

# PLAYBOY

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black lace bra, holding a small glass bottle and a small glass object.

ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN

OCTOBER 1983 • \$3.00

## "THE BIG O"

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THE PRECINCT

HIGH SCHOOL GRAD  
LORETTA MARTIN  
GETS HER  
YEARBOOK WISH  
TO POSE NUDE  
IN PLAYBOY

THE BEST BETS IN  
COLLEGE FOOTBALL



# POCKET

*comin' at ya! pint-sized*



## *modern living* **By GARY WITZENBURG**

OK, the thrill is back. The decade of dullness has come and gone. Cars are exciting and driving is fun again. Showrooms across the country are overflowing with high-output Camaros, Firebirds and Mustangs, twin-cam Supras, turbo T-birds and Z-cars, STEs, 944s, Quattros, Corvettes. . . . The bad news is that you can't touch one of those for less than ten grand, and many go for \$15,000 or more. Some for *much* more. Cheer up, leadfoot. There's a new breed of machine in the land: the pocket rocket—your basic economy sedan or coupe with a massive horsepower and

handling transfusion. It's inexpensive to buy, economical to run and more fun than a swimming pool full of Playmates. (Well, almost.) General Motors' Chevrolet division gets credit for designing the American-market pocket rocket by dropping a high-output V6 engine into its Citation X-car three years ago and calling it an X-11. Soon, the Pontiac, Oldsmobile and Buick divisions followed suit with their own H.O. V6-powered Phoenix, Omega and Skylark X-cars. But the class was redefined for 1983 when Volkswagen of America let loose its four-cylinder Rabbit GTI, a domestic version of the parent (continued on page 200)



# ROCKETS

*cars with plenty of poke*



Slip into the pockets of one of these rockets and you'll be knee-deep in thunder, storming up and down the fast lane. Nissan's new Pulsar NX (far left) keeps pulses rapid with turbocharged tumult that kicks in at 3000 rpm and leans toward the infinite from there. Beat any tortoise by more than a hare in Volkswagen's special Rabbit GTI (middle left), which flashes features sure to turn any slow evening into a speed-seeking night of the Lepus. Pontiac's 2000 Sunbird SE (center) is a super J-car that will soon be sitting in a showroom—but not for long. Dodge's Shelby Charger (middle right), Lee Iacocca's new baby, may not

be as fast as it feels, but hardly anything is. Its other parent is Carroll Shelby, who designed the famous Shelby Cobras and Mustangs. This Charger takes turns better than its predecessors, looks about as striking as anything on the road and goes from 0 to 60 almost before you can say 0 to 60. (All of these cars will do that, in fact, unless you're an auctioneer.) Last is Ford's EXP Turbo, a high-performance cousin of the Escort that's just about the quickest American auto you can buy for less than ten grand. Ford's engineers may have erred in making the EXP Turbo look so good. The speed they put in it just blurs the effect. Vrooom!

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRUCE AYRES



## POCKET ROCKETS (continued from page 117)

*"The essence of the pocket rocket is a frugal four-cylinder engine and front-wheel drive."*

company's very popular European Golf GTI budget Q-ship. Imagine the expression on the face of the typical smug Mercedes driver doing 100-plus on the autobahn when one of these wolves in Robert Hall Rabbit's clothing fills his mirrors and flashes past. The GTI's look is understated. You recognize it by the monochromatic exterior (black, white, red or silver), the oversized Pirelli P6 radials and the little red identification badges. Viewed from the deeply contoured driver's seat, only the black-out dash, the console-mounted gauges (water temperature, oil

temperature and clock) and the chunky steering wheel give clues to the rapid Rabbit's personality transplant. But you have to light the fuse to set off the dynamite.

Ninety horsepower has never felt so strong outside an open-wheeled racer. The transaxle's ratios are so beautifully matched to the engine's torque and power curves, you'd swear the GTI had a V8 under its hood. It does the standard 0 to 60 in a few ticks of the watch less than ten seconds, but it feels more like seven. Toss it into a curve and hang on as the big Pirellis stick to the road like Velcro and you'll

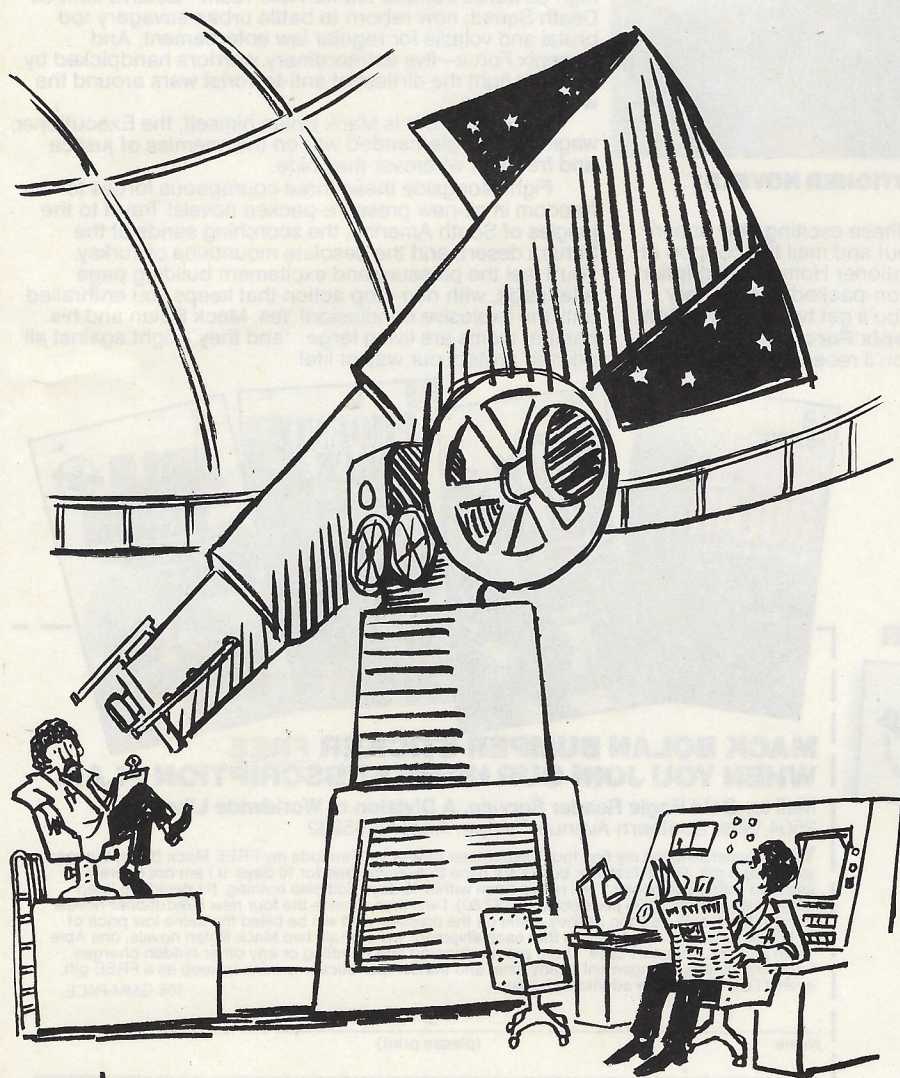
see why the seats are so supportive. Without them, you'd be bounced around by the g forces like a suitcase in the grip of that TV-ad gorilla.

Check the fuel economy after a day of thrashing and you'll find it in the high 20s or better. The GTI's EPA ratings are 26 mpg city and 36 highway, and its starting price—including such standard features as dual remote-control outside mirrors and a rear-window wiper—is only \$7990.

Therein lies the essence of the modern pocket rocket: frugal four-cylinder engine and front-wheel drive. It's fast but fuel efficient, visually distinctive, affordable, fun to drive and as sinewy and agile as a decathlon athlete. Pretenders with sixes or V8s, gas-guzzling heavyweights and those with five-figure price tags need not apply.

Several months after the GTI's late-1982 introduction, the new pocket-rocket class swelled to two with the addition of Dodge's Shelby Charger. You remember the name Carroll Shelby. As a driver, Shelby started racing in 1952 at the age of 29; just eight years, three national championships, one LeMans 24-hour victory and dozens of other triumphs later, he retired. From driving, that is. As a car builder, he created the legendary Shelby Cobras, then followed with the famous Shelby Mustangs. Now that the car business is getting to be fun again, wouldn't you know it? Shel is back? Chrysler chairman Lee Iacocca, who headed the Ford division in the crazy Cobra and Mustang days two decades ago, has wooed the talented Texan into a high-performance partnership—and the Shelby Charger is the first showroom product of their new collaboration. A souped-up version of Dodge's Charger 2.2 hatchback coupe (itself a sporty derivative of the Rabbitlike Omni and Horizon four-doors), this latest Shelby namesake, like the GTI, *feels* much faster than it is. While the reality of acceleration is enhanced by a higher numerical final-drive ratio (3.87:1 *vs.* the standard Charger's 3.57:1), the *perception* is helped by a slick-shifting, close-ratio five-speed and a wonderfully raucous exhaust note.

Compared with Chrysler's standard 96-hp 2.2-liter four, the Shelby's 110-hp version gets its extra muscle from a higher (9.6:1) compression ratio; revised camshaft, intake manifold and emissions system; a special carburetor; and a specific high-output engine computer. Aside from being scrunched down nearly an inch closer to the ground on stiffened springs, it gets its remarkable cornering prowess largely from low-profile 195/50 x 15 Goodyear Eagle GT tires on special alloy wheels. The Shelby's upgraded braking results from large, vented front-brake rotors and its visual punch from an aggressive front air dam, a rear-hatch spoiler, rocker-panel skirts and a striking two-tone paint scheme in your choice of blue on silver or silver on blue. This racerlike theme is continued in the cockpit with improved (though not up



BRIAN  
SAVAGE

*"You know, when you finally comprehend the projected national deficit, space doesn't seem quite that awesome anymore."*



**"Even at  
114 proof,  
it's so  
smooth, it's  
unbelievable.  
And  
that's the  
truth."**

*Melvin Belli*  
Melvin Belli  
Celebrated Trial Lawyer



**Grand-Dad 114. Smooth.**

Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey, 114 Proof.  
Old Grand-Dad Distillers Co., Frankfort, KY  
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to GTI standards) reclining buckets in Shelby blue and white, a wider, V-shaped gas pedal for toe-heel downshifting and a new-for-'84 instrument panel with a tachometer and a full set of gauges.

The 1983 version did 0 to 60 in nine and a half seconds hardly trying, and new close-ratio gearing for '84 makes it a couple of tenths quicker still. In addition to being slightly faster, the Shelby Dodge can outcorner VW's GTI on smooth surfaces; but the lithe little Rabbit's more sophisticated suspension is better on rougher roads and in fast transitional maneuvers. The Charger's fairly flat-cushioned seats don't contribute much lateral support, and its too high steering wheel takes getting used to, but its lusty performance, agile handling, road-racer looks, fuel efficiency (28 EPA mpg city, 44 highway) and reasonable \$8290 base price make such minor flaws easy to forget.

Third to enter the pocket-rocket race this past June was Nissan's turbocharged Pulsar NX. This radically wedge-shaped little 2+2 with its controversial squared-off roof was already pretty sprightly in nonturbo form, but the addition of a turbocharger adds a whole new dimension of performance. Combined with fuel injection and Nissan's electronic engine control, it bumps the 1.5-liter's power to 100 hp and its torque to 152 pounds per foot from the standard version's 69 and 92.

The Pulsar Turbo is less of a stormer off the line than the GTI or the Shelby Charger because its turbocharger doesn't really take effect until about 3000 rpm. But kick it down a gear and floor it on the roll and—hang on—it goes! With its standard five-speed, it sails to 60 from rest in 9.9 seconds; with optional automatic, in 9.7. Firmed-up shocks and springs, larger rear brakes and high-performance Toyo tires move the handling into pocket-rocket territory as well. There's also a special instrumentation package with a turbo-boost gauge and a 125-mph speedometer. It's the only Japanese pocket rocket in America at this time, the most fuel efficient at 33 EPA mpg city and 46 highway with the five-speed (30/40 with automatic) and the cheapest turbocar of any kind on the market today at just \$8349.

Two new domestic pocket rockets—Ford's Turbo EXP and Pontiac's 2000 S/E Sunbird—should be hitting your neighborhood showrooms soon. The former is a high-performance version of Ford's Escort-based EXP two-seater equipped with a new computer-controlled, port (multipoint) fuel-injected, turbocharged variation of the company's 1.6-liter hemihead Escort engine. Hard numbers aren't yet available, but the little Ford turbomotor should crank out about 116 hp with 26 EPA mpg city and 40 highway economy and should rocket the aerodynamic EXP from 0 to 60 mph in about 8.5 seconds. That will make it the fastest American-market pocket rocket yet. Special TR suspension and tires, a five-speed manual transaxle and highly supportive

sport bucket seats will come with the package; and the Turbo EXP will be easily recognized by its deep front air dam, its wrap-around rear-hatch spoiler and its bold two-tone design with turbo graphics on the sides and the rear bumper. Base price is expected to fall just under \$10,000.

The 2000 S/E is really three cars: new high-performance S/E versions of Pontiac's '84 2000 Sunbird (J-car) two-door and four-door sedans and the sleek two-door coupe. A new 150-hp 1.8-liter turbomotor will be standard in all three for '84, and these super-Js will also come with special suspension, interior appointments and exterior trim (including distinctive six-light front ends, like the Pontiac 6000 STE's) to set them apart from their more mundane stablemates. The engine itself, which is port fuel injected and electronically controlled, will also be offered as an option in base-model and luxury LE 2000 Sunbirds. It should propel the compact J-cars to 60 mph in about nine seconds and deliver 25 EPA mpg city and 35 highway economy. Unfortunately, there's no five-speed transaxle available for the front-drive Js that will take the turbo engine's power and torque, so turbo 2000s will be offered with standard four-speed manual or optional automatic only. Price of the performance-model S/E has been set at \$8393 and turbo-equipped base models should be considerably lower.

There you have the current crop of pocket rockets—a quintet of inexpensive, state-of-the-art minihotrods that corner and stop as well as they go, look good in your driveway and put a smile on your face without punching a hole in your bank account. Four of them are domestically built; only one (the Nissan Pulsar) is imported. Four are fuel injected, three are turbocharged and one (the Shelby Charger) makes the grade with an ordinary carburetor and Texas-racer ingenuity.

And there's more to come, especially from the Japanese. Japan itself is alive with twin-cam and turbocharged variations of otherwise ordinary econocars and it won't be long before several more of those start making the long boat ride here. Subaru already has introduced U.S.-market versions of its nifty four-wheel-drive station wagon and BRAT utility vehicle. Honda's new Prelude sports coupe (though not really a pocket rocket by our definition) squeaks in under the ten-second, \$10,000 limitations. And Mitsubishi is about to market a turbocharged model of its little front-wheel-drive Colt through Dodge/Chrysler dealers and probably its own dealer network as well.

Socially acceptable performance and the econo muscle-car are trends whose time has come. Count on it: The pocket-rocket phenomenon is certain to grow, and that's welcome news to everyone who appreciates enjoyable automobiles and the art of driving them well.

