



The best is yet to come, but we just couldn't wait. From the automotive capitals of Europe, Asia and the U.S.A., we've smuggled out Sneak Previews of dozens of upcoming cars. Best of all, we've captured an exclusive Road Test of the hot, new(Vector M12 supercar. Other first looks in this issue include the 1997 Lexus ES 300, the redone Saturn SC coupes and a test of the Cadillac Catera, GM's German-bred luxury offering. Readers into racing should turn to "The Memorial Day 1000," Bob Judd's account of May's double-feature debacle.

## **ROAD TESTS**

- 74 Vector M12—with a full set of design, engineering and business credentials —and a Lamborghini V-12—working for it, the American supercar is alive
- **82 1997 Cadillac Catera**—go to bed an Opel, wake up a Cadillac: GM's luxury division welcomes an entry-level V-6 with a European accent into the family
- **90** BMW 540i versus Mercedes-Benz E420—a great V-8 middleweight matchup that pits the performance leader against the class of the class

## FIRST DRIVES

- **52** Ferrari 456 GTA—the "A" stands for "automatic": Ferrari delivers its less-doctrinaire enthusiasts from the evil clutches of a manual transmission
- **56 1997 Saturn SC1 and SC2**—here's a switch: These restyled coupes from the "different kind of car" company are putting fear into SUV dealers
- **59 1997 Lexus ES 300**—a little more refinement, a little more firepower, a little more room in the front seats, and a little more freshness to its face

#### FEATURES

- 64 Sneak Preview, '97...and Beyond—R&T's around-the-world roundup of the stuff that the automobile manufacturers don't want you to see...yet
- 105 Long-Term Introduction: Mercedes-Benz C280 Sport—the sport version of the world-benchmark compact sedan begins an extended visit
- 108 Salon: 1973 Porsche 917/30—this 240-mph, 1100-horsepower Can-Am dominator carried the final chapter in Mark Donohue's brilliant career
- **150** Long-Term Tests: Audi A4 Quattro and Plymouth Neon Sport Coupe —our A4 gets reincarnated; the Neon serves with rowdy good nature

### COMPETITION

- **120** A Hill of a Driver—a world-champion oak and his acorn—Phil Hill and son Derek John—discuss the racing door opened by the Skip Barber Pro Series
- 124 The Memorial Day 1000—"overcast and cloudy" sums up race day and also covers the Indy Car/IRL mess: too many players and an uncertain future

#### COLUMNS

- 19 Miscellaneous Ramblings—the Editor-in-Chief gets a special present for his 53rd birthday, courtesy of Coventry: driving a D-Type Jaguar to Le Mans
- 32 Side Glances—while the mere thought of Peter Egan's retiring is a chilling one, we can take some comfort in his plans for the "Old Car-Folks Home"
- **42** Ampersand—Paul Frère assesses the fun factor of a parts-bin pocket-rocket, the Renault Sport Spider; the next possible Supra; and the Japanese Q45
- **132** About the Sport—in F1: Schumacher's first win in a Ferrari and Ferrari's first win this season; in Indy Car: Michael Andretti makes every move count











# **DEPARTMENTS**

- 15 People & Places
- 27 Letters to the Editor
- 37 Years Ago
- 146 Time & Place
- **152 Road Test Summary**
- **154 Technical Correspondence**
- **158 Tech Tidbits**
- 160 Showcase

168 PS

165 Market Place





