HEAD TO HEAD: Acura RSX Type-S vs Chevy Cobalt SS

PLUS: Audi RS 4 • BMW M3 Comp Coupe • M-B CLK DTM AMG • Ferrari 612 Scaglietti • Ferrari F430 Spide

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THE STANDING MILE

The quarter mile? Forget about it! We put a tantalizing mix of cars (and a motorcycle) through a true test of power and performance.

BY ANDREW BORNHOP
PHOTOS BY GUY SPANGENBERG & MARC URBANO

Road

It's a vast expanse of concrete, some 200 ft. wide and 13,500 ft. long, covering a large swath of California's fertile San Joaquin Valley. Most days, this east runway of the Naval Air Station in Lemoore is abuzz with Hornets, of the Navy's F-18 fighter jet variety, practicing carrier-style landings before assignment at sea. This rubber-streaked strip, 234 ft. above sea level, which is also an alternate landing site for the Space Shuttle, extends north into the valley as far as the eye can see, usually ending in a large mirage shimmering in the afternoon heat.

Indeed, NAS Lemoore is a great place for our nation's finest to hone their skills. But what would any self-respecting car magazine see in such a wonderfully flat and beautifully long runway? Nirvana. In other words, a perfect place to subject a wide variety of cars to a true test of power and performance: The Standing Mile, a standing-start blast of unadulterated full-throttle acceleration lasting a full 5280 ft., or four times longer than our usual acceleration tests.

After all, in our quarter-mile tests, many supercars have barely cleared their throats by the time the run is over; others struggle to put all that power to the pavement. In the Standing Mile, those issues are of less concern, as horsepower and aerodynamics take on a more prominent role. Also, the added length gives us a much broader spectrum of acceleration data to analyze. Differences in times and speeds between vehicles are amplified. And think about it: How many times have we ever been able to measure a car from 0–200 mph? That's reason enough to head to Lemoore.

Will the cars hit top speed? Will they hit an aerodynamic brick wall? Will they hit 200 mph? Will they be gear-limited? Will a modern sport bike embarrass the cars? Like you, we needed to know those answers, so we set out with our VBOX GPS test equipment that provides us with gobs of data after tracking the vehicles with amazing accuracy.

And speaking of vehicles, we sought a diverse group. To that end, from the racing world, Paul Gentilozzi brought two of his Rocketsports cars—his Lola B02/00-Ford Cosworth Champ Car and his Jaguar XKR Trans-Am car. From the Grand-Am's Rolex series, Blackhawk Racing showed up with its Pontiac-Riley Mk XI Daytona Prototype, Alex Gurney as its driver. From the tuner world, our friends at HPA Motorsports in Canada towed for 15 hours to bring us their 542-bhp Audi TT; John Hennessey blew in from Houston, confident his ultra-potent 1000-bhp Hennessey Venom 1000 Twin Turbo Viper would fare well; and the folks at Vortech showed up too, curious to see how their supercharged 575-bhp Mustang would do in a mile.

And finally, the production-car contingent was well represented by the delectable 750-bhp Saleen S7 Twin Turbo, a Ford GT, two cars from our pal Alois Ruf: a 2004 R Turbo and a 1986 CTR (the classic Yellow Bird!); a Lamborghini Murciélago, a Dodge Viper and a Chevrolet Corvette.

So join us now on a sunny June day in Lemoore, and witness more than 8000 collective horsepower thunder down the runway, in a test made possible with the gracious help and cooperation of the U.S. Navy. For the record, we ran in the morning to benefit from the cooler temperatures, and the windsock revealed a steady headwind of about 10 mph for most of the day. Each vehicle was limited to a maximum of five runs, but did not have to make that many. From the vantage point of the start line, you could see the car for about half-distance and then hear it for the rest of the way, hoping for clean shifts and no sudden stoppage of sound.

Now, the vehicles, in ascending order of performance, based not on elapsed times, which are important, but on highest top speeds reached in their respective 1-mile runs. Of note, while a handful of cars had their own drivers, we employed the services of Steve Millen, the all-time winningest driver in IMSA GT, to drive the remaining cars, while *Cycle World*'s Mark Cernicky wrung out the MV Agusta F4-1000 Tamburini for all it was worth (which, considering its $42,995 price tag, is quite a lot). Also, do note that the mph numbers in this test aren't a vehicle's absolute top speed; they're the highest speeds it reaches in one full mile of acceleration, from a standing start. A flying mile, such as at Bonneville, is a very different beast, the car already at speed before entering a 1-mile speed trap.

CHEVROLET CORVETTE

SPEED AT 1 MILE:	**154.0 mph**	**14th**
TIME TO 1 MILE:	**32.7 sec**	**14th**
Curb weight	3179 lb	
Horsepower	400 bhp	
Pounds per horsepower	7.9	
Gearbox	6-speed manual	
Tires	Goodyear Eagle F1 Supercar EMT; P245/40ZR-18 f, P285/35ZR-19 r	
Catalytic converters	yes	

IN THE REAL WORLD OF EVERYDAY DRIVING, the new C6 Corvette, with its small-block 400-bhp aluminumV-8, is an incredibly potent car, especially when fitted with a 6-speed manual gearbox and sport-tuned Z51 suspension. But in this heady cast of luminaries, the Vette has trouble shining. Even so, Millen is impressed:

"It does the mile so simply. It has good traction, and a nice gearbox. We did the run in the Competitive Driving Mode, and it was quite effortless. No drama whatsoever. It's an easy car to launch, and at speed there were absolutely no problems with stability."

In all, a fine performance by Chevrolet's sports car, and in the last 100 ft. of the mile, it pulls 0.05g in 5th gear, meaning it's still accelerating on the way to its top speed of 186 mph. Another statistic of note: The Vette *averages* 100.1 mph in its mile…not bad when you consider the standing start.

DODGE VIPER SRT-10

SPEED AT 1 MILE:	**159.7 mph**	**13th**
TIME TO 1 MILE:	**31.4 sec**	**13th**
Curb weight	3410 lb	
Horsepower	500 bhp	
Pounds per horsepower	6.8	
Gearbox	6-speed manual	
Tires	Michelin Pilot Sport; P275/35ZR-18 f, P345/30ZR-19 r	
Catalytic converters	yes	

STEVE MILLEN FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO LAUNCH the Viper quickly, what with its 525 lb.-ft. of low-end torque tending to overwhelm its massive 345/30ZR-19 rear Michelins. Nevertheless, using 2400 rpm, he gets the car out of the hole reasonably well. And by the half-mile mark—which the stock Viper hits in less than 20 sec.—the V-10-powered roadster, with top up, is blasting along at more than double the speed limit, at 142.1 mph.

By the end of the mile, where the Viper hits 159.7 mph and air over the fabric top is making lots of noise, Millen notes that the car is in 5th gear, pulling only 2400 rpm. For fun, on his way back to the paddock, he checks the speed of the Viper in top gear at a leisurely 2000 rpm. After learning it's 100 mph at that rpm, he remarks, "This thing must be geared for about 300 mph. I guess that's what you can do with a big old torquey V-10 that's able to loaf along at any speed." For the record, the stock Viper does reach its top speed in 5th gear, and overdrive 6th gear is indeed a fuel economy ratio that bumps the EPA highway mileage figure up to a surprisingly good 20 mpg.

LAMBORGHINI MURCIÉLAGO

SPEED AT 1 MILE:	**168.0 mph**	**12th**
TIME TO 1 MILE:	**30.9 sec**	**12th**
Curb weight	4020 lb	
Horsepower	580 bhp	
Pounds per horsepower	6.9	
Gearbox	6-speed manual	
Tires	Pirelli P Zero Rosso; P245/35ZR-18 f, P335/30ZR-18 r	
Catalytic converters	yes	

AH, OUR LONE ITALIAN EXOTIC. THE LAMborghini Murciélago, the most seductively shaped car in our group, and in possession of a mighty 580-bhp 4-cam V-12 that drives all four wheels via a viscous coupling center differential.

Problem is, the all-wheel-drive system means the 4020-lb. Lambo has almost too much grip on launch. No wheelspin here. What Millen finds in his first run is a hint of clutch slip, enough to make him decide not to make another pass, citing a concern for the clutch.

Nevertheless, it's a good pass. "I felt like I had a made a clean run," says Millen. "You need to be positive with the gated shifter. There's a different feel to driving this Lamborghini because you sit so low in the car. But frankly, I was a tad disappointed with the performance. I was expecting a bigger push in the back from the big V-12."

The numbers, however, reveal otherwise. The big Lamborghini reaches the half-mile a tenth quicker than the Viper, and then opens that gap to a half-second at the mile, where it has a decisive 8.3-mph edge in terminal velocity.

PHOTO BY LT CDR CHRIS CASTRO

FORD GT

SPEED AT 1 MILE:	**171.4 mph**	11th
TIME TO 1 MILE:	**29.9 sec**	9th
Curb weight	3485 lb	
Horsepower	550 bhp	
Pounds per horsepower	6.3	
Gearbox	6-speed manual	
Tires	Goodyear Eagle F1 Supercar; P235/45ZR-18 f, P315/40ZR-19 r	
Catalytic converters	yes	

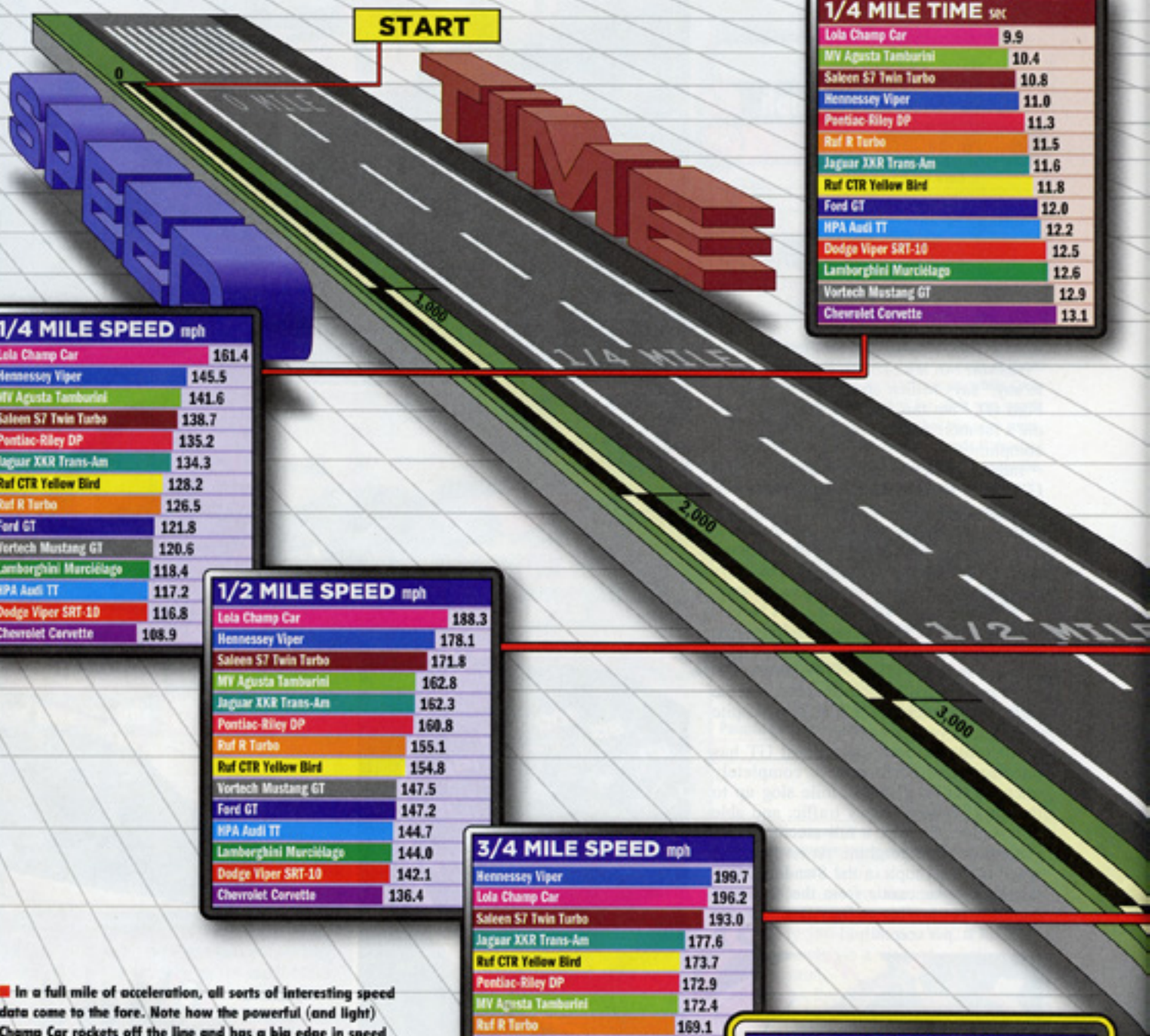
"THIS MAY NOT SOUND LIKE THE RIGHT THING to say," says Millen about the mid-engine Ford GT, "but this thing could easily handle a lot more power. And I mean that as a compliment."

Indeed, Millen is smitten with the Ford GT, which looks great as it takes off down the runway—with only a hint of wheelspin—and disappears into the distance. "You've got to ease into the throttle, making sure you get the best traction you can," says Steve. "And then, once you're past 1st gear, it's foot to the wood all the time. I had no wheelspin in the upper gears, and boy, this car has an incredibly wide powerband." Millen, who shifts the GT at 6500 rpm, says the car is exceptionally stable at speed, and the shift linkage back to the transaxle, despite its length, is very precise.

All told, the bone-stock Ford GT has put in a great performance, completely tractable on its long 250-mile slog up to the track, even in heavy traffic, and able to complete the mile a full second quicker than the Lamborghini. At its terminal speed of 171.4 mph in the Standing Mile, this blue collar exotic from the blue oval company is traveling awfully fast, at a rate of 251.4 ft. per second!

PHOTO BY ANDREW ROBINSON

■ **Our VBOX equipment, left, fits snugly in the nose of the Rocketsports Lola, which has rocker-actuated front suspension. Above, the Ford GT's speedometer reveals that the car, like the others in the test, is capable of much more than its excellent speed of 171.4 mph in the mile. Right, MPs giving the S7 Twin Turbo the once-over twice.**



1/4 MILE TIME sec	
Lola Champ Car	9.9
MV Agusta Tamburini	10.4
Saleen S7 Twin Turbo	10.8
Hennessey Viper	11.0
Pontiac-Riley DP	11.3
Ruf R Turbo	11.5
Jaguar XKR Trans-Am	11.6
Ruf CTR Yellow Bird	11.8
Ford GT	12.0
HPA Audi TT	12.2
Dodge Viper SRT-10	12.5
Lamborghini Murciélago	12.6
Vortech Mustang GT	12.9
Chevrolet Corvette	13.1

1/4 MILE SPEED mph	
Lola Champ Car	161.4
Hennessey Viper	145.5
MV Agusta Tamburini	141.6
Saleen S7 Twin Turbo	138.7
Pontiac-Riley DP	135.2
Jaguar XKR Trans-Am	134.3
Ruf CTR Yellow Bird	128.2
Ruf R Turbo	126.5
Ford GT	121.8
Vortech Mustang GT	120.6
Lamborghini Murciélago	118.4
HPA Audi TT	117.2
Dodge Viper SRT-10	116.8
Chevrolet Corvette	108.9

1/2 MILE SPEED mph	
Lola Champ Car	188.3
Hennessey Viper	178.1
Saleen S7 Twin Turbo	171.8
MV Agusta Tamburini	162.8
Jaguar XKR Trans-Am	162.3
Pontiac-Riley DP	160.8
Ruf R Turbo	155.1
Ruf CTR Yellow Bird	154.8
Vortech Mustang GT	147.5
Ford GT	147.2
HPA Audi TT	144.7
Lamborghini Murciélago	144.0
Dodge Viper SRT-10	142.1
Chevrolet Corvette	136.4

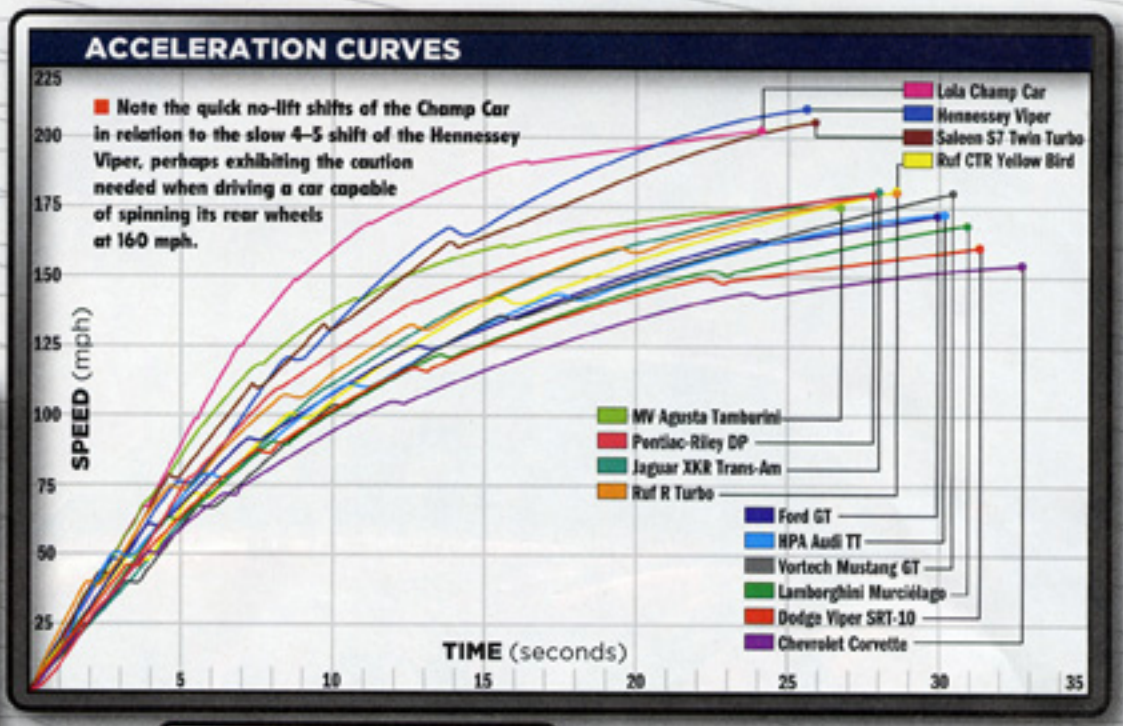
3/4 MILE SPEED mph	
Hennessey Viper	199.7
Lola Champ Car	196.2
Saleen S7 Twin Turbo	193.0
Jaguar XKR Trans-Am	177.6
Ruf CTR Yellow Bird	173.7
Pontiac-Riley DP	172.9
MV Agusta Tamburini	172.4
Ruf R Turbo	169.1
Vortech Mustang GT	165.7
HPA Audi TT	162.3
Ford GT	162.2
Lamborghini Murciélago	157.2
Dodge Viper SRT-10	152.1
Chevrolet Corvette	146.7

FULL MILE SPEED mph	
Hennessey Viper	210.2
Saleen S7 Twin Turbo	205.7
Lola Champ Car	203.3
Ruf CTR Yellow Bird	185.8
Jaguar XKR Trans-Am	180.5
Pontiac-Riley DP	180.3
Ruf R Turbo	180.2
Vortech Mustang GT	179.0
MV Agusta Tamburini	174.7
HPA Audi TT	172.2
Ford GT	171.4
Lamborghini Murciélago	168.0
Dodge Viper SRT-10	159.7
Chevrolet Corvette	154.0

■ In a full mile of acceleration, all sorts of interesting speed data come to the fore. Note how the powerful (and light) Champ Car rockets off the line and has a big edge in speed at the half mile, but drops to third by the mile, a victim of high downforce. The MV Agusta motorcycle suffers a similar fate, because of high drag. Conversely, the bone-stock Saleen S7 Twin Turbo production car, heavier and with slightly less power than the Lola, slices through the air and makes up ground toward the end of the mile, where it has a 2.4-mph edge on the Champ Car at the line. As for the Hennessey, it's a brute, incredibly quick in all stages of the mile. We suspect its twin-turbo V-10 could propel a Dodge Sprinter van to that phenomenal top speed of 210.2 mph, but we don't want to give this Viper tuner any ideas.

■ In this admittedly apples-to-oranges comparison, the times speak for themselves, as the Champ Car maintains a lead throughout the entire mile. When the Lola finishes the mile, the Hennessey Viper, the next-closest car, is 462 ft. behind, whereas the bone-stock production Corvette is 1888 ft. in arrears. Lest you think the Corvette is slow, it completes the last half-mile in only 12.3 seconds.

ACCELERATION CURVES



1/2 MILE TIME sec

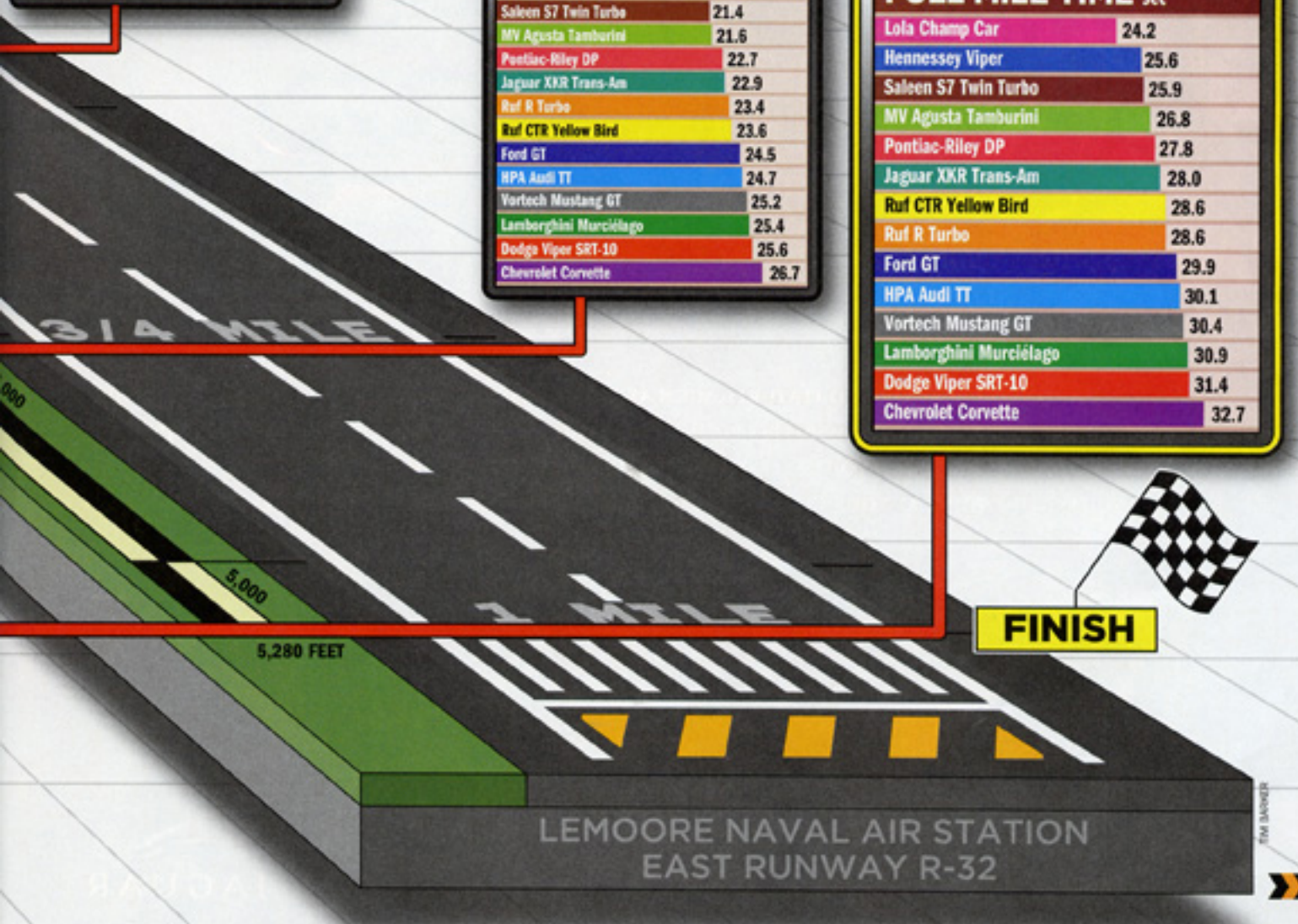
Lola Champ Car	15.0
MV Agusta Tamburini	16.3
Hennessey Viper	16.5
Saleen S7 Twin Turbo	16.5
Pontiac-Riley DP	17.4
Jaguar XKR Trans-Am	17.7
Ruf R Turbo	17.9
Ruf CTR Yellow Bird	18.2
Ford GT	18.7
HPA Audi TT	18.9
Lamborghini Murciélago	19.4
Dodge Viper SRT-10	19.5
Vortech Mustang GT	19.5
Chevrolet Corvette	20.4

3/4 MILE TIME sec

Lola Champ Car	19.7
Hennessey Viper	21.2
Saleen S7 Twin Turbo	21.4
MV Agusta Tamburini	21.6
Pontiac-Riley DP	22.7
Jaguar XKR Trans-Am	22.9
Ruf R Turbo	23.4
Ruf CTR Yellow Bird	23.6
Ford GT	24.5
HPA Audi TT	24.7
Vortech Mustang GT	25.2
Lamborghini Murciélago	25.4
Dodge Viper SRT-10	25.6
Chevrolet Corvette	26.7

FULL MILE TIME sec

Lola Champ Car	24.2
Hennessey Viper	25.6
Saleen S7 Twin Turbo	25.9
MV Agusta Tamburini	26.8
Pontiac-Riley DP	27.8
Jaguar XKR Trans-Am	28.0
Ruf CTR Yellow Bird	28.6
Ruf R Turbo	28.6
Ford GT	29.9
HPA Audi TT	30.1
Vortech Mustang GT	30.4
Lamborghini Murciélago	30.9
Dodge Viper SRT-10	31.4
Chevrolet Corvette	32.7



HPA AUDI TT

SPEED AT 1 MILE:	172.2 mph	10th
TIME TO 1 MILE:	30.1 sec	10th
Curb weight	3436 lb	
Horsepower	542 bhp	
Pounds per horsepower	6.3	
Gearbox	6-speed manual	
Tires	Dunlop SP Sport Maxx, 225/40ZR-18	
Catalytic converters	no	

THE HPA AUDI TT, THE FIRST OF OUR TUNER entries, is beautifully prepared, replete with rollcage, racing seats and a thoroughly upgraded 3.2-liter narrow-angle V-6 with twin turbochargers doling out 21 psi of intercooled boost to help the engine produce a staggering 542 bhp. This power is sent to all four wheels via a 6-speed manual transmission (with hardened gears), a cintermetal clutch, a Haldex center diff and a Quaife limited-slip rear end. This TT also has nitrous, though not for internal combustion. Rather, it's sprayed on the intercoolers to help chill the TT's intake charge, which HPA says is good for as much as 30 bhp on a hot day.

With the sprayers on and nitrous gas pouring out of the intercooler vents in the car's nose, the HPA TT looks like a hissing dragon but takes off like a banshee. Credit here goes to HPA's launch-control software, which overrides the ESP sensors and allows driver Michelin tire engineer Brian Smith to pin the accelerator on the floor at 5000 rpm, at which point he releases the clutch and launches the car when a green light comes on.

The result? Outstanding, uneventful acceleration that's quicker than the Lamborghini and Viper to the quarter mile and beyond, aided by a 50/50 torque split (as opposed to the stock car's 60/40 split) and the removal of the TT's large rear wing.

MV AGUSTA F4-1000 MT TAMBURINI

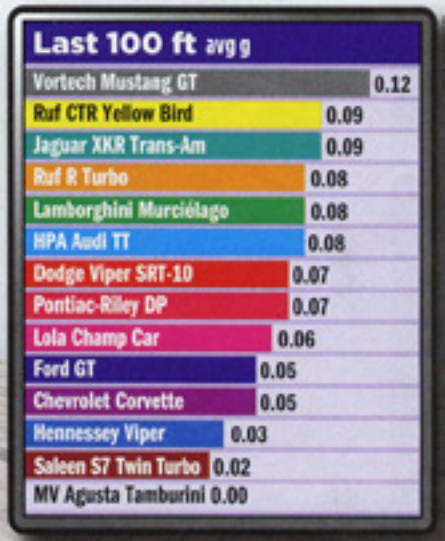
SPEED AT 1 MILE:	174.7 mph	9th
TIME TO 1 MILE:	26.8 sec	4th
Curb weight	412 lb	
Horsepower	173 bhp	
Pounds per horsepower	2.4	
Gearbox	6-speed manual	
Tires	Michelin Pilot Power; 120/65ZR-17 f, 190/50ZR-17 r	
Catalytic converters	no	

■ Choose your weapon: an M16, an F-18 Super Hornet or an MV Agusta Tamburini. The Italian bike blasts down the mile in the 4th quickest time.

IN THE POUNDS-PER-HORSEPOWER BATTLE, this limited-edition MV Agusta Tamburini—named after Marcello Tamburini, the man who designed the Ducati 916 that many consider the prettiest production bike of the last decade—has the cars handled, with each horse needing to move only 2.4 pounds of vehicle. And this shows in its acceleration, which is nothing short of phenomenal. With *Cycle World's* fearless Mark Cernicky aboard, this 2-wheeled Ferrari—whose screaming 4-cylinder engine has variable-length intake trumpets—ties the Champ Car to 60 mph, is second quickest in the quarter mile, is third quickest at three-quarters of a mile and is fourth quickest at the mile, while having only the ninth-fastest peak speed.

What gives? Well, the MV moves out in a hurry, aided at Lemoore by a slightly lowered ride height and an ECU reprogrammed to work with an optional titanium exhaust midpipe that eliminates the stock silencers and the catalytic converter. But motorcycles aren't aerodynamically clean, as the drop-off in acceleration (relative to the sleeker cars) indicates. Still it's impressive to see Cernicky keep the front wheel down and hear him upshift in his unique way, by keeping constant pressure on the shift lever and having the no-lift shift take place the exact moment the engine's 12,850-rpm rev limiter kicks in.

■ **Another way to gauge a vehicle's acceleration is to measure its longitudinal g's, that force pushing a driver back into his seat. And this we averaged in two stretches—in the first 100 ft. of the mile, to show how well the vehicles launch off the line, and in the last 100 ft., to provide an idea of just how hard the vehicles are accelerating at the end of the standing mile. The Champ Car, MV Agusta and Hennessey Viper take off with remarkably similar force, and the Vortech Mustang powers through the last 100 feet at 0.12g, higher than the others and perhaps owing to its relatively languid start. Also, because the MV Agusta has hit its top speed before the last 100 ft., it's experiencing no longitudinal g's when it crosses the mile mark.**



VORTECH MUSTANG GT

SPEED AT 1 MILE:	179.0 mph	8th
TIME TO 1 MILE:	30.4 sec	11th
Curb weight	3850 lb	
Horsepower	575 bhp	
Pounds per horsepower	6.7	
Gearbox	5-speed manual	
Tires	Toyo Proxes RA-1; 245/40ZR-18 f, 275/35ZR-18 r	
Catalytic converters	no	

THIS MUSTANG IS VORTECH'S WELL-USED tester, subject to more than 150 dyno pulls before showing up at Lemoore to again prove the impressive durability of Ford's 3-valve V-8s. Fed 16 psi of boost from Vortech's H.O. centrifugal supercharger through a large water-to-air intercooler in the nose of the car, this V-8 puts out 575 bhp at 6500 rpm.

Driver Richard Holdener uses a 3000-rpm launch, and modulates wheelspin with the throttle while struggling to keep the car headed straight on the first third of the track. After that perhaps overly cautious launch, it's clear sailing for this Mustang, which looks pretty stock but does have quite a few speed tweaks. Foremost among these are a large front splitter, a rear underbody diffuser, tape on the leading edge of the hood, and removal of its side mirrors, rear seat and OEM rear spoiler.

What's more, between runs, large 20-lb. bags of ice are placed on the intercooler's water tank to make the intake charge as dense as possible. Of note, the Vortech Mustang pulls harder than any other car in this test over the last 100 ft. of the mile, as its rating of 0.12g attests. This is apparently a run in which Holdener has kept the hammer down well past the mile mark to see if the Mustang hits the 6600-rpm rev limiter in top gear. It does. Which equates to 192 mph. We can see it on the data. When Holdener heard the rev limiter cut the engine in 6th, he called it "music to my ears."

RUF R TURBO

SPEED AT 1 MILE:	180.2 mph	7th
TIME TO 1 MILE:	28.6 sec	7th*
Curb weight	3325 lb	
Horsepower	590 bhp	
Pounds per horsepower	5.6	
Gearbox	6-speed manual	
Tires	Pirelli P Zero Corsa; P235/40ZR-18 f, P315/30ZR-18 r	
Catalytic converters	yes	*tie

BEFORE STEPPING INTO THE BLUE RUF R Turbo, Steve Millen asks Alois Ruf, "How fast is this little baby going to go?"

Ruf's humble reply: "I am curious myself."

I suspect Ruf liked the answer.

That his car, driven up to the test through L.A. traffic, could hit 180.2 mph in the mile, at 28.6 sec., is most impressive. Millen, though, is most awed with the 590-bhp all-wheel-drive car's launch. "That car just pulled. It launches harder than any other street car I have ever driven. The torque is incredible. The traction is tremendous, and it's really fun to drive." Proof lies in the distance to speed data, where the Ruf reaches 60 mph in only 177 ft., which is 46 ft. sooner than a stock Dodge Viper and 6 ft. before Hennessey's all-conquering Venom Twin-Turbo Viper.

In his runs, Millen drives the R Turbo like it is his own car, shifting it quickly but with care, not crunching the synchros or bouncing the 3.6-liter twin-turbo flat-6 off its rev limiter. No modifications are made to the car for this test…other than unloading the luggage from the trip up. Then it's pedal to the metal for the rest of the way, letting Ruf's superb engineering take over. One of the handiest features on the R Turbo is its Ohlins hydraulic suspension, which can raise the car's body by 2 in. front and rear, anytime it's needed to negotiate a driveway or anything similar. With its outstanding performance and fine everyday driveability, this R Turbo deserves its own nickname. Perhaps Blue Bird?

This blur of blue is the Ruf R Turbo, a tractable daily driver that launches with incredible force. The Vortech Mustang, on the other hand, top, had a slow takeoff but pulled stronger than any other car at the end of the mile.

Can you hear the thunder? It's there, courtesy of the Rocketsports Lola, the Blackhawk Racing Pontiac-Riley Daytona Prototype and the Rocketsports Jaguar XKR Trans-Am car. These latter two had quite a battle, the Daytona Prototype completing the mile a bit more quickly than the XKR but at a slightly lower speed. Unlike the Jag, however, it ran with its rear wing.

PONTIAC-RILEY MK XI DAYTONA PROTOTYPE

SPEED AT 1 MILE:	180.3 mph	6th
TIME TO 1 MILE:	27.8 sec	5th
Curb weight	2175 lb	
Horsepower	500 bhp	
Pounds per horsepower	4.4	
Gearbox	5-speed no-lift sequential	
Tires	Hoosier racing slicks; 25.5 x 11.5R-18 f, 28.0 x 12.5R-18 r	
Catalytic converters	no	

ALEX GURNEY IS WORRIED. WORRIED THAT his Blackhawk Racing Pontiac-Riley Daytona Prototype, with its high downforce body and a pushrod 5.0-liter Pontiac V-8 (limited to 500 bhp with intake restrictors by Grand-Am rules), would look slow.

He didn't need to be concerned.

Even though the tube-frame Daytona Prototype does struggle a bit with a too tall 1st gear, this red rocket blisters through the quarter mile in 11.3 sec. at 135.2 mph, growling deeply as it continues on to the full mile in 27.8 sec. at 180.3 mph. All the while, Alex is no-lift shifting the 5-speed X-Trac sequential gearbox, each time the upshift light illuminates at 7000 rpm.

Modifications to the Riley for the test are minimal. Taping off the brake ducts and the lower edge of the Pontiac kidney-shaped grilles is pretty normal stuff, as is the removal of winglets from the front fenders and the Gurney flap from the large rear wing. "It felt longer than I thought," says Gurney of his run. "I was kind of lonely out there. And I'd like to change 1st and 2nd gears if we could."

JAGUAR XKR TRANS-AM

SPEED AT 1 MILE:	180.5 mph	5th
TIME TO 1 MILE:	28.0 sec	6th
Curb weight	2550 lb	
Horsepower	630 bhp	
Pounds per horsepower	4.0	
Gearbox	5-speed Hewland manual	
Tires	BFGoodrich T/A racing slicks; 325/35R-16 f, 335/45R-16 r	
Catalytic converters	no	

PAUL GENTILOZZI'S A BUSY MAN, PART owner of the Champ Car World Series and full owner of Rocketsports, which campaigns cars in both the Champ Car and the Trans-Am series, where Paul the driver (at the time of the June test) was just one week away from making his series-record 199th race start. Though busy, the 55-year-old Michigan native likes to have fun, which is why he's at Lemoore, in that window between the Milwaukee and Portland races.

Other than taping the Jag's body panels and blocking off the radiator for aero reasons, the Trans-Am car is not tweaked. In his first run, the 630-bhp XKR—a specific chassis that has won two championships—sounds especially sweet, but struggles with too much wheelspin following a 9000-rpm launch and reaches only into the 170s. Not fast enough for Paul.

So, stability be damned, he has the crew remove the XKR's large rear wing and heads out again. This time there's a better launch after a tire-warming burnout, and the Jag hits a very respectable 180.5 mph, in 28 sec. flat.

"It didn't like not having the wing," explains a wide-eyed Gentilozzi, who says the XKR feels like a much different car and experiences wheelspin at 180, making the Jag hit the rev limiter about 800 ft. too soon. "It's kind of weird spinning the tires at 180…it was like an E-ticket ride, while sitting backward. I pedaled it a little [backed off the throttle a bit] to get it settled down, but when I saw 9500 rpm in 5th gear, 1000 ft. before the end of the mile, I thought I had blown it up. I'll tell you what, I'll never do that again."

■ Time warp: Ruf's 18-year-old Yellow Bird squats en route to its 28.6-sec. mile, at a phenomenally fast 185.8 mph.

RUF CTR

SPEED AT 1 MILE:	**185.8 mph** (4th)
TIME TO 1 MILE:	**28.6 sec** (7th*)
Curb weight	est 2580 lb
Horsepower	469 bhp
Pounds per horsepower	est 5.5
Gearbox	5-speed manual
Tires	Dunlop SP Sport 8000; 205/50ZR-17 f, 255/40ZR-17 r
Catalytic converters	no

*tie

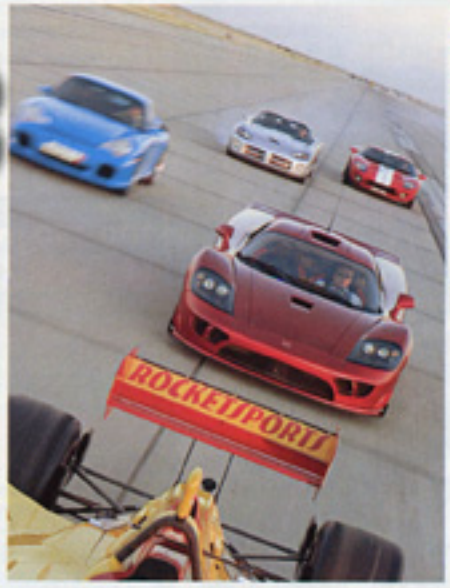
WHEN THIS RUF CTR, AKA YELLOW BIRD, first appeared in *Road & Track*—in the July 1987 "World's Fastest Cars" cover story in which it went 211 mph at Volkswagen's Ehra-Lessien track in Germany—there was a young waiter at a Bennigans restaurant in Houston who idolized Alois Ruf and one day hoped to build fast cars of his own. His name: John Hennessey.

So when the noted Viper tuner sees Yellow Bird in our lineup, he's totally stoked... like a kid seeing his dream car for the first time. At Lemoore, though, John's enthusiasm is matched by that of Steve Millen, who drives Yellow Bird—now with more than 100,000 kilometers on its odometer—to a scintillating speed of 185.8 mph in the standing mile, notably squatting with each upshift of its super-quick 28.6-sec. run.

Not bad for a 18-year-old car. Although it's not quite as quick as a modern Trans-Am car, it has a higher speed at the end of the mile.

When Steve gets out, his eyes are smiling from within his full-face helmet. All he can say is: "Wow!" Continues Steve: "That thing's a blast. It accelerates hard. It's a real old-school car with a lot of torque and power. Just awesome. What a rush. It pulled the whole way through. You can feel that it's lighter than some of the other cars." Then, as he gives Alois a thumbs-up sign of approval, he adds, "It's a good old car."

The understatement of the day.



LOLA-FORD COSWORTH CHAMP CAR

SPEED AT 1 MILE:	**203.3 mph** (3rd)
TIME TO 1 MILE:	**24.2 sec** (1st)
Curb weight	1560 lb
Horsepower	800 bhp
Pounds per horsepower	2.0
Gearbox	7-speed no-lift sequential
Tires	Bridgestone Potenza racing slicks; 25.5 x 12.0R-15 f, 27.7 x 16.0R-15 r
Catalytic converters	no

GENTILOZZI IS WORRIED THAT HIS LOLA isn't very aerodynamic, that its exposed wheels and large wings, together with the downforce-producing underbody, will create a car that hits an aerodynamic brick wall that other sleeker cars will slice through and reach a higher top speed in the mile. He's right, that happens. But no car in this test gets through the mile as quickly as the DHL-sponsored Lola, whose suspension and gearing are tailored for the Portland race the following weekend.

Following a couple of disappointing runs in which ex-Formula 1 driver Timo Glock of Germany says he can actually feel the drag slowing the car down, the DHL Lola is prepped to go out again, this time with the Ford Cosworth engine now having "Power 2 Pass" engaged, which gives the 2.65-liter turbo V-8 an extra 300 revs (to 12,300) and a half psi of additional boost, which bumps the output to 800 bhp. The power increase, together with a rear wing reduced to just one small element, the brake cooling ducts taped off and the optional stickier Bridgestone slicks, makes for a much better car in the mile. Following some wild tire-warming burnouts, the Lola blisters through the mile in 24.2 sec., 1.4 sec. ahead of the next quickest car, the Hennessey Viper. That's a long distance at 203.3 mph.

Two other amazing stats: The Champ Car hits 150 mph in only 8.6 sec., and averages nearly 150 mph for the whole mile. If another car hits the starting line already at that speed and keeps it there, the Champ Car, from a standing start, will catch it by the end of the mile! Also, Rocketsports' own data show that when Glock lets off the throttle after the run, the Lola experiences nearly 1g of deceleration, close to the force a typical production car reaches in panic braking. Just imagine what a Champ Car could do given better aero....

■ According to Rocketsports' own data, the Lola, even with reduced downforce, could drive upside down at 150 mph.

0-100 mph sec

Lola Champ Car	5.3
MV Agusta Tamburini	5.7
Saleen S7 Twin Turbo	6.3
Pontiac-Riley D P	6.8
Hennessey Viper	6.8
Jaguar XKR Trans-Am	7.4
Ruf R Turbo	7.4
Ruf CTR Yellow Bird	7.6
Ford GT	8.6
HPA Audi TT	8.8
Vortech Mustang GT	9.4
Dodge Viper SRT-10	9.6
Lamborghini Murcielago	9.6
Chevrolet Corvette	10.7

0-150 mph sec

Lola Champ Car	8.6
Hennessey Viper	11.5
MV Agusta Tamburini	12.1
Saleen S7 Twin Turbo	12.1
Pontiac-Riley D P	14.4
Jaguar XKR Trans-Am	14.7
Ruf R Turbo	16.6
Ruf CTR Yellow Bird	16.9
Ford GT	19.5
Vortech Mustang GT	20.2
HPA Audi TT	20.5
Lamborghini Murcielago	21.3
Dodge Viper SRT-10	24.1
Chevrolet Corvette	28.9

By no means is any car in this group slow, but note how the Hennessey Viper hits 200 in the same time it takes the Lambo to reach 150. And although the Champ Car is phenomenally quick from 100 to 150 mph, from 100 to 200 the stratospheric power and better aerodynamics of the Hennessey Viper give it the advantage. The car is geared to hit 220 mph in 5th gear.

100-150 mph sec

Lola Champ Car	3.4
Hennessey Viper	4.7
Saleen S7 Twin Turbo	5.7
MV Agusta Tamburini	6.4
Jaguar XKR Trans-Am	7.4
Pontiac-Riley D P	7.6
Ruf R Turbo	9.2
Ruf CTR Yellow Bird	9.3
Vortech Mustang GT	10.8
Ford GT	10.9
HPA Audi TT	11.6
Lamborghini Murcielago	11.7
Dodge Viper SRT-10	14.6
Chevrolet Corvette	18.2

100-200 mph sec

Hennessey Viper	14.5
Lola Champ Car	16.8
Saleen S7 Twin Turbo	17.1

For more video action, additional photography, extra data and contact information, see www.roadandtrack.com

0-60 mph sec

Lola Champ Car	3.1
MV Agusta Tamburini	3.1
Ruf R Turbo	3.4
Saleen S7 Twin Turbo	3.4
Ford GT	3.6
Hennessey Viper	3.6
Pontiac-Riley D P	3.8
HPA Audi TT	4.0
Lamborghini Murcielago	4.0
Ruf CTR Yellow Bird	4.0
Jaguar XKR Trans-Am	4.1
Dodge Viper SRT-10	4.4
Chevrolet Corvette	4.8
Vortech Mustang GT	4.8

0-200 mph sec

Hennessey Viper TT	21.3
Lola Champ Car	22.0
Saleen S7 Twin Turbo	23.4

TIM DARNER

SALEEN S7 TWIN TURBO

SPEED AT 1 MILE:	205.7 mph	2nd
TIME TO 1 MILE:	25.9 sec	3rd
Curb weight	2950 lb	
Horsepower	750 bhp	
Pounds per horsepower	3.9	
Gearbox	6-speed manual	
Tires	Michelin Pilot Sport 2; P275/35ZR-19 f, P345/30ZR-20 r	
Catalytic converters	yes	

THIS IS OUR FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH THE 750-bhp Saleen S7 Twin Turbo, and we like what we see. The production car is beautifully built, and if looks equal performance, the S7 would win hands down, based on all the attention it received from the Navy MPs.

Fortunately, this $575,000 supercar has the performance to back up its looks. It ran in bone-stock configuration, with cats, the lone exception being an aftermarket muffler added by the private owner. Using a drop-clutch start from 2500 rpm, Saleen test driver John Spruill rockets the street-legal Le Mans car down the runway. After a 205.7-mph mile at 25.9 sec., Spruill pulls back into the paddock, allowing the Saleen crew to raise the rear glass to vent some heat away from the twin-turbo pushrod aluminum V-8, which runs only 5 psi of boost.

Says Spruill: "It's a little loosey goosey out there on the paint. Man, this car gets up there real quickly in 3rd gear. You gotta shift so quickly in this thing, because it's accelerating like nobody's business."

"Nobody's business," in real data, means an S7 Twin Turbo that reaches 200 mph in only 23.4 sec., a command performance made possible with gobs of power, light weight and an aerodynamic body. This is a race car for the street, and if it's able to pull redline in top gear, Saleen says the S7 is capable of hitting 235 mph.

HENNESSEY VENOM 1000 TWIN TURBO VIPER

SPEED AT 1 MILE:	210.2 mph	1st
TIME TO 1 MILE:	25.6 sec	2nd
Curb weight	3430 lb	
Horsepower	1000 bhp	
Pounds per horsepower	3.4	
Gearbox	6-speed manual	
Tires	Michelin Pilot Sport Cup, P265/35YR-18 f; Michelin Pilot Sport 2, P335/30YR-20 r	
Catalytic converters	no	

WE ALREADY KNOW HOW POWERFUL JOHN Hennessey's twin-turbocharged Vipers are. Running 15 psi of boost, these stroked 522-cu.-in. V-10s put out 1000 bhp, roughly twice the output of a stock Viper. For a real-world example of how powerfully fast a Hennessey Twin Turbo Viper is, consider this: By the time it reaches the mile in 25.6 sec., it's traveling 210.2 mph, or more than a football field every second.

More telling, however, is how the car fares in relation to a stock Viper, an already potent car. In the 1-mile sprint, with Brian Smith at the wheel and stock 3.07:1 rear gearing, the Hennessey Viper crosses the finish line exactly 1329 ft.—more than a quarter mile—ahead of the stock Viper. Probably can't even see the other car.

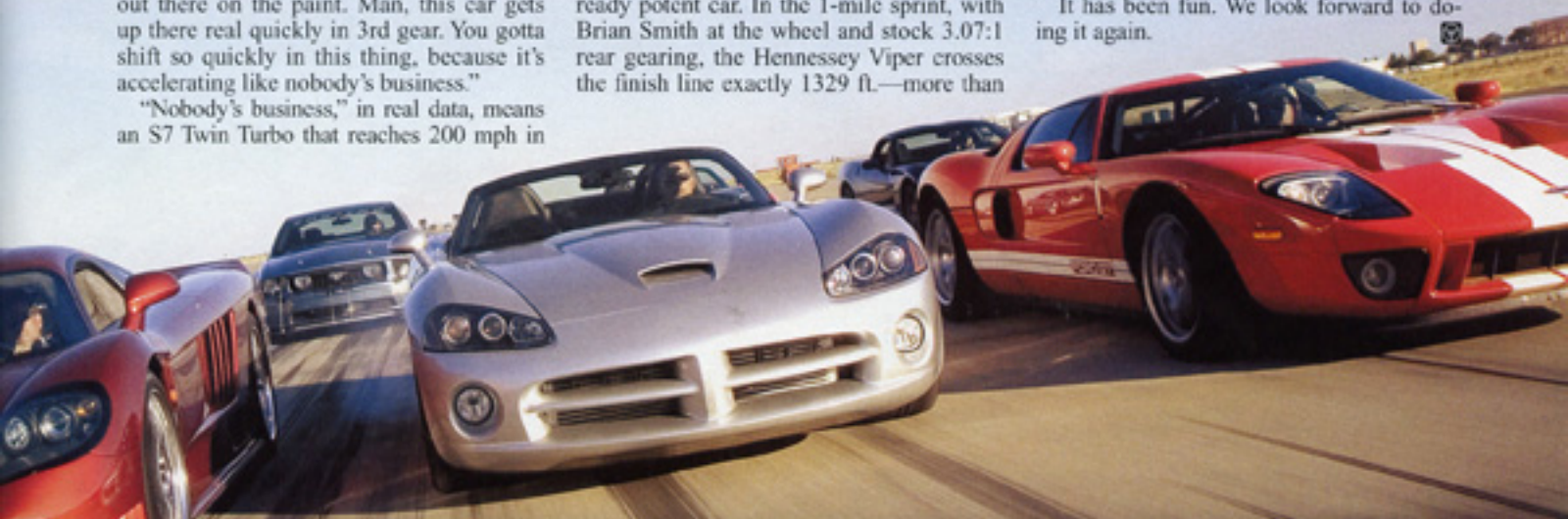
That's power. We're talking about 1100 lb.-ft. of torque here, pushing the obviously chunkier Viper body (with mirrors) through the air at a fantastic speed of 210.2 mph, raising its fabric top off its internal structure as it streaks down the runway with incredible quickness between 100 mph and 200 mph, which it did in nearly 300 ft. less distance than the Saleen S7 Twin Turbo.

The only thing Hennessey did specifically for this test was run without air cleaners. This bit John, as the added ponies probably weren't needed, and the Viper on its final run ingested a small pebble that damaged the passenger-side turbo's impeller shaft, which caused the seals to progressively leak oil and blow lots of Mobil 1 smoke out the tailpipe, but no internal damage.

FINAL THOUGHTS

And speaking of smoke, there's nothing deceiving about this Standing Mile; it's a put up or shut up test that shows the true power of this potent group of vehicles, as fast as they are diverse, with tuner cars mixing it up with production cars and race cars. Kudos to all who participated; demerits to those who turned down this rare chance to play. In the meantime, study the data, and look beyond the astounding fact that we had three cars go over 200 mph. See how, for instance, the mighty Hennessey Viper and all the other vehicles in this test complete the last half-mile in less time than it takes them to do the initial quarter mile.

It has been fun. We look forward to doing it again.



F-18 versus Champ Car

So, what's quicker in the standing mile, a Champ Car or an F-18 fighter jet? To find out, the Navy let us track a Hornet during a takeoff with our Stalker radar gun, which we hoped would give us enough data to plot a standing-mile curve.

It did, showing that the jet is quicker than expected on initial takeoff, nearly matching the Lola's curve in the first second of the run, following a power-braked full-afterburner launch. Thereafter, though, as the chart shows, the Champ Car has the decided edge, at least to the 3/4-mile mark, which it hits 0.7 second sooner than the jet, though traveling at only 196.2 mph versus the jet's 267.1 mph.

Two-hundred sixty-seven-point-one miles per hour! Yes indeed, and the fighter only gets faster from there, its smooth and steeply ramped acceleration curve revealing that the F-18 reaches 308.3 mph at the 1-mile mark, roughly 3000 ft. after going aloft.

Impressive stuff. And like a Champ Car, another great use of thrust, carbon fiber and wings.—*AB*

	Champ Car	F-18 Hornet
1/4 mile	9.9 sec @ 161.4 mph	11.9 sec @ 154.2 mph
1/2 mile	15.0 sec @ 188.3 mph	16.7 sec @ 218.0 mph
3/4 mile	19.7 sec @ 196.2 mph	20.4 sec @ 267.1 mph
1 mile	24.2 sec @ 203.3 mph	23.6 sec @ 308.3 mph