



Of Borscht and Bugatti
The Need for Speed

By **ROBIN GOLDWYN BLUMENTHAL**

WHO NEEDS LE MANS, WHEN YOU CAN HAVE MONTICELLO? The erstwhile capital of the Borscht Belt, just 90 minutes from Manhattan, this week becomes home to driving enthusiasts with a love for speed and an imperviousness to gas prices who perhaps haven't gotten enough of a frisson from the market's latest dizzying action.

The Monticello Motor Club, an invitation-only racing resort, opens its 4.1-mile course to members Thursday. For a cool \$125,000, members get to board their Ferraris and Lamborghinis or what-have-you at the club (the average member owns more than five "superexotic" cars), and take them or the exotic rental car of their choice (for an added fee) out for a spin at speeds up to 200 miles per hour. When they're not out taking hairpin turns -- or driving lessons -- they can relax at the clubhouse or soak at the spa.

The club's situated on 650 acres that at one time housed the Monticello Airport. And it has already attracted roughly 100 resident members of the 500 total, about half of them money managers like Jim Glickenhau, Paul Queally and John Barker, according to Ari Straus, a partner and chief operating officer of MMC who frequented "the mountains," as that part of the Catskills was affectionately known, as a boy. Among others signed up: Nascar driver Jeff Gordon, and comedian Jerry Seinfeld (who knew?).

While Straus says the area around the track is "blighted," he notes that it's "on the brink of revival." So if racing doesn't work out for Jerry, the Borscht Belt circuit beckons -- and as much soup as he wants.