



Pontiac's revolutionary building blocks include an X-car powertrain and suspension, a modified T-car front suspension, a unitized steel underbody, and a dozen major molded-plastic body panels.



heavier than Aldikacti would have liked, and he can only dream of a fifth gear somewhere off in the misty future. Such is the lot of an engineer who must pick and choose from shelves that are sadly behind the times.

Still, the beauty here is that the Fiero is not another front-drive floorpan with the back seat lopped off and a pointy nose tacked on. Weight distribution with the back-motor design is a satisfying 43.5 percent front, 56.5 percent rear, and the control-arm front suspension from the Chevette should do well with the 60-series Goodyear Eagle GT tires (originally developed for the Citation X-11). The MacPherson-strut rear suspension has new spring rates, shock valving, and rubber bushings, but is otherwise unaltered from the original X-car configuration. Since there is no

steering obligation in back, the tie rods are simply anchored to pivot points on the P-car's perimeter subframe.

As you might imagine, this package is not the epitome of space utilization. The nose is long and low to cut aerodynamic drag (Pontiac spots the drag coefficient at 0.377). The fuel tank is located inside a tunnel that bisects the body, and engine-coolant lines run to the front-mounted radiator along the outer sills. While the mid-engine design might suggest the possibility of two trunks, the forward compartment is chockablock with hardware, leaving room for no more than a small duffel bag. In back, you'll find a well that's wide and deep but very pinched in the fore-and-aft dimension. Pontiac claims it will swallow two regulation-size golf bags; if you wish to carry conventional luggage,

you'd be well advised to pack lightly in soft, flexible cases.

Something has to go when the roofline is squeezed down so low (to 46.9 inches, matching the Corvette's overall height), and Pontiac wisely sacrificed luggage room instead of interior space. In fact, the Fiero's cockpit seems all the more inviting because it hugs the road. The knee-high door handle demands a bit of bending, but there's absolutely no aggravation on entry, because the opening is wide and the doorsill is just a micron or so above the pavement. The optional tilt steering column is a great aid to a smooth entrance. Leg space is generous and straight ahead, and a dead pedal has thoughtfully been provided to brace the left foot. Joy upon joy, it's a snap to heel-and-toe without a permission slip from your podiatrist. The mas-