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Senate Bill 251



Support Data

Section 2 lines 10, 11, 12 & 13 allows an exception for requiring a front license plate for those automobiles manufactured without a bracket, device or other contrivance to display a plate.

Section 2 lines 15 & 16 provide an option to the owner should the owner desire to attach a front plate.

Section 2 lines 17 through 28 requires the Department of Motor Vehicles to continue to issue 2 license plates and **does not** entitle the owner to pay a reduced tax or fee.

Remainder of bill amends appropriate sections of the motor vehicle law to comply with the exception provided in the bill.

Fiscal note reflects there is to be no loss in revenue to the Department of Motor vehicles.

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Twenty (20) states require just one (1) rear plate. They are:

Alabama	Michigan
Arizona	New Hampshire
Arkansas	New Mexico
Delaware	North Carolina
Florida	Oklahoma
Georgia	Pennsylvania
Indiana	South Carolina
Kansas	Tennessee
Kentucky	Vermont
Louisiana	West Virginia*

*AAA Digest of Motor Laws, 69th Edition

A few examples of today's automobiles that are manufactured without a provision for a front license plate:

Chrysler 300*

Mitsubishi Lancer

Jaguar J8

Dodge SRT - 4*

Ford Escape

Corvette C6 Cadillac STS

Ford Escape (Hybrid SUV)*

Audi S8

Ferrari 600

GMC Yukon*

Mazda 6 Sport Wagon

Susuki XL 7

Pontiac G 6*

Page three

Chevrolet Cobalt*

Toyota Tacoma

Mercedes SL 65

Audi TT Quattro

Dodge Ram SRT 10

Buick LaCrosse

Buick Terraza

Mercury Mariner

Nissan Frontier

Jeep Cherokee

Saab 9-7X

Chrysler PT Crusier

*photograph attached

Chrysler 300 starts at \$23,595* > 7-year or 70,000-mile Powertrain
Warranty is included > To learn more about our HEMI® V8, take a
test drive at www.chrysler.com/300 or call 1.800.CHRYSLER >

CHRYSLER
INSPIRATION COMES FROM AMERICA

THE TOTALLY NEW
CHRYSLER 300C



Can inspiration lead to something totally unexpected? Yes. Can the American sports
sedan be reborn? Yes. And can HEMI® power arrive
with such style for under 33K*? Absolutely.



BUCKLE UP

*As shown, \$32,995. MSRP excludes tax. Includes Premium Care Plan. †See dealer for a copy of this limited warranty. Transferable
to second owner with fee. A deductible applies. For more information about Chrysler Financial, ask your local dealer.

Chrysler Financial

Financing your drive.

DODGE SRT-4

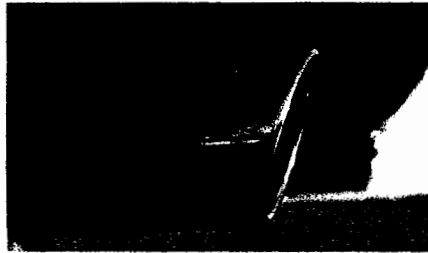
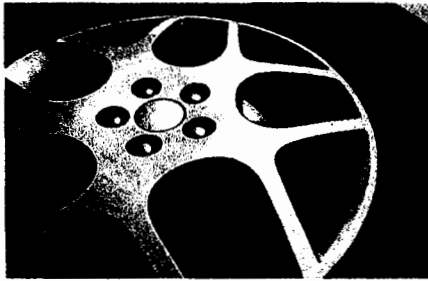
BY MIKE MONTICELLO

THERE ARE ONLY THREE THINGS YOU NEED to know about Dodge's pocket-rocket, the SRT-4: It has 230 bhp, 250 lb.-ft. of torque and no mufflers. Oh yeah, and it starts at just \$20,450. Okay, so that's four things.

To belittle the SRT-4 because it starts life as a "lowly" Neon would be a mistake, as this is part of its allure; what's more frustrating to a Ford Mustang GT or Chevrolet Camaro Z28 owner than to get smoked by a little econobox with a 4-banger? And with its turbocharged and intercooled 2.4-liter inline-4, it's plenty capable of doing this.

For 2004 the engineers at Chrysler Group's Performance Vehicle Operations added larger fuel injectors for increased flow and reworked the engine control module with a new calibration, the latter to improve torque, especially at low rpm. This is shown by the peak torque, which spans 2200-4400 rpm, versus 3200 for the old car. Despite these changes, this particular SRT-4 seemed a little slower than the two we tested previously, and the numbers bore this out: Its 0-60 time of 5.9 seconds and quarter mile in 14.5 sec. at 98.4 mph were both off by 0.3 sec. compared with the 2003 car. Admittedly, the '03 car was tested in cooler temperatures. And there was still enough on tap to handily out-drag the Ion Red Line, beating it by 0.3 sec. to both 60 mph and through the quarter mile.

But the SRT-4's manhandling of the Ion isn't properly borne



The hood scoop, wing and fancy wheels tip off this Dodge isn't your Mom's Neon. Its BFGoodrich tires provide excellent grip, but overheat quickly.

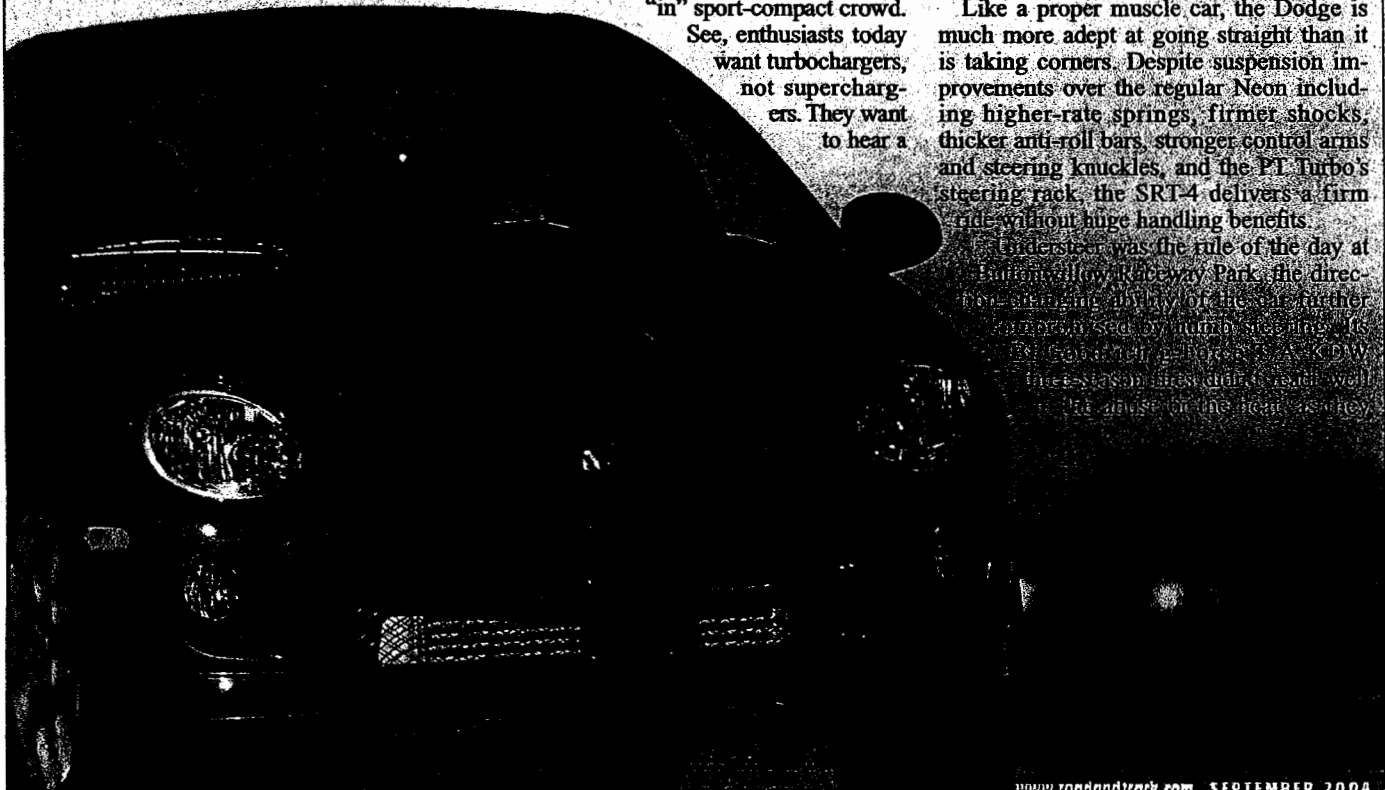
out by the numbers. It is in real-world driving, in roll-on conditions—for instance when cruising along the highway at 70 mph in 5th gear, and you want to make a pass without downshifting—that the SRT-4's tremendous torque and tractability serve notice. In these situations, the Ion's 205-bhp 2.0-liter four takes its sweet time to get up a head of steam.

The Ion also suffers from an inferiority complex, because it isn't part of the "in" sport-compact crowd. See, enthusiasts today want turbochargers, not superchargers. They want to hear a

turbo whistling and a blow-off valve releasing air with every shift. While the Saturn's engine is surprisingly potent—and even has an invigorating high-pitched exhaust note—it just isn't as compelling as the SRT-4's. Because the SRT-4, in all its unmuffled glory, makes every prod of the throttle a thrill (extra downshifts worth doing just for the decelerative burbling and popping from its straight-pipe) and every stoplight a new race.

Like a proper muscle car, the Dodge is much more adept at going straight than it is taking corners. Despite suspension improvements over the regular Neon including higher-rate springs, firmer shocks, thicker anti-roll bars, stronger control arms and steering knuckles, and the PT Turbo's steering rack, the SRT-4 delivers a firm ride without huge handling benefits.

Understeer was the rule of the day at Milton Keynes Raceway Park, the direction of travel of the car further emphasized by numb steering, its lack of grip and the fact that the SRT-4's three-season tires didn't reach well into the corners to the rear, as they



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2005 FORD
Escape Hybrid

BY JOHN LAMM

HYBRID. THE DICTIONARY definition is simple: "one of mixed origin or composition." But defining automotive hybrids isn't at all easy; which are "pure," "mild" or hype?

Into this confusion drives the newest hybrid vehicle, one that is quite a pleasant surprise: Ford's Escape Hybrid. Only little "HYBRID" badges, specific alloy wheels and a vent in the rear quarter window hint at its gasoline/electric drive system.

Interior changes? On the base model, a dashboard gauge indicates if the battery is charging, the tachometer needle rests at zero when you're in the pure electric mode and there's a PRNDL message center. An optional navigation system with a pictogram demonstrates how power is being routed—engine, motor, battery—and offers a readout of instant or accumulated fuel mileage. A 110-volt outlet is another extra.

All this is quite subtle considering what's under the sheet metal. Like Toyota's Prius, the Escape is a pure hybrid. This means it can run on only electricity (driven lightly to 25 mph) or a combination of electricity and the power of a 2.3-liter gasoline in-

line-4. An automatic stop-start function shuts off the internal combustion at rest and turns it on at launch, while regenerative braking recovers energy for the array of nickel/metal-hydrate batteries under the rear load floor.

The Escape can be had with front drive or—a feature it shares for the time being with no other hybrid—extra-cost all-wheel drive.

While the Escape shares no parts with the Prius, their drive systems are similar partially because of a patent swap between the automakers that forestalled nasty legal tangles. Ford points out that the software is all its own.

The gasoline heart of

the Escape is a 2.3-liter Duratec-based four with 133 bhp at 6000 rpm and 129 lb.-ft. of torque at 4500 rpm. An Atkinson-cycle engine, the four is said to be 4 percent more efficient than a normal 2.3 Duratec, but loses torque at low speeds. That loss is made up by a 94-hp electric motor working in unison with the gasoline engine via an electronically controlled planetary gear CVT (continuously variable transmission). Ford claims a combined 155 bhp for the hybrid system.

Also on the tech list are the "regen" brakes and electric power-assisted steering so you have boost even when the gasoline engine is off.

Nudge the key and the hybrid system comes alive. Shift into Drive and if you're a bit gentle with the throttle, you hum away under purely electric power. Dip into the pedal for more acceleration or get over 25 mph, and the gasoline four kicks gently into the equation.

Ford claims 4-cylinder fuel economy with 6-cylinder power for the hybrid, and while it doesn't feel that sprightly, it climbs freeway on-ramps with ease and can be fun on a curvy road or even off-road.

There are a few oddities, like the loud, disconcerting engine hum as the CVT revs the four up to its "sweet spot" and holds

it there, while the car hums. You can't hear the engine. It shuts down at stops and minor vibrations under some conditions.

Ford estimates the Escape Hybrid's combined fuel mileage at 32 mpg, which is about what we saw in mixed driving. Early guesses at EPA mileage are 35 mpg city/29 mpg highway. That's a far cry from the Prius' 60/51 mpg and the Honda Civic "mild" Hybrid's 47/48 mpg, but in a very different package... an SUV for those offended by SUV fuel mileage?

Buyers who are confirmed "greens" and find hybrids fit their needs to help conserve fuel (but aren't crunching numbers to have it all make financial sense) will like the new Ford. It's a useful, enjoyable package.

Those who want the Escape to stand up to the gasoline-powered Escape on a cost-per-mile basis will have more trouble making sense of it, particularly if the premium over the standard Escape is the expected \$3000-\$3500.

It's nice to see another sensible hybrid in the mix. And we're anxious to drive the Toyota and Lexus SUV hybrids that are just around the corner.

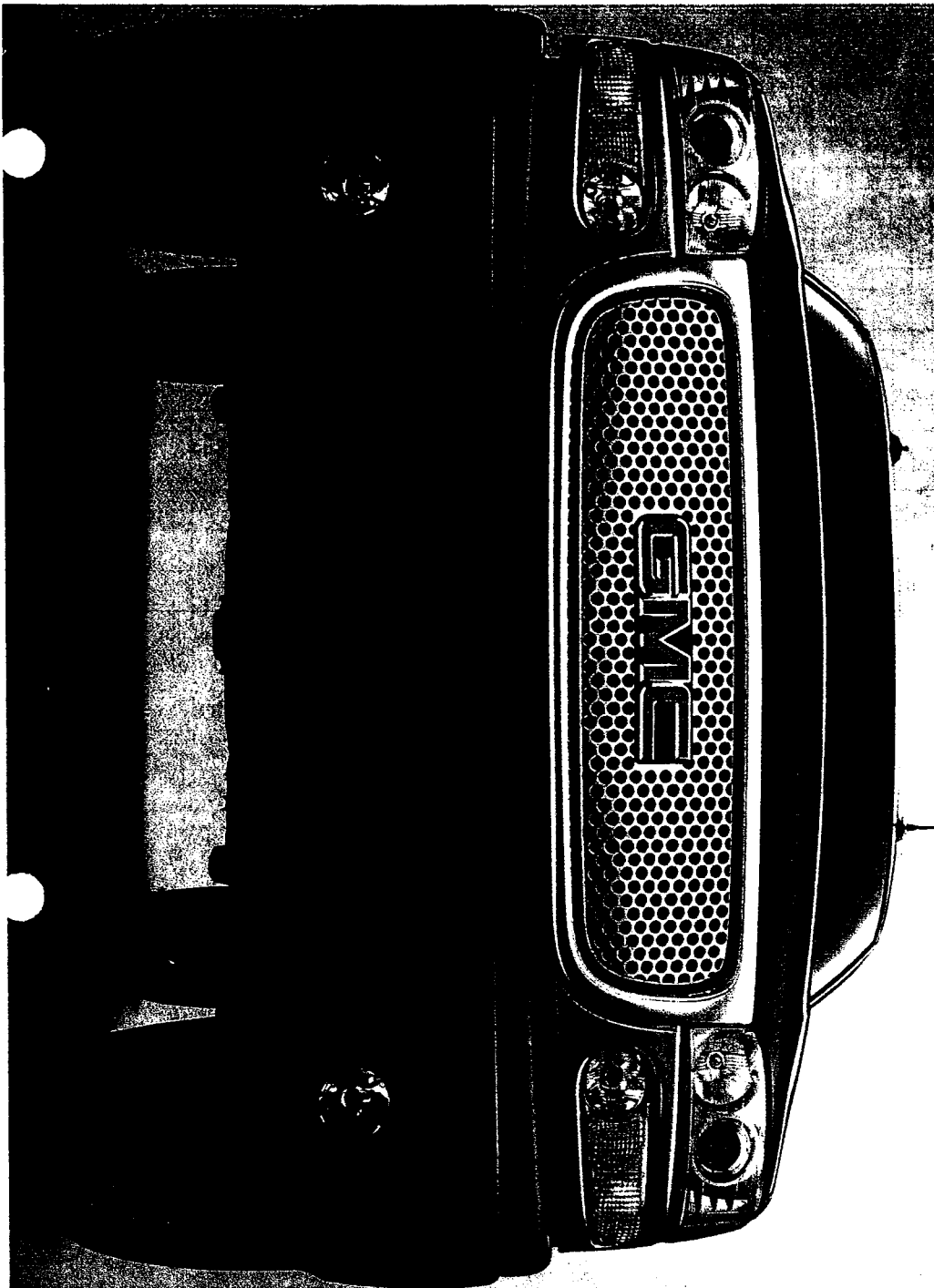


Electric, gas, or both? Dashboard's pictogram demonstrates how power is routed.

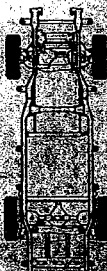
-60-

GETTA GRIP!

COMPUTER CHIP TO ALL FOUR WHEELS



STABILTRAK



YUKON DENALI WITH ROADS CURVES, SNOW, ICE, IN A GMC YUKON DENALI WITH STABILTRAK, IT'S ALL GOOD. THAT'S BECAUSE STABILTRAK ACTUALLY HELPS YOUR VEHICLE RESPOND MORE ACCURATELY AND PREDICTABLY TO YOUR STEERING COMMANDS. BY USING A COMPUTERIZED SYSTEM, STABILTRAK ADJUSTS ENGINE SPEED AND BRAKE PRESSURE TO HELP CORRECT UNDERSTEER OR OVERSTEER, AND KEEP YOU SAFE. PROFESSIONAL GRADE. ENGINEERING IT'S NOT MORE THAN YOU WOULD WANT MORE THAN YOU'RE USED TO.

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GMC YUKON DENALI

Yukon Denali is one of the most powerful SUVs in America. It's got 300 horsepower, 4000 lbs. of towing capacity, and a 4x4 drivetrain. It's also got a lot of other cool features, like a leather interior, a sunroof, and a navigation system. For more information, call 1-800-4ADONSTAR. ©2006 GM Corp.

21. Pontiac G6

Although it's too soon to mourn the Aztek's passing, Pontiac has at least replaced the hoary Grand Am with a more lively sedan called the G6. Leaping one class into the small end of the mid-size segment, the new G6 shares Epsilon front-wheel-drive architecture with the Chevrolet Malibu and the Saab 9-3. Coupe and convertible editions will follow, but four-cylinder engines are hors de combat. Thrust comes from GM's venerable 60-degree, 3.5-liter pushrod V-6. Sometime next year, a 3.9-liter edition arrives with a larger bore, a wilder cam, variable valve timing, and a dual-mode intake manifold. That engine and a six-speed manual transmission will energize the GTP version of the G6 with an

estimated 240 hp at 5900 rpm and 245 lb-ft of torque at 2800 rpm. Eighteen-inch wheels and tires are also part of the deal for the package. The extra power will come in handy, because the G6 plants substantially deeper dents in the pavement than its predecessor. A five-inch-longer wheelbase, improved body structure, and added air bags increase base weight by some 300 pounds. Shutting down half the 3.9-liter V-6's cylinders during cruising will help mitigate the pain at the pumps.

ON SALE: Fall 2004
PRICE: \$22,000-\$28,000 (est.)
ENGINES: 200-hp, 3.5-liter V-6; 240-hp, 3.9-liter V-6
BOTTOM LINE: The next wave of Pontiac's performance renaissance

25. Chevrolet Cobalt

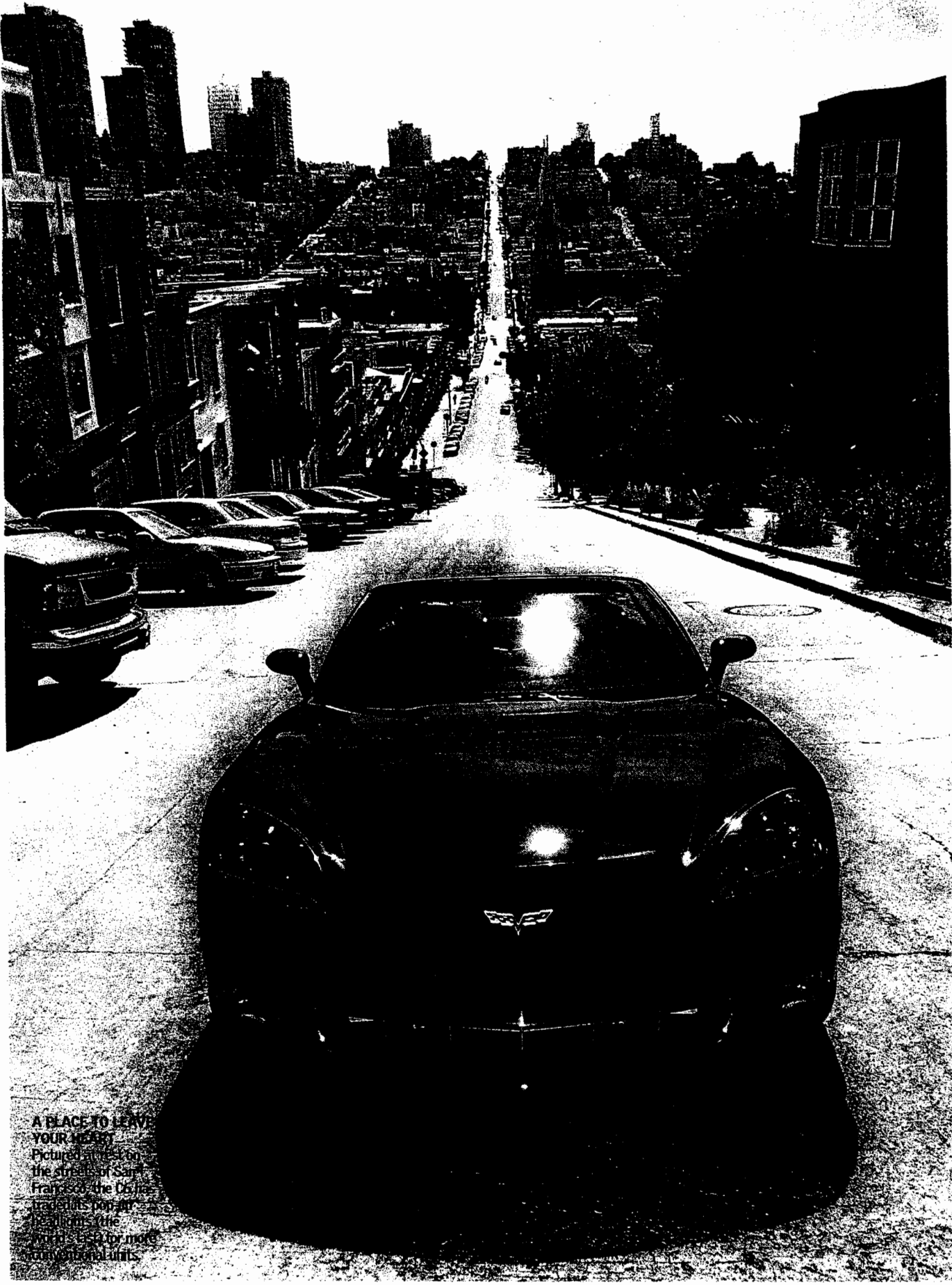
Remember the Saturn Ion? GM hopes you don't, because it's widely regarded as the General's nastiest product since the Aztek. The Delta platform introduced with the Ion received a deep therapeutic massage in anticipation of its use under Chevrolet's new Cobalt. Upgrades include a steel-sandwich firewall, a molded cover to quiet engine ruckus, a cast-aluminum oil pan to stiffen the engine-to-transmission interface, improved door seals, and higher-grade tires. Except for being two inches taller, the Cobalt is slightly smaller than the Cavalier it replaces. It weighs 200 pounds more, confirming attention to structural integrity and crashworthiness since the Cavalier was engineered more than twenty years ago. There are coupe and

sedan body styles and a new SS Supercharged coupe. Notable in the powertrain lineup is the addition of a supercharged and inter-cooled 2.0-liter four-cylinder identical to the Ion Redline's engine. Internal components originally engineered for the Saab 9-3 whip out 205 hp and a husky 200 lb-ft of torque. In 2006, a normally aspirated, 2.4-liter Ecotec rated at 170 hp also will be offered in the SS. GM is praying the Cobalt's fresh face finally will help Chevy make headway in the highly competitive compact segment.

ON SALE: Fall 2004
PRICE: \$15,000-\$20,000 (est.)
ENGINES: 140-hp, 2.2-liter I-4; 170-hp, 2.4-liter I-4; 205-hp, supercharged 2.0-liter I-4
BOTTOM LINE: Chevy's latest warrior, armed to battle Civic and Corollas



CHARLIE WAGNER



A PLACE TO LEAVE
YOUR KEYS
Pictured at left on
the streets of San
Francisco, the Camaro
trades its pop-art
headlamps for
the... for more
conventional units.