

1984 Pontiac Fiero

A pretty, plastic face hiding a major revolution



With the sole exception of the 1984 Corvette, no car in recent memory has generated as much pre-introduction speculation and anticipation as this one has. The spy photo/rumor merchants have been going full-tilt since word first got out that such a car was scheduled for production. Mid-engine. Two seats. Its painstaking progress has been chronicled with the same sense of urgency usually reserved for major world events like disarmament talks or political campaigns. We've been waiting for this one a long time, and for lots of very good reasons.

For those who are observers of the car scene and the machinations of Detroit corporate life, the story of the Fiero has been laden with high drama, low humor, and a classic struggle between men who have a vision (plus the strength and know-how to see that vision made real) versus men who, for reasons of

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their own, don't share the vision and are less than tolerant of its very existence.

On one side of the struggle is the Pontiac division, an embattled entity by anyone's definition. Lacking the sales clout of Chevy and Oldsmobile or the electronic wizardry and quality image of Buick, Pontiac really had nothing, in terms of unique products or image, to set it apart from the other divisions. (Cadillac doesn't really enter into

this discussion, living as it does in splendid isolation from the rest of Detroit.) It was clear that Pontiac needed something new, something different, and something it could call its very own—a car that would not be shared by any other division and upon which Pontiac could begin to rebuild the image it had in the past, when GTOs ruled the streets of America. This was patently clear to everyone, especially to Bill Hoglund, Pontiac's general manager.

On the other side of the struggle is the Corporation. At best, it was reticent about building a 2-seat sports car. At a time when it couldn't sell mainstream USA the bread-and-butter cars that had always been the staple of America's car diet, how in the world, the Corporation reasoned, could Pontiac have the nerve to suggest something so, so—frivolous as a 2-seat sports car?

As with anything worth doing, the struggle was not easy. The Corporation was finally sold on

