

L.A. Story: Part Two

Seeing the future

Say "lube job" to a gay man and he revs the wrong engine. But not always, as I discovered on a recent expense-paid junket to Los Angeles, where former No on 36 Campaign staffer **Calvin Fleming** invited me and nine other journalists to test-drive General Motors cars.

The first I tried was the Saab 9-3 convertible. Heck. When in L.A., do as the Angelinos do. I've fantasized about driving one of these babies with my hair flying in the breeze, my elbow carelessly hanging over the door, sunglasses shading my identity from the hoi polloi. And here I was actually doing it...except that I have no hair to fly.

Our first stop was the Saturn dealership in Santa Monica, one of a handful of gay-owned GM dealerships in the country. The owner described the Saturn driver as someone who buys Cole-Haan shoes, but also shops at Target for the style even though he or she can afford better. Clearly, the owner can afford better because his stylish jeans came from Fred Segal.

GM was the first car company to provide domestic partner benefits and is the most innovative regarding marketing to the queer community. Among its ads are three for Saab aimed squarely at us: "Because Not All Roads Are Straight," "Versatile Tops" and "Topless in 30 Seconds."

Leaving the dealership, I climbed into Calvin's

two-seater Sky convertible, the very first sports car from GM's Saturn line. It's the roadster featured in the Bon Jovi music video for "Lost Highway." If the Saab 9-3 made me feel like I'm luxuriating in success, the Sky made me giddy and exuberant as I zipped up Pacific Coast Highway toward Malibu.

On the way, Calvin pointed out Point Dune, where Matthew McConaughey likes to surf and

fortunately, they aren't, but the conversation did turn to the topic of three-ways. I peered down the beach, still hoping to catch a glimpse of Matthew.

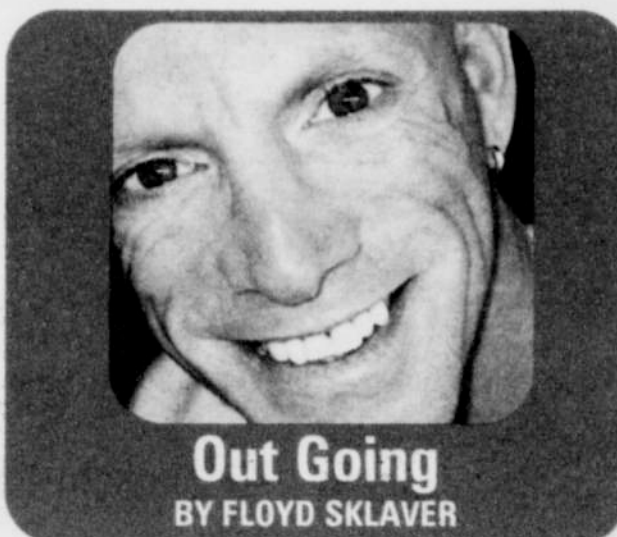
Much of the talk

was about cars and most of it was way over my head. Finally I asked the table, "What was it like growing up a car geek and gay?" One journalist said he was relieved to discover auto journalism (not to be confused with auto eroticism): "I was so glad to finally find others with my passion." In fact, *Car & Driver* has a number of gay writers.

After lunch, I climbed behind the wheel of the hydrogen-powered Chevy Equinox. Unlike the hybrids on the market, hydrogen cars offer the promise of zero-emission technology; the only byproduct is water vapor. GM is testing the technology on the Equinox, which is a minivan because it hopes to convert

the masses.

The ride was surprisingly smooth and quiet. In fact, the only noise I heard was the fan. The car also accelerated quicker than I expected. GM officially rates it at 0-60 in 12 seconds, but I can attest to doing better than that. The weird part was that



there was no noticeable shifting of gears during acceleration. It was like driving a golf cart on steroids.

That night was my last in L.A., and I attended the open-

ing festivities of OutFest, the 28th annual gay and lesbian film festival. **Margaret Cho** gave a few (very few) opening remarks before the screening of *Breakfast with Scot*, an adaptation of **Michael Downing's** novel. The first gay-themed film ever to have permission to use the logo of a major league sports team, it was better than the book, so it was easy to praise the surprisingly short **T.R. Knight** at the party afterward.

Standing by the bar was cyber-gossip **Perez Hilton**. I wanted to take my picture with him but was warned that the celebrity gawker doesn't like being gawked at himself. Ironic, no?

At midnight, the DJ spun Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline" and the crowd headed to the door. I expected later from an L.A. industry party, but it was a school night and some had to drive many miles to get home.

I don't know what they're all driving, but I'm exhausted from being so Out Going. 10

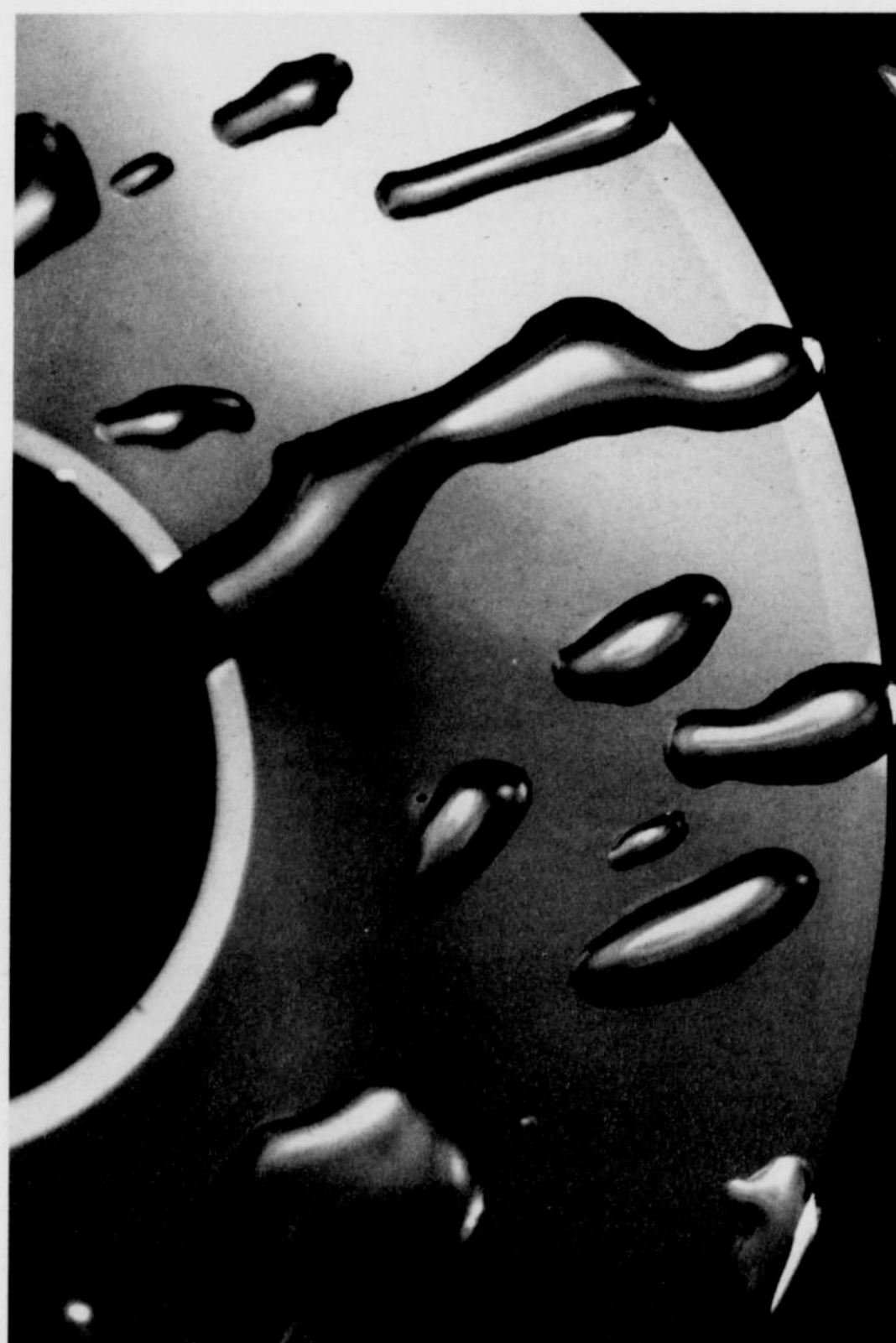
FLOYD SKLAVER wants to know about your event. E-mail him at floydsklaver@comcast.net.



GM's Calvin Fleming lets Floyd test-drive the hydrogen-powered Chevy Equinox.

where the locals got into a fistfight with paparazzi staking him out. If there hadn't been so much traffic, I would have pulled an illegal U-turn and staked him out myself.

"Are Barbra and James meeting us for lunch?" I asked about Malibu's most famous residents. Un-



VIDEORAMA

MOVIES UNCENSORED...
THE WAY THEY SHOULD BE

2640 ne alberta • 2310 n lombard • 1136 nw lovejoy • 7522 n lombard • 1990 se ladd

503-288-4067 • 503-289-8408 • 503-796-2825 • 503-247-3433 • 503-231-1181

ALL RENTALS - 5 DAYS