

## QUICK TAKES

**Porsche North America** has introduced a new "affordable" lease program for 944s. Customers can get in a 944 S4 for \$499 per month or a 944 Cabriolet for \$599 a month. The company says the lease doesn't run counter to plans to build exclusivity, but is simply a year-end clearance to make room for '91 models. The offer expires Oct. 31.

**General Motors** has teamed with PAS Inc., a Michigan-based company, to produce a high-performance specialty truck. The vehicle, called Syclone, is a modified GMC S-15 pickup powered by a turbocharged 4.3-liter V6. Four-wheel drive, ABS and a modified suspension, as well as a modified exterior, are part of the package. The trucks will be built in Shreveport, La.

**Chrysler Motors** announced that 1991 model-year prices will go up only one percent—or roughly \$150 per car—over 1990 prices. Chrysler officials said that with the small increase, it hopes to get buyers away from incentives and rebates by offering less of an increase.

**A judge has ordered Chrysler** to pay \$7.6 million in fines as a result of the odometer tampering case in 1987. Some 30 cars were damaged, repaired and sold as new vehicles and a total of 60,000 were driven with the odometers disconnected. Chrysler also was ordered last month to pay a Missouri couple \$1 million in damages after the couple bought a "new" New Yorker that had been damaged and repaired. Chrysler officials said the company may appeal both of the judgments.

**Mazda in Japan denies** the existence of its second channel study, known in the U.S. as Pegasus. A Japanese newspaper reported that Mazda already has started selecting dealers for the channel, which is due to open in 1992. Mazda denies those reports also. However, U.S. sources say the study is still under way.

**The strike** which had idled Ford's Cuautitlan, Mexico, assembly plant is now over. The plant builds the Topaz, Taurus, Thunderbird, Cougar and pickup trucks for the Mexican market.

**BMW** will, within the next five years, begin developing electronic components in-house, rather than relying on outside suppliers such as Robert Bosch. Fuel injection, ABS and electronic engine management systems are among the items being considered.

## Iacocca admits Chrysler's talking with Fiat, others

*He mentions giant mergers, but then expresses his doubt*

**C**hrysler chairman Lee Iacocca has revealed his company is talking not only with Fiat (AW, July 9), but Renault and Volvo about joint ventures—and maybe more?

Speaking at the Windsor, Ontario (Canada), assembly plant where Chrysler officially launched its '91 minivans, Iacocca said, "Everybody is talking to everybody. I think over time everybody's going to need some affiliation or partnership."

Partnership?

"I wouldn't predict that today," Iacocca said. "Maybe in the year 2000. Given the way things have evolved, you might see some giant mergers, but I doubt that. I doubt any full merger talks."

While there has been speculation about Chrysler and Fiat getting together on everything from sharing platforms to sharing stock, Iacocca said talks with Volvo and Renault concerned possible joint ventures involving engines and other components. Renault and Chrysler recently terminated a joint venture which would have produced sport/utility vehicles.

## New Audi Cabrio to debut in late 1991 as a '92

*Purpose-built topless model gets power top, optional V6*



Hans G. Lehmann/Hidden Image photo

**Cabrio to come in front- or four-wheel drive**

**F**or those who've wanted to go topless on the alternate route, the long-awaited Audi Cabrio is on the way. The car is due in 1991 as a '92 model. However, it will not be a convertible version of a current Audi.

Instead, it will be an all-new model, powered by a 2.8-liter V6 which is said to develop around 150 horsepower.

According to our Audi source, it won't look like the Frankfurt Show cabrio but will be readily identifiable as an Audi. It has a shorter cabin and a larger trunk. The car will also have a built-in roll bar.

Best of all, the convertible top will completely retract electronically beneath a hard tonneau, with no unsightly bulges.