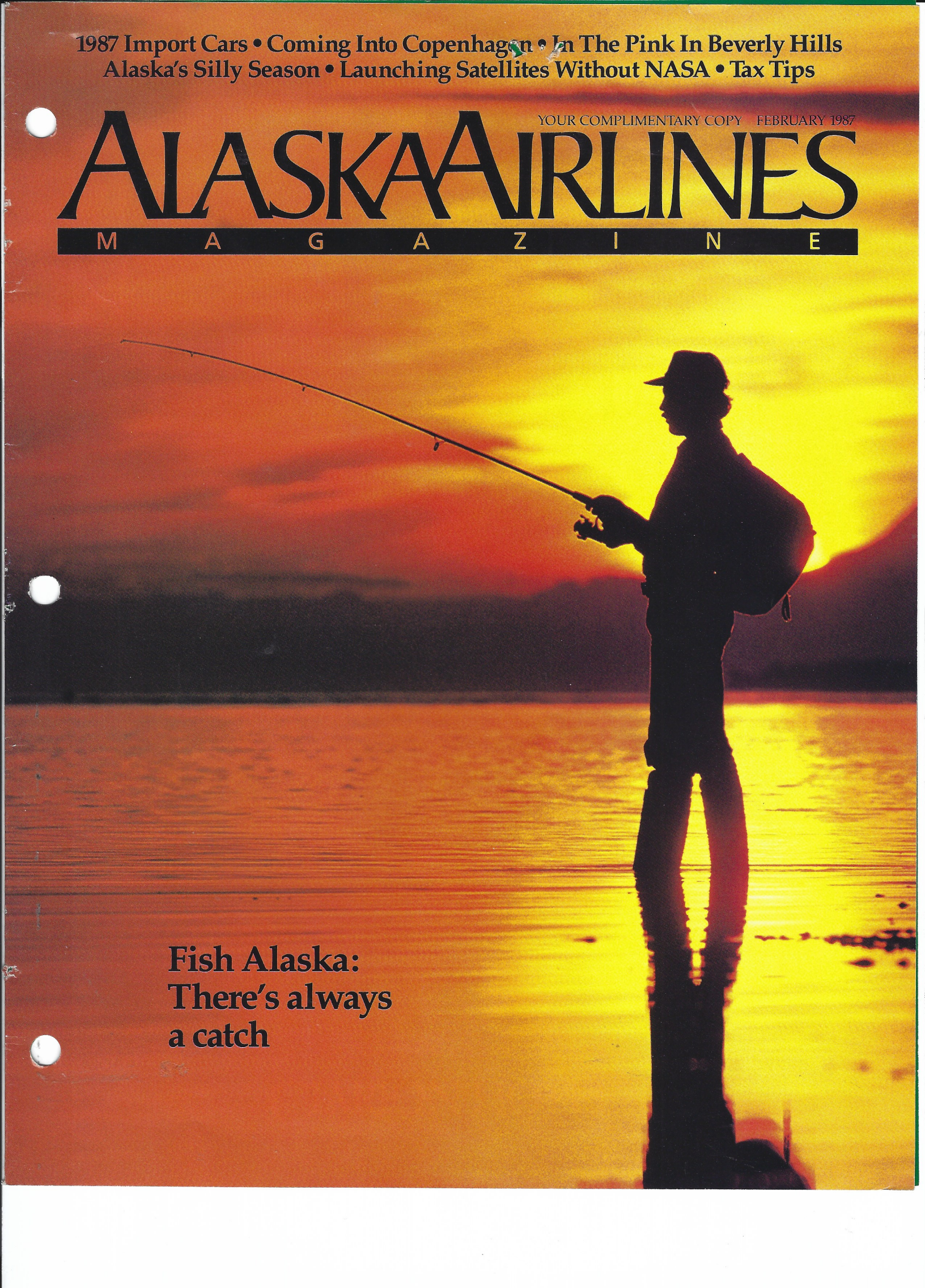


1987 Import Cars • Coming Into Copenhagen • In The Pink In Beverly Hills
Alaska's Silly Season • Launching Satellites Without NASA • Tax Tips

YOUR COMPLIMENTARY COPY FEBRUARY 1987

ALASKA AIRLINES

M A G A Z I N E

A full-page photograph showing the silhouette of a person wearing a hat and carrying a fishing rod, standing on a pier or dock. The person is facing left, holding the rod which extends across the upper half of the frame. The background is a vibrant sunset or sunrise over a body of water, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a strong orange and yellow glow. The person's reflection is visible in the calm water below.

Fish Alaska:
There's always
a catch

THE INVADERS

BY GARY WITZENBURG

E

VERY YEAR, as soon as Detroit parades its fine new wares before the fickle public and postures proudly for a day or so, up pops this invading army of imports with 'leventy-seven exciting new models of their own.

And 1987, unfortunately for the Motown makers, is no exception.

Adding to Detroit's considerable headaches, several smaller importers have established beachheads on our shores in the last couple years. And countless more from all over Asia, Europe—and, for all we know, the moon—are already poised offshore and preparing to strike.

Unfamiliar new nameplates from both new and established importers (some captives of the domestics themselves), keep popping up like pesky weeds: first Yugo, Hyundai (Excel), Suzuki (Samurai) and Acura (Legend and Integra); now Sterling, Merkur Scorpio, Mercury Tracer, Ford Festiva, Subaru Justy, VW Fox and Renault Medallion. Who ARE these guys?

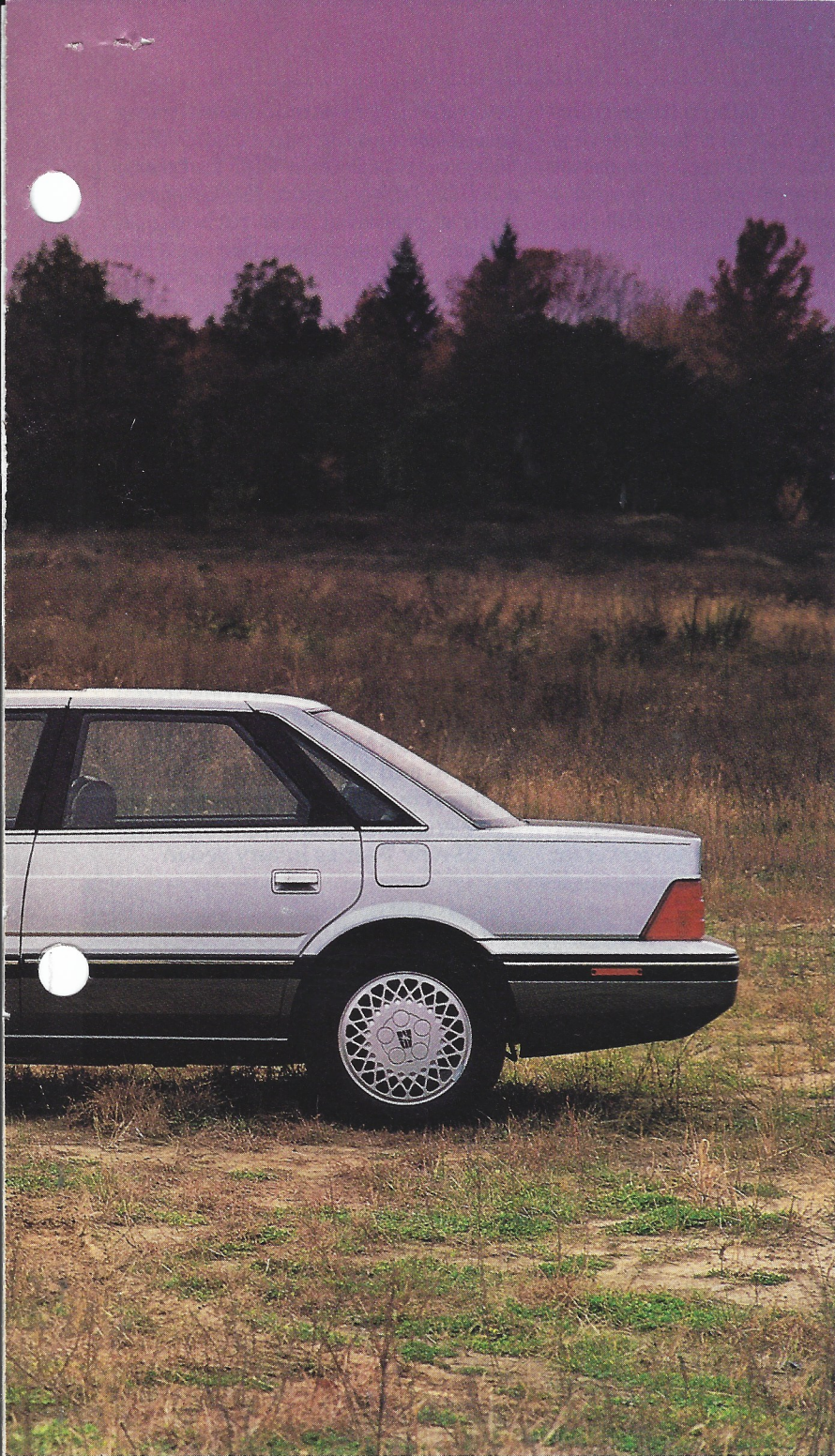
Starting with Japan, Toyota has more new products this year than ever before. First is a brand-new, better-handling, better-performing and *much* better-looking mid-size Camry, available for the first time as both sedan and wagon. Powered by the same 16-valve, twin-cam four

found in the sporty Celica, the '87 Camry is also larger, plusher and better equipped. Automatic passive shoulder belts—better than nothing for those who won't buckle up—are standard.

Then there's the restyled and upgraded Tercel. Besides slicker new three-door and five-door hatchback bodies (the oddball wagon goes unchanged), it offers a more powerful 12-valve engine, rack-and-pinion steering, a redesigned rear suspension and a fuel-squeezing lock-up torque converter for the optional automatic.

The Corolla FX16, Toyota's spirited new econosport entry, not only handles as well as it looks but is also significant as the first-ever American-built Toyota. Assembled at the joint-venture NUMMI plant in Fremont, California





SUSHI N' CHIPS: Rover/Honda Sterling (left).
BRAZIL BRAU: VW Fox (above).

Watch out Detroit, here come the imports.

four-door sedan and five-door hatchback built on the more expensive Maxima's front-drive platform. It's now essentially a four-cylinder Maxima, while the popular Maxima itself (sedan, SE sports sedan and wagon) retains its smooth and powerful V6 engine.

NEW THIS FALL at Nissan are a versatile Pulsar NX sports coupe, a Pathfinder 4WD sports utility based on the "Hardbody" pickup, and a seven-passenger van that looks surprisingly similar to Toyota's. Like last year's new Nissan truck, both Pulsar and Pathfinder are efforts of Nissan's U.S.-based design house in La Jolla, California, and both sport unusual triangular rear-side windows.

With its T-tops and hatch removed, the Pulsar transforms into an almost-convertible, while a dealer-available "Sport-Bak" upper rear section turns it into a tiny wagon. You can also get an optional twin-cam, 16-valve engine, a much improved suspension and larger standard tires. The Pathfinder, amazingly roomy, comfortable and car-like for a compact truck, can also be a serious off-road prowler with its optional V6 engine and the segment's largest factory-available tires.

Nissan's 200-SX sports coupe and 300-ZX sports/GT both

(alongside GM's Corolla-based Chevy Nova), the FX16 boasts the MR-2 sports car's 16-valve four-cylinder engine. There's a lovely new Celica convertible; the already-hot Supra coupe gets an optional turbo; the mid-engine MR-2 sports available T-tops; and the Toyota Van can now be had with four-wheel drive.

Not to be outdone, rival Nissan has revamped nearly its entire U.S. line. Last spring came a restyled subcompact Sentra, an all-new mid-range Stanza and a mildly facelifted luxury Maxima. Besides its more contemporary new look, the Sentra now features a more rigid body and added insulation for a quieter ride, plus a stylish new sport coupe model and a four-wheel drive option for the wagon.

The Stanza's undergone a major upgrade, with both

JUSTY DUES: new mini Subaru (below). **VITAMIN T:** two Toyota Camrys (right). **THE BRAKES:** Volvo gets ABS (bottom).



Porsche, with three new four-cylinder cars out of the box in '86 (an "entry-level" 924S and both 16-valve and Turbo versions of the wonderful 944), follows up in '87 with more power and a new transmission and clutch for the six-cylinder 911, plus major styling and engineering upgrades for the flagship 928. The new 928-S4's 32-valve V8 engine now packs an awesome 316 hp; top speed is 165 mph.

Audi adds electronic engine control (and a resulting power increase) to its non-turbo five-cylinder engine while awaiting the spring introduction of a slippery new 4000 series. Volkswagen's subcompact Fox (planned for mid-January), a thoroughly German design assembled by VW of Brazil, comes in attractive two and four-door variations with a starting price for the two-door in the \$5,700 range.

Lincoln-Mercury's German-built Merkur XR4Ti turbocharged sports coupe benefits from upsized wheels and tires for improved high-speed handling; but a second Merkur model, the Scorpio sedan, is not expected here before spring, if then.

Sweden's Volvo debuts its Bertone-designed 780 luxury coupe, complete with a new aluminum V6 engine, ABS brakes and a supplemental restraint system (SRS) similar to Mercedes'. The smoother engine and ABS also enhance the 760 sedan (SRS will be added in March), and both ABS and SRS will be optional in four-cylinder 740s at that time. Volvo's turbo engine now has water-cooled turbo bearings, and a five-speed manual replaces the old four-speed with overdrive in the 240 DL.

Saab freshens the face of its funky 900 models, increases production of the nifty 900 Turbo convertible, water-cools its own turbo's bearings and

adds a 16-valve, non-turbo "S" model and four-speed automatic to its top-line 9000 series.

Peugeot of France boasts two new fuel-injected engines (a 2.2-liter four and a 2.8-liter V6) for its handsome 505 sedans, electronic injection for its available turbodiesel engine, and ABS brakes for top-of-the-line 505s. Also from France come the all-new mid-size Renault Medallion sedan and wagon and (maybe by mid-year) a sleek and sexy Corvette-challenging Renault Alpine Turbo sports car.

England's Jaguar offers an open roadster version (not the caged-in Cabriolet) of its V12 XJ-S before the spring launch of its new XJ-6 sedan. Rolls-Royce unveils a sports-oriented Bentley Eight model (\$89,900) with firmer suspension, larger tires on alloy wheels and a nostalgic wire-mesh grille. Aston-Martin adds fuel injection and a 20 percent power boost to its exclusive (\$114,000 to \$169,000) line of hand-built beauties, while Lotus leaves its swift Espirit Turbo alone.

But the biggest news from Britain is the Rover-built Sterling version of the

same mid-size sedan already available here as Honda's Acura Legend. With a pretty but conservative shape somewhere between Audi 5000 and Peugeot 505, the front-drive Sterling combines lush wood and leather interior appointments with Honda's 24-valve V6 engine and five-speed or automatic powertrain. If quality is up to snuff (and it likely will be), the Sterling should be a hit at \$19,000 base.

There's not much new to report from Italy, land of fiery red sports cars and fast exotics. Ferrari, Lamborghini, Bertone (which still sells the former Fiat X1/9 here) and Alfa Romeo stand pat. Maserati—celebrating its 60th anniversary this year—will add electronic fuel injection to its Biturbo coupe, 425 sedan and Spyder convertible later in '87.

In the category of "other," Yugoslavia's Yugo holds its \$3,990 base price and prepares to launch a sporty GVX model (with larger engine, aero spoilers, five-speed gearbox, low-profile tires and alloy wheels) in March. The Korean Hyundai Excel (\$4,995 base) gets aero headlamps, optional power steering and longer warranty. And the

Pontiac LeMans and Ford Festiva small cars (also from Korea) and Mercury's Mexican-built, Mazda 323-based Tracer all are due for early 1987.

It could be another long year for some Motor City moguls. ▲

Gary Witzenburg contributes to Motor Trend and other national publications.

