

S7

Saleen S7—American Supercar

by Chris Caswell

This didn't happen because, if it had, I would have broken every speed limit in this great nation less than five seconds after putting the hammer down, and I don't know that many judges. So I'll deny categorically that, on August 30, I was behind the wheel of the brand-new Saleen S7 supercar at speeds on the very far side of 150mph on an open stretch of toll road near the Saleen plant in Southern California. That disclaimer out of the way, let me tell you what it felt like (if it had really happened).

But first, a word about Steve Saleen and his amazing speed machine. In the early '80s, Steve Saleen channeled his passion for racing as a successful driver in everything from the Trans-Am Series to Indy cars into a thriving business that has since turned more than 7000 Mustangs into street-legal muscle cars, as well as provided a host of parts and accessories for do-it-yourselfers. Saleen also builds a performance version of the Ford Explorer sports ute, and the racing team he shares with



TV star Tim Allen continues to compete with Saleen cars at LeMans, Daytona and Sebring.

The S7 is the logical next step for Saleen Inc., which has set a goal of building the first true American supercar. Designed to compete with the fastest, best handling and most luxurious grand touring cars in the world, it will be built in extremely limited numbers at a retail price of \$375,000. For that, the lucky buyers will get a car that has a top speed of around 206mph and yet still have full creature comforts.

To get into the Saleen requires a bit of a slither, since the doors open up and away from the body. The steering wheel comes off to help you in over the door-sill and you're quickly settled into the fitted Connolly leather seat. The driver's seat is moved toward the center for more room and better weight distribution, and, with a car height of just 41 inches, you're literally sitting on the ground. Surprisingly enough, the seating and pedals are adjustable