

# ROMEO & GIULIETTA



The Newsletter of the Alfa Romeo Owner's Club of San Diego

November 2010



**Cars and Coffee-Poway**

**2011 Board of Directors Nominations**

**Remind Me Why I'm an Alfa Romeo Nut?**

# ROMEO & GIULIETTA

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALFA ROMEO  
OWNER'S CLUB OF SAN DIEGO



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- November 3 .....Board Meeting, Lance & Jennifer Dong's
- November 6 ..... General Meeting
- December 1 .....Board Meeting, Lance & Jennifer Dong's
- December 19 .....Christmas Party and Election of Board  
Bob and Elladine Foley, Escondido

Idyllwild Photos courtesy of  
George Hershman



The Touring group at Lake Henshaw Cafe



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

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We want to hear from you!  
Submit your experiences, stories, and/or musings for print in the AROCSD newsletter. Please forward content to [ajdong@cox.net](mailto:ajdong@cox.net).

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POINT CONCOURS

[www.arocsd.org](http://www.arocsd.org)





## IL PRESIDENTE

Ciao Alfistis,

Our Romeo & Giulietta is back!!

Please take a moment and reflect on the contributions of our club's editor in getting the R&G back. There were a couple of computer crashes and a hard drive meltdown, a day job, helping temp on the board while transferring our newsletter to an electronic format.

This new format will save the club well over 100.00 dollars a month. The efforts of Lance Dong with this endeavor and so many other behind the scenes tasks, personifies the talent in this club. Thanks Lance, well done!

AROCSD had a lucky 13 travel to Idyllwild on the October 16th tour and stay over. The watchful eye of Glenna picked up on what hopes to be only a faulty oil pressure gage in her Milano and pulled out of the tour. Kudos to veteran Ron Brown as he and Ann were a chase plane who pulled out and followed Glenna back home. Most would stay at home or go on to home, but not these three. Glenna picks up the Prius and all were back in Idyllwild in time for a late lunch! Teamwork!

The earlier arrival to Idyllwild this year leant some time to walk around the town to do some shopping and people watching. There was a Model A tour going through town as well as a biker poker run. We were also getting watched as well in our hard core Alfa jackets, Ts and caps!

The club had the Blue Bird Cottage almost exclusively to ourselves and the rec. room worked out well. Moving the event up from November to October made for pleasant weather. We enjoyed appetizers and drinks on the deck and grilled outside. Wonderful food and conversation made for a perfect Saturday! Thanks to all who attended.

For our Nov. general meeting we are changing things up a bit. Instead of our usual dinner meeting during the week, we will take it to the garage. On Sat. Nov. 6th 9:00 am AROCSD is hosting a Cars and Coffee at:

RATHMANN AUTO WORKS  
14035 Kirkham Way, Suite 106  
Poway, CA. 92064  
858-668-2808

Please invite any friends/family that would be interested in seeing what might be in the garage/out in the parking lot that day.



Our December meeting will be held at the Holiday Party on December 19th, hosted by Bob and Eladine Foley. We will vote in the 2011 slate of officers at that meeting.

Hope to see you at both of these events!

Bill



## FROM THE EDITOR

Romeo and Giulietta is in need of editorial assistance. If you have a few hours a month to help edit and/or contribute to the content of the newsletter, the editor welcomes your help. One of the reasons that Romeo & Giulietta has been late or MIA in the last few months has been a lack of time and content. Please help. We need content contributions from the membership



## IDYLLWILD 2010



Lunch crowd at Bone Daddy'z



Happy Hour @ Blue Bird Cottage Inn





## *Alfa Romeo Owners Club of San Diego*

The November General Meeting will be held at Erik Rathmann's shop in Poway, November 6 at 9:00AM.

This will be a "Cars and Coffee" style gathering. Other San Diego area car clubs have been invited to see and be seen at Erik's.

AROCSD is hosting the gathering and providing refreshments.

Check out Erik's web site for directions:

<http://www.europeanautomotiveconsultants.com/>

**European Automotive Consultants LLC**  
**14035 Kirkham Way, Suite 106**  
**Poway, CA 92064**

**858.668.2808**



European Automotive Consultants



## Remind Me Why I'm an Alfa Romeo Nut?

By "Verdégal"

Reprinted from Jalopnik.com

Many many years ago, I purchased an Alfa Romeo Milano Verde. My criteria were that the car sound good and have a rear mounted transaxle for handling balance. The finalists were a Porsche 928 and the Milano. I missed finding the right Porsche, but instead I found a creampuff Verde. Or so I thought.

The first owner had taken excellent care of the car, but all Alfas have foibles. For the Milano, one of those foibles is the warning light system known as ARC. It's flakey as hell, going off for no reason. Only recently, after 20 years of putting up with this, has an engineer worked out a fix. But at the time I bought the car, there was nothing that could be done about the "Disco Johnny" display, so I ignored the festive flashing and blinking lights. Ignored them at my peril.

One day not long after I purchased the car, I was cruising along, enjoying the torque engine while ignoring the always panicked ARC. But as I eased onto the brakes in preparation for a traffic light going red, the pedal was unresponsive and hard as a rock. Holy crap! I put all 100 pounds of me straining against the seatback, and got only the tiniest whiff of hoped-for retardation. Thankfully the road swooped upward toward the light, and there was a long dedicated left turn lane that was virtually empty. I hauled on the giant U-shaped hand brake lever, putting the less than effective emergency brakes into action, and downshifted madly. As I neared the car in front, the left turn arrow turned green and I sailed through in first gear. A right turn led to a large strip mall, so I crept into a deserted part of the lot with an eye to easy flatbed access and shut down the engine.

After sitting for a couple of minutes to let the adrenalin shakes die down a little, it was time to see what had failed. The first logical place to look was under the car. I expected to find fluid dripping, or something along those lines, but no dice. Calipers and rotors looked normal. Opened the hood and could find nothing leaking or smoking or otherwise amiss. Popped the fuse panel and all looked fine. What the...? Of course I had left the weighty and expensive shop manual at home in the garage. The nearest Alfa mechanic was 35 miles away. I was 5 miles



from home and the daily Alfa newsletter that might provide some clue. So after venting by leaping around and shouting (I should have gotten a BMW you piece of shit!), I went to one of the stores and bought a crappy novel, some jerky sticks, and a bottle of water (something my cars all carry to this day), then parked my butt in the snug Recaro seat of the Alfa and waited until dark and traffic to die down. Using the back streets, I managed to crawl home without incident.

The shop manual wasn't much help in that the diagrams and language (think really bad Italian to English translation) were cryptic, but upon pleading with the Alfa mechanic and absolving him of all liability, he told me the likely cause for my adventure. What was the culprit? An 85-cent blade fuse located under a small black cover on top of the fender, but under the coil. Apparently the fuse would pop, thanks to cheap Russian copper and steel not grounding properly and over-loading the fuse. I now always carry a spare fuse and clean the grounds with Stabilant 22 each year. Just as importantly, why did brake-maker Teves come up with a brake system that could fail like this? The Verdes and

Platinums came with an ABS system that used a small pump to pressurize the accumulator, which in turn supplied pressure to the brakes when needed. But the pump needed power, and when the fuse blew, that didn't happen. After a certain number of brake applications, the accumulator ran out of pressure, and I had my heart attack moment. Other cars such

as Mercedes got the same system, but lacking the Russian element, didn't provide the same thrills.

Some time transpired before the next major incident occurred. There were many minor incidents (such as the car dying while on the freeway-damned Bosch fuel pump relay), but they weren't character building except in a cumulative kind of way.

That was the year of big rains that washed away parts of Laguna Beach. I had made an appointment with the Alfa mechanic for him to adjust the shim under bucket valves, after doing the task exactly once myself before realizing it just wasn't worth the time and hassle of pulling the cams as well as buying a whole shim set to get all the various thicknesses I might need. After dropping off the car, I caught the bus for a day of reading car magazines in cozy restaurant overlooking the ocean. Rain was forecast, so I wasn't bothered until the streets started looking more like canals and beating a retreat looked like a good idea. It turned out I had caught the last bus out of town, and we

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had water sloshing around in the stairwell of the bus as we chugged through the canyon. The mechanic's shop was in an industrial complex that was awash. I waded through water half way to my knees to get there. From there it was 35 miles of totally F-d up roads - many flooded - to get home. And it was rush hour. I plotted a course over the back roads, just like a lot of people. It was slow going, with lots of people hydrolocking or just flooding their cars by racing through huge standing puddles and streams. I pattered along, keeping my revs up to keep from stalling when the tail pipe went under water, but speeds down to prevent other problems. Or so I thought.

Turns out the alternator got good and wet. Of course it would, being mounted down low next to the subframe. So dead car - but at least at home this time. Called the local parts shop and had them special order the part. They said they would have it by afternoon. Called work and took a sick day. The part arrived, and I anticipated a running car very shortly. But fate and Alfa engineers would not have it that way. At first I tried to take off the old alternator by removing the long bolt at the bottom of the housing. But the bolt was too long, and ran into the front core support before clearing the housing. So close! Undeterred, I crawled under the car to remove the bracket that held the whole unit. That bracket however, had a stiffening rib. The rib and close quarters meant that despite sacrificing some dislocated joints and blood to the Alfa Gods, I could remove two of the nuts holding the bracket, but there was no tool - not even Snap-On - that could reach the third nut.

The only option I could see was to loosen the motor mounts, then jack up the engine enough to where the long bolt at the bottom of the housing could clear the core support. However, that seemed like a really dumb thing to do, and so I discounted it - until I talked to the Alfa mechanic. Yup, that was the correct procedure. Once the alternator was out, I could get to the third nut and remove it permanently. Voila!

As time has passed, and all these tricks have been documented on various Alfa websites, owning an Alfa has become so much easier. The better cars that have survived the years often see various improvements applied, so the owner need never encounter these adventures again. And while I've had my share of horror stories, I've enjoyed many more special moments that were made all the more special thanks to my Italian four wheeled buddy. Road trips from the balmy Mexican border to the frozen Yukon. Seaside bombing runs and breathless mountain marathons. After 268,000 miles of mostly motoring heaven, I now save her for days when I can drive her on fun roads or the race track.

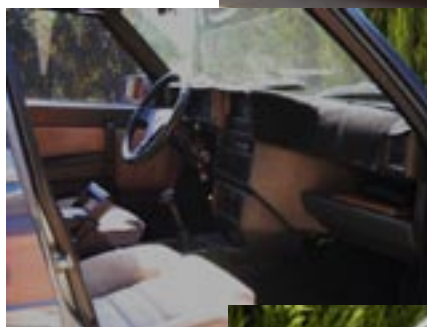


### From Richard Moker 1987 Milano For Sale

It has about two hundred thousand plus miles. The engine was rebuilt in or around 1996 or so.

I have all the documents of service and repairs. All of the work was performed by Nick Mute on Alfa Tech.

I am selling it because I have four cars and I want to eliminate at least two. I would like to get about \$2,750.00, but I will entertain any reasonable offer as long as my Alfa is going to a good home! I can be reached at home (760) 749-1183 or interested parties can also contact me via e-mail for additional information



Cut along dotted line and submit to AROC or AROCSD Membership staff

# Alfa Romeo Owners Club Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (H) \_\_\_\_\_

(W) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to affiliate with the local chapter nearest you? \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Some chapters charge additional local dues

How did you hear about AROC? \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate your interests:

- Technical       Vintage cars       Autocross       Track events  
 Tours       Social       Rally       Concours

National Dues: \$60.00 per year  
 Make check payable to Alfa Romeo Owners Club  
 P.O. Box 12340, Kansas City, MO 64116-0340

Cut along dotted line and submit to AROC or AROCSD Membership staff



## Romeo & Giulietta Advertising Rates

Size	Six Months	One Year
Business card	\$35.00	\$65.00
1/4 Page	75.00	140.00
1/2 Page	130.00	235.00
Full Page	225.00	410.00
Back Cover	155.00	275.00
Flier Rate	50.00	100.00

Rates are for camera-ready artwork.

Typesetting and design available at an additional fee.

The **deadline** for all ads is the first of the month prior to the AROCSD general meeting, which is on the first Wednesday of every month. Romeo & Giulietta is mailed to members, prospective members, and all nationally affiliated Alfa Romeo Owner's Club chapters once each month, 7-10 days prior to the AROCSD General Meeting. Total mailing (including advertisers) averages approximately 175 copies per month. For information regarding advertising in Romeo & Giulietta, please contact: Lance Dong (760) 798-1652 or Hillary Galkin-Griffith (760) 787-0301.



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 President

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December 19..... Christmas Party and Election of Board  
Bob and Elladine Foley, Escondido

*Alpha Omega*



Address Correction Requested

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AROC&D