

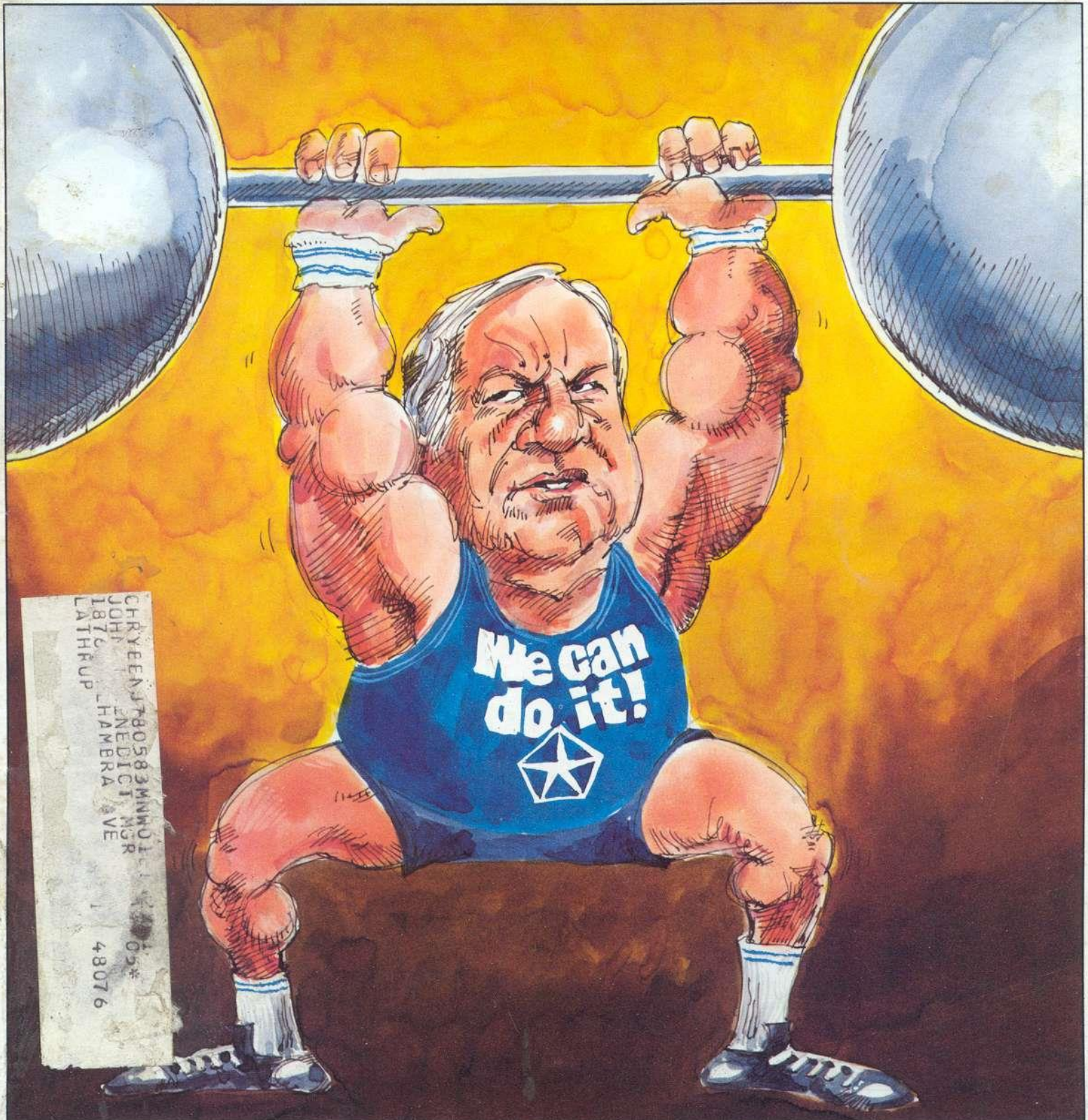
WARD'S AUTO WORLD

SPECIAL REPORT
Import Evaluations

MAY 1980

\$2.50

Will Chrysler Survive?



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car, plus a zippy driving character in addition to excellent fuel economy.

But there are annoyances along with endearments — intrusion of the fore-aft-mounted engine into the passenger compartment, the resulting “afterthought” vertical radio placement, manual choke with no automatic shutoff or temperature gauge to indicate when to release it, the rubbery manual shifter and lack of a fifth (overdrive) gear to cut the noise level at speed. Then there’s styling, which you like or you don’t. “Nice, cute, trendy,” says one critic. “Ugly little wart of a car,” argues another.

SAAB

The “other” Swedish automaker, Saab-Scania AB, has given its excellent 900 Turbo models (right) — both 3- and 5-door — the only things they really needed: a 5-speed manual transmis-



sion plus redesigned front seats with adjustable head restraints and other evolutionary improvements. We think Saab 900, especially the Turbo, is a car at which domestic automakers should take a long, hard look. It’s no fashion plate, but it gives exciting performance from a reasonably fuel-efficient 2-liter (122-cid) 4-cyl. engine, exceptional interior room and comfort, agile handling with bump-eating ride and near-station wagon practicality with its huge rear hatch and cavernous luggage area.

ALFA ROMEO

Alfa Romeo S.p.A.’s Spider roadster continues unchanged into 1980, the 4-door sedan is dropped and the handsome GT 2+2 stays for the moment in 1979 form. Alfa’s lovely \$20,000 V-6 luxury sedan will be available in small quantities only in California this year.

Looking back, this import list contains something for practically everyone. But it’s heavily weighted with small cars and small engines — the kind that produce superior fuel economy. That’s where the action is going to be as far ahead as anyone can speculate. And that’s why Detroit’s headed in the same direction. □

Peugeot’s Stodgy 504 Becomes Stylish 505

Just as Nissan Motor Co. Ltd. (Datsun) has metamorphosed its 200-SX and Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd. (Subaru) its entire lineup for 1980, France’s PSA Peugeot-Citroen has transformed the stodgy 504 into a nearly beautiful, almost-exciting 505.

Styled by Italy’s Pininfarina S.p.A. and powered by a choice of diesel or fuel-injected gasoline engines, the new mid-range sedan falls just two big headlamp bezels short of handsome and some 20 hp this side of exhilarating. Yet it’s a remarkably well-balanced package in overall performance and appearance, and about as much like its predecessor as a 747 is like a DC-3.

Under the new body is a fully independent suspension with MacPherson struts in front; semitrailing arms in back; and coil springs, antisway bars, high-performance Michelin radial tires and vacuum-boosted disc brakes at all four corners, plus brake-pressure equalizing valves to prevent rear-wheel lock-up under any load condition. Steering is power rack-and-pinion with a crisp 3.5 turns lock to lock. Weight distribution is nearly 50/50 for superbly stable, agile and responsive handling.

The new 2-liter (122-cid) gasoline 4-cyl. engine features an aluminum head with hemispherical combustion chambers, aluminum pistons, forged-steel connecting rods and crankshaft in a cast-iron block. There’s also electronic ignition and a Lambda-type 3-way-converter emissions system with exhaust sensing and feedback to the Bosch

K-Jetronic fuel injection. Coupled to a standard 5-speed manual transmission and a torque-tube driveline, the 505 delivers 96 hp at 4,900 rpm and is rated at 16 mpg (6.8 kml) city (19 mpg/8.1 kml with optional automatic) and 24 mpg (10.2 kml) highway in Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) tests.

The trusty 2.3-liter (140-cid), 71-hp diesel “four” has Bosch VE mechanical injection and a new “mini-maxi” fuel-regulation system that eliminates most of the traditional diesel throttle-response lag. With standard 4-speed manual transmission, the 49-state diesel gets 29 mpg (12.3 kml) city and 35 mpg (14.9 kml) highway (slightly less with automatic and in California).

Interior roominess and comfort are excellent, with sufficient seat travel for long-legged drivers in front and surprisingly straight-ahead knee clearance in the rear. Front bucket seats have fully adjustable backrests, are orthopedically designed for lower back support and are of a new polyurethane-foam construction without the usual coil springs.

Peugeot’s new 505 sedan.



Quietness, visibility, ventilation and instrument/control layout also are first-rate.

The 505 is 4.2 ins. (10.7 cm) longer, 1.6 ins. (4.1 cm) wider and .7 ins. (1.8 cm) taller than the 504 it replaces on the same 108-in. (274.3-cm) wheelbase. Yet at 3,020 lbs. (1,359 kg) base curb weight, it’s slightly lighter and 9% better aerodynamically.

At about \$11,000 base and \$13,000 in fully equipped “S” form (\$3,000 less than Peugeot’s 604 luxury sedan), the 505 is aimed directly at midrange imports such as Saab 900, Volvo’s 4-cyl. DL and especially Audi 5000, which also offers a choice of gas or diesel engines. A station wagon and perhaps a coupe version are expected to follow the 4-door sedan during the next couple of years (the 504 wagon remains for the moment), and a turbocharged diesel currently is undergoing certification tests. Another future possibility is a turbocharged gasoline engine, which would move Peugeot right into BMW’s hallowed ground as a true performance sedan.

Only some 8,000 Peugeot 505s are targeted for the U.S. during the remainder of calendar 1980 (of a projected 15,000 total 1980 Peugeot sales), but that should increase substantially in the future. With Citroen and now Talbot (Chrysler France) in its camp, Peugeot is Europe’s largest automaker. The new 505 represents a strong step toward its goal of increasing penetration in the U.S. import market. □

—Gary L. Witzenburg