

Fast Paced

ation from the aftermarket enables horsepower levels upward of 300 hp normally aspirated. Drivetrain and suspension pieces designed for the road race program (IMSA, GTU, and SCCA Trans Am) fit in with Pontiac's pace car aspirations.

After months of development, HOT ROD was invited to road test the Fiero Pace Car at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. We jumped at the opportunity and met with John Callies, project engineer on the pace car.

We were extended the hospitality of Charlie Thompson, track steward, and were treated to a typical off-season day around the Speedway. There were three or four Indy teams pitted in tents on pit road who were testing for '84. Speedway track crews and USAC officials would filter in and out of the garages to get warm and pour a cup of coffee. They would walk around and look at the Fiero with an air of indifference and swap stories about real race cars and real race drivers.

The Fiero was backed out of the garage, and John Callies took me around for a few warm-up laps to get the car up to temperature and familiarize me with the track. At the 70-mph warm-up speeds, a lap around the 2½-mile Speedway oval seems endless. My first observation was that this oval indeed has four distinct turns unlike most shorter ovals. In fact, at slower speeds there are short straightaways that connect turns 1 and 2 and turns 3 and 4. My other observation was that this place is awfully flat and narrow to go 200 mph around those corners.

Then it was my turn. I started out slowly, using the heavily blackened groove as my guide. There are few landmarks around the course to use as braking or turning-in points, and the point at which you apex the corner can be as long as 50 feet depending upon your speed. Several things became immediately apparent with the Fiero. Its aerodynamics must be superb. There was a total lack of wind noise or buffeting, and the little 4-cylinder was hardly laboring to reach the 135-mph lap averages that I was, in a short time, clicking off.

Another indication that the aerodynamics must have really been working was the excellent stability even in turns, especially for a 93.4-inch-wheelbase car on street radials. And speaking of the tires, these new Goodyear VR series Eagle GTs really get the job done on the racetrack. The sensation I got from the Fiero was like no other car I've been in at over 120 mph. There was a total lack of engine or driveline vibration; there existed a sail-



The rear brakes use larger rotors and F-body calipers. The uprights were modified to accept the emergency brake mechanism. The Fiero Pace Car has the braking capacity of a brick wall; you stop right now, no questions asked.



A Rapid Cool oil cooler and remote oil filter system are used to maintain proper oil temperature during high-speed running.



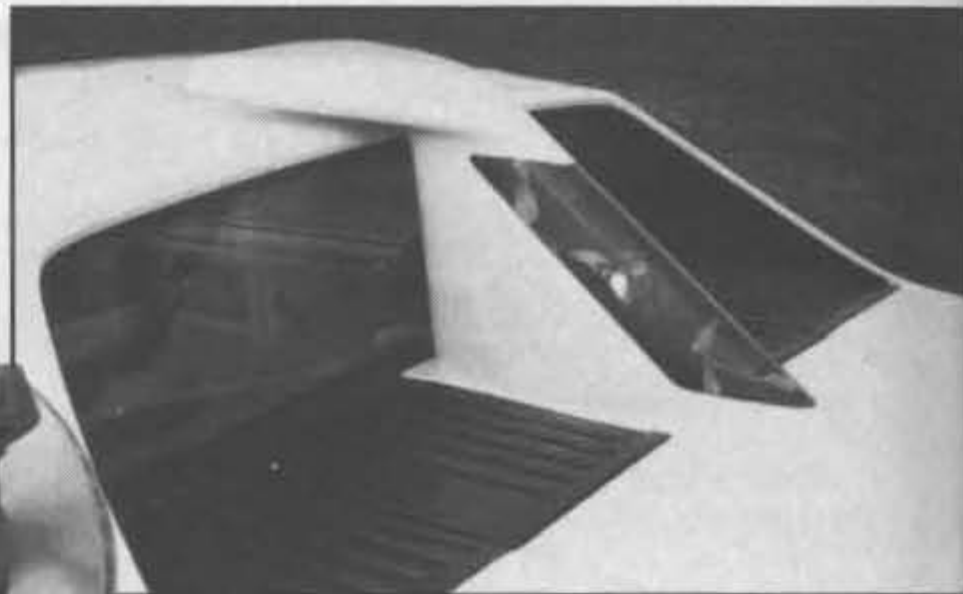
Special aluminum front hubs from Bell Tech Industries, (209) 445-1602, use F-body bearings with a stock Fiero knuckle and Firebird rotors. The assemblies add 28 pounds to the car, but they gain the benefit of larger vented rotors and bigger bearings for outstanding braking with repeatable non-fade performance.



The standard 23mm rear axles were upgraded with HD 27mm axles and hubs from a Pontiac STE. These provided larger bearings to handle high-speed running and allowed the use of larger rotors and Trans Am calipers.

plane-like quietness all the way around the course.

The unfortunate story about the Fiero Indy Pace Car is that the edition offered for sale to the public will only have the cosmetic appeal. It's really a shame because what Pontiac has here is a world beater, Corvette included. It



The air scoop is reminiscent of a well-known space traveler, but it is very effective; Pontiac is the first to use strobe lighting and the first to integrate the caution light into the aerodynamics of the car. The strobes are from Federal Signal Corporation and the amber trailing edge lens on the scoop is actually a wingtip lens from a 747 jetliner.



A Hooker header exhausts through a special exhaust system that eliminates the muffler and catalytic converter. Rear body fascia was designed with special low-pressure ducts around the exhaust outlets that actually use the car's aerodynamics to help scavenge the cylinders.

makes you wonder about the V6 slated for '85 production, too. Here is a 4-cylinder more than capable, and with Pontiac being the 4-cylinder development arm of GM, it would be an excellent time for them to "flaunt their stuff" with an H.O. version of the iron duke for the street. **HR**