THE PULITZER VERSUS THE PONTIAC

Car writers don't get Pulitzer Prizes. I suspect that'sbecause their writing is either wonky and burdened with specs or basically carpornography. Or rather, car writers used to not get Pulitzers, before Dan Neil got one last year, "for his one-of-a-kind reviews of automobiles, blendingtechnical expertise with offbeat humor and astute cultural observations."I guess they liked Neil's honest, irreverent writing in passages like this:

If you ever despair that the U.S. auto industry is whirling, slowly but with gathering momentum, down the tubes of history, thesecond-generation Toyota Prius will give you no comfort. This is a car Detroit assures us cannotbe built. No way. No how. A spacious, safe and well-appointed mid-sizefour-door with practical performance while returning more than 60 miles pergallon? For \$20,000? Are you, like, high?

Well, there it sits in my driveway, looking like a set piecefrom a Kubrick film but in other respects a straightforward piece ofengineering. And it shames the domestic automakers and the Bush administration.

Well, guess what? Neil's right about the Prius and the domestic car makers. Butthe car makers don't like to see suchthings in print, certainly not in one of this country's largest newspapers. Which became a problem when the LA Times published this slam on the Pontiac G6 the other day:

The G6 is not an awful car. It's entirely adequate. Butplainly, adequate is not nearly enough.

[snip]

Meanwhile, the detailing of the bodywork makes the skin ofthe car look eggshell-thin. I wonder how many buyers look at this car andwonder what is behind the billboard?

Interior styling: The GT comes with comfortableleather-lined bucket seats, nicely bolstered with heaters. I like the soft gripon the hand brake. That exhausts my praise for the interior.