



# grand prix goes west



can be obtained on the long straightaway and that average lap speeds will be in the vicinity of 90 mph, some 20 mph faster than possible on courses now used throughout the West.

Beyond the shoulders on both sides of the roads, which range from 35 to 100 feet wide, will be four foot strips of grass, adjoined by multi-flora rose bushes four feet high and eight feet thick. Tests have shown that these bushes will absorb the impact of a car leaving the road at high speeds with a minimum of panel bending. Behind the bushes will be a four foot, triple strength chain link fence.

Escape roads were deliberately ignored when drivers and design experts pointed out that the error of over enthusiasm in cornering frequently goes unappreciated until the G's take over, well after the car is into the turn. Instead, the outside of the turns will have a wide "slide area," giving wandering drivers ample time to reduce speed and regain control.

A permanent shop and garage area are scheduled and will include parts and accessory sales, power equipment and complete shop facilities. Clean starts will be assured through a system of electric trip wires on each starting grid and an overhead light will flash off the seconds remaining to eager, impatient drivers. A system of colored lights will replace time-honored flagmen and will be controlled from a tower atop the press building. Scoring will be done by electronic calculators and lap by lap results will be flashed to the public on a multi-faced tote board.

Those close to the international automotive picture realize that a majority of all cars manufactured in Europe must be exported and know that, for the most part, factories support racing teams almost entirely for the prestige and publicity it brings to their products. In the past, little has been done on the U. S. front — potentially one of their richest markets — since the country's top speed attraction would require building an expensive and highly specialized machine. With facilities capable of handling an event of major proportions featuring cars already built or in production, the lure should prove nearly irresistible.

The one American event most likely to feel the impact of this program is the Indianapolis classic. Officials have asserted that the Raceway "will not compete with Indianapolis; they are a tradition." But it's generally conceded that only courtesy and respect for tradition have kept Indianapolis on the International Calendar. If the public education program succeeds in convincing people of the true significance of international racing, the center of U. S. competition stands a good chance of shifting from Indianapolis to Los Angeles.

United States Automotive Testing is fully aware of the fiasco at Roosevelt Raceway the last time motor racing on an international level tried to take its place in this country. They feel that a combination of better timing and superior facilities guarantees their success. The validity of this assumption may get its first severe tests before the year is out. #

**B**Y mid-summer of this year, the United States may be able to command a respect in international motor racing that it hasn't enjoyed in nearly a quarter century. At least, that's the reaction of racing experts to the announcement that United States Automotive Testing, Inc. has started construction on a \$12,000,000 racing plant in Southern California.

The 470-acre site, officially known as the Los Angeles International Motor Raceway, is located at the base of the rugged Sierra Madre Mountains near Ontario, California, just 32 miles from downtown Los Angeles. It will contain complete facilities for every type of big time automotive event.

The story of the Raceway began in a wild, imaginative dream, the dream of two men in love with racing. These men were Al Torres, the race starter whose colorful showmanship has already made him something of a living legend, and Rudy Cleye, a Swiss restaurateur whose European racing background and rapid white Mercedes have made him one of the hottest items currently in sports car competition. Unlike most dreamers, this pair did something about it.

What they did was simple, direct and productive. Realizing the breath-taking amount of money necessary to transform dream into fact, they approached Kermit Pollack, a general partner in Investment Associates, Ltd. and one of the leading young business executives in the United States today. The idea struck a responsive chord in Pollack, who specialized in automotive finance at an earlier point in his career, and an organization was set up with Pollack as president, Torres as Racing Director, Cleye as Public Relations Director and Jeff Cooper, a young engineer long associated with the automotive world, as liaison man between the corporation and Quinton Engineers, Ltd., designers of the Raceway.

The particular site was chosen because of rapid accessibility by freeway and major highways. A nearby railroad spur and air terminal will make the shipping of cars easily possible from all parts of the world.

Original plans called for an initial investment of \$1,000,000 on a site in California's San Fernando Valley. But as the full potential of the venture hit home, it became apparent that the available 280-acre plot was too small, as was the original budget. Another location was sought and the initial ante was boosted to \$3,000,000, with another \$9,000,000 to be invested over a four year period.

Sports Cars Illustrated representatives got their first hint of the impending Raceway some eight months ago and hundreds of hours of meticulous planning and investigation had already gone into it. Nothing was left to chance. The decision to place the Raceway in Southern California, as an example, came after research showed this area had become the Mecca of automobile racing in recent years and contained the country's heaviest concentration of fans, drivers and competition machines.

Planners stress that this isn't merely another racing circuit, but a carefully engineered combination of seven distinct courses, including (1) 1.7, 4.5 and 5.5-mile road circuits that will accommodate Grand Prix racers, sports cars, stock cars and motorcycles; (2) one mile and one-half mile ovals; (3) a quarter-mile acceleration strip; and (4) a three-mile testing circuit running around the perimeter.

Engineering specifications list a 6100 foot front straight and a 3000 foot back straight as part of the asphalt paved road circuits. Actually, however, the front straight is a gentle bend, designed so spectators in the grandstand can see more than the back of their neighbor's head as they strain to view the cars whip out of the final turn and power past the pits. Experts estimate that speeds up to 180 mph

*This is what the completed \$12,000,000 raceway will look like sometime at the decade's end. Rapid accessibility by freeway and major highways make proposed raceway ideally situated.*

*Racing director Al Torres and Public Relations Director Rudy Cleye. Torres is probably the best known official in Sports Cars today. Cleye's background includes driving Maserati, BMW, Alfa, and others during the thirties.*

