

Car-like

If you think trucks are starting to look more and more like cars, you're right. And with the way things are going, expect trucks to keep right on changing in the car direction. Why, you might ask?

One reason is that the U.S. government is adding many emissions and safety regulations that force vehicle manufacturers to utilize designs already approved for automobiles. Also, a growing number of truck buyers are converted car owners who don't want to lose some of the luxury, entertainment and safety features they've come to expect from cars.

The ultimate reason, however, is that the manufacturers can appeal to a wider cross section of people, without hurting the dependability and durability of their truck lines. That, of course, is a tall order. When fuel-economy regulations became tougher for cars, the manufacturers discovered downsizing. But when it comes to full-size vans and trucks that isn't going to be so easy. "Some loads don't get smaller," said Carl Freeman, chief engineer for C/K full-size pickups at General Motors Truck & Bus Group in an *Automotive News* article.

New technology will improve mileage, however, as the manufacturers start using lighter materials, more sophisticated transmissions with additional gear selections and reduced friction components. At the same time, expect to see more luxurious interior materials, new child safety devices and, yes, air bags.

GMC For 1992: Syclone, Typhoon And Sonoma GT

If the rumors we hear are true, GMC Truck will offer no less than three high-performance truck models by the '92 model year.

One will be the then-year-old Syclone, currently the rage in magazines and on the auto-show circuit (and, apparently, at the showrooms as well—when production started in January, GMC Truck had 2600 firm orders for the Syclone).

The turbocharged, intercooled, all-wheel-drive super pickup will stay in the GMC product mix next year, and it will be available in a second color—red. The truck's future beyond 1992 is uncertain; GMC execs aren't sure how



the total S-truck overhaul in 1993 will change the pickup.

According to GMC Truck head honcho John Rock, a second hi-po truck, the Typhoon, may be available for truck magazines to test this fall. As we told you in our March '91 "Extra" section, the Typhoon will be a two-door S-Jimmy with Syclone-like performance.

And after the Typhoon debuts, GMC Truck will introduce the Sonoma GT,

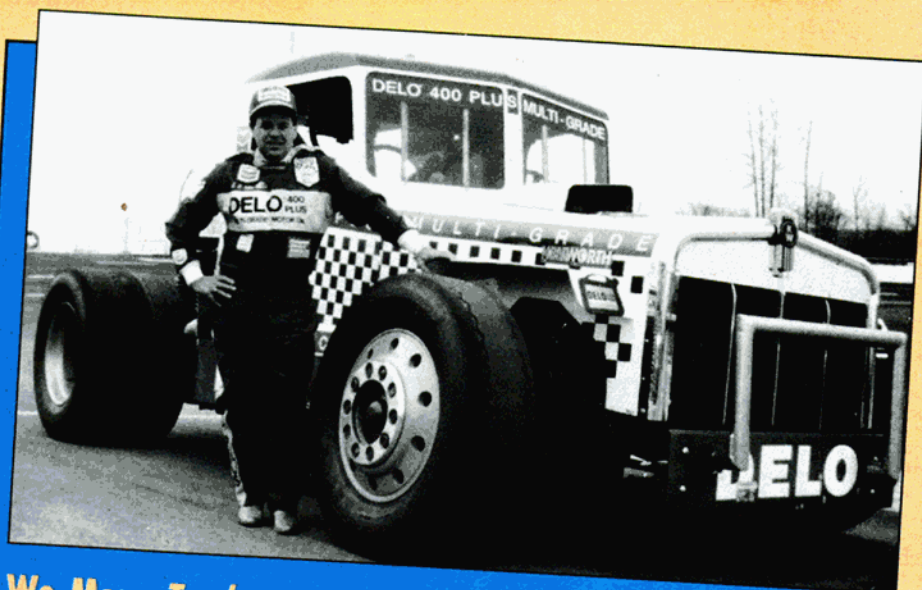
sort of a junior-varsity Syclone. The Sonoma GT will not be turbocharged, and it will not offer all-wheel-drive. It will, however, have an instrument panel and seats similar to its older brother, as well as a body-cladding package that's similar to the Syclone's but unique to the Sonoma GT. The best news of all, though, lies under the hood. There you'll find a center-

port-injected, high-output 4.3-liter V-6, code-named L35. How high is its output? Try 200-plus horsepower and over 300 lb-ft of torque.

And you can bet that much of the engine's new technology (the details of which we'll explain as soon as we know ourselves) will carry over to the small-block V-8. Can ultra-fast versions of the full-size Sierra pickup and Yukon sport/utility be far behind? ■

EXTRA

How'd you like a red Syclone?



We Mean Truck

So we thought the Sports Car Club of America truck-racing series was pretty cool and all that, but have you seen the Great American Truck Racing series that features *real* trucks? We're talking big rigs here and we don't know about you, but the sight of a bunch of Peterbilt, Kenworth and Mack trucks barreling down the front straight at the Orlando Speedworld in Orlando, Florida, gets us all in a titter.

This photo of E.J. Utley's Chevron DELO 400 PLUS Racing Team rig is typical of the perfectly coiffed machines that run on speedways, closed-road courses and (gulp!) clay ovals. The series, launched in 1982, will see 26 teams participating this season in what one press release called "intriguing just by virtue of their size and the speeds at which they race." Our sentiments exactly.