

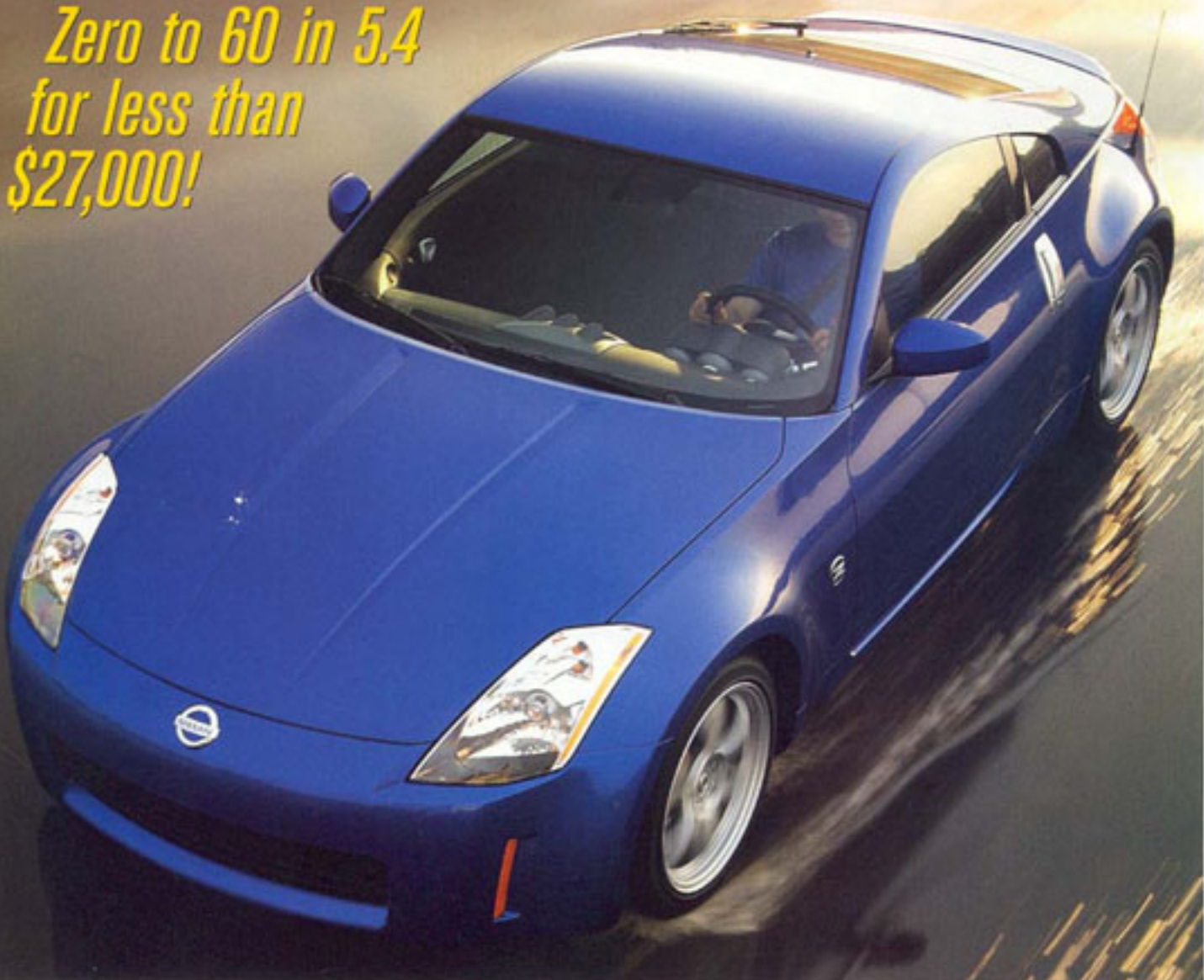
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# CAR AND DRIVER

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## First Test! **Nissan 350Z**

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**NEW:** Ferrari 575M Maranello, Saleen S7, Austin Powers pimpmobile.

**TESTS:** Hummer H2, Lexus ES300, Lincoln Town Car.

**PLUS:** One Lap, a hydrogen Chrysler, Funny Car wizard Lee Beard.





Looking a bit homemade after a New Mexico crash, Rick Ehrenberg's nitrous-boosted '69 Valiant still finished 15th.

the rest of the day but left the competitors facing another 596 miles to the next stop, a little north of Tulsa, Oklahoma. The route led through St. Louis. The Gateway Arch looked great at midnight. *Are we almost there yet?*

There were three events in the Tulsa vicinity: one at Tulsa Speedway, a half-mile dirt oval, and two at Hallett Motor Racing Circuit, which meant it was early evening once again when the Lappers set out for Pikes Peak International Raceway, just south of Colorado Springs, 662 miles away, a drive made merrier by thunderstorms rich in tornado potential, as well as some uncommon animal sightings. There were the customary suicidal deer, although none fulfilled its death wish. Not so common, however, were the wild horses reported to be cavorting across the highway about 100 miles east of Colorado Springs. Since this report was based on a wee-small-hours encounter of the three-consecutive-nights-of-driving kind, it had a hallicinatory sound to it. Still, the Saturn team swore by it, claiming they'd avoided equine tragedy only by wild maneuvers and a little luck. In any case, wild horses

## 22nd Place 2003 Saturn L200

This was the third straight One Lap for the Saturn factory team and the most ambitious yet, with entries in two different classes—Economy Car, dominated once again by a turbocharged SC1 coupe driven by Chris Berube and Michael Stimac, and Mid-Price Sedan, where Mike Kramer, a Saturn engineer and Sports Car Club of America weekend racer, piloted a turbo L200 sedan (below). That car represented new territory for



on the highway were a One Lap first, as was the team's encounter a few days later with a bat. This would be the mammalian kind of bat, as distinct from a Louisville Slugger. And this particular bat will fly no more.

Meanwhile, back in Colorado, other drivers reported seeing a pair of mules sauntering down the blacktop, not to mention assorted coyotes, jackrabbits, and sundry small critters. Then two days later, the Mark Fitzgerald-Wayne Chin-Emilio Arce Subaru Impreza whacked into a wild boar, prompting a new team name: Boar's Head Racing. The boar, for its part, got up and sauntered off into the Texas brush.

Following two Pikes Peak time trials, the Lappers were afforded a bit of respite

Saturn, and its opposition was formidable. Thus, finishing fourth in an 18-car class would have been a respectable achievement even if the car hadn't perforated a piston in its turbocharged Ecotec four during its second run at Summit Point, the event's penultimate time trial. But it did. Rather than give up, the Saturn crew limped the car some 350 miles from West Virginia to Saturn of Westridge, near Rochester, New York, a run marked by steadily decreasing intervals between stops to top up the oil. When they arrived there, a volunteer team of Westridge techs was standing by, as were Saturn engine gurus Peter Dugdale and Mark Womack, back home in Michigan, cell phones in hand. Adapting used pistons and a used head gasket, the team got the engine together just in time to nurse it the 60 miles to Lancaster, east of Buffalo, for the finale. Although the team dialed the boost down to 3.5 psi, a big drop from the 13 to 15 psi they'd been using, Kramer managed to post the 25th-fastest time on the paved oval, thus preserving the L200's place in the standings. Using all the boost, the Saturn boys pegged the Ecotec's output at about 270 horsepower, a big jump from the 135 horsepower of the naturally aspirated version. Note: A factory turbo option is a definite maybe for future Saturns.

in Albuquerque, New Mexico, a mere 373 miles south. But the next day brought two runs at Sandia Motorsports Park, a tricky two-year-old road circuit just west of town, and an eye-crossing 812-mile grind to Texas World Speedway, about 90 miles northwest of Houston. After two runs at TWS, the next stop was Road Atlanta, 924 miles east.

Small wonder that a good many Lappers were talking in tongues when they showed up at a social event not usually performed at racetracks: a wedding. Fortunately, the bride and groom were still able to express themselves in English, which helped move the ceremony along at a brisk pace. But more on that in a minute.

Following the Road Atlanta rounds, the schedule became more tolerable—a 575-mile run to Summit Point Raceway in easternmost West Virginia (punctuated by a checkpoint at Glen Dodd's always-interesting Carolina Rod Shop in Piedmont, South Carolina). After Summit's two track sessions, there was a 383-mile dash to Lancaster Speedway, just east of Buffalo, the last track event on the schedule. With a little rest, rationality reappeared among the various teams. Grumpiness subsided. Old friends resumed their friendships. New



Cooliest trailers duplicated Ron Adee's Viper (right) and Lyons-Hurst T-Bird, observed mowing Summit Point grass.

