



## Vega GT

Did you say, gasp, ghaack, a VEGA GT?? Yes. It's a fun-to-drive, handsome, economical car, very pleasing, except . . .

. . . Except that older Vegas' engines self-destruct. You have to be EXTRA extra careful shopping for a Vega. Get a mechanic who knows and hates them to check your prospect thoroughly.

This bad engine reputation is why you pay so little for a car that goes so well. The steering is firm and the shift is heavy and the clutch is better than Charles Atlas, but you can shoot a Vega GT down a twisting road like a wild man. Forget the dismal back seat. Just keep one eye on the temperature gauge (any overheating is death to a Vega engine) and the other on the road and enjoy your Vega while it lasts.

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## Capri 1600

The original 1,600-cc Capri was the first "super coupe"—a collection of economy sedan parts designed into a machine of disciplined road manners.

The engine is the same as in the first Pinto and isn't very strong, but it's as complicated as a cement block and not much harder to fix. Power-mongers should seek out later Capris with the 2,000-cc engine.

But who cares about acceleration when you've got a crisp, four-speed, rack-and-pinion steering that tells you all about the road, and superbly balanced brakes? The front seats are comfortable and the rears much better than a Pinto's or Vega's. Four six-footers can take a long trip—not in opulence but not in agony either. The main problem is that in a Capri, they'll all want to drive.

# 6

Story by Jim Williams and Mark Young

Photos by Jim Williams and Steve Boerner

# City folks 'discover' the pickup truck

By Mark Young

Over the horizon a cloud of dust appears. Moving over to the side of the road, you watch while a big, blue Ford pickup slides by sending up a shower of gravel. You have just met the pickup on its native surface, the gravel road.

Today the pickup prowls not only the country lane, but the high-speed freeway as well. Clothed in decorator colors and sporting the accoutrements of civilized driving, the pickup has moved on the trendy automotive scene. Urban teenagers and their parents lust after them, and all the right car magazines sing their praises.

The trend has its roots in the last decade, with the coming of the pickup camper. No more fussing with tents, no more motel bills. Now Ma and Pa could load up their brood and see the world, living in the same vehicle in which they travelled.

The roads west suddenly were covered with campers with West or East coast license plates, crawling toward the perfect vacation.

Back home, the proud campers discovered the utility of the big open box. Everything from motorcycles to mothers-in-law could go into the spacious rear end and travel with a minimum of driving discomfort. Besides, the pickup was fun to drive.

The height of the cab and the wraparound windshield allowed good visibility for drivers trying to get through heavy traffic.

With options like power steering, power brakes and even automatic transmissions, the pickup could be tamed into a sedate pseudo-car. Air conditioning, AM-FM radios, the new pickups offered all the comforts of home in a kinky form.

During an era which hungered for "countrified" entertainment like the Eagles and the Waltons, the pickup was seen as another way of getting back to the farm. As one observer put it,

"Many corporate executives spend their first 30 years trying to get to the city and their next 30 trying to get out."

Today the pickup has an added attraction—power. Pickups with a gross vehicle weight rating over 6,000 lbs. are safe from the Environmental Protection Agency's light-duty emissions regulations. This convenient immunity allows the thrill seeker to order mammoth engines which once powered all super cars.

One such pickup is the Chevy C-10 Stepside. While the short bed won't hold much—think of it as an open-air trunk—the optional 454 cu.-in. 250 hp engine makes this near pickup the most powerful bastard since William the Conqueror. In this ersatz form the pickup has become the new darling of the van elite in California. Rumor has it the one famous rock star has ordered a Stepside with the history of Western civilization since Rome pictured on the side.

The pickup probably will continue to spawn new cultural mutations. A large part of its present appeal comes from the pickup's flexibility. Unlike most cars which have been stylized and opera windowed to death, the pickup still can be molded to individual tastes.

Perhaps you'd like a nice \$12,000 Range Rover that can satisfy all your explorer fantasies except calling you sahib. Then of course, you could buy a 1953 ambiguous, grayish-pink Studebaker pickup and paint black fists on the sides. I don't know what kind of fantasy this fulfills—and it's probably illegal.



Photos by Todd Kirk