

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 6

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2003



Corvette's 50th Anniversary

Enthusiasts celebrate in Arizona, join New Mexico owners in Caravan to Bowling Green

PLUS...

- ADVENTURE CAPITALIST JIM ROGERS BRINGS HIS 'ROUND THE WORLD MERCEDES TO ARIZONA
- ORANGE FEST : NISSAN CREATES A BROAD PALETTE OF ONE OF THIS YEAR'S MOST POPULAR HUES
- FUZION ZRI TUNER TIRES ■ TEEN DRIVER : CELL PHONE USE AND DRIVING ATTENTION
- GULDSTRAND 50TH ANNIVERSARY CORVETTE AND AVAILABLE 427 ENGINE ■ AND MORE!

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INVENTORY

Mercedes-Benz

2004 SLR.....Silver/Black.....Inquire
2003 S55.....Silver/Black.....100 mi.
2003 CL600.....Black/Black.....100 mi.
2003 CL55 Coupe.....Silver/Black.....2,179 mi.
2003 SL55 Roadster.....Silver/Black.....10 mi.
2003 SL55 Roadster.....Black/Black.....24 mi.
2003 CL55 Coupe.....Pewter/Ash.....200 mi.
2003 SL500.....Black/Black.....8,000 mi.
2002 S500 Sedan 4D.....Black/Java.....11,524 mi.
2002 S500 Sedan 4D Sport.....Silver/Ash.....15,100 mi.
2001 CLK 320 Cab.....Britt Silver/Charcoal.....19,600 mi.
1999 S500 Sedan 4D.....White/Tan.....43,083 mi.
1991 SL500 Roadster.....Green/Tan.....35,055 mi.
1971 280SL.....White/Tan.....1,700 mi.
1971 280SL.....Red/Tan.....74,500 mi.
1959 220C.....Light Blue.....70,000 mi.

Porsche

2004 Carrera GT.....Silver/Black.....Inquire
2003 Cayenne Turbo.....Black/Tan.....50 mi.
2003 Cayenne S.....Blue/Tan.....50 mi.
2003 Turbo.....Steel Gray/Gray.....50 mi.
2002 995 Cabriolet 2D.....Steel Gray/Gray.....234 mi.
2002 Boxster.....Silver/Black.....10,400 mi.
2001 995 Turbo.....Arctic Silver/Gray.....9,024 mi.

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Other Exotics

2002 BMW Alpina Conv. Titan.Sil/Gray.....200 mi.
2002 BMW 330ci Conv. White/Tan.....10,625 mi.
2001 BMW X5 SUV.....Silver/Gray.....45,100 mi.
2001 BMW 740i.....White/Tan.....10,050 mi.
2000 BMW M5 Sedan.....Titan.Sil/Black.....14,700 mi.
1998 BMW 750i.....White/Tan.....43,800 mi.
2003 Dodge Viper SRT-10.....Black/Black.....10 mi.
1966 Ford Cobra.....Black/Gray.....9 mi.
2001 Jaguar XK8 Conv. Pacific Blue/Ivory.....12,800 mi.
1999 Jaguar XK8 Conv. Topaz/Parch.....37,800 mi.
1996 Jaguar XK140 Conv. Black/Tan.....18 mi.
1996 Jaguar XK140 Conv. Red/Tan.....150 mi.
2004 Maybach.....Inquire
2003 Panaz Esperante.....Black/Parch.....70 mi.
1999 Panaz Roadster.....Silver/Black.....580 mi.
1998 Panaz Roadster.....Red/Tan.....1,500 mi.

Bentley/Rolls-Royce

2004 Bentley Continental GT .3 to choose.....Inquire
2002 Bentley Arnage T.....Black/Black.....1,100 mi.
2001 Bentley Azure.....Black/Tan.....1,600 mi.
1989 Bentley Turbo R.....Burgundy/Tan.....43,000 mi.
1987 Rolls-Royce Camiche.....Met./Black/Tan.....14,200 mi.
1987 Rolls-Royce Camiche.....Ivory/Magnolia.....59,599 mi.



2003 Mercedes SL55
Silver/Ash



2004 Porsche Carrera GT
Silver/Black, inquire

2004 Bentley Continental
Inquire



2004 Ferrari Enzo
Red/Black, inquire

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ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

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AZ-NM Corvette group travels to Bowling Green 34

Arizona and New Mexico Corvette owners teamed up to celebrate the 50th with events in the Valley and a Caravan to the National Corvette Museum in Bowling Green KY.

Guldstrand 50th Anniversary Corvette 40

Racing and tuning great Dick Guldstrand has produced a Special Edition 500 hp Corvette. Now its stunning 427 V8 is also available for installation in a wide range of Chevs.

Lexus GX470 SUV review 44

Lexus notches in a size smaller than the LX470 with this intermediate SUV. We check it out around town and find it is just as well-received as it is capable off-road.

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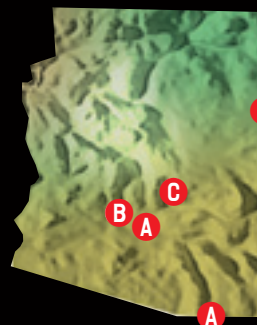
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COVER: The 2003 50th Anniversary Chevrolet Corvette barrels across Arizona's high country. Photo courtesy of GM.

Arizona is a great place to enjoy the road, and in this issue we see how well our highways perform as a focal point for people, places and events of the world. Corvette owners from Arizona combined forces with those from New Mexico, in a National Corvette Museum-sponsored cross-country caravan to Bowling Green, Kentucky, in celebration of Corvette's 50th Anniversary. And Jim Rogers, author of the eminently entertaining books *Investment Biker* and *Adventure Capitalist: The Ultimate Investor's Road Trip*, returns to Arizona and visits with us to relive his 2001 re-entry into the US at Nogales, the final leg of his 'round-the-world tour driving a highly custom Millennium Mercedes "off-roadster" (created from an SLK 230 and a G-Series Gelaendewagen) through 116 countries, the basis for *Adventure Capitalist*.

In addition, we present highlights of vehicles and news we know will be of particular interest to Arizona driving enthusiasts, from Bridgestone's new Fuzion tire line, to the Chevy HHR concept, to the Audi LeMans and beyond.

Always eager to help the youngest drivers learn the joys and thrills of life behind the wheel in complete safety, we present new research on driving and dialing, particularly as it pertains to teen drivers versus adults.

We've got a lot of miles in store for you this issue.

And stay tuned for next month, as auction fever returns to the Valley of the Sun, we bring you an *Arizona Rider* section looking into the development of the Honda Valkyrie Rune, and we find out who makes the world's fastest production pickup.



Joe Sage
Joe Sage
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Executive Editor

ARIZONA DRIVER

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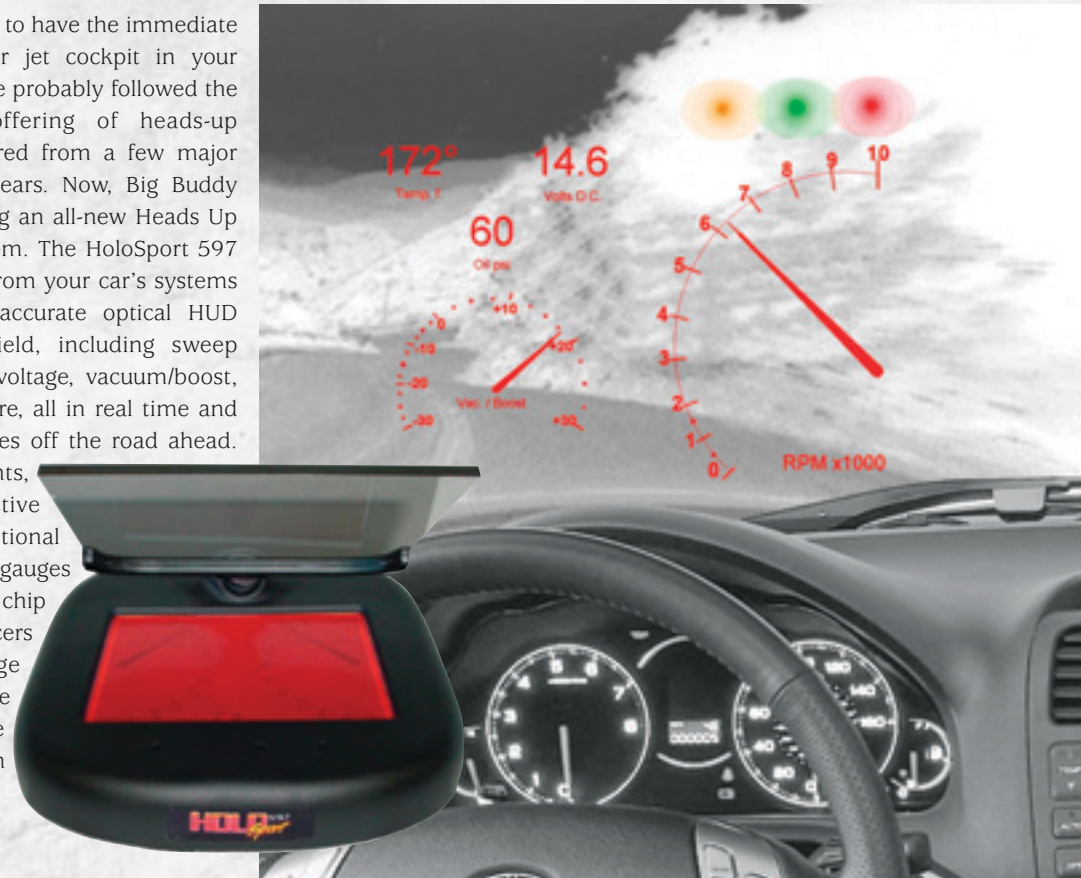
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EQUIPMENT : HOLOSPORT 597 HEADS UP DISPLAY

If you've always wanted to have the immediate data feed of a fighter jet cockpit in your personal vehicle, you've probably followed the occasional factory offering of heads-up display, which has appeared from a few major manufacturers over the years. Now, Big Buddy Performance is announcing an all-new Heads Up Display (HUD) gauge system. The HoloSport 597 gathers vital information from your car's systems and projects a digitally accurate optical HUD display on your windshield, including sweep tachometer, oil pressure, voltage, vacuum/boost, EGT, and water temperature, all in real time and all without taking your eyes off the road ahead. Programmable shift points, nitrous arming and active warning lights give additional safety display. Additional gauges can be added via plug-in chip software and senders. Racers can also log their gauge system's data via available USB download port. See bigbuddyperformance.com for more information. ■



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AUTO INDUSTRY UPDATE

Audi Le Mans Concept



AUDI TEASES WITH LE MANS CONCEPT

▲ Audi is showing a high-performance two-seat sports car concept called the Le Mans, in celebration of its three consecutive wins at the prestigious 24-hour race. The futuristic-looking mid-engine Le Mans is a four-wheel-drive powered by a 5.0-liter twin-turbo V-10 engine rated at 610 horsepower. It has a clutchless six-speed manual transmission with paddle-shifters on the wheel. Audi claims the car will go 214 mph, but would have speed limited to 155 mph. Computer simulations indicated it should have a 0-to-62 mph time of 3.7 seconds and hit 124 mph in just 10.8 seconds. The very firm riding Le Mans also has Audi Magnetic Drive, which is very much like General Motors' MagnaRide used on the Corvette and Cadillac products. The brakes are state of the art ceramic discs (15-inch in the front and 10-inch in the rear). The 3,366-pound car is shorter, wider and lower than the Porsche 911 Turbo, but the wheelbase is 12 inches longer. Audi has hinted that it will build the supercar.

HUMMER H3 NEARS UNVEILING

General Motors is expected to show the concept version of the newest Hummer (probably called the H3) as early as the SEMA (Specialty Equipment Market Association) Show in November. This smallest Hummer will be based on the underpinnings of the upcoming Chevrolet Colorado and GMC Canyon pickups, due out late this year. The initial version is expected to be a traditional four-door configuration, with a pickup style added later. Early spy photos show design cues from the H2 but with a sweeping windshield and a more sculptured look. When the H3 arrives at dealerships in fall 2004 as a 2005 model, it's expected to carry a price tag of \$30,000 to \$35,000. There are already rumors circulating about an even smaller fourth model (the H4?) that will be the size of a Jeep Wrangler.

BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GT SELLING OUT

Volkswagen-owned luxury carmaker Bentley appears to have a big hit on its hands. Bentley plans to build 3,500 Continental GTs next year and they

already have 3,200 deposits (\$7,900 each) on the \$149,990 high-performance coupe. Of the deposits, 70 percent are from people who have never owned a Bentley previously. The all-wheel drive GT has a twin-turbocharged W-12 engine (552-hp) that accelerates from 0 to 60 mph in only 4.7 seconds and provides a top speed of 198 mph. The first cars will be delivered starting in November.

NEW PLANS FOR SMALLEST MERCEDES

Four years ago Mercedes-Benz announced that the next generation A-Class would be sold in the United States by 2004 or 2005. Now that plan appears to be altered because the A-Class is not "cool" enough for the fickle US market. Instead a new vehicle called the CST is being planned as an entry-level Mercedes. It will utilize the same redesigned A-Class platform and will use many of the same components, but will look more like a small sports touring wagon. The unique platform has the fuel tank, running gear and spare tire mounted under the floor. The engines will likely be a standard four-

Chevrolet SSR, HHR, '49 Suburban



cylinder 1.9-liter (125-hp), and a 140-hp AMG version. The CTS will be priced somewhere in the \$20,000-30,000 range, where it's expected to compete with cars like the MINI, BMW 1 series, Toyota Matrix, and Pontiac Vibe when it goes to dealers in 2005.

TOYOTA TUNDRA FINALLY HAS 4 DOORS

Beginning with its 2004 model, Toyota will offer a four-door Tundra Double Cab pickup. The new model frame is extended 12 inches and widened by 3 inches to create a cab that is longer than the Nissan Titan, Ford F-150 and Dodge Ram four-door models (only the Chevy and GMC fullsize trucks will have a larger interior). The Toyota has a taller beltline and window area, plus the bed is four inches deeper, at 20.7 inches. The rear window is now powered and the 40-60 split rear seats can be tumbled forward to increase storage space and to gain access to hidden compartments. No changes have been made to increase the V-8 engine from its current 4.7-liter, 240-hp. The Double Cab goes on sale starting November 12.

BMW TO DOUBLE M-CAR LINEUP

BMW has plans to add double the number of M-Cars in its stable by 2007. Plans call for V-8-powered M3 and M4 models, along with V-10-powered M5 and M6 models. In the new naming system, sedan and wagons will be labeled with odd numbers and coupes and convertibles will get even numbers.

There is also a rumor of a series of lightweight sport coupes being built by BMW using carbon fiber construction. They will be labeled CSL (Coupe Sport Leichtgewicht) and will be attached to the M4 and M6 coupes underpinnings. These models will have even more modified versions of their V-8 and V-10 engines.

CHEVY TO BUILD HHR RETRO WAGON

▲ The trend to build retro-styled vehicles like the Volkswagen New Beetle, Chrysler PT Cruiser, Ford Thunderbird and Chevrolet SSR continues in 2006 when Chevrolet will offer a new small wagon that resembles the 1949 Chevrolet Suburban and the new Chevy SSR pickup. The basic styling of the Chevrolet HHR (high heritage roof) will resemble the Chrysler PT Cruiser with its high hood, fenders with lights mounted low and 1940s-era grille. When announcing the HHR project, Gary Cowger, president of GM North America, said it would be bigger than the PT Cruiser. It's being built on the same GM Delta small-car platform as the 2005 Chevrolet Cobalt, the car being built to replace the Chevy Cavalier. Its four-cylinder engine could produce up to 220 horsepower. The price is expected to be about \$23,000.

WHEELS TV COMING TO CABLE

Automotive Networks, LLC, has announced plans to launch a new around-the-clock cable TV channel devoted exclusively to cars, trucks and motorcycles. Scheduled to start appearing on cable channels by the fourth quarter of 2003, Wheels TV plans to cover a full

spectrum of auto-related programs including magazine and lifestyle programs, documentaries, new vehicle profiles, how-to shows, travel, safety and recall alerts, event coverage, news, movies and more. They will draw from many programs already produced to fill the 24/7 scheduling, but will also add many new programs like *Ultimate Garage*, *World's Fastest Wheels*, *The Highway My Way* and *Hot Streets*.

HONDA NATURAL GAS CIVIC IN CA

Next year California consumers will be able to fill their specially-equipped Honda Civics with natural gas from their garage. The natural-gas-powered Civics will emit 70 percent less carbon monoxide, 87 percent less nitrogen oxide and 20 percent less carbon dioxide and are expected to cost about 80 percent less for fuel. Natural gas fueling will require a device called "Phill" (which will sell for \$2,000, but may qualify for a \$1,000 tax credit). Fueling will take about 8 hours to fill half of the car's tank. There are also about 1,300 natural gas fueling stations nationwide that can fill the tank in three to five minutes using pressurized

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Volkswagen Concept R



>> AUTO NEWS UPDATE - cont'd

systems. If California sales of the \$20,000 Civic GX goes well, Honda may expand sales to other parts of the country.

FORD PERFECTS ONE STOP TWO TONES

Ford engineers and scientists have developed a new paint process that allows two different colors of paint to be applied simultaneously to a vehicle without the colors bleeding together. This is the first application of a wet-on-wet (WOW) process used most often to paint accent colors on two-tone 2004 Ford Super Duty trucks. The process allows the vehicle to go through the paint process only once, to save time and the waste normally associated with painting two-tone vehicles. The process also prevents potential exposure to dirt and contamination to newly painted surfaces.

GM CROSSOVER SPORT VANS

General Motors plans to debut four new crossover sport vans (CSV) next year as 2005 models. The CSVs will blend mid-van versatility with SUV-like attributes. The four models include the Buick Terraza, Chevrolet Uplander, Saturn Relay and Pontiac Montana SV6. Each vehicle will take on brand design elements and features, while offering a sporty new market alternative.

AVANTI TO BUILD STUDEBAKER XUV

Six months ago, General Motors was planning to sue Avanti Motors to stop production of the Studebaker XUV,

charging that the XUV too closely resembled the Hummer H2. Since that time, the David and Goliath of auto-makers have reached an accord, and the XUV will be built with modifications. The XUV will slant the windshield a little more, remove hood latches and vents and make a few other changes to avoid confusion. The Studebaker XUV is being built using the platform and chassis of the Ford F-250 pickup. It will be available early in 2004 for about \$75,000. For more information about the XUV log on to www.avantimotors.com.

VW PONDERS ROADSTER, NEW "LOOK"

▲ Volkswagen is showing a roadster concept that is under consideration as a future product. Presently referred to as the Concept R, the sleek mid-engine roadster breaks from the traditional VW form to a more liquid flowing design complete with a new grille and fascia. The grille incorporates large air inlets and a sweeping line running from the hood edges down to the bottom of the front air dam and back up the other side to create what some might call a smiling face. The headlights are molded into the fenders for a flush surface. While the Concept R rides on a new platform using elements blended from existing vehicles the suspension and other mechanical components come from the Golf. The engine used in the concept is a 265-hp V-6 mounted just behind the cockpit. VW says it will make a decision on the car within about six months.

Dodge Durango



DURANGO GOES FOR BROADER MARKET

▲ The second-generation Dodge Durango SUV is not only larger, it is designed to appeal to a broader market. The new Durango, on sale this fall, is built on its own chassis, rather than piggybacking on the frame of the Dakota pickup. The target is a ride more akin to a luxury SUV like the Lexus LX 430, but with more truck-like capabilities to improve its towing and off-road capabilities. The front end carries a grille that looks like it was plucked from the full size Ram pickup. Power options include a 3.7-liter V-6 engine for the first time, to compete with vehicles like the Chevy TrailBlazer and Ford Explorer. On the high end of the performance scale there's the powerful 345-hp Hemi V-8 engine. The new larger interior is more car-like.

3RD GENERATION ACURA TL READY

▼ Acura says the third-generation midsize TL is sportier than previous generations. For the first time, the TL will have a standard six-speed manual transmission



with limited-slip differential and a five-speed automatic as an option. The 225-hp engine has been replaced by a standard 3.2-liter 270-hp V-6; the previous 260-hp Type-S will be dropped on the new model. Styling has been sharpened and made more distinctive. As always, the Acura has a high level of standard features with nearly no options. The sound system is an impressive 225-watt DVD-Audio system with eight speakers and a six-disc changer, cassette player and 5.1 surround-sound technologies. The DVD system is unique in that it carries three times the channels of a CD system and 500 times the signal resolution to create one of the best surround-sounds in the marketplace. XM satellite radio is also available. A hands-free phone system can incorporate up to six different Bluetooth-enabled cell phones into the vehicle system. The TL is in showrooms now.

IIHS CRASH TEST RANKS 7 AS GOOD

The latest grouping of Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) front offset crash tests ranked seven new and redesigned vehicles as "good". That's the highest rating issued by the IIHS. The insurance industry-funded group gave the 2003 Mazda6, Infiniti G35, Saab 9-3, Lincoln Town and Mercedes-Benz E-Class "good" ratings. The 2004 Toyota Sienna and Nissan Quest minivans also rated a "good" from the group. The test is conducted by ram-

ming the vehicles into an offset barrier at 40 mph. That's a much more difficult test than the government's straight-on 35-mph barrier crash test.

NOW AVAILABLE WITH MOOD LIGHTING

A German company, Schefenacker AG, has developed an electroluminescent (EL) foil that is being used in some high-end cars to provide extra ambient mood lighting. Currently the Mercedes-Benz E-Class, the Maybach limousine and the Audi A8 are using the lighting to create a homogeneous glow in areas where neon or incandescent tubes won't fit. The patented system uses a 0.3 mm thick foil that can even be mounted behind fabric or leather with holes punched in it so the light can pass through when the foil is illuminated. EL foil works on a principle similar to fluorescent tubes, in which an alternating current is passed through particles of phosphor to create light. In the case of foil, phosphor and a translucent, conductive ink layer are printed on a Mylar film backing. A square-meter panel produces 25 to 50 lumens of light (the equivalent of a 3 to 6 watt light bulb), depending on the amount of power applied. The inverter required to turn direct current into alternating current is about the size of a cigarette package and can be located anywhere inside a vehicle. ■

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

"Adventure Capitalist" World Tour

reenters the US at Nogales
and revisits us at Tempe



By Jim Rogers and Paige Parker, with editor's notes

*The "Millennium Mercedes": a car on a mission:
a unique off-roaster takes on the world's potholes*

The Millennium Mercedes is a one-of-a-kind vehicle developed and built for Jim Rogers and Paige Parker for a historic, three-year journey around the world, which began Jan. 1, 1999 and ended Jan. 5, 2002. This first true All Activity Vehicle combines the comfort and styling attributes of the Mercedes-Benz SLK 230 sports car with the sturdy durability of the legendary Mercedes-Benz G-Series wagon. It helped Paige and Jim set a Guinness World Record.

The couple's dream of traveling in a luxurious, sporty convertible that also provided the ultimate in safety and

ruggedness was realized by California-based Gerhard Steinle and his team at Prisma Design International. Steinle is the former President of Mercedes-Benz Advanced Design of North America who founded his own design studio in 1997. Rogers developed the concept of merging a sports car body with the chassis and diesel engine of the G-series four-wheel-drive sport utility wagon, also known as der Gelaendewagen.

The two cars needed for the operation, together with a second long-wheelbase G-wagen which joined the adventure as a support vehicle, were donated by Mercedes-Benz of North America in a tribute to the unprecedented success of the Three-Pointed Star in the US market at the turn of the millennium.

It took three months to create an automobile worthy of its "Millennium" nametag. The team had to not only link the

mechanical components, but also to deal with the much greater challenge of connecting the vastly different computer and electronic systems.

The "Millennium" is powered by the proven, reliable 177 hp 3-litre G-Series Turbodiesel six-cylinder engine with a five-speed automatic transmission and a four-wheel-drive powertrain. For road clearance, the Sunburst Yellow body rides a full foot higher than a stock SLK. Specially designed full fender flaring and a step-up rocker system visually blend the hybrid's two characters, giving it a unique



KEEP RIGHT >>

The world is 24,000 miles around, but you can travel 150,000 miles by road if you set out to see enough of it, as indicated on the map above, showing the complete 3-year, 116-country tour taken by the authors.

Crossing Egypt's Lake Nasser by boat, the Millennium Mercedes disembarks at Aswan.

Statues of police officers, male and female, stand along the roads of Sumatra, Indonesia.

The tree-line streets of Nanjing, China, leading into the mausoleum of Sun Yat-sen.



The trip begins in Iceland. Narrow, wet, cold and rough at first, excitement still abounds, as does spectacular scenery. Warm, dry Arizona is years away.

66 satellites around the world at any time of day. Alpine supplied a navigation system and its disks for nine countries in Europe. Prisma designed a matching trailer for extra storage capacity. The special two-wheeled utility trailer echoes the lines of the original SLK and probably is probably the most charming accessory of this challenging undertaking.

The last leg of the journey

Jim and Paige's 'round-the-world odyssey provides spellbinding reading, and the entire tale can be enjoyed in Jim's book of the trip, *Adventure Capitalist: The Ultimate Investor's Road Trip*. As we joined Jim for lunch in Tempe recently, we learned much about the pitfalls and rewards of such normally mundane tasks as parking your vehicle and gear overnight in countries you wouldn't even want to be

seen in during broad daylight; dealing with routine breakdowns or maintenance on African roads where "mud" and "ruts" are gross understatements, and "road" is, in fact, an overstatement; of developing routes based on shifting alliances and permissions across the Middle East and South Asia, sometimes not knowing the final path until a (possibly hostile) border was reached, even when protocol normally requires significant advance notice; of the gifts and courtesies which grease a transaction in a variety of cultures; and much, much more.

We were particularly interested in his reentry into the United States at Nogales, not long after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. From Paige's journal:

11 SEPTEMBER 2001 - Every American will remember where they were when they

learned that an American Airlines plane, complete with passengers, flew into the World Trade Center. Jim and I were in Puno. I had just checked out of the hotel, when Jim ran over exclaiming, "A plane crashed into the World Trade Center." The hotel manager had found Jim at breakfast to share the wretched news and offer condolences.

Jim and I dashed to a room to watch Peruvian news cover the event and saw that not only had one plane crashed, but another one hit the other tower and a third plane flew into the Pentagon. We both shook our heads in disbelief. America was under attack. I spent the remainder of the day driving in a haze, full of wonder and dread. I drove by signs looking right at them, but not seeing them, as my focus was on America and the ramifications of this disaster.

Jim and I have seen evidence first-hand of anti-US sentiment on our world journey,



Takeshita Dori, one of Tokyo's pedestrian-only streets. This Angolan general blocked passage and forced the authors to a military camp, where they spent the night in their car; they were relieved to learn it was for one night only, and was for their safety, as the next bridge is known to be loaded with land mines each evening. Fellow travelers include ornately decorated and often-overloaded trucks in Pakistan, the ubiquitous Soviet-era Trabant in Hungary, and this three-wheeler in China. The Sahara offers considerably more elbow room than Tokyo. Youngsters in Kazhakstan are used to Russian cosmonauts, but the Mercedes was a whole new thrill.

but were they capable of this? But closer to home, where was the United States' multi-billion dollar Intelligence? How could the massive CIA and FBI departments not know anything of this horrible event? We could feed, educate and vaccinate the entire needy world for what America spends on Intelligence. And, three of our planes go down killing thousands...

Not until early evening did our short-wave radio receive a BBC signal, which told us that the Twin Towers had collapsed and a fourth plane had crashed in Pennsylvania. What a nightmare! What a devastating tragedy! Countless dead. Children to grow up without a parent. A new America is before us.

Already, the media speculates bin Laden is behind the attacks. I can only hope that

American politicians will look to hard evidence before annihilating Afghanistan and her poverty-stricken people. And, what in the world will happen to those Western missionaries, two Americans, on trial in Afghanistan? I can only imagine a certain death for them now.

But before jumping to judgment, let's remember that when McVeigh bombed the Oklahoma building, America's first response was to blame Islamic fundamentalists and we were dead wrong. And if America proves that Islamic radicals are behind today's horrible destruction, I hope, with all my might, that Americans will not blame all Muslims. The Koran doesn't condone the evil deeds committed today nor will the majority of Muslims.

Perhaps this will make Americans take a serious look at US foreign policy. Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps - I could list a hundred potential outcomes from this tragedy. But, no matter the decisions made by our government on retaliation - and I fear a severely heavy-handed response creating more hatred in our enemies - nothing entitled anyone in the world to kill thousands of innocent civilians today. Absolutely no rationale - political or religious - can condone what the suicide bombers did on 11 September 2001 in the USA.

The shock and disorientation everyone felt during that period was magnified by

KEEP RIGHT >>



At risk from war, the authors searched for a boat from Cabinda to Luanda, Angola. Then they arrived at the Cabinda airport just as the door to a Russian plane was closing. After a request to the Russian general and crew, and just forty minutes of fetching the vehicles, packing and checking out of a hotel, the Millennium Mercedes was rolling aboard this Angolan military cargo plan.

being out of country, in South America, when the events struck. Jim and Paige's adjustment to a shifting world had to be absorbed during the long drive across South America, up its west coast, across Panama and up through the various nations of Central America, then the full south-to-north length of México, enjoying the people, cultures and scenery every step of the way, but also anticipating what could be one of the most anxious border crossings of the entire adventuresome trip. From Jim's journal:

12 NOVEMBER 2001 – As we approached Hermosillo; the clouds looked like a child's etch-a-sketch.

One of the tires on the G-Wagen had a tear, but continued to hold proper air pressure. Still, we tried unsuccessfully to

have it vulcanized in Los Mochis, so we changed the tire instead.

If all goes as planned, we drive back into the US tomorrow, after spending 34 months exploring 114 countries. As many have written, travel is addictive. Perhaps, travel is one of the few genuinely good-for-you, all-natural drugs. The more I search, explore and uncover, the more I want to dig deeper, stay a little longer and visit just one more special spot. So many places pull me back; I am tied to them forever, and I love knowing this. To paraphrase a wonderful Mexican saying, "Once you've danced the dance, it is yours." Even now, before this journey is complete, I find myself thinking of the places I'll return. My mind is crammed to the brim with rich, vivid memories of people, terrain and food, museums and cathedrals, landscapes even. I imagine, upon return, much time will pass

before I can sort through everything jogging, and sometimes, racing around my head.

I've always been a dreamer, thinking of what next and when will I do this. But now, I often dream by reliving a wonderful experience from the last 34 months. Sure, I've moaned often about bureaucrats, tough conditions and much more, but the goodness I've experienced in 114 countries far outweighs any maddening situation or ridiculous, time-wasting, 50-year old statute we've dealt with, granted, with clenched teeth. Even the bad is now not so bad! Plus, stories of corruption, wars, bombs, small arms fire, pick-pockets, horrible roads, absurd laws enforced by ludicrous, self-important officials – all make for a much better story than utopia, which, by the way, we have yet to find. Poverty, illness, child soldiers, prostitutes, oppression of women,



A giant ant colony in Côte d'Ivoire foreshadows the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, currently the world's tallest buildings. A visit to Saudi Arabia begins with a clear warning that misbehavior will result in death, followed by a camel advisory and a fork in the road for Muslims only (to Mecca) or non-Muslims. With the car already loaded, the trailer joins the cargo in Oman. Fellow travelers from United Arab Emirates, in Muscat, Oman. On Kish Island, Iran, a young girl in headscarf enjoys rollerblading.

religious intolerance, dismal education, corrupt politicians, wasteful expatriates – have slapped reality hard in my face.

Today, though, I remind myself not to live in what I've learned – thinking, sorting, deciphering. There will be plenty of time for that in 2002. Fortunately, we have two months of exploration before us. Driving to Alaska in the winter will be rough, but no worse, we hope, than driving in Iceland and southern Argentina during their coldest, iciest months. Then, we head across the US, at the most trying time the country has faced mentally, not to mention the lackluster economy, in my lifetime, with farmers to politicians grappling with fear, outrage, disbelief, anxiety, patriotism, foreign policy and why others hate us. We still have quite a

ride in store between here and New York.

Thus, they approached the United States, crossing from Nogales, Sonora, into Nogales, Arizona. One detail had to be tended to, the swapping of their self-assigned international (or anarchic?) license plates, which featured the designation of the vehicle, 99-2001, for their original Alabama plates, to be street-legal in the United States. The days when even the most imposing authorities didn't seem to much know or care about such formalities were over.

From Paige's journal:

13 NOVEMBER 2001 – Arizona: our entry into the US for the first time since 28 December 1998 when we departed New York

for Iceland. Just like last night, I slept sporadically, as I am worried over border crossing. We've read and been warned that the Mexico/US border is on highest alert since 9-11, and we should expect a minimum five-hour wait. We have certainly faced longer crossings, so, perhaps, the recent anxiety is due to my imminent normal life in the US!

On our drive to the Mexican border, known as Nogales, the name of the nearest city, we were stopped a couple of times on the toll road at military and police checkpoints, where young male, uniformed officers routinely asked us our destination and the contents of our trailer. Once we reached Mexico's first border area, I asked about immigration and customs. Two officials





This trip can make your head spin. Or call your travel agent. It's hard to think of a better postmark than Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso (although Timbuktu, Mali, was also a stop). Crossing the Bosphorus from Europe to Asia at Istanbul (left center) and three mountain passes through the mountains to Erzincan, Turkey (upper right). Flowers add some color to the edge of desert north Africa, at La Gazelle d'Or, just outside Taroudant, Morocco. In central east Asia, three generations pose in front of their Mongolian yurt. More familiar civilization appears in Port Headland, Australia, at the hotel/motel/restaurant/club/pub of owner Wayne Nichols, shown with sons Austin and Jacob, and dog Bart. It's enough to fill a book. In fact, Jim has. Also see his website: www.jimrogers.com

advised us to proceed to the next border post. Once there, we found no office to have our exit marks stamped on our passports, nor did we see anywhere to turn in our temporary car permits. Finally, two poorly kept Mexican officials told us to return to the small office 21 kilometers back, and there we could do the proceedings to leave the country! Both men, one in his 50s and missing several teeth, and the other, younger and wearing dirty civilian clothes, showed outright glee in our having missed the proper office for the required, but mindless paperwork.

Wanting to confirm the guidance of the Mexican officials, I headed to the US side of the border, where an officer explained we

could enter the US without an exit stamp from Mexico, but we should turn in the car permit, as not abiding to our 30-day agreement might influence our future visits to that country. So, we returned 21 kilometers and found a small office, with no sign marking its function, and did the necessary paperwork for our car's departure to the US.

To be stamped out of Mexico, we had to drive into Nogales and find "any Mexican bank" to pay for our tourist cards, which immigration presented when we entered the country. Immigration officials are no longer entrusted to accept cash, so tourists are burdened to seek out a bank to pay the Mexican Immigration Department before

leaving the country. Immigration, why not collect the money upon arrival! Then, upon return to the final Mexican border point, the immigration office was locked and unmanned at 4:20 p.m., even though this is a 24-hour border. We could not turn in the ridiculous tourist cards! We'll send in the cards from the US and hope they reach Mexican immigration! Pure madness. Several times in Mexico, both Jim and I questioned how the country could be as prosperous as it is, given the inefficiency we experienced.

Remarkably, the US crossing was a breeze. We waited about five minutes, inching forward as cars, and people in them, passed through initial examination, before showing our passports to a young officer, who

September 11, 2001, found our travelers with local cholitas at the Cathedral in Puno, Peru. Jim knowingly strikes a tourist pose with the Virgin of Guadalupe at one of the many photo stands in the Basilica's plaza. Lower left, Jim stands before the Pyramid of the Sun, near Puebla and Teotihuacan, which Mexico proudly points out has a base as large as the more famous pyramid at Cheops in Egypt. The route from Guadalajara to Mazatlan passes through the town of Tequila, where the surrounding countryside is covered in agave plants, used to make the intoxicating Mexican national drink.

directed us to "secondary", since the Army officers at the secondary inspection were excited and intrigued by our car! We explained our last 35 months and they didn't search a thing. The male and female officers even allowed us to take photographs, which, I feel certain is not allowed.

Jubilant, I finally stood on US soil for the first time since 28 December 1998, the date we headed to Iceland. The most exciting, challenging and educational part of my life has just taken place, and I am not keen for my growth and exploration to cease, but, nevertheless, I am pleased as punch to be home again. Jim, who is a genuine nomad, does not share in my excitement. Maybe he will just keep traveling around and around the world....

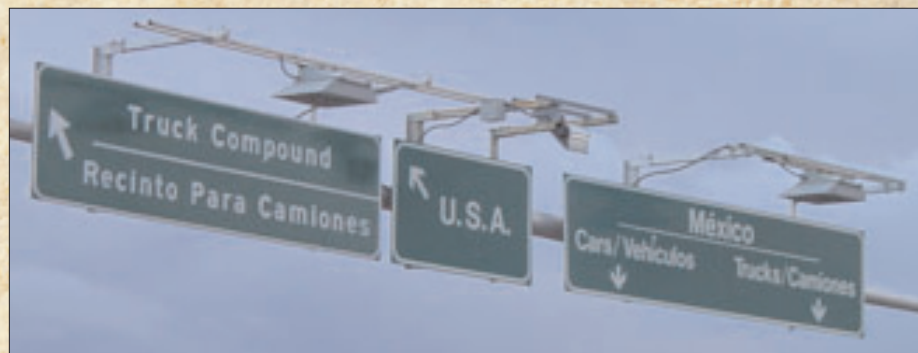
From here, Jim and Paige enjoyed a fairly normal visit to Arizona, as normal as any visit anywhere in the US could be after three years out of the country. After staying in Tucson the first night, they visited their friend Nancy Prevo, who has kept in touch via email during the whole journey, then drove to the Valley of the Sun and checked into The Phoenician resort. The next day was spent in historic Old Town Scottsdale, seeing the tourist trappings, restaurants, galleries and shops of the southwestern United States from a perspective surely shifting somewhere between guest and host. On November 16, they were headed north to Alaska... well, to the Grand Canyon, actually. Again, the journal shares the times:

17 NOVEMBER 2001 – Oh my goodness! Hard to contain my excitement and adoration of the Grand Canyon, one of the most spectacular sights/sites we have seen in the last 35 months! We woke at 7 a.m. to crisp, chilly weather (32F, 0C) and drove into town (we are staying on the canyon at El Tovar, the first hotel ever built here in 1905) to the airport and took a helicopter tour (50 minutes) over the canyon. Wow. I continually took photographs of the red, brown, gray and pink rock strata that date back two billion years; the youngest rock here is 250 million years old! Flying over we saw the massive depth (one mile), the confluence of the Little Colorado (turquoise in color) and the Colorado (muddy looking), the northern rim





Author/adventurer Jim Rogers and the Millennium Mercedes, an "off-roadster" combining the best of an open 2-seater with the rugged durability of an extreme off-road chassis, visiting Tempe AZ, as Jim retraces the Arizona leg of the round-the-world journey he took from 1999 to 2001 with his wife Paige Parker.



License tags used for the prior 34 months had no identification of nationality. They had the proper numbers, but it is often dangerous to identify one's nationality in many places Jim and Paige had been. At the US border, however, it was time to swap back to the original tags for both car and trailer, which are registered in Alabama, Jim's home state. Getting out of Mexico took two hours, but entering the US was a breeze compared to all the horror stories they had heard of border crossings since 9/11. What's that in the trunk? A map of their three-year journey around the world, back to the US after more than 34 months on the road (out of 36 ultimately) and 114 countries visited (out of 116), satisfies a border official. Neither Jim nor Paige had touched US soil since December 28, 1998. With glee, almost three years later, Paige posted their 115th country sticker, USA, on the G-Wagen. Near Tucson, Jim and Paige stopped by to see Nancy Prevo, who had e-mailed with Jim during the three-year journey. All-American cowboys and a steak dinner make a perfect welcome back to the US, Arizona style; they photographed both their American dinners. A group from Vanguard followed the adventure since the beginning, so Jim and Paige stopped by on their way through Scottsdale to meet Laura Swoger, Wendy Nelson, (Paige), Marianne Krnc, (Jim) and Connie Currie. At Grand Canyon National Park in northern Arizona, Jim looks through a brass Site Locator, donated to the park in 1922. As the day progressed – and the clouds along with it – the sweeping views over the canyon became more and more awesome. Paige's worldwide journal states, "Jim and I both loved our time at the Grand Canyon and rank it among the best sights/sites of our three-year world journey."

that receives much more precipitation so far more fertile, the southern rim that looks barren as desert, the massive peaks named after Indian gods (the first geographer who named them, back in the early 1800s, had a fascination with Asia and thought the peaks here resembled the temples there), the majestic colors and curvaceous formations at every swoop, and the countless trees in the park surrounding the 277-mile-long

canyon. Surprisingly, we saw no animals in the wilderness area, covered with tall, thin evergreens; I'm told the park service recently reintroduced condors in the northern rim.

After the amazing flight over the canyon, Jim and I walked part of the south rim for several hours, stopped for an ice cream in Grand Canyon Village, and, while eating our cones, sat with a couple of photo-friendly ravens. The village is a modern affair, but

began as a modest tent-colony meant for iron ore explorers. Developers soon realized tourism was more profitable than minerals and began building cabins and lookout points and offering mule rides into the canyon, a still-thriving tourist draw a century later. We stopped in the oldest curio shop, Verkamps, (opened in 1922 and still run by the founding family), where I bought an unusual, nine-stone silver ring, designed by Lynol Yellowhorse, a

39-year-old Native American (renowned for his jewelry described as "art"). No matter the hype of Lynol, I adore the ring and, every time I glance that way, I will remember the spectacular, stately Grand Canyon, where Jim and I enjoyed a utopian day.

Four nights in Arizona was surely a wonderful way to decompress and to enjoy the comforts and the mysteries the United States has to offer after such a long time on the road. We look forward to their next visit, any time. ■

JIM ROGERS had his first job at age five, picking up bottles at baseball games. He founded the Quantum Fund, which gained 4,000% in ten years, while the S&P rose less than 50%. Jim retired at age 37, but has never stayed idle. Jim is author of *Investment Biker* and also his journal of this trip: *Adventure Capitalist: The Ultimate Investor's Road Trip*, published by Random House (ISBN 0-375-50912-7). More information is also available online at www.jimrogers.com

Technical Specifications

ENGINE: Six-cylinder 3.0-liter turbodiesel, four valves per cylinder, 22:1 compression

POWER: 177 hp @ 4,400 rpm

TORQUE: 244 lb.-ft. @ 3,600 rpm

TRANSMISSION: Mercedes-Benz five-speed automatic

DRIVE SYSTEM: Full-time, four-wheel drive, three differential locks from Mercedes-Benz G-Series

CHASSIS: Mercedes-Benz G300 Short Wheelbase (160 inches) (4 meters)

RIDE HEIGHT: Approx. one foot taller (30 cm) than stock ride height of standard SLK

FUEL CAPACITY: 146 liters (38.5 gallons)

FUEL RANGE: 1,000 kilometers / 620 miles

COMMUNICATION: Short-wave radio and walkie-talkies

WHEELS: Mercedes-Benz aluminum alloy, G500 V8-7.5 inches wide/18 inches tall

TIRES: Bridgestone Dueler HP0680 P265/60R-18

BODY: Steel-framed body constructed of composite fiberglass. SLK Sunburst Yellow paint scheme including fender flares enlarged around wheelwell openings. Newly designed rocker panels with integrated step, front and rear bumper skirts.

INTERIOR: Black leather

TRAILER: Custom made, two-wheel trailer sits on leaf springs and utilizes electric brakes and the same 18-inch tall wheels used on the lead vehicle. It houses a spare tire, drinking water, medical supplies and a spare fuel can. The rear compartment holds luggage.

DRIVING AND DIALING: TEENS AND ADULTS COMPETE IN RECENT FORD STUDY

Driver distraction studies finds teenagers to be as much as 56 percent more distracted than adults when operating a cellular phone while driving. Regardless of hands-free operation, cellular phones pose a distraction while driving, according to the results of a recent driver distraction study conducted by Ford's Scientific Research Laboratory.

However, using Ford's VIRTtual Test Track EXperiment (VIRTTEX), the study also proved when operating a cellular phone with hands-free technology, the driver was noticeably less distracted. "Some research has suggested that hands-free technology doesn't really reduce distraction," said Jeff Greenberg, Staff Technical Specialist of Safety Research. However, "for short conversations where the driver is trying to work with simple information, we found that hands-free really does make a big improvement."

The forty-eight adults and fifteen teenagers who participated in the study were asked to combine an everyday simulated driving experience with

performing various tasks including phone dialing, voicemail retrieval, manual radio tuning and climate control adjustment.

While each participant was trying to complete a given task, he or she was asked to respond to sudden movements in surrounding traffic, such as a swerving vehicle. Vehicle control was measured by lane violations and heading error. For the adult drivers, the most distracting tasks to perform were hand-held voicemail retrieval and hand-held phone dialing while hands-free voicemail retrieval did not significantly distract participants.

Results studying teenage drivers show that they are more susceptible to in-car distractions than adults. Due greatly to their driving inexperience, teenage participants were found to choose small following distances, leaving less room for error. They performed the same tasks as the adults with a greater occurrence of error; some to a drastic extent. The lane violation rate for the hand-held voicemail task was 56 percent higher for teens than adults. Similarly, teens

missed 53.8 percent of the events occurring in front of them when dialing a hand-held phone.

With such overwhelming results, it appears that many teens give the dialing task equal or higher priority than scanning the driving scene. The results indicate a serious cause for concern according to Greenberg: "Cellular phones, pagers and other devices are popular among teens. The results of the study, at a minimum, indicate that driver education curricula should be revised to address the use of communication technology while driving."

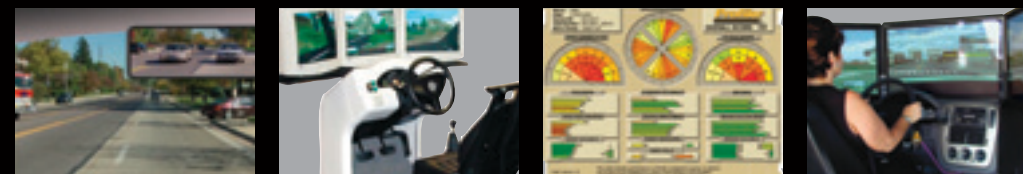
While driver's education may become more advanced, Greenberg also believes vehicles will become more intelligent. "There's never a good time to answer your cellular phone while driving. I see a future with vehicle systems intelligent enough to gauge traffic and manage your workload. Incoming calls could be sent directly to voicemail if the vehicle sensed high-stress surroundings. Deferring to voicemail might get around the distraction problem."

Ford's VIRTTEX is one of the most advanced laboratories of its kind in the world. Since 2000, Ford Motor Company has used the controlled laboratory setting to study everyday driving tasks and how they affect driver performance during a variety of simulated driving experiences. ■



Delivering the driver's edge to teen drivers.

Traditional driver's education has focused on the skills needed to pass a driving test, with classroom lectures and some behind-the-wheel "on-the-job training." The DrivingMBA™ program goes beyond this, bringing high-tech simulators to everyday drivers.



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- **Safe Young Drivers** : A book to supplement your own in-vehicle training.
- **Advanced Decision Skill Building** : The same high-end simulator used by police and other professionals to improve behind-the-wheel decision-making skills.
- **Profiler™** : Assesses your skills against a pro database (included with Advanced Decision Skill Building).
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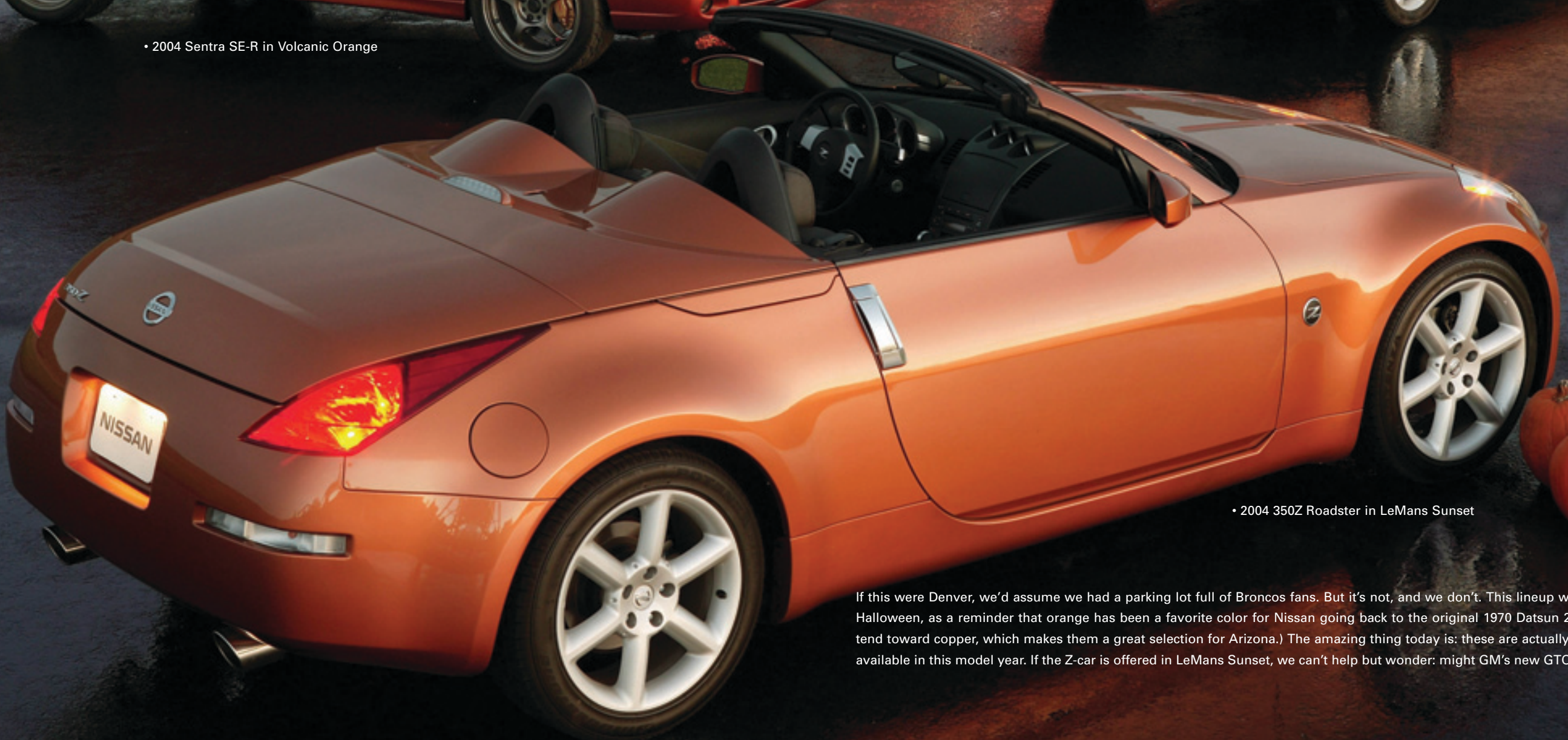
• 2004 Murano in Sunlit Copper



• 2004 Sentra SE-R in Volcanic Orange



• 2004 Maxima SE in Radiant Ember



• 2004 350Z Roadster in LeMans Sunset

If this were Denver, we'd assume we had a parking lot full of Broncos fans. But it's not, and we don't. This lineup was photographed for Halloween, as a reminder that orange has been a favorite color for Nissan going back to the original 1970 Datsun 240Z. (Some of these tend toward copper, which makes them a great selection for Arizona.) The amazing thing today is: these are actually four different colors available in this model year. If the Z-car is offered in LeMans Sunset, we can't help but wonder: might GM's new GTO come in Fuji Dawn?



All-new Fuzion™ ZRi Performance Tire Line Debuts at SEMA Show

The Fuzion™ ZRi, designed specifically for the enthusiast and tuner markets, is being introduced by Bridgestone/Firestone North American Tire, LLC (BFNT) at the SEMA (Specialty Equipment Market Association) Show this week (Booth #41917).

The Fuzion ZRi, a new brand from BFNT that addresses this fastest growing segment in the performance tire market, will be available to retail customers in spring 2004. "We are very excited about the new Fuzion brand of tires," said Phil Pacsi, executive director, North American Consumer Tire Brand Marketing, BFNT. "This is our first tire designed specifically to appeal to the tuner market segment."

The new W- V- and H-speed rated Fuzion ZRi features a directional tread pattern for great looks and optimum handling. The tire launch is backed with a major marketing initiative, including a new website, www.thefuzionzone.com, complete with an exciting

interactive on-line racing game, Pacsi added.

The tire, engineered with the company's exclusive UNI-T® technology, will be available in more than 30, 16- to 20-inch, 30- to 60-series sizes. UNI-T is an acronym for "Ultimate Network of Intelligent Tire Technology" found only in Bridgestone, Firestone, Dayton and select associate brand tires. One of its core technologies is a Computer Optimized Component System, CO-CS®, which uses a super computer to help determine an ideal combination of tread design, casing shape, materials and construction for a particular application. Tires with UNI-T have a special O-Bead® that eliminates overlapped joints in the bead assembly, improving the way a tire interacts with the rim, and providing a rounder assembly for improved stability. The use of L.L. Carbon®, or Long Link Carbon, an advanced form of carbon black, produces a stronger tire, better able to resist cracking, chipping, tearing and excessive wear.

The Fuzion™ ZRi is available in Arizona at:

TIREXCHANGE, INC.
Performance Tires and Wheels
15485 N. 84th Street - Scottsdale AZ
85260
1-800-766-2588
480-596-9655

FUZION • ZRi

2003 Civic Si project vehicle is the face of the new "Fuzion" brand tuner

Bridgestone/Firestone North American Tire, LLC (BFNT) unveiled a new project image vehicle, the 2003 "Fuzion" Civic Si, in its exhibit (booth #41917) at the SEMA Show in Las Vegas.

The project car, built under the direction of Robert Wilson of Modern Image Signworks, Huntington Beach CA is designed as a showcase for the company's new Fuzion™ brand of performance tires, aimed at the growing tuner market.

"Our 'Fuzion' Civic project is an exciting way for us to promote our new Fuzion line of performance tires," said Phil Pacsi, executive director, North American Consumer Tire Brand Marketing, BFNT. "We conceived this project as something to which our target audience of tuners can easily aspire." Conceived as a "super-trick street ride,"

the Civic features an array of body, engine, performance and custom interior enhancements, as well as a state-of-the-art stereo/video installation and custom paint scheme, expertly applied by the renowned Bernt Karlsson of Customz by Bernt.

Following the SEMA Show, the car will be exhibited at a host of Bridgestone/Firestone events and product launches across the country, and other automotive lifestyle shows. The car is also featured on the company's new Fuzion website, www.thefuzionzone.com.

The following companies have supplied product for the vehicle: AEM, Auto Meter Gauges, Cobra Seats/Sube Sports, Customz by Bernt, Fidanza Engineering, FLUIDYNE High Performance, Global Accessories, Inc., Kaminari USA, Konig Wheels, Luxaura Light Guide, MBRPinc Performance Exhaust, Modern Image Signworks, MOMO Automotive Accessories, Nitrous Express, Optima Batteries, Pioneer Electronics, Stainless Steel Brakes, SmarTire pressure monitoring system, SPAL Advanced Technologies, Specialized Powder Coating, Stitchcraft Custom Interiors, Tein USA, Thermal Flex, Inc., Valspar/House of Kolor, and Wilwood Engineering. ■





These 1950s-era "Little Red Corvettes" are among more than 5000 on display at The Coliseum in Nashville for Corvette's 50th, June 28, 2003.

Photos: GM • Event photos: Joe Pollmenti/GM



Thousands lined the streets from The Coliseum to downtown Nashville for the 50th Anniversary parade of Corvettes from 1953 to 2003.

50 Years of Kicks on Route 66

Arizona was arguably put in the nation's consciousness by two guys, a Corvette, and U.S. Route 66.

The Corvette always has been a design trendsetter. No matter which generation, its bold, curvaceous shape is uniquely, unmistakably Corvette, never to be confused with another. The long flowing lines, voluptuous, round fenders, quad taillights and the once-maligned split window are but some of Corvette's trademark cues. Remaining true to the heritage always has been a priority for Corvette's designers, and is quite evident when looking at 50 years of Corvette. The car has inspired a series of one-offs created by dozens of independent tuners who take stock Corvettes and build on them, adding high horsepower engines, high-performance suspensions and various accessories.

One could say Corvette owns the roadways that once made up Route 66. Surely, Tod and Buzz would agree. And today's C5-R more often than not owns the tracks on which it races, giving the fans yet another venue to soak up the lore. Those serious about motoring technique and skill trek to Corvette driving schools.

After 50 years, one thing is clear, people love their Corvettes, and they embrace anything that relates to the car. It has survived five decades of fluctuating economies, changing markets, and tightening governmental regulation. Still, it remains a symbol of pure driving pleasure and pure American grit, perseverance, ingenuity and spirit. Through it all, it's retained its M.O. as an

accessible dream car. It's not haughty nor stuffy, snobby nor temperamental, it's as down-home, grassroots, heartland American as it gets. That's the appeal of Corvette, and one of the reasons its following has remained so strong.

It's been said that the ability to inspire passion is the single most significant measure of a vehicle's success. If that's true, then Corvette surely is one of the most successful cars ever. Relatively low volume aside, it remains an icon after 50 years. Uniquely American, it's a symbol of independence, exuberance and driving pleasure.

Certainly, few cars have inspired as much passion, loyalty and excitement as Corvette. Corvette's following has inspired thousands of car clubs, an official national museum, scores of events, conventions, rallies, ride and drives, swap meets and even a cross-country cancer fundraising tour undertaken by a single loyal fan. Corvette has appeared in

countless movies, songs, books, magazines, and video games. It's inspired Corvette art, cologne, cookies, board games, trinkets, wearables, even its own unique wave, shared by fellow owners as they pass one another on the road. Some decorate their garages or basements to honor Corvette, with signs, banners, posters, spare parts and other memorabilia.



The Fifties

When it first debuted in 1953 at the GM Motorama at the Waldorf Astoria in New York, the Corvette immediately made a huge impression. The breakthrough 46-piece fiberglass body, nearly devoid of chrome in an era of maximum brightwork, the two-toned exterior, the silver shark's-tooth grille, the silver mesh



1953



1957



1958



1961



The latest model, the 2003 50th Anniversary Corvette, meets up with its ancestor, the original 1953 roadster.

headlamp covers and the sleek styling added up to an elegant package. It retained this basic design for several years and then underwent a redesign that featured quad headlamps with chrome bezels, a louvered hood and wraparound bumpers.

The Sixties

By the time the 1960 model debuted, the Corvette was almost entirely chromeless. During this decade, GM's stylists tweaked the design nearly every year, giving just about every model year a fresh, distinctive look. Model year 1960 brought standard blackwall tires and the end of the shark's tooth grille. A blacked-out chrome mesh screen replaced it, and then, in 1963, thin, horizontal grille bars graced the front end that remained until '66. A ducktail rear end offered more trunk space.

Engineers designed the first CERV-I experimental model in 1962 that pushed the boundaries of Corvette design. Two-toned paint exited by 1962, and the trademark hidden headlamps

appeared in 1963. Model year 1962 also brought the Bill Mitchell Mako Shark I, which led to the controversial split rear-window '63 Sting Ray coupe. At the time, critics derided the split window for its limited visibility, but today, these models are among the most highly coveted, collectible Corvettes. The '63 model marked the first time the car came as a closed coupe, and it featured a sleek, aero look and the introduction of hidden retractable headlamps. The Grand Sport Corvette racecar debuted in 1963.

In 1964 the split window disappeared and was replaced by a new one-piece window. Designers also removed the faux air intakes in the hoods and the functional air-exhaust vents on the pillar. In 1965 Chevy showed the Mako Shark II. Built on a Sting Ray chassis, with styling similar to Mako I, the II had a lower stout and shorter tail. It proved to be one of most famous Corvette showcars and the Sting Ray forerunner.

The following year, an eggcrate insert replaced the horizontal grille bars, and Corvettes gained ribbed rocker moldings and a side

mounted exhaust system option and, in 1967, the last of the Sting Rays rolled off the line.

GM restyled the '68 model, called the Shark, with a long, low profile, blunt design, bulging fenders, a tunneled roofline, and added the Mako Shark II's close-to-the ground snout. Larger fender louvers improved cooling, and removable roof panels and rear glass added convenience. The car kept the quad taillights and hidden quad headlamps. In 1969 Chevrolet resurrected the Stingray name, now as one word. The Mulsanne show car appeared, with high, side view mirrors and exposed headlights. It paced the Can-Am race series.

The Seventies

In 1970, Corvette's chrome eggcrate grille returned and stainless steel sill moldings debuted. A special Aero Coupe model combined the '69 Corvette design with a crosshatched grille and vent, one-piece roof, side exhaust and higher windshield. The XP-882 prototype appeared at 1970 New York Auto Show with a low, square front end, hidden headlamps, louvered boattail at the back, bulging rear fenders and a fastback.

Model year 1972 marked the final year for the front and rear chrome bumpers and removable rear windows. A mid-engined silver XP-895 prototype debuted, serving as a study in aluminum construction. The following year, 1973, Corvette underwent its first big redesign since 1968. A new bumper, created to meet federally mandated five-mph bumpers, added two inches to the length. The long, sleek V-shape front end, with a urethane plastic nose that bounced back into shape, neatly camouflaged the utilitarian nature of the change. Also in '73, an XP-898 prototype gave clues to the design of the C4 Corvette that was to debut 10 years later.

In 1974 Corvette added the five-mph rear bumper, a Kamm-style tail, new front and rear ends and new trim and scoops. The latter part of the '70s brought few exterior changes to the Corvette, save an exterior luggage rack on the convertible in '75 (the final year for a convertible until its return in 1986), a new fastback roof in '78, and the end of the Stingray name in '77. Corvette celebrated its 25th birthday with an Indy pace car and Silver Anniversary edition.



The fiberglass floorpan of the original '53 set the stage for a materials revolution.

The Eighties

In 1980, new front and rear spoilers improved aerodynamics and offered a more modern appearance. Most of the design changes lowered the mass of the car by 250 lbs.

GM produced exactly zero 1983 model year Corvettes, but mid-year the first all-new Corvette in 15 years debuted to much acclaim. This modern interpretation featured a lift-up rear window, one-piece lift-off top and a forward-opening clamshell hood. The '84 model grew two-inches in width, but was smaller everywhere else to improve handling. Also new was a birdcage uniframe construction with fully welded, galvanized steel.

In 1986, Corvette resurrected the convertible and showed a mid-engined, low-to-the-ground Corvette Indy concept car with scissor-hinged doors, glass-in cockpit, high back and a bubble canopy that flowed into a rounded nose.



1963



1968



1975



1979



2003 has also brought Corvette (and Cadillac) to the Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving in Arizona.



Generations: Corvettes C1 through C5.

During the late '80s, most of the changes to Corvette were largely technological in nature, and it earned reputation as a trendsetter in the Chevy lineup for new, advanced technology.

The Nineties

In 1990, the ZR-1, also known as the King of the Hill, debuted. A power and performance wonder, the primary design difference was in the convex rear end. Also in 1990, Corvette debuted the CERV III at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit. This descendant of the Corvette Indy proved to be a forerunner of certain fifth-generation design cues.

In 1991, Corvette underwent the first design refresh since 1984, bringing rectangular taillights, horizontal front fender louvers, wraparound front cornering lamps and a smooth, tapered lower nose.

By 1995, the ZR-1 ended its run. The following year, Chevy released a limited production Grand Sport package with a blue

exterior and white dorsal stripe.

In 1997, of course, the long-awaited, highly anticipated fifth-generation debuted to much fanfare at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit. It weighed 90 lbs. less than its predecessor and had more interior room, despite being larger in every dimension. It also it had a much stiffer structure thanks to hydroformed frame rails and a drag coefficient of .29. The trademark hidden headlamps and quad taillights continued.

In 1998 a convertible model returned, with the first actual trunk since 1962. That same year, the new Corvette paced the Indianapolis 500, and Chevy released a special pace car version.

In 1999, a no-frills, high performance hardtop version



increased power and performance to even greater levels. The fifth-generation model, while paying homage to Corvettes of the past, has a sleek, modern shape and timeless design.

50th Birthday

The fans? Well, they are known to be loyal indeed. Even fanatical. They've memorized VINs, horsepower ratings, part numbers, trim changes,

engine evolutions, options and exterior colors. They soak up Corvette information like students cramming for their finals.

The celebration of the century got underway June 27-28 in Nashville to commemorate Chevrolet Corvette's 50th Anniversary. Thousands of Corvette owners, club members and enthusiasts gathered in and around Bowling Green and

Nashville to participate in the weekend's events, which included vintage car displays, parades, technical seminars, restoration clinics, heritage displays, racing exhibits, historic memorabilia, elements from the Chevy Rock & Roll Tour and, to top off the weekend, the legendary ZZ TOP performing on Saturday night.

In addition, the National Corvette Museum sponsored an owner-driven National Corvette Caravan, which hit the road on June 22 and included approximately 12,000 Corvettes dating from 1953 to the present and arriving from all corners of the US and worldwide, including over 60 cars and their owners from Arizona and New Mexico. The National Corvette Museum and the Corvette manufacturing facility are in Bowling Green, Kentucky, about 60 miles from Nashville. The procession then headed to Nashville for the Nashville Cruize Caravan and Corvette's 50th birthday party on June 30, the day the first Corvette rolled off the line in Flint, Michigan. More information on the AZ-NM National Corvette Caravan is presented in the following feature. ■



1984



1994



2000



2003

SPECIAL EVENT : AZ-NM NATIONAL CORVETTE CARAVAN



Event Corvettes line up at the GM Desert Proving Grounds, led by Dave Richter of the GMDPG, followed by Grand Marshall Bob Bondurant, and then Bob Kroener, Captain of the AZ-NM Caravan.

AZ-NM National Corvette Caravan

by Bob Kroener • Photos by Luis DeBonoPaula, Bob Kroener and Jim Pyle

GM created the car. Enthusiasts created the event, sponsored by the National Corvette Museum.

In response to interest from Corvette owners and enthusiasts nationwide and around the world, who wanted to make sure their marque's golden anniversary was properly celebrated, the National Corvette Museum organized a National Corvette Caravan, in which owners and their cohorts would drive from points worldwide to the GM assembly plant and National Corvette Museum in Bowling Green, Kentucky, arriving just in time for GM's anniversary events in Nashville, Tennessee. The Caravan attracted over 50,000 people, with over 12,000 registered Corvette owners and their cars, comprising 19

different Caravans in the US, Europe and as far away as Australia. Not about to miss an event of this magnitude, Arizona's Corvette owners and enthusiasts plugged in, in a big way. They joined forces with New Mexico Corvette owners, and Bob Kroener of Surprise, Arizona, was appointed Caravan Captain. Kroener extends his deepest appreciation to Roc Linkov, Chairman of the 2003 National Corvette Caravan, for his guidance, counsel and patience. Corvette Clubs throughout Arizona, including Desert Corvette Club and Sun Country Corvette Club, joined forces with owners and clubs in New

Arizona Corvette owners gather at Cracker Barrel for their launch breakfast. Cracker Barrel Restaurants handled the crowds the length of the route.



Photo: Luis DeBonoPaula

Mexico as the AZ-NM National Corvette Caravan, under the able guidance of Captain Bob Kroener of Surprise. All clubs in both states were notified, and at least half were represented in this event. The Arizona group quickly had 60 cars registered, with 54 going en masse and 6 going early or taking a different route, for various reasons.

Mayor Skip Rimsza of Phoenix proclaimed June 22-30 Corvette Caravan Week. The Bondurant School of High Performance Driving provided a race Corvette and, even more exciting, sent Bob Bondurant himself, to officiate as the event's Grand Marshall. Courtesy Chevrolet's Bill Gruwell shook hands with Kroener on his dealership's role as Kick-Off Sponsor. Gruwell and Courtesy graciously provided tremendous support and attended pre-event activities on Sunday, June 22, 2003, at the Cracker Barrel restaurant at I-10 and Chandler Boulevard, the first of a series of Cracker Barrel

restaurants the group visited along the route. The group then headed to the GM Desert Proving Ground in Mesa, for some track and performance events. The Desert Proving Ground just celebrated its own 50th Anniversary in March of this year, so they were certainly receptive to this event.

The Arizona contingent received Phoenix radio coverage and television coverage with Brad Perry on Channel 3 KTVK's *Good Morning Arizona*.

On Tuesday, June 24, everyone met early at Courtesy Chevrolet on East Camelback Road in Phoenix, for ceremonies and presentations. Bob Bondurant promptly spoke the famous words everyone awaited: "Ladies and gentlemen, START YOUR ENGINES." As Bondurant performed his official duties in Arizona, he was freshly back from being inducted into



KEEP RIGHT >>

Fighter Combat International provides an aerial salute..



Aircraft photo: GMDPG • VIP photo: Jim Pyle

Grand Marshall Bob Bondurant and Sponsor Bill Gruwell at Courtesy Chevrolet.



Arizona enthusiasts meet up at the GM Desert Proving Grounds.



Show photo: GMDPG • Track photo: GMDPG

A tire-smokin' performance cornering demo at the Proving Grounds.





Arizona and New Mexico Corvette enthusiasts team up and head east on I-40 to Kentucky and Tennessee.



Destination: Bowling Green. Thousands of Corvettes arrive at the National Corvette Museum.

The AZ-NM National Corvette Caravan extends special thanks to:

- KICK-OFF SPONSOR: Courtesy Chevrolet
- GRAND MARSHALL: Bob Bondurant
- AERIAL DEMONSTRATION TEAM: Fighter Combat International
- CARAVAN ROAD SPONSORS: Galles Chevrolet & Bill Heard Chevrolet
- PRE-EVENT SPONSORS: Valley Chevrolet Dealers Association & General Motors Desert Proving Ground
- CHEVROLET SUPPORT DEALERS: Lou Grubb-Arrowhead & Camelback; Sands Chevrolet; Brown & Brown Superstition Springs
- Cracker Barrel Restaurants
- Earl's Family Restaurant-Gallup, NM
- Comfort Inns in Tucumcari, NM & Van Buren, AR
- BORLA Performance Industries
- B & B Motorsports
- XTREME Motorsports
- Checker Auto Parts, Southwest Region
- Flying J, Inc.



Over 60 Arizona Corvette owners, with spouses and friends, celebrate the open desert at the GM Proving Grounds and the open road ahead.

Photo: Luis DeBonoPaula

Photo: Luis DeBonoPaula

Photo: GMDPG

the Motorsports Hall of Fame of America, in Novi Michigan, in the Sports Car category. LOUD APPLAUSE!!!!!! to this legend of both sport cars and racing.

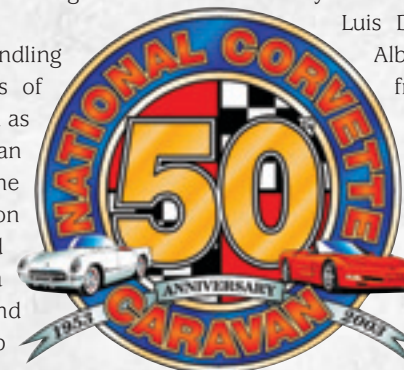
With the Phoenix Police Department handling traffic and a two-plane flyover compliments of Fighter Combat International, spirits were high as dozens of Corvettes ranging over a 50-year span headed east on Camelback Road, then off to the Piestewa Freeway northbound. One connection to the westbound Loop 101, exit to northbound I-17 and off to Bowling Green they headed, via I-40 from Flagstaff, through Winslow and Holbrook, and on into New Mexico. The group included Ray and Belinda Battagliani of Hobbs, New Mexico, Ray being well known as the original president of the National Corvette Museum Foundation; Tom Arazny of Phoenix, a broker who satisfies his clients' needs for specialty

cars nationwide; Wayne Cameron and Jerry Wich of Yuma, Wayne driving one of Jerry's two Corvette and Jerry the other;

Luis DeBonoPaula, a C-130 pilot at Kirtland AFB in Albuquerque; Joe Endres, an America West pilot from Glendale; Butch Herman of Casa Grande, with his red 1960 coupe; David Krippner of Casa Grande with his black 1959 convertible; and dozens more.

The first day brought the Corvettes to a stop in Gallup at Earl's Family Restaurant, for a light lunch. From there, it was off to Albuquerque and Galles Chevrolet for dinner, Mexican-style. Galles hosted the affair, and the NM-AZ Caravan proudly contributed to a local charity.

The next stop was in Tucumcari, to meet some of the others



Corvette photo: Bob Kroener • McGuire photo: Jim Pyle

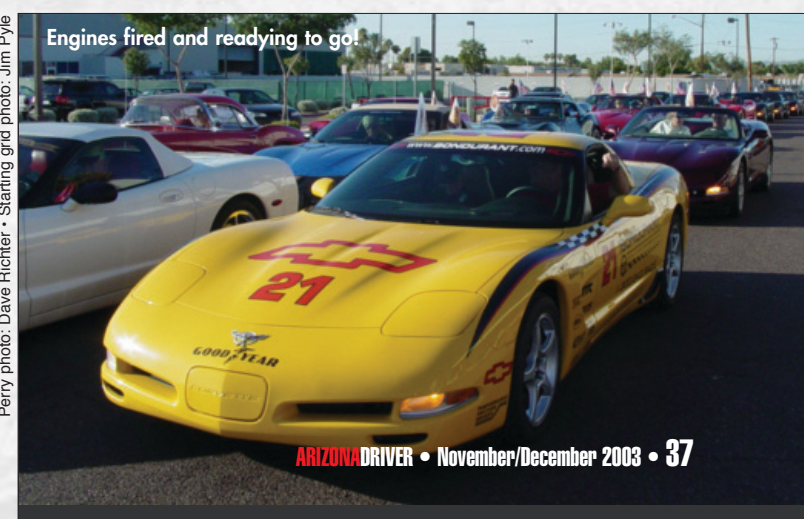


Jesse McGuire sounds off.



Channel 3's Brad Perry picks up fine points from Bob Kroener.

Perry photo: Dave Richter • Starting grid photo: Jim Pyle



Engines fired and readying to go!



Caravan Captains' cars from all across the US and some from overseas take a nicely-polished break in the Kentucky grass, with the National Corvette Museum as a backdrop.

Photo: Bob Kroener

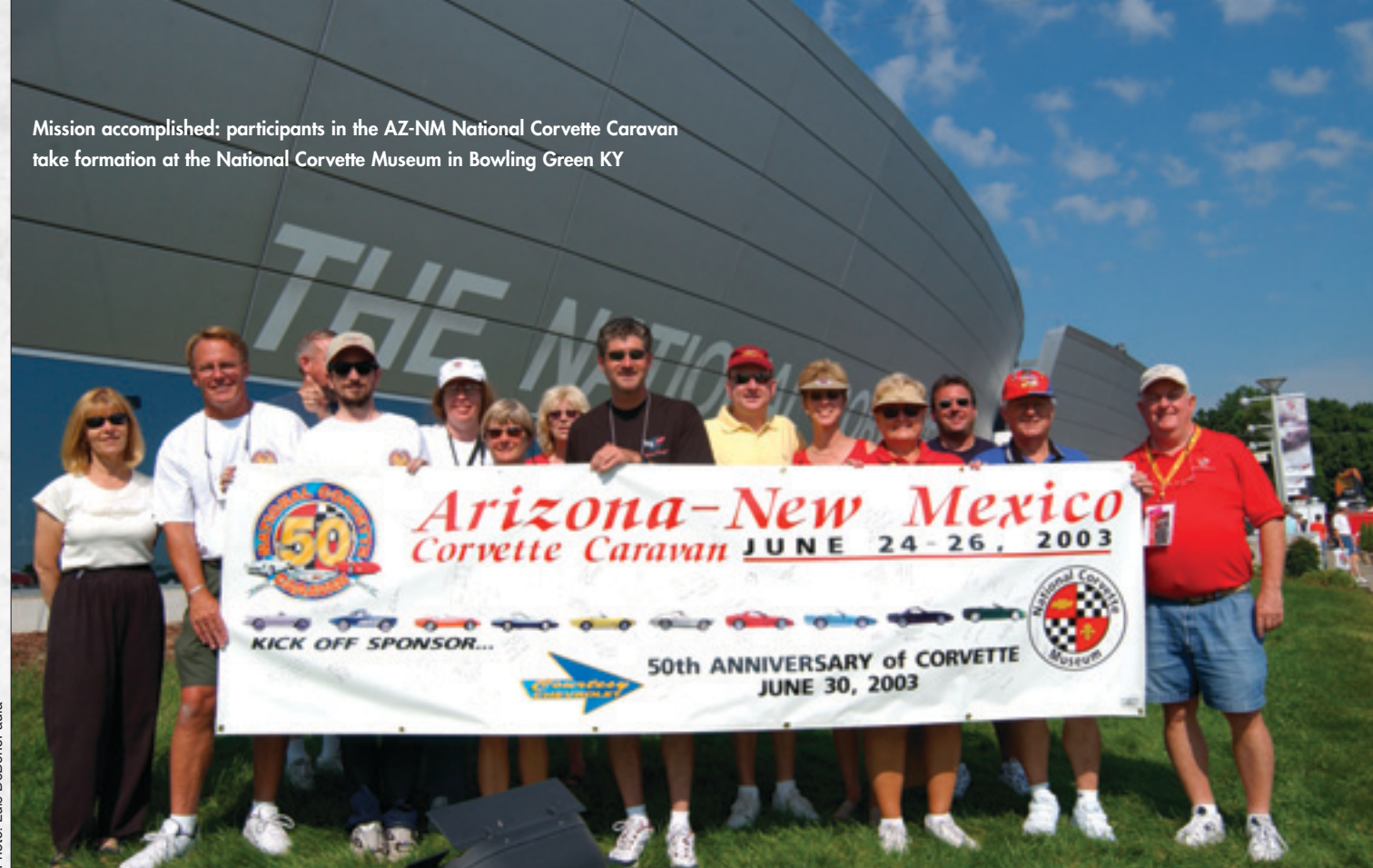
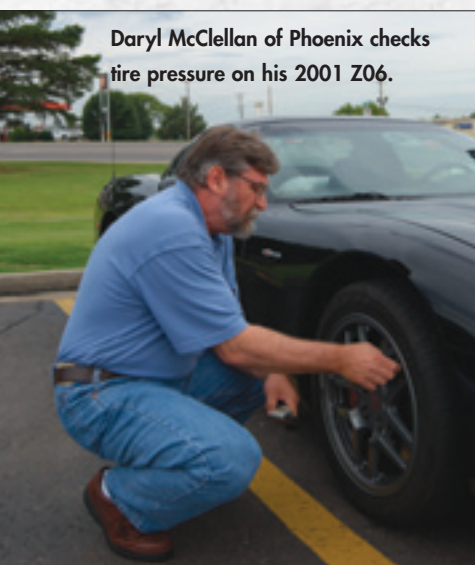


Photo: Luis DeBonoPaula



Daryl McClellan of Phoenix checks tire pressure on his 2001 Z06.

Photo: Luis DeBonoPaula



Roots: Bob and Donna Kroener arrive at he Corvette assembly plant in Bowling Green KY.

Photo: Bob Kroener

waiting at the Comfort Inn. The next morning, the group crossed the Texas state line, and headed off to Bowling Green, Kentucky, via Amarillo, Oklahoma City, Little Rock, Nashville and several other points between. (With over 50 Chevrolet dealers identified in the route book, everyone was assured of expert assistance in the unlikely event of mechanical or technical trouble.) The AZ-NM National Corvette Caravan arrived in Bowling Green on the evening of June 26.

50 years of Corvette as the premier America Sport Car Legend guaranteed a newsworthy event. No other automobile can make the claim of fifty years' production of the same model. The Bowling Green and Nashville events had over 12,000 registrants, making this the biggest and most historical gathering in US automotive history.

Again, LOUD APPLAUSE!!!!!! ■

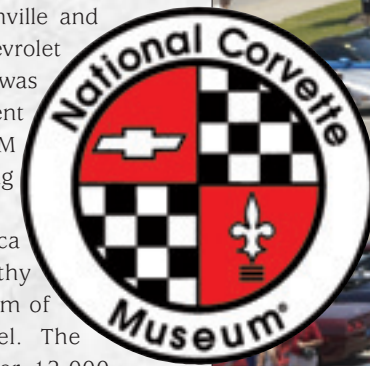


Photo: Joe Polimeni/GM



Fueling up at Flying J.

Photo: Luis DeBonoPaula



License plates: Joe Polimeni/GM • Nashville: Luis DeBonoPaula



Nashville, Tennessee.

Guldstrand Signature Edition

427 V8 now available for Chevy V8 cars and trucks



GULDSTRAND SIGNATURE EDITION UNVEILED AT NATIONAL CORVETTE MUSEUM

Hall of Fame Corvette racer and tuner Dick Guldstrand unveiled his Signature Edition Anniversary Corvette at the 50th Anniversary Kickoff event held by the National Corvette Museum in Bowling Green, Kentucky. "I am very excited and honored to display to the public for the first time this special Corvette, at the National Corvette Museum's Kickoff for the 50th Anniversary year of America's sports car," said Guldstrand. "It seems like I've been associated with the Corvette for all my life, and this Signature Edition is the ultimate statement for all those wonderful years."

Based on the high performance ZO6, the Guldstrand Signature Edition features Dick's patented suspension modifications including specific wheels and tires, a high performance exhaust, plus a paint and graphic treatment by former GM designer John Schinella. As for the engine package, Guldstrand assures Corvette aficionados that it will perform in the manner of all the great Corvettes, and then some. Formally introduced to the world's automotive media in the fall, sales of the car began in early 2003.

Only 50 signed and numbered Signature Editions will be built – one for each year of the Corvette's history.

The Signature Edition Corvette is one phase of Guldstrand's plans to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Corvette. Guldstrand's program, entitled "50 Years of Corvette Thunder" has a national road show tour featuring historic Corvette race



cars and drivers, a commemorative book on the complete history of Corvettes in competition, a registry of past and present Corvette racers and much more.

"When the Corvette first came on the scene back in 1953, it had potential," says Guldstrand, "but it took racing to hone the car into the world class performer it is today. 'Corvette Thunder' is my way of thanking all those racers, amateur and professional, who made the Corvette the great American sports car it is."

On the Corvette Thunder website, www.corvettethunder.com, is the Racers Registry, a compilation of past and present Corvette race drivers. "The idea of the Racers Registry is to locate as many Corvette racers as possible and make them a formal part of the car's racing heritage," Guldstrand states. "If not for them, I don't think any of us would be here today celebrating this event."

PROTOTYPE BREAKS COLLECTOR PRICE BARRIER

The much publicized prototype of the Guldstrand Signature Edition Anniversary Corvette has sold for more than the list price of the car. Its new owner, recognizing the Guldstrand Corvette's collector car appeal and potential, paid well into six figures for the Anniversary Gold machine. Desirability of the limited edition high performance Corvette was further underscored when US Bank agreed to provide financing for the purchase of the Guldstrand Signature Edition package for customers with approved credit.

The car now carries a 12-month/12,000-mile warranty on the 500 hp 427 cu.in. V8 Katech engine. Such a warranty is a rarity in the world of high performance custom collector automobiles, but it emphasizes the total streetability built

into the Guldstrand Signature Edition package. As demonstrated by major magazine road tests, the Guldstrand Anniversary Corvette has both outstanding performance and reliability. Quarter-mile acceleration has been recorded at 12.4 seconds and over 120 mph, but it can also cruise on the highway averaging 27 miles-per-gallon fuel economy, while meeting current emission standards.

GULDSTRAND SIGNATURE EDITION 500 HP 427 V8 AVAILABLE TO CUSTOM INSTALL

Harkening back to the glory days of pavement melting big-block horsepower and torque, Guldstrand Motor Productions is making the New Generation 500hp 427 V8 from his Signature Edition Anniversary Corvette available for all Chevrolet V8 passenger cars built after 1997 and, with a special adapter, back to 1955.

With this year's SEMA show as a backdrop, Guldstrand announced: "For a major industry event like this, you need to make a powerful statement. We believe that offering one of the great performance icons from Chevrolet's past, the 427 cubic inch V8, is consistent with the fantastic array of power accessories on display at this show. Seeing all this great Chevrolet hardware in one place makes you appreciate what the brand has meant to American performance industry. In conceiving the Signature Edition 427," continued Guldstrand, "our goal was to connect to the engine's rich heritage with a thoroughly modern application. Using the 427 configuration based on the Gen III engine allows us to do exactly that."

The New Generation Signature Edition 427 is built by Katech, Inc., from unique specifications developed by Guldstrand. Katech also produces the engines for the Corvette C5-R race cars that won at LeMans in 2001 and 2002 as well as the American LeMans Series Championship in 2003.

Starting with the LS1 5.7-liter V8 block from the basic ZO6 Corvette in the Guldstrand Signature Edition car, Katech bores and resleeves the cylinders to a 4.12-inch bore and a 4.0-inch stroke. The block is remachined using billet steel for main caps and both head and main bearing studs. Katech pistons are inserted in the enlarged bores, and rings are file-fitted to exactly fit. Carillo rods connect the pistons to a 4340 forged crankshaft.



To maximize air flow through the stock Z06 heads, Katech ports and cc's the combustion chambers to emulate their Stage III cylinder heads. While the rocker arms and lifters remain factory stock, titanium retainers and stainless steel valves are employed with an adjustable

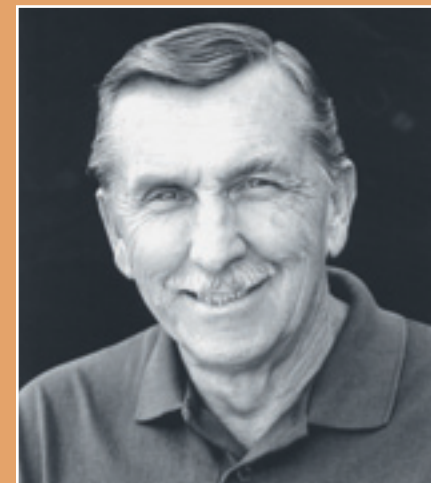
engine producing 500 horsepower at 5,600 RPM and 520 ft-lbs. of torque at 4,700 RPM. Yet, it remains totally suited to everyday street driving, even with its use of air conditioning and long periods spent at idle speeds in heavy traffic.

"The beauty of our Signature 427-powered cars," Guldstrand said, "is that the engine virtually drops right into all 1997 and newer General Motor product vehicles that use this basic block; Corvettes, Camaros, Chevy pickups, Firebirds, what have you. Plus, our special adapter kit makes it fair game for an even wider range of GM drive train vehicles." Retail price for a complete ready-to-run Guldstrand Signature 427 is \$19,950, plus shipping and core.

"Like the original big-block 427 engine, we wanted the Signature Edition 427 engine to deliver true high performance," says Guldstrand. "But it also had to have the civilized road manners expected by today's drivers."

"After driving Guldstrand Signature Edition 427 powered cars to Corvette events all over America this past summer," Guldstrand smiles, "I think we accomplished that."

For more details go to Guldstrand's Corvette 50th Anniversary Website, www.CorvetteThunder.com. ■



timing sprocket and a stronger high performance timing chain from the C5-R race car. The camshaft has a high performance profile with higher lift and longer duration, but remains totally streetable. The compression ratio is 10.8:1. Inlet air flows to the heads through a Katech ported throttle body.

All of this adds up to a 427 cubic inch

THE INSIDE TRACK: BRIEFS & RUMORS

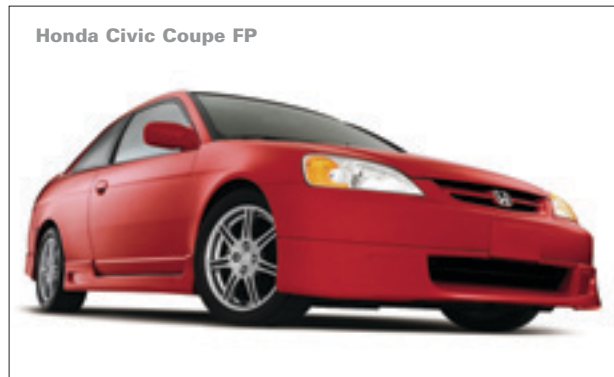
■ A freshened version of the **BMW X5** SUV was scheduled to go on sale in mid-October. It features a redesigned front end



and horsepower increased to 315 hp for the 4.4 liter V-8 engine. It also gets an all-wheel-drive system that works in conjunction with the stability control systems to improve traction and handling.

■ **Michelin** will offer a system that will automatically monitor tire pressure and maintain correct inflation. The system, which will also allow drivers to vary pressure for different driving conditions, will be available in 2006.

■ **Honda** is offering performance packages for its 2003 Accord V-6 and Civic Coupes. The dealer-installed options include special wheels and tires, an aero kit and interior changes, in addition to a sport-tuned suspension with recalibrated shocks and springs. The Civic FP (Factory Performance) package is \$3,811, while the Accord FP sells for \$3,492 for cars with manual transmissions and \$4,204 for automatic transmission models.



■ Look for **Jaguar** to offer a high-performance R version of the entry-level Jaguar X-Type when the next generation comes to market for the 2006 model year. Few details are available at this time, but the engine is likely to get a supercharger.

■ **Volkswagen** now has plans to build a vehicle that will fall between the Passat and the large luxury sedan, the Phaeton, which is due to go on sale in the U.S. in later this year. The mid-size luxury sedan, Code-named

the C1, is intended to compete with cars like the Mercedes-Benz E-Class and BMW 5 series.

■ **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.

■ The **Isuzu** Axiom sport utility vehicle has had poor sales figures since it was introduced in 2002, so the company has decided to pull the plug after the 2004 model year. The Axiom is distinguished by its futuristic styling. It fits into the Isuzu lineup between the popular Rodeo and Trooper models.

■ The new **Lincoln** Aviator sales have been so weak that the mid-size luxury SUV will be dropped as early as 2005. The Aviator, which is in essence an upscale version of the Ford Explorer, will be replaced by 2007 by a new sport wagon based on the Mazda6 platform.

■ The second **Jaguar** X-Type model to hit the market will be an Estate, or wagon to those of us in the US. The Estate debuted in Europe at the recent Frankfurt motor show and is expected to reach the US by the end of 2004. As with the X-Type sedan, Estate buyers will get a choice of 3.0 or 2.5-liter V-6 engines, with standard all-wheel drive.

■ **Toyota** may be dropping the RAV4 from its North American lineup by 2007. The Toyota Tacoma-Based FJ40, a retro-looking vehicle reminiscent of early Land Cruisers, would replace the RAV4 as the entry-level Toyota SUV. The FJ40 is scheduled to debut sometime in 2005.



■ To aid sales of the new Pacifica crossover vehicle, **Chrysler** is offering a decontented front-wheel drive model that will drop the base price under \$30,000. The base price of the all-wheel-drive model is currently \$32,980 (including destination charge) and \$31,230 for the front drive version.

■ **Toyota** may build a gasoline/electric hybrid version of the full-size Tundra pickup. Toyota Motor Sales executive vice president Jim Press said in a phone interview that pickup drivers, who typically pay premiums for big horsepower and towing capacity, will care enough about fuel economy to create enough demand to justify the Tundra hybrid. A Tundra hybrid would probably debut after the manufacturer introduces the second generation gas-powered Tundra in a few years.

■ It's no big surprise that **Pontiac** will drop the Aztek after the 2004 model year. The crossover was designed to appeal to the young male market, but it had controversial rear end styling that didn't appeal to enough buyers. The Aztek will likely be replaced with a new vehicle based on the next-generation Buick Rendezvous and with styling from the sensuous Centieme concept from the 2003 Detroit auto show. The Aztek name will be dropped like a hot potato.

■ **Saab** plans to challenge the distinction between traditional hatchback and wagon body styles with its new "Sport-Hatch" concept car. The sporty five-door, four-seat car "offers driver-focused performance and innovative versatility" in a new "fastback" shape. Power comes from



a high-performance 250-hp version of Saab's 2.0-liter four-cylinder turbo-charged engine.

■ **Ferrari** is working on a seven-speed sequential gearbox for the next generation Ferrari 360, which is due in 2007. The transmission is best suited for models with a V-8 engine; the extra gear is not as necessary for Ferrari's more powerful V-12 engine.

■ **Mercedes-Benz** apparently wants all its cars, in all classes, to be the fastest on the road. To add a new dimension to the C-Class, the entry-level sedan will get a new big V-8 engine for its AMG version. The AMG model will become the C55 and will sport the same naturally-aspired 5.4-liter V-8 that powers many of the company's upper-level cars. Horsepower levels have not been announced but have been estimated at 365.

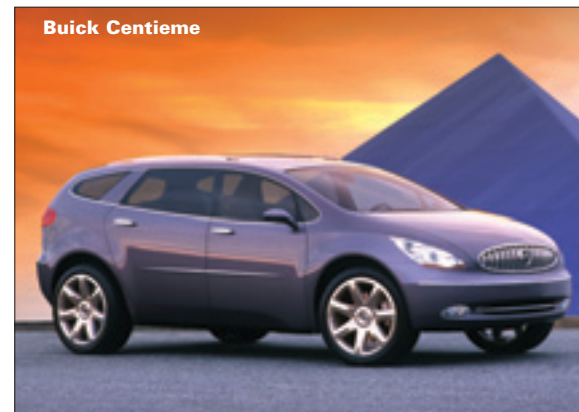
■ **Lexus** is offering a special edition of the SC 430 convertible/hardtop to commemorate its four-year association with the Pebble Beach Company. The SC Pebble Beach Edition will get a special Beach Azure Pear paint on the body and the wheels. Inside, it gets special leather seating, black bird's-eye maple trim and customized Pebble Beach badging and floor mats. Inside the trunk is a free black leather golf bag. Lexus is building 400 of the special editions, and they are already at dealerships.

■ **Mercedes-Benz** did so well with the first generation M-Class, plans are now calling for five different models of the second generation. A new model with a standard wheelbase, called the Grand Sports Tourer (GST), will debut early in 2005, followed by an extended wheelbase version. In mid-2005 there will be a new standard wheelbase M-Class. A long wheelbase MLX-class will debut in late 2005. A G-Class replacement called the MLG is due in 2006 out of the Alabama Mercedes-Benz plant.

■ The **Ford** GT will be hard to find when the \$100,000-plus supercar goes into production next spring. Most of the 3,800 Ford dealers in the US are trying to get one of the 1,500 GTs being built, so Ford has devised a lottery system. Each of 380



President's Award winners will get one car, while the rest will be drawn from a lottery so all dealers have an equal chance of stocking a GT.



■ **Buick** has been generating interest with a crossover concept called the Centieme (French for 100th and pronounced sen-tee-em). Bertone built the sleek four-door wagon-style concept. It has four-wheel drive with a twin turbo 3.6-liter V-6 rated at 400 hp. The seating is a 2 + 2 + 2 configuration like the new Chrysler Pacifica, but has features like a third row seat that folds at the touch of a button.

■ **Volkswagen** will offer a Golf-based sport utility vehicle in about three years. Internally the new SUV is referred to as the Marrakech.

■ When the **Mitsubishi** Outlander debuted last year, one of the only complaints about the small SUV was that it was underpowered. The Outlander came only with a 2.4-liter 140-hp four-cylinder engine and a four-speed automatic transmission. Mitsubishi has listened to the complaint and is upping the horsepower for 2004 to 160-hp, still only with the automatic transmission, but at least now equal to the horsepower in the Toyota RAV4.

■ The **Chrysler** PT Cruiser convertible is set to reach dealerships in March 2004 as a 2005 model. The two-door Cruiser will come with a choice of two turbocharged engines, the standard being a new 180-hp four-cylinder turbo and optional a 220-hp version of the 2.4-liter four-cylinder. Chrysler is expecting to sell up to 20,000 of the convertibles annually. ■

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*.

NEW-SIZE LEXUS



By Barbara Schaffer

It is difficult to imagine a luxurious sport utility vehicle like the all-new GX 470 Lexus performing more like a hardcore off-roader while climbing the steepest off-road hills filled with large holes and silk-like powdered dirt several inches deep. However, we experienced this firsthand in Park City, Utah, where journalists gathered for the introduction. The performance of the GX470 was absolutely unbelievable through the tough off-road course.

DESIGN The GX470 design clearly is linked to the Lexus/Toyota family. The styling is contemporary and bold, with well-integrated fender flares and running boards. It resembles the LX more than it does the RX, however, it does share the headlights of the RX, but the size is just slightly smaller than the premium luxury LX 470 model.

The interior design continues the Lexus tradition of luxury and comfort, along with optional high tech features like a DVD-based navigation system with voice command controls and a DVD rear entertainment system that lowers from the headliner.

MECHANICAL A 4.7-liter V-8 engine that produces 235 horsepower and 320 lb.-ft. of torque powers the new GX 470. It is paired

with a five-speed automatic transmission featuring shift logic that holds gears on inclines for power and on descents for increased engine braking.

PERFORMANCE AND HANDLING Handling and performance on the road displayed typical Lexus characteristics such as a quiet and smooth ride but at the same time good performance. Acceleration times from 0 to 60 mph are a very strong 8.5 seconds, according to Toyota figures. Top speed is limited to 112 mph.

COMFORT Like any other Lexus, the GX470 is extremely comfortable, with many amenities. Plus you have the comfort of knowing that the GX470 comes with a new Downhill Assist Control (D-A-C) for steep descents. Working only at speeds below 15 mph, the D-A-C controls the brakes to keep the vehicle at speeds from 2 to 4 mph in forward and at even lower speeds in reverse. It also has full-time four-wheel drive and hill-start assist control that allows the driver to more safely stop and start on slippery inclined surfaces, by helping to prevent the vehicle from rolling backward.

PRICE RANGE Prices of the GX470 range from around \$45,000 to \$50,000. ■



We've got an acquaintance who picks the big Lexus LX470 as her ultimate vehicle (despite regular exposure to her boss's Aston Martin V-12 Vanquish. Why? She says it's like being able to drive your living room down the road. Um, okay. Well, if something more reasonable like a family room is to your taste, the GX470 might be just the ticket.

The interior's combination of wood and leather is not only attractive, it gives a tactile sense of where the steering wheel is during a turn. The shifter offers similar benefits, and its offsets also offer a certain amount of guidance, eyes-off.

However, the shifter at night only offers dots for its position, and you have to cross-check the instrument panel to see what gear you're in. Perhaps the driver's eyes should be up anyway, but putting letters in both locations certainly couldn't hurt.

Merging onto a Valley freeway while a highly-publicized speed enforcement crusade was underway, naturally our gaze went right to the speedo. Imagine our discomfort to discover that a burgundy needle against a charcoal dial is basically invisible. With some fiddling, we ultimately were able to achieve better visibility at night and suspect there are ways to increase it during the day, too—maybe. The GPS unit, similarly, had a lot of unexplained options (we had no manual with our test vehicle) for brightness, contrast and color, but we made do with what we could figure out fairly intuitively. (always a great place for user interfaces to begin, anyway).

We were surprised by the attention our test vehicle received. What appeared to be pretty much yet another SUV turned out to be a showstopper of sorts. The number of heads turned, the parking lot walk-arounds, and the inquiries at the pump rivaled what we might expect with a performance coupe. Something Lexus has put together here obviously clicks.

As many SUVs creep up in size a bit (witness the Trailblazer's size and weight gain), and vehicles such as the Lexus GX470 arrive to fill new gaps, it's easy to see why someone might not spend the big bucks on an LX470, when the GX470 pretty much fills the bill. ■



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BARBARA SCHAFFER is co-editor of *Auto Digest*, including automotive reviews, rumors and other features.



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MABEL MEGUIAR : THE LITTLE OLD LADY FROM PASADENA

Mabel Meguiar, "The First Lady of Car Care," matriarch of the Meguiar's car care family and oldest stockholding member of Meguiar's Inc., has died in Newport Beach, California at the age of 86.

Born in Hamlin, Texas, in 1916, Mabel was married for 65 years to the late Malcolm Meguiar, who served as Chairman Emeritus of the Irvine-based car care products manufacturer. Malcolm was a chemist who, along with his father, Frank, Jr., formulated and perfected the polishes and cleaners upon which Meguiar's Inc. was founded more than 100 years ago.

A life-long resident of Pasadena, Mabel often reminisced about early days when the family made furniture and car polishes one bottle at a time with an eggbeater in the family's Pasadena garage. Today, the company has corporate headquarters in Irvine, a state-of-the-art 200,000-square-foot production facility in Nashville, and global operations offering more than 300 products.

Mabel was a strong community leader in Pasadena, among the longest and most-active members of the famed Tournament of Roses. She has long been connected with the Beach Boys '60s hit "The Little Ol' Lady From Pasadena." Mabel Meguiar is survived by her sons Larry and Barry, the current president and CEO of Meguiar's Inc., five grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.



ish painted surfaces, Quik Clay to remove surface contaminants and restore finish, and Deep Crystal Polish to finish it off. Meguiar's Gold Class Liquid Wax can then be applied, and Quik Detailer or Quik Wax can be used for touch-ups and daily maintenance.

Meguiar's Gold Class All Wheel Cleaner removes dirt, mud, and brake dust from painted or polished wheels, along with Carpet and Interior Cleaner, Car Odor Eliminator and Hot Shine Tire Spray, to protect and maintain interior and exterior surfaces that receive daily abuse. For metal surfaces, Gold Class All Metal Restore removes oxidation, restores a deep shine, and guards against tarnishing. ScratchX polishes out small scratches caused by dirt and abrasion, while PlastX Clear Plastic Cleaner & Polish cleans plastic surfaces.

For the interior, The Gold Class



Vinyl/Rubber Protectant and Dash & Trim Foam Protectant will help bring back the richness and color in rubber, vinyl and plastic surfaces. To keep leather surfaces in top condition, the collection provides Meguiar's Gold Class Rich Leather Aloe Cleaner and Rich Leather Aloe Conditioner to nourish and protect fine leathers without changing their natural suppleness.

The collection contains three polishing pads, a wash mitt, detailing swabs, detailing brushes, towels and applicator pads, wipes, bonnets and a micro-fiber dust mitt. An assortment of pads is also included with either the polisher or buffer collection. ■

CENTENNIAL COLLECTION

Meguiar's promises this is the ultimate car care package, to clean, polish, protect and detail, inside and out. The Meguiar's Centennial Collection combines products to keep any car, truck, or motorcycle maintaining a show car finish with minimum effort. The set includes 17 surface care products, dozens of cleaning and polishing accessories, and a choice of either Meguiar's Dual Action Polisher or Cordless Orbital Buffer. Also included are Gold Class Car Wash to safely clean and nour-

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UPCOMING FEATURES

January 2004 : The world-famous auction circuit hits the Valley of the Sun



Russo and Steele, Barrett-Jackson, RM Auctions, Kruse International and Silver Auctions bring enthusiasts and bidders from points worldwide. We visit with Russo and Steele.

2004 Honda Valkyrie Rune



"Superbike" doesn't even begin to describe this engineering and stylist tour de force. We take a look at the production bike and the wild concepts that brought it to manufacture.

Mobility programs from Ford and GM



Ford and General Motors are well along with comprehensive new programs for the disabled, providing flexibility and independence while developing standards of universal design.

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