

DAN JENKINS' SEMI-HILARIOUS NEW NOVEL

PLAYBOY

ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN

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THE SECRET PAPERS OF HOWARD HUGHES

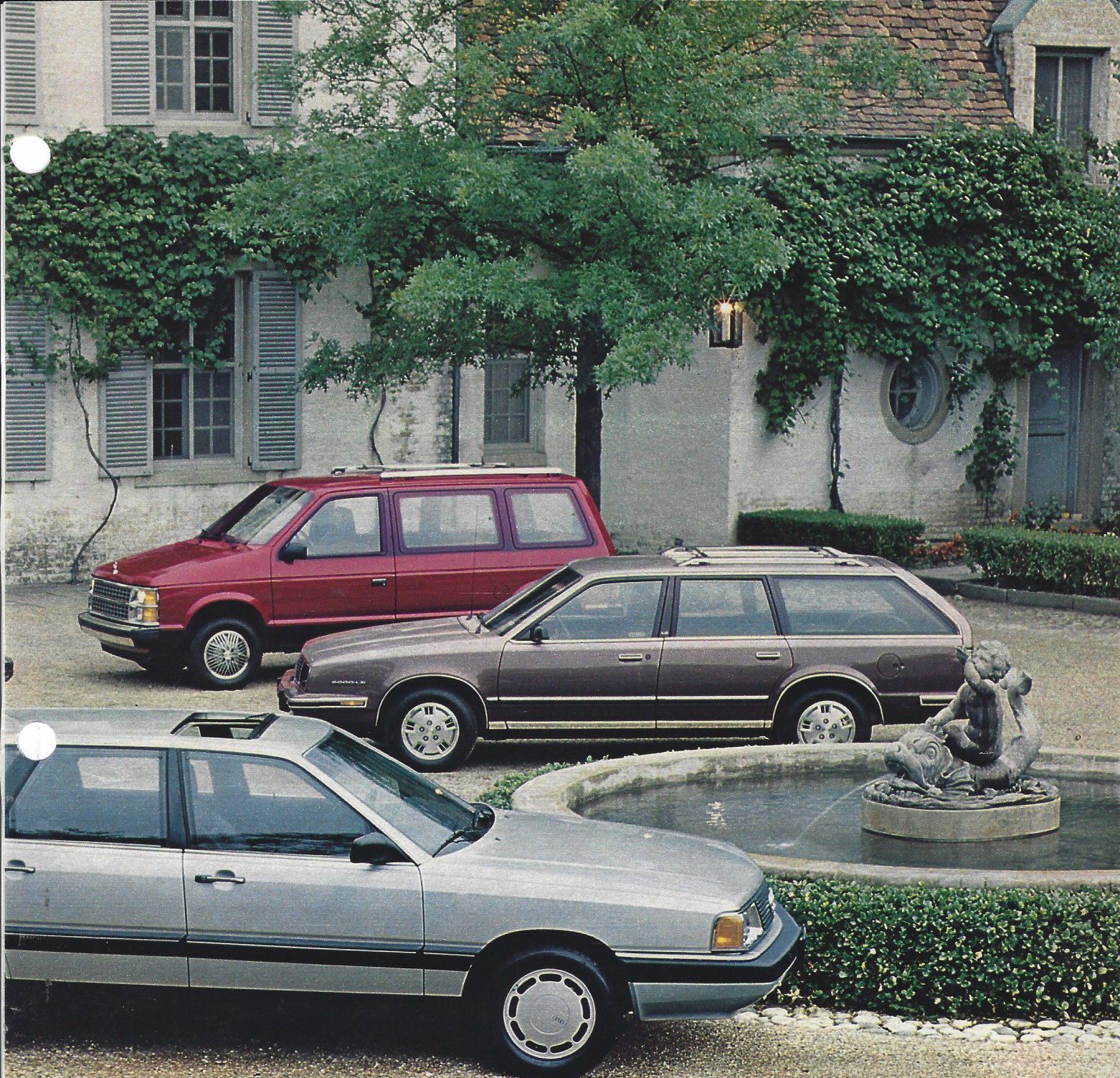
HOW THE
PHANTOM
BILLIONAIRE
TRIED TO
BUY THE U.S.
GOVERNMENT

**DAZZLING
& DIRTY**
PLAYBOY'S
SEX IN
CINEMA

INTERVIEW
PRESIDENT
JOSÉ
NAPOLEÓN
DUARTE
OF EL
SALVADOR

**CHRISTIE
BRINKLEY
DRESSES
UP**





This quintet of urban estate cars represents an escalating space war of a different sort—interior space, that is. Toyota's futuristic-looking van (far left) takes a short-wheelbase, mid-engine approach and features standard five-speed manual transmission, optional twin sun roofs, dual air conditioning and an innovative ice maker/drink cooler between the front seats. Prices start around \$9500. Audi's \$17,900 wagon (center foreground) is an aerodynamically svelte and delightfully smooth and agile derivation of the German maker's beautiful 5000S sedan. Its fuel-injected five-cylinder engine drives the front wheels through a standard five-speed manual or optional three-speed automatic transaxle. Jeep's state-of-the-art Cherokee Chief (left rear) offers a choice of two- (shown) or four-door styles; four-cylinder, V6 or

new-for-'85 turbodiesel power; and part-time or viscous-drive full-time four-wheel drive at a base price of about \$11,400. Dodge's Caravan (center rear) and its corporate sister ship, Plymouth's Voyager, about \$9000 base, are the forerunners of super-space-efficient American minivans. Unlike their soon-to-come domestic competition, they have front-wheel drive and are powered by a transverse four-cylinder engine with five-speed manual transaxle. Pontiac's handsome 6000 LE Wagon (middle right), a member of the excellent A-car clan of General Motors' front-wheel-drive intermediates, combines the road feel of a sports car with the quiet class of a European grand-touring sedan. A choice of four-cylinder, V6 or diesel-V6 power is available with standard automatic transaxle. Base price: about \$10,000.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD FEGLEY



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*introducing a new
breed of city wheels—
the urban estate car*

modern living

By GARY WITZENBURG

LIKE RODNEY DANGERFIELD, the lowly station wagon just don't get no respect. It's thought of as boxy, clumsy, as slow as premium catsup and too damned *practical* to be any fun. If it makes a statement at all, it's one of advancing middle age, family responsibility and orthodontist's bills. But suddenly, there's a new crop of wagons that are both fun and fashionable. They are modern, stylish, fuel- and space-efficient, neither too big on the outside nor too small on the inside. They drive like sports cars but haul like trucks. Whether they're loaded or unloaded, their tough yet smoothly sophisticated suspensions eat up decaying freeways and moon-cratered city streets with equal aplomb. Some, like the Jeeps and the minivans, seat you high enough to see over traffic, watch situations develop and plan well ahead to maneuver around (continued on page 134)

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"If there's an American Audi, it's certainly the Pontiac 6000—one of G.M.'s excellent A-car clan."

them. Combined with orthopedically designed seats, state-of-the-art sound systems and other niceties, they bring a new perspective to the daily commute.

Aside from contemporary chic and surprisingly fine road manners, the greatest virtue of this new class of vehicle is usable space. And because these cars are so useful, yet so pleasant and refreshingly different from the ubiquitous wood-wallpapered gargantuawagons and appliance-like econowagons that pepper the landscape of suburban America, we call them urban estate cars.

Audi's 5000S wagon, for example, is a cargo-carrying version of the beautifully aerodynamic front-wheel-drive 5000S sedan. As fans of the sedan, we expected something special from the wagon, and it did not let us down. About 11 seconds after snicking its standard five-speed into gear and releasing its precision clutch, we sensed this sleek German hauler's message loud and clear. "Hello from the land of no-speed-limit *Autobahnen*," it whispered. "Welcome to the world of luxury sports motoring." Eleven seconds, of course, was all the big Audi needed to go from rest to 60 mph. Once at speed, it handled like the thoroughbred it is, whether cruising serenely along the freeway or careening safely and securely through the mountains. If it weren't for the extended roof and the slightly raised rear spoiler reflected in our mirror, we'd never have known we were driving a wagon. Like the sedan's, the 5000S wagon's lines are wind-tunnel sleek, with unique flush-mounted side windows. Its drag coefficient is a best-in-class 0.35, and its cabin is surprisingly quiet, save for the five-cylinder engine's muffled whine at high rpms. The interior is upper-crust understated Teutonic functional, and there's even a lockable compartment under the carpeted load floor that's big enough for two medium-size suitcases. The price: \$17,900.

Designed according to the same high-speed touring philosophy but powered by their rear wheels instead of their fronts are the German Mercedes-Benz 300TD, the French Peugeot 505 and the Swedish Volvo wagons. Mercedes surprised the once conservative wagon world several years ago with the TD wagon version of its venerable mid-range 300 series. Like the Audi, the \$36,000 Mercedes is virtually identical to its sedan sibling underneath, inside and outside from its doors forward:

four-speed automatic transmission, four-wheel independent suspension and four-wheel power-disc brakes. The only major mechanical difference, in fact, is a set of hydropneumatic rear shock absorbers that provide automatic level control by adjusting air pressure for changing loads. Need we say that the 300TD drives like every other Mercedes built? It's solid, secure, surprisingly agile in the turns, with a strong feeling of mechanical precision and a touch of sporting character once the lively turbodiesel is spinning up to speed.

Peugeot, which essentially *invented* the station wagon 90 years ago, introduced its best-ever wagon late last year. Though derived from the delightful 505 sedan, the roomy and stylish 505 wagon was designed from the ground up as a wagon. Its handsome Pininfarina-styled body encloses the largest cargo area of any imported wagon in America. The French love their luxury and their smooth, supple ride; but they also like their cars as tough as nails. Peugeots deliver on both counts, which is why you'll see them in big-city taxi service as well as hauling the mail across the Sahara desert. Think of the 505 as a pretty, plush, quiet, bump-absorbing, fine-handling Sherman tank and you'll get the idea. With a choice of two hardy four-cylinder engines—fuel-injected gas or turbocharged diesel—the standard GL version (about \$12,000) is well equipped, and the luxury S (about \$16,000) comes with all the bells and whistles possible.

Easily the oldest and boxiest design of this group, the \$12,700 Swedish Volvo wagon nonetheless remains a favorite of discerning city and suburb dwellers alike. Volvos have long been the best-selling European imports in America, and some 30 percent of them sold here these days are wagons. They're known as solid, safe and strong, they ride and drive like Scandinavian Mercedes and they can be had in high-value DL, luxury GL or fire-breathing GLT turbo (yes, there's even a spoke-wheeled, bespoilered turbo wagon that'll do zero to 60 in about *eight* seconds) and diesel variations. See if that doesn't impress your pinochle foursome!

If there's an American Audi, it's certainly the Pontiac 6000. One of G.M.'s excellent A-car clan of front-wheel-drive intermediates (Chevrolet's Celebrity, Oldsmobile's Cutlass Ciera and Buick's Century are the others), Pontiac's 6000 series is topped by the wonderful STE per-

formance sedan. All four A-cars have carved favorable reputations for solid construction, fuel and space efficiency and first-rate ride and handling since their 1982 introduction, but Pontiac carries its fashionable Euro flavor further than the others. There's no STE wagon (yet), but order the 6000 wagon woodless (please!) with the optional V6 engine, tachometer and gauges, automatic load leveling, stiffer suspension and aggressive performance tires on alloy wheels, and it's the next best thing. We flogged one through L.A.'s hills and valleys, paraded it down Rodeo Drive, turned it over to the snootiest valet parkers—and soon discovered that it could do anything the Audi could, including turn heads, despite its very reasonable \$10,000 base price.

A.M.C.'s downsized Jeep Cherokee is the only four-wheel-drive model of our delightful dozen. Jeep wrote the book on four-wheel drive, so the Cherokee (like its plusher brother, the new Wagoneer) offers a choice of standard Command Trac part-time or optional Selec-Trac viscous full-time 4wd, the latter with shift-on-the-fly (to fuel-saving two-wheel drive and back) capability for the first time this year. Compared with its G.M. and Ford competition, the \$10,000 (base price) Cherokee has more interior room and is the only one available in both two- and four-door body styles. We tested one (with the new-for-1985 turbodiesel engine) near San Luis Obispo, on the central California coast, and came away thoroughly impressed. It flew down the freeway as quietly and smoothly as an expensive sedan. It gobbled up a twisty two-lane like an overgrown sports car. It chewed up rocks and dips and suspension-busting bumps on a long, fast off-road scramble and spit them out in a twirling rooster tail of dust. So comfortable and supportive were the seats, so controlled and compliant was the ride, we weren't even breathing hard when we reluctantly parked. Neither was the Cherokee.

Volkswagen of Germany created the minivan in 1949, at least a decade before America thought up the bigger ones. Now in its third generation, VW's Vanagon remains a logical alternative to the larger, heavier, thirstier home-built variety, which peaked in popularity in 1978—just before the second fuel crisis. The engine hanging out behind its rear axles is still a modest four with the cylinders arranged (VW-Beetle style) in a flat H pattern; but it's now water-cooled, electronically fuel-injected, more powerful, more economical and more sophisticated than ever. So is the baby bus itself, with its four-wheel independent suspension, rack-and-pinion steering and power front-disc brakes. And there's a nifty factory camper version, complete with pop-up top, two full-size

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"Chrysler has invented the American minivan and has done an absolutely bang-up job of it."

beds, running water, a propane stove, a three-way fridge and a truly amazing amount of storage space. Not long ago, we logged 3000 miles in one of these (complete with three dogs, a word-processing system and two weeks' supply of clothes and junk food), and a more pleasant 20-plus-mpg cross-country-camper capsule would be hard to find. The basic Vanagon starts at \$11,910; the camper, at \$16,115.

Unfortunately for VW, though, Chrysler has invented the American minivan—Dodge Caravan and Plymouth Voyager—and has done an absolutely bang-up job of it. Derived from the company's popular K-cars and sharing their excellent front-wheel-drive power trains, these little boxes look like small conventional vans but drive like tall cars, and they've enjoyed a virtual sold-out status ever since their early-1984 introduction. The basic five-seat Caravan/Voyager (about \$9000) comes with power steering, five-speed manual and a 101-hp engine; almost any option available on a mid-size car (and some that aren't, such as convert-a-bed rear seating that's available for 1985 models) can be added. Our most recent experience with one—a Dodge Caravan with optional performance suspension, wheels and tires—was a fast over-the-mountain jaunt to Malibu for dinner. Our passengers sat in comfort, with only their tightened seat belts reminding them that they were in a moving vehicle, while the driver played Mario Andretti through the

sweeping turns. No one could believe a van could be such fun.

Mitsubishi of Japan also makes an urban estate car, which (under a longtime marketing agreement with Chrysler) is sold by Dodge and Plymouth dealers as the Colt Vista. The smallest, lightest and least expensive (about \$8300 base) of our group, the Vista is really a tall wagon with four conventional side doors and a rear lift gate. It carries up to seven and, like a van's, its second and third seats fold into various seating, sleeping and cargo combinations. A smooth and very peppy 2.0-liter engine drives its front wheels through a choice of five-speed manual or three-speed automatic transaxles, and its features include two glove boxes and no fewer than eight additional storage pockets and bins. More important to anyone who enjoys a brisk mountain drive is the way this cute little hauler handles. We recently returned from a race-track test of Chrysler's 1985 Mitsubishi-built vehicles at Laguna Seca Raceway near Monterey, and—amazingly—the Vista quickly proved itself one of the most delightfully agile vehicles there. This has got to be the world's first seven-passenger sports car!

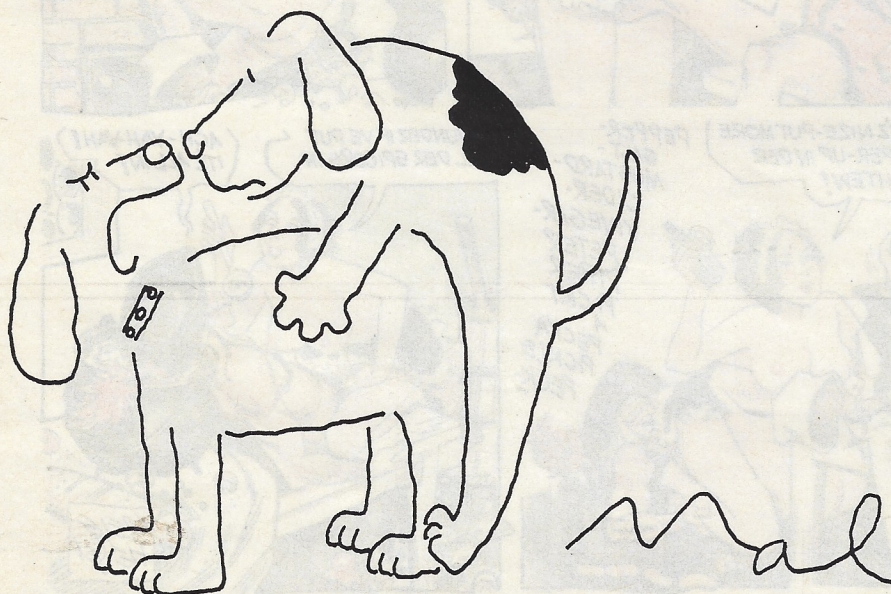
Once market-savvy Toyota got wind that Chrysler was serious about minivans, it decided to jump on the proverbial band wagon with an Americanized version of its home-market Town Ace van. With futuristic moon-walker styling, an unusually short wheelbase and its 2.0-liter engine

mounted between the front and second seats, it was originally dubbed Van Wagon but was hastily rechristened Toyota Van to separate it from VW's Vanagon. The engine's restricted accessibility is compensated for by its 60,000-mile maintenance interval; and the big box that covers it, while impeding walk-through from front to rear, makes a handy table for second-seat occupants. Less fast-freight-and-twisty-road-oriented than the Vista, the Toyota Van is simply designed to be enjoyed, on the move or at rest, rather than seriously driven. With available twin sun roofs, separate front and rear air conditioners, five-speaker electronic stereo with equalizer and an optional drink cooler/ice maker between the front seats, it's a veritable party on wheels. Soft drinks only for the driver, of course. Base price: \$9500.

G.M. and Ford, too, once convinced that this new minivan market was worth fighting for, mobilized their considerable forces to come up with competing vehicles of their own. G.M. took the shortest route and designed a smaller van much like its larger ones, with front-engine, rear-drive mechanicals and a smooth but square-backed look. Rear drive is less space efficient than front-wheel drive but far better for hauling and towing heavy loads, so it's no surprise that the 1985 Chevrolet Astro (like its G.M.C. Safari counterpart) hauls and tows exceedingly well for its size. Make no mistake, the Astro/Safari is larger than the Chrysler minis and still more van than car; but with Corvette-type lightweight-fiberglass rear springs and a choice of four-cylinder or V6 engine, it's a very nice-driving van, indeed. It also comfortably carries up to eight passengers with second and third seats in place. Base price: about \$9000.

Ford took a slightly longer road to market and designed a swoopy, wind-tunnel-preened shape for its soon-to-come (probably in April 1985) Aerostar van, apparently aiming it toward the growing urban-estate-car market rather than toward commercial buyers. With an expected starting price of around \$9000—competitive with the Chrysler and G.M. minis—Aerostar, too, will have rear-wheel drive and will tow and/or haul hefty pay loads for its size. With buckets up front and available seating for five in back, it will transport seven full-size adults in luxury-car comfort or, at the other extreme, two passengers and up to 142 cubic feet of cargo. Four-cylinder and V6 gas engines are available, and the carlike interior will radiate high tech with electronic instrumentation, finger-tip controls, an available trip computer in the overhead console and a six-directional optional stereo with graphic equalizer.

Urban estate cars may be fine for country and suburb dwellers but they're also ideal in the city. No other vehicle—no car, truck or conventional van—can match their happy combination of convenience and class, pleasantness and versatility. Welcome to the automotive space age.



"Out, damned Spot!"