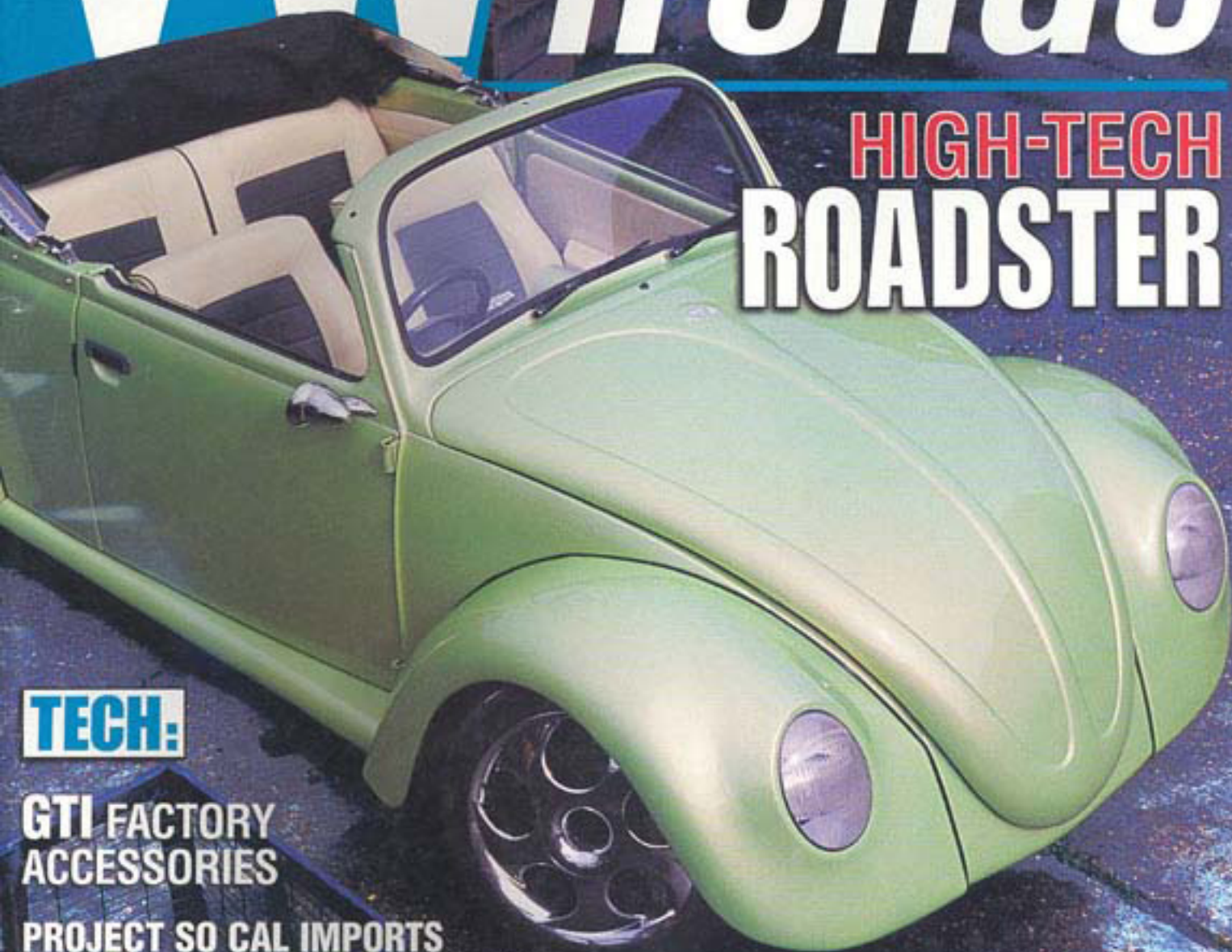


EXCLUSIVE: HPA'S 165-MPH NEW BEETLE



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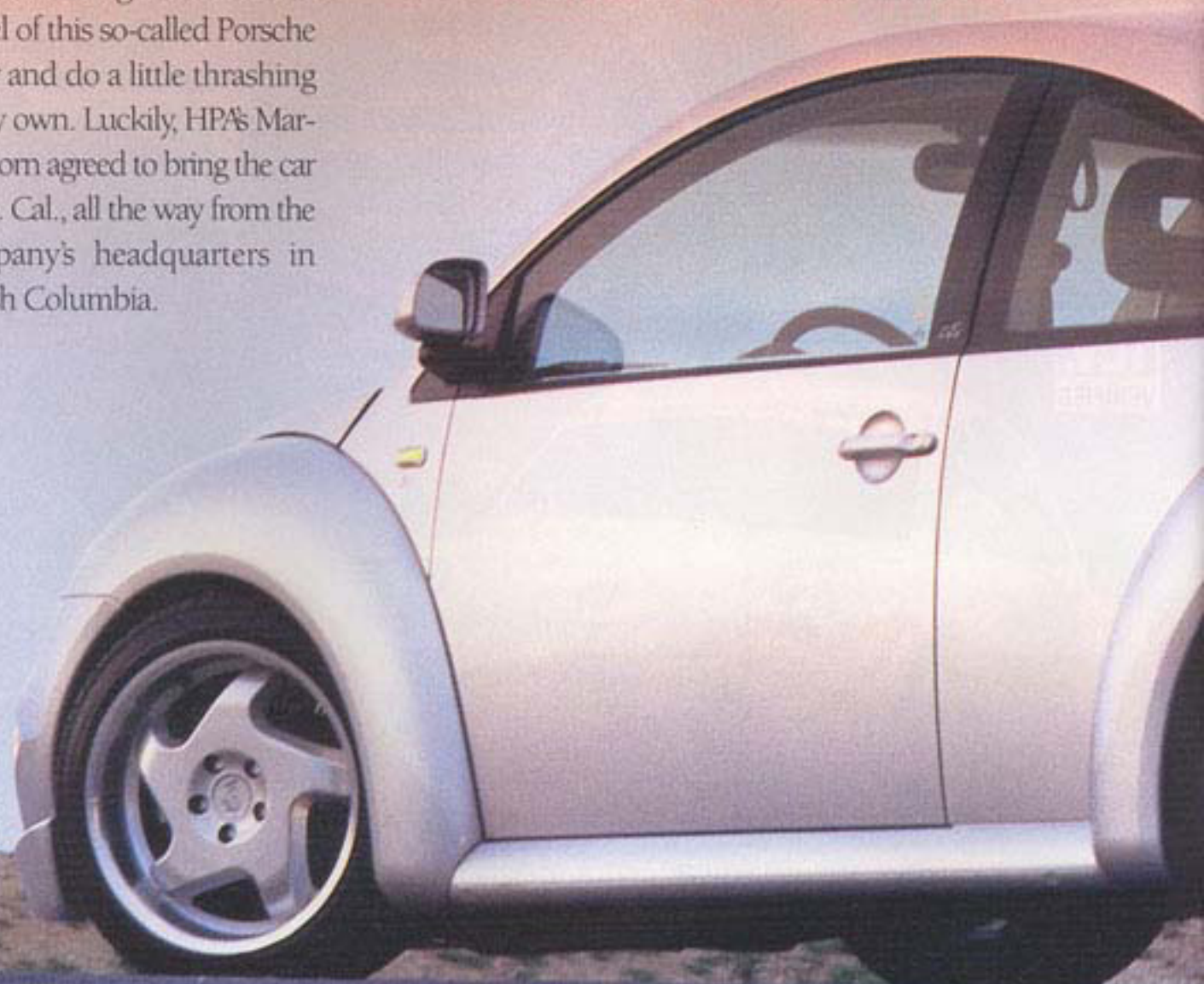
BY ROBERT HALLSTROM
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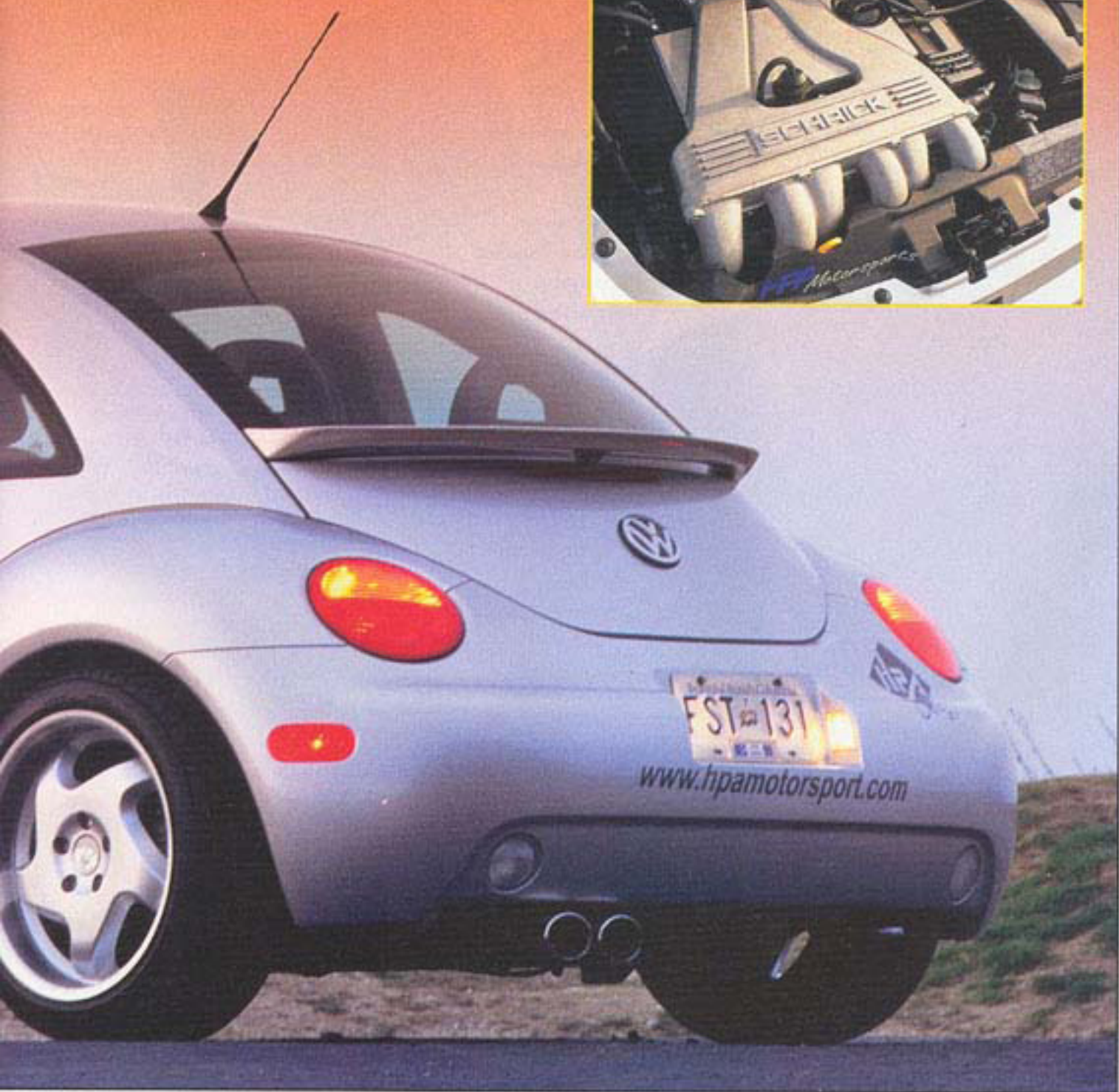
One hundred and sixty-five miles an hour! That's the estimated top speed this monstrous GT6 New Beetle is capable of running.

The fact that HPA's V6 New Beetle dyno tested at 285 bhp, tripped the lights at 13.89 sec. (after a standing quarter mile) and blistered 0 to 60 mph in only 5.7 sec., only intensified my desire to get behind the wheel of this so-called Porsche killer and do a little thrashing of my own. Luckily, HPA's Marcel Horn agreed to bring the car to So. Cal., all the way from the company's headquarters in British Columbia.



Pushing 165 mph in HPA's
beastly V6 New Beetle!







After a quick walk around the car and a toss of the keys from Marcel, I said I'd be back in a flash and headed out with *European Car's* senior editor, Les Bidrawn.

Roughly a half hour later—with Marcel still

waiting at the curb—we returned with exuberant grins and an apology for the delay, something about hitting a red light, oh and there was this long train and.... Truth is the GT6 New Beetle was such a thrill to drive, it's a wonder we came back at all.

What propels this daily-driven VW to astonishing speeds? For starters, hidden inches beneath the hood is a six-cylinder ABT stroker capped with a Schrick aluminum head. Gone is the wimpy 2.0-liter engine the vehicle was originally equipped with and in its place, a thoroughly massaged V6 conversion, the brainchild

of HPA proprietor Marcel Horn. The company, which is credited for producing the first New Beetle VR6 engine conversion, has already shipped a total of 50 of these fire breathing monsters, this silver 1998 being its latest.

Featuring 3100cc with a 82mm x 96.5mm bore and stroke, the engine's 10.0:1 compression ratio helps provide 282.0 lb-ft of torque with a staggering red line of 7200 rpm! All of this power is anchored by CAD-designed, powdercoated motor and trans mounts. The VR6 conversion bolts to a modified VR6 drivetrain with a Quaife limited-slip differential. Utilizing a Bosch Motronic ignition, port fuel injection and a Schrick variable geometry intake manifold, the twin overhead cam powerplant emits spent gases via a stainless dual oval exhaust system.

The engine's pavement-melting horsepower and torque are transmitted to the street through a set of 17-in. cast-aluminum KW Twist wheels wrapped with Yokohama A520, 40-series tires. A complete KW Variant 2 coilover suspension kit keeps the New Beetle tight in the corners while additionally offering a comfortable ride. The braking system is also upgraded using 11.1x0.8-in. vented and slotted discs in the front and 9.4 x0.4-in. discs in the rear.

When you combine the various performance mods with exterior styling cues such as Hofele Design front cup spoilers, front and rear valance grills and a rear wing you get a New Beetle that looks as stunning as it performs. The interior also reflects the car's dynamics; a two-tone gray Hofele Design cockpit featuring leather upholstery and dash covering makes the New Beetle one of the plushiest I've seen.

The entire V6 conversion is clean and precise, employing only factory VW parts and requiring no welding or structural modifications whatsoever. It thus allows complete restoration to stock specification (as if anyone would want to).

The car was built for Mohamed Bin Hofan, a resident of Dubai, UAE, who requested the special 3.1-liter New Beetle in order to catch his area's high-end German and Italian machinery by surprise. Based on the HPA New Beetle's awesome horsepower and unbelievable performance, it's certain Hofan won't be disappointed. 

400 hp. 0-60 in under 5 sec.

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