

Suzuki sedan tops 200 m.p.h.

It's hard to imagine a sporty but mild-mannered family sedan like the Suzuki Kizashi hurtling at 203.72 m.p.h. across the Bonneville Salt Flats, but that's what it did.

Road & Track's Sam Mitani piloted a modified Kizashi to Suzuki's first attempt to set a record with a car instead of a motorcycle. The speed was set Wednesday, an average for a two-way pass, Suzuki said. It set a land speed record in the blown gas coupe category.

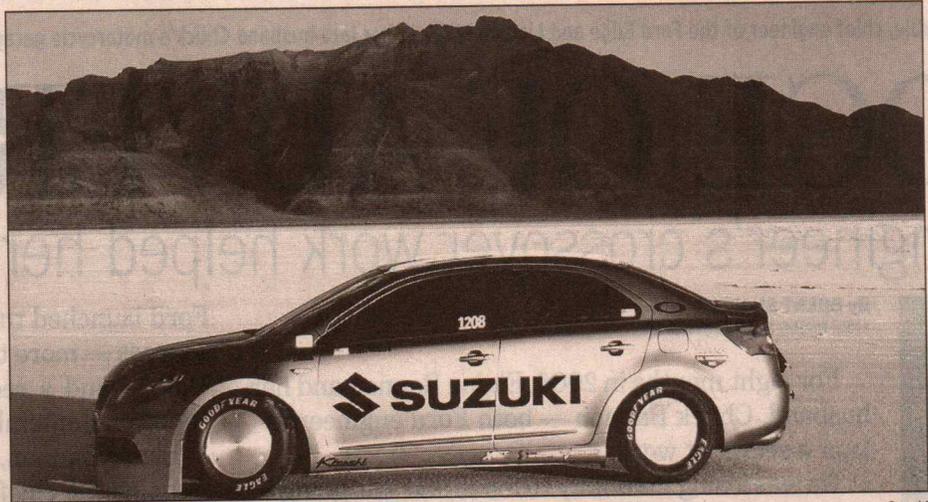
To become the Bonneville Special, Suzuki installed a roll cage, rear aluminum bulkhead, racing seat and harness and other improvements into a Kizashi. A few modifications were made to the engine, too, including a new intake manifold and forged rods and pistons to stand up to high revs.

The car got its boost from a Turbonetics Turbocharger and a new ACT clutch.

Output shift helps Honda profit

Honda became the first Japanese automaker to build cars in the U.S. 28 years ago in part to fulfill a long-held goal of founder Soichiro Honda. The company's success in shifting production is shielding profits from the yen's advance to a 15-year high against the dollar.

More than 89% of Honda and Acura brand autos sold in the U.S. through July were built in Tokyo-based Honda's plants in the U.S., Canada and Mexico, up from



Suzuki

Suzuki's Kizashi Bonneville Special set a record at 203.72 m.p.h. at Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats.

82.2% a year ago, the company said. Toyota and Nissan each made 68% of vehicles sold in the U.S. at North American plants, according to Honda's two biggest Japanese rivals.

VW to bring Phaeton back to U.S.

Volkswagen plans to bring back the \$85,000 Phaeton to the U.S., where the sedan flopped and was withdrawn in 2006, as part of the German carmaker's aim of tripling its share of the world's second-largest market by 2018.

"We have our eyes firmly set on the U.S. market," Juergen Borrmann, director

of Volkswagen's plant in Dresden, Germany, where the Phaeton is built, said in an interview. The model will be redesigned and retooled before VW begins selling the high-end sedan in the U.S. again, he said.

Former CEO Bernd Pischetsrieder pulled the Phaeton from the U.S. four years ago after the car failed to meet sales goals and called a 20,000 global target a "pipe dream." His successor, Martin Winterkorn, later threw his full support behind the model and announced plans to keep the Phaeton. Sales last year fell 27% to 4,500 cars.

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