

# Goldfields Alfa Group



in Association with AROCA (Vic) and

Alpine Alfisti Association of Australia inc.

## "Il Grande Gíro"

## 2022 Alfístí Spring Tour Report

### Grampians Gallivant & "Forays in SA"

Friday 14th October - Wednesday 26th October

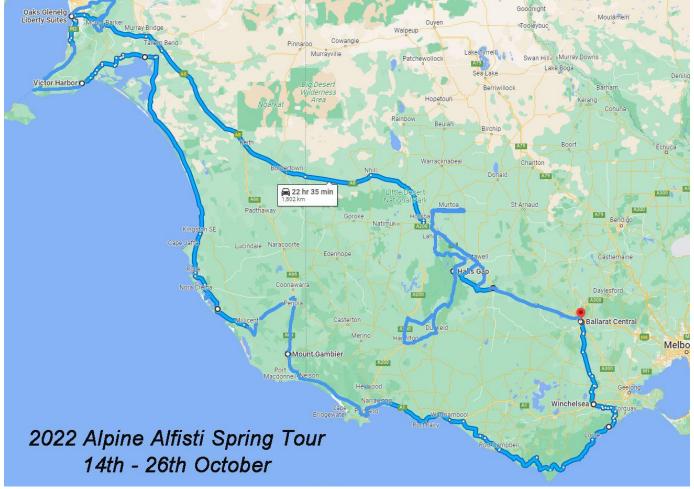
Well – <u>FINALLY</u> (3<sup>rd</sup> time lucky!), after 3-years of planning, many frustrations, cancellations, rearranging and de-tuning due to our friend 'Mr. COVID', our 'long-awaited' 13-day **'II Grande Giro' Alfisti Spring Tour** was at last achieved, over 14<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2022. This was despite 100mm of rain on the day before we left Ballarat, closing many roads and requiring some hastily redesigning of a few routes on the first two days!

And a <u>BIG</u> Tour it certainly was - in distance travelled (my total was 3,200km), the number of days spent driving, and the number of venues visited. But what a fantastic Alfa drive! Exploring some great Alfa roads (apart from the 'pothole ridden' Western Hwy!), exploring a wide variety of places, driving through some wonderful scenery with a great bunch of Alfisti to share it all with. Many thanks to everyone who participated in this amazing Alfa extravaganza, making it so enjoyable and such a wonderful success. We might just have to do it all again

A total of <u>54 Alfisti</u> participated throughout this event in <u>31 Alfas</u> (well – 29 Alfas, 1 Audi TT Quattro & 1 Ford Focus RS!), with attendee vehicles from Victoria (27), SA (3) and ACT (1).

The numbers for each stage were:

- Stage 1: 'Grampians Gallivant' 33 Alfisti & 19 Alfas
- Stage 2: 'The Bend & The Hills' 30 Alfisti & 17 Alfas, a Ford & 1 Audi
- Stage 3: 'Targa Fleurieu, Coorong & Great Ocean Road' 28 Alfisti & 15 Alfas, a Ford & 1 Audi



**AAST22 Tour Map** 

It certainly was a Big Alfa Tour discovering many 'BIG' Things:

- Big Lake Wendouree Ballarat Vic
- Big Arch of Victory Ballarat Vic
- 'Big Koala' Dadswells Bridge Vic
- 'Big Stick Shed' Murtoa Vic
- Four Big Silo Art Works Rupanyup, Horsham, Kaniva & Coonalpyn
- 'Big Pink Lake' Dimboola Vic
- Big 'Bend Racetrack' Tailem Bend SA
- Two Big Motor Museums Hamilton (Vic) & Birdwood (SA)
- 'Big Rocking Horse' Gumeracha SA
- Big Reservoir Myponga SA
- 'Larry The Big Lobster' Kingston SA
- Big Caves Tantanoola SA
- Big 'Blue Lake' Mt. Gambier SA
- Big Great Ocean Road along with its big costal rock formations.

Plus, we seemed to eat very well with some delightful Big meals at many nice restaurants along the way.

Well, what a 'surprise' Ballarat gave us on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> of October as the Alfisti arrived the day before the Tour started, with 4 inches of rain that day, causing flash flooding & many road closures! Welcome to 'Sunny Ballarat" - Does anybody know the dimensions of that Ark again? – An "Alfa Ark" perhaps! However, compared to many other areas of Victoria, we were let off quite mildly with many communities being devastated by floodwaters. Hence the routes for the first two days needed changing due to the backroads around Ballarat, Ararat & Halls Gap being closed. Google Maps came in very handy!

The heavy rain made a few participants making hasty vehicle changes, such as the Peake's swapping their Alfa 105 for a Mazda CX-5 so Lynnie's knitting didn't get wet!

#### **Tour Itinerary Highlights:**

**Thursday 13**<sup>th</sup> – Pre-Tour Dinner at Craigs Hotel, Ballarat. Unfortunately, due to the heavy rains and road closures, only 11 Alfisti were able to enjoy this early catch-up meal.

Day 1 - Friday 14<sup>th</sup>: Ballarat to Halls Gap (182km)

The Tour's 'Welcome Breakfast' was at 'The Turret Café' in Ballarat, after which **AROCA (Vic) Life member** - **Anne Beck,** officially 'flagged off' our Tour Party as we started this 'long-awaited' 13-day Alfa extravaganza.



AROCA (Vic) life member Anne Beck 'flagging' us off from Ballarat

Initially I led the group on a 'mini-Ballarat Tour' with a lap of Lake Wendouree, a stroll through the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, and a look at the 'Arch of Victory' before we headed west along the Avenue of Honour towards Beaufort.





**Ballarat Botanical Gardens** 

Ballarat's 'Arch of Victory'

Due to most of my planned route via backroads being flooded, I had to redirect most of Day 1 back onto the main Western Hwy – which unfortunately was in a shocking state with many huge potholes, causing two of our group to receive wheel damage and having to retire early.

It rained most of the day and attempting to avoid the holes made this drive very challenging. However, the remaining group made it safely to Beaufort for morning tea where we met up with Andrew & Andrea Sadow from Canberra in their Red Alfa Sud. We had lunch at the 'Sicilian's Italian Restaurant' in Ararat, afternoon tea at the 'Pomonal Estate Winery' and then onto our accommodation in Halls Gap for three nights. Tea was at the delightful 'Kookaburra Restaurant.



Multiple Road closures due to floods!



Andrew & Andrew's Alfa Sud needing a garage at Beaufort?

#### Day 2 - Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>: North Grampians & Murtoa (329km)

Once again due to floods closing some roads, a quick rerouting was necessary, but we were still able to drive along the great 'Roses Gap Road' through the Northern Grampians, avoiding the occasional Kangaroo. Then we headed north onto Murtoa for lunch at the 'Wild Duck Kafe', then a visit to the iconic Murtoa 'Stick Shed', Rupanyup Silo Art, but then we had to double back via Longerenong to Great Western for afternoon tea at "Salingers Café'. The 'Alpine Alfisti Association' held its AGM, before our group tea at 'Darcy's Restaurant' in our motel.



Alfas at 'Wild Duck Kafe' - Murtoa



**Rupanyup Silo Art** 



AAST22 Alfisti at The Stick Shed - Murtoa



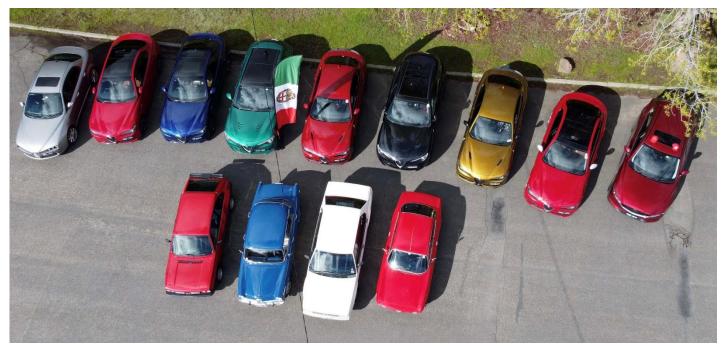
#### Day 3 - Sunday 16th: Southern Grampians (221km)

One of Leon's annoying 'Photo Shoots' was held at Lake Bellfield – nicely capturing the group of Alfisti & their Alfas (& 1 Mazda – but they did have Alfa caps on the roof!). David Roberts took a few snaps with his drone as well, adding an interesting perspective to the Alfa collection on display. A nice drive to Dunkeld for morning tea via Mirranatwa Gap and Victoria Valley Road. Then onto Hamilton to visit the eclectic collection in 'Glen Campe's Motor Museum'. It's always a joy to catch up with Glen & Margaret and search through their huge shed full of many fascinating items & cars. This year he even had an Alfa Romeo banner in his front window to greet our Alfisti, and he was wearing an Alfa cap I had presented to him on an earlier visit. Still no Alfas though in his collection but he was very keen in attempting to keep one of our Touring Alfas for his shed, especially Marie's 1961 Giulietta. As is my yearly practice, on behalf of the group I presented Glen with another cap to add to his huge cap collection. A short drive north to Cavendish and to one of our regular Tour highlights – an amazing 5-course banquet lunch at 'The Bunyip Hotel'. An incredible feast, during which I presented the special 'Grampians Gallivant' trophy (refer below). Tea was at the 'Flame Brothers Smokehouse' back in Halls Gap, although most only had very light meals!



Alfas & Alfisti at Lake Bellfield – Halls Gap





Alfas at Lake Bellfield – Halls Gap (Photo David Roberts)





Kat testing her new Giulia QV Fire truck?

Campe Motor Museum – Hamilton





The 1929 Stutz



Marg & Christine relaxing in the 1929 Stutz

Leon presenting Glen Campe another cap for his collection - Hamilton



Glen trying to persuade Marie to leave her 1961 Giulietta ti for his collection

#### Day 4 - Monday 17th: Halls Gap to Tailem Bend (410km)

**Stage 2** begins with another altered route due to road closures, so we had an opportunity to do an impromptu visit to 'The Big Koala' at Dadswells Bridge on our way to morning tea at 'Cheeky Fox Café' in Horsham. A new Silo Art in Horsham was worth a look, then onto the 'Pink Lake' near Dimboola, a brief stop in Nhill to check-in on my 96-year-old mother-in-law, who was quite chuffed that 14 Alfas parked by her front gate! Another Silo Art inspection at Kaniva before lunch at the 'Morning Loaf Bakery' in Bordertown, and yet another Silo Art stopover in Coonalpyn – where a few people sampled the local Waffles. Our group stayed at the Rydges Hotel at 'The Bend Motorsport Park' near Tailem Bend and had tea in their 'Apex restaurant'.

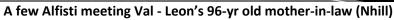


Alfas at 'The Big Koala' - Dadswells Bridge



Alfas at Silo Art - Horsham









Silo Art – Kaniva



A few Criminal Alfisti - Bordertown SA



Silo Art - Coonalpyn



#### Day 5 - Tuesday 18th: Tailem Bend to Glenelg (154km)

Marg & Leon's 36<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary today – once again celebrated apart, with Marg still in Halls Gap while I'm in SA After breakfast many of the Alfisti did a few 'Laps of The Bend'. Despite being behind a Pace Car and not allowed to pass anyone, it was still a real hoot driving around this 7.7km GT circuit – which is apparently the second longest track in the world - behind the 28km Nürburgring track in Germany. After many smiles and exaggerated tales of 'wannabe' Fangio's, the convoy headed off along the highway for lunch at the Summit Café on top of Mt. Lofty, giving great views over the city of Adelaide. Then we headed down to Glenelg, via another stopover at 'Windy Point Lookout' with more views over Adelaide. A very popular spot to 'watch the city lights' at night – a few fond 'younger Leon' memories there Tea was held at 'Luciano's on The Marina' at Glenelg, who had created a lovely 'welcome' sign with the appropriate Alfa Group logos for us and the venue provided great views of the sunset over the bay.





Alfisti at 'The Bend' SA





Laps of The Bend (Photo Andrea Sadow)





**Laps of The Bend** (Photos Andrea Sadow)



Leon, Clyde & Andrew – three happy wannabe Fangio's after their 'Laps of The Bend'

(Photo Andrea Sadow)



Alfisti at 'Windy point Lookout' - Adelaide





Alfas at 'Windy Point Lookout' - Adelaide (Photo Andrew Sadow)





(Photo Grant Jansen)

Sunset at Glenelg – SA

#### Day 6 - Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>: Glenelg to Birdwood Motor Museum (139km)

Once we battled the early city traffic, we wound our way up to Stirling via the old road out of Adelaide - the Old Mt. Barker Road via 'Eagle on the Hill'. Scary memories of many a drive along that narrow road behind trucks in the rain late at night, plus the dangerous 'Devil's Elbow' where many trucks rolled when they failed to negotiate this tight hairpin bend. The new 'Heysen Tunnels' in 2000 created a much safer and easier route - but has now made the Mt. Barker region rapidly expand. Morning tea at 'The Red Cacao Chocolatier' in Stirling then onto more backroads to the 'National Motor Museum' in Birdwood. Upon arrival our Alfas were carefully parked on the museum's forecourt and hence a few more of Leon's group shots were required! I hadn't visited this museum for over 30 years, and was very impressed with the collection held inside, and yes, they had one Alfa - a yellow 1970 GT Veloce 1750. Many years ago, they did have a white 'Giocattolo' - a 1986 mid-engined Alfa Sprint 2.5lt V6 (later a Holden V8). Only 15 of these were built before the company folded in 1989. They had a great display of Holdens, including many design prototypes – including the futuristic 1969 'Hurricane' (even had a reversing camera & navigation system in 1969!), the unfortunately abandoned sleek & beautiful 1970 Torana GTR-X, and the very impressive 2005 Holden 'EFIJY' (a cross between the FJ Holden and a modern Hot-rod that won the 2007 North American Concept Car of the Year Award). Plus, a nice (& expensive) 2008 Bugatti Veyron and a 2010 Lamborghini Murcielago SV for those who have a few 'spare' coins!

Afternoon tea at 'The Big Rocking Horse' at Gumeracha, before our route back to Glenelg took in some nice scenery & some delightful Alfa roads — Gorge Rd., Corkscrew Rd., and Norton Summit Rd. Our group tea was held at 'Mamma Carmela Café Pizzeria' on Jetty Rd. in Glenelg.



Alfas at the 'National Motor Museum' - Birdwood SA



Alfisti at the 'National Motor Museum' – Birdwood SA



HOLDEN

2008 Bugatti Veyron

1970 Holden GTR-X



2005 Holden 'EFIJY'



The Big Rocking Horse – Gumeracha SA

#### Day 7 - Thursday 20th: A Rest Day. (A Rest for some while Leon does an extra 288km!)

Now at the halfway mark of our long tour, I had decided to ensure the group had some rest from driving and gave them a chance to rest in Glenelg or catch the tram into the city and explore Adelaide. While they all 'took a breather', I 'rested' by doing another 288km circuit, heading 100km north to Balaklava visiting a few more relatives, and up to Auburn in the Clare Valley to see friends. Plus, I had a guided tour through my old country High School since I couldn't attend their special Centenary in a few days' time. The school has certainly altered a bit since I left in 1975, with large computer screens now in every classroom — "where are the good old blackboards" I asked! Plus, every building was now properly air-conditioned too — "Argh the kids of today are getting too soft!" — Yes "Gramps!"



**Glenelg Trams - South Australia** 

#### Day 8 - Friday 21st: Glenelg to Victor Harbor. (229km)

**Stage 3** begins with us retracing part of AROCA (SA)'s annual 'Targa Fleurieu'. Again, we battled with early city traffic before winding our way via Chandlers Hill and Kangarilla to morning tea at the 'Wirra Wirra Winery' in McLaren Vale. Then a drive to the Myponga Reservoir Lookout on our way to lunch at the 'Forktree Brewery' overlooking Carrickalinga and the coast. Following lunch, we drove south to the 'Cape Jervois Lookout' encountering unexpected thick fog on the way, but thankfully this cleared so we could still see Kangaroo Island across the water plus the ferry loading up below us. Our drive then took us along Range Road to Victor Harbor, which is usually a great scenic road, but this was totally obscured by yet more very thick fog. While the group had their tea in the 'McCracken Country Bar & Grill Restaurant', I visited my 92-year-old parents at Pt. Elliot just down the road.



Alfisti at Myponga Dam - SA

#### Day 9 - Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>: Victor Harbor to Robe (340km)

A pleasant drive through Middleton and Strathalbyn to our morning tea stop at the 'Angas Plains Winery'. While Judy fed us some very tasty (& healthy?) scones jam & cream, Phil assisted by allowing us to taste a few of their lovely wines and spoke about how they started up this winery. My brother who lives in Strath caught up with me here so I could buy him a coffee! I suggested that he should come and have a look at some 'real cars'! A short drive through the picturesque Langhorne Creek wine region and onto Wellington, where we caught the ferry across the River Murray. With all the recent rain, the river was quite high and flowing swiftly. Since we had 15 cars, it necessitated 3 separate trips to all get across the river. Trip one managed to get 4 of us on board, Trip 2 had the ferry full of 9 Alfas plus the Audi, but that left poor Andrew and his blue Ford Focus RS waiting alone on the bank until Trip 3. Once Andrew had crossed the river, we turned south for our lunch at Meningie and then a stop at the 'Jack Point Observatory' allowing a good view of the Coorong and watching many flocks of pelicans in flight. As we arrived in Kingston, we met 'Larry – The Big Lobster' which created a few more iconic tour photos. Plus, we found a nearby Tractor Museum, so we parked Claude & Leanne's 'tractor' Alfa 157 diesel next to the sign. Throughout the whole Tour, Claude was picked on for his 'agricultural' Alfa – but he had the last laugh averaging over 1,000km between tank refills!

Tea was at the wonderful 'Sails restaurant' in Robe. Despite being booked out, very busy and very noisy, this was one of the Tour meal highlights for their fantastic food and service. It was noted that a few Alfisti consumed some of 'Larry's' relatives – so no wonder he looked angry when we met him earlier!



Alfas at 'Angas Plains Winery' - Langhorne Creek



A ferry full of Alfas (& 1 Audi) with Andrew & the Ford Focus left behind - Wellington SA



Alfas at the 'Jack Point Observatory' - Coorong SA



'Larry' the Big Lobster about to devour two Giulia QV's plus Andrew & the Ford - Kingston SA





Claude & Leanne's 'Tractor' Alfa 147 at the Tractor Museum – Kingston SA



Martin's Audi TT 'Alfa-corrected'

#### Day 10 - Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup>: Robe to Mt. Gambier (280km)

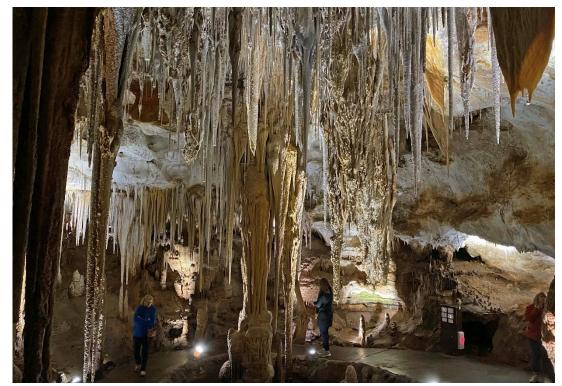
Breakfast at Robe's 'Union Café', then a short stop at Beachport, allowed me to catch up with a cousin of mine. Very cool & windy at the 'Viewpoint Lookout' there. An inspection of the interesting 'Tantanoola Caves' before our lunch in Penola in the Coonawarra wine district. A few members visited a few of the local wineries while in the area, before heading south to Mt. Gambier. At the BP petrol station at Nangwarry (just south of Penola), a few Alfisti made the young attendant's day as he was very excited to see not one, but four Alfas visit his servo, with his phone taking many snaps and the largest grin I've ever seen.

Despite the heavy rain, a few of us visited the iconic 'Blue Lake' which due to the overcast weather was more of a grey colour than its usual deep blue. Tea was at the 'Caffe Belgiorno's' Italian Restaurant where we enjoyed more good food in a room to ourselves.



Alfas at Beachport SA





Tantanoola Caves - SA



One wet Giulia QV at The Blue Lake - Mt. Gambier



One very happy BP Servo attendant with Denis & Craig



The Blue Lake in the rain - Mt. Gambier SA

#### Day 11 - Monday 24th: Mt. Gambier to Warrnambool (235km)

We met for breakfast at the 'Sorrentos Café' opposite the 'Cave Gardens', and rain accompanied us on our drive back over the SA/Vic border at Nelson and for morning tea at the 'Margaret & Anges Café' in Portland. Like last year, we were able to watch the large B-Double Semis over at the Port being tipped nearly vertical to unload their cargo of woodchips - fascinating to watch. Then it was onto Pt. Fairy for our lunch at 'The Wharf' restaurant, which is located next to the Moyne River. They usually don't open on Mondays, but they did especially for our Alfa group, and this was one of the best meals we had all tour. The group presented 'The Tour Director' some nice Hollick wine & a new 'GPS Unit' to assist my navigation during the remainder of the tour

On the way to Warrnambool, we visited 'Tower Hill' which is a large dormant volcano crater and drove through the small Irish settlement of Koroit, before heading into Warrnambool. Our group dined at another of my favourite restaurants, 'Images', and during the evening I presented three more Tour awards (see below).





Alfas, rain & roadworks - near Portland (Photos Andrea Sadow)





Alfisti lunch at the 'Wharf Restaurant' - Pt. Fairy



**Tower Hill near Koroit** 

#### Day 12 – Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup>: Warrnambool to Apollo Bay (178km)

Breakfast was at 'The Pavilion Café' near Warrnambool's breakwater, where we got to watch a few of the local racehorses do their 'water training'.

Today's drive was along the 'Great Ocean Road' where we visited the 'Bay of Islands' & 'London Arch' (formerly 'London Bridge' before it partially collapsed). Lunch was held at the '12 Rocks Beach Bar Cafe' in Port Campbell, as the mist rolled in. Following lunch, we visited 'Loch Ard Gorge' & the iconic '12 Apostles' (or the 7 or so still standing). As always, this major tourist attraction was very busy, but the area was mostly covered in fog, so these landmarks couldn't be seen. A pleasant drive onto Apollo Bay then through the scenic Otway Ranges with its many ferns and tall timbers. Tea was at the 'Casalingo Italian Restaurant' in Apollo Bay. A great meal here as well.



Graham, Carole, Andrew & Andrea - 'Bay of Islands'



Alfisti at London Arch - Great Ocean Rd.



The 'London Arch' - formerly 'London Bridge



Alfas at Pt. Campbell with the fog rolling in



Andrea, Andrew, Kat, Claude & Leanne at The London Arch



Alfa convoy on The Great Ocean Road (Photo Andrea Sadow)



What you 'should see' & what we actually saw!

Fog obscuring the 12 Apostles

#### Day 13- Wednesday 26th: Apollo Bay to Ballarat (215km)

Our last day on Tour began with breakfast at 'Café 153' before we headed east along the 'Great Ocean Road' once again. The recent heavy rains had caused multiple landslides, so there was a lot of road repairs being done plus areas having heavy 'netting' attached to rockfaces to prevent further rockfalls closing this important costal tourist road. Fascinating to watch the workers abseiling down the rockfaces fixing the netting to the rock walls.

Lunch was at 'Onda Food House Café' in Aireys Inlet, before we drove through Anglesea, past another icon – the house perched on the pedestal, and onto Winchelsea for afternoon tea at the 'Café La Hoot'. And what 'A Hoot' this little café was too.

A few more of the group departed from this location making their way back to Melbourne, while the remaining few Alfas headed north back to Ballarat passed many more of the local large Wind Turbines. Our final Tour meal together was held at the tiny 'Dyers Steak Stable' restaurant with just 7 Alfisti attending to watch in amazement as Peter actually consumed his 800g slab of steak!



'Netting' being fixed to the rockface (Photo Andrea Sadow)



Alfisti at 'Café La Hoot' - Winchelsea



Alfas on The Great Ocean Road (Photo Andrea Sadow)



Peter's 800g Steak! - Ballarat

Well, after 3-years of planning and fine-tuning, our 13-day Alfisti Spring Tour was finally all over Despite COVID and floods, we were finally able to do this special long Alfa tour to SA and we survived it all. My total distance was 3,200kms – sure beats working!

What a great event, shared with a great bunch of fine Alfisti and their wonderful Alfas. Many thanks to everyone who participated throughout the Tour to help make it such a fun time for everyone.

My very special thanks go to Peter Atkinson, who – despite not being able attend this year's Alfisti Spring Tour, was extremely helpful in assisting me over the last few years in planning and fine-tuning this huge event. This Tour would not have eventuated without Peter's guidance and support!

Now the planning begins to attempt to replicate a similar **'II Grande Giro' in 2023**. Hopefully there isn't a 3-year delay before our next 'Big Tour'! Possible dates are Monday 16<sup>th</sup> to Monday 30<sup>th</sup> of October and yes, it's grown one extra day now making it a 14-day event & again in three distinctive stages. More information will be advertised soon.

#### **AAST22 AWARDS:**

#### Stage 1:

AROCA (Vic) 'Grampians Gallivant'
Trophy: to Andrew & Andrea Sadow,
who 'bravely' decided to bring their
1984 red Alfa Sud ti on Tour. During
the first two days there was much
regret ("Should have bought the
Stelvio"!) as they confronted torrential
rains, wind, road closures, detours,
potholes, and delays to eventually
meet our group at Beaufort on Day 2.
Plus, they organised all our 2-way
radios and name badges during the
event. A trophy well deserved for their
perseverance and tenacity.



#### AROCA (Vic) also donated two bottles of wine. These were presented to:

- 1) Marie & Vin Sharp for the oldest Alfa on Tour (1961 Blue Giulietta ti)
- 2) Kat Marmara-Stewart for the youngest, her 3-week-old 'Lipari Ochre' 2022 Alfa Giulia QV.

#### Stage 2:

**AAAA 'Forays in SA' Trophy:** to **Craig Milne & Paula Heap** for their amazing job of ensuring everyone mingled and had a great time throughout the Tour. Craig's ability to stir everyone continually (including the 'Tour Director'!) yet still be perceived as a 'likable bloke' – a good effort well worth this trophy.



Alpine Alfisti Cap: to Peter Marmara-Stewart for taking on the task of carrying, setting up and then dismantling the huge Alfa Club banner throughout the whole Tour. This was greatly appreciated.



(Photos Andrea Sadow)



**Special Ferrari Cap:** Awarded to "Copy That" Andrew Inglis, for his amazing job of being our convoy's 'Tail-gunner' and keeping the entire group together. I overlooked the fact that he wasn't actually in his Alfa but the 2016 Blue Ford Focus RS, so the 'F' Ferrari Cap seemed doubly appropriate.