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# SPORT TRUCK

**MONSTER POWER**



**GMC SYCLONE**  
*0-60 MPH In 4.8 Seconds!*

£2.40 October 1990 \$2.95

## POWER WARS!

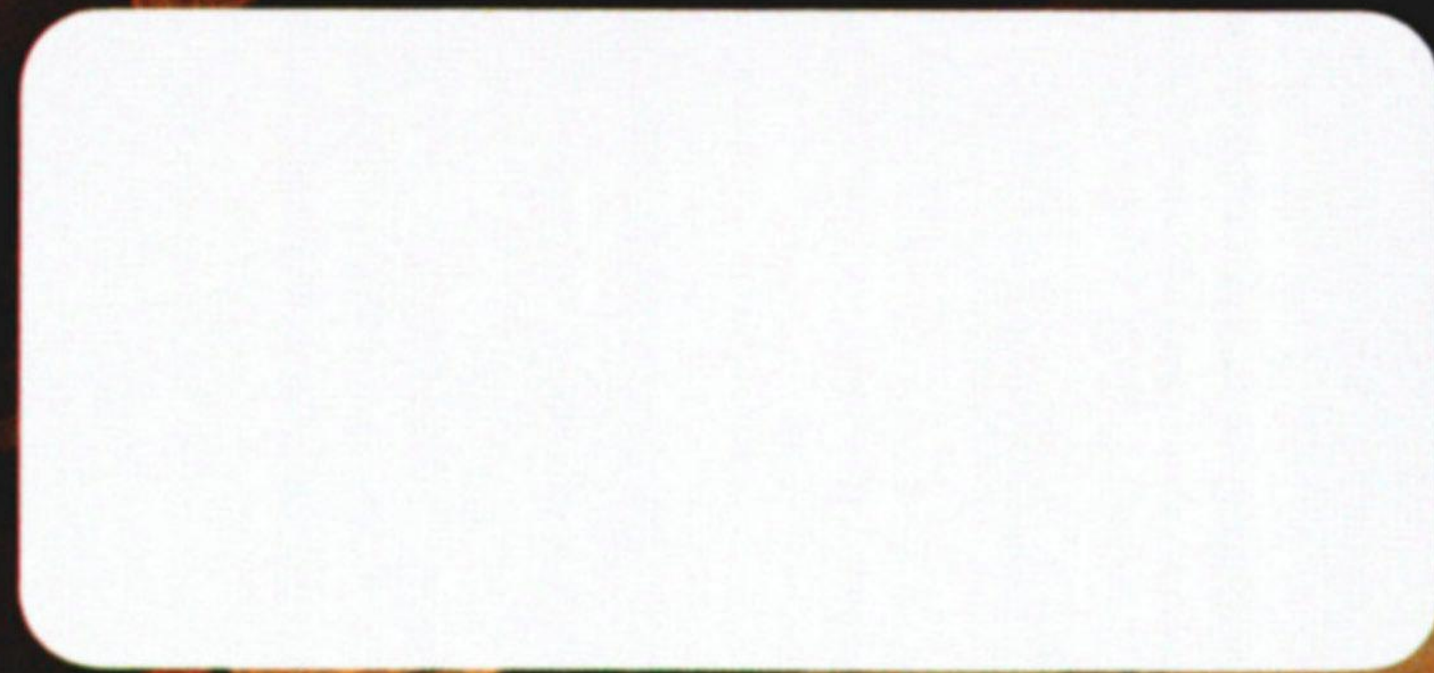
*Detroit Gets **SERIOUS***

**'91 454 SS**

**Chevy's Big-Block  
Sizzles**

**ALL NEW** Big-Block • More Horsepower •  
Electronic 4-Speed Tranny

... And Cool Sounds, Too  
Stereo Tech & Buyer's Guide







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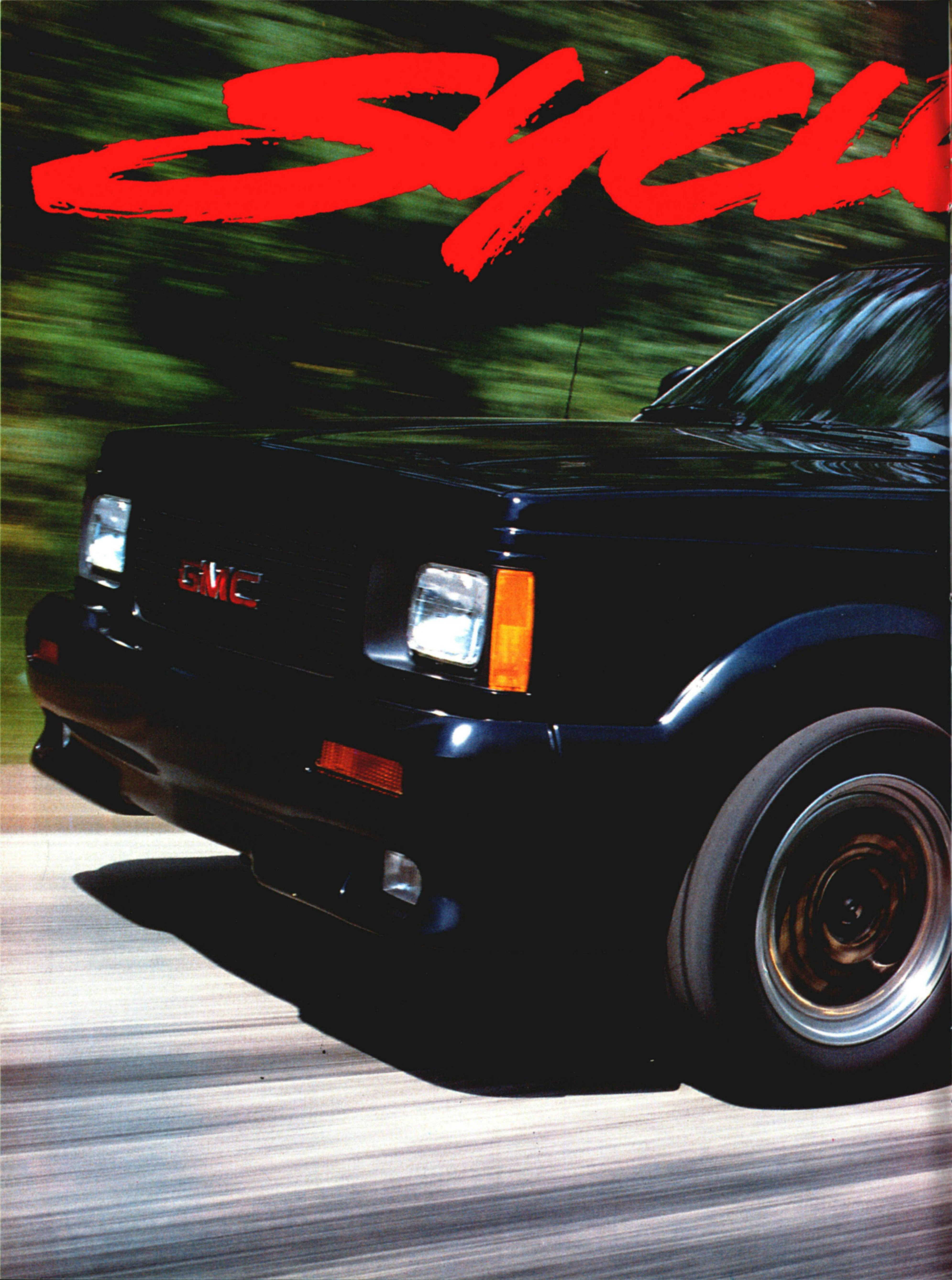
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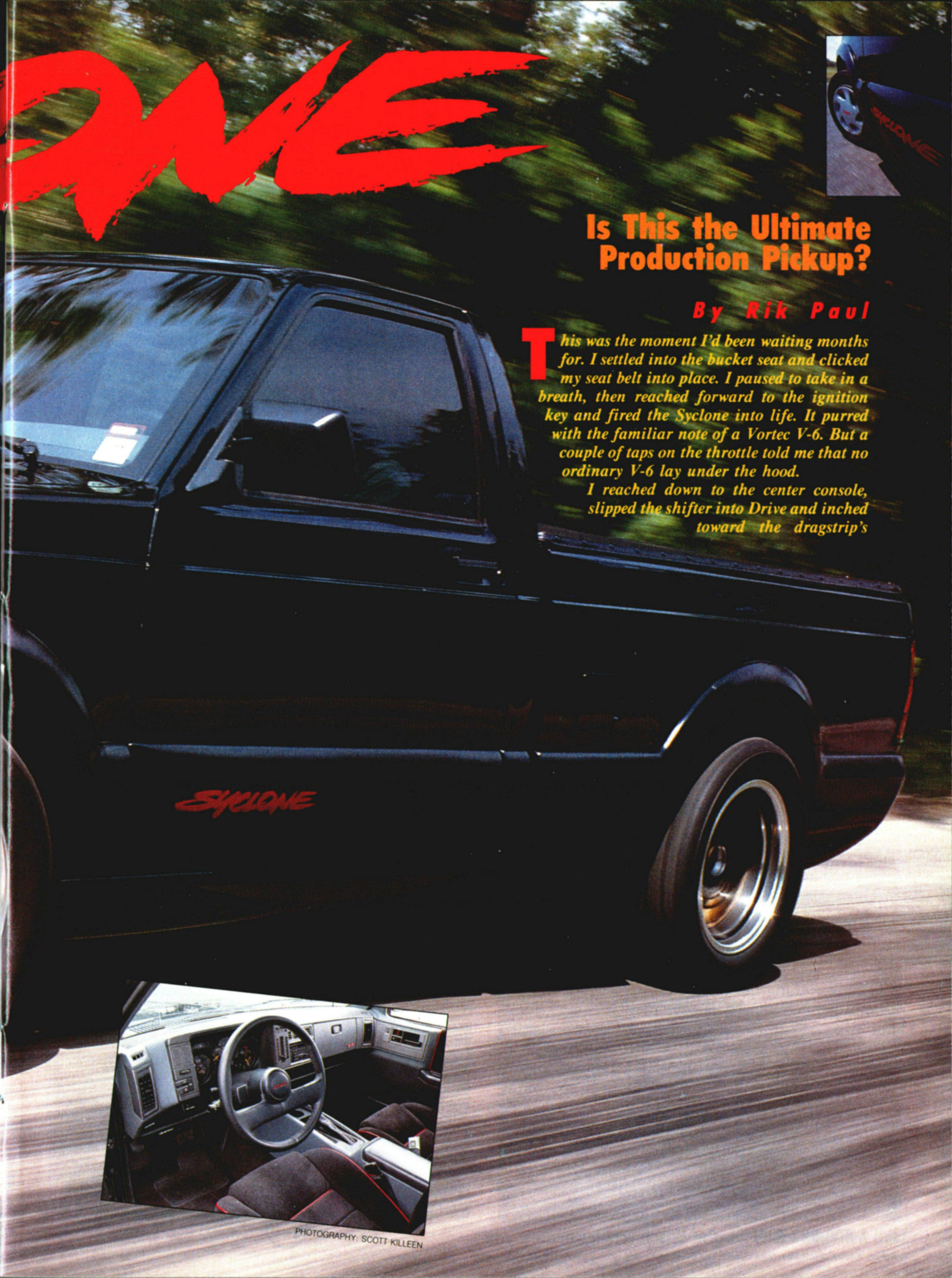
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# DRIVE



## Is This the Ultimate Production Pickup?

*By Rik Paul*

**T**his was the moment I'd been waiting months for. I settled into the bucket seat and clicked my seat belt into place. I paused to take in a breath, then reached forward to the ignition key and fired the Syclone into life. It purred with the familiar note of a Vortec V-6. But a couple of taps on the throttle told me that no ordinary V-6 lay under the hood.

*I reached down to the center console, slipped the shifter into Drive and inched toward the dragstrip's*



PHOTOGRAPHY: SCOTT KILLEEN



starting line. The moment was at hand.

The yellow staging lights blinked on as I settled into position. Then the Christmas tree began flashing its countdown. First yellow. With my left foot on the brake pedal, I stomped on the accelerator. The rpms jumped immediately, but my eyes were fixed on the turbocharger's boost gauge. Second yellow. There was a moment of lag time, and then the boost needle began to swing upward. Third yellow. As the needle hit mid gauge, I could feel the rear tires straining to break loose. Green. I lifted my left foot from the brake pedal and the Syclone lurched forward.

Immediately, I was pinned back in my seat, and I instinctively gripped the steering wheel tighter. The first couple of gears were a blur of motion, while I concentrated on keeping the truck pointed as straight as possible. I glanced down at the speedo just in time to see the needle swing past 55. Already. At that point, the Syclone's transmission kicked into Third and I felt still another surge forward.

Now, I had a few seconds to sit back and appreciate the thrill—the unexpected speed with which I was consuming the dragstrip's asphalt.

As the quarter-mile line rapidly approached, I glanced again at the speedo. The needle swung through the mid 90s, when suddenly a few light sputters indicated that I'd hit the V-6's rev limiter. A fraction of a second later, the line passed under me in a blur.

The day's best times? 0-60 mph in 4.8 seconds; quarter-mile in 13.08 seconds at 100.44 mph. From a pickup truck! We could list a handful of sports cars that would be envious of those numbers.

Yes, the Syclone is alive... and it is doing very well.

In our August '90 issue, we gave you a scouting report on GMC's newest model ("Syclone Watch"). But not until now

were we able to experience an actual running model. It was worth the wait.

The Syclone is the brainchild of the

## The best times? 0-60 mph in 4.8 seconds; quarter-mile in 13.08 seconds at 100.44 mph.

GMC Syclone	
BASE PRICE	\$25,000 (est)
PRICE AS TESTED	N/A
ENGINE TYPE	V-6
DISPLACEMENT (ci/liter)	262.0/4.3
FUEL DELIVERY	Multiport EFI
MAX. HP (SAE net)	280 @ 4400 rpm
MAX. TORQUE (SAE net)	360 lb-ft @ 3600 rpm
TRANSMISSION	4-speed automatic
AXLE RATIO	3.42:1
SUSPENSION	
FRONT	Independent w/torsion bars
REAR	Rigid axle w/leaf springs
BRAKES	
FRONT	Antilock disc
REAR	Antilock drum
CURB WEIGHT (lb)	3525
GVWR (lb)	N/A
MILEAGE	
EPA ESTIMATE (city/hwy) (mpg)	N/A
0-60 MPH (sec)	4.8
0-1/4-mile	13.08 sec @ 100.44 mph
STOPPING DISTANCE (60-0 mph) (ft)	154

GMC Truck Division of General Motors. In the last year, GMC Truck has been the most aggressive manufacturer in the sport-truck field. Last summer, the company ran a turbocharged S-15 to a land-speed record of 194.77 mph on the Bonneville Salt Flats. This fall, GMC, through Chattanooga Customs, will be selling a sporty limited-edition, full-size Sierra pickup, called the Spectre. Plus, the company has two innovative concept trucks—the Transcend and the Mahalo—touring the auto-show circuit right now. The Syclone, however, is the crowning achievement.

The Syclone was built by PAS of Troy, Michigan, under the guidance of GMC Truck. The vehicle we drove was the first finished, drivable prototype, and it was very close to production trim.

The foundation of the Syclone is a Sonoma (formerly called the S-15) compact pickup with a 4.3-liter Vortec V-6 engine and a four-speed Hydra-matic 4L60 automatic transmission. This is where the similarity to the everyday Sonoma ends.

The V-6's power was given a substantial boost through the addition of an electronic multiport fuel-injection system and a Mitsubishi turbocharger. The turbocharger, in turn, is equipped with a water-cooled intercooler, which uses its own separate cooling system. With 14 psi of boost on tap, the engine can put out 280 horsepower at 4400 rpm and 360 lb-ft of torque at 3600 rpm. These figures are slightly lower than those initially quoted to us, but they're still quite sobering—especially when matched with a truck weighing only 3525 pounds.

This gives the Syclone an excellent power-to-weight ratio of 1:13 (based on flywheel horsepower). By comparison, the power-to-weight ratio of a stock Sonoma is about 1:18, a full-size Sierra with a 350 V-8 is about 1:22 and the '91





## SYCLONE

Chevy 454 SS has about a 1:17 ratio.

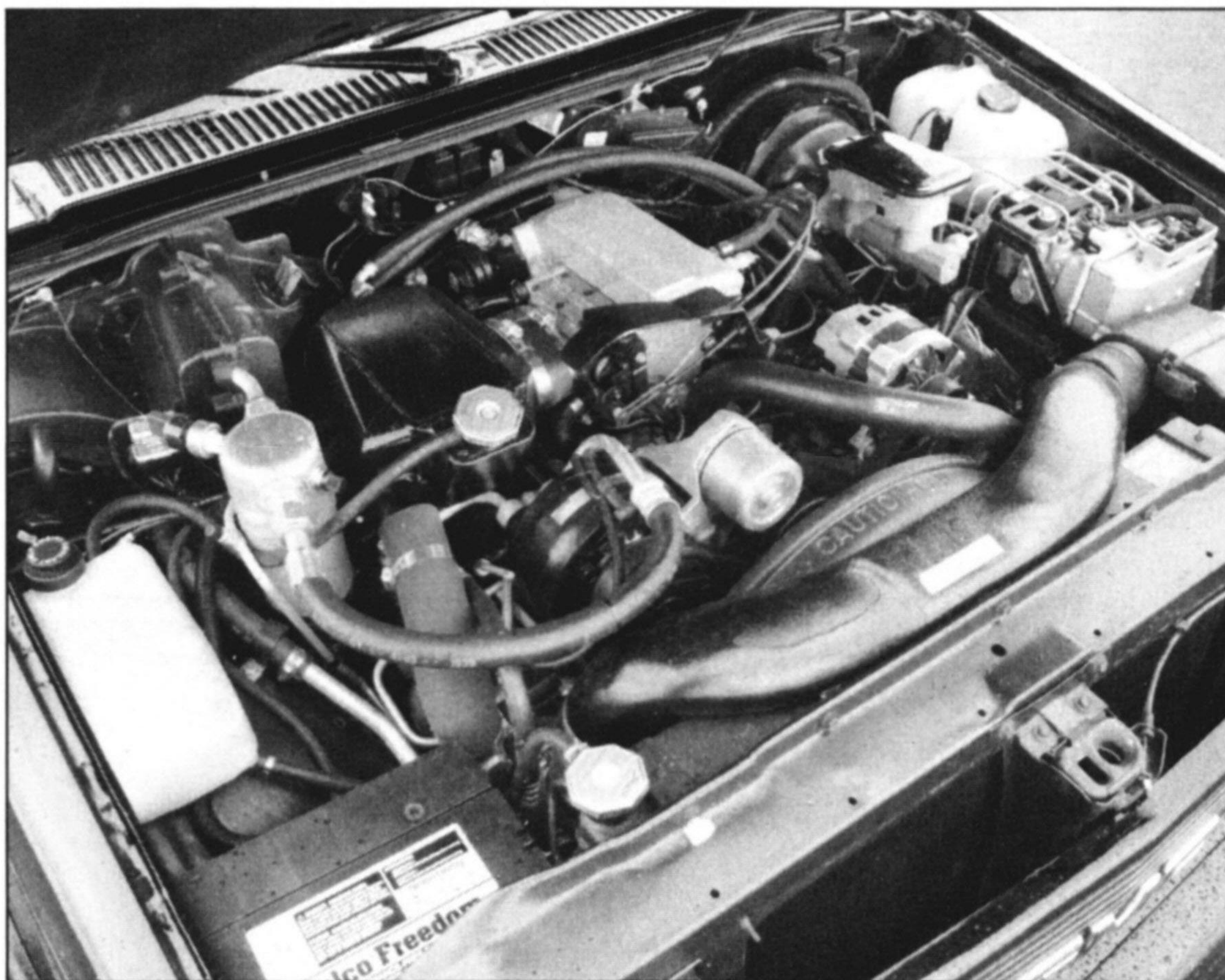
The Syclone's engine has almost a full second of turbo lag in its power delivery, which actually works to the truck's advantage. This helps give the Syclone something like a Clark Kent/Superman duality. Without the turbo in effect, the truck is mellow enough to drive in everyday, around-town traffic without feeling like it wants to break its reigns and run. Should you need some instant power, however, to pass, to merge into fast-moving traffic or to get yourself out of a troublesome situation, simply floor the accelerator, count one beat and then watch it go.

Besides being the fastest production truck we've ever tested, the Syclone is also a nicely well-rounded package, offering much more than a powerful engine. For instance, a fast truck needs a good braking system, and GMC had the foresight to equip the Syclone with the first four-wheel, antilock brake system available on a production pickup. It provides effective, controllable, skid-free braking, without the need for manual modulation at the brake pedal. In our braking test, the Syclone needed only 154 feet to go from 60 mph to a complete stop.

To get the V-6's power to the ground in the most effective, controllable way,

the Syclone also sports a full-time all-wheel-drive system that uses a viscous coupling to constantly distribute drive-train torque among all four of its wheels. This system not only eliminates wheel-

spin during hard acceleration, but it also helps the Syclone grip the road more effectively during hard cornering. The Sonoma is one of the better handling pickups on the road already. GMC fur-





## SYCLONE

ther enhanced the Syclone's cornering abilities by lowering the body about 1½ inches and adding custom-designed 245/50-16VR Firestone Firehawk tires (specifically designed for the Syclone) mounted on 16-inch aluminum wheels.

Although the suspension has also been softened a bit to improve ride quality, the Syclone is not what we'd call plush. It still rides . . . well, like a truck.

While GM's recirculating-ball steering system is not the most responsive in the world, the truck's variable-rate power assist provides pleasantly neutral steering.

The rest of the Syclone also reflects the elite status of the vehicle. The exterior features one of the cleanest aero packages around, with fog lights integrated into the front spoiler. Meanwhile, the bed is covered by a Luzzus TruxCover tonneau cover, supplied to GMC by Innovative Accessories in Norman, Oklahoma. Because this tonneau snaps directly to an aluminum frame that's attached to the bedwalls, the tailgate can be opened without disconnecting the tonneau.

Interior custom touches include contoured bucket seats with side and thigh bolsters; a leather-wrapped steering wheel; a floor console, which houses the transmission shifter, a small storage compartment and two drink holders; and a new, sporty looking analog instrument cluster, including a 140-mph speedometer, that fits perfectly with the performance nature of the Syclone.

Other standard features include air conditioning, power windows and door

locks, a tilt steering column, tinted glass and an AM/FM/cassette stereo, while a sunroof is optional.

The Syclone is slated to go into production in January, 1991, and should be available through GMC Truck dealers by the end of that month. The suggested retail price is expected to be in the \$25,000 range. If you're interested, get your order in early. GMC says that it is prepared to make as many Syclones as it can sell, but when they first hit the street these compact rockets should be in high demand.

So, *is* the Syclone the ultimate production pickup? With blistering acceleration, easy around-town drivability, high-tech all-wheel-drive and ABS systems, clean, custom styling and a host of standard creature comforts, it may not be the *ultimate* pickup (after all, who knows what the future holds), but it's the closest thing we've got right now. ■

