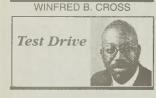
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT/The Charlotte Post

cura's new 2.2 CL is competent coupe





3B

SPINGS. PALM Acura's revamp of it's car line will be nearly complete this month when it releases the CL, a familiarlooking coupe which replaces the two-door Legend.

The Legend name is gone forever, replaced by Acura's weird decision to go with alphanumeric names. Why? Because the company says more people knew the names of its cars than the company.Why should that matter? Ask Acura. I couldn't figure that one.

Anyway, the CL is a totally different approach to the Legend. It is not a two-door version of the RL, the new flagship sedan that replaced



the four-door Legend. And it's nothing like the Legend coupe. So why is it familiar? The CL screams Honda Accord coupe. It should. It's based heavily on the Accord, from chassis to transaxle. It even looks like an Accord from the front. That wide-mouth chrome grill is nothing but Honda

But that's where a lot of the similarities end. View the car from a three-quarter angle and you see a much more striking figure, especially the rear. It is wildly aggressive, moving the tail lights to the corner and using a subtle crease down the center. There is no external trunk lock, just the Acura symbol. It's destined to become one of the most distinct rear ends on the road

Inside, there is plenty of room for a coupe, but it's best suited for two. Four can ride, but the rear passengers need to be short and narrow to have a good time.

The interior is much like the Accord's - trimmed neatly, finished meticulously. The exception is that the CL is trimmed in fake wood, acceptable fake wood, but fake none the less. All the amenities are standard - power locks, mirrors and windows and single CD player.

The standard five-speed transmission coupled to a 2.2liter, four-cylinder engine is straight from the Accord. The proven engine is quiet, making 145 horsepower with 147 pounds-feet of torque. Acura engineers said the gear ratios are slightly different from the Accord's, thus giving the car a sportier feel

I found this to be true. We



flogged the CL through some breath-taking mountains and found it to be a great handler as well as driver. Negotiating twisty roads (many of which didn't have guard rails, which I found to be a bit unnerving) was fairly simple. The frontwheel drive CL was right at home whipping around tight curves.

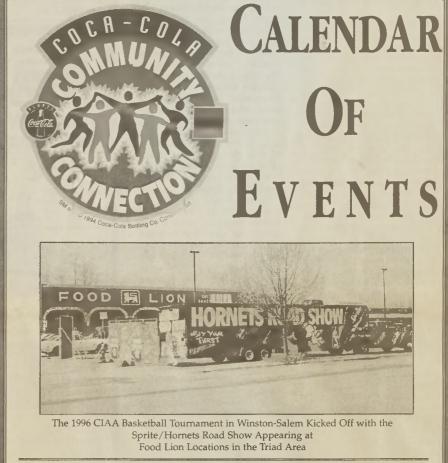
Thursday, March 14,1996

The greatest advantage the CL has over its Honda cousin is its rigid body. Acura has shored-up the CL's body in critical areas, making it feel solid as a rock. This in turn adds to the car's deft handling ability.

Complaints? I hate fake wood no matter how real it looks. The cloth seats look much too much like the Accord's. And there's not enough engine. The 2.2-liter

See TEST DRIVE Page 4B





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