

OF INTEREST

## Real prize packages

*The ins and outs of special contest trucks*



**W**ant a new truck? A very special truck? Then Marlboro and Mello Yello have contests for you.

Marlboro must have been pretty happy with the "3 million or so" entrants in last year's Marlboro Penske RMI Corvette giveaway, because it called RMI-designer Larry Shinoda with even bigger plans for this year's contest.

"We discussed several different possibilities," said Shinoda. "One was going to be Vipers, but they just weren't available." So as prizes for its Marlboro Racing '92 contest, the company is offering 10 Marlboro Syclone Project trucks.

Meanwhile, Coca-Cola's Mello Yello

brand is doing 15 special-edition Hummers which it will give away in a regional promotion tied to a TV commercial featuring Kyle Petty, whose NASCAR Winston Cup car is sponsored by the soft drink. The Hummers will be painted to resemble Petty's race car in a promotion aimed at the Southwest and the upper Midwest (Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota).

While Mello Yello chose the AM General military hero as its prize, Shinoda said the Syclone was selected for the Marlboro contest because the decision finally was made to do a truck, "and this was the hottest one out there."

Shinoda contracted ASC Incorporated to

### ► GRAY MARKET UPDATE.

NHTSA still seems to **think** the so-called "gray market" has a **future** in the United States.

The federal safety agency has recently **approved**, or is considering approving, a **number of non-U.S. specification passenger cars for import and conversion** by aftermarket companies or private owners. To approve cars for direct importing, NHTSA has to conclude the specific versions are "substantially similar" to models the original maker previously certified.

Among those already O.K.'d: the 1986 BMW 518i, the '89 525i, the '88 730iA and even the German-spec '91 850i; along with the '89 Mercedes-Benz 200TE and '89 200E.

NHTSA approved most of the European-sourced cars on its own initiative, despite the collapse of the

gray market from a high of 66,500 in 1986 to less than 500 in 1991.

Generally, the one-off applicants are owned by individuals returning from overseas jobs.

### SUBURBAN SHORTAGE.

To maintain build quality, production speed has been slower than anticipated, so the **1992** model year run of the Chevy/GMC **Suburban** is **sold out**. The cause, says a Chevy spokesman, is the "balancing act" between production quality and volume. "We opted to keep the priority on quality," and the result is that first-year production volume on the new model is roughly half the projected level.

The supply is so tight that some customers who placed firm orders with dealers won't get 1992 models.



Larry Shinoda and ASC teamed up on Marlboro Syclones. Mello Yello is offering special Hummer (above) as prize

perform the major modifications necessary to transform the '91 Syclones into the '92 Marlboro Syclone Project trucks. The most impressive feature in Shinoda's design was a removable top panel which turns the Syclone's standard steel roof into an exotic carbon-fiber/Kevlar T-top. The standard Syclone's soft tonneau cover is replaced with a hard one, under which the top panel can be safely stored.

The Marlboro Syclone also employs an aftermarket roll-down back window. Even with that, and headliner alterations, the Marlboro Syclone's leather Recaro seats are able to weasel a couple of inches of recline (a claim the standard Syclone can't make).

Once the trucks are painted to "show quality" with "Hot Licks" red paint (lot like Marlboro red) and clearcoat from PPG, Shinoda and ASC will properly stripe the vehicles and install Goodyear-shod wheels featuring black-anodized centers.

Alex Borla designed the exhaust system and figures it boosts power 10 percent.

After ASC screws and squeegees everything into place, you have a Marlboro Syclone Project truck.

You have one, that is, provided you win the contest. ■

**NEW GM EUROPE PLANT?** Further on the subject of the General, GM Europe is considering building a plant in northern Spain, near Bilbao. GM's investment could go as high as \$600 million for a plant to produce 150,000 units a year.

It isn't known what car will be built at the new plant.

**NISSAN EXPANDS TEST CENTER.** Nissan has spent \$15 million in upgrading its hot-weather testing facility in Arizona, including new garages, engineering space and evaluation bays.

Nissan's test center now covers 3000 acres.

Vehicles developed at Nissan's new tech center in Michigan, primarily intended for the U.S. market, will be tested at the Arizona facility.

**MILESTONES.** Saab Automobile AB and AM General Corp. both reached milestones recently: Saab built its 2.5-millionth car and AM General its 100,000th Hummer.

**RECALL.** GM is recalling all 1991 full-size wagons (Caprice, Roadmaster and Custom Cruiser) to correct a potential faulty seatbelt cover. The cover may come off, and the belt anchor's edges may cut the belt webbing. GM dealers will replace the seatbelt covers free of charge.



All '91 GM full-size wagons being recalled

**TRANSITIONS.** Dr. Gian Luigi Longinotti Buitoni has assumed responsibility for all operations at Ferrari North America Inc. He replaces Dr. Giuseppe Greco, who will return to Italy with Ferrari S.p.A.

● **Carl Flesher**, BMW of North America Inc.'s marketing chief, will be vp of public relations for BMW's upcoming South Carolina plant. Flesher will report to Helmut Panke, director of corporate planning at BMW AG in Munich.



Carl Flesher

● **Jaguar Cars Inc.** has chosen Ogilvy & Mather as the advertising agency to run Jags' \$15 million to \$20 million campaign. Geer, DuBois handled the account until it was put up for review four months ago. Ogilvy & Mather handles Ford Motor Co.'s parts & service business as well.

**CORRECTION.** The name of Terry Lingner, former ESPN producer who now heads Lingner Group Productions, was misspelled in our Cover Story (AW, July 6). Also, the Mustang photo in World News (AW, July 27, page 11) was of an LX 5.0-liter, not a GT. ■

World News is compiled and edited by  
Wes Raynal, (313) 446-0342,  
and Larry Edsall, (313) 446-0323.  
It may include contributions from  
Automotive News, another Crain publication.