



PONTIAC FIERO GT

TWOS FOR THE MONEY

Fast and furious fun with the affordable 2-seaters.

AFFORDABILITY, like good looks, is a concept that's open to considerable interpretation. One man's affordable is another man's unthinkable self-indulgence, and like so many other things in life it ultimately comes down to disposable income.

However, when it comes to sports cars, it's pretty clear that the number of machines most of us might regard as affordable has thinned somewhat since the heyday of the British roadster. Even with a cutoff as high as \$20,000, the list dwindles down to a precious few. We make it to be about a half-dozen, in fact, and a couple of these—the venerable Bertone X/1-9 and Alfa Romeo Spider—represent only a tiny slice of this small segment of the market.

Accordingly, we've grouped the four cars that constitute the heart of

the under-\$20,000 sports car market—the Honda CRX Si, Pontiac Fiero GT, Toyota MR2 and Mazda RX-7—to see just who's who.

Assessed on a basis of power-to-weight and general vehicle concept, we expected this foursome to be quite comparable, despite some fundamental differences in basic design (one front-engine/front-drive, two mid-engine/rear drive and a front-engine/rear drive).

That was the plan, anyway. A real shootout. But what emerged after four days of tire-shredding in and around Santa Barbara, California, was a cross-section sufficiently diverse to make us a bit reluctant to name winners, losers or also-rans.

Each of these cars has its own peculiar set of strengths, each has its drawbacks, and each has its own distinctive character.

BY TONY SWAN
Automotive Editor