

Perhaps the most revealing thing about that blast down the interstate was the mileage

duction path. The combination of these three factors allowed the compression ratio to be increased from 8.2:1 to 9.0:1. Bore and stroke remain the same, but, oddly, the horsepower rating has been reduced from 94 hp at 4000 rpm for the '83 engine as found on the Phoenix, to 92 hp at 4000 in Fiero trim. Torque rating is also down from 135 lb-ft to 134. Fuel delivery is by throttle body fuel injection.

The engine and transaxle are mounted on a cradle at the rear of the car, with the engine lying transversely. The cradle is attached to the body spaceframe at four points by large synthetic rubber isolators. The mounting points for the lower control arms at the rear are also mounted to this cradle, while the top of the MacPherson strut is mounted to the body. There are control rods connecting the rear of the

wheel assembly to the cradle. These rods control rear wheel toe-in, and it would seem that rear toe control could be affected by bushing compliance in the cradle-to-body mounting points. That is, in time, as the cradle bushings begin to wear, the rear wheels might tend to exhibit a certain amount of rear toe change when side loads are imposed.

The front suspension is made up of an upper and lower control arm with the shock absorber and coil spring mounted between the body and the lower control arm. This setup is borrowed virtually intact from the Chevette/T-1000 cars except that the shock absorber is mounted to the lower arm in the Fiero rather than the upper arm in the Chevette. This change was necessary to keep the hood profile low. Although the track of the Chevette's front

suspension was widened by 6.6 in. (51.2 in. for Chevette versus 57.8 for Fiero) the geometry was left essentially unchanged. While this may sound like a pretty humble setup for a mid-engined 2-seater, the unremarkable origins of the front end don't make themselves apparent. It feels like a whole different beast. Ditto for the steering rack. Same origin, different feel. The final component of the front suspension is a 23mm anti-roll bar. Interestingly enough, there is no stabilizer at the rear of the car.

As you might expect, the combination of a bar at the front and none in the rear results in understeer, the safe-driving mode as determined by Genuine Motors. That's not to say that the car is a congenial plow, however. It's actually quite neutral, right up to the limit where dreaded understeer takes over and forces you to lift off

