

CAR COMPANIES LAUNCH SAFETY CAMPAIGNS

In response to growing concerns about the dangers airbags pose to children, the Big Three automakers have initiated programs to educate consumers on ways to keep their children safer while in the car. General Motors Corporation recently unveiled its program entitled "Precious Cargo — Protecting the Children Who Ride With You," which features a color booklet and a 16-minute videotape. Ford, in a team effort with Sesame Street producer, the Children's Television Workshop, will encourage kids to "Buckle up with Big Bird." Chrysler's partnership with leading medical and educational associations has produced "The ABCs of Air Bag Safety," a campaign that advocates the buckling up of children in the back seat whenever possible.



Plymouth Voyager, Dodge Caravan, Chrysler Town & Country

The granddaddy of minivans, having fended off competitors from every direction, is still the industry benchmark. Chrysler was the first to offer the optional fourth, sliding door on the passenger side, and among the first to discover new places to insert cup holders. The Plymouth Voyager and Dodge Caravan still have broad appeal among the masses. Says *AAOW* editor Paul Eisenstein: [It is] "An affordable way to get into America's best minivans." Throw in ABS and the optional door, and you get "a perfect package at a bargain basement price tag," he adds. One drawback: The sluggish 2.4-liter engine offering 150 horsepower. Buyers would definitely want to purchase the peppy, but optional 3.3-liter V6.

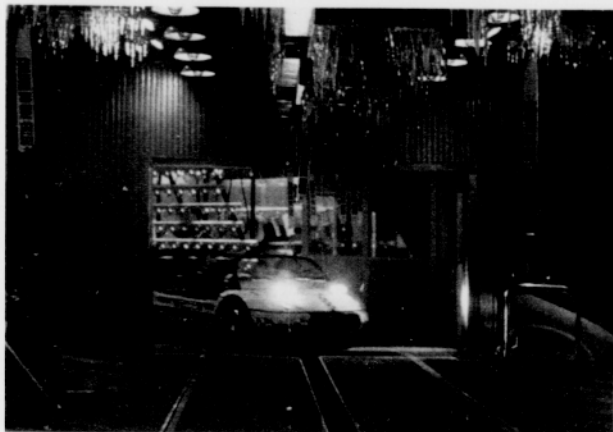
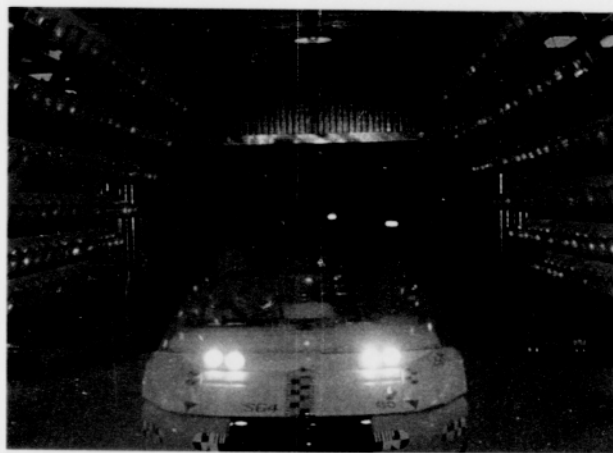


Ford Windstar

The Windstar lacks personality, but is functional. "As good as it is, it still shows why Chrysler remains the leader in the minivan pack," says editor Paul Eisenstein. The Windstar performs and handles well and, says editor Warren Brown, "it's one of the best sculpted minivans inside and out." The interior is roomy and comfortable, sporting a dashboard that curves and wraps around the vehicle. But it's missing some little amenities, such as the optional fourth door. And, unlike GM and Chrysler, Ford doesn't offer an optional stretch body, but its length and wheelbase are longer than both. The 3.0 V6 engine performs well.

GM AND DISNEY CREATE TEST TRACK AT EPCOT

General Motors and Walt Disney World Resort in Florida have teamed up to open the latest attraction at Epcot. Scheduled to debut this fall, Test Track will offer theme-goers a realistic recreation of GM's Milford Proving Ground, the company's testing facility northwest of Detroit. Among the thrills visitors will experience, are an almost too-close-for-comfort high-speed barrier test in which riders seemingly replace crash test dummies. Riders will also experience the thrill of a test track and a behind-the-scenes glimpse of how GM incorporates its safety testing into the development process of each car and truck.



BLACK CAR TALK RADIO

AutoNetwork, a Virginia-based Internet provider, recently launched a radio talk show designed to help African Americans buy automobiles. The show which currently airs on WOLB-AM in Baltimore, WOL-AM and WYCB-AM in Washington, D.C., discusses the process of buying automobiles and directs consumers to a network of dealers who have pledged to provide fair treatment. The host and creator of the show, Roosevelt Gist, said he plans to expand the program nationally through black newspapers and other black radio stations. AutoNetwork can be reached on the Internet at: www.autonetnetwork.com or by telephone at: (703) 758-0119.

Briefs compiled by Marc Battle