

February '87 · £1

Street Machine

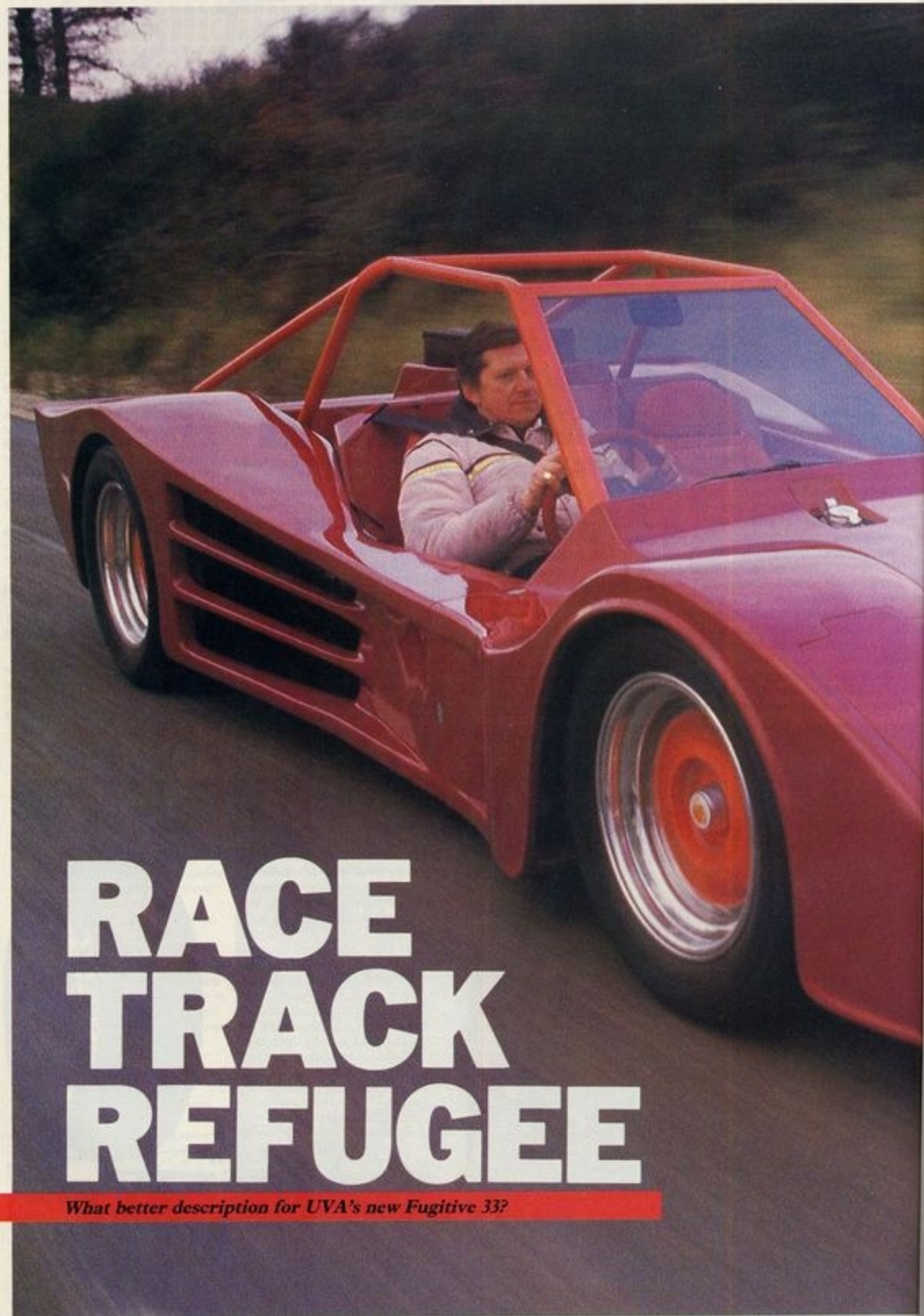
1987 ROVER V8
CHAMPIONSHIP
PREVIEW

UVA'S
NEW
CAN AM
STYLE
FUGITIVE



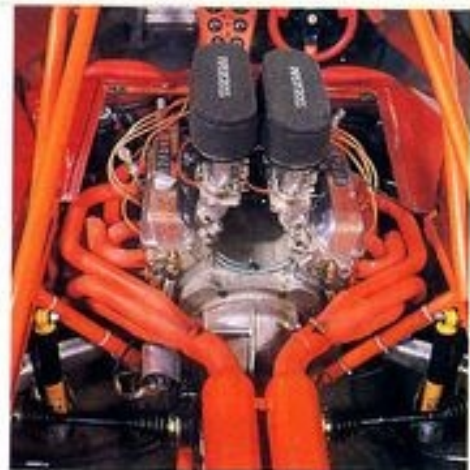
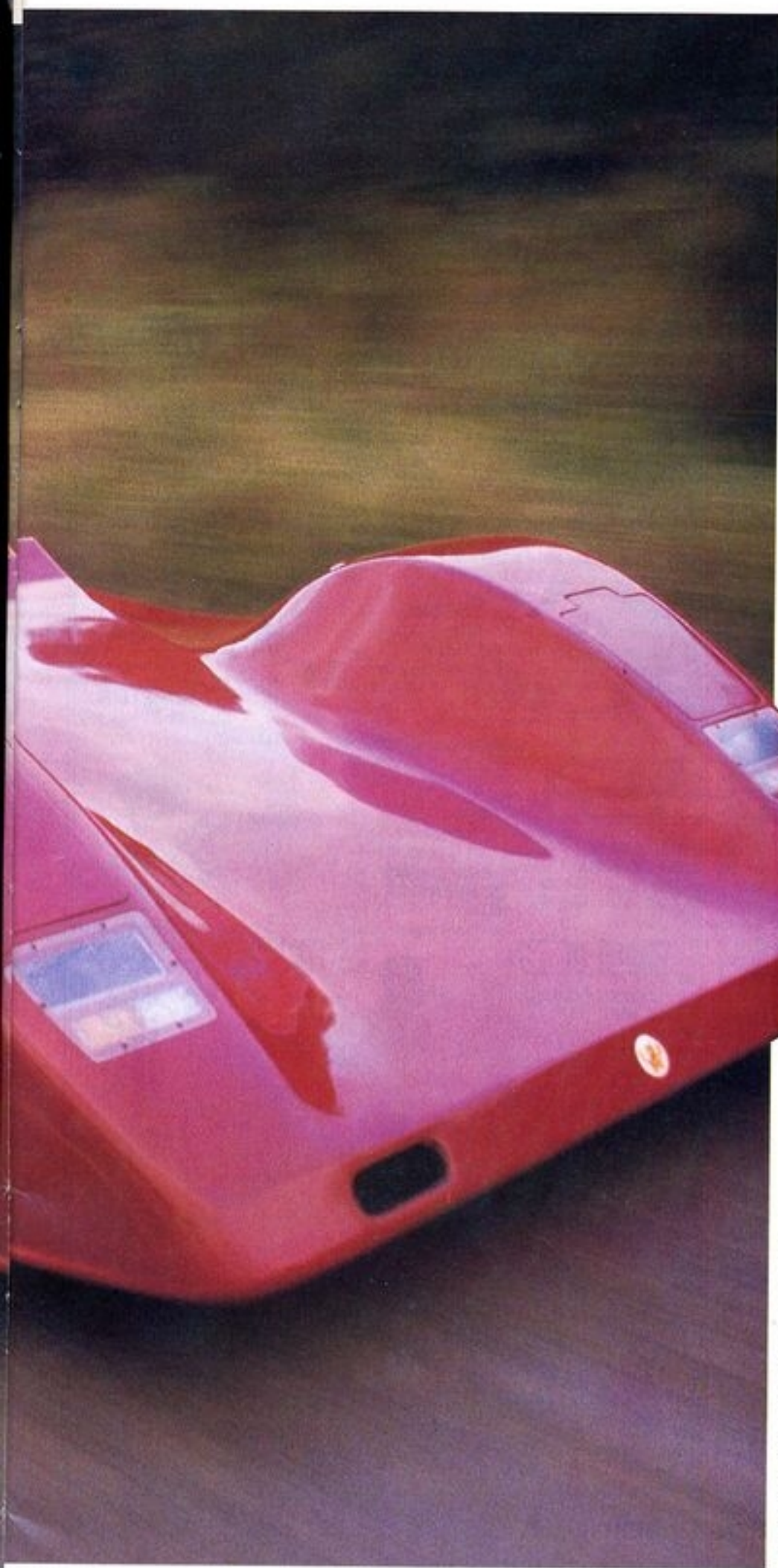
North West Capri





RACE TRACK REFUGEE

What better description for UVA's new Fugitive 33?



"HAS IT GOT A HEATER?" asked photographer Bailie (with no sign of a tongue in his cheek). "Yes," replied Alan Arnold, "it's called *adrenalin!*" That sharp remark by UVA's ever-articulate spokesman during our recent photo session says much about the latest Fugitive, the F33 Can-Am. Without a doubt, it's an adrenalin-pumper *par excellence*. A car that has been designed for both road and track, but definitely not for the faint-hearted or those drivers who prefer anonymity...

Different doesn't begin to describe this latest Rover-powered creation from the Unique Vehicle and Accessory Company. Looking more like a full-on Group C race car than a dual-purpose road/race machine, it is the sum total of many years' development by the Newbury, Berks-based firm. It has the same chassis design, mid-engine layout and rear suspension as its predecessor, the

Fugitive III (now known as the Fugitive 30 Clubman), but the all-new wishbone front end and totally re-styled bodywork have made it an altogether more attractive proposition for the enthusiastic builder seeking a truly innovative kit car with extremely high performance.

So, first things first, what price do you pay for a V8 mid-engined machine with adjustable front and rear suspension, 4-wheel disc brakes, rack and pinion steering, full underside aerodynamics, side rads, and a power-to-weight ratio which in this particular case equates to 70% greater than a Porsche 911 Turbo? In reality, Alan Arnold reckons around £5,500 on the road, though I imagine the really ingenious hot rodder could do it for maybe a thou' or two less — which still wouldn't be cheap, I know, but then we're not talking about a run-of-the-mill replicar...

Looks-wise, it may not be the easiest shape on the road to accept — but then as Alan points out, racing car technology always dictates the vehicle's 'clothing' to a large extent. The all-enveloping bodywork measures 6ft wide and just under 13½ft long — although with that super-swoopy front end it looks deceptively larger in the flesh (and wide-angle photographs). But, more importantly, it has some rather impressive aerodynamic innovations.

For starters, there's a complete flat undertray running from the nose of the car right back to the transmission, so that all the air passing underneath has an undisturbed run and is channeled straight out the back in the least turbulent fashion — increasing downforce in the process. A better Cd is also achieved by mounting a radiator in each side, thereby eliminating the need for a conventional intake at the front of the car. ▶▶



Above: Side profile of the Can-Am shows dramatic lines which UVA boss Alan Arnold describes as "visually more comfortable" than those of its predecessor, the Fugitive 30 Clubman (née Fugitive III). The styling leans heavily towards contemporary Group C race cars

The two small openings you see at the very front supply cooling air to the brake discs, while the inevitable build-up of air in the front wheelwells is exhausted through two vents situated behind each front wheel. To further reduce drag on the race track, those dummy louvres in the rear of the front wing bulges can be opened out. The two vents also help to feed air along the sides of the body, through the rads concealed behind those Ferrari Testarossa-type inlets, and out through the slots in the engine cover. Alan Arnold penned most of the changes in the new Can-Am with advice from various consultants, while Jonathan Savile takes the credit for the final styling.

Apart from the dash, the Can-Am glass body is entirely different to the relatively slim-looking cycle-fendered Clubman featured in our September '85 issue. As well as the major aerodynamic changes there are also a few minor ones, such as pop-up headlights. These are operated by a simple choke-type cable and incorporate polished stainless steel reflectors which enable the lights to be flashed in daylight. The rear lights, whilst bearing a vague resemblance to PSV items, fill the area nicely and help to keep the uninitiated guessing as to the car's heritage.

The 1½in and 1in diameter space frame chassis follows the same design as the Fugitive III and it's about as rigid a structure

as you can get! Obviously, the more rigid the chassis the less it is affected by the torque reaction of the engine and the better the car's suspension will perform — especially on the bends. And take it from someone who's ridden shotgun, this car corners like it's on rails!

The mid-mounted Rover SD1 engine is said to put out an honest 265bhp at the 'box and it was built by John Isles of Coventry. The complete bottom end is balanced, the crank tufrided, the rods specially prepared, the heads extensively ported and polished, and a Kent performance cam installed with solid lifters. Both the heads and the block were machined for better oil return also. On top sits what must be the ultimate set-up for a naturally-aspirated Rover engine: 4x45 DLHA downdraught Dellortos on a special John Isles inlet — no less than a grand's worth of carburation! Alan says the engine ticks over at 800rpm and is as smooth as can be.

The motor is mated to a beefed-up VW transaxle using UVA's standard conversion kit which consists of an ally adaptor plate, a special diameter flywheel, and a 2,500lb racing clutch assembly. The exhaust system is one that UVA make especially for this application, while the side rads are Golf GTi items with independent thermostats for the electric fans. There's also a 20-row remote oil cooler, situated near the right-hand rad. As an interesting aside, UVA are currently working on a small block Chevy-to-Porsche 5-speed kit for use in the F33, and are hoping that this combination will attract customers in the USA.

With such a lightweight car and such a torquy engine, a 5-speed 'box would hardly seem necessary. The motor will hit 7,000rpm in any gear quite comfortably, and



Above: Pop-up headlights are operated by a simple choke-type cable rather than a motorised set-up, to save on weight and cost

Below: This is the view of UVA's 'ultimate driving machine' that you're most likely to see on the road



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with the 4.125 VW crown wheel and pinion (swapped over), maximum speed is, theoretically, around 150mph — plenty fast enough for any of the world's freeways, especially those in America. And 0-60? Say one and two and three and four and — you'd be doing a fairly effortless 60mph in this highly-tuned F33. Make no mistake, this is one super-quick machine — ideal for sprints and circuit racing, as well as the traffic light grand prix.

But how can a turned-around VW transmission take that kind of power, you may be thinking? Well, starting with the high-geared late-model 'box, UVA add two additional spider gears into the diff then fit heavy duty keyways in 3rd and 4th gears and weld these cogs onto the synchro hub, making it impossible for them to spin. They also replace the stock spring spacer plate between 3rd and 4th gears on the layshaft with a solid spacer to keep the gears in constant mesh. Similarly a heavy duty cover plate on the diff side of the trans. Needless to say, UVA also fit one of their mid-engine gearshift kits which transfers the standard H-pattern to the correct location in the cockpit. Even with Sway-A-Way driveshafts, it's still hard to believe that the VW 'box can be made to take roughly five times the standard power, but it certainly seems to cope with it.

The rear suspension works in the same way as on a VW although the geometry is different. It utilises a VW torsion bar with the torsion housings built into each side of the chassis, along with a pair of VW 1303S/1600 Variant trailing arms, height-adjustable spring plates and urethane bushes, and adjustable Spax dampers. It also features one of UVA's rear disc brake conversion kits with radially-drilled late-model 11in Beetle discs and early-style Type 3 Girling calipers — the same as the front brakes in fact. Goodridge braided steel brake pipes are used, while the brake pedal assembly is another UVA special which enables fine tuning of the front to

rear braking ratio.

Up front, you'll find a very un-Volkswagen-like wishbone set-up, the same as on UVA's other new vehicle, the McLaren-inspired M6 GTR. Though having said that, it does utilise Super Beetle hubs and discs in conjunction with tubular wishbones top and bottom and fully adjustable Spax coil-over shocks. It's rubber-bushed (as opposed to rose-jointed) and runs 1° of negative camber. An anti-roll bar is not part of the standard kit, but UVA do offer one for competition use. Without the roll bar and with the shocks at the softest setting the set-up provides a surprisingly comfortable ride, and Alan says you can take your hands off the wheel at 120mph, no problem. The steering rack, arms (extended) and column are all Mini Metro. Racey-looking Revolution 5-spoke rims are used at both ends, size 7x15in front, 9x16in rear, shod with 50-series BFGoodrich Comp TA's.

The aluminium-lined cockpit is best described as 'functional'. There's a triangular-shaped centre console housing a VDO 160mph speedo, tachometer, oil temperature and pressure, water temp and fuel gauges, and a pair of business-like bucket seats. A new full-height windscreen in place of the half size one originally developed for the III is a welcome addition at high speeds.

To help justify their claim that the F33 is a practical road car, UVA offer a soft top with two semi-rigid doors hinged from the 'screen uprights, and even a luggage rack which is designed to sit above the engine cover. The canvas top would obviously come in handy during the winter months, but I seriously think that a wicker picnic basket might look more than a touch out-of-place strapped on the back of such a purposeful-looking machine! Further details on this and UVA's other component vehicles and products are available from UVA, Argents Mere High Technology Park, Hambridge Lane, Newbury, Berks. RG14 5TU. Tel: 0635 33888. Colin Burnham

Drive In!

COMING SOON...

next month

MOTORVATION '86

If you were there then you'll know it was a weekend not to be missed. If not then you can find out just what you did miss in next month's mag. Don't worry, though, there's always Motorvation '87!

PROJECT CARS!

Two brand-new project cars are about to be unveiled next month, ex-Features Editor Brian Crichton's Capri 2 and Ad Manager Dave Cotton's Dax DC Cobra replica

PRO POP

How about a Pro-style Pop from the US running low ten second quarters at 130mph in full street trim? And all from a 327...

PLUS...

... Richard Grant competition results, rear axle narrowing explained, reader survey, a super-straight Road Runner, Garage Scene, On The Street, Up Front, Small Talk, Yanks — it's all in the...

MARCH ISSUE ON SALE FEBRUARY 13th

This is what we're working on at the time of going to press. A lot can happen in the meantime that may change the final contents.