

## MUSCLE CARS FOR SEXY WOMEN

by Johanna Siegmann

I swear. It shouldn't be that difficult. Really. I mean, it's just a car – it goes from A to B on four tires, right? Any car will do that. So what's the big deal? Four cylinder, V-6, V-8 – isn't that a juice? 150 or 250 horsepower? How much power in a horse? And alloy wheels? What do they do? Who cares? As it turns out, I do, which is really frustrating because after all, I'm a girl. All right, I'm more than just a girl: I'm a nice Jewish girl – you know, a Jap. I'm supposed to have a genetic aversion to any metal not measured in carats, and a gut-heaving repulsion to all things mechanical, especially if they're not imported. RPMs, Gs, DOHC – none of this is supposed to matter to me; however, it's becoming increasingly obvious that it really matters a whole hell of a lot that I pack a lot of ponies under my hood. And that my (car's) rear end is as independent as me...Where'd this come from? And would grandma be turning over in her grave to spit between her fingers, or secretly wishing should could have trotted out her own ponies?

I'm going to blame Dad (a guy is a guy, after all). He once owned a GT Mustang – a '73 I think (whew! I *am* a girl. A guy would know exactly what year it was.) I'll never forget the thrill of driving it for the first time. Tap throttle – sorry, that's gas pedal – go fast. That accelerator...accelerated. I owned a couple of four cylinder imports after that before going car-less for a real long stretch while living in the Big Apple. Then I moved up to a V-6 – a zippy little used 300ZX that I thought was the cat's meow until late in its life when all the repairs made it sound more like whining. So here I am, contemplating my next move. And guess what? V-6 just doesn't seem to be enough. I don't just want speed. I want to peel off so fast I get a face lift out of first. I want to MAKE dust. I want to break the 300 horse barrier. And I want to be able to afford it.

See, that's the problem. I've got a chick's income and guy's lust for a great drive. I've also got to be (shudder) practical – this *is* my primary mode of transportation. There are very few places in L.A. I'd feel safe parking a Lamborghini, even if I could afford one. And where would I put the groceries? See, more evidence that I'm still a girl – always thinking of where to store stuff...water bottles, Thomas Guides, change of clothes, Tango shoes – you know, just in case. A guy? What does a guy need? A pair of Ray Bans and a box of Tic Tacs. Just about all the excess baggage any of those high-end power monsters can accommodate anyway.

You may find this “intrapersonal” debate very amusing, but it's driving me batty – no pun intended. Really. After all, one has to consider mileage, right? Or maybe not. As long as it gets me from one gas station to the next...Then there's that pesky insurance issue – oh, yeah. Insurance. *Affordable* insurance...but, hey, there's that oh so pleasant squash of G's as I smack down on the throttle – sorry, gas pedal – for a 0-60 thrill ride. And as if all these considerations weren't enough, the Star Spangled Banner keeps playing through my mind. Which certainly narrows down the narrow field of affordable kick-butt transportation.

So why do I need to know about torque – whatever that is – and how long it takes me to get from 0-60 (5.4 seconds), or the distance it takes to get from 60-0 (129 feet). Or even about drivetrains and displacement, or skidpads and slalom, or how it handles deep in the corners? I have a growing uneasiness about this desire to look under the hood – even if I have no idea what all those complicated little doodads do. I guess as long as I don't get the urge to get UNDER the car...The next thing you know I'll be reading Motor Trends. Ha ha ha...oops, already have.

How to explain to the French manicure set that I drive a muscle car? It can't be done. If your idea of power is a Beamer 500 series, get out of my way. It's not that I will go faster than you, it's that I can. And even though I never understood about guys and their toys before, I certainly do now. There's something about taking a curve at 60 without worrying that you'll fly off the face of the earth. These cars snuggle up against the road at high speeds, and deeper into the corners. And for all you worry warts standing by ready to frame my 1000<sup>th</sup> speeding ticket – eat my dust. Having the power – as Superwoman well knows – is enough. I've got nothing to prove: I'll turn on the power when I need (or want) it.

Relax! I'm not secretly applying Nair to my chin. It's power with *comfort*, dahling. I am, after all, still a chick. And a JAP chick at that. I really like it when you can make things work just by pushing a button. Not to mention an interior that's plush, roomy, and properly appointed with cup holders, vanity mirrors, keyless entry, and power everything. With the possible exception of a virtually impossible graceful exit from this kind of car, I will put up with nothing that will crimp my style (or chip my nail polish). There's a damn good reason why those TV commercials cut away once the gorgeous lass with the stiletto heels touch the ground – flailing is not a strong selling point.

So what does all this mean? I still feel like a girl. And judging by all the whistles and winks, I still look like a girl. Besides, I'm not trying to grow a beard or secretly wishing I could write my name in the snow. I just think it's about time we girls stop hiding the fact that we covet the power to leave our Lotharios in the dust. Besides, we're already used to controlling powerful things under our foot. So, you might ask, how do all these numbers make me a better person? (They don't.) How will all this power under my grip change the world? (It won't.) What's the point? (It's a whole lot of fun.) As the song says folks, girls just want to have fun.