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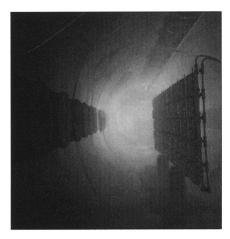
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ON THE COVER: A rack of 90 aluminum automotive pistons being treated by plasmaimmersion ion implantation, a process invented at the University of Wisconsin and being developed for automotive applications by the university with General Motors Research and Los Alamos National Laboratory. As discussed in the article beginning on p. 52 by Joseph Mantese and others, the implantation process is one of several plasma-based materialsprocessing steps to improve piston wear properties. The blue glow is the characteristic emission spectra from oxygen and argon gases ionized inside the vacuum chamber by radio-frequency electric fields (generated by the antenna positioned near the top of the chamber). The pistons are mounted atop ceramic insulators and are energized by a pulsed electric power supply, accelerating ions from the plasma into exposed piston surfaces. (Photograph courtesy of Los Alamos National Laboratory.)

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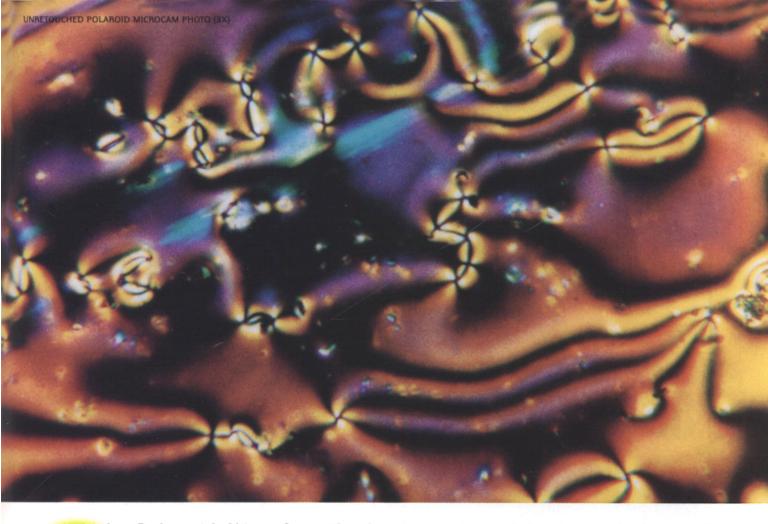
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