



**THE
FLYING
CAR!**

Carl Dietrich (in his invention) started flying in high school.

UP, UP & AWAY

Baby, you can fly my car: The FAA approves a new airborne roadster, designed by inventor Carl Dietrich



"It's a very safe aircraft," says the Transition's test pilot, Phil Meter.

Who hasn't, sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic, dreamed of a flying car? Aerospace engineer Carl Dietrich went further: He invented one. His two-person Ter-

rafugia Transition looks a little like a VW Beetle with retractable wings. "Just push a button and the wings fold into place," explains Dietrich, 33. "Like putting the top down on a convertible." Sure, if a convertible could speed to the airport at 65 mph, fly from Pittsburgh to JFK and then drive into Manhattan on a tank of unleaded.

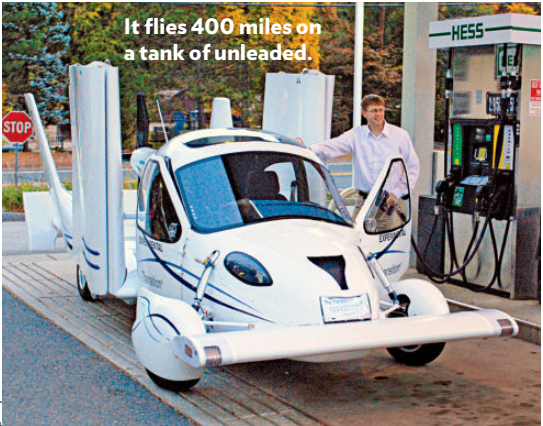
"Carl has this great ability to see things before they are real," says his wife, Anna, CEO of Terrafugia, which the two MIT grads founded in 2006.

The FAA gave the Transition the all-clear in June, and so far 70 people have preordered the \$200,000 vehicle,

available in 2011. But it is too soon to say if this hybrid will soar or go the way of the Edsel. Says Tyghe Trimble, online editor of *Popular Mechanics*: "It works and it captures the imagination, but I'm not sure it's something a lot of people are going to clamor for." (It also can't get you out of that traffic jam; it needs a runway for takeoff.) Still, says company test pilot Phil Meter, "it's easy and fun to fly." And on the road, "it gets all sorts of looks," says Dietrich. "I will be making use of the company vehicle at every possible occasion."

By Champ Clark

Photograph by NEIL BECKERMAN



It flies 400 miles on a tank of unleaded.