

Cuore Sportivo Tour

10th - 14th March 2021

Words by Clyde Hay; photos by Barb Hay & Leon Cottle

This tour was originally planned for March 2020 and was to run through Victoria, the Snowy Mountains and finish in Canberra to coincide with Auto Italia. But as we all know, things changed, so this tour along with Auto Italia 2020 was cancelled.

Move forward to 2021, and a few freedoms allowed the tour to proceed, albeit just staying in Victoria - to overcome any possible border closures that may have beset us during the tour.



Wednesday 10th March and 25 Alfisti in 16 Alfa Romeos headed off from the Bean Seen Cafe in Lilydale, heading to Mansfield. In Yea, we collected Claude and Leanne in their 159 sedan, then passed through Bonnie Doon and stopped for coffee and a chat in Mansfield.



We then continued on to Whitfield and our lunch spot at the Mountain View Hotel, a beautiful setting in the courtyard under the nice shady trees.



Here we picked up 3 more Alfa Romeos and 5 Alfisti.



After lunch it was the mandatory photo shoot, which surprisingly was a very snappy affair, followed by a short drive out of the King Valley to our overnight destination of Beechworth.



Distance of 290km for the day.

Dinner was at the Bridge Road Brewery in Beechworth - pizza and great catch-ups!



Day 2 dawned fine and sunny and we collected another participant to join the group.



Today we were heading to Mt Buffalo, via Stanley and Myrtleford, where Keith and his Coffee Van were waiting for us in the Mt Buffalo Chalet Car Park.



There were some wonderful views over the Ovens Valley too, though a little misty.



More photos of the group and then off to Bright for lunch at the Bright Brewery where we had been set up in the nice vine covered courtyard.



A very pleasant location and great attentive staff made our stay very welcome.

From lunch it was onto Tawonga Gap for more photos and our first casualty of the tour, a simple adjustment of moving cars for the photo resulted in smoke coming from under Claude and Leanne's 159. Lots of close attention by a few quickly had the battery disconnected and on closer inspection, a leaking power steering fluid was dripping on the alternator.



A flat-bed tow truck was called and back to Melbourne for the trio.

The view from Sullivans Lookout at Tawonga Gap was the reason that we all stopped there!



The group then headed to Wodonga via Mongan's Bridge and Tangambalanga skirting around the Hume Weir before arriving in Wodonga, today we covered 240km with great scenery. Dinner tonight was at Miss Amelie's restaurant in the old, newly renovated, Railway Station.

Onto day three and with the arrival of Rob and Pru from Talgarno in the 156 and Paul Edwards, the originator of the Alpine Tours and his son in a Volvo, the group was now complete.



Following our morning briefing at the Bean Station Café, we started by retracing part of yesterday's route to Tallangatta for morning tea.



From there it was on to Dartmouth Dam and then Mitta Mitta via Lockhart Gap Rd and then the Omeo Hwy.



Lunch was in the Pub which, believe it or not, was full! Another nice meal enjoyed and then we proceeded to our overnight stop at Falls Creek via Glen Wills and the Bogong High Plains Rd. Alfa Romeos were not the only cars in the car park, a dozen or so Renault Alpines arrived shortly after.

The car park was quite full and this was where our second casualty occurred. Martin in the Brera Spider had parked on the outer edge of the car park and had gone in to the hotel to check in. Leon who was parked next to the Spider, was still unpacking but sensed something moving, unfortunately the Spider had started rolling but could not be stopped. It ended up going over the edge of the car park into the gully below.



On checking it was found the handbrake was applied but it was not in gear. The drive to Falls Creek had been quite demanding on brakes and it appears that the brake disc had expanded with heat and on cooling down, resumed its normal width resulting in the hand brake pressure being released. Lesson learned here, was to always put a manual car in gear when parking!

Meanwhile, Leon issued the following statement in his defence:

Despite the banter for the last 6+ years over the merits of the GT verses the Spider and the widespread suspicion: I DID NOT push the Spider over the cliff! However, we await the results of the fingerprint report from the rear of the Spider to confirm this.



Martin continued on with the Tour by joining Grant in the Giulia QV – and enjoying a few spirited drives too.

Another day of over 200 km with some challenging roads squared off with wonderful scenery.

Our last day was a partial retrace back to the Omeo Hwy and then via Anglers Rest for a morning tea stop in Omeo.



It was pleasing that a few new Cafes had opened up since the tour was planned, giving us a great choice. From there it was onto Mt Hotham for lunch, this section of road was wonderful, with lots of nice flowing bends.

The weather forecast was finally going to turn against us, so a quick luncheon at The General was taken before heading down off the mountain to Bright for a coffee break.

An easy drive followed to our overnight stop at Wangaratta with dinner at Hollywood's Pizza Cafe, another day of plus 240km.

This brought the tour to an end and as is the norm, an award is given to the person who best fits the Spirit of the Tour award. This year the choice was fairly simple, Martin displayed fantastic attitude following his mishap, continuing on the tour, and enjoying the "new ride". New member Kat, who had shown considerable enthusiasm in her new Giulia, along with her son Caspian, received the President's Cap award.



On Sunday everyone headed home, some north and some south. Those driving south, visited Chrismont (below) at Cheshunt for morning tea, then headed to Mansfield for lunch before the last leg of the homeward trip.



Until next time,
Clyde.