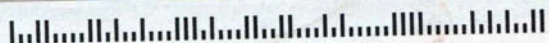
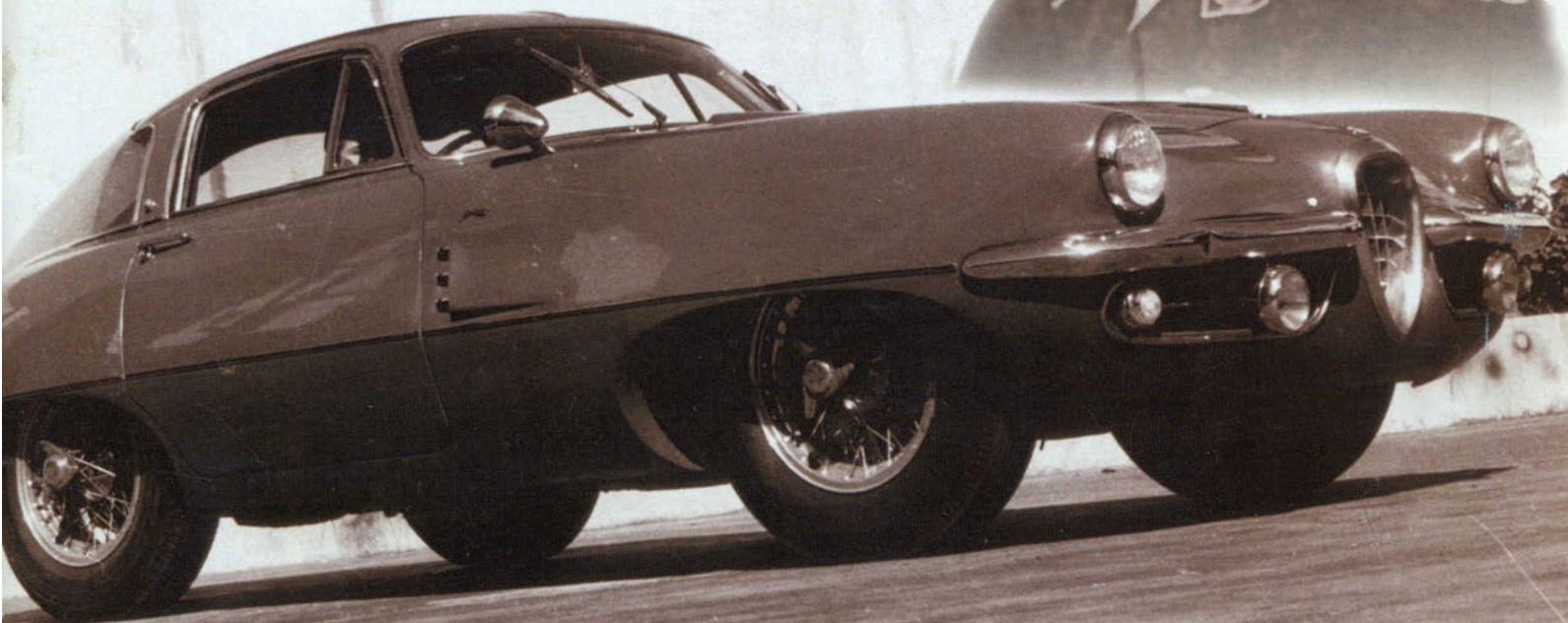


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The story of Juan Peron's  
Alfa Romeo Volante



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# The story of Juan Peron's Alfa Romeo Volante

By Cris Bertschi



Alfa Romeo Archive

This is a brief history of a very special car, known in Argentina as Perón's Disco Volante. But to be more accurate, it is not a Disco Volante. In addition, during its 49 years of life, it was owned by the dictator just for a couple of months. There is more irony to the story as well.

In 1953, Engineer Giuseppe Busso started working on what would be the natural successor to the Disco Volante project. The tests started on a Touring Spider, powered by the new 3-liter engine. Two new cars were built with a Spider body by Colli, which either had disappeared or just been renumbered. These cars would become known as the 3000CMs. Alfa Romeo built perhaps eight 3000CMs; three of them were bodied as berlinettas by Carrozzeria Colli of Milan, and one of these, stamped 1361.00126, was the car destined for Perón.

In early 1955, Eng. Giuseppe Busso was asked to build a unique road car for a very demanding person; this special client was Juan Domingo Perón, president of Argentina. Rather than start from scratch, Busso found a used 3000CM (#00126) at the factory. Busso had the Colli berlinetta body

removed and refurbished the chassis. It was then sent to Mario Boano, who sketched the unique lines of the berlinetta at his studio. The car had to be ready very quickly as it had to be in Argentina as soon as possible. The beautiful, futuristic aluminum body was finished in blue and charcoal. The resemblance to the original Disco Volante coupe was intentional.

The car was presented, in Argentina, to Perón by the Workers Union (Confederación General del Trabajo - CGT). Rumors say that the CGT never paid Alfa Romeo for the car and an attorney was sent from Europe to solve the problem. The first public appearance of the car was at the Buenos Aires Autódromo where Perón drove three laps before a race.

During the few months that Perón had possession of the car, he had a minor crash with a bus in Buenos Aires. The repairing of the aluminum was done locally by Alberto Borghi, an Italian craftsman who knew well the secrets of how to repair the aluminum bodies.

On September 16, 1955, Perón was removed from his office by the Revolución Libertadora. He escaped to Paraguay

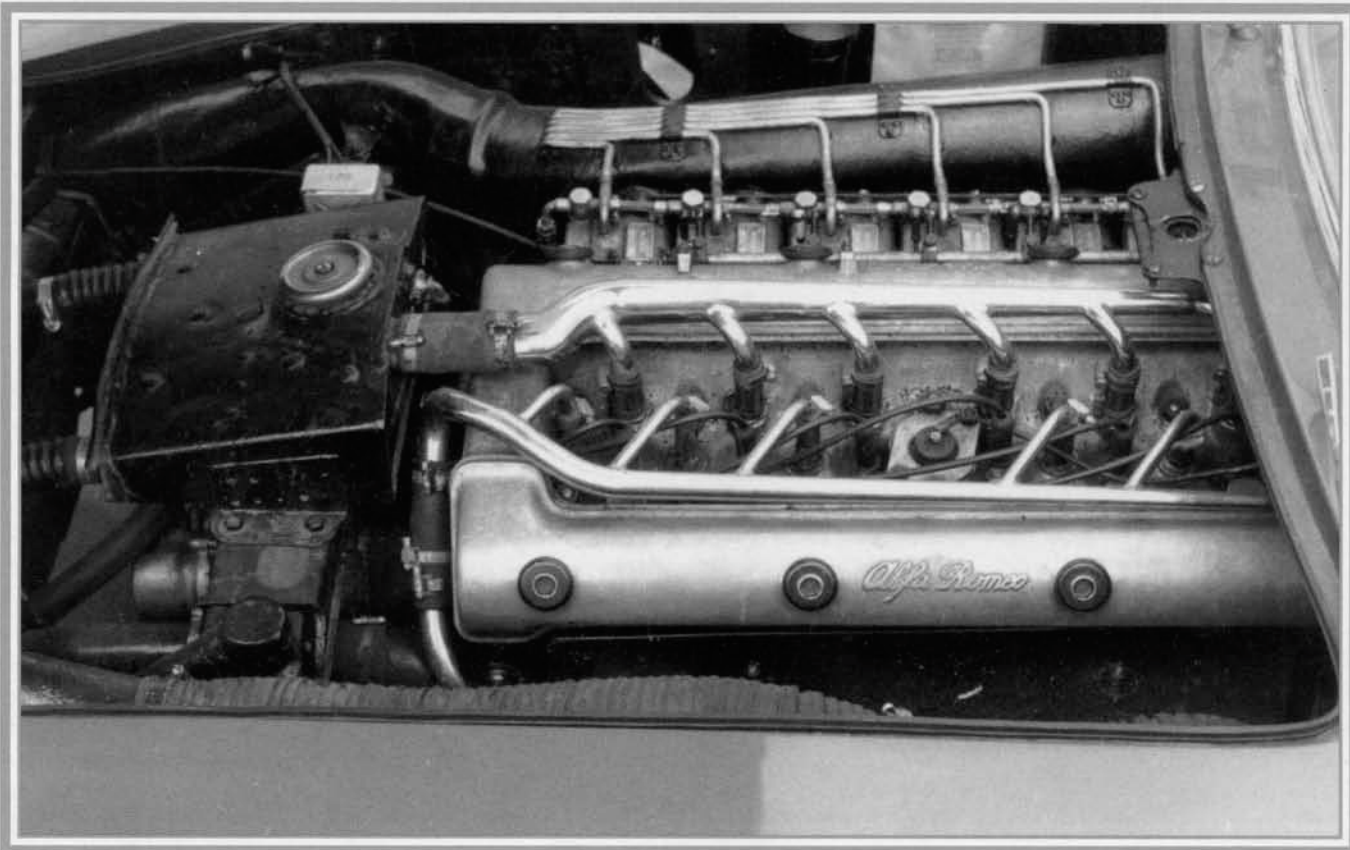


**Above:** Mechanics prepare Peròn's "Disco Volante" while a crowd gather.

**Right:** Juan and Eva Peròn, circa 1945.



**Below:** The beautiful 6-cylinder engine of Peròn's s/n 1361.00126.

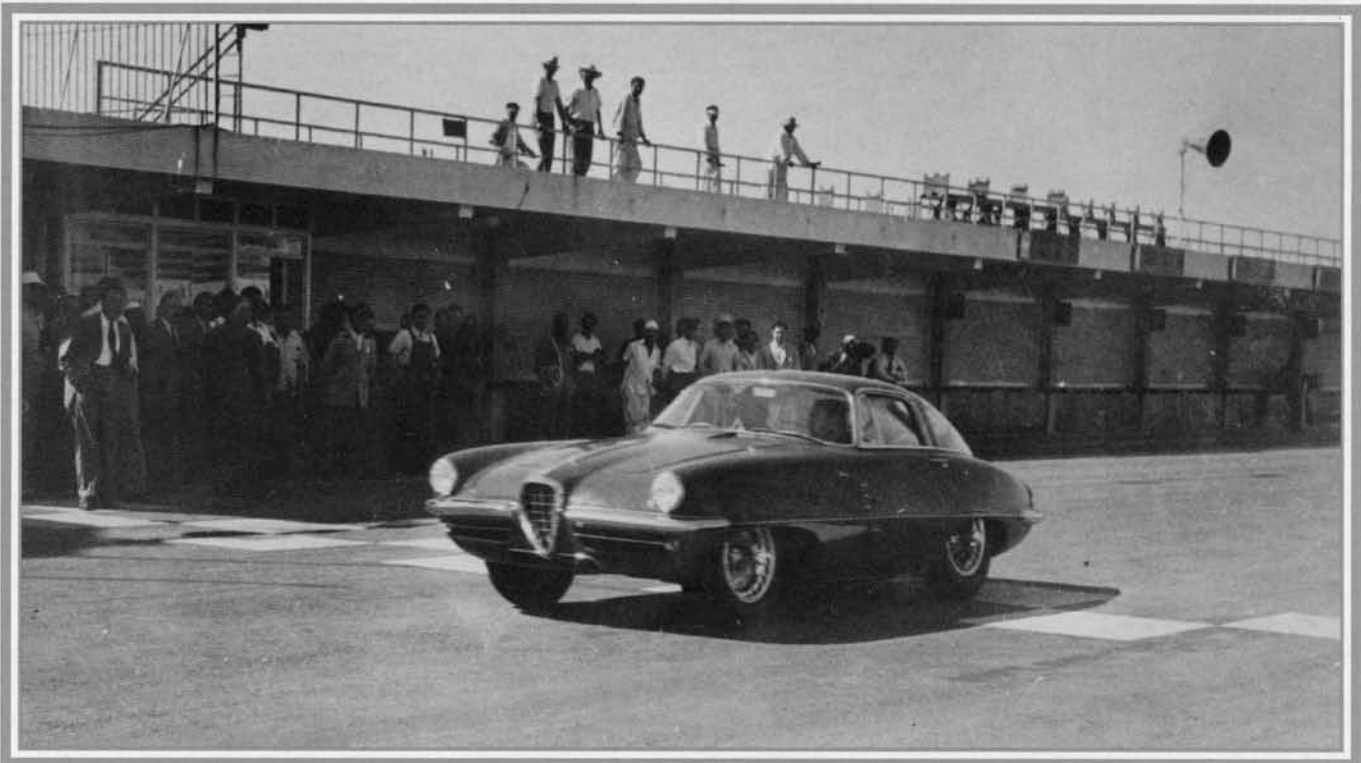




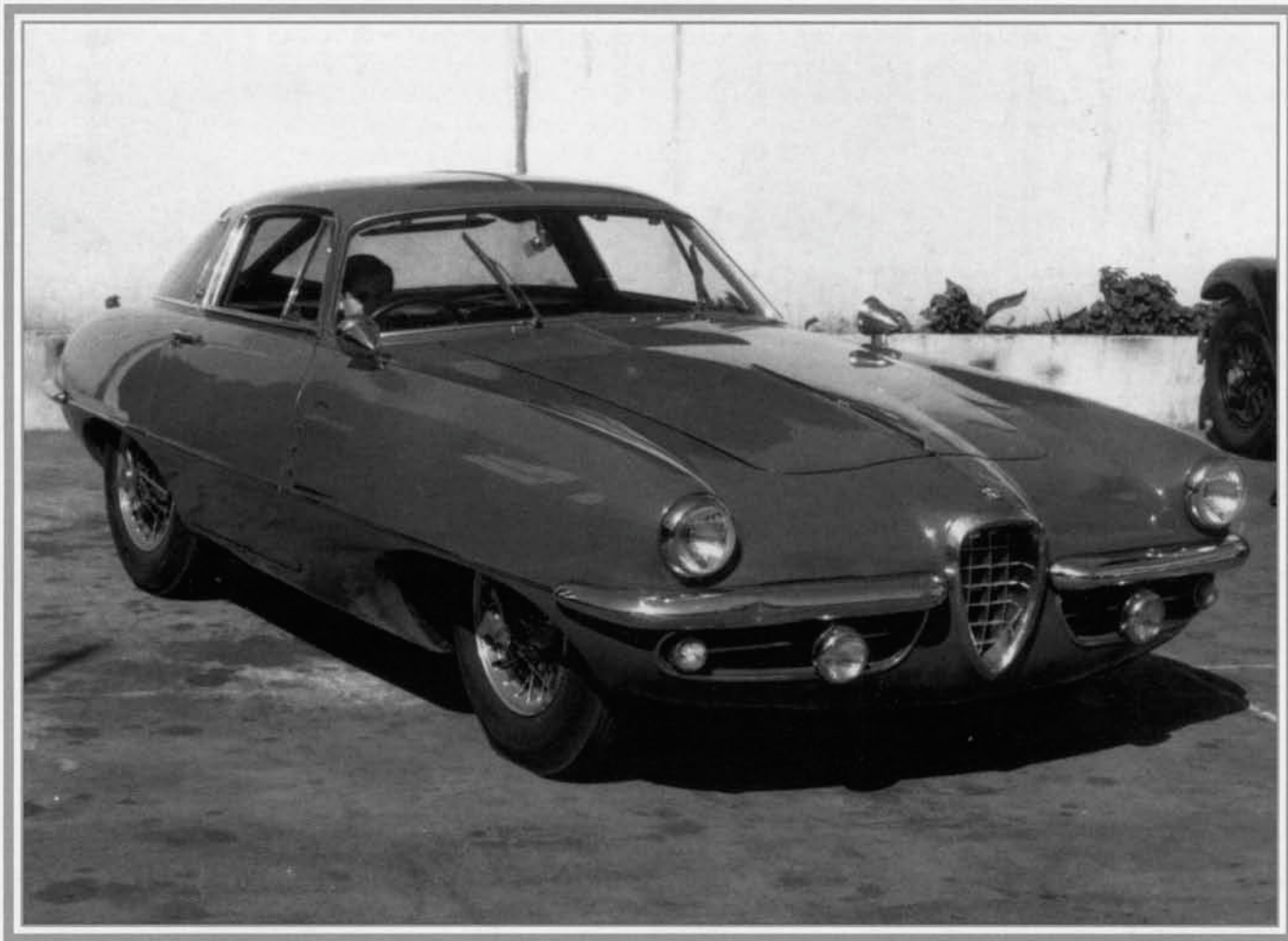
Iacona/Bertschi collection

**Above:** The stylish interior of s/n 1361.00126.

**Below:** Juan and Eva Perón testing their new car at the Autódromo de Buenos Aires in 1955.



Alfa Romeo Archive



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**Above:** The Volante when it was in the hands of J. M. Ahumada of Argentina.  
**Below:** The car, in Argentina, circa 1965, when it was painted gold!

and all his belongings were taken by the new government and later auctioned. The 3000CM was not the only car Perón had; he also used to drive a Ghia-bodied Ferrari 212 Inter (#0191EL), and eight other cars, including an Alfa 1900 CSS Touring and a Giulietta Sprint.

The car was bought in a public auction by Guillermo Decker who then sold it to Carlos Lostaló, a sports car driver who raced successfully in a Maserati. We certainly know that the Maserati driver Roberto Mieres was also part of the ownership chain, although it is not clear precisely when.

The car then surfaced in *Road and Track*, March 1967; the Argentinean J. M. Ahumada advertised it through E. Newbery from Maryland asking US \$10,000. We don't know the owner at that time, but probably it was not Ahumada as he was a dealer who exported cars from Argentina mainly through the Vintage Car Store. Black and white pictures from Ahumada's archives (seen here) show the car during 1966 or



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1967 with two different body colors. We have a set of pictures that clearly shows a light paint. As per Ahumada's partner, this light color was not cream as we thought, it was gold! On a different set of photos, it is most probably painted red.

A few months later, the ex-Peròn Alfa again shows up, this time in the September 30, 1967 *Competition Press*. "ALFA ROMEO DISCO VOLANTE - Extremely rare 1954 "Flying Saucer" coupe with Boano coachwork. Built for Ex-dictator Juan Peròn. One of 6 produced, powered by 6-cylinder twin-cam 3.5-liter engine, fed through 6 Webers. 270 bhp at 6,500 rpm, 5-speed gearbox. Tested at 170 mph. Paintwork slightly blemished but otherwise excellent condition, \$10,500. Vintage Car Store, Inc., 93 S. Broadway, Nyack, N.Y.; (914) EL 8-3800 or (212) LO 2-6048."

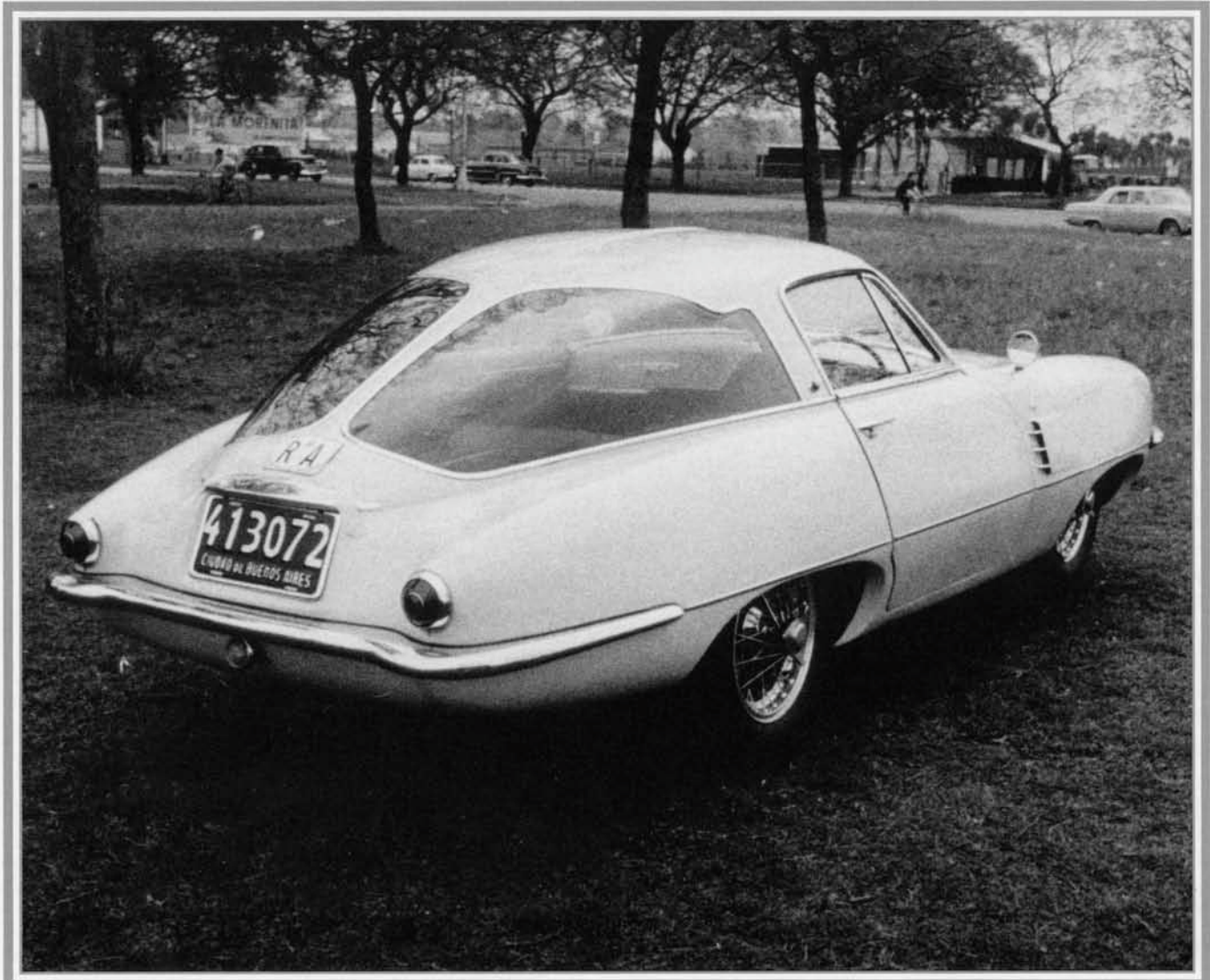
In 1968, the Alfa finally left Argentina when sold through the Vintage Car Store to Ed Bond of Connecticut. Bond only

kept it for a couple of years and, in 1970, it passed to Henry Wessells III of Paoli, Pennsylvania, a very well known Alfa enthusiast. Henry Wessells III recalls that the car arrived to the USA in the early '70s, painted black.

Wessells ran the car in classic car races until 1984 when at the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix, he crashed the Boano Alfa into a couple of trees. The car was badly damaged, especially the body. So he decided to take the beautiful Boano creation off the frame and send the mechanical parts to Hall & Fowler in the UK. Wessells then asked Carrozzeria Diamante, from Turin, to build a replica of the first body that #00126 had, a berlinetta Colli.

After a seven-year restoration process, the car appeared at the Mille Miglia retro in 1992, but had to retire due to mechanical problems. It is still owned by Wessells today. ❀

Rear view of the car when it was painted gold.





Joost Gompels

The Peròn Alfa as it is today, with a replica Colli body. This unique vehicle is still proudly owned by Henry Wessells III, who members may remember, was the special guest speaker at the New Hampshire national convention, in 2004.

**1953 Alfa Romeo 3000CM  
Juan Peròn's Disco Volante  
s/n 1361.00126**

Engine #AR1311.00506

Body: Berlinetta Colli, later berlinetta Boano.  
Now with a berlinetta Colli-style body.

Engine: 6 cylinder - twin cam  
3495cc - 87mm x 98mm  
Compression ratio: 8.2:1  
6 Webers Tipo 48 DOM  
270 BHP @ 6,500 RPM  
5-speed gearbox

**This article, on Peròn's Disco Volante, was generously made available to AROC by [VeloceToday.com](http://VeloceToday.com), the online magazine for Italian car enthusiasts.**

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