


PLAYBOY



ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN

SEPTEMBER 1981 • \$2.50

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BONUS PULL-OUT
OF THE SEXIEST
JANE EVER,
PLUS EXCLUSIVE
PHOTOS FROM
THE NEW, HOT
TARZAN FILM

GIRLS OF THE SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

(NO WONDER THOSE
GUYS PLAY SUCH
GOOD FOOTBALL)

RIGHT FROM
THE SOURCE'S MOUTH:
AN EPIC INTERVIEW
WITH JAMES MICHENER

NEW FICTION FROM
JOHN UPDIKE

PLAYBOY'S
PIGSKIN PREVIEW

THE ME DECADE
IS OVER.
SAY HELLO TO
**THE
GIMME
DECADE**

A PLAYBOY
REPORT ON
RUTHLESSNESS
IN THE EIGHTIES

WHEELS

DECADE OF THE DE LOREAN?

They say it can't be done. No one has started a major new car company in America and succeeded since Walter Chrysler did it in 1925. The last to try was Malcolm Bricklin, who built flashy, gull-winged sports cars bearing his name in the mid-Seventies before the financial tides sucked him under. So here we have ex-G.M. executive John Z. De Lorean building flashy, gull-winged sports cars bearing his name.

Complicating that task is the car itself,

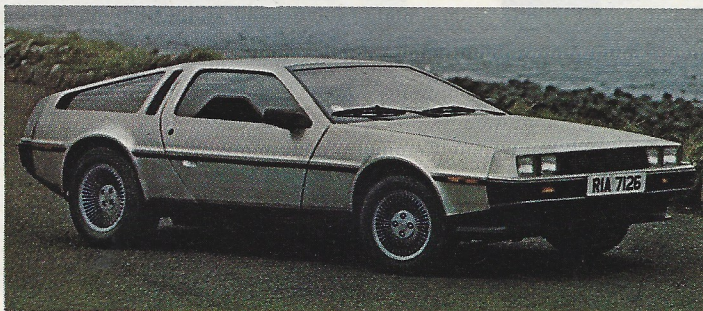
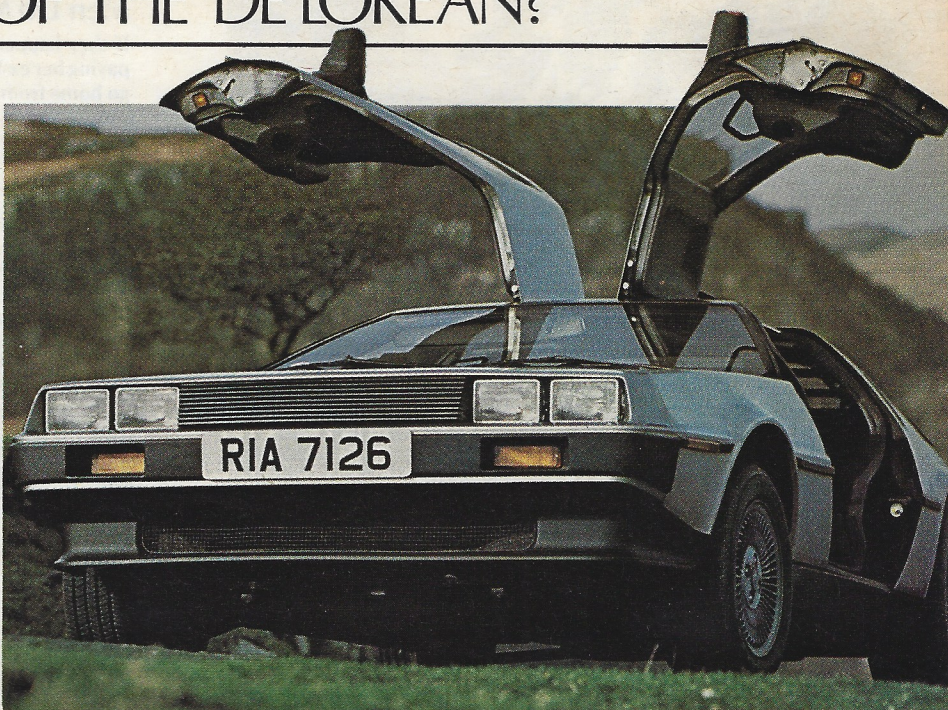
which is unlike any other ever built. De Lorean wanted it to last forever, so its skin is rustproof stainless steel. He wanted it light yet strong, so its structure is glass-reinforced plastic over a central backbone frame of epoxy-coated steel. He wanted impressive performance with reasonable fuel economy and rugged durability, so he chose a light, strong, overhead-cam, aluminum fuel-injected 2.8-liter V6 engine from the PRV combine of Peugeot and Renault of France and Volvo of Sweden. He wanted sex appeal, so he hired the famous Giugiaro Ital Design studio of Turin to fashion the body's

contours, with stunning gull-wing doors that swing up and over like hatches on a Darth Vader space shuttle. He wanted racerlike road holding, so he contracted England's Lotus (of Grand Prix world-championship fame) to help develop a fully independent suspension around low, fat Goodyear NCT tires with a tread design patterned after Goodyear's best racing rain tires.

First approach this unique automotive creation and you're struck by how low it is—just 45 inches from tire patch to rooftop, or belly-button high to a six-foot man. The shape is a classic aerodynamic wedge: low and flat in front, rising smoothly past a laid-back windshield, tapering over a louvered back light and terminating in a tall rear deck. Engine and transaxle are in the rear, putting 65 percent of the car's weight on its back tires, which are significantly larger than the front ones, to ensure handling stability.

The stainless-steel skin is hand-brushed to a finish alternately dull and bright, depending on the light reflecting from it. De Lorean is adamant about shipping the cars unpainted, because the stainless steel is one of their most important features . . . but he adds that dealers and buyers can easily paint them if they wish.

The heavy-looking gull-wing door almost opens itself,



Top right: Poised with its gull-wing doors open, the stainless-steel-bodied \$25,000 De Lorean resembles an exotic bird of prey that can gobble up 0 to 60 in nine seconds as you wind the fuel-injected 2.8-liter V6 engine through five fast gears. **Top left:** Rearview mirrors on the trim 168-inch body are electrically operated. **Above:** Although the De Lorean is definitely a two-seater (no kiddie seat here), there's storage behind the driver/passenger and, yes, those buckets are top-grain leather. Air conditioning, power windows and door locks also are standard. The open road awaits you.

assisted by a special torsion spring. A gas-filled strut holds the door open while you slip underneath and settle into a wonderfully comfortable contoured bucket seat upholstered in rich supple leather. There's plenty of leg room and both the seat-back angle and the steering wheel are adjustable for comfort.

Maneuvering in close quarters is complicated by the low nose and restricted rear visibility—only a small "toll booth" side window retracts—so you may want to pop the gull wing to sight down the fender for backing up. But once under way, you soon feel right at home. All controls are in easy view and reach; acceleration is quick enough (about nine seconds 0-60 with the standard five-speed); handling is superb; braking from the four-wheel discs is straight, stable and fade-free; and the supple suspension soaks up surfaces that would shake the bejesus out of ordinary cars.

The De Loreans we drove were early production examples, and they did suffer from some niggling quality glitches. De Lorean says he won't ship any Stateside until the quality is right, and, if so, his 342 dealers should have little trouble selling them at the expected \$25,000 price. That's well above the original target, the Corvette, but a bargain compared with, say, a Lotus or a Ferrari. Maybe it can still be done.

—GARY WITZENBURG