

# Sotto Veloce



THE CHICAGO ALFA ROMEO OWNER'S CLUB NEWSLETTER OCT/NOV 2015

## Alfa's On The Glen!



By Chip Van Sant

Admittedly, I'd always heard about "Alfas on the Glen" but had no clue as to what "the Glen" referred too or what the event was, but I signed up for it. After doing some internet surfing I found out that the event was indeed a Vintage race weekend and that this year's event would celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> year of the GTA racer (how cool is that). What the event promised was plenty of Alfas on the famous Watkins Glen race track in New York and a chance to hang with the in-crowd.

Trailing a race car isn't that tough but a New York state road-trip required at least two days driving. Traveling through Indiana, Cleveland, Toledo, various small towns in Pennsylvania and the hilly countryside of the fingerlakes region in New York left plenty of time for soul searching, radio surfing (I got sick of my music in my phone) and catching up with my good friend and fellow racer George Mikhail.... either by text, at gas station stops and any chance to grab a meal. George led the convoy and did a great job of navigating Cleveland during rush hour and the late night New York countryside twists/ turns.



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When we finally made it to Watkins Glen racetrack, I was amazed at the elevation changes surrounding the area and how big the racing complex was. Mike and Dianne Besic were there. Mike and Dianne do the "Alfas on the Glen" on the regular five year interval and knew where to set up camp, where to Tech and where best to stay (Our house that Dianne sourced was by a winery!). Italian Sausages were a stone's throw away as well as a few grandstands to check out the competition and the race-track, which several of us had never been on before.



The race track where we were to waste tires and racing fuel was the "short course" only because Watkins Glen was slated for a resurface in the fall and they had already begun to tear up the "boot" of the longer extension. The short course did have a lot of elevation changes including ascending esses, a "bus stop" chicane, a descending carousel and Turn One, right after the main straight, dropped off way before you'd be ready for it. What scared me most about the track was that it was surrounded by plenty of Armco (car-crushing metal banding), car netting and little run-off area. Mistakes would be met with severe consequences.



By far my two favorite things this weekend was a presentation/slide show by an Autodelta insider and the "all Alfa" race on the track. Robert Little, the Autodelta insider was an American who was allowed, by the good graces of Sig Carlo Chiti, to be the chief lackey within the Autodelta shop. He actually lived there, in order to guard the cars, clean the cars, feed the dogs and importantly was allowed to photo-document the shop in action including many important car builds such as the Tipo 33s and GTAs, both present and racing at the Glen, that weekend. It seemed to me that Autodelta was so bare-bones and small in scale, yet they accomplished so much. It was a truly amazing story that can be accessed online at [www.Robertlittle.us](http://www.Robertlittle.us) Don't miss checking this one out !!!

The best part of the weekend had to be getting my butt kicked on the race track by many important and FAST Alfas like the Tipo 33 V12 that flew by me on the straights. A TZ-1 was also on the track driven by a professional driver and he passed me like I was standing still, as well !!!

Next year, even though the Alfas on the Glen won't occur, I want to return to the Glen since the track will be resurfaced and the entire track will be available....Will I see you there????



-Chip Van Sant

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## CAROC Road Trip to Sport and Specialty

A special thanks to John Saccameno for treating us to a tour of his shop in Durand, Illinois. Saturday the 17th of October was a perfect day to pull out the Spider and make the trek to the Northern Illinois countryside. A bit cool in the A.M., but perfect later in the morning. The shop is set back, off the road and behind a home. He's also conveniently located about 5 miles from Blackhawk Farms raceway. Hardly visible from the street but deceptively large once you enter the shop.

John's shop is nothing short of spectacular. Spotless and everything in its place, and of course some excellent works in progress. Most noticeable to my eye was a mid 60's Ferrari 330 GT 2+2. (Pardon my ignorance if I got the model wrong, I'm no Ferrari expert.) Wrecked at one point in its life, John brought it back to life where there is no visible sign of prior damage. It would seem, perfection is the standard.

Also on display were some excellent Healy examples and John's GTV race car, sans engine. The pristine engine was on display, mounted to John's engine stand ready to go back in for a weekend of racing.

Adjacent to the workshop was Sport and Specialty's "warehouse." John's warehouse is essentially a barn, just loaded with "stuff" ; "stuff" all us gearheads dream of. Engines, transmissions, drive trains and loads of other cool stuff. Next to the "warehouse" was a garage containing John's two Lotus race cars and two Healy Sprites. One Lotus waiting for a new frame but the remainder ready for a day at the track.

Check out his web site [www.sportandspecialty.com](http://www.sportandspecialty.com)



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## **CAROC Fall Driving Tour !**



Our Fall Driving Tour Following our visit to John's shop we had the privilege of driving some curvy, twisty, hilly northern Illinois roads. Member, Dave Fonda is a Freeport resident and was kind enough to take a few of us for a tour of some areas clearly built with ALFA driving in mind. Having done it many times on a bicycle he surely knows his way around. Minimal traffic and hills and curves made for some spirited driving. We finished off with a lunch at The Union Dairy Bar in Freeport, a beautiful old porcelain panel clad building with a 50's style malt shop inside. From there, we adjourned. Many thanks Dave, let's do it again.

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## **The Final Turn...In Remembrance**



# **Mason Smith**

**1949—2015**

Mason Smith, a former member and past president of the Chicago chapter of the Alfa Romeo Owners Club, died peacefully on September 5, 2015 of cancer. During his time here in Chicago he was a very active member and a strong competitor in the Midwestern Council of Sports Car Club (MCSCC) and Vintage Sports Car Drivers Assoc. (VSCDA) with his #24 Alfa Spider. Mason was always able to keep the club interesting and he will be missed. He has become part of the horizon that we all chase when the top is down and the tank is full.

Below is the URL for the obituary that his family published in the Boothbay Register

<http://www.boothbayregister.com/article/mason-b-smith/58809>

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## **CAROC**

# **CALL FOR Nominations for 2016 Board of Directors and Officers**

To the General Membership: If you wish to serve as an Officer or Board member for the coming year please submit your nomination by December 21, 2015. You can nominate yourself. Nominations should be submitted to Marco Battistoni, via email to: [mbattistoni@neuronetics.com](mailto:mbattistoni@neuronetics.com) or, via US mail to: 517 Chester Avenue, Park Ridge, IL 60068. Your nomination may also be submitted to any of the other Officers or Board members.

In your nomination you must designate the party nominated, the position sought, i.e., President/Vice President/Treasurer/Secretary or a Trustee position.

The current board composition is as follows: Officers: President, Dennis M. Sbertoli; Vice President, Sandy Ganun; Treasurer, Barb Carroll and Secretary, Marco Battistoni. Trustees: Dave Johnson, George Mikhail, Chip Van Sant, Gregg De Zutti . Executive Advisor: Tony Cavaliere (Past President.)

November 1, 2015

Respectfully submitted,

Marco Battistoni, Secretary

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## **CAROC Swap Meet at Besic Motorsports !**



Food, friendship, Alfa's and haggling, what more could you ask for on a Sunday afternoon? You could have had all that and more if you attended the CAROC annual swap meet at Besic Motorsports.

If we ain't got it you don't need it at this event. Hard parts, interior trim, literature, collectables....all of that and more was on display and available for sale. Of course a great selection of Alfa's were on display also.

Thanks to Mike and Dianne Besic for opening their business and being excellent hosts for this well-attended event. We all can appreciate how much work must go into cleaning up that shop! Plus, it's always entertaining to see what Mike is working on. Thanks again!



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*The Pres Sez-*

## Important Notice—Change of Banquet date.

Previously we posted a “save the date” announcement for our annual banquet. Due to a scheduling conflict we have changed the date.

**Please take Notice that our 2016 Banquet will be on February 20, 2016. 6:00 P.M.**

Chicago Prime Italian  
1370 Bank Drive  
Schaumburg, IL 60173  
(847) 240-1370

<https://www.chicagoprimeitalian.com/>

Cost will be \$55.00 per person. Payments can be made to CAROC Attention Barb Carroll, 9704 Bonner Lane, Spring Grove, IL 60081

Reserve your spot now.

DMS  
November 12, 2015

## Member Meeting



**Nov 19th, 2015**

Avanti Caffé in Mt Prospect on Elmhurst Rd, just south of Higgins.  
Address: 1900 S. Elmhurst Rd. in Mt Prospect, IL

## Upcoming Events:

**Nov 19, 2015—Monthly Meeting**  
**Avanti Caffé**

**HAPPY  
HOLIDAYS!**

**Feb 20, 2016—Annual Banquet**  
**Chicago Prime Italian**

## Italian Vehicle US Sales by Brand



US Light Vehicle Sales by Brand	Oct-15	Oct-14	10-mos. 2015	10-mos. 2014
<b>Alfa Romeo</b>	65	-	562	-
<b>Fiat</b>	3,757	3,725	35,576	39,226
<b>Ferrari</b>	177	176	1,770	1,758
<b>Lamborghini</b>	63	62	630	612
<b>Maserati</b>	1,166	1,203	9,543	10,327

Source: Automotive News Data Center