

UP TO SPEED

THE LATEST BUZZ IN LA'S CAR CULTURE

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Gearhead alert: Cyclone Engine, a big steamer?



A novel steam engine design from Cyclone Power Technologies (Pompano Beach, Fla.) -- and EX-ternal combustion engine, strictly speaking -- has been named one of Popular Science's ten Inventions of the year for 2008. Check out "[Steam Under The Hood](#)," at Popsi or visit www.cyclonepower.com.

Damn clever if a little baffling in operation, the Cyclone engine uses a cylindrical combustion chamber that drives the ignited fuel in a furious vortex of flame that can be generated using all varieties of fuel, says the inventor and company CEO, Harry Schoell. The flame is used to explosively vaporize deionized water, which drives a radial array of pistons in a separate chamber.

According to its makers, the engine's combustion is so complete that it actually scrubs the air of pollutants with its hyper-efficient combustion process. Other advantages are max torque at 1 rpm; compact design; no auxiliary systems such as injectors, radiators, oil pumps (the thing uses water for lubrication). It also generates its own electricity by using a smaller heat exchanger, doing the business of a conventional alternator.

Cool.

-- Dan Neil

Photo by EPA/Ian Salas