

**V-8 ULTRA SEDANS FROM AROUND THE WORLD:  
LEXUS, CADILLAC, BMW, INFINITI, AUDI, MERCEDES-BENZ**

# **MOTOR TREND**

**FLAT-OUT FASTEST!**  
**SUPERCARS**  
**AMERICAN-  
STYLE**



**EXTRA!**  
**CHRYSLER'S  
NEW YORKER LHS**

JUNE 1993

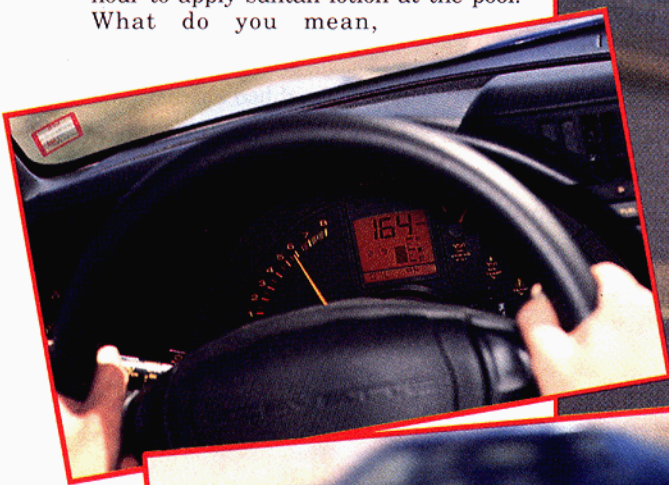
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## COVER STORY

Hey, guys, the NFL commissioner just called to invite us to watch the Super Bowl from his private skybox! Not exciting enough? Well, here's a call from the Hollywood Starlet Association, and they'll pay us \$100 an hour to apply suntan lotion at the pool. What do you mean,



# AMERICAN PERFORMANCE-CAR SHOOTOUT

AS FAST AS  
THE  
FASTEST  
AMERICAN  
CARS  
WILL GO

by Mac DeMere

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT KILLEEN

"Where's the fun in that?" Wait, this'll push your hot button: The Navy's Blue Angels want to give us rides during their full show and, afterward, go break the sound barrier and make a night carrier trap! What's that? You don't ride, you drive?

Okay, what do you say we assemble the fastest American cars—the Chevrolet Camaro Z28, the Ford Mustang Cobra, the GMC Typhoon, the Pontiac Firebird Formula, and two Corvettes, the ZR-1 and the LT1 with the super-secret autocross suspension—go run 'em over some canyon roads, down the dragstrip, around the racetrack, and top 'em out on an abandoned desert road? Only if we include the '93 Dodge Viper? Well, with an assist from Viper owner Jay Leno, your wish is our command.

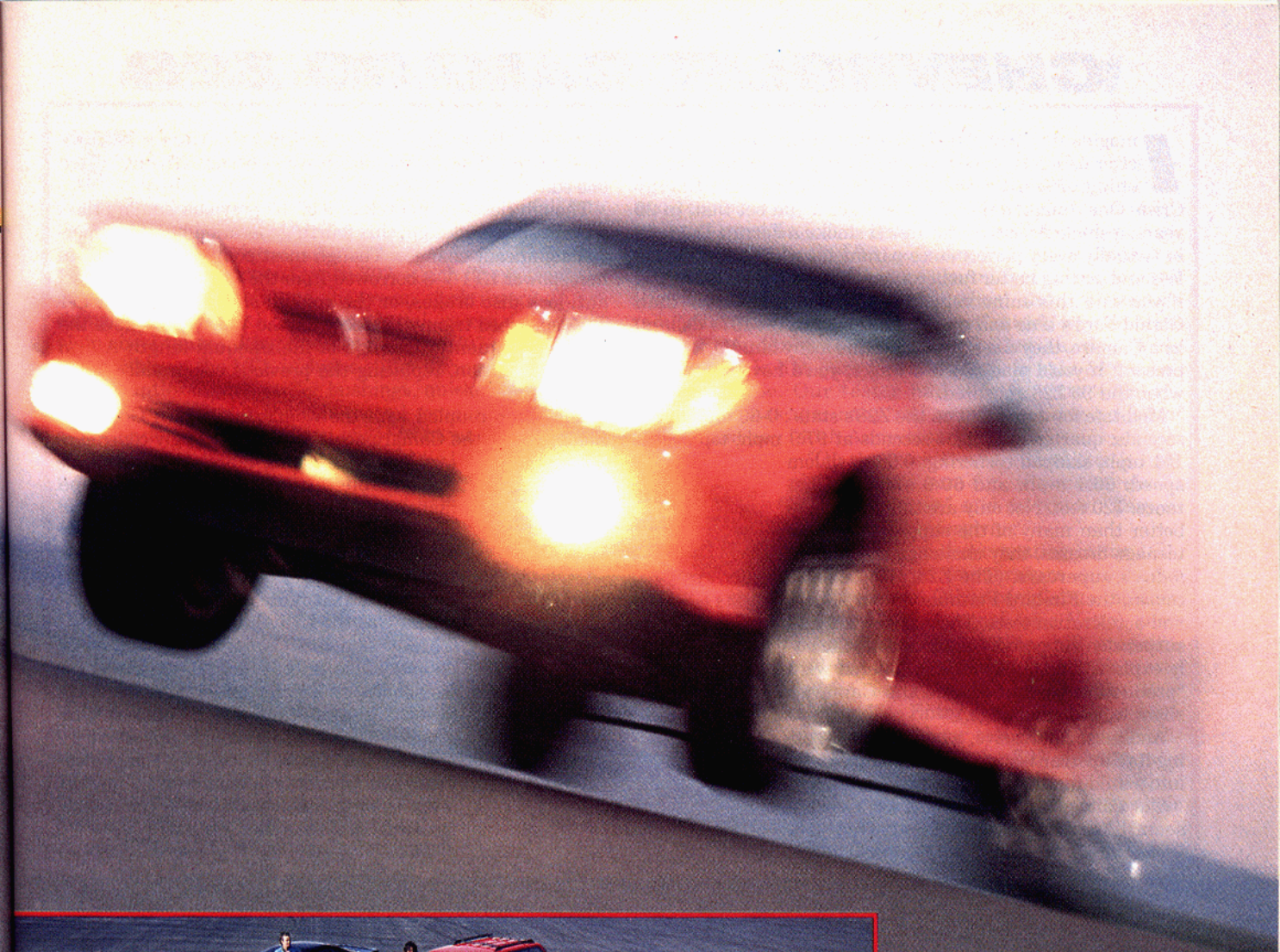
We assembled the seven fastest American cars (okay, so it's the six fastest American cars and the fastest sport/utility vehicle, Mr. Semantics). Only domestic-nameplated vehicles labeled domestic by the EPA were considered. Some really fast cars didn't make the cut: the Dodge Stealth R/T Turbo and Plymouth Laser Turbo (the former is built in Japan; the

latter, though assembled in Illinois, has too many foreign parts to be legally domestic), the Dodge Daytona R/T Turbo (with production ceased, Dodge couldn't get us one), and the Ford Probe GT (as quick and wonderful as it is, its normally aspirated V-6 just can't match the acceleration of the big V-8s and the lone turbocharged V-6).

In keeping with traditional American power, all seven have engines up front, and six put the power to the ground through the rear tires; even the all-wheel-drive Typhoon sends about two thirds of its power to the back. The field features a combined 2175 horsepower and enough torque to light a small southern city. And, also traditional with American performance cars, they're comparatively affordable: Frugally optioned, you could get the entire seven-car group for less than the price of a Lamborghini Diablo with a full tank of gas. (If you just thought, "Or you could buy a boatload of Geo Metros," we suggest you skip to the next article.)

We took this pack of rocketships to an abandoned dead-end desert road, which county officials graciously allowed us to use, and held the gas pedal down until wind resistance equaled horsepower; at that point, we were going faster





than many small airplanes fly. We launched them down the Pomona dragstrip, scrubbed their tires around the skidpad, and hustled them through the slalom cones. En route to the ultimate fun—pounding around the Streets of Willow race-track—we diced and sliced some of Southern California's curviest canyon roads. We asked our editors to rank the cars according to their own personal concept of fun, biased toward, say, backroad enjoyment, racetrack performance, or everyday entertainment, as they saw fit.

Z28 is a close second, earning it the "best delight for the *dinero*" award, too. If we were headed to an autocross, the LT1, with its Z07 handling package, would be our first choice. If money meant nothing, we'd buy a Viper for sunny Sunday cruising and Saturday backroad banzai runs, a Z28 to drive Monday/ Wednesday/Friday, a Firebird Formula for Tuesday/Thursday, a Typhoon for the monsoons, the LT1 for Pro Solos, and a ZR-1 for cruises down a little dead-end lane we know.

"Okay," you ask, "so which is the winner?" If top speed is the sole judging criterion, the ZR-1 wins. If acceleration is the only yardstick, the Viper takes top honors. If you're a stoplight-to-stoplight street racer who never runs beyond 40 mph, the Typhoon gets the gold, ditto if you like to drag race in the rain. Biggest bang for the buck goes to the Z28, with the Firebird right behind. The Viper sweeps the fun-factor voting, though the



# CHEVROLET CAMARO Z28

**I**magine it's 1974. The U.S. auto industry is on the mat after using its chin to deflect the triple punches of tightening emissions and safety regulations, and Energy Crisis One. Imagine the odds you'd get if you bet that, in 20 years, a single American car would smoke a Ferrari Daytona in virtually every performance parameter while polluting far less and getting better fuel economy than a BMW 2002. And if you said this same vehicle would also ride better than Gerald Ford's limo *and* cost about the same (in 1974 dollars) as a Camaro, they'd send you off to the loony bin. Back to the present: If you'd made such a wager, you'd have cleaned up when the '93 Z28 appeared.

Meditate for a moment on the Z28's stats: 0-60 mph in 5.8 seconds; quarter mile: 14.4 seconds at 97.9 mph; top speed: 151 mph; skidpad cornering: 0.86 g; slalom speed: 66.1 mph, and 60-0 stopping distance: 120 feet. Not only are those numbers better than many of the supercars of your teenage dreams, they challenge the stats of today's supercars. (The Z28 also beat its cousin, the Firebird Formula, in our slalom and acceleration tests. Their drivetrain and suspension supposedly are identical; the only explanations either division offered were "production variances" and the Camaro's slight weight advantage.)

And most impressive, when it's not wearing its Supercar leotard, the Z28 slips easily into a mild-mannered Clark Kent guise.

Our editors' notebooks made the Camaro seem like a Boy Scout: "Neat, fun, pre-

dictable." "Forgiving." "Trustworthy." "Delivers a lot for a good price." "Best of the bunch for everyday driving," noted one editor.

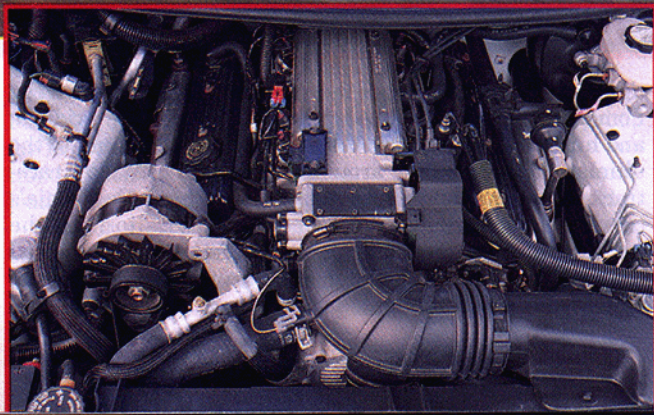
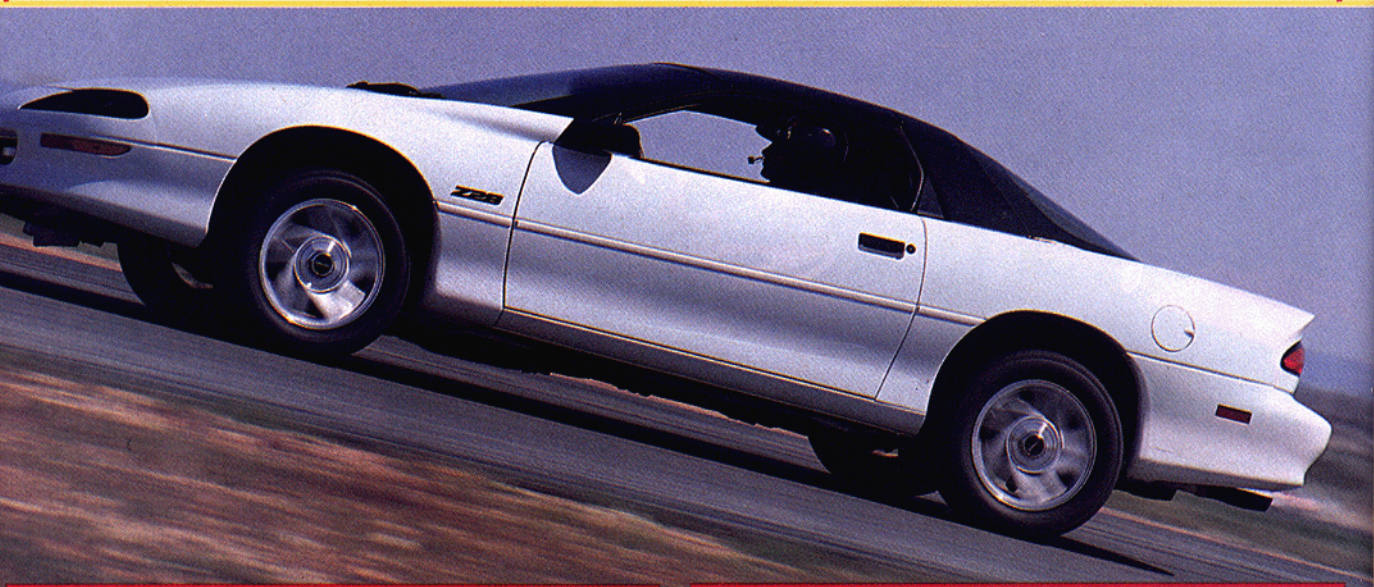
Though closer to an evolution of the previous Camaro than a clean-sheet redesign, this fourth generation boasts numerous significant changes. Though most point first to the 275-horsepower LT1 V-8 borrowed from the Corvette, four-wheel anti-lock disc brakes, or the smooth-shifting Borg-Warner T-56 six-speed tranny shared with the Viper, we believe the most consequential change is the unequal-length A-arm front suspension, replacing the previous compromise-laden strut design.

And when coupled with the wonderful 16-inch Goodyear Eagle GS-Cs, the Camaro achieves the seemingly contradictory results of being more responsive, yet more stable during edge-of-the-envelope maneuvers. Other likes included supportive cloth seats, precise steering feel, dual airbags, easily reachable controls, and the results of an aggressive campaign to eliminate unwanted noise and allow us to concentrate on the LT1's beautiful music.

Many said this Camaro's best feature is its attainable price. Since it's easy to get a well-equipped Z28 for under \$20,000, it offers the biggest bang for the buck in this group—and perhaps in any group, ever.

Noted one editor: "Except for minor performance advantages that won't show up away from the test track, the Camaro is a far better deal than the Corvette."

**Our unanimous opinion: With a base price of under \$17,000, the Z28 offers the biggest bang for the buck in this field—and maybe the biggest in any field. We love the sonorous LT1 V-8 and rear drive.**





# CHEVROLET CORVETTE LT1

**T**his is a special Corvette LT1. Unless you spend Sundays weaving through cones on autocross courses, it's unlikely you knew it existed; most dealers will tell you it doesn't. Wouldn't want it to fall into the wrong hands, would they?

Though an otherwise standard LT1, this special Vette features Regular Production Option Z07, which Chevy wants to go only to autocrossers and showroom stock racers. In exchange for increased handling potential, racers won't complain about the resulting rougher ride. The Z07 package, only available on the LT1, includes stiffer springs and shocks, thicker anti-roll bars, stiffer bushings, quicker ratio steering, a recalibration of the ride-control computer, an engine oil cooler, fortified brakes, and wider front wheels and tires. Many of these pieces were in the old Z51 package, which many non-racers made the mistake of ordering ("Gimme the best-handling Corvette ya got!") and then complained about the ride ("Sloshes my soda on I-10 going to Palm Springs!"), thus the triple-secret nature of Z07.

The Z07 significantly outperforms a regular '93 LT1: a whopping increase of 3 mph in our slalom test, 0.01 g on the skidpad, and 0.3 second in 0-60 acceleration. It beat the ZR-1 in our slalom test, moved within 0.4 second of its much more powerful sister's 0-60-mph time, and proved much easier to drive fast on our road-racing circuit. Only the Viper and ZR-1 accelerate faster, and only the Viper outperformed it on the skidpad. The LT1 Z07 set the fastest slalom

time and also stopped the second shortest.

On moderately rough pavement with the FX3 Selective Ride Control on its softest setting, the Z07 setup is almost undetectable. And those who wish to complain about rough road ride must first show their SCCA Pro Solo license.

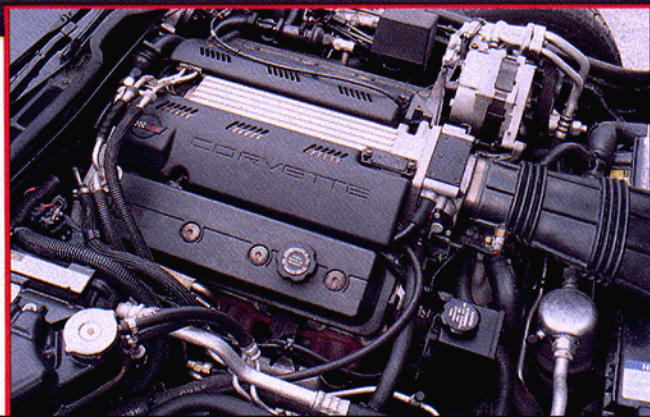
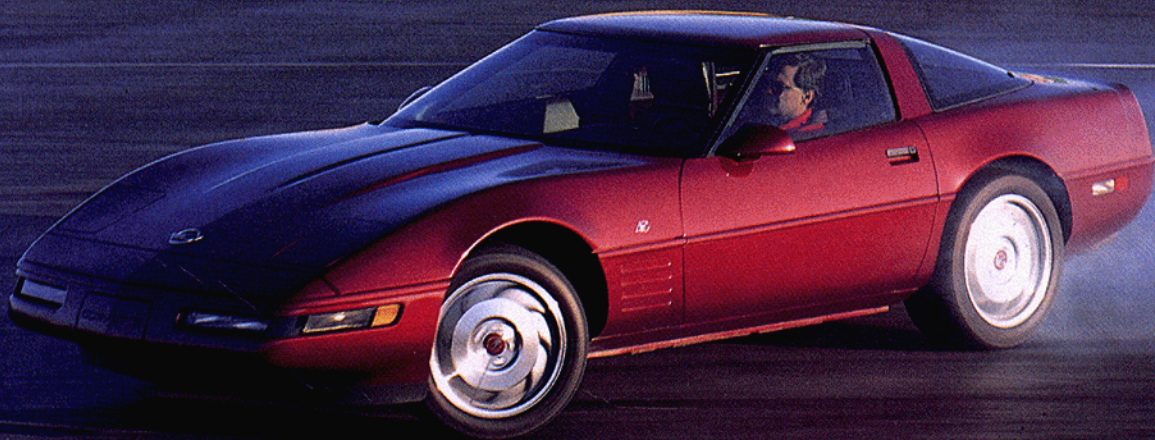
For '93, the basic LT1 gets several minor improvements that result in 10 more pound-feet of torque and slightly quieter operation. Front wheel and tire size was reduced "to balance tractive efforts," which we translate as "less tendency to spin in unskilled hands." Wide fronts on Z07s like ours mean it's okay to spin on the autocross course. Our tester had the Corvette 40th anniversary package: ruby red exterior and a bunch of badges that say "40th Anniversary."

"On the track is where the Vette is happiest, and it's sure fun, if someone else is buying the tires," said an editor. "Easy to drive and fairly forgiving."

We experienced overheating in the LT1, pegging the oil temperature gauge on a top-speed run. Other complaints included chassis flexing (normal for a Vette), seating position, the 1-4 skip-shift program, and our usual whining about Corvette gauges. Several didn't like the new Passive Keyless Entry system, which was untrustworthy on our test car. A couple editors wanted to say the Z07 steering ratio was too quick for the street, but neither could produce a Pro Solo license so their gripes were dismissed.

The faster we go, the more we like it.

**Meet Secret Agent Z07. With its stiffer, intended-for-competition suspension, this LT1 produces significantly better performance numbers. But it's definitely not for everybody.**





# CHEVROLET CORVETTE ZR-1

**T**o ensure end-to-end radio communication on the abandoned road we use for top-speed testing, we positioned an editor a bit more than a mile from the start, on the edge of the dry lakebed. As we blew past this poor soul, flinging a 15-foot tall wake of dust and rocks, the ZR-1's speedometer was showing 164 mph. Two miles later, when air resistance equaled horsepower, it was going 180 mph.

No one doubts the ZR-1's staggering performance. In addition to an astounding top speed, its 405-horsepower four-cam 32-valve engine blasts it to 60 mph in 4.9 seconds. It can cover a quarter mile in 13.4 doing 110.0 at the finish. With the lone exception of the Viper, it's the fastest American car produced in any significant number.

Still, this performance comes at a steep price: \$26,000 more than the LT1. While Top Fuel racer Kenny Bernstein would gladly pay 10 or maybe 100 times that to cut a few tenths off his 0-60 time and a half second off his quarter-mile elapsed time, it's steep fare for a street machine. Too steep, our editors think.

In our handling tests and on the road-race circuit, the ZR-1 fell behind the Z07-equipped LT1. Its skidpad number was far off previous ZR-1s and, despite a determined effort, failed to equal the LT1's slalom time. (Surprisingly, it was quicker through the slalom on the soft-suspension setting.) At the limit on the road course, it understeered more in medium and high-speed turns than any recent

Corvette. We also experienced brake fade after just a few laps. With the binders cool though, this particular ZR-1 stops like nothing else. We logged a best 60-0-mph stop of just 104 feet—nothing short of phenomenal.

For '93, the ZR-1 gets a 30-horsepower and 15 pound-feet-torque addition on the spec charts, accomplished mainly by some old-fashioned porting and polishing of the LT5's cylinder heads, along with a racer's three-angle valve job.

Corvettes evoke strong emotions, and the ZR-1 the most ardent feelings of all. Owners love them with a fervor unmatched by televangelists and cult members. Some of our staffers hold its hardcore performance in such high esteem they easily forgive deficiencies; others

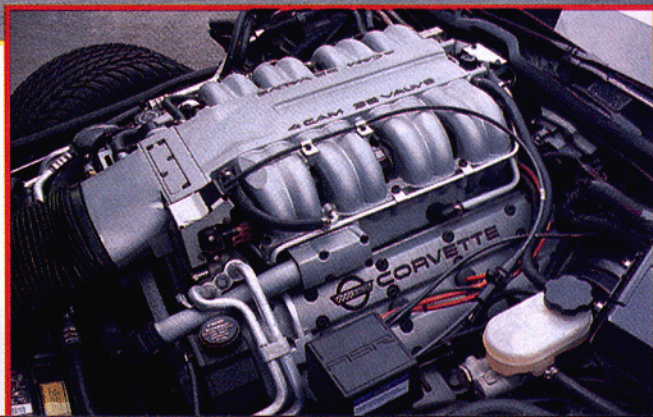
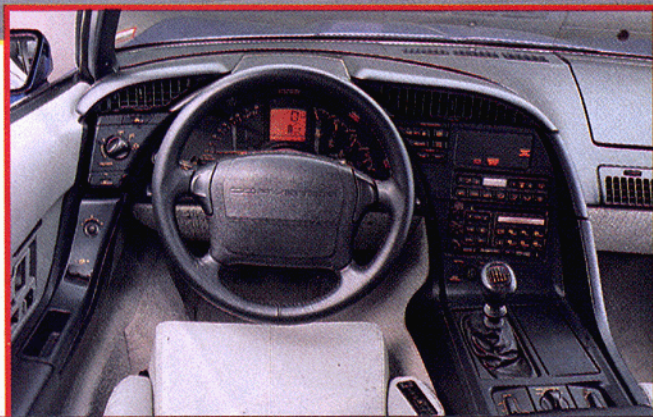
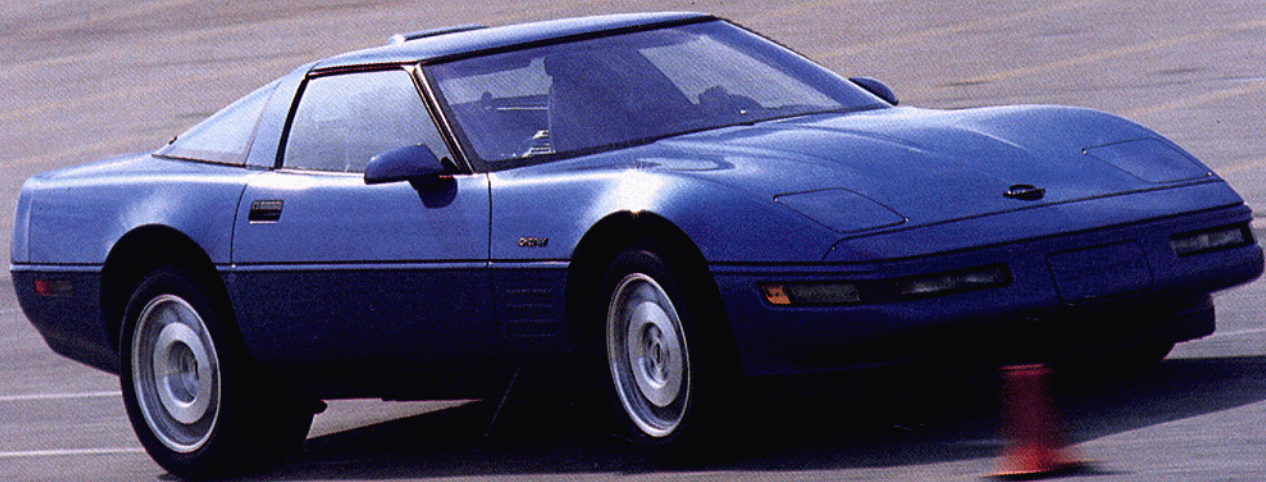
practically shout that no amount of race-track grace can save it from the fires of eternal damnation.

Take a look at the detractors' notebooks: "The ride was poor no matter where we set the suspension controls." "Due to the flexy chassis, rough pavement upsets it badly." "In daily driving, the LT5's power delivery isn't nearly as useable as that of the LT1."

Other ZR-1-specific complaints: the "valet" power key defaulted to low-power mode each time the car was started, and the full-power light is difficult to see any time the sun is above the horizon.

Yet, if top speed is how you define it—and if \$26,000 is pocket change—the ZR-1 is indeed the fastest American car.

**If top speed is  
how you define it,  
the ZR-1 is the  
fastest American  
car, recording  
a blistering  
180 mph.  
Yet, the ZR-1  
couldn't equal  
the Z07-equipped  
LT1 in handling.**





# DODGE VIPER R/T 10

**F**un with cars comes in many forms. A list of our favorites includes the adrenal acceleration rush of a Porsche 911 Turbo, the contentment of a topless Mazda Miata on a sunny country road, the way heads turn our way when we're behind the wheel of a Ferrari 512TR, the thrill of carving up a backroad in a Mazda RX-7, and the nostalgic dreams of a Shelby Cobra. The Viper combines the best of all these, and adds its own special touches. As a result, it swamped our subjective fun-factor voting, earning first-place points from three of five voting editors.

"It's a warm, sunny-day funfest that begs you to come and play," said one editor.

On performance alone, the Viper could stake a claim as the most entertaining American car. It took wins in three of six objective test categories, failing to take the top spot in top speed (where it was second behind the ZR-1), stopping distance, and slalom. For '93, the Viper is unchanged over its introductory specs, save for the option of black and, later, yellow exterior, in addition to the previous red.

Though we've tested the Viper and ZR-1 a gazillion times each, this was the first time we've been able to place two production versions on the same test track on the same day. The Viper won, not by much and not in every category, but it was a clear victory, nevertheless. Some of the Viper's handling prowess comes from its extremely stiff chassis and superwide Michelins.

The Viper is easy to drive fast on curvy backroads. At just 3600 rpm, its giant, 8.0-

liter pushrod V-10 pumps out a tall torque peak that falls little as you race toward its 6000-rpm redline. So, we've found the best method is to stuff its six-speed gearbox in third and just leave it there. You'll still have the choice of producing wheelspin exiting all except the slowest hairpins, and if you need to go faster than 6000 rpm in third (about 110 mph), go rent a racetrack.

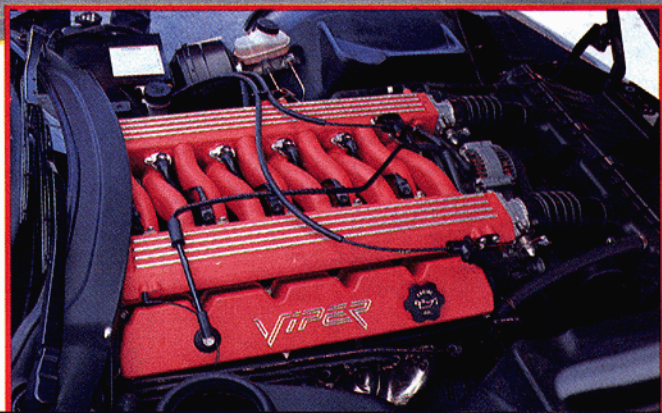
At right up to a race pace, it's predictable and catchable, with stable initial understeer easily offset with the throttle. However, on the track it's too easy to lock the wheels under braking and too hard to get them rolling again. An anti-lock braking system would help.

"A very good track car—stable and predictable with tremendous grip," said one editor.

**With stump-pulling torque available from idle to redline, you rarely need to shift from third gear on a backroad or racetrack. We'd trade one of its six gears for roll-up side windows and a Miatalike top; two if they'd throw in ABS.**

Still, the Viper remains more an entertainment device than a real automobile; need you more testament than its lack of roll-up windows? In comparison, a Miata seems as practical as a Ford Taurus. Only two of our editors have challenged the removable top; the resulting horror stories dissuading others. Even with the top off, it gets quite toasty in the Viper: The glovebox would make a nice convection oven if it didn't pop open during maximum acceleration. Yet, every time we complain about the Viper's lack of civility, we realize this makes as much sense as Cindy Crawford's husband complaining about her lack of an engineering degree.

"This is a play toy, not a real car," said one editor. "And I like it for that reason."





# FORD MUSTANG COBRA

**T**he radically revised Camaro Z28 made an impressive beachhead this January, yet Ford can't counterattack until late this fall when the next-generation Mustang reaches the combat zone. In the meantime, Ford's Special Vehicle Team was charged with executing a rear-guard action, and, while they were at it, hanging onto a valuable trademark. The result is the Mustang Cobra, the fastest Mustang in more than 20 years. With vast superiority in cornering power and handling, the Mustang Cobra would easily show its taillights to its musclebound ancestors on a mountain road or road-race circuit.

In our instrumented testing, the Mustang Cobra was only slightly slower than the Z28 (0.2 second in both 0-60 mph and quarter mile times). If a skilled Mustang Cobra driver were to challenge an unpracticed Z28 owner at the local dragstrip's grudge-race night, the Mustang would win at least as often as it lost.

Ford SVT's makeover features big-valve GT40 cylinder heads, SVO intake manifold, and a revised cam. However, the increase in high-end power comes at the expense of low-end torque and, thus, driveability. Handling improvements come from new Goodyear Eagle 245/45s on 17-inch wheels, a smaller front anti-roll bar, and softer springs and shocks. The suspension tuning unquestionably improves at-the-limit performance, but increased body movement may unnerve some. Still, several editors enjoyed the

softer ride, especially after a tour of duty in the Typhoon.

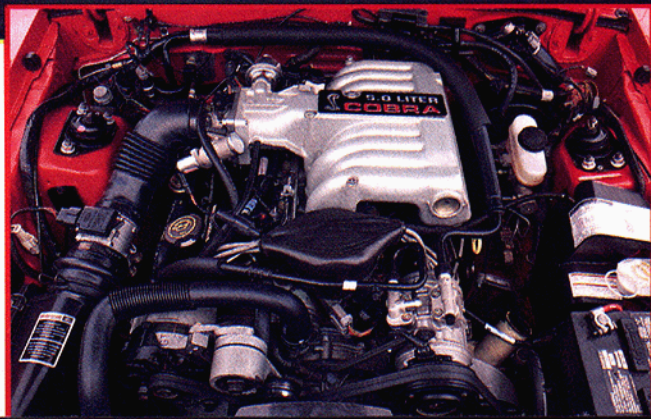
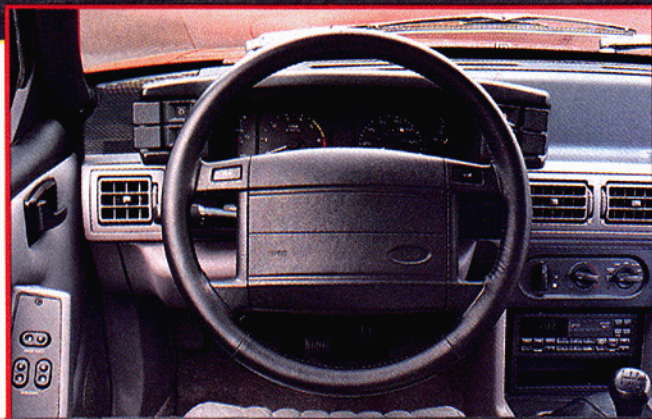
However, unless your biggest concern in life is choosing between deep and shallow staging, the bad news is the Mustang Cobra's new muscle still comes in the old Mustang's body, which debuted in '79 as a spinoff of the Ford Fairmont (which, it's safe to say, many of our readers don't remember).

Our Mustang didn't equal the Crown Victoria, much less the Camaro, in stopping distance. Numb steering and lack of support from the seats exacerbates the difficult-to-tame handling as drivers' waste physical energy hanging on and mental energy trying to guess what the front tires are doing.

"SVT has improved both stability and response, which means it no longer alternates between pronounced understeer and pronounced oversteer," remarked one. "It's a quick thrill and a couple of giggles, but you don't want to run at the limit very long," said another.

Away from the strip and track, the Mustang feels and looks old (especially the interior). Many controls are awkwardly placed and lack the positive feel we enjoy in cars such as the Probe GT and Camaro. Also, a base Mustang Cobra costs about the same as a loaded Z28 despite the former's lack of anti-lock brakes, passenger-side airbag, tilt steering wheel, and more. Still, the Mustang Cobra offers a lot of bang for the buck...just not as much as the Z28.

**The good news:  
This is the fastest-  
accelerating  
Mustang in more  
than 20 years and  
likely the fastest  
ever around a  
road course.  
The bad news:  
This generation  
Mustang has been  
around since '79;  
the next will debut  
in the fall.**





# GMC TYPHOON

**T**his may be the perfect SUAVE (Stealth Urban Assault Vehicle). Thanks to its sport/utility vehicle disguise, few understand the Typhoon can leap intersections in a single bound.

Besides encouraging others to give the Typhoon an unneeded headstart in impromptu sprints between stoplights, this facade also allows Typhoon drivers to quickly affix a believable halo when such questionable activities inevitably attract unwanted attention. Not only will it dust that Carrera 2 in a sprint to 45 mph, the Porsche driver will get the "display-of-speed" ticket.

Nothing in this test accelerates from rest to 30 mph quicker than the Typhoon. In fact, the only four-wheeled production vehicle with a chance of beating the Typhoon off the line may be the new Lamborghini Diablo VT, which also features all-wheel drive. And when you're not racing for pink slips, it's the only one in this test that will hold four full-size adults *and* a golden retriever.

Thanks to its combination of viscous-coupling all-wheel drive, sticky Firestone Firehawks, turbocharged V-6 (with a massive 360 pound-feet of torque), and automatic transmission, little skill is required to achieve dragsterlike acceleration. The drill: Pin the brake pedal to the floor with your left foot, push the gas pedal to the floor with your right, and, when the boost needle hits the top of its travel, jump off the brake. But don't forget an im-

portant step: Place your head firmly against the headrest to avoid whiplash. In a previous test, we recorded a faster quarter mile time (13.9 at 100.7) in a driving rainstorm than we did in the dry; the cold rain allowing the intercooled turbo to make more than normal power.

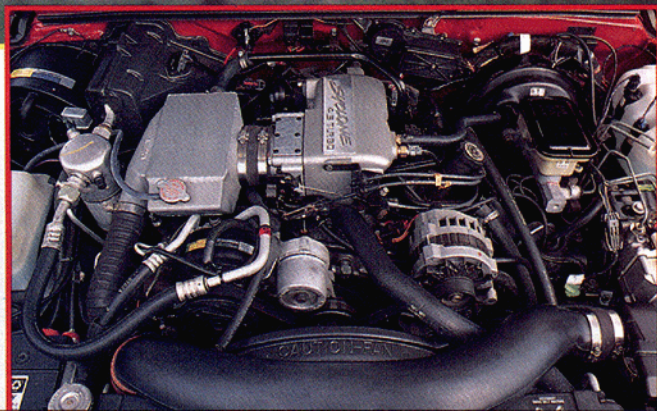
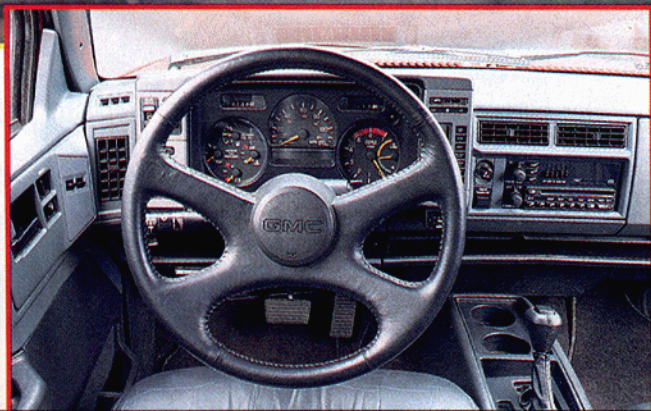
On the gentle sweepers of smooth backroads the Typhoon's all-wheel drive absolves all but the most grievous driving errors, including that of not knowing about the water on the far side the blind corner. However, the enjoyment factor falls if the road contains many tight turns or any bumps. And bumpy downhill hairpins are a pain, especially if you turn while applying an appreciable amount of brake. Around our hairpin-packed

road-racing circuit, its resolute understeer and slow steering made it easily the least enjoyable hot-lapper. Also, its electronic speed limiter gave the Typhoon the slowest top speed by a wide margin. And when not in attack mode, several editors complained about its harsh, choppy ride, unsupportive seats and aging interior.

"I love the all-weather stoplight lunge, but not much else," noted one editor. "It's a very sporty truck, but a very trucky sports car." "Does the term 'spinal compression' mean anything to you?" said another.

Yet, for those who measure performance driving in city blocks, the Typhoon is hard to beat.

**The Typhoon's  
all-wheel drive  
and sticky  
Firestones  
convert 360  
pound-feet of  
torque directly  
into forward  
motion. Little skill  
is required to  
make it leap to 20  
mph in less than  
1 second, even in  
the rain.**





# PONTIAC FIREBIRD Formula V-8

**N**ot many years ago, the ultimate in performance demanded sacrifice. To get muscle-car acceleration, you had to endure a rough idle, frightening handling, brakes only Fred Flintstone could love, and weight-machine-stiff steering, gearshift and clutch. With sports cars, your tradeoff included forsaking thrilling acceleration and reliability, while suffering an abusive ride in return for what passed for excellent handling ("It has to be good if it hurts this much, right?").

Today, the Firebird Formula will simultaneously beat at their own games both muscle-cars and sports cars of yore, while offering first-class ride, excellent amenities, outstanding safety features, good mileage, and environmental friendliness. Important for those of us whose lottery numbers fail to come up, its base price of less than \$18,000 means 6-second 0-60-mph performance, 152-mph top speed, and estimable handling is attainable, if not easily affordable.

Like the Camaro, the Firebird is radically revised for '93. Though many of the basic dimensions remain the same, most every component is completely new or extensively updated. The list begins with the 275-horsepower LT1 V-8, continues through the Borg-Warner six-speed and a stiffer chassis, and is highlighted by the unequal-length upper and lower front control arms that replace aging and inadequate struts. All Firebirds boast anti-lock brakes, dual airbags, and a much more user-friendly in-

terior. Because it dispenses with things that don't increase performance or driving enjoyment, the Firebird Formula V-8 also is much cheaper than its Trans Am brother. We like the results a lot.

"Very easy to drive quickly." "Much more useable torque than the Mustang or ZR-1." "It costs \$2000 less than a Mustang, yet kicks its butt in almost every category, and it's \$45,000 less than the ZR-1, yet is tighter, smoother, and only fractionally slower." "Except for the Camaro, this is the best around the racetrack." "Easy to drive fast and very forgiving."

"Ten years ago, this car would've been unthinkable, now we wonder if it's as good as something else."

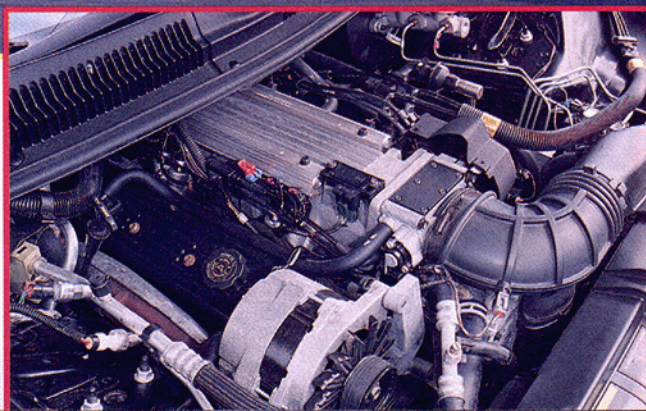
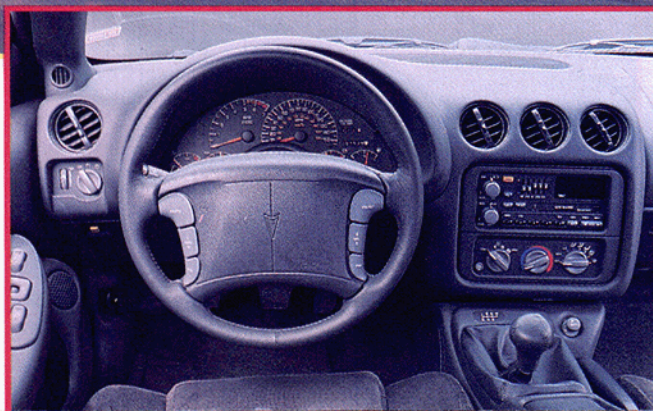
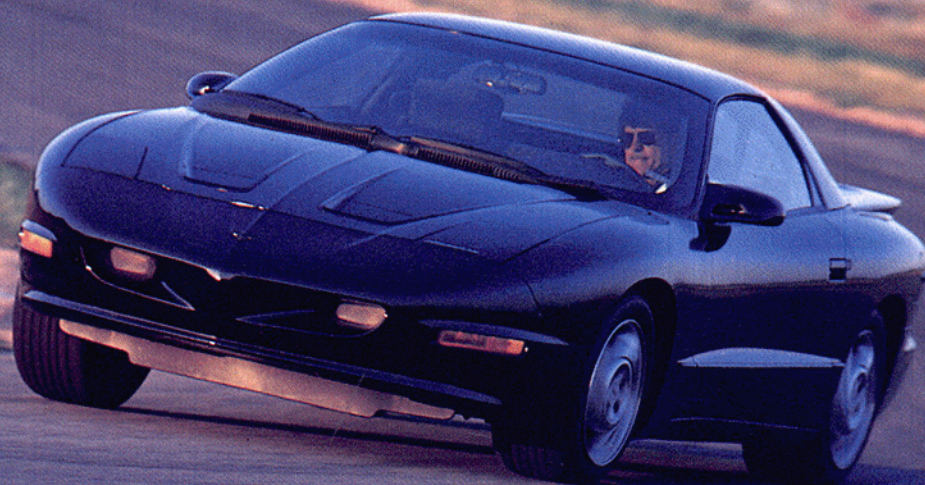
Still, the Firebird Formula fell a bit short of its Z28 sister in three performance tests: 0.3 second in both 0-60 mph and

quarter-mile acceleration and a comparatively massive 2.3 mph in our slalom test. Also, our organic ride data-acquisition systems (aka seat of the pants) said the Firebird Formula felt softer. But we enjoyed the Firebird's highway ride more than the Camaro's: Many said it was the most comfortable cruiser, with the penalty of a lower confidence level on the road course.

The interior got mixed reviews, and the six-speed kept some guessing ("is that fourth or sixth, is this fifth or third?"). Other dislikes include the standard GM-issue turn signal/cruise control stalk.

As one editor put it: "Why buy a Vette? This has 99 percent of the performance at half the price—plus it's got a backseat."

**"The Firebird Formula has 99 percent of the Corvette's performance at half the price—plus it's got a backseat."**  
**"I like big V-8 power and rear drive at an affordable price."**





**We use a computerized fifth wheel to measure acceleration and braking. Acceleration results are adjusted to compensate for altitude, humidity, and temperature. Drag racers may beat our times on cool evenings, or if they stage shallow and, thus, get a running start into the timing light. Tire smoke is to impress photographers and to present an exciting image of test drivers; little or no wheelspin is employed in actual timed runs.**



## TECH DATA

GENERAL							
	Chevrolet Camaro Z28	Chevrolet Corvette LT1	Chevrolet Corvette ZR-1	Dodge Viper R/T 10	Ford Mustang Cobra	GMC Typhoon	Pontiac Firebird Formula
Manufacturer	Chevrolet Motor div., GM Corp., Warren, Mich.	Chevrolet Motor div., GM Corp., Warren, Mich.	Chevrolet Motor div., GM Corp., Warren, Mich.	Dodge div., Chrysler Corp., Detroit, Mich.	Ford Motor Co., Dearborn, Mich.	GMC Truck div., GM Corp., Pontiac, Mich.	Pontiac Motor div., GM Corp., Pontiac, Mich.
Location of final assembly plant	Ste. Therese, Quebec, Canada	Bowling Green, Kentucky	Bowling Green, Kentucky	Detroit, Michigan	Dearborn, Michigan	Pontiac, Michigan	Ste. Therese, Quebec, Canada
EPA size class	Subcompact	Two-seater	Two-seater	Two-seater	Subcompact	Compact spt/ute.	Subcompact
Body style	2-dr, 4-pass.	2-dr, 2-pass.	2-dr, 2-pass.	2-dr, 2-pass.	2-dr, 4-pass.	2-dr, 4-pass.	2-dr, 4-pass.
Drivetrain layout	FE,RD	FE,RD	FE,RD	FE,RD	FE,RD	FE,AWD	FE,RD
Engine configuration	V-8, OHV, 2 valves/cyl.	V-8, OHV, 2 valves/cyl.	V-8, DOHC, 4 valves/cyl.	V-10, OHV, 2 valves/cyl.	V-8, OHV, 2 valves/cyl.	90° V-6, OHV, 2 valves/cyl./turbo	V-8, OHV, 2 valves/cyl.
Engine displacement, ci/cc	350/5733	350/5733	349/5727	488/7990	302/4942	262/4300	350/5733
Horsepower, hp @ rpm, SAE net	275 @ 5000	300 @ 5000	405 @ 5800	400 @ 4600	235 @ 5000	285 @ 4400	275 @ 5000
Torque, lb-ft @ rpm, SAE net	325 @ 2400	340 @ 3600	385 @ 5200	462 @ 3600	285 @ 4000	360 @ 3600	325 @ 2400
Transmission	6-speed man.	6-speed man.	6-speed man.	6-speed man.	5-speed man.	4-speed auto.	6-speed man.
Airbag	Dual	Driver side	Driver side	None	Driver side	None	Dual
Base price	\$16,779	\$34,595	\$34,595	\$50,000	\$18,505	\$29,320	\$17,995
Price as tested	\$20,555	\$42,069	\$67,878	\$50,700	\$20,811	\$30,227	\$20,375
DIMENSIONS							
Wheelbase, in./mm	101.1/2566	96.2/2444	96.2/2444	96.2/2444	100.5/2553	100.5/2553	101.1/2566
Track, f/r, in./mm	60.7/60.6/1542/1540	57.7/59.0/1466/1499	57.7/60.6/1466/1539	59.6/60.6/1514/1539	56.6/57.0/1438/1448	57.7/58.0/1466/1473	60.7/60.6/1542/1540
Length, in./mm	193.2/4908	178.5/4535	178.5/4535	175.1/4448	179.5/4562	170.3/4326	195.6/4968
Width, in./mm	74.1/1883	70.7/1796	73.1/1856	75.7/1923	68.3/1735	68.2/1732	74.5/1893
Height, in./mm	51.3/1303	46.3/1177	46.3/1177	43.9/1115	52.1/1322	60.0/1524	52.0/1321
Ground clearance, in./mm	4.4/112	4.2/107	4.2/107	5.0/127	4.5/115	7.1/180	4.4/112
Mfr's base curb weight, lb	3373	3333	3503	3476	3255	3800	3381
Weight distribution, f/r, %	56/44	51/49	52/48	50/50	58/42	57/43	57/43
Cargo capacity, cu ft	12.9	12.6	12.6	11.8	12.2	28.1	12.9
Fuel capacity, gal	15.5	20.0	20.0	22.0	15.4	20.0	15.5
Weight/power ratio, lb/hp	12.3	11.1	8.6	8.7	13.9	13.3	12.3
EPA fuel economy, mpg, city/hwy.	17/25	17/25	17/25	13/22	17/24	15/19	17/25
CHASSIS							
Suspension, f/r	Independent/live axle	Independent/independent	Independent/independent	Independent/independent	Independent/independent	Independent/live axle	Independent/live axle
Steering	Rack and pinion, power assist	Rack and pinion, power assist	Rack and pinion, power assist	Rack and pinion, power assist	Rack and pinion, power assist	Recirculating ball, power assist	Rack and pinion, power assist
Turning circle, ft	37.8	40.0	40.0	40.7	40.8	35.4	37.8
Brakes, f/r	Vented discs/vented discs/ABS	Vented discs/vented discs/ABS	Vented discs/vented discs/ABS	Vented discs/vented discs/ABS	Vented discs/vented discs	Vented discs/drums/ABS	Vented discs/vented discs/ABS
Wheel size, in. Material	16 x 8.0 Cast aluminum	17 x 9.5 Cast aluminum	17 x 9.5/17 x 11.0 Cast aluminum	17 x 10.0/17 x 13.0 Cast aluminum	17 x 7.5 Cast aluminum	16 x 8.0 Cast aluminum	16 x 8.0 Cast aluminum
Tire size f/r Mfr. and model	245/50ZR16 Goodyear Eagle GS-C	285/40ZR17 Goodyear Eagle GS-C	275/40ZR17/315/35ZR17 Goodyear Eagle GS-C	275/40ZR17/335/35ZR17 Michelin XGT-Z	245/45ZR17 Goodyear Eagle ZR45	245/50VR16 Firestone Firehawk SVX	245/50ZR16 Goodyear Eagle GS-C



## ACCELERATION, 0-60 mph (sec)

DODGE VIPER R/T 10	4.4
CHEVROLET CORVETTE ZR-1	4.9
CHEVROLET CORVETTE LT1	5.3
GMC TYPHOON	5.3
CHEVROLET CAMARO Z28	5.8
FORD MUSTANG COBRA	6.0
PONTIAC FIREBIRD FORMULA	6.1

## ACCELERATION, Quarter Mile (sec/mph)

DODGE VIPER R/T 10	12.8/110.0
CHEVROLET CORVETTE ZR-1	13.4/110.0
CHEVROLET CORVETTE LT1	13.9/101.0
GMC TYPHOON	14.1/95.4
CHEVROLET CAMARO Z28	14.4/97.9
FORD MUSTANG COBRA	14.6/96.5
PONTIAC FIREBIRD FORMULA	14.7/97.2

## TOP SPEED (mph)

CHEVROLET CORVETTE ZR-1	180
DODGE VIPER R/T 10	167
CHEVROLET CORVETTE LT1	162
PONTIAC FIREBIRD FORMULA	152
CHEVROLET CAMARO Z28	151
FORD MUSTANG COBRA	137
GMC TYPHOON	126



## JAY LENO TO THE RESCUE

Hey, guess what? This magazine stuff doesn't always run like clockwork. Best as we try to cover all bases, nearly every test involves some sort of blindsided surprise that results in manic scrambling and cold sweats. It's why most car-mag editors die of hideously painful brain aneurysms by the age of 45.

And you thought all we did was drive prototype Ferraris in the morning, brunch with industry leaders at a table next to Madonna, then knock off early to play racquetball. Heck, we hardly ever get to do that anymore.

Though it may seem a simple task, coordinating the details of a multi-car test should be worthy of a doctoral thesis at the Institute for Advance Planning. Despite the bulldoglike tenacity of Road Test Editor B.J. Hoffman (who has the thankless duty of administrating the logistics of each test) a stomach-churning 11th-hour complication almost always occurs.

The dull sound of antacid tablets being masticated slowly between clamping molars signaled the staff meeting wasn't going smoothly that day. A phone call told us the Dodge Viper we had hoped to procure was no longer in the Los Angeles press fleet. Nor was there one available in Detroit or any of Chrysler's other offices. A "Fastest American





Cars" test without a Viper?

Well, we can all be thankful that Jay Leno is a dedicated car guy. And a *Motor Trend* reader. That's his glistening black '93 Viper on the cover and lapping Willow Springs Raceway. The gods of good timing let our crisis coincide with Jay's vacation week away from NBC's "Tonight Show." One phone call and the hardest-working guy in showbiz was at the track and ready to drive. Big thanks also to Martin Peters at Michelin public relations for supplying the replacement 17-inch XGT-Z Viper tires.

Leno is a knowledgeable enthusiast with a collection of iron guaranteed to cause frothing about the jowls. Not one to be swayed by "trendy car of the month club," his taste is eclectic enough to include a Pebble Beach Concours-winning '30 Duesenberg, two Lamborghini Miuras, a '57 Buick Roadmaster convertible, a '15 Hispano-Suiza powered by a 1200-cubic-inch aircraft engine, and some two dozen vintage motorcycles.

The Viper is about the only vehicle Leno owns that was built since Nixon left office, and it appeals to him because it's got boatloads of torque and "doesn't have all those transmission interlock things that make you step on the brake, pull this, and yank that before you can get out of the driveway. C'mon, who needs all that stuff...I've already got a mother!"

—C. Van Tune

## SKIDPAD (lateral g)

DODGE VIPER R/T 10	0.99
CHEVROLET CORVETTE LT1	0.94
CHEVROLET CORVETTE ZR-1	0.90
FORD MUSTANG COBRA	0.87
CHEVROLET CAMARO Z28	0.86
PONTIAC FIREBIRD FORMULA	0.86
GMC TYPHOON	0.81

## SLALOM (mph)

CHEVROLET CORVETTE LT1	68.2
CHEVROLET CORVETTE ZR-1	68.0
DODGE VIPER R/T 10	67.5
CHEVROLET CAMARO Z28	66.1
GMC TYPHOON	65.6
FORD MUSTANG COBRA	64.8
PONTIAC FIREBIRD FORMULA	63.8

## STOPPING DISTANCE, 60-0 mph (ft)

CHEVROLET CORVETTE ZR-1	104
CHEVROLET CORVETTE LT1	116
DODGE VIPER R/T 10	117
CHEVROLET CAMARO Z28	120
PONTIAC FIREBIRD FORMULA	123
GMC TYPHOON	131
FORD MUSTANG COBRA	146