

ROAD & TRACK Presents

CBS LEISURE TRANSPORTATION SERIES

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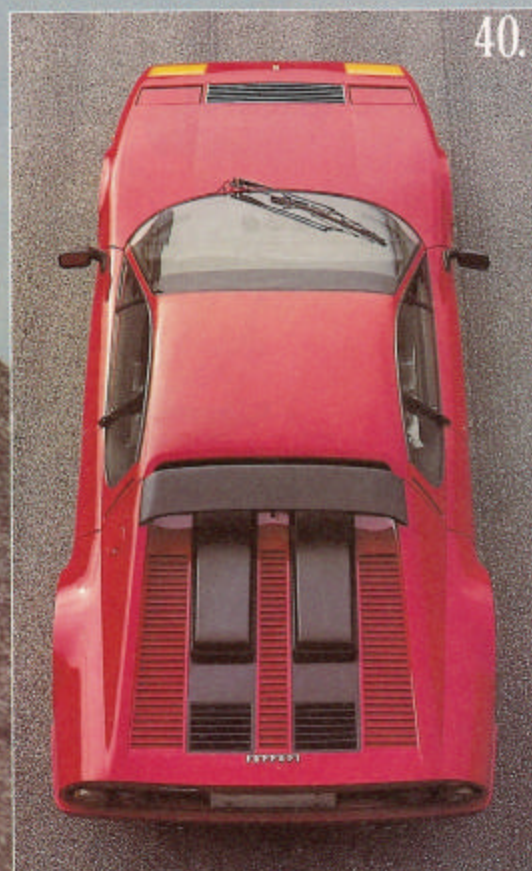
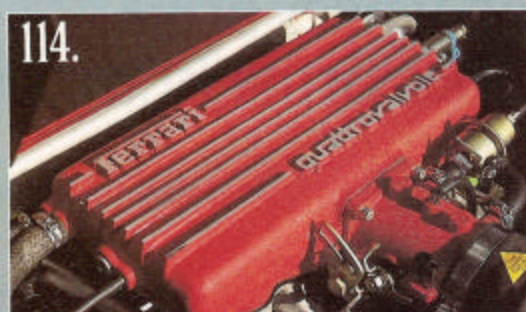
DISPLAY UNTIL AUGUST 7

EXOTIC CARS: 2[®]

CELEBRATING THE WORLD'S MOST EXCITING DREAM MACHINES



CBS SPECIAL



EXOTIC CARS:2

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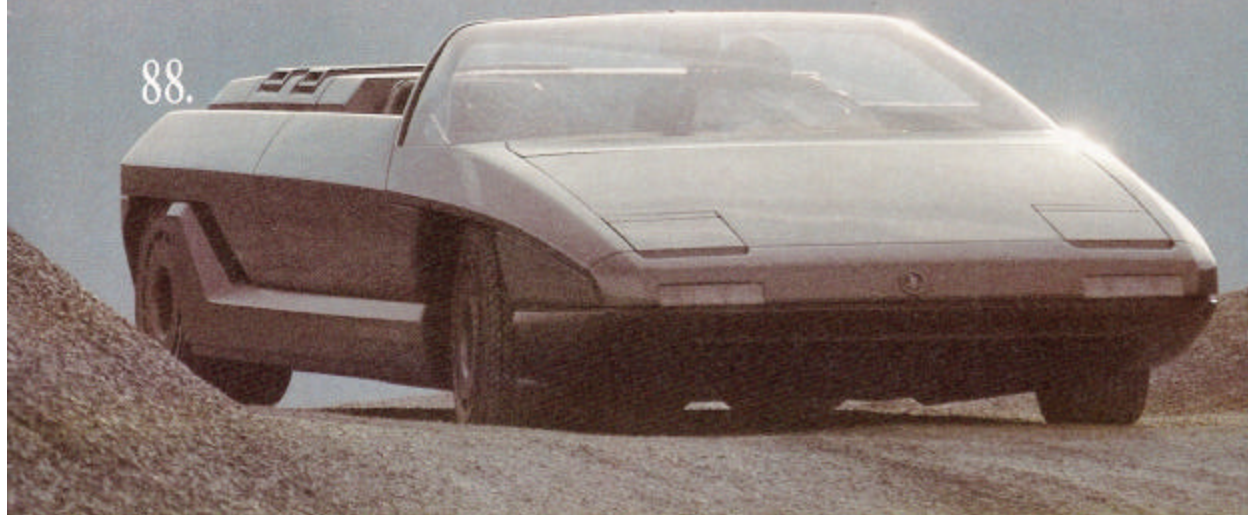
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Lamborghini Countach, Lancia Stratos, Ferrari Mondial Cabriolet, photos by John Lamm; Porsche 930 Turbo Carrera by Joe Rusz; b+b CW311 by Jeffrey R. Zwart

88.



RENAULT 5 TURBO 2

Beg, borrow or steal the money—you've got to have one

BY THOS L. BRYANT
PHOTOS BY JEFFREY R. ZWART

ONE FACTOR MOST exotic cars have in common is astronomical price tags. Having a car that is rare, unusually styled and a stunning performer generally costs more than most of us make in a year of hard work. But not all of them. The Renault 5 Turbo 2 is as exotic as most anything on the road but within the reach of many enthusiasts, at a price of some \$25,000 in the U.S. The American importer, Sun International (577 Mary Ann Dr., Redondo Beach, Calif. 92078; 213 376-2267), offers the completely certified R5 T2 for \$20,500 plus options. Still a lot of money for a set of wheels, perhaps, but oh, what wheels these are!

The Renault 5 Turbo (sans 2) was introduced in 1980 as a pure homologation special for Group 3 and 4 racing and rally competition. A total of only 1400 were needed to satisfy international racing regulations, but the R5 Turbo caught on with the public and street-going versions became among the most coveted pocket rockets on the Continent. Renault didn't mind the increasing popularity and publicity, so the R5 Turbo went into limited production at the Alpine facility at Dieppe.

But those original Turbos were costly to build, with their aluminum doors and roof panel, resulting in a price tag close to \$30,000. To bring the price down, the R5 Turbo 2 hit the market with the same exciting fender flares and all-out aggressive look, but retaining the standard steel doors and roof of the production R5. Also, the 2nd-generation Turbos have a considerably more sedately styled, less art deco interior.

Okay, so much for the history of this exciting and entertaining little machine, let's get into it. The powerplant is an overhead-valve 1397-cc inline-4—just like any other Renault 5 (Le Car in America), you say. But, not quite. Adding the turbo and intercooler and some speed equipment transforms this engine into a 160-bhp performer; or for an additional \$2100 (installed), you can have the 185-bhp stormer. In a car with a curb weight of just 2230 lb, this produces outstanding acceleration. In a February 1984 road test, *Road & Track* measured a 0-60 mph time of 6.7 seconds, and a quarter-mile run of 15.0 sec at 91.0 mph.

To circumvent the problems that would result from this much power being sent to the front driving wheels of the R5, the Turbo 2 is a mid-engine car, with the powerplant located where you would expect to find the rear seat. It drives the rear wheels through a 5-speed manual gearbox, and drive them it does. Once you settle into the contoured driver's seat, buckle your seatbelt and twist the ignition key, things start to happen. The engine's location just behind you results in instant awareness of a high-performance state of tune. Engage 1st gear, slip the clutch and press the throttle and all of a sudden you're moving away from rest at an exhilarating rate.

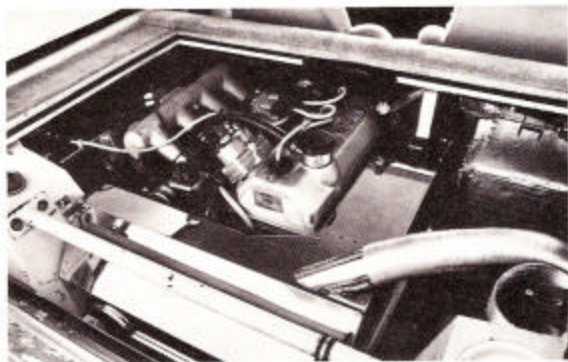
The 5-speed is a close-ratio affair that calls for lots of shifting, but then that's all part of the fun. Running up

through the gears, you'll be doing 80 mph when you shift from 3rd to 4th at the 6250-rpm redline; you'll break the century mark while still in 4th; and finally, the R5 T2 will top out at about 125 mph in 5th gear as the Renault's lack of aerodynamic styling overcomes the engine's power. That's enough top speed for just about any driving you're likely to do, anyway, and the real fun of the Renault Turbo is in the mid-speed ranges, where you can scoot with the best of them.

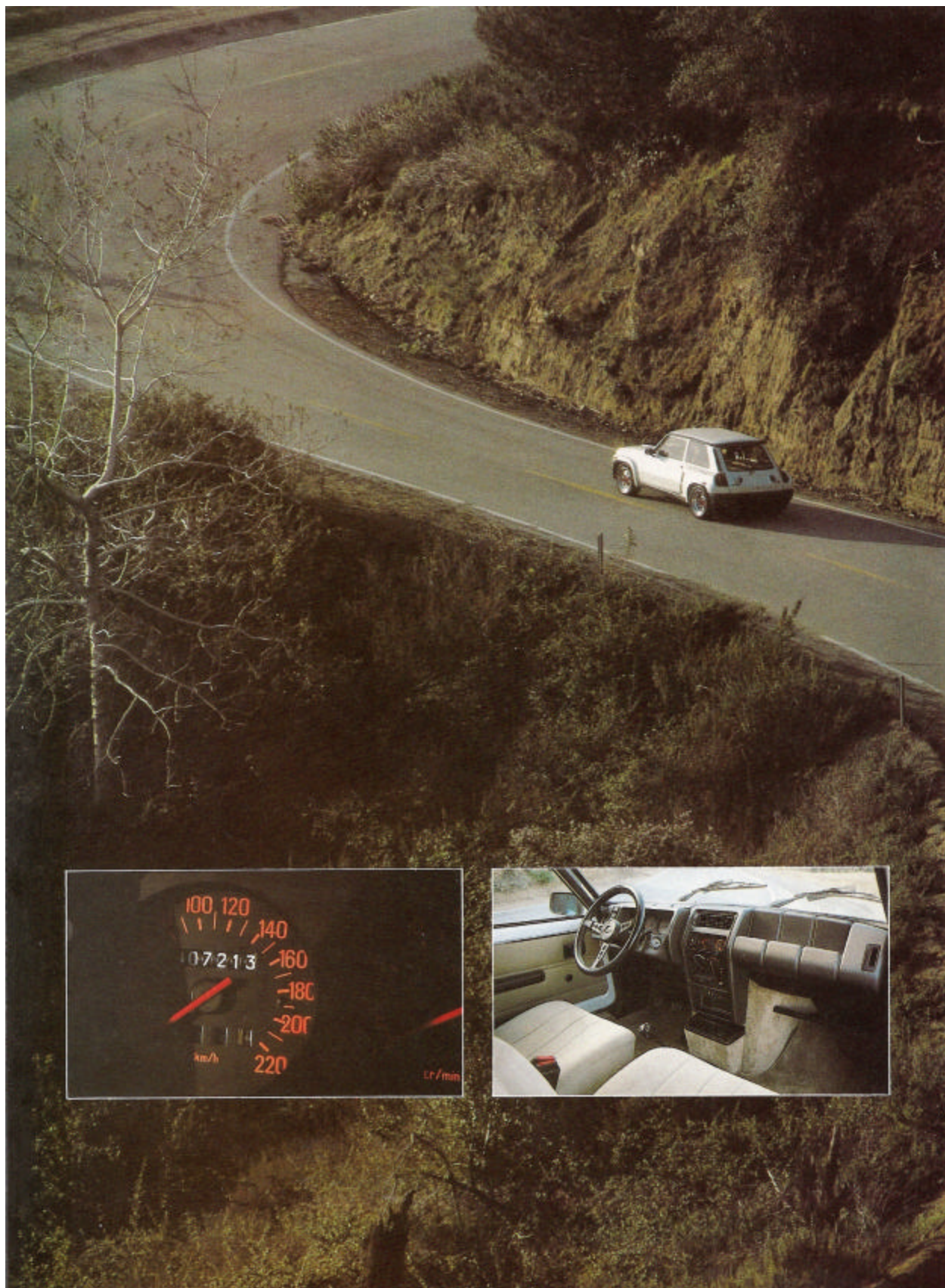
One new option (\$2200) available on the U.S. R5 T2 models from Sun International since our road test is a wheel/tire package that gives the car an incredible footprint: Gotti 7x15-in. wheels front and 9½x15 rear, with Pirelli P7 tires measuring 205/50VR-15 front, 285/40VR-15 rear. With this amount of rubber on the road, it's no wonder that the Turbo is an amazing handler. Most corners can be taken with scarcely any slowing, but do keep in mind that lifting off the throttle in the midst of a corner does produce considerable tuck-in. As long as you're prepared for it, it's not a liability, but it can take the novice by surprise. Nonetheless, the Turbo's limits are extraordinarily high: A run through our 700-ft slalom is accomplished in a super-quick 64.0 mph, and the skidpad test produces a lateral acceleration number of 0.864g. These are the kinds of numbers that very few production cars can come close to matching.

There's more to the story than the objective handling measurements, however, because the R5 T2 has a dynamic and exciting feel that transcends mere numbers. It's a small car (144.4 in. overall length) on a short, 95.7-in. wheelbase that gives it a close-coupled feel of unmatched agility. It is simply so much fun to toss around on a twisty road or in the cut and thrust of traffic that you find yourself eager to go anywhere—to work, to the market, you name it. This is the sort of car that can destroy your social life and turn you into an automotive recluse.

Inside, the individual front seats are comfortable and provide sufficient leg and head room for nearly







"This is the sort of car that can destroy your social life and turn you into an automotive recluse."

everyone. The instrument panel is rather sparse, with few instruments and lots of warning lights. It's a comfortable car for two, although the noise level is sufficiently high to discourage idle chitchat. Sun International now has provided an excellent air conditioning system (\$1550) that will keep occupants cool and fresh no matter the exterior temperature. Luggage space is quite limited, but then you'll have so much fun in the going you won't really care about multiple changes of clothes when you get there.

Working on a publication such as this affords the opportunity to drive all manner of exotic cars. And that, naturally, leads to the oft-asked question about a favorite. There are so many wonderful cars to drive if money's no object, but for a reasonable amount of money, there's only one car for me: the Renault 5 Turbo 2—it is just so much fun you hate to give it back.



U.S. SPECIFICATIONS

GENERAL

Curb weight, lb/kg	2230	1012
Wheelbase, in./mm	95.7	2430
Track, front/rear	53.0/58.0	1346/1474
Length	144.4	3664
Width	69.0	1752
Height	52.0	1323
Fuel capacity, U.S. gal./liters	23.2	88

ENGINE

Type	turbocharged ohv inline-4	
Bore x stroke, in./mm	2.99 x 3.03	76.0 x 77.0
Displacement, cu in./cc	85.2	1397
Compression ratio	7.0:1	
Bhp @ rpm, SAE net/kW	185/138 @ 6000	
Torque @ rpm, lb-ft/Nm	159/216 @ 3250	
Fuel injection	Bosch K-Jetronic	

DRIVETRAIN

Transmission	5-sp manual
Gear ratios: 5th (0.87)	3.38:1
4th (1.06)	4.11:1
3rd (1.38)	5.37:1
2nd (2.06)	8.01:1
1st (3.36)	13.08:1
Final drive ratio	3.89:1

CHASSIS & BODY

Layout	mid-engine/rear drive
Brake system	10.3-in. (260-mm) vented discs, front & rear; vacuum assisted
Wheels	cast alloy, 7 x 15 front, 9 1/2 x 15 rear
Tires	Pirelli P7, 205/50VR-15 front, 285/40VR-15 rear
Steering type	rack & pinion
Turns, lock-to-lock	3.2
Suspension, front/rear	unequal-length A-arms, torsion bars, tube shocks, anti-roll bar/unequal-length A-arms, coil springs, tube shocks, anti-roll bar

