



engineer Terry Satchell's test unit installation of GM's 190-hp, dual-overhead-cam, multi-valve "Quad 4" engine would have been a simple bolt-in adaptation, and could easily have been made available by 1989. This combination would have transformed the four-cylinder Fiero from the lackluster performer it had been into an absolute world beater.

In addition, Alcan of Canada developed two complete all-aluminum prototype space frames created from the Fiero's original steel frame tooling. The completed units, bonded together with special high-tech adhesives, weighed less than half as much as the production steel components and boasted more than 40 percent greater structural rigidity. This frame technology, or some variation thereof, would have been a likely near-future production reality, resulting in both dramatically increased performance and a significant improvement in fuel economy.

In 1991, GM's V-6 counterpart to the Oldsmobile-developed Quad 4 appeared. Called the "34L Twin Dual Cam V6," this 210-hp, 24-valve, four-cam engine would have shown nearly the same explosive performance increase over the 2.8-liter V-6 Fieros of 1985-88 that the Quad Four would have had over Fiero's old 2.5-liter four. These under-the-skin engineering improvements would most certainly have given real meaning to Pontiac's "We Build Excitement" theme.

The photos shown here provide a

tempting and revealing look at GM's Tech Center plans for Fiero's new styling concepts from 1989 forward. One body style that seems unfortunately to not have been included in Pontiac's plans was an open roadster version. This would surely have been a match made in heaven—but apparently not economically feasible because of Fiero's space frame construction.

The silver base series Fiero coupe indicates an evolutionary styling approach, amplifying and expanding on prior Fiero themes. An all-black upper body cab area created a simulated "all-glass" look, while the tapering narrow front to a wide back wraparound black body band was a clear evolution of Fiero's narrow black rub strip. The grid-pattern taillights were neatly integrated into the wider rear portion of the band. A higher shadow line on the lower body with more "bum-under" gave the car a slimmer profile, while the front and rear body caps were more fully integrated into the bodyshell.

The red proposal was an evolution of the GT model. Its more aggressive character would have capitalized heavily on Fiero's GTP racing success, and would have been a good name choice as well. Combined with the Twin Dual Cam V6, this would have boosted Fiero to serious sports car performance levels.

The charcoal variation was very similar, but featured a transparent sail area on the roof's aft portion for improved visibility.

Opposite page: A Fiero that might have been, the Stealth, started out with an aggressive-looking air inlet flanked by parking lights set into a recessed sculpture that wrapped around to house the side marker lights. The Pontiac name was played up at the rear. Above: Sculpturing added interest to the body sides.

Both of these red-and-charcoal GTP proposals represented a much better overall integration of intake scoops, lower-body ground effects, and spoiler treatment than the GT and SE versions of earlier years. There's no doubt about it, the Fiero would have been heading toward a very bright future in terms of enthusiast appeal.

Unfortunately, even with the problems that caused Fiero's termination in 1988, any chance of extending production into the next few years would likely have been snuffed due to the more serious problems facing General Motors itself. Fiero thus would likely have been killed in any case. A drastic planned reduction of platforms from which to build GM's entire fleet most certainly would not have allowed for anything as unique as the Fiero, at least not in GM's near-future plans.

This glimpse at what might have been is a tantalizing prospect for those of us "Fiero Faithful" still lamenting the car's demise a half-dozen years ago. I'm just glad that I can still go into my garage and enjoy looking at my "new '88 Fiero Formula coupe.

I'm hoping it will be there for a long, long time.