

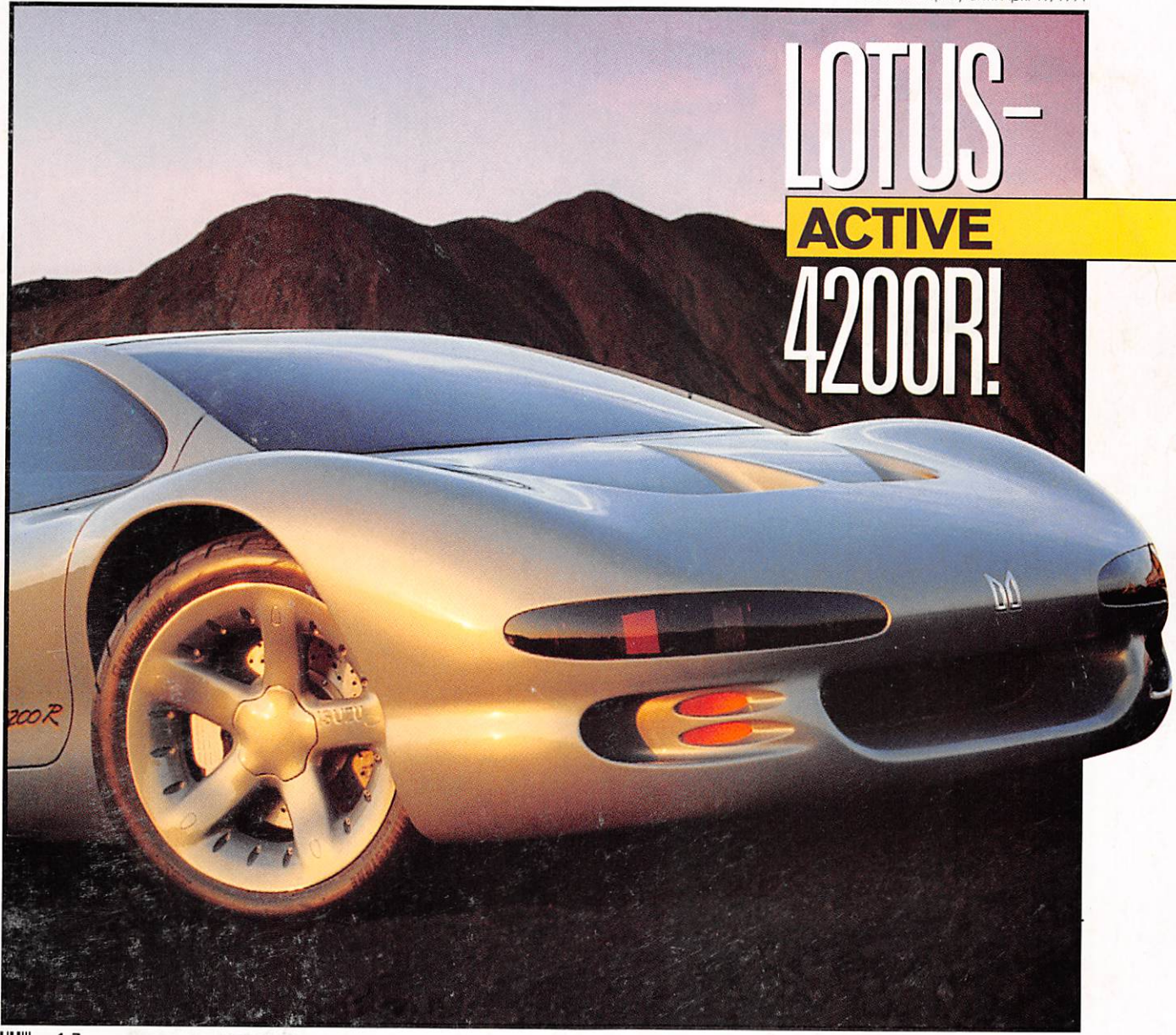
▶▶▶ OUTRAGEOUS SHOGUN! ◀◀◀◀◀

# EXOTIC CARS

## QUARTERLY

SPRING 1991

Retailer: Display until April 19, 1991



LOTUS-  
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95  
\$3.95  
\$5.95



**INSIDE: Callaway Cabrio, Gemballa Mirage, Ginetta G33, Mariah, Bizzarrini P538 & more....**



## ROTARY ROLLERSKATE BY MAXTON

A rally of old cars seems an odd place to be driving an automobile from a new automaker. Yet that's what happened at the Colorado Grand, the 1000-mile vintage car run through the lovely mountains of Colorado. Several of the men who organize the Grand have also established Maxton Components Ltd of Englewood, Colorado, and they took along one of their just-completed cars for journalists to try. If you enjoy small, quick automobiles, you'll probably like what they're doing.

Bob Sutherland, godfather of the Colorado Grand, and Dan Ripley are two of the major players in the Maxton project. And they are ambitious, readying two models. One, called the Mille Miglia, is the big honker, with such features as a Nissan 280Z engine and Alfa Romeo's De Dion rear suspension wrapped up in a little roadster with front cycle fenders. They begin with their first production model, the Rollerskate.

While both cars' exterior designs pay homage to the Lotus/Caterham Seven, the Rollerskate's spirit is most like that famous kit car. Although the wheelbase is 90.0 in., the overall length is only 145.2 in.; width tapes at 64.0 in. and the height at the top of the rollbar is 41.5 in.

Underneath is a tube chassis developed and made in Englewood, where the remainder of the pieces are also added. Front suspension is upper and lower A-arms, with the uprights and disc brakes from the Mustang II. The rear has a live axle from a first-series Mazda RX-7, located by trailing arms and a Panhard rod, with coil springs and tube shocks completing the design. The axle's original drum brakes stay with it. Tires are 205/

60R-13s mounted on Panasport alloy wheels. The steering is a Ford rack-and-pinion unit, using a power-assisted version to get a quicker ratio, but without the power. In a car as light as the Rollerskate, you don't miss the assist.

For legal reasons, you can buy all this as either a rolling kit or almost completed car. What you'll need to add to the kit version are the fiberglass body panels and the interior (Maxton adds them in the more finished edition). Ripley figures that in less than 50 hours (believe it or not!), you can bolt on the panels and add the insides, which include VDO instruments and Corbeau seats.

What you're still missing, of course, is the engine. If Maxton were to install that part of the car, it would have to meet both U.S. federal emissions rules and Department of Transportation safety regs. This would require building prototypes for all sorts of checks, from engine emissions to crash tests. As a result, your Maxton arrives with only hopes where the engine should be, and you need to find a Mazda rotary to fill the void.

You'd be looking for a 13B—used in the RX-4 and the early Seventies' pickup—or a 12A Wankel from an RX-7. Both come stock with around 125 bhp, but can easily be modified to the 165–170 range. The builder's job is to make certain the engine is installed with all Mazda's emissions equipment in place. While state rules dictate the final needs, you'll likely have to prove all the emissions equipment is there, and then pass a tailpipe emissions test.

The result is pure fun. Getting into the Maxton is like putting your pants on two legs at a time ... but well worth the effort. What'll it do? Just over 5 sec to 60 mph with the higher-bhp engine. Get around a corner flat with what you might call impish authority. Act even more like a streetable Formula Ford than a Mazda Miata. Touse your hair in the nicest possible way ... and generally plant a grin across your face. It's a car for Saturday mornings after a hard week.

Prices range from \$19,500 for the rolling kit to \$22,000 for the full car less engine. More info is available from Maxton Components, 3774 Lipan St, Englewood, Colo. 80110.

The line forms on the right.

—John Lamm

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

