village Shopping Center, Dutch Bros Coffee, 8663 Auburn Folsom Rd., Granite Bay, CA 95746 ---- Google Maps link <u>HERE</u>

This will be a lovely morning Spring drive through the Eldorado Hills Gold Country, starting in Granite Bay and finishing at 12:30 at the Moonraker Millhouse Restaurant in Cameron Park for lunch. There is no cost for the tour and the lunch will be on your own. The day will end after lunch around 2:00.

NOTE: All attendees must **RSVP** by Thursday, April 4 to Mary Ann Dickinson at <u>mary-ann@dickinsonassociates.com</u> so that we can get a final count for lunch.



### Annual Spring Fling Drive [ARA] - BACK FOR 2024!

#### 20<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) 8:30 AM – 1:00 PM

START Location: Los Gatos Shopping Center, Starbucks/Aldo's Cafe, 440/442 N. Santa Cruz Ave., Los Gatos, CA 95030 ---- Google Maps link <u>HERE</u>

We will meet in the parking lot outside the Starbucks/Aldo's Cafe at 8:00 am and head out for the traditional Spring Fling Tour at 8:30 am..

This driving tour will start from the Los Gatos Shopping Center parking lot to Gilroy on winding South Bay roads.

The first stop will be Sierra Azul at Jaques Ridge - Mt. Umunhum parking lot.

The second stop will be at the Uvas Reservoir. From there, we will drive to Gilroy. the final destination is Mamma Mia's Restaurant parking lot at 1360 1st Street, Gilroy.

Advance registration is required. Please register on our website HERE.

Questions? Please contact Andre Adamski at <u>andre \_adamski@yahoo.com</u>





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# **Green Hills of Earth Tour**

This Winter has been mixture of crazy storms and brilliant sparkling breaks. The Alfa Gods again smiled upon us, so we were once again blessed with a magical rain-free interlude for the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Green Hills of Earth Tour. On February 18<sup>th</sup> we ran this year's tour again through the rustic valleys and ridge tops of Napa and Sonoma counties. As much as ever, the hills this year were green indeed! I was particularly pleased to see the burnscar recovery progressing very well across the Capell and Pope Valleys above Napa and Lake Hennessy.

We had a smaller turnout than some years past, which I suspect was due to the aggressive Winter we've been having. But as it happened the group that did bring their cars out enjoyed it very much. There were no mishaps, breakdowns, or off-*pista* excursions. And only one near-miss with a deer crossing in front of a Spider!!! We had great luck keeping the group together this year, had literally zero traffic, motorcycle or bicycle, to contend with, and almost perfect roads all the way.

Afterwards we enjoyed a fabulous lunch at what I think will prove to be a favorite stop in Petaluma, Acre Pizza. The heavens did indeed open and bring the rain again during the lunch break. For the most part we all remembered to close our windows.





I trust we all had a safe, albeit wet, return to our dry garages afterwards!

If you missed the event this year, do catch the next tour or event on the Club calendar. We hope to see you on the roads of Northern California, and next year on the Green Hills of Earth Tour! *cams* 







# New Alfa Romeo Logos

Alfa Romeo begins 2024 by celebrating two very important anniversaries. This vear is the 70th of the Giulietta Sprint. unveiled in 1954, as well as the 50th of the 1974 Alfetta GT. These much-loved and commercially successful models that —each in their own way—tell the story of two extraordinary times in Italian automotive history. The beloved Giulietta Sprint, a romantic legend of a car nicknamed "la fidanzata d'Italia" ('Italy's girlfriend'), was the epitome of the stylistic mastery of Bertone and its designer Franco Scaglione. The iconic Alfetta GT, a coupé based on the Alfetta designed by master of style Giorgetto Giugiaro, was a commercial success and a milestone in the brand's history.

To mark the occasion the Alfa Romeo Centro Stile pays tribute by creating two official logos, with minimalistic and elegant lines to retrace the hallmarks of both icons of their eras. Their aim is to make them emblems of the cars that have taken their rightful place in the collective unconscious, as icons of functional beauty and noble Italian sportiness

The Alfa Romeo Museum in Arese will celebrate the two anniversaries with dedicated events, where fans will take part in parades, 'backstage' lectures and much more. The culmination of the celebrations









will take place during the unmissable third Tribe Days (October 5-6) at the Mugello circuit.

#### CELEBRATIONS AT THE ALFA ROMEO MUSEUM

The Alfa Romeo Museum in Arese has already scheduled two events to celebrate these major anniversaries. The context is Backstage, a series of lectures begun in 2018 to explore Alfa Romeo history using unpublished materials from the Documentation Center and testimonials from the historians, designers, test drivers, and mechanics who played an active role in or had in-depth knowledge of that car or project.

On Sunday, May 5, the spotlight will be on the Alfetta GT, with the Giulietta's turn coming on June 2. The lectures will take place in the Museum's Giulia Hall, preceded by a parade to which owners of that specific Alfa Romeo model are invited. The full schedule of Backstage lectures will be posted on <u>museoalfaromeo.com</u> soon.

The third Tribe Days will definitely be the pinnacle of the celebrations. A unique event aimed at all four-wheel enthusiasts: *Alfisti* fans and others, clubs, collectors, enthusiasts, the merely curious, all united by their passion for the brand.

#### HISTORY OF THE TWO CARS

**Giulietta Sprint (1954).** The car that marked Alfa Romeo's transformation into a major automotive industry was undoubtedly the Giulietta, "Italy's girlfriend". In 1952, Alfa Romeo production was focusing solely on the 1900, so the idea of a more modern car with a more limited displacement made headway.

Having discarded the initial plans for a 350-cc small car, and for another 750-cc front-wheel drive model (although the code 750 would also be used in later projects), by August 1952 it was clear that the car's layout would be conventional, with a front engine and rear-wheel drive. Within a year, the first prototype took to the road, a compact coupé created by Ivo Colucci's bodywork department, equipped with a 1100-cc four-cylinder twin-cam light alloy engine. Its displacement was then increased to 1300 (1290 cc). With a single-barrel carburetor, it delivered 65 hp, for a top speed of 165 km/h, but at the end of its career, with the latest evolution in 1958 and a twin-body carburetor, its power rose to 79 hp, running



at up to 170 km/h. The gearbox and differential housing were also made of aluminum. The drum brakes, with their helical fins, were based on the 1900's.

In early 1954, the mechanics were on the home stretch, but only sketches and a few rudimentary prototypes of the body survived. However, Finmeccanica announced the delivery of a certain number of units to selected shareholders. The impasse was resolved by Rudolf Hruska, recently called on by Giuseppe Luraghi to reorganize the plant with the aim of producing 50 Giulietta cars per day: an external coachbuilder would assemble a small series of coupé versions to be delivered to shareholders while they waited for the sedan. After initial mistrust, the Alfa Romeo-led IRI accepted the proposal: the sketches were presented by Boneschi, Boano and Bertone. The latter, assisted by designer Franco Scaglione, then came up with a compact and well-proportioned car, with minimalistic, refined and sporty lines: the Giulietta Sprint.

The car was unveiled at the Turin Motor Show on April 21, 1954, but two weeks earlier, a preview was held in the courtyard at Portello for insiders and authorities: two actors jumped out of a helicopter dressed as Shakespeare's Romeo and ... Juliet.

The Giulietta made its mark on sales as soon as it was introduced. A few days later, orders had to be suspended; the plant was already overrun. As well as the sporty and successful lines, its success was down to



performance, putting the car at a level that had not been seen before in its category and undermining competitors in a much higher class.

This would become the turning point for Alfa Romeo, the dawn of a great automotive industry. Production of the Giulietta in its various versions continued for 11 years: a total of 177,513 units were made, 24,084 of which were the Sprint.

Alfetta GT (1974). The launch of the Alfetta was followed two years later by a coupé version, assigned with the unenviable task of replacing the legendary, best-selling Bertone coupé, designed by Giorgetto Giugiaro in 1963 as a sports version of the Giulia. However, the wheelbase of the Alfetta GT 1.8 was shortened by 110 mm and the suspension was sportier. The bodywork was still designed by Giugiaro—who by then had set up his own business, Italdesign—according to very modern standards, already partly anticipated with a prototype from a few years earlier, based on the 1750 GTV: hatchbacks with a fastback tail that ended very high up with a hint of a spoiler. The lines were taut and angular; the front, with four recessed headlights, was low and assertive. Actually, the Alfa Romeo Centro Stile had already clearly left its mark in the





design. The driver's seat also reflected the sporty tone, with its low, relaxed position and single instrument—a large speedometer—in front of the driver. The tachometer and secondary instruments were in the middle of the dashboard.

The Alfetta GT, however, was intended as more of a grand tourer than an extreme

sports car, with great attention paid to practicality: there was enough space inside for four people, the rear windows could be wound down, and the large trunk was easily accessible via the tailgate.

As soon as 1975, the mechanics of the Alfetta GT would already be modified slightly, from 122 hp at 5500 rpm to 118 hp at 5300 rpm. One year later came the debuts of an entry-level version, with a 109-hp 1.6 engine (only produced until 1980) and simplified specifications, and of the GTV (GTS in the UK market) with a two-liter engine.

Production ended in 1986, after 136,275 units of the various versions had rolled out of the factory. *cams* 





# 1973 Giulia Super Euro 1.6L

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# Museo Fisogni

Guido Fisogni has amassed a huge collection of gas station artifacts on display in his eponymous museum. How large? Thousands of items, including gas pumps, nozzles, signs, models, oil and gas cans, toys, etc. His collection of 164 gas pumps has been recognized by the Guinness World Records as the "Largest collection of Gasoline Pumps."

Signor Fisogni's business was building gas stations, thereby providing access to these items, and he started his museum in 1966. The museum currently occupies an entire wing of his lovely house in Turate, Italy, a town northwest of Milan. While having a delightful conversation mostly in English with a bit of Italian, Signora Fisogni told me that the house had been in the family for a few centuries. (Previously the museum was in Palazzolo Milanese, an area in northern Milan, not far from Monza.)

Many more photos of the museum can be seen in their wonderful virtual tour at <u>museo-fisogni.org/en/</u>. Note that the museum is open by appointment only. The museum has also published a second edition of its catalog.

Elisabetta Cozzi gets a big thank you for recommending this museum to me during a visit to *Museo Fratelli Cozzi* last June. *cams* 

















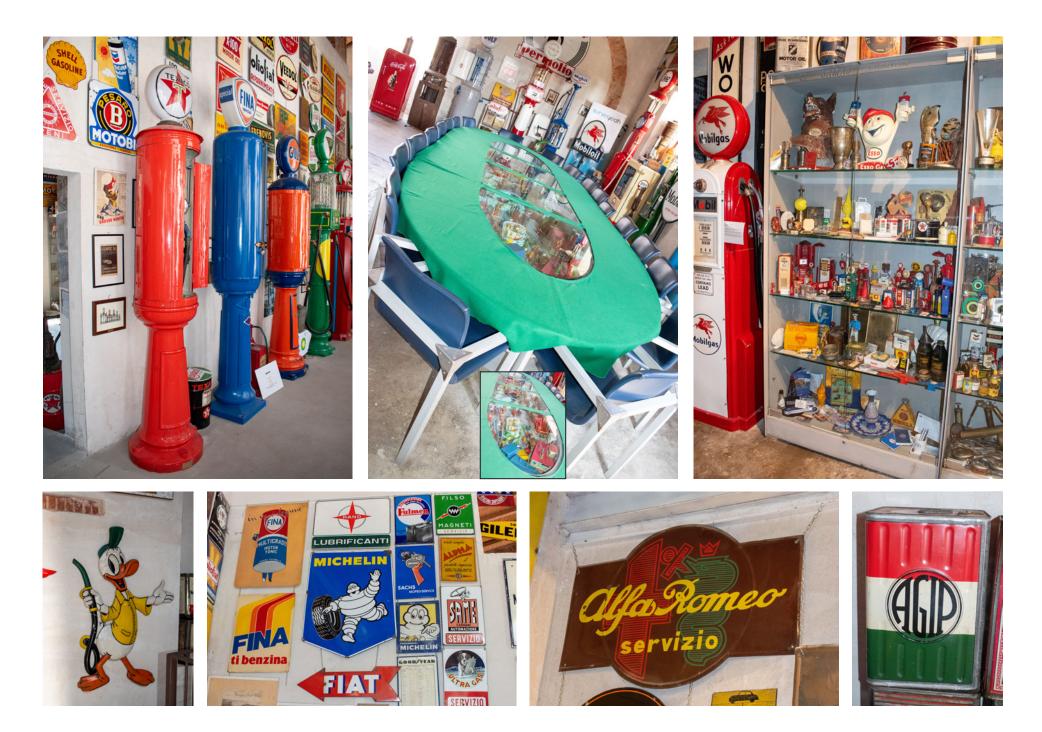












# **Paint Touch Up Tips**

If your Alfa Romeo has "driver quality" paint and you want to improve it without taking your car apart for a complete paint job (\$10–40,000), you may want to touch it up. There are two ways to go about this: do it yourself or have it done professionally.

Touch up yourself. There are a lot of noncritical parts of your car that can be touched up easily. For example, the fender edges behind the tires where rocks chip off the paint. This can include the entire length of the rocker panel as it folds under the car or, for that matter, any area low enough that is not in direct eye site. First, wash the area with water and a couple of ounces of Dawn dish soap. This removes all grease and contaminants. Dry the area. If it is really rough, consider sanding with 200 grit or finer sandpaper. You are then ready for touch up.

Go to a good auto paint store, such as Ned's Auto Body in Concord, Pittsburg, or Vallejo. Drive your car there where they will photo scan your car and mix a fraction of a pint of single stage paint (cost \$15–30). Also buy a small can of hardener (\$32) and a tube of E-Z paint dabbers (\$15). With single stage paint, you don't need to put a clear coat on top. The color of the paint they mix will be good enough for all of the low areas of your car. Mix the paint and hardener 4:1. Use a small artist



brush to paint low areas. Use the paint dabbers to carefully touch up the front of your car where you have rock chips. If the paint is not an exact match, you can go back to Ned's and they will adjust your paint to match. Be sure to tip the guy \$20 for paint sight matching. It takes about thirty min.

Professional help. If you have blisters or big paint chips that need to be sprayed, you need help. Ask the tech at Ned's Auto Paint for a referral for a paint shop that will do small jobs. Take the paint you bought from Ned's. The paint shop tech can eye match your paint, sand out the blisters, paint chips, rocker panels, etc., and spray a nice finish. You won't believe how much better it will look.

Andy Schank has been painting Alfa's for years. He lives in Richmond and works out of his garage. He is mostly retired now, but may be able to help you. You can reach him at 510-236-5232 or aschank25@yahoo.com.





For example, my GTV was painted back in the 80s. While the engine was out, I cleaned up the engine compartment and primed and painted it with spray (rattle) cans. Ned's color matched the paint and made me two cans of red spray paint. I also shot the clear coat with rattle cans. Later, Andy Schank straightened my rocker panels, then sprayed them and the front of the car. He also repaired and touched up several other obvious defects. The overall paint quality is good enough that it only got a one point deduction for paint at the AROC Concours at Coronado Island last June! BTW, overall score was 99.4 points! Yes, it was detailed to the max (for which I got a lot of bonus points)!

There is one more benefit to touching up your paint: If you do a complete paint job on your car, you probably won't drive it, because you will be so worried about paint chips! If you touch up your car and then get another rock chip, all you need to do is a ten minute touch up repair using the kit you already have. If you need more advice, feel free to email me. CAMS

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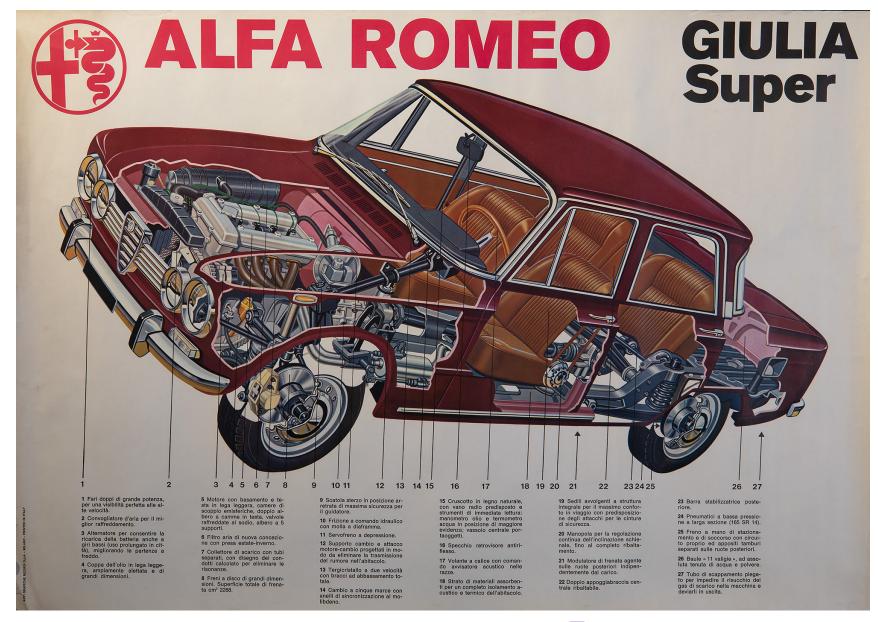
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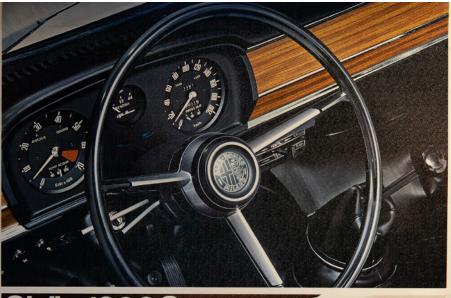


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# **The Filter-King**

When Alfa owners get to talking about the fuel system on earlier cars, those with carburetors, words such as Weber DCOE, main jet, air corrector, butterfly, and velocity stack fill the air.

That's all very well but these refined systems depend on an appropriate fuel supply from the primary fuel system to operate effectively. We can think of the primary fuel system as all the parts that work with fuel upstream of the carburetors.

This article takes up a decidedly practical component installed on many Alfas, a core center part of the primary fuel system. Lots of Alfas are fit with a Filter-King fuel filter. The Filter-King combines a fuel filter with a fuel pressure regulator. This unit needs to be kept in working order to enjoy driving the Alfa.

#### **DRIVABILITY PROBLEMS**

I recently had the chance to help a friend with an older Alfa, a very nice example, but one that exhibited drivability problems. The Weber carburetors were over delivering fuel in a big way. This, of course, presented difficulty making satisfactory adjustment to the dual twin-choke Webers. We did not know the extent of internal improvements to the engine, outside of having determined that it ran 10:1 pistons and high-lift camshafts. This car delivered good performance at high power levels. However, there were notable flat spots across the power band that affected drivability. This is opposite to the spunky, easy-to-drive character these cars normally exhibit.

Other troublesome symptoms included variable idle speed and poor low-rpm characteristics. The car came in from test drives to settle to different idle speeds, often not acceptable, and not responsive to the usual tuning inputs. One time, after a warm-up run, a quick check at idle using an infrared thermometer showed the four individual exhaust headers running at widely different temperatures. Cylinders 3 and 4 were running significantly lower temperatures than 1 and 2. That's not right.

That was when the light bulb came on it was time to measure the fuel pressure.

#### FUEL DELIVERY PRESSURE

This attribute of the primary fuel system, fuel delivery pressure, can have a big impact if runs too low or too high. Fuel pressure that falls too low often results from a plugged fuel filter. Fuel pressure that runs too high sounds like something that would not fall in the problem category. Too much fuel pressure? What could go wrong?

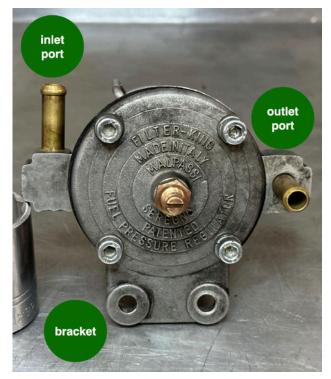


Fig. 1. Filter-King top view

Plenty. Carburetors depend on setting a consistent float level, in that way controlling the depth of the fuel in the carburetor float chamber, a parameter that affects idle fuel delivery rate. Float height is a subtle but important setting for carburetors. If the fuel supply pressure runs too high it can overcome the control authority of the float valve, resulting in overfilling. When that happens the idle fuel passages deliver too much fuel.



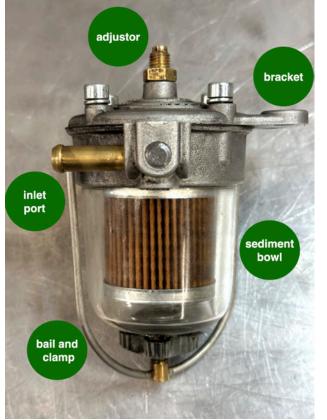


Fig. 2. Filter-King inlet side view

The best place to install a pressure gage to determine the fuel delivery pressure is immediately upstream of the carburetor float chamber. One simple way is to install a tee fitting in the fuel hose. What we found was fuel delivery pressure that was too high, at about 5 psi, pounds per square inch, well above the recommended pressure of about 3 psi. The downstream symptom of that problem was excess fuel delivery at idle.

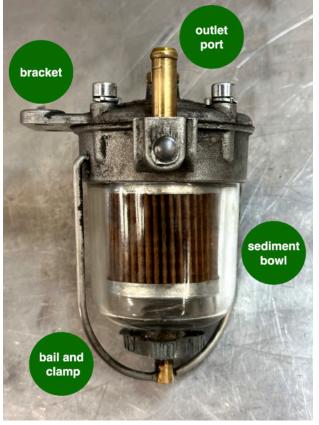
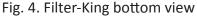


Fig. 3. Filter-King outlet side view

#### **CONFIGURATION AND PARTS**

Fuel pressure measurements indicated that the old Filter-King pressure regulator might be stuck wide open. Curious minds need to know. The only thing to do was to take the old unit apart. What emerged from that study was simple enough. The fuel metering needle, spring, and spring retainer had fallen out of the housing, leaving them free to bounce around at the bottom of the replaceable filter element. The old Filter-King





did run wide open, and no wonder.

This is a good time to take a step back to look at the big picture. A friend, reviewing the article, asked whether all fuel filters for vintage Alfas with carburetors are also pressure regulators. It's a good question. The answer is no, not all. There are both standalone filters and likewise standalone pressure regulators.

Another reviewer told me that they had forgotten about the integrated fuel pres-



Fig. 5. Filter-King parts layout

sure regulator in the Filter-King. I think this point needs emphasis. Looking at how effective the Filter-King can be, both filtering and regulating pressure, I can see why so many owners and technicians have installed these units. This compact unit integrates two devices that help the primary fuel system do its job.

How does an owner recognize that the Filter-King is a pressure regulator? The

pressure adjusting screw and locknut at top center are the main features to look for.

Please see figure 1, showing the upper surface of the Filter-King. Note the pressure adjusting screw and locknut. From the top of the housing, we can read Malpassi and Seregno. Malpassi is the name of the manufacturing company, offering a range of products in the primary fuel system arena. Seregno is a place name, a little north of Milan, not far from Arese and Monza.

A design feature to pick up in figure 1 and the other illustrations is the economical use of metal throughout. There is nothing extra on the Filter-King; nothing too heavy; nothing bulky for no reason.

The inlet side view in figure 2 shows the inlet hose fitting, running parallel to the top of the regulator housing. At the top we can see the fuel pressure adjusting screw with its locknut.

Figure 3 shows the outlet side view, with outlet hose fitting directed upward on this example.

Figure 4 shows the lower surface, including the bail and the four-lobed clamp knob on the bail. At left we can see the cast markings "IN" and at right "OUT."

A friend asked what a "bail" in this context is. That's the springy clamp formed out of round steel stock. The springy feature is helpful and makes working with the Filter-King very simple. The word "bail" in this usage is akin to bail, the handle on a bucket, free to rotate in one axis.

On the Filter-King the way this works is in two steps. Suppose we need to remove the glass sediment bowl to clean it out or change the filter. There's a brass stud at the center of the bail that holds the clamp knob. Turn the clamp knob clockwise, toward the base of the brass stud to release the clamping pressure. When it's turned far enough, we can swing the bail to the side without removing any fasteners. This frees

the glass sediment bowl, spring, and filter element. Bail, brass stud, and clamp knob all stay together on the Filter-King.

When it's time to refit the glass sediment bowl we reverse the process, swinging the bail into place and rotating the clamp knob toward the sediment bowl, once again applying clamping force. My opinion? We can call this clever, minimalist, and easy to work with.

Figure 5 shows a fuel filter parts layout, consisting of the regulator assembly, the filter element, the filter tensioning spring, the glass sediment bowl, and the bail with clamp knob that holds the sediment bowl in place. Looking at the lower surface of the regulator assembly, facing up in this view, we see the elastomer seal for the sediment bowl, this example a flat ring. Engineers use the term flat ring for parts that provide static sealing, much like o-rings except being flat, with a rectangular cross-section.

Figure 5 also shows the fuel inlet port near the edge of the regulator assembly. Fuel flows from this port into the sediment bowl, where it passes from outside to inside through the paper filter media. The smoothly finished glass sediment bowl fits the elastomer seal and is held in place securely by the bail and clamp knob. The bail is fabricated in steel, the clamp stud in brass, and the clamp knob in pot metal. The bail itself is intentionally a little springy, providing gentle force to position the sediment bowl, holding it in place without damage.

Figure 6 shows us the small parts that fit inside the regulator assembly, including the metering needle, metering needle spring, and the spring retainer. In this Fuel-King the spring retainer is fabricated in polymer. The spring is steel. The needle is fabricated in brass with an elastomer seal.

The metering diaphragm in figure 6 fits between the regulator housing and the cover. It has an attached steel spring rest that matches the metering needle spring. The spring rest is held in place by a rivet. On the upper side of the metering diaphragm the rivet engages with the adjusting screw, allowing adjustment of vertical position, setting the tension of the metering needle spring. The cover has a small vent hole. The pressure adjusting screw bears on the top of the rivet on the metering diaphragm, serving to compress the metering needle spring, setting the pressure differential that the regulator will maintain.

Figure 7 shows a detail oblique view of the metering needle with its green elastomer seal, worn flat where it bears on the valve seat.

#### **OPERATION**

The main idea is to balance the fuel pressure on the downstream side of the regulator with atmospheric pressure plus an adjustable amount of pressure, in this case 3 psi, on the upstream side. When the upstream pressure plus the adjustment exceeds the downstream pressure, the metering diaphragm moves the fuel metering needle off its seat, allowing fuel to flow into the downstream side. When the downstream pressure rises high enough to match the upstream pressure plus the adjustment the spring returns the fuel metering needle to its seat.

The Filter-King incorporates a fuel filter and removable sediment bowl. This makes good sense from this perspective: the filter and sediment bowl help to prevent plugging the needle valve. That might still happen, but it could take years.

As with any mechanism of this kind there are nuances to both design and build. For example, the diaphragm in the metering chamber needs to hold up to fuel on one side. Similarly, the atmospheric pressure side of the metering chamber needs to have a vent hole, not a large one, but one that does not somehow get plugged.

The needle itself needs an elastomer sealing ring that provides the needed differential hardness between needle and seat, a fundamental in leak tight integrity. Differential hardness is the term engineers use to describe valves or seals that have one harder component, in valves often the seat, fabricated in metal, and one softer component, often a seal located on the needle, fabricated in elastomer.

Elastomer is a coined word that engineers use to describe flexible material that is elastic and formed from polymer. Engineers hate calling it rubber if they don't know for sure what the seal is made of. In that circumstance elastomer does nicely.

This is my way of saying that I don't know what the elastomer diaphragm in figure 4 is made of. I can say that the example in the photo has been swelled or stretched out of shape. Did ethanol in fuel cause this? Maybe so, maybe not. More about this a few paragraphs farther along.

#### FAILURE MODES AND EFFECTS

One purpose behind the article is to illustrate how to look at components in the primary fuel system one by one, while maintaining awareness of the overall system and how it needs to operate. To illustrate, how does a technician know that the Filter-King incorporates a pressure regulator? How does a technician know what could go wrong with a pressure regulator? It's not at all obvious how a regulator could fail stuck wide open.

Engineers love to analyze a part or subsystem for failure modes and effects. This phrase "failure modes and effects" comes out of the necessarily stoic language of mishap investigations. For the Alfa and the Filter-King I think going too deep into this would not be a good use of time. In this case, with the new Filter-King in place and working OK, the next step was to go driving. It's a car.

If we keep this discussion concise, however, not venturing too far off into the tall



Fig. 6. Filter-King pressure regulator parts layout

grass, it will serve our purpose to sketch what could go wrong with the Filter-King and why.

**Filter element**. Let's begin with the paper fuel filter element that might get plugged, doing its job trapping particles in the fuel. Rust particles are a likely form of contaminant to plug a filter. The filter element in the Filter-King passes the fuel from outside to inside, a common design choice because the outside surface has more room for contaminant. Even so, the outside surface of the filter element does not have much capacity. By saying that engineers acknowledge that it doesn't take much contaminant to plug the filter.

**Sediment bowl**. The sediment bowl could collect too much water. This is a good opportunity to remove the sediment bowl for cleaning. That's why the Filter-King

is set up with the springy bail and clamp knob. There's no need to break fuel lines or to remove the Filter-King. Turn the clamp knob to advance it toward the bail, away from the sediment bowl, to release the tension. Then move the bail and clamp knob to the side, out of the way to release the sediment bowl. The bowl may stick to the elastomer flat ring seal and need to be persuaded.

**Elastomer parts**. Over time, we can expect the flat ring elastomer seal in the regulator housing to deform and to shrink, decreasing the sealing pressure applied by the bail. This can generate a small fuel leak, just enough to smell bad. Irritating. Sometimes tightening the bail by turning the clamp knob toward the sediment bowl takes care of this problem. At other times we need to replace the flat ring elastomer seal.

The metering diaphragm in figure 6 has swelled out of shape. Would it still work? That's an unknown. A challenge in the diaphragm design is the balance of requirements for flexibility, leak-tight integrity, and ability to survive exposure to fuel on one side, with air on the opposite side. That's quite a list. Manufacturers meet such requirements by fabricating parts like the diaphragm in advanced synthetic elastomer material, adding to cost.

**Fuel composition**. A friend, reviewing the article, reminded me of a likely failure mode of the elastomer diaphragm. Visual-



Fig. 7. Filter-King metering pin detail

ly, looking at the regulator parts layout in figure 6, it's not easy to determine the age of this assembly. The diaphragm, however, has become extensively distorted.

Both the oil and automotive industries learned costly lessons when they made the transition from fuels that contained a lot of aromatic compounds to blends containing more synthetic branched-chain alkyl hydrocarbons. Following on to this change, in so many ways an improvement, there were unfortunately a lot of failures of elastomer components in the fuel system—they shrank and cracked.

Before we go on, we need to take time to spell out what engineers mean when they say aromatic compounds. That phrase refers to a broad class of hydrocarbons having less than the maximum number of hydrogen atoms per carbon atom, arranged in a particular structural geometry having to do with different and distinctive carbon atom to carbon atom chemical bonds. Aromatic compounds<sup>\*</sup> have particularly advantageous properties, arising out of the combined effects of structure and reactivity on organic substances.

There's a lot more to this subject, none of it Alfa content, so we will leave it right there, except for two notes. First, from a combustion science point of view, notably in octane rating, aromatic compounds can be good. Second, from a health point of

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<sup>\*</sup> For a representative example of an aromatic compound we might encounter when taking care of the Alfa we can consider benzene CAS [71-43-2]. For a representative example of a branched chain alkyl hydrocarbon we can consider 2,2,4 trimethyl pentane, CAS [540-84-1] a standard reference material for an octane rating of 100. To be clear, we do not have reason to conclude that 2,2,4 trimethylpentane, that specific alkyl compound, is present in gasoline to any appreciable extent. Rather 2,2,4 trimethylpentane is a rough model, representative of the many branched chain hydrocarbons produced by an alkylation plant.

view for owners and technicians not good. In many regions benzene content of fuel is limited to a low percentage, for example 1 percent. For more about this, please see Further Reading.

Back to cars and damaged elastomer. Many cars had problems that were due to failures that caused fuel leaks, resulting in many manufacturer recalls. These recalled cars, during the late 1980s, would have updated elastomer tubing, fittings, seals, diaphragms, and other parts installed by the dealer.

Failure went something like this. The original elastomers were formulated to withstand the aromatic compounds, taking up a little bit into the material. The added volume tended to swell the elastomer parts slightly. Formulated to withstand this, the elastomer parts by and large remained flexible, retaining effective sealing properties.

When the new gasolines came on the market that was a big change, because they were very low in aromatic compounds. These gasolines did however extract the existing aromatic compounds out of the elastomer. The result was that the elastomer shrank somewhat, but not back to the original dimensions, tending to become less flexible. Over time this process could develop cracks in the elastomer. What does this mean for the Alfa? It's best to use recently produced elastomer parts for the fuel system, in preference over new old stock (NOS).

Metering needle valves. Metering needle valves can fail three ways; stuck open, leaking when closed, and stuck closed. I associate the stuck open and stuck closed failure modes with long storage. In the garage, a quick test for this condition is to give the Filter-King a gentle but sharp tap with a hammer. To clarify: a small hammer. It's the shock from sharp impact that might release the metering needle. No crushing blow is required. Plastic hammers typically work better at this than metal. Leaking when closed is more difficult to diagnose, one of the possibilities when we encounter a pressure regulator that does not control downstream pressure effectively. Such a pressure regulator may not respond to adjustment by way of the pressure adjusting screw.

**Overview**. I think it's fair to ask how the Filter-King can help us enjoy driving the car if it's subject to all these failure modes. Is the metering needle not about the same as the metering needles in the carburetors? There are five critical features that set the Filter-King apart. First is the fuel filter. True, it can plug. But by doing so it may prevent more expensive problems in the carburetors. Second is that the metering valve in the Filter-King is less delicate than the float metering valve in the carburetors. Third, the Filter-King puts spring tension on the metering diaphragm and the metering needle. That's more robust than the small force produced by the buoyancy of the floats in the carburetor float chamber. Fourth, the Filter-King is more easily removed, inspected, cleaned, and replaced. Fifth, the Filter-King costs far less than a carburetor. That last point makes a big difference.

### **Test Driving**

Bolting in a new Filter-King and setting the fuel pressure to 3 psi set this Alfa to right, allowing us to find a good baseline combination of fuel pressure, float height, idle jets, main jets, air corrector, and idle screw adjustment. Making these changes led us to adjust the idle and low speed ignition timing advance using the 123 Ignition app.

We knew the car was OK when we took a test drive, including pulls at high power levels, and found, on our return, that the engine idle returned to the same speed and smoothness, and that the plugs that had been loaded up had burned clean on the center electrode. Plugs getting hot enough to burn clean, in moderation, are a good sign when tuning the engine. Another verification was our finding that the car ran the same way the following day, after a cold start.

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### CONCLUSION

A friend suggested that a bit more explanation was needed about why this particular Alfa needed both a fresh fuel filter and a working fuel pressure regulator. We might well ask that question since plenty of Alfas run fine without a Filter-King. We are free to speculate that Alfas might have run OK without fuel supply pressure regulation when the parts were mostly new, not mostly old.

There is a tendency to forget the delicate nature of carburetors, and their exacting requirements for fuel quality and for delivery pressure. Understanding how the Filter-King works helps considerably to make us aware of this reality, and to help us see how a Filter-King can help make the Alfa more fun to drive. *CAMS* 

### FURTHER READING

I can recommend the manufacturer's website: <u>www.officinamalpassi.it/en/</u>.

The Wikipedia article Fuel Filter (<u>en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuel\_filter</u>) presents a concise summary. The article Pressure Regulator (<u>en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pressure\_regulator</u>) goes into detail, for example, on how the fuel pressure acting on the metering needle tends to offset the set point pressure.

The article Seregno (<u>en.wikipedia.org/</u> <u>wiki/Seregno</u>) sketches background on this city, home to many small companies, including manufacturers of industrial goods.

I hesitated using the term pot metal to describe the cast alloy clamp knob, yet it's a practical choice made by countless manufacturers. Having selected die casting technology including metal dies, intending to produce parts with smooth surfaces, manufacturers are obliged to use metal alloys that melt at temperatures low enough that the process does not harm the valuable dies. The article Pot Metal (<u>en.wikipedia.org/</u><u>wiki/Pot\_metal</u>) sketches the scene, including the frequent presence of zinc and lead in the alloy.

Those curious about aromatic compounds may appreciate the concise Wikipedia article Aromatic Compounds (<u>en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aromatic\_compound</u>). Similarly the account in the article Aromaticity (<u>en.</u> <u>wikipedia.org/wiki/Aromaticity</u>).

Further information about branchedchain hydrocarbons is available in the Wikipedia article 2,2,4 trimethylpentane, CAS [540-84-1] (<u>en.wikipedia.org/</u><u>wiki/2,2,4-Trimethylpentane</u>).

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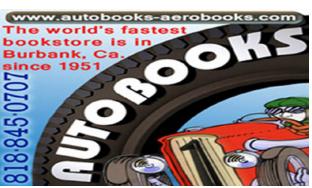
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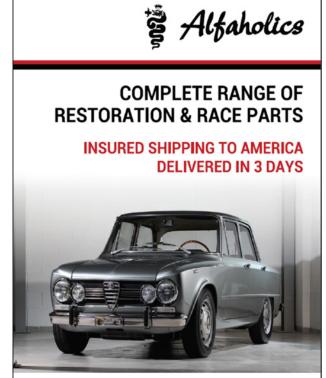






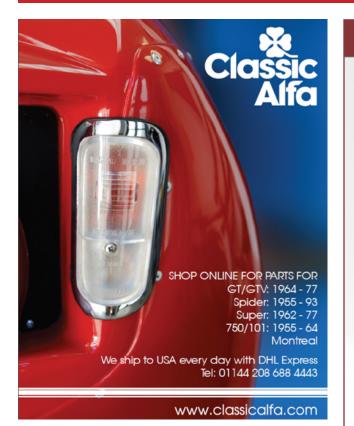


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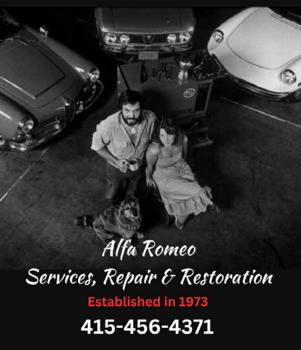
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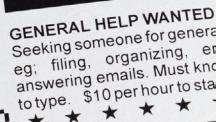
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