

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 4

JULY/AUGUST 2003

\$5



Round-the-world Wanaume Expedition comes to Arizona Through Africa to Route 66 and Sedona via Land Rover Discovery

plus... • Saleen goes Hollywood in its 20th year

- Porsche Cayenne gets Bridgestone performance utility tires
- Aston Martin DB7 GT and DB7 Volante to Bartlett Reservoir
- "Take it to the Track" keeps it off the streets
- Kia Sorento: affordable SUV visits the Grand Canyon • and more!

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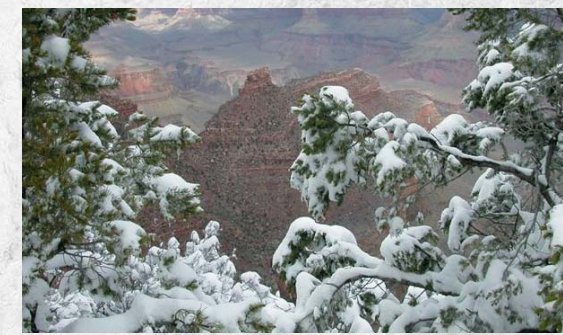
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 By Larry Edsall

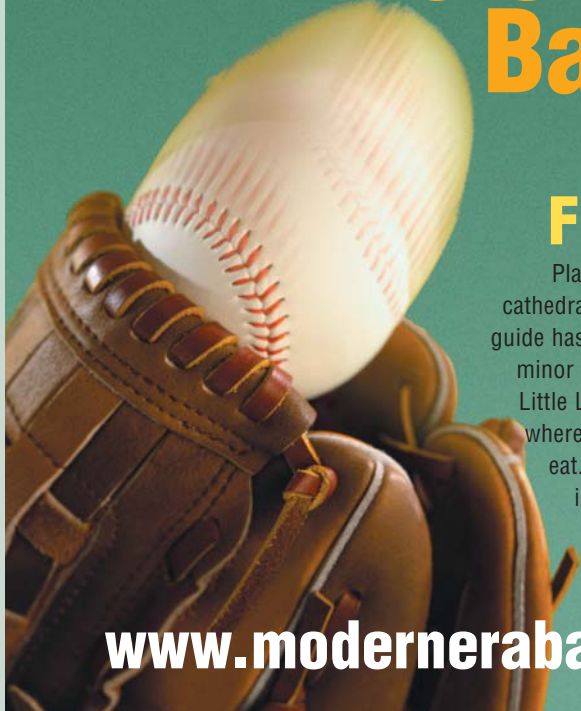
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- The Viper is fastest in the Dodge fleet. What is their second fastest vehicle?
 - Ram 1500
 - Neon SRT-4
 - Intrepid R/T
 - Stratus R/T
- How many vehicles on the annual list of the 25 most popular among thieves were trucks?
 - 4 trucks
 - 7 trucks
 - 11 trucks
 - 14 trucks
- Which of the following has the largest percentage of ethnic minority dealers?
 - MINI
 - Infiniti
 - Kia
 - Jaguar
- What was the average annual household income of 2003 Range Rover buyers?
 - \$157,000
 - \$268,000
 - \$387,000
 - \$463,000

- How much gasoline vaporizes into the air annually from missing or misused gas caps?
 - 10 million gallons
 - 75 million gallons
 - 150 million gallons
 - 300 million gallons

- Which vehicle has the youngest average buyers?
 - Volkswagen GTI
 - Lexus IS 300
 - Nissan Xterra
 - Volkswagen Jetta

- Which vehicle received the highest scores on the NADA Retention Ratings (retained value) for 2002 vehicles?
 - Mini Cooper
 - Acura MDX
 - Porsche 911 Carrera Cabrio
 - Lexus SC 430

- In a recent survey, what percentage of respondents said they perform some vehicle maintenance jobs themselves?
 - 63 percent
 - 73 percent
 - 83 percent
 - 93 percent

- What percentage of women are responsible for the maintenance of their vehicles?
 - 33 percent
 - 53 percent
 - 71 percent
 - 83 percent

- The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) gives all cars an annual green score. Which car received the highest green score for 2003?
 - Honda Civic GX
 - Toyota RAV4 electric
 - Toyota Prius
 - Honda Insight

- MINI Cooper is now one year old in the United States. How have actual sales compared with expectations?
 - 20% below
 - 20% above
 - 35% above
 - 50% above

- How many vehicles in the US are equipped to run on E85 (a blend of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline)?
 - 100,000
 - 500,000
 - 2 million
 - 3 million

- Ford plans to continue building the current model F-150 trucks after introducing the all-new 2004 model F-150. To distinguish the two, the prior model will get a new name. What is that new name?
 - Ford F-150 Heritage
 - Ford F-150 Custom
 - Ford F-150 Original
 - Ford F-150 Classic

(answers below)

10. ANSWER: d. According to the Car Care Council, 150 million gallons of gasoline vaporize (or evaporate) into the air because of missing or misused gas caps.

11. ANSWER: d. According to Jack Pitney, General Manager of MINI USA, sales for the first year were more than 50 percent over the company's expectations.

12. ANSWER: d. According to the National Ethanol Vehicle Coalition, there are currently about 3 million vehicles equipped to run on E85 (a blend of 85 percent and 15 percent gasoline) or regular gasoline. There are currently only 140 ethanol-fueling stations available in 22 (mostly Midwestern) states. E85 promises a reduction of our dependence of imported oil.

13. ANSWER: a. The current Ford F-150 pickup will continue to be produced after the new generation comes to market later this year, but renamed the F-150 Heritage.

5. ANSWER: c. According to the Car Care Council, 150 million gallons of gasoline vaporize (or evaporate) into the air because of missing or misused gas caps.

6. ANSWER: a. According to the Power Information Network, the average buyer of a new Volkswagen GTI is 37 years old. The average buyer of the Lexus IS 300, Nissan Xterra and VW Jetta is 38 years old.

7. ANSWER: a. The MINI Cooper received the highest scores in the NADA (National Automobile Dealers Association) Retention Ratings for 2002 vehicles, with its retained value listed at 117.06 percent. The Acura MDX was 102.91 percent and the Porsche was 102.69 percent. Yes, these vehicles were actually worth more than when they were sold new.

8. ANSWER: c. According to Opinion Research Corporation, 83 percent of respondents said they do some vehicle maintenance jobs themselves. That could include tasks like washing, checking tire pressure or changing oil.

9. ANSWER: d. According to the Car Care Council, 83 percent of women are responsible for the maintenance of their vehicles.

CAR QUIZ ANSWERS

1. ANSWER: b. With a 0-to-60 mph acceleration time of 5.7 seconds, the 215-hp turbocharged Dodge Neon SRT-4 is the second fastest Dodge. Later this year, when the new Ram SRT-10 truck with a 500-hp V-10 arrives, it will be slightly faster, with a 0-to-60 mph time of 5.0 seconds.

2. ANSWER: a. Only four trucks were listed on the CCC Information Services Inc.'s annual list of 25 most stolen vehicles: the 1994 Chevrolet C1500 4x2, 1997 Ford F150 4x2, 2001 Ford F150 4x2 and 1997 Chevrolet C1500 4x2.

3. ANSWER: a. According to the National Association of Minority Automobile Dealers, MINI has the largest percentage of minority dealers: 10.1 percent. Of course, MINI only has a total of 69 dealers. Infiniti has 8.6 percent, Kia 8.0 percent, and Jaguar 7.8 percent. The largest numerical total is at General Motors, with 400 of their 7,166 dealerships owned by ethnic minorities.

4. ANSWER: d. According to Ford, the average household income for 2003 Range Rover buyers is \$463,000, with more than a third of the owners citing an annual household income of more than \$500,000.

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AUTO NEWS UPDATE



■ While the 7 Series is quickly redesigned amid controversy, the 5 Series takes on a similar look.

NEW BMW 5 SERIES DUE IN FALL

The all-new mid-size BMW 5 Series will use innovative lightweight construction with an aluminum/steel body and an all-aluminum suspension and chassis. The slightly larger four-door sedan will have more room for passengers and luggage, along with new styling, already stirring some of the controversy brought on by the most recent 7 Series. Technical innovations include the world's first Active Front Steering system that electronically varies the degree to which the front wheels turn in relation to steering input from the driver. Optional Adaptive Headlights utilize two bi-xenon beams that are controlled in real time as a function of the steering wheel angle, yaw rate and road speed, to perfectly illuminate the road ahead in a bend. The new 5 also features an Active Cruise Control system and Adaptive Brakelights that intensify the brightness of the taillights, in addition to the brake lights, when the ABS system is activated during hard braking.

NEXT M5 MAY BURST ENVELOPE. The next generation BMW M5 is likely to have an F1-inspired 500-plus-hp V-10 engine. The sedan will have flared wheel arches, 18-inch tires in the front and 19-inchers in the rear. Suspension will be heavily reworked, and there will be a lot of aluminum used to keep weight down. Plans call

for a new six-speed manual transmission with traditional or sequential manual shifting, and possibly a six-speed automatic for the US market. The M5 is due at the end of 2004 and should bring 0-to-60 mph times under 4.5 seconds, with top speed limited to 155 mph.

LATE 2005 FOR NEXT BMW 3 SERIES.

BMW's fifth generation 3 Series will grow from its entry-level position to a middle spot in the BMW lineup. A new 1 Series will take over the entry-level position for 2004, with sticker price around \$26,000. The new 3 Series will get an all new look and a new aluminum-intensive rear-wheel-drive chassis. 3 Series body styles will continue to include a sedan, wagon and convertible, but the coupe may get a unique 4 Series designation. Standard equipment will include new electrohydraulic anti-lock brakes, stability control, traction control, and cornering brake control. Engines will include four or six cylinders, and transmissions will include a new six-speed manual (with available sequential manual gearbox shifting) and an optional six-speed automatic. Evidently there is internal debate about the M version. Some want it to retain its great balance and a highly modified six-cylinder engine, while others prefer a new high-revving V-8 currently in development.



■ The success of the Cadillac CTS is spawning new performance options.



■ As hatchbacks finally take off in the US, the Audi A3 is sure to please.

CADILLAC'S CTS-V NEARS PRODUCTION

Cadillac's new high performance CTS sedan, the CTS-V, is powered by a 400-horsepower version of the 5.7-liter Corvette V-8 engine. In addition to increased horsepower, the V cars will get enhancements to brakes, suspension and steering along with a mesh grille. Initially, the only transmission available will be a six-speed manual, but an automatic may be added later. Cadillac says to expect 0-to-60 mph accelerations times of less than five seconds and top speed in excess of 155 mph. Cadillac expects to produce about 2200 of the V cars for the 2004 model year. Prices have not been announced, but they are expected to be about \$10,000 to \$15,000 more than the base vehicle. (The base price of the current CTS is \$30,345).

The Cadillac CTS-V will be the first of a series of performance versions similar to those of the Audi S, Mercedes-Benz AMG and BMW M models. There are "V" versions planned for the upcoming Cadillac XLR sports car and the STS sedan approximately 12 to 18 months after those cars originally go into production.

CTS GETS SECOND V-6. Cadillac debuts a new 3.6-liter V-6 engine in the 2004 CTS equipped with automatic transmission. Models with manual transmissions will retain the current 3.2-liter V-6. The new V-6, producing 255 hp and 252 lb.ft. of torque, will be the first application of GM's new global family of V-6 performance engines. The engine, which will also be used in the upcoming Cadillac SRX sport utility and Buick Rendezvous Ultra, has variable valve timing on both intake and exhaust valves to improve fuel economy and reduce emissions. Fuel economy is expected to be comparable to the 3.2-liter engine, which is rated at 18 mpg city and 26 mpg highway.

COMING TO AMERICA: AUDI A3

Audi plans to bring the A3 two-door hatchback and Avant (wagon) to the US in the summer of 2005. The smaller A3 will be built on the same platform as the fifth-generation Volkswagen Golf, which will debut at the Frankfurt auto show this fall. The A3 has four-wheel independent suspension and new electromechanical steering. The engines for North America are likely to be the same 1.8-liter turbocharged in-line four-cylinder used in the VW Golf, plus a 240-hp 3.2-liter V-6. Transmission options include a six-speed manual, a six-speed automatic or a new Direct Shift Gearbox. The front-wheel-drive A3 will also offer quattro all-wheel drive. Coming later will be a high performance S3.

LEXUS HAS BIG CHANGES PLANNED

Lexus has ambitious plans to add several new vehicles to its lineup in the next few years. The midrange GS sedan is due for a redesign and the new platform will be used to build a crossover-style vehicle to compete with the new Infiniti FX35 and FX45. Like the Infiniti, the upscale Lexus crossovers will come with six-cylinder and V-8 engines. The new vehicle will be slotted above the new RX330 SUV with a

price in the \$45,000 range. Even though it will be priced near the new GX470 SUV the crossover will be designed to compete more with the BMW X5, Volvo XC90, Cadillac SRX and Infiniti FX.

The entry-level IS300 gets redone in mid-2004 to better compete with the BMW 3 Series. There will be a larger in-line six-cylinder engine and maybe a V-8. It will also get four-wheel drive capability, to enable another crossover on the IS platform. There is also likely to be a coupe and convertible based on the new IS rear-wheel-drive platform.

The top-of-the-line LS is likely to get an optional new V-12 engine to make it competitive with the Mercedes-Benz S600 and BMW 760Li, but at a lower price.

EXTRA TESTING ON CADILLAC XLR

The first 240 Cadillac XLR sports cars will be given to engineers and marketing staff to drive for their first 1700 miles to check for squeaks and other flaws. Once this testing is complete, the cars will be shipped to dealers and sold as used cars. The new retractable hardtop is not being assembled on a traditional moving line; rather the car is moved through 36

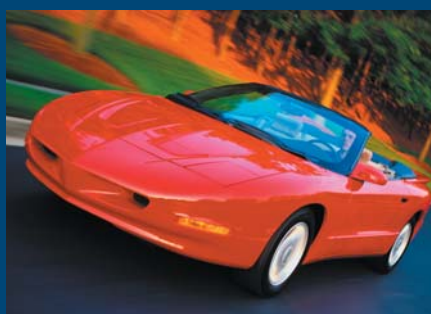
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>> AUTO NEWS UPDATE - cont'd

stations, spending about 20 minutes in each. The XLR is based on the reengineered Corvette platform debuting on the next-generation 2005 Corvette. Both cars will use the same double wishbone front and rear suspension, but the XLR will have a more luxurious ride than the Corvette. The XLR also gets a new version of the famous Northstar DOHC V-8.

FORD PLANS 10 NEW VEHICLES

Ford has plans to build up to 10 new vehicles in the next five or six years from the platform of the new Mazda6 sedan. According to Bill Ford, the Fords, Lincolns and Mercurys will run the range from luxury to crossovers to sedans. The Mazda platform lends itself well to lengthening and widening and can be built in front- or all-wheel drive configurations. The first car, due in 2005, will be the Ford Futura sedan, which resembles the 427 concept car from this year's Detroit auto show and will gradually replace the Taurus, as the Taurus will be sold exclusively for fleets. The Futura will also be offered with a gasoline-hybrid engine. Other products may include a Mercury version of the Futura and a Lincoln sport wagon to compete with the Lexus RX.

CAN'T DECIDE ON MUSTANG COLOR?

The Ford Special Vehicle Team (SVT) will paint some 2004 Mustang SVT Mustang Cobras with a Mystichrome Appearance Package. The Mystichrome finish shifts from green to blue to purple to black, depending on the light. The special paint is filled with tiny particles (each an average size of about 17 microns or about the thickness of a human hair), each comprising five layers of colorless film, which combined work like a prism to produce the shimmering, vibrant colors. The packages will only be available on a total of 1000 Cobras, either coupes or convertibles. These cars will also be upholstered with leather treated with the same Mystichrome color. This is the first application of the color-shifting paints to be used on a production vehicle and the first use of the colored leather in the industry. Prices have yet to be announced.



■ The Mazda6 sedan is so well engineered, Ford plans to adapt it to ten more vehicles.

CHRYSLER BUILDING ON MITSUBISHI

To keep development expenses down and to allow building several vehicles on the same assembly line, Chrysler will use the Mitsubishi Lancer platform as a basis for the next generation Chrysler Sebring, PT Cruiser, Dodge Stratus and Neon, plus other possible new products. A vehicle platform, the definition of which is debated somewhat, can be considered to include the floorpan (the flat frame-like floor), suspension, drivetrain and connection points for the body. Development costs on a typical vehicle platform run about \$1 billion.

CHRYSLER & DODGE DIFFERENCES.

Chrysler and Dodge are going to move the look and feel of their vehicles further apart, according to Chrysler Group COO Wolfgang Bernhard. Chrysler brand products will still be high volume, but will be moved more upscale, with exclusive products like the Pacifica and Crossfire. Dodge vehicles will be more bold, powerful and capable, according to Bernhard. New rear-drive models of the Chrysler Concord, Chrysler 300M and Dodge Intrepid will have totally different body styles, not merely changed fascias and fenders. Next-gen minivans, scheduled for complete redesign in 2006 or 2007, will share drivetrains but the sheetmetal and interiors will be quite different.

CHRYSLER 300C TO SPORT A HEMI.

When Chrysler's new full-size 300C sports sedan debuts early next year, it will be powered by a 340-hp version of the 5.7-liter Hemi V-8 that powers the Dodge Ram pickup. The full-size sedan will be using a five-speed automatic transmission built by the company's Mercedes-Benz division. It also has a control-arm-front and multilink-rear suspension, rack and pinion steering and electrical system from Mercedes. The rear-wheel-drive



■ The new Chrysler Crossfire sports coupe is an early harbinger of the Mercedes-Benz-based upscale direction intended for the Chrysler brand.

platform has a seven-inch-longer wheelbase than the existing 300M, but it's still an inch shorter than the existing car overall because of a shorter front overhang. Expect the price to fall somewhere over \$40,000.

A FLOOD OF CONVERTIBLES COMING

Convertible lovers are getting an abundance of new droptops in the near future. New Mercedes CLK and Saab 9-3 convertibles debuted this spring. Later this year the Chevrolet SSR roadster/pickup goes on sale, as does the Cadillac XLR luxury roadster. Nissan just introduced a

roadster version of the 350Z sports car. MINI Cooper and PT Cruiser both have soft tops entering the market early next year. There is an all-new Mercedes-Benz SLK due out soon. And BMW will have a new 6 Series Cabrio based on the 5 Series sedan before long. Plus, the popular Mazda Miata gets a makeover next year. Down the road a bit further, the upcoming Chrysler Crossfire will also be getting a Cabrio version in 2005 or 2006. Pontiac has announced it will build the Solstice two-seat sports car that was a concept at the 2002 auto shows. And there is rumor of a two-seat Mazda RX-8 roadster.



■ The Chevrolet SSR roadster/pickup offers a versatile take on topdown fun and utility, perfectly suited for hot sales in Arizona this year.

GM & BMW TEAM UP ON HYDROGEN

General Motors and BMW are working jointly to develop refueling devices for liquid hydrogen vehicles. Dr. Lawrence Burns of GM says, "Both compressed and liquid hydrogen hold promise ... The density of hydrogen in a liquid state is especially attractive with respect to fuel distribution and vehicle range." The companies hope others will join them in developing a standard coupling device, so all vehicles will use the same system. Both companies expect to have significant hydrogen powered vehicles on the road by 2010. ■

Automotive Fine Art by Don Evenson

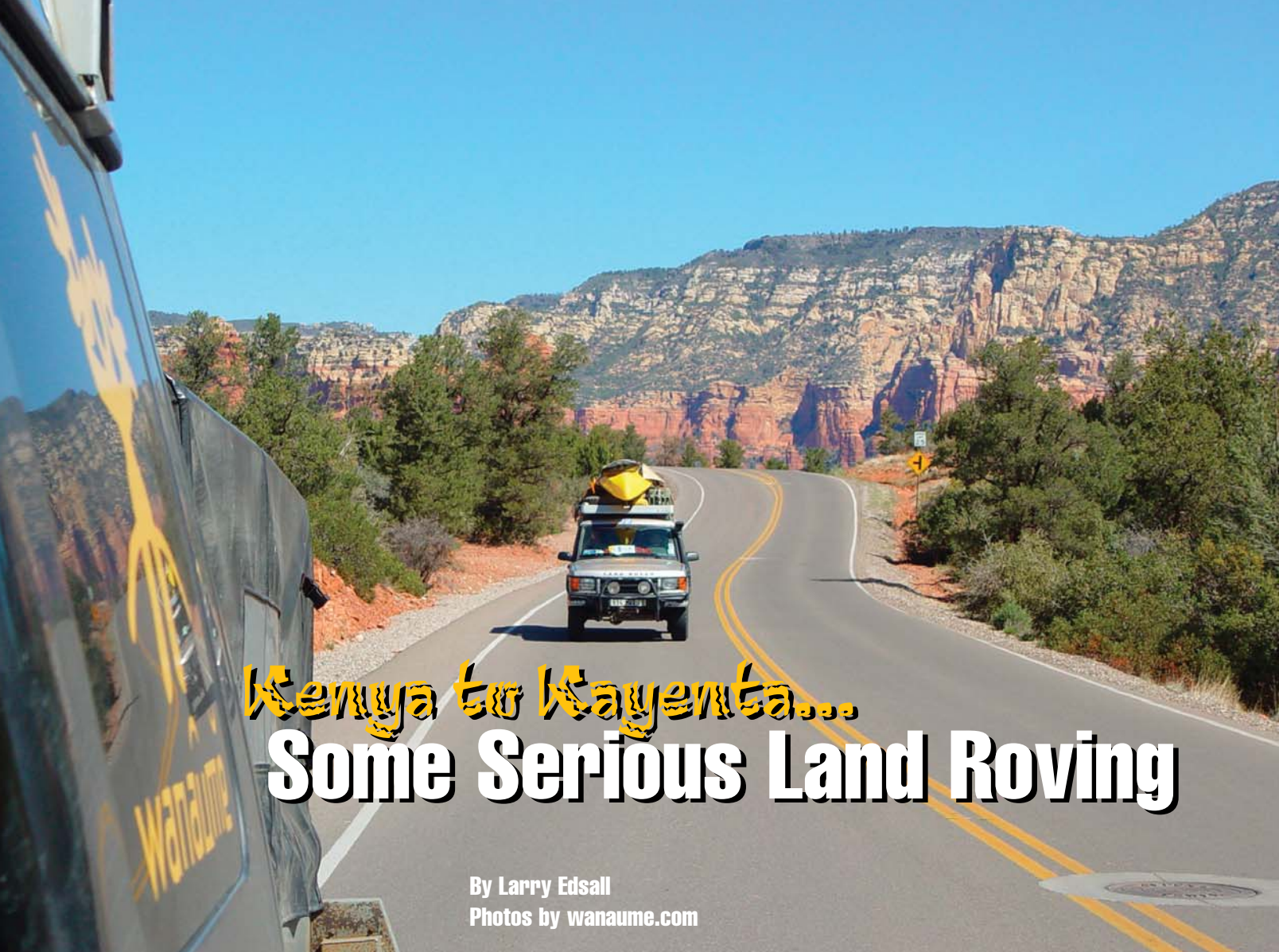


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Kenya to Kayenta... Some Serious Land Roving

By Larry Edsall
Photos by wanaume.com



After driving from France across Europe, through the Middle East, then down through Africa and up through South America and Mexico, what's left to see?

Well, Arizona and its Grand Canyon, obviously, and that's where 30-year-old Sebastien Ledoux and his friends were headed after spending a few days in Phoenix catching their breath.

After three years on the road, Ledoux and his crew were nearing the completion of at least the first section of one of the world's great driving adventures. Ledoux thought his round-the-world route would consume 15 months max. Instead, after three years he'd completed only two-thirds of his original route by the time he reached Arizona.

Didn't his family think he was crazy when he quit his job at age 25 to drive around the world? "They didn't think I was crazy," Ledoux said. "They knew I was crazy."

Ledoux had grown up fascinated by the world and its cultures and wanted to see them for himself. He convinced Land Rover of France to give him two diesel-powered Discoverys, which he named Kikaya, after an ancient Angolan kingdom, and Kikuyu, after the main tribe in Kenya. He called his expedition Wanaume,

the Swahili word for "people."

Perhaps his favorite story from the trip came from one Sunday morning when they were driving across the Masai Mara, a huge game preserve in Africa, and found people standing beside a church bus that was stuck in the mud.

The people began cheering as Ledoux's vehicles approached. They were cheering because they were certain their prayers had been answered when they saw their own name printed across the top of the windshield of one of the vehicles; they were the Kikuyu people.

Ledoux's Land Rovers pulled the church bus out of the mud.

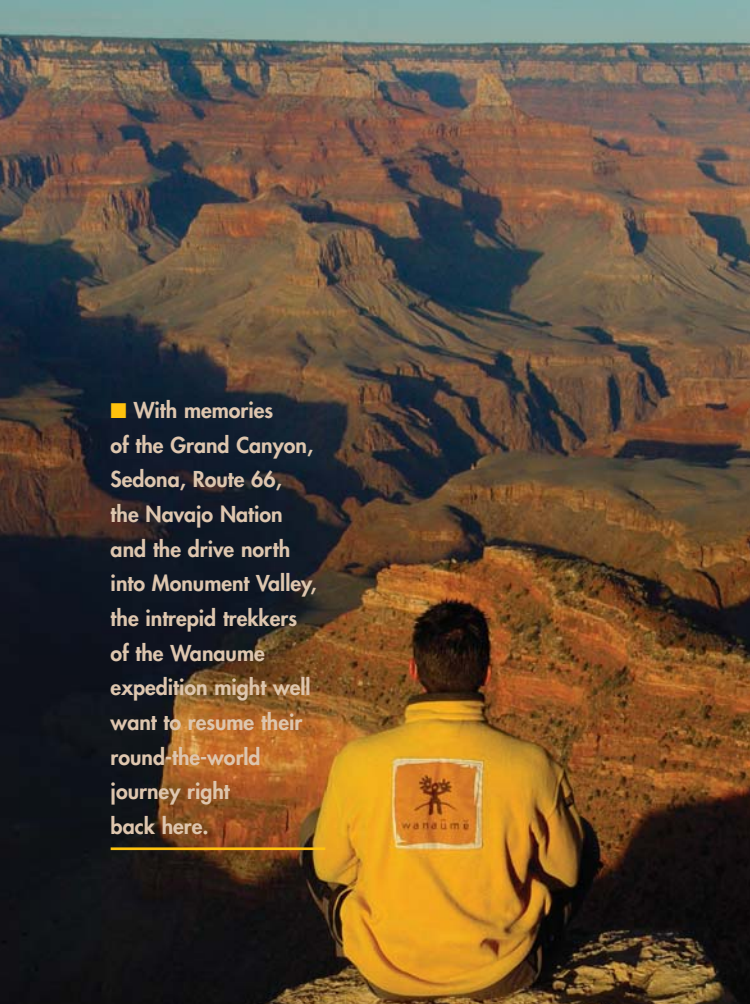
"We were on the TV news the next day," Ledoux said. "They called it a miracle."

Also miraculous was the way that people would come to Ledoux' aide. For example, local Land Rover distributors and dealers equipped his Discoverys with special equipment they'd developed for use in their local environments, including an amazing two-tiered roof-rack system in South Africa.

Ledoux arrived in the United States just as Americans were



KEEP RIGHT >>



■ With memories of the Grand Canyon, Sedona, Route 66, the Navajo Nation and the drive north into Monument Valley, the intrepid trekkers of the Wanaume expedition might well want to resume their round-the-world journey right back here.

>> WANAUME - cont'd

rebuking French fries because of France's position against the invasion of Iraq. But Ledoux preferred to deal with people, not politics. "We always have felt safe," Ledoux said. "We had no bad food. We were never attacked. We had no serious problem with the cars," although one vehicle had to be replaced after tumbling off a cliff in Argentina.

In Mexico, he'd met a teenager who'd had to quit school because his father was in jail. Convinced that the father was wrongly accused, Ledoux worked through the French ambassador to find an attorney to take on the father's case so the youngster could return to school, and Ledoux promised to help

underwrite the teenager's education.

"It costs me nothing, maybe 500 bucks," Ledoux said, but it could change the youngster's life, could help him, as Ledoux put it, "to have a future."

Ledoux' immediate future involved that visit to northern Arizona, the Grand Canyon, Kayenta and Monument Valley, then driving cross-country to New York, where the team appeared at the Land Rover stand at the New York Auto Show before heading back to France. Ledoux is going back to work long enough to underwrite his return to the road. Perhaps we'll see him in Arizona again. After all, his original route map (see previous page) ran from here to the coast, across the Pacific to Australia and New Zealand, then across southern Asia to France. ■



After working as a sports editor for daily newspapers in Michigan, **LARRY EDSALL** was on staff for 12 years at *AutoWeek* magazine, most of it as managing editor. He has driven more than half a million miles testing cars on four continents. He moved to Phoenix to help launch www.izoom.com, an automotive website, and also helped to found PAPA, the Phoenix Automotive Press Association. His book on concept cars is scheduled for publication in Italy this fall.

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SALEEN TURNS 20 AND GOES HOLLYWOOD!

Photo: Randy Lorentzen



Saleen S281 Mustang Coupe
2 Fast 2 Furious

Here's a quiz for the day: What has 12 wheels, 989 cubic inches, almost 1300 horsepower, and seats up to 8 consenting adults?

If you took a guess at "the all-new Saleen S989 double-semi-dually competitor to the Porsche Turbo Cayenne and M-B ML 55 AMG," no dice... please move on to clue number one.

CLUE NUMBER ONE: This 12-wheeled wonder is being seen by more than 43 million people at over 10,000 locations this summer, with over \$100 million spent on its advertising and promotion.

Er, no, it's not the long-rumored Saleen supercharged V-10 diesel-powered combination Zamboni ice groomer and wood floor polisher that would allow the Coyotes and Suns to schedule back-to-back doubleheaders with only a 30-minute intermission. Saleen tells us that machine will not make its debut until... um... much later.

CLUE NUMBER TWO: Every one of the 43 million viewers will be screened during the course of his or her exposure to this vehicle, and many will be placed in stadium seating.

BONUS CLUES: One driver could easily be known as Mr. Indy (though he's never raced at the Memorial Day 500 mile

classic). Another currently fancies himself as God (though he's never won a race, and lots of people consider him a major joker).

Enough of all that? Well, we didn't want to serve up the answer on a silver platter. Actually, it's being served up on the silver screen. We're talking movies here, three of them. And not one, but three Saleens:

an S7 supercar, a supercharged S281 Mustang convertible, and a supercharged S281 Mustang coupe. Saleen calls this trio of summer releases *Hollywood Horsepower*: a triple knockout punch of comedy, speed and thrills.

The triad premiered in late May with *Bruce Almighty*, a Universal Pictures film starring Jim Carrey as an average Bruce who gets his wish when God (Morgan Freeman) arranges a switch for a week, to give Bruce some much-needed perspective. Two beauties costar: one Jennifer Aniston, and one silver Saleen S7. Jennifer may have the softer curves, but the S7 is arguably faster and a real handler. Aniston is a heartbreaker; the S7 is a remarkably powerful short-distance braker. The Pope has occasionally been driven in a Ferrari, but this film proposes that the Almighty drives a Saleen S7.

Next up, in early June, was a motor-

head's favorite: *2 Fast 2 Furious*, starring Paul Walker and Tyrese Gibson. A Lizstick Red Saleen S281 supercharged Mustang coupe joins the cast of this sequel, in which an ex-cop and an ex-con team up to deal with a Miami drug kingpin.

Finally, *Hollywood Homicide* opened in mid-June, a Sony Pictures/Revolution Studios film starring Harrison Ford and Josh Hartnett as LAPD homicide detec-

Saleen S281 Mustang Convertible
Hollywood Homicide

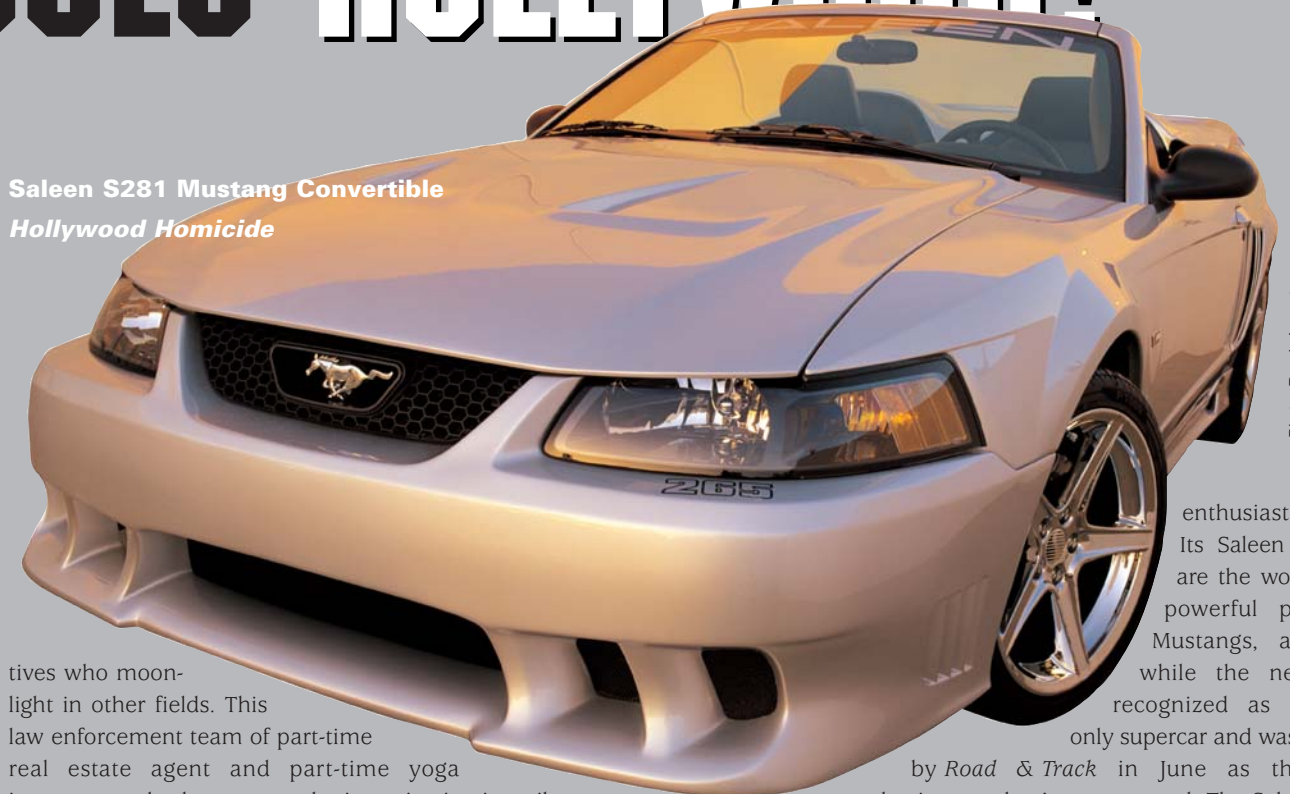


Photo: Randy Lorentzen

tives who moonlight in other fields. This law enforcement team of part-time real estate agent and part-time yoga instructor embarks on a murder investigation in a silver Saleen S281 supercharged convertible. Some consider the chase scene to be of the same caliber as the Steve McQueen classic, *Bullitt*. Hartnett and Ford have also had some fun on late-night TV, insinuating cause, effect and responsibility for some crash scenes that went not exactly as scripted.

Celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2003, Saleen is a widely recognized niche manufacturer of high-performance American

enthusiast vehicles. Its Saleen Extremes are the world's most powerful production Mustangs, at 445hp, while the new S7 is recognized as America's only supercar and was reviewed

by *Road & Track* in June as the fastest production car they've ever tested. The Saleen S7 has done well at the track, as well, winning eight GTS championships in its first two years of competition.

And speaking of milestone birthdays, as Ford celebrates its 100th by producing their own Ford GT supercar, based on last year's GT40 show car (see *Arizona Driver*, Nov/Dec '02), Saleen has been commissioned to assemble it for Ford, beginning this summer. Stay tuned... we expect to revisit this project! ■

SALEEN
20
1983-2003

Saleen S7
Bruce Almighty



VISITING SALEEN

What a way to beat the heat and crank it up at the same time: next time you're in southern California... heck, this is worth a special trip!... you might want to see where the stars live. No, not Brad or Jennifer... Saleen World Headquarters offers tours twice a week in the afternoon, a chance for you to see the famous S7 and Mustang production lines, as well as other manufacturing aspects. These tours are free of charge and can last between 45 minutes and an hour and a half. We recommend you call and notify the folks at Saleen of your plans before you arrive.

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The new Porsche Cayenne performance SUV is selling as fast as the dealers can bring 'em in. Bridgestone has been an original equipment supplier to Porsche for more than 20 years, according to Michael Martini, VP of Consumer Tire Original Equipment Sales for Bridgestone/Firestone North American Tire, LLC, noting that the company also provides tires for the Porsche 911 and Boxster. And Bridgestone has been chosen to supply the new Turanza™ ER30 N-0 extra load tire as original equipment for the Cayenne, in a base size of 255/55R18 109Y.

The new Cayenne, manufactured in Germany, offers the best Porsche performance characteristics combined with a luxurious interior roomy enough for five passengers and a large amount of cargo. With advanced on- and off-road capabilities, the Cayenne can satisfy the driving enthusiast as well as the everyday driver with an active and varied lifestyle. The vehicle is offered in two models: the Cayenne S and the Cayenne Turbo for ultimate Porsche performance.

"It is very gratifying to be named an original equipment supplier for this exciting new



vehicle," adds Martini. "Our engineers have worked very closely with Porsche to secure this fitment, and we've been the main supplier since the start of production on the Cayenne."

The Bridgestone Turanza ER30, which is manufactured in Japan by Bridgestone Corporation, is a touring tire that delivers high performance tire characteristics without sacrificing ride comfort. Designed with a two-ply rayon body, two nylon cap plies and two steel belts, the tire offers optimized dry handling and wet traction. It also features a UTQG rating of 140 for treadwear, and an "A" for both traction and temperature. ■

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Sleeper supercars



By Gary Goldzweig & Joe Sage

When Aston Martin, with Ford's new and warmly welcomed financial assistance, launched the DB7 in 1993, it made an immediate splash. With the creature comforts and brute power Aston Martin has long purveyed, combined with the reliability inherent in Ford's oversight and parts participation, the Aston eased into an era of mass production whose positive trade-offs were well worth a little less panache than its hand-built predecessors offered.

With a 355-hp supercharged in-line six, the DB7 generated power and torque that easily dusted the equally new Jaguar XK8. The comparison was more complex, though, as the Aston outperformed the XK8, but did so with six cylinders to the Jag's eight, and at about twice the price. The Jaguar was an automatic, but the DB7 was available with a stick; advantage: Aston Martin.

Aston recognized it had a marketing, if not engineering, issue with its six. The configuration continued for about six years, until the current DB7 Vantage was introduced in 2000, with a normally-aspirated V-12 (on about half that year's DB7 models) generating 420 horsepower

■ The DB7 GT acknowledges Astons natural position as a supercar with Grand Touring genes, the perfect car for surrounding oneself in elegance and comfort while kicking some serious butt.

and 400 lb.-ft. of torque. It would seem there was now no question the Aston was king of the beasts, at least compared with its feline cousin, the Jag. Except, during roughly the same period, Jaguar upped their ante with the XKR, a 390-hp supercharged version of the XK8.

As the supercar market heated up further, launching exotic performance supercars all over the roads of dot-com America, Aston Martin introduced the V-12 Vanquish. Although slightly more muscular in stance, to the untrained eye it was as the DB7, a sleek and stylish, fairly harmless looking GT coupe, not the kind of thing that would turn a policeman's head as quickly as a Lamborghini Countach. The Vanquish is at the top of most anyone's Aston Martin wish list, but as a 500-a-year rarity, it's a bit too dear for most. To bridge the gap, Aston has now introduced the DB7 GT, barely distinguishable from the original DB7. There are two versions available: a six-speed manual Coupe (DB7 GT) and a five-speed automatic (GTA), and they are

offered alongside the existing DB7 Vantage Coupe and Volante models.

The GT can quickly be spotted (if stock) by 5-spoke wheels that buck the plus-one trend by being actually an inch smaller than the standard, as Aston Martin has concluded a little more sidewall optimizes performance with the upgraded GT suspension. These alloy wheels are equipped with 245/35 front, 265/30 rear low profile Bridgestone tires. There is also a distinctive wire mesh radiator grille and lower air intake, again subtle cues to differentiate the car as a DB7 GT (or GTA).

The GT benefits in performance from racing-style grooved Brembo brakes (with recognizable silver calipers) and an engine tweaked to 435 hp and 410 lb.-ft. of torque. A lower final drive ratio improves acceleration, the manual shift has been strengthened and quickened, and a reinforced twin-plate AP racing clutch has been installed.

Special attention has been paid to aerodynamic balance for high speed stability with the adoption of additional



■ Cave Creek Road becomes Bartlett Dam Road, then Forest Road 19 within the Tonto National Forest. We pretty much had it to ourselves.

sweeps for the undertray, wheel arch liner extensions and a revised bootlid which emphasizes the new look. These additions have helped to reduce lift by almost 50%.

We recently spent a day on Aston Martin's appropriately named Power, Beauty and Soul Tour as it visited Arizona.

Included were (a) a DB7 GT coupe with 6-speed manual transmission and (b) a DB7 Volante droptop with a 5-speed automatic. We flipped a coin, each grabbed one of the machines, turned the key, pushed the trademark red start button, and enjoyed the exhaust note,

which Aston has also spent some time refining for the GT, with an active sports exhaust system incorporating rear silencer bypass valves. Music! We headed north along the desert surface streets of upper Scottsdale, a good chance to check out the "sleeper" nature of this unassuming supercar, hoping the police didn't know we were as red-hot as we knew we were. By and large, we cut a fairly tame profile through town, at least compared with perhaps a red Ferrari or high-winged Porsche. But the Aston definitely turns a few heads.

Our destination was Bartlett Reservoir,

so once we eased through Carefree, we had some great open roads with enough twisties and hills to give the systems a good workout. By now, our feet were dancing, but it bears noting that the first thing both drivers had noticed upon entering the two DB7s was the notoriously tight British cockpit. Some Aston drivers are known to drive the Aston barefoot, and it's not hard to see why. One of us wears a size 13, the other a 9, and we were both noticeably tight around the pedals, side-to-side and with motion

KEEP RIGHT >>

■ The DB7 Vantage (non-GT) is quickly identified by its 9-spoke 19" wheels. On the Volante, we found the convertible top operation far short of what has become a one-latch, one-button, body-concealed, weatherproof operation on so many new roadsters. Not so for our Aston. It had latches over here, latches over there, a series of fumbly moves, and then yes, a power button, but the fun was wearing thin. Worst of all, when the top is down, it accumulates above body level in an untidy, vision-disrupting pile not dissimilar to what you get in a VW Beetle, surprising at eight times the price.



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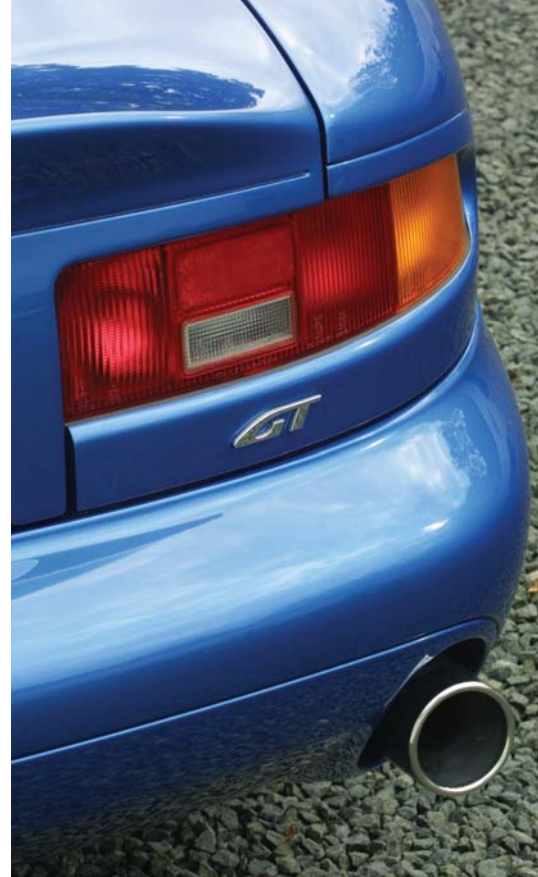
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>> ASTON MARTIN - cont'd

restricted above the toes as well. Around town, this is probably more of an issue to the driver of the manual, who has more pedals to work and has to use them often; but on the open road, it pretty much slipped our mind. (Fortunately, we can't say but can certainly wonder what would happen with that tight footwork in any panic situation.)

Surrounded by the Connolly leather, deep wood grains, piped seating, the growl of the powerful 12 and the intuitive controls Aston provides, all we really cared about was the quality of the drive. And top quality it is. With a 12-cylinder powerplant up front, a long hood and significant front overhang, a front-favored weight distribution, and 3795 pounds of curb weight (4175 for the Volante), we might have anticipated noticeable understeer on corners such as those en route to Bartlett. Not the case. These cars cornered, at fairly aggressive speeds, with as much balance as some of their midengined competitors. Aston insists luxury comes first, so if performance is considered to be just along for the ride, it's come fully packed and ready for a long trip in the GT.

Like a fine stereo, you're always tempted to try this machine out at top volume, but can get a real test of the



■ For us, it was largely no contest. We'd opt for the GT over the Vantage for its extra power, torque, braking, aerodynamics and other performance enhancements. We'd prefer the coupe anyway (the only choice on the GT), for its distinctive style and normal weight and strength advantages over a convertible. Round that out with our preference for the manual transmission, and we're just about ready to place our order... if only. But we would never kick the DB7 Volante out of our garage.



overall experience when turned down low. Even when not driving these cars at the limit (we were on our best behavior when we encountered the Maricopa County Sheriff's deputies several times), the driver enjoys a top-flight experience. Cruising in a high-rpm lower gear, the power is always there, with plenty of low-end torque and thrilling engine sounds that are the natural result of a thrilling engine. Cornering and braking are intuitive and strong. Luxury and amenities are thorough. The recognition factor is subtle but powerful.

In fact, our day with the Astons wrapped up with a surprising bit of recognition. Just moments from our final drop-off, we eased up to a red light. The driver to our left wanted our attention, which wasn't that unusual, but his story was: his brother had just written the definitive history of Aston Martin. The light turned green and he was off before we could get a positive ID on him, his brother, or the book. One thing for sure, though, it would be a great place to get the full lineage that flows through Vantage, Volante, Vanquish and the new GT. ■

GARY GOLDZWEIG has worked in quality control and test engineering for Ferrari, BMW, Mercedes-Benz and others in the US. Besides being a valuable road evaluator for *Arizona Driver*, Gary works in the Valley as a tennis pro. **JOE SAGE** is publisher and editor of *AZD*.



THE INSIDE TRACK: BRIEFS & RUMORS

■ According to Chairman Bernd Pischetsrieder, **Volkswagen** will offer a V-10 diesel engine as an option on the new Touareg SUV in the spring of 2004. The



same engine will also be available in the upcoming Phaeton luxury sedan. A diesel will be offered in the Passat beginning this fall. Rather than using the existing 90-hp 1.9-liter engine from the Golf, Jetta and New Beetle, the Passat TDI (turbo direct injection) will get a 2.0-liter, 134-hp version with a massive 248 lb.ft. of torque.

■ **Mercedes-Benz** will leapfrog the competition this fall when they plan to introduce a new seven-speed automatic transmission, lighter and more compact than the current five-speed automatic. It's expected to debut this fall in the S500 sedan attached to a 5.0-liter V-8.

■ A company called Government Acquisitions is trying to place advertisements on **police cruisers** similar to those on race cars. Nearly 100 police departments have signed up for the program to help pay for new police cars, which generally run from \$25,000 to \$30,000.



■ The **BMW** design team is already working on a restyled version of the brand new 7 Series, which just came to market last year. Highly negative reaction has design chief Chris Bangle and his crew working on new front and rear ends, with modification of the trunk lid line and the 'eyebrow' headlights. Look for the new look to debut as early as the Tokyo auto show or the Detroit show next January.

■ **Ford** will offer a crossover between an SUV and a wagon called the Freestyle FX, a six-passenger unit-body vehicle with a wheelbase similar to the Ford Explorer. It will share parts with the upcoming Ford 500 and Mercury Montego sedans, which are planned for market at the same time, in 2004 as 2005 models. The engine will likely be a 3.0-liter V-6 with a CVT (continuously variable transmission).

■ The 2004 **Isuzu** Axiom will get a new direct injection engine. The 3.5-liter V-6 boasts 250 hp and fuel economy of 18 mpg for city driving and 23 mpg on the highway. The direct injection system squirts fuel directly into the cylinders and improves 0 to 60 mph acceleration from 8.9 seconds to 7.5 seconds over the current engine 3.5-liter V-6.

■ **Ford** is talking about discontinuing its retro-looking Thunderbird in 2005 or 2006 after only four or five years of production. Designed to be an image-building car for the Ford line, sales have not reached the projected sales levels. Ford Division President Steve Lyons said the decision is still tentative and that even if it is discontinued, it might still be brought back again for a limited production run.

■ **Saturn** will offer two performance vehicles starting in 2004 under the Red Line label. The Ion Red Line is equipped with a supercharged (200-plus-hp) 2.0-liter Ecotech four-cylinder engine. It also gets modified suspension, larger brakes and other performance enhancements. The Vue Red Line SUV will get a 250-hp 3.5-liter Honda V-6 engine.

■ **Audi's** Nuvolari concept car from the Geneva auto show will be close to the planned A8-based 2+2 luxury coupe planned for 2006. The car will be built on an aluminum space frame and is expected to weigh less than 3500 pounds. 600



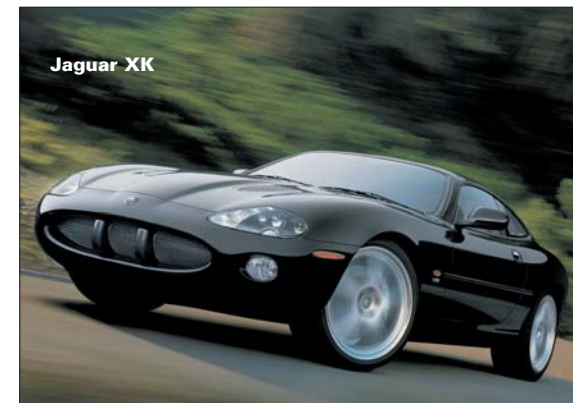
hp will come from a twin-turbo 5.0-liter V-10 care of Lamborghini (which, like Audi, is owned by Volkswagen).

■ **Volvo** will include four years or 30,000 miles of scheduled maintenance starting with 2004 model vehicles. The warranty will continue to be 4 years/50,000 miles.

■ **Avanti** Motors Corp., which is currently building a Hummer competitor despite a lawsuit by GM claiming it's too close to the H2 design, is also working on a new Avanti sports car based on the Pontiac Firebird platform with a 4.6-liter Ford V-8, scheduled to debut this fall.

■ **General Motors** is redesigning its minivans to keep up with competition. When the new models roll off the line the designations will be changed from minivan to sport vans. The current Chevrolet and Pontiac models will be joined by Saturn and Buick versions.

■ **Jaguar** is working on a second aluminum bodied car to join the new XJ sedan. When the next generation XK and XKR coupe and convertibles debut in 2006 they are expected to have a high level of aluminum paneling and undercarriage. The convertible is likely to get some steel reinforcement to bring it to the required level of body stiffness. Engines will be updates of the current 4.2-liter V-8 (about 300 hp) with a possible 500-hp supercharged version two or three years later. There also may be a smaller entry-level 3.5-liter 260-hp V-8 version.



■ **Mazda** will soon be offering a MazdaSpeed version of the venerable



Miata. Using an aftermarket turbocharger and suspension parts, the two-seater will be boosted to about 180 horsepower. The finished product will be sold through Mazda dealers with a full warranty.

■ Within two years, **Lexus** will offer a hybrid version of its RX 330 luxury SUV. The gasoline/electric hybrid will actually have better performance than the standard RX 330, plus fuel economy will be about 60 percent better than the standard model (up to about 35 mpg).

■ **Mitsubishi** has added a wagon version to the Lancer lineup called the Sportback. It will compete with cars like the Mazda Protégé 5, Ford Focus and Toyota Matrix. The Sportback has a new 2.4-liter four-cylinder engine producing 162 hp.

■ **Audi** plans to introduce a coupe version of the popular A4 in September at the Frankfurt motor show. The coupe will basically be a hardtop version of the Audi

A4 Cabrio, which has unique sheetmetal from the sedan. Expect also an S4 version, to compete with the BMW M3 and Mercedes-Benz C-Class AMG.

■ **Hyundai** is building new proving grounds at California City, in the desert northeast of Los Angeles. The facility includes a 6.4-mile oval test track with a vehicle-dynamics test area and a handling course within the oval. It will also have a hill course, special surface roads, an indoor test facility and a 30,000 sq.ft. office.

■ **Mazda** will likely drop the Protégé name in favor of Mazda3 when the next generation debuts early in 2004. The new naming follows the nomenclature of the new larger Mazda6 that debuted last year. The new 3 will get new 2.0- and 2.5-liter four cylinder engines and share its platform with the next-generation Ford Focus and Volvo 40 series cars.

■ **Lotus** may bring a lightweight Elise roadster to the U.S. as early as spring or summer 2004. The engine is likely to be the 1.8-liter 138-hp four-cylinder from the Toyota MR2 Spyder.

■ Since the **PT Cruiser** debuted in 2001 many owners have said it needed more power. Chrysler responded in the fall of 2002 with a charged GT model, but the \$23,280 base price deterred new sales. Chrysler is responding again by offering a less expensive turbocharged version starting in August. Pricing and features have yet to be announced and it not known if the GT will continue to be offered.

■ **Cadillac** has discontinued the Seville STS leaving only the SLS to carry the flag through 2004 when the all-new Sigma-architecture based 2005 STS performance sedan comes to market. When the new model arrives, the Seville name will be dropped. The SLS will remain unchanged through the 2004 model year.

■ **General Motors** has taken the Pontiac Solstice sports car from concept stage to prototype for possible production. The rear-wheel drive Solstice was a big hit at the Detroit auto show in 2002. GM Vice Chairman Robert Lutz said it's built on a flexible architecture that could be used on a variety of small vehicles including a coupe, convertible and small sedan. If it comes to fruition, Lutz said he expects to see the pricing at about \$19,000.

■ **Mercedes-Benz** is upping the horsepower ante to even more astronomical levels next year when the CL65 AMG goes on sale. The luxury coupe will get new larger twin turbochargers with more boost, pushing power to 604 hp with 738 lb.ft. of torque.

■ **Renault** is planning to come back to the United States after being gone since 1987. Using its Nissan connection, Renault could possibly sell through the existing dealer network and ultimately could build cars a U.S. Nissan plant.



Because of their common ownership, many of the vehicles will share common platforms by the end of this decade. Don't look for new Renaults in the U.S. until 2010 at the earliest. ■

Briefs & Rumors is a summary of auto news from industry sources, trade journals and consumer magazines compiled for *Arizona Driver* by **BILL & BARBARA SCHAFFER** of *Auto Digest*.

KIA SORENTO TO THE GRAND CANYON

By Larry Edsall
Photos by the author

Before accepting our \$20 entry fee, the ranger at the entrance to the Grand Canyon warned us and then warned us again that we might not actually see the canyon this day.

In fact, until a tow truck cleared away a car that had skidded off the road, we couldn't even get close to the canyon for at least an hour.

Fortunately, there was a service area between us and the accident, so we could go inside, have a cup of coffee and look at souvenirs until the road was reopened. Then, just as we neared the first overlook, the snowstorm subsided and the clouds even parted enough for the sun to shine through, although those clouds were low enough that we never got a good clear view of the North Rim.

But that was okay. Looking down on clouds inside the bowl of the Canyon's snow-frosted red rock gave friends from the Midwest a spectacular first look at one of the world's true wonders.

For a while, we'd also wondered, not about the Canyon but about how well the Kia Sorento we were driving would do. The Sorento is the Korean automaker's new-for-2003 mid-size sport-utility vehicle.

■ Doesn't that look nice right about now? Forget it. You can get your own Kia Sorento, you can go to the Grand Canyon (both great ideas), but this time of year you won't cool off quite this much.

Miles per dollar

The Sorento looks a lot like the Lexus RX300, at least until you focus in on the price sticker. Our 4X4 EX model is the fanciest version of the Sorento and yet it had a base price of \$24,100, more than \$10,000 lower than the two-wheel-drive RX.

One way Kia kept the price so low—the Sorento LX with front-wheel drive starts at only \$19,995—is by not even offering such things as advanced vehicle dynamic (anti-spin) technology and by making even things such as anti-lock brakes a \$595 option.

Our test car came without any options, which meant it had neither ABS nor Kia's torque-on-demand system—which includes low range and automatically transfers power from slipping rear wheels to gripping front wheels, but comes only as part of a \$2000 luxury package that includes leather seats and an in-dash six-CD changer—so we had to drive with extra caution on snow-covered and wet roads.

The snow began while we were in Sedona, but we still opted for the scenic

route up through Oak Creek Canyon on the way to Flagstaff, although as it turned out the snow blotted out much of the view.

Kia's 3.4-liter V6 engine provides 192 horsepower and 217 pound-feet of torque and did a nice job on the steep climb up the ridge from the creek. However, that engine is rated at only 15 miles per gallon in town and 18 on the highway.

The climb involves several switchbacks. We found the Sorento to be softly sprung (which many people like) and steering feedback so light it was almost vague at times.

Nonetheless, the Kia had no problem with the often-heavy snowfall, and the location of the four-wheel-drive control knob, just to the left of the steering wheel, made it easy to select between two- and four-wheel traction without having a pull or push any levers.

The Sorento's cloth seats were comfortable, even for the long trip from the Valley to the Grand Canyon and back, and, except for the cap-like cover above the radio, the interior was attractively detailed, with wood-grain trim along the sides of the center console.



■ In typical Arizona road trip fashion, we encountered a light but whiteout dusting and the clear, dry desert roads near Cameron all within a narrow time band. Time to hone those winter driving skills (see *Arizona Driver*, November/December 2002), set the Sorento in 4WD, and you're good to go.



We counted nine storage areas, including a two-tier center console storage unit, within the driver's reach, and that didn't include the vehicle's many cupholders.

Those sitting in the back seat had plenty of legroom. There also was plenty of cargo area behind the seat, although the cargo cover didn't always want to stay in place.

But that was okay. It was more important to us that the cloud cover lifted to provide us with a grand view of the Grand Canyon.

Trip tips

Many, maybe even most people who drive from Flagstaff to the Grand Canyon

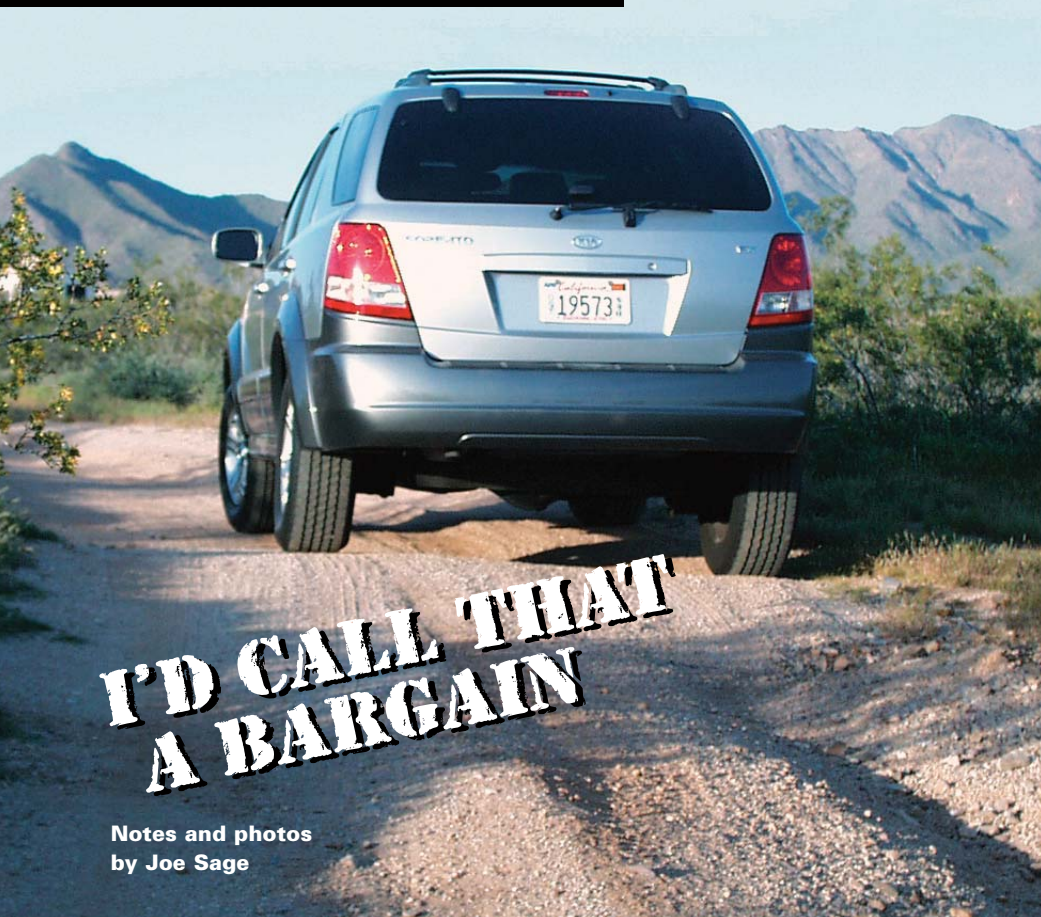
take I-40 west to Williams, then turn north up Arizona 64 to Tusayan. A more scenic route is to leave Flagstaff on U.S. 180, which offers the opportunity to visit the Museum of Northern Arizona and to skirt the San Francisco Peaks as you angle northwest to intersect with AZ 64 at Valle, about halfway between Williams and the South Rim.

But our preference is to head due north from Flagstaff on U.S. 89. It's about 45 miles to the AZ 64 West turnoff, but we recommend staying on 89 for a couple more miles to enjoy a meal (our breakfast was outstanding and we treated Midwest-

ern visitors to their first fry bread) and to do some shopping at the Cameron Trading Post. You'll also want to take time to see the historic bridge across the Little Colorado River Gorge. If you decide to spend lots of time there, the Trading Post complex includes a 66-room lodge.

When you leave the Trading Post, backtrack down 89 to 64 and turn west toward the canyon. But be sure to stop at the Little Colorado River Gorge Overlook, which provides a postcard-style preview to the powerful panorama you'll enjoy of the Grand Canyon some 30 miles further along the road. ■





I'D CALL THAT A BARGAIN

Notes and photos by Joe Sage

One of our staffers couldn't get over the point-by-point similarities in quality and performance between the \$26,000 Kia Sorento and his noticeably pricier Mercedes-Benz ML.

The Kia Sorento delivers everything you'd expect, maybe more—controls are complete and intuitive; performance is more than adequate; handling could be improved a bit, as it feels like the rear could break loose (oversteer) on the most mundane turns (though it didn't); and fit and finish of the bodywork rival the tight tolerances coming out of Europe's best, at least while new.

Half the fun of heading down a few narrow desert roads wasn't the Sorento's off-road capability—we were pretty confident of that—but its 36.4-foot turning circle gave us confidence we could get out of about any trouble we could get into. For a vehicle likely to spend plenty of time in town, the parking implications of this are significant.

Ultimately, you have to remind yourself of the real positioning elements of this Kia—its 10-year warranty and its exceptional price. The Koreans are catching up at a breathtaking pace. ■



The Alternative to Illegal Street Racing

The *Take it to the Track*™ public awareness campaign was founded in 2002 by Toyo Tires, to promote a safe alternative to illegal street racing. Street racing has become more prominent in the news, as related accidents lead to stiffer legislation toward both enthusiasts and the automotive industry as a whole, due to the risk of serious injury and even death to both participants and innocent bystanders.

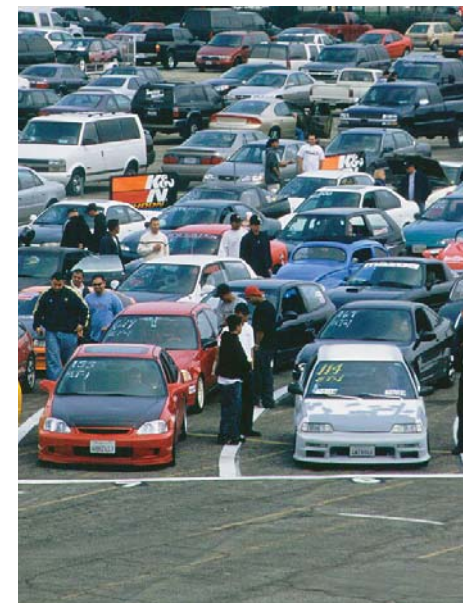
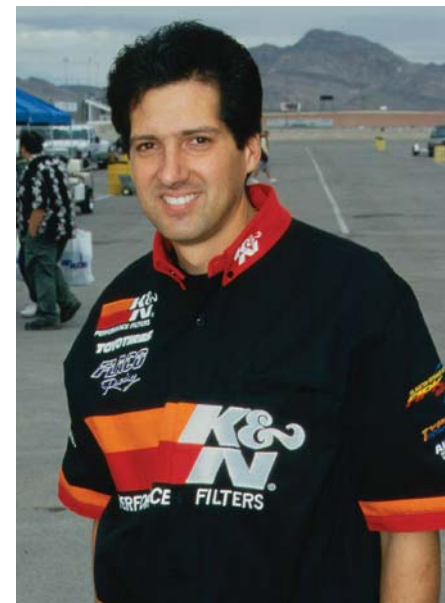


According to Gregg Vandermark, Manager of Performance Events and Activities for Toyo (USA), the "goal is to make young enthusiasts aware that there are local race tracks available for their use (with) a variety of events designed to provide not only an opportunity to race their cars, but to enjoy any number of fun, entertaining activities associated with each event. This way, they will consider the race track their home base for their activity, rather than taking risks on public roads."

The *Take it to the Track*™ message precedes many NHRA® Summit™ Sport Compact Drag Racing events and supports the NHRA Street Legal Drags™ program. Professional drivers such as Team Toyo's Abel Ibarra (right), Craig Paisley, Stephan Papdakis and Scott Kelley promote the program on TV news and radio interviews.

www.takeittothetrack.com, the program's website, provides updated information on how to get started in legal racing at a local track, and includes a comprehensive racetrack guide. Streaming video is currently being integrated into the site, which will discuss the strengths of the program and the negatives of illegal street racing.

Support materials are available at no charge to young drivers and organizations such as schools, driver training programs, tracks and law enforcement. ■



UPCOMING FEATURES

COPPERSTATE 1000



As this annual event gears up for early 2004, we revisit the 2003 tour, as a stunning and fun collection of great value cruises some of the most scenic (and drivable!) roads, historic towns, state parks, National Monuments and other attractions of southeastern Arizona.

FORD ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS



Rubberized asphalt is just the beginning. "The pioneering spirit shown by Arizona ... is a catalyst for other states interested in innovative ways to conserve natural resources," said Andy Aho, Ford's Worldwide Director of Environmental Outreach and Strategy.

TEENS TACKLE TRAFFIC



We tackle the traumas of teens and traffic. With the thrills of reaching driving age come opportunities and, of course, responsibilities. We will look at issues that can build driver skills and parental trust, while ensuring that driving is safe and still plenty of fun.

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