

1997 August

VOLUME 48, NUMBER 12

A flurry of revs, the screech of tires, a shift grabbed with vigor, the sound of your own blood coursing through your veins. That's what our Thrill Rides cover story is all about, and we've assembled a fantastic group of cars—the Diablo Roadster, Lotus Elise, Caterham Super Seven, Porsche 911 Turbo S and Dodge Viper—with one criterion in mind: sheer visceral impact. If something a mite more tame fits your lifestyle, then check out our comparison of two well-heeled convertibles, the Jaguar XK8 and Mercedes-Benz SL 500, and our Road Test of the Oldsmobile Intrigue. And for a journey back to when cubic inches, live axles and attitude ruled the roost, then our Shelby GT-350 Salon is for you.

ROAD TESTS

84 **Jaguar XK8 Convertible vs. Mercedes-Benz SL 500**—new thinking out of England challenges the old guard in a top-down, drag-out comparison test

98 **Oldsmobile Intrigue GL**—the Cutlass has been cut loose, but its replacement has a stiffer chassis, a refined V-6 and import-competitive dynamics

FIRST DRIVES

49 **Mercedes-Benz CLK 320**—blend a little C-Class with a little E-Class, throw in a new 3.2-liter V-6, simmer, and you have Mercedes-Benz's newest coupe

53 **Audi A4 2.8**—5-valve-per-cylinder heads literally breathe new life into Audi's impressive entry-level sedan...but it could still use more low-rpm torque

56 **De Tomaso Guará**—the return of this Italian carmaker to the U.S. is accompanied by a return to Ford power in this exotic mid-engine 2-seater

FEATURES

62 **Thrill Rides**—climb in, buckle up and put the hammer down! Driven, quickly: Diablo Roadster, Lotus Elise, Caterham Seven, Porsche Turbo S, Dodge Viper

106 **Long-Term Introduction: Mercedes-Benz SLK230**—our newest long-term loser loses its a/c refrigerant, but natural cooling is a pushbutton away

114 **Salon: 1965 Shelby Mustang GT-350**—if your fancies turned toward muscle cars in the Sixties, then Shelby's GT-350 was bigger than the Beatles

137 **Used Car Classic: Mazda Miata, 1990–1996**—the car that virtually re-invented the roadster is now an excellent—and nearly unbreakable—used-car buy

143 **American Egomania**—were Freud alive today, he'd have a field day with the crop of renegade specialty manufacturers we've assembled here

TECHNICAL

122 **Toyota's Hybrid Program**—by artfully shuffling batteries, gears, motors and gasoline engines, Toyota has concocted a far-ranging answer to low emissions

COMPETITION

127 **Stewart on Speed**—novelist Bob Judd's take on Jackie Stewart's impressions of Monaco, driving technique and success at the pinnacle of motorsport

COLUMNS

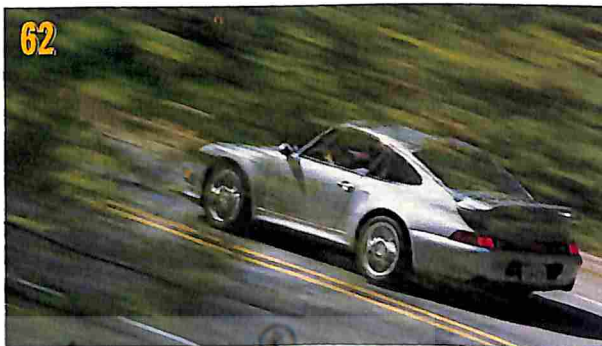
17 **Miscellaneous Ramblings**—putting out issues of R&T is great fun, we say, though sometimes through clenched teeth; and lingering images and words

29 **Side Glances**—father didn't always know best when it came to cars. Peter Egan examines the lows of automotive taste...and sees glimmers of hope

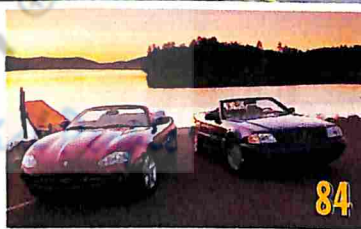
38 **Ampersand**—BMW erects a solid roof over its Z3, and Andrew Bornhop drives two spectacular Chrysler show cars: the Copperhead and Dual Cowl Phaeton

152 **About the Sport**—Paul Tracy charges to dramatic closing-lap victories in CART; and Schumacher pours it on in the rain-drenched Monaco Grand Prix

62



114



84



49

DEPARTMENTS

13 People & Places

23 Letters to the Editor

34 Years Ago

166 Time & Place

168 Road Test Summary

170 Technical Correspondence

173 Tech Tidbits

176 Showcase

180 Market Place

184 PS



127

COVER PHOTO BY BARRY HATHAWAY
CONTENTS PHOTOS BY BARRY HATHAWAY, JOHN LAMM, E. JOHN THAWLEY III & NIGEL SNOWDON

CONVERTIBLES COMPARED: Jaguar XK8 vs Mercedes SL 500



ROAD & TRAVEL

AUGUST 1997 \$3.50 CANADA \$4.50 UK £2.30

Thrill Rides

THE MOST EXHILARATING CARS IN AMERICA

- Lamborghini
- Porsche
- Viper
- Lotus
- Caterham



03920



08

0 274171 2