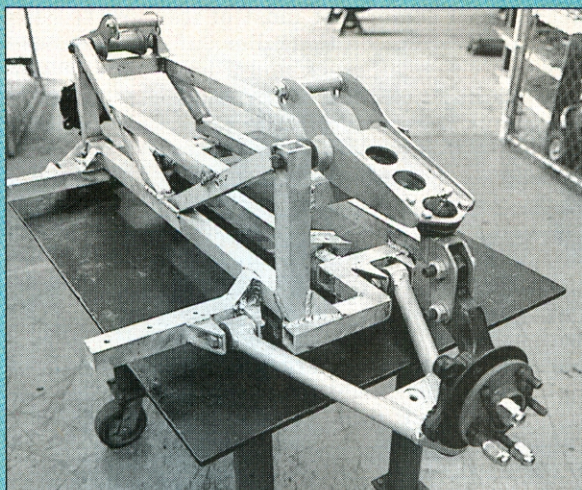


One obvious question about a car with such a skewed power-to-weight ratio is how well it handles bumps. Very well, thank you. At higher speeds, the body's reverse-lift aerodynamics help keep the rubber on the pavement. In addition, the front steel subframe (aluminum is optional) supports a McKee independent system with upper rocker arms that cantilever on coil-overs to absorb washboard surfaces. At the rear



The front subframe carries a rocker-arm suspension system damped by inboard coil-over springs.

is a similar design, with the subframe cradling the engine as well. This same system will be used on Consulier's HP-40 sedan now under development. While driving the test mule, I watched the rocker arms in action, and they respond adroitly to the slightest road imperfections.

On the GTP sports car, the suspension operates with extraordinary suppleness, with virtually no jiggling or darting. The steering response is quick, positive, and direct. You feel almost invincible diving into a turn, and can apply huge doses of power coming out of the apex without throwing the back end off its track. The car just slings around like it was hooked to a steel cable. Consulier reports pulling as much as .98 g on the skidpad.

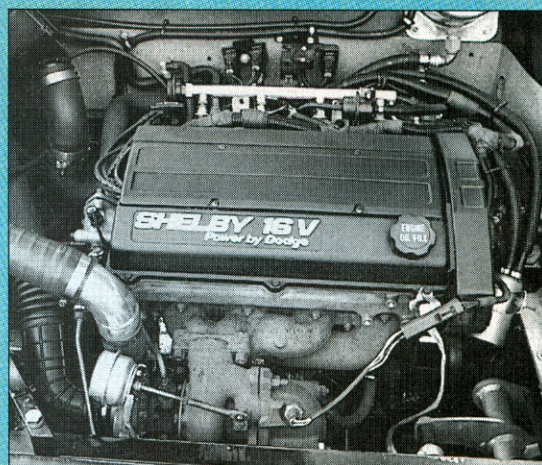
Interestingly, the brakes are stock discs right off Chrysler's parts shelves, as is the five-speed tranny. Why the conventional production components? Chapin explains, "Our market is for the guy who either

understands the technology of the structure, or who wants high performance at low price—not necessarily low price going into it, but low cost of continuing to receive that performance. Because of the fact of having a very light automobile, we don't put a lot of stress on the mechanical components. We've run three 24-hour races, untold number of regional races, a full IMSA series, and we've never had a structural defect in the automobile." In other words, thanks to the chassis' superior technology you don't need expensive, heavy-duty race components. And replacing most worn parts is as simple as stopping by the nearest Mopar dealer.

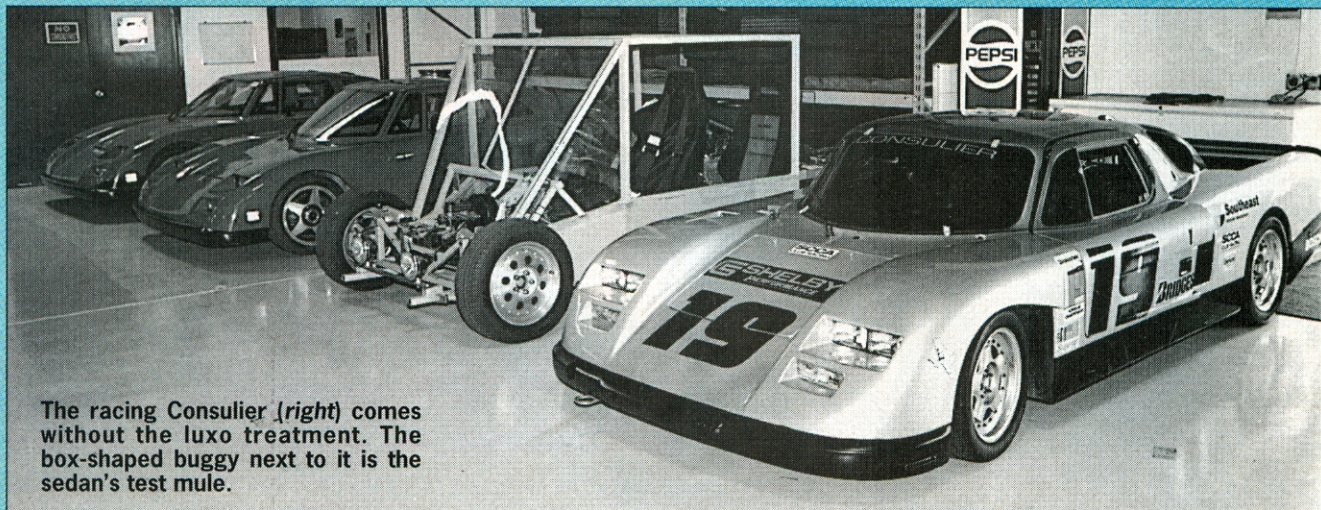
One part that should be swapped right off, though, is the Pontiac

Fiero parking brake lever. Oh, it works well enough, but it just doesn't look right in a new, \$63,000 exotic. Otherwise, the basic-black interior is classy and upscale. The original cockpit treatment received quite a drubbing in the automotive press (the editor of our sister publication *Motor Trend* even had the gall to refer to it as looking like a *kit car*—shows what he knows about kits). But the interior accommodations have since been spruced up. Included in the LX model are air conditioning, electric windows, an Alpine stereo with a CD player, leather seats, full carpeting, and VDO instrumentation. The stripped-down, race-oriented GTP SPORT version costs about \$10,000 less (as of this writing).

Whichever version you prefer, the comfort factor is quite good, much better in fact than replicas of GT40s and Countaches that I've wedged myself into. There's even some luggage space in the rear underneath a vinyl tarp. The Consulier's bubble



What makes the new C-4 Consulier go boom is Shelby's new Turbo III—a 16-valve 2.2-liter Chrysler rated at 224 hp.



The racing Consulier (right) comes without the luxu treatment. The box-shaped buggy next to it is the sedan's test mule.