

★ FOURTH ANNUAL TEN BEST ISSUE ★

CAR DRIVER[®]

JANUARY 1986 • \$2.50

TEN BEST

CARS

PHOTOGRAPHS

ROADS
OF EUROPE

ENGINEERS

COLLECTIBLE
CARS

POWER TOYS

AMAZING
STORIES

RACES

PERFORMERS

JOKES



ROAD TESTS:

Porsche 911 Turbo, Pontiac Grand Am SE,
Mitsubishi Starion ESI-R, Suzuki Samurai



Porsche 911 Turbo

*The vexing return of the car
no one could forget.*



• Set your time control for 1979. Forget everything automotive you've experienced in the last six years. Let yourself drift back, back, all the way back to a time when one high-performance automobile in America stood head and shoulders above the rest.

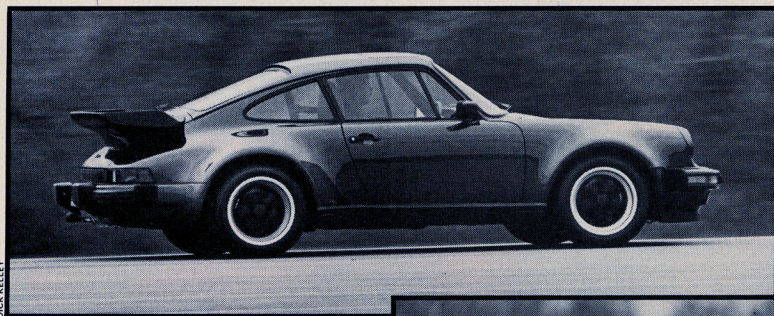
Six years ago, things looked grim for car enthusiasts. The feds' emissions standards and a pair of fuel crises had just about squeezed the life out of hot cars—with one notable exception. Towering Colossus-like above the sea of gas-sipping econoboxes and throbbing diesels was the Porsche 930 Turbo. Its sheetmetal bulged

like Arnold Schwarzenegger's chest. Its engine had turbocharged lungs. It accelerated as if there were a Saturn booster strapped to its tail. It became the altar at which car nuts worshiped, and no one with even a few drops of 30-weight in his veins would ever forget it.

The 930 Turbo was the promise of a better tomorrow through turbocharging. But at the end of the 1979 model year, it was withdrawn from the U.S. market. The expense and the complexity of maintaining its power level while bringing its air-cooled engine into line with tightening

emissions regulations were cited as the primary cause of its demise. Its penchant for gasoline (it delivered only 12 mpg on the EPA city test), its high price, and its low sales volume were the nails in the coffin. America would have to get by with normally aspirated 911s, or none at all.

This was not easy news to take. Sure, the Turbo was beyond the reach of all but a few wealthy buyers. Its passing shouldn't have meant a thing to the rest of us, but it did. That's because the Porsche 930 Turbo transcended the realm of everyday cars and parts and suggested retail prices. It de-



fined and dominated an era in automotive history.

It was inevitable that a car as coveted as the 930 would continue to find its way here through the gray market. It never went out of production, so a ready supply has been available for those with fat wallets; we tested a number of such cars ourselves. To thwart the gray-market traffic, Porsche went so far as to offer the 930's voluptuous bodywork and revised chassis pieces as a big-buck option on the 911 Carrera.

As of this moment, all of these substitutes for the real thing are hereby declared obsolete. Porsche Cars North America is once again importing the most potent member of its rear-engined family, this time under the 911 Turbo name.

The manufacturer's reasons for its change of heart are simple and straightforward. Porsche has finally recognized the full importance of the North American market, where more than half of its cars are sold. As a result, we will no longer be denied the best stuff, which has been heretofore reserved for Europe. The game plan is for Porsche to offer all of its model lines here, while making every attempt to equalize power levels worldwide. Last year, we were granted the four-valve-per-cylinder 928 before the German market got it. The 944 Turbo makes the same power wherever it's sold. The 911 Turbo is the third step in that direction.

Importing the 911 Turbo is also the best way for Porsche to blunt the gray market and to channel the profits from U.S. sales into its own coffers. Why buy a privately federalized European-spec 911 Turbo, which might be hard to get parts for, when you can have a factory-fresh, EPA-approved model with the full dealer warranty?

Corporate maneuvering aside, the best part of the deal is that a solid-gold, heart-thumping supercar has returned to our midst. It's as if Ferrari had brought back the Daytona, or Ford had resurrected the Cobra. But is all the lore surrounding the mythical 930 Turbo grounded in reality, or have our warm memories been clouded by time and distance? Is the new 911 Turbo still the King Kong super ride of our demented dreams, or has automotive science passed it by? Only a test drive will tell.

To look at the new 911 Turbo is to stare



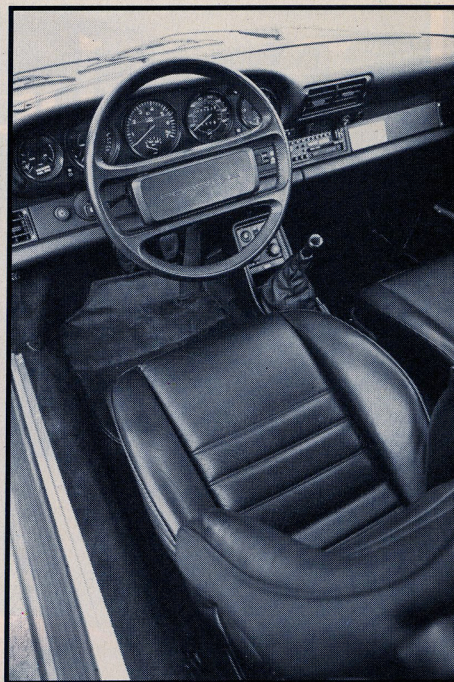
right back into 1979. Only the keenest eye will notice that the rear tires now fill out the massive flared fenders a little more fully. The engineers have attacked the 930's nasty tendency to wag its tail during hard cornering by specifying wider-than-ever, 245/45VR-16 Dunlop SP Sport D40 rear tires in place of the old car's 225/50VR-16 rubber. The bigger tires are mounted on 9.0-inch wheels, which are an inch wider than before.

Precious few cars could live through six years without so much as a face lift, but the 911 Turbo has done just that. This car has a sexier body than Madonna, and the years have dulled its charm not a whit. We sampled the 911 Turbo in the L.A. area, which has the highest per-capita number of winged and flared 911s in the Western Hemisphere, but our red beast wowed the masses nonetheless. They still find this a spellbinding automobile, and far more folks than you'd expect went out of their way to let us know that.

Inside, the Turbo could be any 911 of recent vintage, but for a few minor details. A small boost gauge is incorporated into the tachometer at the six-o'clock position. Check the standard plastic shift knob and you'll see that the gear pattern stops at fourth. (Turbos have never been equipped with five-speeds by the factory.)

Aside from that, the Turbo is just a well-dressed 911. Soft, sweet-smelling leather is lavished on the cockpit, including the dash top. A full load of extras, from air to sunroof, are standard—just as you'd expect in a car that comes in at a nice, round \$48,000. But that's it. No surprises or great advances have sprung up since we last saw this model.

You won't find any major changes under the whale tail, either. The 911 Turbo's air-cooled flat six is basically the same one



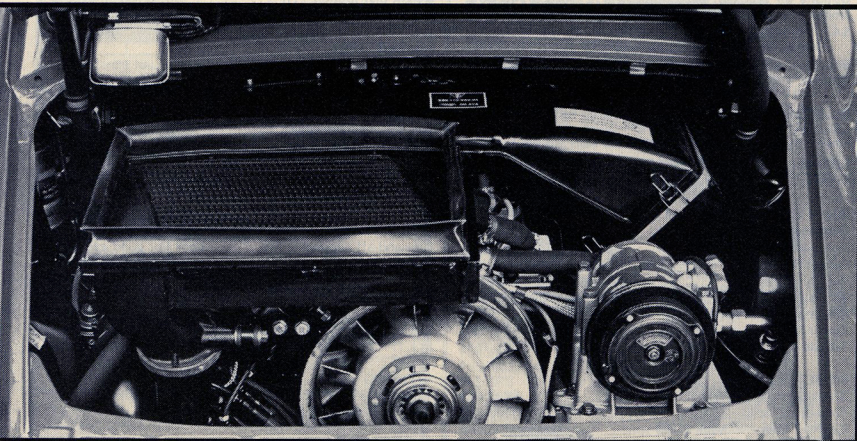
that tantalized us so much back in 1979. The turbocharged and intercooled powerplant still displaces 3.3 liters, and such details as its bore, stroke, and compression ratio remain unchanged.

The bottom line—the horsepower coming off the end of the crankshaft—is fatter than ever, though. Porsche's data banks are six years richer with emissions-control knowledge, and it's been put to good use in the 911 Turbo. The tweaking includes a three-way catalytic converter, an oxygen sensor, and electronic assistance for the Bosch mechanical fuel-injection system. In 1979, Porsche was carping about the difficulties of making its air-cooled powerplant comply with federal exhaust-emissions standards. Today, the engineers have made it comply, adding an impressive 29 hp in the bargain. They also managed to improve fuel economy by 33 percent, though the 911 Turbo's 16 mpg still isn't good enough to get it past the gas-guzzler law. This scrape with the tax man adds a \$500 penalty to the car's base price.

Nevertheless, if 1979 was a great year for turbocharged 911s, 1986 ought to be even better, right? Twenty-nine more horses, fatter tires, and six years of chassis development could only make things positively dreamy.

There's certainly no shortage of promise when you get the proceedings under way. On a cool morning, the beat of the 911 Turbo's idle will warm you faster than the heater. This engine sounds serious: lumpy and hoarse, with an occasional *spit!* thrown in for good measure.

There's no need to hound the 911 around town. Enough torque is on hand



for easing along in thick L.A. traffic without fishing for boost. But look out the first time you decide to scoot away from a light. First gear is as steep as the north face of the Eiger—it's good for 50 mph—and there's no heavy thrust down low. A cheerleader in a clapped-out Mustang II will have no trouble beating you across an intersection while checking her makeup. As a matter of fact, one did exactly that to us.

Then the boost comes in as the revs go past 4500 rpm, the exhaust hisses like a very angry 3000-pound cat, and *whoosh!* you rattle the Mustang's windows as you blow by.

On the freeway, locked in a clot of 65-mph traffic, the Turbo feels dead on its feet. Rolling along in fourth gear with the engine just ticking over, it's a good five-count before the boost needle moves off of the peg. Drop down to third and it's still a three-count before the rockets fire and you can blast through a hole into the next lane.

This is no fun. Your average Volvo 740

Turbo would be ten car-lengths down the passing lane by now. In truth, second gear, which goes all the way to 86 mph, is the way to deal with the freeway—but it's kind of embarrassing, not to mention noisy, howling along at 4500 rpm just to have the horsepower on retainer.

We remember the 930 as having bags full of boost lag, but was it really this bad? Has turbo technology left this car—a *Porsche*—so hopelessly behind?

Our track testing indicated that something was probably wrong with our test car. Its clutch was definitely slipping, and we suspect that a waste-gate problem kept the engine from building boost quickly. This car also suffered a thrown A/C drive belt and a recalcitrant driver's door during our testing, so it was not the best example of Porsche quality we've seen.

Further study was called for, so we traded our flaming-red 911 Turbo for a deep-blue-metallic number (yes, you do see two different cars in the photos) and set off for

the test track again. There was certainly nothing wrong this time around. Big horsepower, big rear tires, and a big rear weight bias enabled our second test car to blow out of the hole like a cannon shot. With a searing 0-to-60-mph run of 4.6 seconds and a clocking of 13.1 seconds at 105 mph through the quarter-mile, the 911 Turbo is most assuredly this season's acceleration ace—providing you're willing to resort to rough, wheel-spinning, drag-race starts.

Out on the road, though, these numbers pale next to the Turbo's boost-lag arthritis. Even the healthier of our two test cars took forever to spin its turbo up to liftoff speed. Once it was up and running, it was plenty strong, but it just didn't awe us the way the old 930 used to.

Then again, there's more to our memories of the 930 than pure speed. It was also known as one of the trickiest handlers around. Driving one hard was a job for experts. Putting the power on aggressively in a corner would pitch the nose way up, and the 930 would try to run straight over its front tires. Lift off the gas just a few millimeters in these conditions and the 930 would swing sideways so fast, it would jump-start your heart.

Not so the new 911 Turbo. On the tortured curves of California's Ortega Highway, it shows real poise. In the last six years it's obviously been taught some manners. Antics that would have spun you out before hardly faze it. The brakes are superb. It's still hard work to drive very, *very* fast, but it's much more forgiving now.

Comparing this experience with our last 930 outing, in 1979, it's clear that things have changed. The 930 was dead in the curves and awesome on the straights, and the 911 Turbo is mellow in both areas.

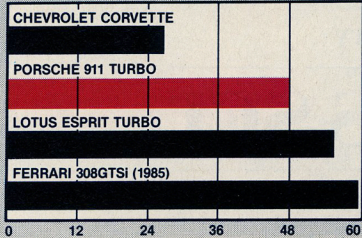
This pass through the time barrier, the 911 Turbo's performance just hasn't blown our minds—and we think we know why. Back in 1979, there really wasn't any other car in America that offered anywhere near the 930's kind of speed. Today, however, we're in the middle of a horsepower boom. We've got 157-mph 944 Turbos, 154-mph 928s, 151-mph Corvettes, 140-mph Camaros—hell, even Saab is in the 140-plus club these days.

Faced with these facts, we can draw no other conclusion than that the handwriting is on the wall for the 911 Turbo. Precious few cars can sprint with it, but the march of technology has produced a whole flock of turbo cars with much better manners. This is, no doubt, why Porsche is hard at work on a four-valve-per-cylinder version of this car, and why the awesome 959 prototype is fitted with a sophisticated twin-turbo-charger setup.

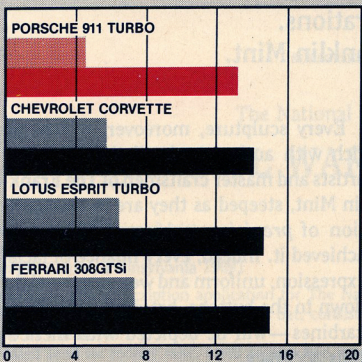
But this is today—the here and now. Taking a cold, hard look at the 911 Turbo's vexing return, we get the feeling that fond memory may have been better left undisturbed.

—Rich Ceppos

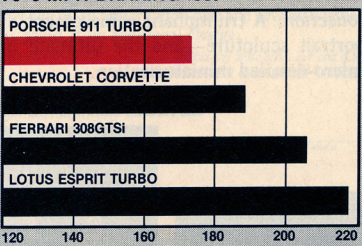
CURRENT BASE PRICE dollars x 1000



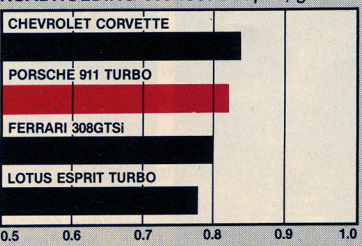
ACCELERATION seconds



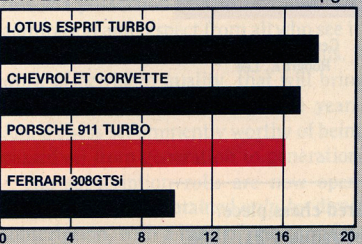
70-0 MPH BRAKING feet



ROADHOLDING 300-foot skidpad, g



EPA ESTIMATED FUEL ECONOMY mpg



ANTI-SWAY-BAR HANDLING KITS

FREE All Domestic & Import
Catalog & Forged, not welded ends
Handling Book • 23 years eng. exp.
ADDCO • Best quality steel
• 1000 applications
305/844-2531 656 East Street, Lake Park, FL 33403

PANTERA SERVICE - PARTS - SALES HALL PANTERA

World's Largest Panthera Dealer
FREE CATALOG

9210 Alondra • Bellflower, CA 90706
(213) 867-3319 (213) 866-5852

Compare our prices on performance

radial tires
Enjoy superior performance of top imported steel belted radials at cut prices. No blems or seconds. Order or get advice by phone. Ask for Dept. B-1.

Toll-free 800 835-8473

(In California, Alaska, Hawaii, 714 250-9141)
Phone Pacific Time, M-F 7-6, Sat 8-1. Telex 181689.

Use Visa/MasterCard

Tell us card number & expiration date. Or send certified check, MO or personal check. In Calif or Pennsylvania, add 6% sales tax. No COD's.

More than \$7 million inventory. Allow 3-10 days shipping time. If personal check add 14 days to clear our bank. Shipping extra. Phone for shipping costs. **Call for free illustrated catalog.** We ship from our Calif. or Pennsylvania warehouses. 42-147

BRIDGESTONE

S407 UTOG: 180AA. Radial, 2 steel belts, 1 or 2 polyester body plies. Superflier stiff bead compound. High performance all-season design. P-Metric 70 series. HR speed rated. Raised white letters. Tubeless. 0 = blackwall.
P175/70R13b \$40 P185/70R14b \$47
P185/70R13b 45 P185/70R14b 50
P185/70R13b 42 P205/70R14b 53
P185/70R13b 47 P215/70R15 50
P185/70R14b 45 P215/70R15 61
P185/70R14 51 P225/70R15 65

CONTINENTAL

CH 51 UTOG: 150AA. Radial, 2 steel belts, 2 nylon caps, 1 or 2 rayon body plies. HR speed rated. Blackwall. Tubeless.
175/70-13 \$55 195/70-14 \$66
185/70-13 57 205/70-14 71
185/70-14 62 185/65-15 67

137 Potenza UTOG: 140AA. For high performance cars. Radial, 2 steel belts, 2 polyester body plies. Superflier stiff bead compound. P-Metric 60 series. HR speed rated. Blackwall. Tubeless.
P185/60R14 \$79 P205/60R15 \$94
P225/60R14 89 P215/60R15 90
P185/60R15 80

E81 Potenza UTOG: 140AA. For high performance cars. Radial, 2 steel belts, 1 nylon belt, 2 polyester body plies. Metric 55 & 50 series. VR speed rated. Blackwall. Tubeless.
195/50-15 \$109 205/55-16 \$139
205/50-15 122 225/50-16 146
205/50-15 139

MICHELIN

MXL UTOG: 200AB. Radial, 2 steel belts, 1 polyester body ply. 1R rated. Blackwall. Tubeless.
175/70-14 \$40
165/70-13 \$32 185/70-14 40
175/70-13 39 185/70-14 48
185/70-13 40 185/65-15 46

XXZ UTOG: 240AB. Radial, 2 steel belts, 1 or 2 rayon body plies. SR speed rated. Blackwall. Tubeless. RF = Reinforced.
155-12 \$25 185-14 \$42
155-13 27 185-14RF 47
165-13 32 145-15 27
165-14 34 155-15 41
175-14 47 165-15 36

CH 41 UTOG: 150AA. Radial, 2 steel belts, 2 nylon caps, 1 or 2 rayon body plies. HR speed rated. Blackwall. Tubeless.
175/70-13 \$58 195/70-14 \$74
205/70-13 72 185/60-15 79
185/60-14 66 205/60-15 83

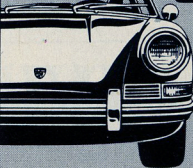
CS 21 UTOG: 160-200AB. Radial, 2 steel belts, 1 nylon cap (some sizes), 1 or 2 rayon body plies. SR speed rated. Blackwall. Tubeless. 175-14 \$36
145-13 \$23 185/70-13 29
155-13 26 175/70-13 32
165-13 28 185/70-13 36
165-14 34 185/70-14 39

MXV UTOG: 170AA. Radial, 2 steel belts, 2 rayon body plies. HR speed rated. Metric 65 & 60 series. Blackwall. Tubeless.
175/70-13 \$51 195/70-14 \$70
185/70-13 57 205/70-14 78
185/70-14 61 195/60-15 69
195/70-14 64 205/60-15 75

TRX UTOG: 170AA. Radial, 1 steel belt, 1 polyamide belt, 2 polyester or rayon body plies. Blackwall. Tubeless.
P185/70-13 \$64 190/65-30 \$75
P185/65-35 67 220/55-30 85

XBT UTOG: 170AA. Radial, 1 steel belt, 1 polyamide belt, 2 polyester body plies. P-Metric 60, 55 & 50 series. VR speed rated. Recessed raised black letters. Tubeless.
P205/60R13 \$104 P245/60R15 \$61
P205/60R14 111 P255/60R15 171
P245/60R14 136 P205/55R16 180
P215/60R15 126 P225/55R16 191

PORSCHE OWNERS NEW GIANT CATALOG



Thousands of photos and listings of parts, accessories and tools

- Immediate Delivery
- Discounted Prices
- The Leader Since 1964

Send \$4.00 for Catalog.

PERFORMANCE PRODUCTS

Dept. A4, 16129 Leadwell, Van Nuys, CA 91406
818-787-7500 CA (800) 272-3906 U.S. (800) 423-3173

Advertised prices good through January 31. Phone for prices on other Michelin, Bridgestone, Continental, Englebert, Pirelli, Kelly & Quantum tires. Also truck & off-road tires.

PIRELLI

P3, P3/70 UTOG: 140-180A. Radial, 2 steel belts, 1 nylon cap, 1 rayon body ply. SR speed rated. Blackwall. Tubeless.
155-12 \$25 165/70-13 \$29
165-13 29 185/70-13 35
185-14 35 185/70-14 38
155-15 29 185/70-15 42
165-15 33

P4, P44 UTOG: 180AB. Radial, 2 steel belts, 1 nylon cap, 1 rayon body ply. SR speed rated. Blackwall. Tubeless.
145-13 \$23 175-14 \$34
155-13 28 175/70-13 34
165-13 30 185/70-13 37
165-14 33 195/70-14 43

P6 UTOG: 130-140AA. Radial, 2 steel belts, 2 nylon caps, 2 rayon body plies. Metric 65 & 60 series. HR speed rated. Blackwall. Tubeless. 1 = VR speed rated.
185/60-13 \$80 225/60-14 \$91
205/60-13 76 185/70-15 91
185/60-14 69 195/60-15 81
185/65-14 63 195/60-15 85
195/60-14 77 205/60-15 86
205/60-14 86 215/60-15 100
205/60-14 95 215/60-15 114

P7 UTOG: 160AA. Radial, 2 steel belts, 3 nylon caps, 1 rayon body ply. VR rated. Blackwall. Tubeless. * = R or F-type.
205/60-13* \$101 285/40-15 \$191
205/55-14* 116 345/35-15 218
225/55-14* 126 205/55-16 159
205/50-15 137 225/50-16 187
225/50-15 155 265/50-16 191

P700 UTOG: 160AA. Radial, 2 steel belts, 2 nylon caps, 2 rayon body plies. VR speed rated. Blackwall. Tubeless.
225/50-16 \$228

P77 UTOG: 150-190AA. Radial, 2 steel belts, 2 nylon caps, 1 nylon body ply. Asymmetric tread design. M & S rated. P-Metric 75 & 70 series. HR speed rated. Whitewall. Tubeless. 0 = blackwall.
P175/70R13b \$48 P185/70R14 \$50
P185/70R13b 51 P205/70R14 62
P205/70R13b 54 P205/70R14 56
P205/70R13b 49 P205/70R14 59
P185/70R14 50 P205/75R15 67
P185/70R14 54 P215/75R15 67
P195/70R14b 55 P225/70R15 70

P8 UTOG: 200AB. Radial, 2 steel belts, 2 nylon caps, 1 rayon body ply. Low rolling resistance design. Metric 65 series. SR speed rated. Blackwall. Tubeless.
175/65-13 \$42 185/65-14 \$30
175/65-13 48 185/65-14 55
185/65-14 44 205/65-14 60
175/65-14 45 185/65-15 54

ENGLEBERT

Max 1 UTOG: 160AB (Metric 70 sizes) (140AB, Metric sizes). Radial, 2 steel belts, 1 or 2 tread & sidewall plies. Nylon cap. SR speed rated. Blackwall. Tubeless.
155-13 \$25 175/70-13 \$32
165-13 28 185/70-13 34
175-14 34 185/70-14 39
185-14 36 195/70-14 44
165-15 34 205/70-14 Call

MUD & SNOW SEMPERIT

M523 Snow radial, 2 steel belts, 1 or 2 rayon body plies. SR speed rated. Hydrophilic tread compound. Studdable. Blackwall. Tubeless. 165/70-13 \$32
155-12 \$29 175/70-13 35
145-13 29 185/70-13 37
155-13 30 175/70-13 34
165-13 32 185/70-14 38
175-14 39 195/70-14 44
185-14 42 205/70-14 49
165-15 37 185/65-15 43

KELLY
Ice Radial Snow radial, 2 steel belts, 1 or 2 polyester body plies. Studdable. Whitewall. Tubeless.
P185/75R14 \$44 P215/75R15 \$52
P195/75R14 46 P225/75R15 55
P205/75R14 48 P235/75R15 57
P205/75R15 50

MICHELIN CLEARANCE
M&S Snow radial. Studdable. Tube type, includes tube
155-14 \$15 165-14 \$15
PIRELLI WINTER 190
185/65-15 \$83

YOKOHAMA
A008 UTOG: 140AA. Radial, 2 steel belts, 1 or 2 nylon belts, 2 rayon or polyester body plies. Metric 70, 60, 55 & 50 series. VR speed rated (70 series, HR speed rated). Blackwall. Tubeless.
175/70-13 \$64 225/60-15 \$104
185/70-13 68 195/60-15 83
205/60-13 86 205/60-15 111
185/70-14 71 215/60-15 121
205/70-14 77 195/50-15 119
205/70-14 84 205/50-15 140
185/60-14 78 225/50-15 158
205/60-14 88 205/55-16 173
205/60-14 98 225/50-16 176

SEMPERIT
M501 UTOG: 160AB. Radial, 2 steel belts, 2 rayon body plies. SR speed rated. Blackwall. Tubeless. RF = reinforced.
145-13 \$25 185/14RF \$44
155-13 27 165-15 35
165-13 30 175/70-13 30
165-14 31 175/70-13 34
175-14 37 185/70-13 36
185-14 40 185/70-14 38

Hi-Speed UTOG: 160AA. Radial, 2 steel belts, 2 nylon cap belts, 1 or 2 rayon body plies. HR speed rated. Blackwall. Tubeless.
175/70-13 \$43 205/70-14 \$71
185-14 46 185/60-14 49
195/70-14 61 205/60-15 75

TELETIRE

Send mail orders to Dept. B-1, 17622 Armstrong Av, Irvine, CA 92714-5791. Call first for shipping charges.