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1967 Alfa Romeo

photo by Chris Johnson

## Hot Italian Cars, Old & New

By Chris Johnson

**IT'S IN MY BLOOD. I CAN'T HELP IT.** Having grown up in Indianapolis, the months of April and May were always filled with automobile-related news. I spent my formidable years hearing about the latest Indy car racing technology, from engines and tires to suspension and aerodynamics, all leading up to the "Greatest Spectacle in Racing."

If you've spent any time in Indiana, you know how the storied history of the state is saturated with the events of the auto industry. In fact, during my high school years Labor Day was spent attending a huge Kruse Collector Car auction in Auburn, Indiana, home of the once-manufactured Auburn Cord. Numerous early automakers called Indy home at one time or another, including the Cole Company, Duesenberg and Marmon Motorcar. Indianapolis today is second only to Detroit in cities associated with the automobile.

Additionally, my Dad was an accountant for Ford Motor Company and had a passion for automobiles. For a number of

weeks every year, his job required him to go to Dearborn, Michigan and on many occasions, my family would join him on the weekends. Weekend getaways would often include visits to the Henry Ford Museum.

The Murcielago coupe was gorgeous, but I waited for the top-off model (convertible Roadster) that didn't come out until 2005.

So, I've always had an understandable passion for the automobile—any kind of automobile. I don't need to own it or drive it—just see it and appreciate it. And, occasionally I need to satisfy my yearning to see a beautifully designed "horseless carriage" with all the original

accoutrements. Whether mechanical or aesthetic, if it has to do with a car, I'm in!

Fortunately, North Texas is not short on opportunities to satisfy my ongoing fascination. One such event was the fourth annual ItalianCarFest (ICF) on the ninth of September, organized and hosted by the Italian Car Club of the Southwest. In fact, a few minutes with a pristine Ferrari 308 saved me from having to TIVO my favorite episode of *Magnum P.I.*

This exotic car extravaganza features a unique collection of new and classic Italian automobiles and two wheelers—approximately 150 cars and 25 two wheelers.

"ItalianCarFest salutes the artistry and sheer brio of Italian cars," said event chair Bob Dezzany. "The show attracts vintage and contemporary masterpieces from Ferrari, Lamborghini, Maserati, DeTomaso, Alfa, FIAT and others. Visitors from around the world are drawn to North Texas to enjoy these irresistible



2006 Lamborghini Murcielago Roadster (above)  
Tom Tjaarda & Chris Johnson (below)  
photos by Chris Johnson

1973 DeTomaso Pantera (above)  
Wanda & Mark How (right)  
photos by Chris Johnson

pieces of machinery each year.”

This year, ICF hosted a special guest for the weekend: noted automobile designer Tom Tjaarda. Mr. Tjaarda is responsible for the design of the Ferrari 365 California Spider, DeTomaso Pantera and Fiat 124 Spider, among others. Word of Mr. Tjaarda's presence at ICF quickly created a buzz in Italian car clubs around the country.

While at ICF, my brief discussion with Mr. Tjaarda was a real treat. Much has been reported recently about Mr. Tjaarda's outstanding work on the restyled Shelby Series 2 cars, including new front end design, a modified rear light cluster and mesh screens in place of the original side air outlet gills. A plaque on the dashboard of the new Shelby

Series 2 carries the signatures of both Mr. Tjaarda and Carroll Shelby.

However, while I am more than interested and passionate about these cars, some Frisco residents have more seriously invested in the hobby.

Upon seeing David Seizer's '06 Lamborghini Murcielago Roadster, you can't help but be impressed and awed. After all, when was the last time you saw a yellow rocket with wheels parked at your local Kroger Signature Store? "My wife calls it our 'condo on the beach,'" Mr. Seizer said. "Love and take care of what you have," he advises, as he gently wipes and removes every piece of lint from the car's shiny yellow jacket.

Before his Lamborghini, Mr. Seizer had seven Ferraris. He purchased his Lamborghini because he "wanted something far more extreme...and exotic." "I thought the Murcielago coupe was gorgeous, but I waited for the top-off model (convertible Roadster) that didn't come out until 2005."

If there's any doubt about Mr. Seizer's passion, his business card displays a photo of his beautiful Murcielago, doors open, ready for a spin.

Frisco resident Mark How has had a passion for automobiles since he was 14 years old. Having owned more than 90 cars total, Mr. How is passionate about his current toy: a bright red '73

DeTomaso Pantera. "The great thing about having one of these as your toy is that it's both an Italian sports car and a muscle car," said Mr. How. "Also, these cars are a good value in a market that's growing."

Lest you think Mr. How's Pantera is only a work of art, he proudly reports that he likes to drive it about once a week to dinner or places around town.

The great thing about having one of these as your toy is that it's both an Italian sports car and a muscle car.

Mr. How purchased his Pantera about two years ago in Orange County, CA. At the time, the car was cosmetically clean, but needed some mechanical work. For this, he turned to Kevin Govett of KG Performance, also of Frisco.

Mr. Govett's business card pretty much says it all: "Where Speed Freaks Go For a Fix." Mr. Govett rebuilt and restored Mr. How's Pantera engine and transmission to mechanical and aesthetic perfection.

However, the ICF is not entirely about pulling an "ooh" and "aahh"



out of car lovers. An important part of ItalianCarFest is to raise money for charity. This year the ICF featured a raffle for a 2006 Vespa motor scooter, with all proceeds going to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. In addition, after expenses, all profits from ItalianCarFest Weekend '06 were donated to the Make-A-Wish Foundation and the Grapevine Heritage Foundation.

So, next September when you get tired of the summer heat and the ho hum, I recommend you look up the ICF (<http://italiancarfest.com>). It's a great way to see some great machines and support a good cause.

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*Chris Johnson is the publisher of Frisco STYLE Magazine and an avid car aficionado.*



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