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STATE FARM

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SEBRING

European style domestic appeal

The Sebring may share its name with the coupe, but that's about it. The ragtop is really a model unto itself, assembled in Mexico on a platform it shares with the Cirrus and defunct Stratus and Breeze models. This makes the convertible a longer and wider car than the U.S.-built coupe. While many companies create hardtop vehicles and remove the roof after a year or two to create a convertible, the Sebring was designed as a convertible from Day 1. The success of the Sebring is such that Chrysler has had to do little over the car's five-

year history other than create some new options and make the 168-horsepower 2.5-litre SOHC V6 standard across the line. For 2000, Sebring comes in three configurations: base JX; luxurious JXi; and Limited models. With the same engine available in all three, the model you choose will depend on the level of opulence you seek. All come with air conditioning, most power features and ABS, but the JXi adds woodgrain dash trim, leather-wrapped steering wheel and shift knob, Infinity stereo, leather seats, alloy wheels and



Sebring convertible: style and elegance personified

touring suspension. The Limited further raises the bar by including AutoStick - which allows the driver to shift the automatic transmission like a manual - traction control, four-wheel disc brakes, body-colored grille and chrome-plated wheels.

SEBRING AT A GLANCE
Type: Convertible
Base price: \$32,600
Base engine (hp): 2.5-litre SOHC V6 (168)
Optional engine: None
Layout: Front-engine, front-

wheel drive
Transmission: Four-speed automatic with AutoStick (Limited only)
Fuel consumption (l/100 km, city/hwy): 12.8/6.9
Safety: Front airbags, ABS
Weight (kg): 1,510

Air bag deaths usually due to passenger error

CAA South Central Ontario has read the recent headlines full of the horror stories of children and adults being killed by the very air bags that are supposed to protect them, but what are the facts? People are discussing turning their air bags off or doing away with them altogether, but the facts need to be considered in context before you make a decision as important as using or not using your air bag. In actuality, the

U.S. has recorded over 750,000 air bag deployments since 1986 and under 50 fatalities related to air bag use. Air bags are credited with saving an estimated 1,500 lives in this same period. In almost all of these cases, the people who were killed were either not wearing or were incorrectly using their seat belt or child safety seat. Air bags are powerful and wonderful devices that help save lives every day, but, as

with any other powerful device, you have to use them properly and with the appropriate precautions. Preventing a crash situation can push unrestrained adults and children toward the dashboard just before the air bag deploys. In a crash, the air bag inflates within one-tenth of a second after impact with enough force to seriously injure or even kill someone who is too close to it. Therefore, the num-

ber one precaution is to buckle up. Small-statured adults risk serious injury if they ride in the front seat of a vehicle equipped with air bags. Smaller adults typically sit with their seats pushed all the way forward to see or so they can reach the vehicle's pedals. This puts them dangerously close to the deploying air bag. If your vehicle is equipped with an air bag installed in a tiltable steering wheel, for maximum effec-

tiveness, make sure you drive with the bag pointed at your chest, not your head. Car safety seats position children dangerously close to the air bag when it deploys. It is safest and recommended that children ride properly restrained in the back seat. Never install a rear-facing child safety seat in the front seat of a vehicle that is equipped with a passenger-side air bag.

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