



PEOPLE, Places & THINGS

By David W. Black

BIG THEATER: Technical advances continue to invade the motoring world. *The Detroit News* says a feature of Ford's SYNus concept car is nothing less than a huge 45-in. flat-screen TV mounted inside the rear door. The system plays DVDs, or can serve as a rear window by using a rear-pointing camera. When at rest, the car's front seats can be rotated rearward so the whole family can enjoy the show.

WHO, ME? The reckless-driving alert produced a

strange and leisurely chase. Police followed the 66-year-old Idaho woman as she drove about 15 miles on I-85 between Bonner and Boundary counties, all at legal speeds. On she went, while city and state police swarmed around her with sirens howling and lights flashing. She simply wouldn't stop. After spike strips flattened three tires, she finally pulled over and was charged with eluding driving and dangerous driving. Bail was a modest \$600. The police chief said, "She just didn't understand."

LUCKY PUP: The costume party in Wauwil, Switzerland, had been stupendous, and the guy in the dog outfit was thoroughly oiled when he started walking home. He was barely maintaining his relationship with the road's centerline when drowsiness overwhelmed him. He decided to lie down and rest awhile. Fortunately, the next driver was alert and the costume was so well padded that the man's wounds were superficial. The driver said he was grateful that he hadn't harmed a real dog.

Italy on \$1290 a Day*

► Choices, choices. Will it be the Ferrari 360 Modena Spider F1, its Berlinetta counterpart, or the 550 Maranello? Actually, you and your lucky partner can drive all three over the course of eight days on a fantasy trip through the Tuscan countryside dining at world-renowned eateries such as Rome's Tazio Restaurant, and staying at hotels such as the 15th-century Villa Il Poggiale near Florence.

The 1000-km tour retraces parts of the Mille Miglia route, with the tour director leading the way in an Alfa Romeo GTV. There's also a VIP shuttle chase vehicle with three additional directors—think of them as "my people," as in "I'll have my people talk to your people"—who'll cater to your every need and are on hand to "take over the driving of the Ferraris if required." Umm, that shouldn't be necessary.

Does zipping through quaint hilltop villages, with a 395-hp V-8 at full metallic shriek behind your shoulder blades, sound like your cup of *lambrusco*? Then London-based Red Style Tours (www.red-travel.com) can make it happen, with packages starting at 8000 Euros per person, not including flights to and from Rome.—Douglas Kott

*Ferrari F430 available at significant extra charge. Prices based on exchange rates at time of publication.

Cool
Car
Trip!





RACING BY THE SEA

Another choice for go-karting enthusiasts is Drumel Kart, which operates on the track at Misano Adriatico near Rimini on the Adriatic coast. Group and corporate events can also be held in the evening on a floodlit track of 35,000 sqm. Things really take off in the summer when Rimini's nightlife comes into its own and high-powered Rotax RM1 2t (125 hp) and Birel Honda 4t (200 hp) go-karts start zipping around the track.

The **Misano circuit** has a long tradition of racing, and offers a **special corporate package, SpeedDrive**, which allows groups of between 30 and 100 people to experience the life of a racing driver for a day in a single-seater Renault Campus, similar to an F1 car.

"After a briefing in the press room, a shuttle bus takes participants to the track, and allows them to familiarise themselves with the circuit", says Maurizio Damerini, manager of the track. "They are then issued with fireproof overalls, gloves and shoes, just like those worn on international racetracks, since they will be driving at speeds of up to 200 kmph. Afterwards, they are each awarded a certificate by their team manager. Our **SpeedDrive** package can also be applied to go-karting, and for this our main partner is Drumel Kart."

Despite being a new company, **Drumel Kart** has really benefitted from the 20 years of experience gained by its founders while working for major car manufacturers. Corporate events are dealt with personally by Luca Drudi, a world-renowned racing driver who has competed in numerous championship races in all types of cars and has won many victories in contests such as the Le Mans and Daytona 24-hour races.

"We have all the most up-to-date facilities here", observes Barbara Pagliarini, marketing manager of Drumel Kart. "We also have a computerised timing system that prints out personalised rankings. All events start with a technical briefing on the safety procedures expected of a professional racing driver, and the cost ranges from 65 euro to 95 euro per person, depending on the programme. We can also provide services such as open bar, coffee breaks and catering on the go-kart track itself. This is in addition to our existing events facilities, which include meeting rooms seating up to 250 people, a multimedia press room and a restaurant by the swimming pool. For accommodation, we use various 4-star hotels in Misano and Riccione. The track is just two kilometres from the sea and the nightlife of the Romagna coast."

Corporate events can be booked for any time of the year if required (although the temperatures are undoubtedly less pleasant in winter).



FIVE STARS AND FERRARIS

Being behind the wheel doesn't mean missing out on the scenery: that's the philosophy of the agency Red Travel, which uses Rome as the starting point for its Gran Turismo&Incentive packages.

Headed by Andrea Levy, Red Travel offers clients the "quintessential Italy", concentrating the pleasure of driving three different Ferraris (the 360 Modena F4, the 360 Modena Spider and the 550 Maranello) into a single, week-long trip that covers a thousand kilometres of panoramic roads between Rome and Florence. Each night, the client stays at an exclusive 5-star hotel, and can enjoy spa treatments, dinner in the best restaurants and designer shopping.

On request, the trip can be followed up by a high-speed racing course at a track run by Ferrari. Logistical support is provided by a staff of professionals, including a tour director who leads the way along the most picturesque routes in a powerful Alfa Romeo GTV (as well as revealing the secrets of driving an F1 car). Luggage is carried separately.

"Red Travel was officially launched onto the market last March", says Levy, "when we organised the first Red Style Tour for journalists from 15 major international newspapers and magazines. It was a huge success, and although our main clients at present are the British, Russians and Arabs, our aim is to attract more corporate clients, perhaps companies wanting to organise high-level incentive trips for their senior management. For these we can offer tours lasting three or four days rather than a whole week, for groups of eight to 30 people, assisted by a five-member team of technical staff. The service we offer aims to meet the standards that helped us win a *Five Star Diamond Award* from the American Academy of Hospitality Sciences, a prize awarded for providing one of the most exclusive and glamorous travel experiences worldwide."

