

Pontiac has been vindicated—the vision has been delivered intact, on budget, and on schedule

the idea that this should be a 2-passenger commuter car, a high-mileage second car to the B-body that already occupied a place in the driveway. The other part of the sales pitch to the bean counters stipulated that the Fiero would be built using as much existing componentry as possible. The engine, transaxle, and rear suspension would be based on X-car components. The front suspension from Chevette components. But even at that, the money allocated to the project, known internally and to the rest of the world as the P-car, was a piddling amount, a mere \$700 million.

All through the course of design and development the project ran into problems, some so severe that there were rumors as recently as two years ago that the whole thing might be scrapped. New technologies were being tried, a new way of dealing with

suppliers was being instituted, and it took considerable effort on the part of the project team to overcome the built-in inertia they encountered both inside and outside the company. Some said the new plastic skins would fly off the first time a Fiero passed an 18-wheeler. Others said the project could never be delivered for the money that was allocated.

Hoglund and company responded to the challenge. The various suppliers were called in en masse, shown the car, given an opportunity to drive it, and then told to go home and see how much they could reduce the price of the components. This strategy paid off, and the project was imbued with an unusually high respect for costs, which was good. If the P-car project had gone significantly over budget, it's likely the Fiero would not be the subject of this month's

cover, nor any other month's, for that matter. The people at Pontiac deserve plenty of credit, not only for being creative in the use of some new technologies but also for persevering in the face of some really tough odds.

Now that the car is here, and we've had a chance to drive it, it's clear the effort was well worth it. Pontiac has been vindicated—the vision has been delivered intact, on budget, and on schedule.

The engine chosen for the Fiero is the tried-and-true 2.5-liter pushrod four mated to the manual transaxle also employed in the X-cars. The cylinder head was redesigned and an all-new casting was used to incorporate swirl-port fuel delivery. The combustion chambers and the shape of the piston tops were also redesigned to take maximum advantage of the swirl-port in-

