



Alfesta Stories – The Teens – 2010-2019

Alfesta 2010 - Victoria

(By Victor Lee) Like most of AROCA Victoria's 2010 Centenary Celebrations, planning for Alfesta 2010 started in early 2008, when an idea was floated to combine Victoria's turn to hold Alfesta with a two day race weekend held at the same time. The appearance of some "special" Alfas at such an event was a good possibility...

Victorian Alfesta attendees sought the initial expression of interest and received the participants' approval at Alfesta 2008, Mooroolaba to allow Victoria to move Alfesta away from its traditional Easter timeslot to an earlier weekend.

This approval was reconfirmed a year later by Alfesta attendees when we presented Alfesta 2010 at the final dinner at Alfesta 2009, Orange. The Silverwater Resort was announced as the venue, and attendees were updated on the increased likelihood of the aforementioned appearance of these "special" cars.

About two-thirds into 2009 we discovered that, as is typical in the world of motorsport, Club level events were going to be pushed to the bottom of the pile. After a wait for the Australian Grand Prix, then the Adelaide Clipsal 500, then the annual Phillip Island Historic Meeting to confirm dates, we were left with our Alfesta dates and our two day race weekend on different weekends.

What was initially thought as disastrous actually became quite advantageous to us as organisers. Alfesta would now be held on the same weekend as the annual Phillip Island Historic Meeting. Would (predominantly social) Alfisti prefer to watch club-type cars or real classics? The latter was more likely, so we replanned the event on that basis.

Silverwater Resort is a four star self contained apartment resort with conference facilities. Spread over seven hectares, other facilities include indoor and outdoor pools, tennis, basketball and volleyball courts, children's facilities and a resort oval. It hosts one, two and three bedroom, self-serviced apartments.

We initially reserved accommodation for about 80 people, but then in December bookings literally started flooding in (typical Alfisiti – booking at the last moment!), and had to reserve more rooms. Most of our attendees chose the one bedroom apartments but because of other conference bookings at the Resort and the fact that the Phillip Island Historic Meeting was on the same weekend, we were unable to obtain more rooms and some Alfisti on the waiting list missed out. Some even volunteered to co-share a three bedroom apartment (which has two bathrooms) so they could still attend the event.

Because of the heavy bookings, the Resort gave us an unexpected surprise. At the last moment, we were informed by them that they were unable to provide any more one bedroom apartments to us and we will be provided with two bedroom apartments and extra three bedroom apartments at no additional cost, giving guests that extra bit of space in their rooms!

As we were to discover later, this 'bonus' caused some disquiet amongst some attendees, who asked the question: "Why couldn't we fit more people in?" For the record, this was at the discretion of the resort and more importantly, the events scheduled over the weekend could not physically allow for



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larger numbers than what we had already organised and booked. We were maxed out! On this note, I want to thank Graeme & Lynnie Peake who did a superb job in answering people's enquiries and taking their bookings.

On the Thursday evening of Alfesta, we welcomed our attendees. For the majority, this was the end of their journey from their respective homes. For others, it was another event in the AROCA Vic's calendar of Centenary Celebrations in March as several had stayed over from the immensely successful 'Alfas Only' two day race event at the Phillip Island circuit held the previous weekend.

It was heartening to see the largest contingent of New South Welshmen (30) attending in a long time, along with the great effort from 6 West Australian Alfisiti. There were 19 Queenslanders, 4 from the ACT, 16 from SA and 42 from Victoria. Every division was represented in what was the largest Alfesta in over ten years!

In our welcome room, where attendees were checked off, we showed our visitors the special "Alfa Grille" chocolates that we had been made up especially for Alfesta (also because there would be no 'Easter Bunny'!), along with a framed poster print depicting the Alfetta 159 at the Phillip Island Circuit by artist Bill Caldwell (number one of 50 produced). Also on display were the prizes for our Sunday night raffle, as well as all our Club Shop wares. This room would become very well frequented over the weekend!

After the buffet breakfast on Friday, the official welcome by the Alfesta Committee and the traditional group photograph, it was time to start our first activity, the Mix 'n' Match welcome games. We divided and deliberately allocated all the attendees into seven groups so there were different state people in each group.

Mary was the game master and devised the seven games. These ranged from simple physical games like golf putting (Gasket Golf!), throwing horseshoes (Broken Springs) and target throwing (Sticky Serpent); to more intellectual games like a memory game (Rusty Memory), Alfa grilles recognition (Know Your Hearts) and general Club knowledge (Club Challenge). But it was the hilarious Helium Stick game that was to prove the most fun and challenging. At one point, staff from the resort came running to see what all the laughter was about. My thanks go to Dorothy Caldicott and Vanessa Sharp in assisting in running two of the games.

Lunch was at Panny's Chocolate Factory where we were treated to chocolate samples, a chocolate tour and lunch. Did I mention the chocolate samples?! Afternoon was free time and some went to the track to watch the Classics and others made use of free vouchers included in the Alfesta pack, including the historical farm and afternoon tea at Churchill Island.

At 3.30pm, we had arranged a special visitor to the Resort. The Alfetta 159 was en route to Phillip Island circuit, and we coordinated it to be unloaded from its transporter for an hour or so onto the resort's Village Green. Alfisti were able to have a private viewing, up close and personal as well as many photos of this rare and special part of Alfa history.

We had an early gourmet BBQ dinner at the resort because of the arrival of two coaches to take everyone to the famous Penguin Parade. When you're visiting Phillip Island, this is a must! Luckily the evening was not too cold and everyone had great views of the penguins as they scurried their way back to their burrows.



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Saturday saw the Ray Sharp Observation Run (proudly sponsored by South Australian, Julie Crafter's company – Car Torque). This event has special significance for Victorian members, as the trophy remembers Ray Sharp, a stalwart of the Victorian Club and a really devious setter of observation runs! Who remembers getting lost within 100 metres of the start line at Echuca in 1996?! Whilst no one got lost on Vin & Marie Sharp's run, it wasn't without its interesting moments ... like when participants were required to walk around their car twice at a break stop!

Vin & Marie had a special treat for Andrew and Rachel Carra when they rolled up to the start point in their people mover with three young kids in the back. The kids were given lollies and whistles. And in case Mum & Dad took away the whistles, the kids were given spares! Even with all these added distractions, the Carras were the winners of the Observation Run.

The finishing point of the Observation Run was the Seal Rocks Nobbies Function Centre at the far western point of the Phillip Island. A clear blue sky and panoramic vista of the ocean all the way to the horizon combined with the nearby Nobbies in the foreground made a pretty spectacular backdrop for our luncheon.

Saturday afternoon was allocated free time, until the coaches picked us up for the short journey to Dutchies Stone Grill Restaurant for dinner. What was different about this meal was that all our main courses were served on a very hot stone rick, which then continued to cook in front of you for a different eating experience. I did a mini-trivia quiz which was won by Ross and Lilliana Flood (Victoria).

Sunday was our busiest day. An earlier start was necessary so everyone could get their nice, clean Alfas to the Cowes foreshore car park for the Wash 'n' Shine (proudly sponsored by Victorian Alfa Dealer, Lance Dixon Alfa) by 9.15 am. Dark skies and the threat of rain did not deter diehard Alfisti from cleaning their cars upon arrival, in case it picked up that little bit of dirt on the short journey.

Judging was by people's choice. It was interesting to note, however, that most cars received two votes! Most of the votes were in favour of Gary & Nerine Pearce's 105 GTC for 'Best Presented Car' and Colin & Terry Densley's modern Spider for the 'Most Desirable Car' award.

After the Wash 'n' Shine, we drove in convoy to the Phillip Island Circuit and into a specially roped off area that was reserved for us. A short walk over the pedestrian bridge later led us to the functions area above the main straight Pit Garages, our lunch destination. In addition to the Alfesta attendees, we had a total of over 170 people for the luncheon. We were directly above where the Alfetta 159 was garaged (P3 and Tipo 33 were its stablemates) so we could see all the action first hand.

We welcomed Diana Gaze who graciously accepted the Club's invitation to be the Patron of the Alfa Centenary Events. Alfisti Ian Frost was volunteered to auction a low numbered Alfa Centenary Rally Badge. The original Alfetta 159 painting by local artist and past AROCA member, Bill Caldwell was displayed and subsequently sold at the luncheon. VHRR chairman Ian Tate sent his thanks to the Club for its attendance and participation and the wide variety of cars that the Club assisted in getting to the event. The forecasted rain did arrive, but we were well covered watching the racing from the comfort of the function centre.

Alfesta then finished up another year with the Presentation Dinner (sponsored by South Australian, Paul Lonsdale's Turin Imports. Jeremy Caldicott was our MC for the evening, keeping the night's



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activities under timely control. We had a few fun activities over the process of the night like auctioning off the framed number one limited edition print of the Alfetta 159 by artist Bill Caldwell, along with the auction of the Centenary Rally Badge number '156' and the fantastic raffle prizes.

After brief goodbyes on Monday morning, it was all over! Several of the Alfisti then continued the AROCA Vic Centenary Celebrations by participating in Gary Pearce and Tony Hawker's two day road rally to Lorne via the Sorrento Ferry and the Great Ocean Road. For a report on the two day drive written by Leon Cottle, [click here](#).

I want to take this opportunity to thank the hard working Alfesta Committee: Graeme & Lynn Peake, Vin & Marie Sharp, Jeremy Caldicott and my wife, Mary. For without them, this Alfesta would not have proceeded.

I would also like to make one last mention and express our sincere appreciation to our Alfesta financial sponsors and contributors, the majority of whom are club members.

Alfesta 2011 – South Australia

Held in the Clare Valley, one of Australia's premium wine regions.

Alfesta 2012 – Tasmania

No official Alfesta – Replaced by "Turismo Tasmania".

Alfesta 2013 – Australian Capital Territory

Held in Canberra.

Alfesta 2014 – Queensland

Held at the Gold Coast.

Alfesta 2015 – Victoria

Held at Creswick.

Alfesta 2016 – South Australia

Held at Creswick.

Alfesta 2017 – Tasmania

Held in Launceston.

Alfesta 2018

No Alfesta was held in 2018.



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Alfesta 2019 - Victoria

(By Keith Faulkner) The 2019 Easter long weekend saw over one hundred Alfisti travel to the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria for the forty-second Alfesta. This year was also the Golden Jubilee of Alfesta hosts, AROCA Victoria, which formed in 1969. As the Victorian State Division was the first AROCA Division to come into existence, 2019 could also be considered the 50th Anniversary of AROCA itself.

For the statistically-minded, the official attendee list numbered 105, made up of 54 from Victoria, 21 from Queensland, 10 from New South Wales, 9 from South Australia, 4 from Tasmania, plus international visitors from The Netherlands (Harry Hoving and Maartje Von Son) and America (Dave Mericle).

The venue for Alfesta was “Brooklands of Mornington”, a resort-style accommodation and function centre, located a short distance from the foreshore, and our group had pretty much booked out the place. We just had enough time to register, collect our Alfesta Goody Bags, and find our rooms before it was time to head across to the bar for a “meet-and-greet” drink in the Brooklands Bar, followed by a gourmet BBQ. While Alfesta officially runs from Friday to Monday, it has become traditional to offer attendees an optional Thursday evening light dinner or supper for those who want to start the fun early.

Good Friday dawned cool and sunny and, after a buffet breakfast and official welcome address, we walked the short distance from Brooklands to Main Street to undertake the “Mornington Mystery Walk” activity. While most of the shops were closed, a number of cafes were open and it seemed every second person in Mornington was out walking their dogs. Clutching our question-and-answer sheets, groups of Alfisti walked up and down the street trying to spot the answers to the cryptic clues.

After the morning exercising our legs and brains, we rendezvoused at one of the foreshore parks where the Alfesta 2019 team provided our boxed lunch. There was some comparing of notes, but Alfisti are a competitive lot and most groups chose to keep their answers close to their chest. I was quietly confident I had nailed it (as it turned out, I only missed one answer), but I actually forgot to hand in my answer sheet in time! But that’s the way the Alfesta biscotti crumbles. Nick and Angela Hodgman from AROCA Victoria emerged as the worthy winners of the “Mornington Mystery Walk”.

After a short rest back out the hotel, it was time to line up on the footpath for the coaches that would take us to the restaurant for dinner. Rather than drive straight to the restaurant, our coaches took the scenic route, first heading up to Arthurs Seat, where we disembarked and caught the chairlift for a very scenic trip back down to be reunited with our buses and continue the journey. A couple of Alfisti (who shall remain nameless) chose to keep their feet on terra firma and accompanied the coaches on the trip back down the mountain. I’m not quite sure, however, that a drive down a steep and winding mountain road as a passenger in a huge bus is less hair-raising than a chairlift gondola ride!

Dinner was at Alatonero, a Greek restaurant across the road from the beach at McCrae. McCrae is known for its impressive steel lighthouse, built in England in 1874 by Chance Brothers and Company – a company well known to lighthouse aficionados such as myself. Our busses had made



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good time to the restaurant and we were a little early, so we had a pre-dinner drink and watched the sunset before we made our way into the main dining area for our meal.

And what a meal it was. The kitchen staff at Alatonero kept bringing out plates of delicious food all evening. In fact, but the time we had worked our way through the appetisers and entrees, there was barely enough room left for the mains, let alone the desserts!

Coach driving can be a lonely job sometimes, so rather than require the drivers to wait in their busses, or head off and return at a later time, they were invited in to join us in the restaurant. I'm not quite sure what they thought of a bunch of Alfisti in full flight, but they seemed to enjoy themselves.

As mentioned previously, we were fortunate to have a few international visitors. The name Dave Mericle would be familiar to many Alfisti and his involvement with, and knowledge of, Alfas is legendary. Dave hails from California and was attending Alfesta at the invitation of ACOCA Victoria Life Member Barry Edmunds, who struck up a friendship with Dave some years ago. Dave was very complimentary about Alfesta and AROC Australia. He has attended bigger events; he has attended smaller events; but he could not recall having attended a more friendly and welcoming event!

After a very enjoyable evening of great food and scintillating conversation, we boarded the coaches again and headed back to Brooklands and our beds. We would need a good night's sleep to prepare for the Ray Sharp Observation Run the next morning.

Saturday morning turned out to be unseasonably warm (at least for Victoria), so many of us donned shorts and t-shirts for breakfast and the morning briefing. The observation run is a highlight of Alfesta and keen competition is assured. Being unfamiliar with the Mornington Peninsula area, I'm not quite sure where we went over the next few hours, but I had the sense we criss-crossed the same areas a few times. Notwithstanding, it was a very pleasant drive indeed and we seemed to be picking up the majority of the clues. Our mid-morning coffee stop at Merricks General Store allowed us a nice break, before continuing on to the finish at our lunch destination, Max's Restaurant at Red Hill Estate.

Red Hill Estate offers sweeping views over the vines to the ocean and provided a beautiful backdrop against which to display the cars. A group of the older classics were arranged in a semicircle, in front of which the entire group was posed for the official Alfesta group photo.

Max's restaurant has an excellent reputation and we were served an interesting range of appetisers on the patio before sitting down to our lunch. As would be expected, a range of excellent wines was on offer and Alfisti were able to take advantage of a 20% discount if they wished to purchase a few bottles from the cellar door (a couple of bottles of Pinot Noir came home with me).

As befitting AROCA Victoria's 50th anniversary, David Wright (AROCA Victoria Life Member) gave a short speech covering the formative years of the Club and there were several albums of photos from previous Alfesta available for perusing.

After lunch, it was time to jump in our cars again and head back to Brooklands for a rest before the evening's festivities. Some of us took the opportunity to stop at the nearby car wash to clean our cars in preparation for Sunday's Show 'n Shine. The Alfesta organisers had thoughtfully provided



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tokens for the car wash as part of the Alfesta Goody Bag. The dedicated few who shun car washes (or those in old Spiders!) got out the bucket and sponge back at Brooklands.

The activity for Saturday evening was a trip to Dromana Drive-in, a drive of about 15 minutes, where a screen had been made available for our exclusive showing of the classic movie "The Italian Job". Any Alfisti who might have still been hungry after our lunch were able to purchase a meal at the drive-in diner. A fun time was had by the Alfisti, reliving youthful times at the movies. Of course, the days of a speaker hanging off the car window are long gone and surviving drive-ins usually transmit the sound via FM radio. The necessity of having to have the accessory switch on to have the radio playing can be a bit of a challenge with some cars, but I heard there was only one instance of a low battery at the end of the evening – something the organisers had anticipated and were ready with jumper leads!

The weather on Sunday, the day of the Show n Shine, was much cooler and somewhat overcast. The official forecast showed some potential for rain, but thankfully this did not eventuate. Actually, in my opinion, an overcast day is much better for car displays as it doesn't bake the cars or the spectators and allows for much better photography without harsh shadows or glare.

The area arranged for the Show n Shine was Mornington Park, overlooking the foreshore and pier. In addition to the Alfesta attendees' cars, a few other AROCA Victoria members had driven down for the day. After manoeuvring the cars into position, Alfisti were left to wander down to the beach or check out the Main Street shops, most of which were now open.

As would be expected, Alfesta attracts an interesting range of cars and although they had been visible throughout the Brooklands car park, the Show n Shine gave everyone an opportunity to check them out properly. There was a pleasing balance of "moderns" and "classics" with some rarities also present. Victor and Mary Lee had their Alfa SZ and Tim and Frankie Guinness brought their Alfasud Giardinetta station wagon. Classic convertibles were well represented, as were 116 Series sedans and coupes.

The Show n Shine wrapped up about 2pm after which Alfisti could check out some of the other sights the Mornington Peninsula had to offer, or head back to the motel for a rest before the Gala Dinner that evening.

The Gala Dinner is, of course, the main dining event of Alfesta and was conveniently held at Brooklands itself, allowing us to enjoy ourselves without having to worry about transport or the local constabulary. During the evening, the Brooklands staff continued their high standard of service they had been providing during Alfesta (remember, they were working over the Easter long weekend) and the food, conversation and fun flowed freely. At my table was the legendary Phil and Pat Storr from South Australia, which also allowed me to meet my personal Alfesta goal of meeting Alfisti from every state.

The winners of the Alfesta trophies are typically announced at the Gala Dinner, and this year Queenslanders were well represented.

Our final breakfast together the next morning saw numbers down a bit, due to some late risers as well as some early risers who had already departed on their journey home. Alfesta farewells are usually bittersweet, but of course there is always next year.



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Some Alfisti were extending their Alfesta experience a little longer by participating in a post-Alfesta tour, something that, while not officially part of Alfesta, has also become a bit of a tradition.

Congratulations to the organisers of Alfesta 2019 for a well-run thoroughly enjoyable event: Garry and Nerine Pearce, Graeme and Lynnie Peake, Vin and Maree Sharp, Laurie and Josie Westcott and Bruno and Mary Colautti.

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