

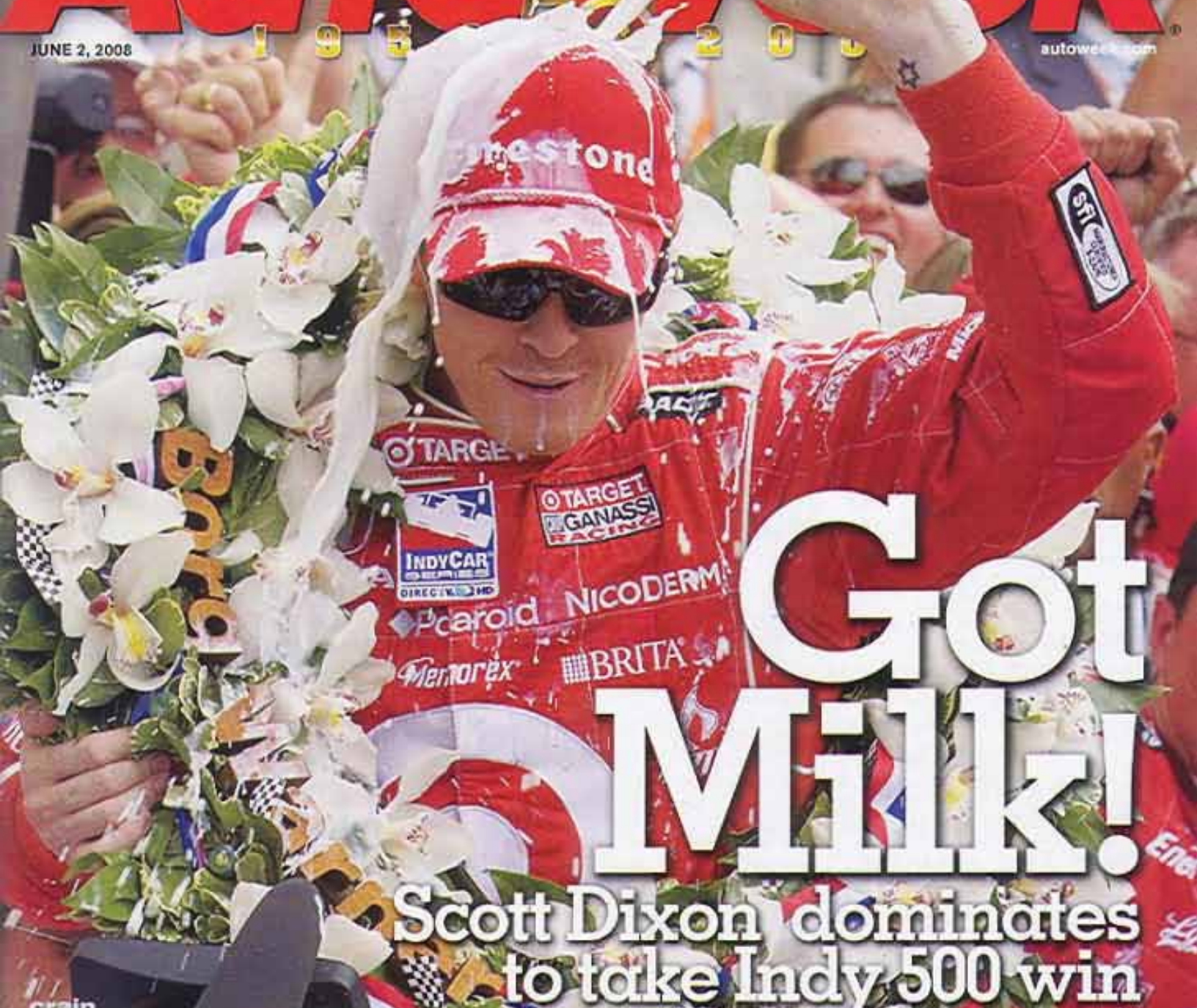
HOW TO SAVE MONEY AT THE PUMP
▶ HONDA hybrid fleet ▶ Challenge X

FIRST DRIVE
VW PASSAT CC

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Got Milk!

Scott Dixon dominates to take Indy 500 win



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THE REAL DEALS

WITH CXC, YOU MIGHT NEVER NEED A REAL RACETRACK AGAIN

BY MARK VAUGHN



THIS IS NOT AN ARCADE game, it's not a video game, and it's not Grand Theft Auto IV.

"These were designed as driver-training tools," Chris Considine explained about the CXC driving simulator. "I was looking to train cheaper."

Considine was a racer himself, and he followed the karting tour for a while. But it didn't take long for him to realize that getting enough practice time on a real racetrack in a real car, even a kart, can get pretty expensive—counting not just the track rental itself but also the cost of getting there with your race car and your

engineers and putting everybody up in a motel during the test. So he made this.

CXC Simulation's Motion Pro II Racing Simulator may not be cheap—\$26,000 to start—but it's as close to the real deal as you're likely to get without going there. The base model gets you a steel-frame chassis with a composite race seat, Formula One-style steering wheel, pedals that feel like real pedals, paddle shifter and a 46-inch high-def LCD screen. The kicker is the "full-motion feedback system" that moves your seat around, simulating bumps, engine vibrations and all the g-forces you're likely to feel in a race.

The amount of software driving your drive is staggering. The simulator can run with eight or nine pieces of software, allowing you to change suspension setup, fuel strategy, tire compounds, gearing, aerodynamics, brake-duct size and radiator size—it's as helpful to race engineers as it is to drivers. For the tires alone, you can change 16 variables, including temperature, slip value and pressure. And that's just setting up your car. The available tracks are almost unlimited.

There is a plethora of software available that will run on this machine. You can



have virtually (no pun intended) any race car for which someone has written a software program lapping any track that is in a computer database somewhere. The limit is the quality of the program you choose to run.

"The motion system's only as good as the research that went into it," said Considine.

Since we had recently lapped the Nürburgring's new course, we chose that. For reasons we don't understand ourselves, we chose a Panoz. As soon as the engine started, we could feel the big Ford V8 thumping under the hood, even though there was no hood. We exited the garage, headed down pit row onto the straight and almost immediately spun off.

"Cold tires," said Considine.

After a few more turns, we noticed that the inside front tire would lock up but not the outside. Terrific detail.

We asked Considine to take a few laps, and he really hammered the car. *He gets paid to do this!* we thought.

For another 13 grand, you can get three-panel wraparound TV screens. A six-speed gated manual shifter is another \$1,050, and a sequential shifter is also \$1,050. And so on.

More information about CXC is online at www.exesimulations.com. 🗺