

# Probing the Probe

## Marko Peric test-drives the new Ford Probe

By Marko Peric

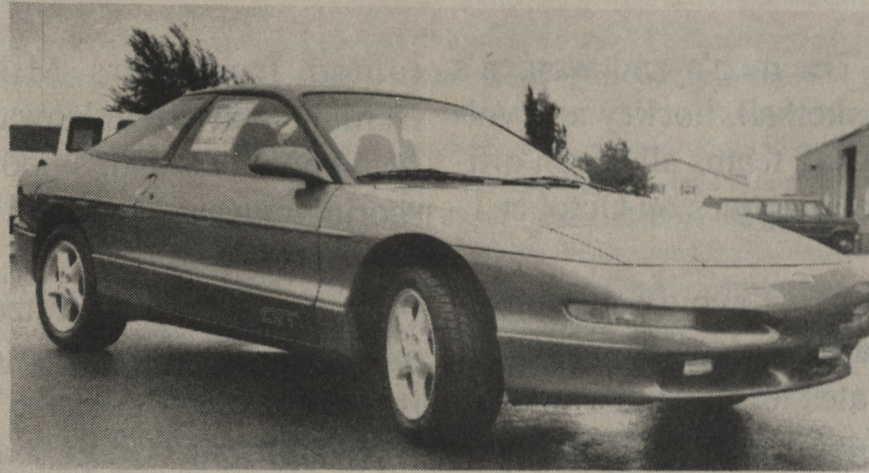
WHEN BUYING A CAR, SOME PEOPLE look for basic, reliable transportation. Others look for luxury, comfort, and a smooth ride. A third group wants performance, the more the better. The Ford Probe is a combination of all three.

The car is available in two flavours: the base model and the GT, which I test-drove. Both will get you around town in anything short of a blizzard, and the cargo area will hold plenty of groceries. Fold down the rear seats and lift out the tonneau cover and there's room for a battleship. As for luxury, two can ride in extreme comfort. The seats are supportive, the spaces well-proportioned. The optional adjustable driver's seat, which was included on my test car, allows almost anyone to find a comfortable driving position.

The sports car nature of this automobile is apparent at a glance: smooth, flowing lines, a wide aggressive stance, and big, beefy tires. Bodyside cladding and five-spoke aluminum wheels make this even more obvious on the GT. Under the hood, both engine choices are potent. The GT that I drove comes with a V6, and I had no problem reaching illegal speeds. The engine is very quiet, and wind noise is minimal. Cruising well above the speed limit is a simple and silent matter; the engine doesn't need to rev high to reach high speeds. Don't buy this car if you are always counting the

points remaining on your license.

When you must slow down, the four-wheel disc brakes do an admirable job.



Antilock brakes are available on both the GT and the base car. And for the safety-conscious, dual airbags are standard on both cars.

I haven't had the opportunity to drive the base Probe since the design was changed in '93. I found the previous model fun to drive, though. The new one is faster, and probably a better car altogether. Not a serious sports car, the basic Probe is good for someone who wants a good-looking car that's reasonably nimble and quick. The GT appeals to a more aggressive driver, a person who likes hurtling past slower vehicles on the highway. Both models have sold well for Ford in the U.S.,

almost to the point of being a benchmark in the automotive community. Sales in Canada have been slower, espe-

cially in the Maritimes. The older version is seen much more frequently than the new cars.

If you want to buy a Probe, be advised that they aren't cheap. The base car starts at \$16,300, but that includes numerous features that are options on other cars in this class. The available option packages add almost everything a driver could want. More exotic options like the CD player, a sunroof, and a power radio antenna are also obtainable. The GT will set you back \$19,995, a hefty sum for most students. The all-but loaded GT I drove had a sticker price of \$25,926. Of course, there's room to bargain in all these prices.

The Ford Probe is an excellent automobile, and I heartily recommend it to anyone who wants a sporty car. It has almost everything desirable in a car--pleasing looks, great performance, fun and reliability. Unfortunately, this car holds a limited appeal to students, mainly because of the price. Used ones are rare, since this new design is only two years old. The previous model is also a good car, as I can personally attest, since I almost bought one (I couldn't afford it). A good used '89 Probe can be had for \$6000 or less if you're a patient shopper. A word of warning, though--avoid the turbocharged GTs of '89 through '91. Stick with the base car or the V6 that was available in 1992.

Turning to other Ford news, the new Contour is now available. Five came in on the day I test drove the Probe. The Contour is replacing the aging Ford Tempo and Mercury Topaz. I believe that the Mercury version of the Contour is called the Mystique, a name that might be better suited to a different car. I may review the Contour at a later date.

Thanks to Bob Avery, and especially Terry Davis, the general sales manager at Fair Isle Ford. A true automotive enthusiast, Mr. Davis found time in his busy schedule to talk to me, and he was quite cooperative and insightful. If you would like more information on any vehicle built by Ford, contact *Fair Isle Ford at 166 St. Peters Road in Parkdale.*

## campus comment:

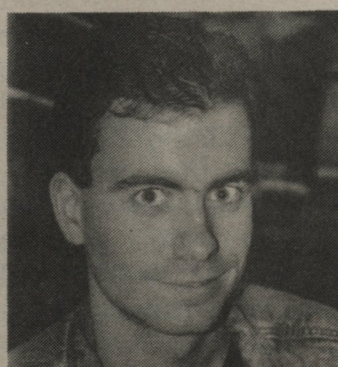
### Why did they change the color of the Sprite bottles?

Sprite is the clear choice.

--wow aren't you original? prod. ed.



Ella Milner-- 1st year Arts



Dan Arsenaault-- 1st year English



For environmental reasons.

Robert Power-- 4th year Anthropology



Kelly Rafter-- 2nd year Science

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