

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## For the Fast and the Timorous

Continued from page A7

dynamics, fuel-injection systems and carbon-fiber bodies that have made possible lightweight cars that can exceed 230 mph. "If you drive through any number of upscale neighborhoods with a keen eye, you'll see all these shiny new cars just sitting in garages," Mr. Kaplan says.

In the New York area—where bankers and brokers have been enriched by a bullish stock market—the demand is so great that the wait for a Lamborghini can be about a year and about two years for a Ferrari, several local dealers say.

The initiation fee at the Monticello track will be up to \$100,000, with annual dues of up to \$2,500 depending on how often members will use the track. Mr. Kaplan says membership will be limited to 750 and he has signed up about 100, with a goal of reaching 200 by the time of the facility's opening next spring.

James Glickenhaus, a New York money manager and former movie producer, is an early joiner. One of his 10 Ferraris is a \$4.5 million sports coupe custom made by famed coach builder Pininfarina SpA that can reach 233 mph, which he has driven on touring tracks in Spain, Germany and Italy. "When I drive it, I do it very carefully and can't afford to be around other people," Mr. Glickenhaus says.

After sifting through motor-vehicle records, Mr. Kaplan says he found that the Northeast—especially New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts—had the highest concentration of fast-car owners in the nation.

Experts say that car owners in other metro areas—Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco and Phoenix—have expressed interest in touring tracks. Several are on the drawing board, including ones in Pennsylvania and New Hampshire.

"If these tracks can be built with an element of safety to them," says Elliot

Johnston, a California-based racing instructor, "I can see these types of clubs really taking off."

Building a high-speed course for amateurs, especially for drivers protective of their expensive sports cars, isn't an easy task. To construct the Monticello course, Mr. Kaplan has turned to former racers and engineers at Rutgers University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Factors to be considered: the gravitational forces on the driver that can equal those on a fighter-jet pilot and the difficulty of stopping at high speeds.

"When you're going at 180 mph and you put the brakes on, it feels like you have no brakes at all," says Brian Redman, a 70-year-old former British racing champion and a Monticello consultant. At about 3.5 miles, the Monticello track will be one of the longest in the sport. Straightaways are twice the width of a U.S. highway lane. Around corners, they will be triple the normal width.

Special "high-friction" surfaces will be installed on the bends and other tricky spots to keep the stray Porsche from skittering off the track. The outer fringes will be laid with two types of surfaces: coarse asphalt for greater tire grip and a rubber composite for bringing the car to a faster stop.

The course meanders through 225 acres of rolling hills. At its straightest point, it stretches for about a mile—great for high speeds. The rest of the course is broken up by hairpin turns, corkscrews and bends.

The club has hired an MIT researcher to set up cameras on the track, in cars and at the clubhouse to film members as they wind their way around the course. Analyses of the footage can help drivers improve their performance. MIT's AgeLab views the club as a rare opportunity to study the reflexes of aging baby-boomers behind the wheel.

## A Not-So-Crash Course



James Glickenhaus's custom Ferrari P4/S

### Hug the Curves

A schematic of the touring course under construction at the new Drive & Race Club in Monticello, N.Y.



Source: The Drive & Race Club

## An Auto Touring Track Offers The Fast and the Timorous A Safer Way to Race Hot Cars

By JOSEPH PEREIRA

**M**ITCHELL FRIEDMAN drives a German-made Audi S4, designed to go 150 miles per hour or more for long stretches. But the 48-year-old New Jersey businessman has never come close to pushing the needle that far.

Although he's fascinated with fast cars, Mr. Friedman confesses to being "a bit scared. Besides, I've got two young children, and my wife won't let me drive fast."

He and other U.S. drivers fearful that their cars' capabilities exceed their own have another option on the horizon: touring, a deceptively sedate name for a pastime that strives to preserve the pulse-pounding speed of competitive racing but eliminate its spectacular smash-ups.

Originated in Europe, the concept is being introduced in the U.S., with one of the first touring tracks under construction in Monticello, N.Y. At an expected cost of \$50 million, it's scheduled to open next year.

Tourers typically drive fast on wide, specially paved private racetracks with plenty of room for error. An instructor usually sits in the passenger seat telling drivers how fast or slow to go as they negotiate straightaways, the quick-succession of left-right turns in chicanes and the abrupt change of direction in hairpins. Cars on the course stay out of sight of each other—often up to a half-mile apart. Passing isn't allowed. Speeds can reach up to 200 mph, instructor permitting.

"Touring is a safe way to get to know your car without it ending up in a garage or you in hospital," says Mark Hales, a British racer and auto journalist who's been hired to teach at the Monticello track.

Michael Kaplan, a former mergers-and-acquisitions attorney who is leading the investor group

behind the Drive & Race Club, says he wasn't interested in building a track where amateurs can race each other; there's already about three dozen of those. The track is not for someone "looking to be next to some crazy kid who's trying to beat him," he says, but for "someone who wants to be with guys with fast cars who are just as scared as he is."

Nestled in the Catskill Mountains foothills about 80 miles northwest of New York City, the facility is being built at a time when well-heeled baby boomers have been buying expensive, high-performance automobiles capable of race-car speeds.

Their appetite is stoked by advances in aero-

Michael Kaplan, a former mergers-and-acquisitions attorney who is leading the investor group behind the Drive & Race Club,

Please turn to page A9