

## If we had a getaway to make, we'd do it in a W-30 4-4-2.

**S**OMEBODY AT OLDSMOBILE must belong to Captain Midnight's Secret Squadron. We lost our Magic Decoder long ago and were a little worried when confronted by Oldsmobile's jumble of code names, like W-30, W-31, 4-4-2, FE-2 and the like.

But everything's all right, gang.

No matter what the package, Oldsmobile's got the idea. They know where it's at. Our first spin 'round the road course in a 4-4-2 confirmed our long standing view that Olds is about two years ahead of Buick and Chevrolet when it comes to making the A-body handle. Maybe even more.

The styling of the 4-4-2 is Detroit Heavy. The front grille has the banal mouth-full-of-chrome-fangs look. Doesn't look half as tough as the '67 and '68 grilles, where the numerals 4-4-2 were strongly played off against the black void of the grille cavity.

The amount of special identification on a Supercar is a very esoteric thing.

Some people like loads of emblems. Others prefer a clean sleeper. For '70, the 4-4-2 looks weaker up front. But oh, my, the hood!

The great sweeping hood of a 4-4-2 equipped with the W-30 package is fiberglass, topped by two bestripped plateaus housing the "forced air" scoops. The air is rammed back, filtered through a wire mesh, and a low restriction air filter and down into the carb, which itself is protected from engine heat by a spongy gasket sealing with the hood. The hood appeared last year on the Hurst/Olds; now, like the 455-cid V-8, it's straight from the factory. Why?

First, practicality. As we pointed out in our W-31 test (March, 1969) the under bumper units are vulnerable to flattening by curbs. Secondly, those long aircraft-type hoses used on the old W-31 package could possibly heat the air through friction during its long passage. The hood scoop offers a shorter route for the air, keeping it cooler.

Cold air is denser, providing more power.

Other trim items on our test car included two hood pins which supplement the regular hood latch, rally stripes on the flanks, bullet-shaped mirrors and W-30 insignia below the 4-4-2 emblems on both sides.

The interior of our 4-4-2 was white vinyl. We like white theoretically because it reflects, remains cooler. But you could already see the imitation leather "pores" Oldsmobile worked into the upholstery filling up with dirt. If you order white, keep your scrub brush ready.

The buckets were firm in back and a bit wider than we needed. We compared them to the bench seats in our Superwagon, also an Olds, and decided that the buckets were still our top choice for the long distance runs. Be nice to your back, it's the only one you've got.

The console is almost non-existent, it's so thin. It's trimmed with simu-

lated wood as is the instrument panel.

Fortunately, the steering wheel is devoid of cover-it-with-wood mania. It's the best wheel we've ever seen in an American car. Called the Custom Sport, it's covered with a leather-like non-slip surface, stitched on the inside, and it's a look-alike for a Grand Prix racer's wheel. The four spokes are brushed metal so there's no dazzling reflections. The spokes look sturdy, too, like they would bend under stress but wouldn't snap off, forcing you to see if the collapsible steering column really collapses.

We had hoped that the advertised Rocket Rally Pac would, like the Camaro version, contain useful gauges like an oil pressure gauge, an ammeter, etc. Uh-uh. It turned out to be a clock stuck smack-dab in the middle of the tachometer. It was a waste. Not that we're against tachometers—we love 'em—but trying to combine one with a clock results in a dial slightly more confusing than the instrument panel in an Apollo capsule. Even if you could decipher its secrets, the poor location hid it behind the steering wheel anyway.

The optional Hurst-made Dual Gate shifter worked superbly. Marketed independently as a "His-Hers" package,



PHOTOS BY DAVID GOOLEY

the shifter is the perfect solution for a one-car, two-driver family where the man of the house wants to pick his gears and the woman of the house couldn't care less.

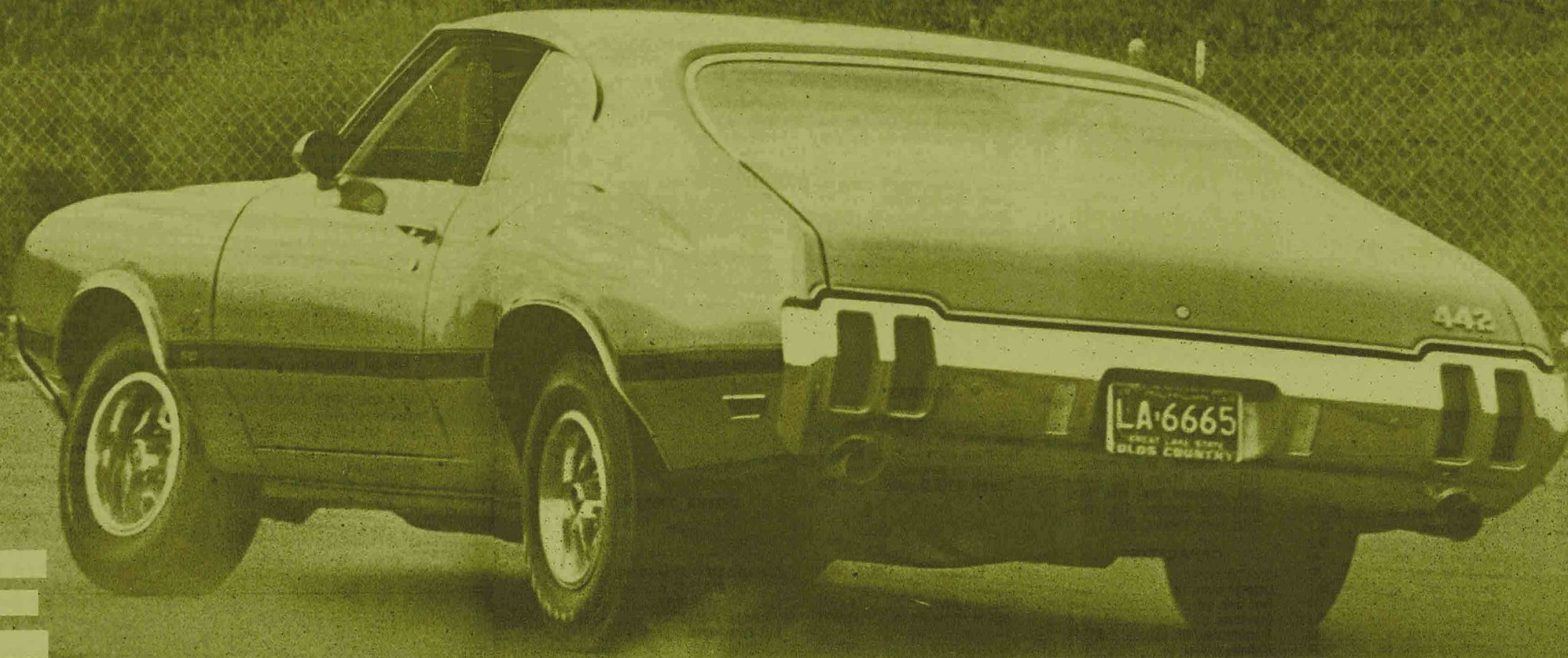
The left hand slot has all the gears in a straight line while the right hand gate has a series of stepped notches. The shift lever itself is pulled to the right by a strong spring so, when

you're taking the step by step route through the gears, you can only hit the gears one at a time progressively. Olds protects you from missing a gear.

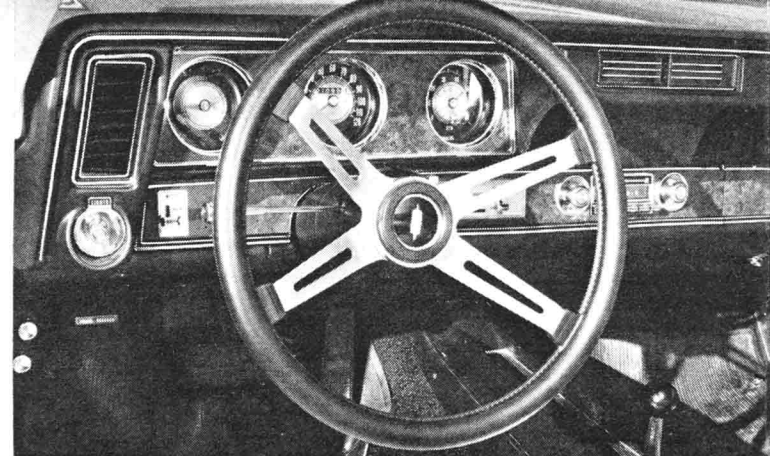
One of our road test crew complained that the Olds Turbo Hydra-Matic was too "jerky" in our test car. He especially didn't dig it when he would move the lever down a gear at

CAR LIFE  
ROAD TEST

THE  
GREAT  
ESCAPE

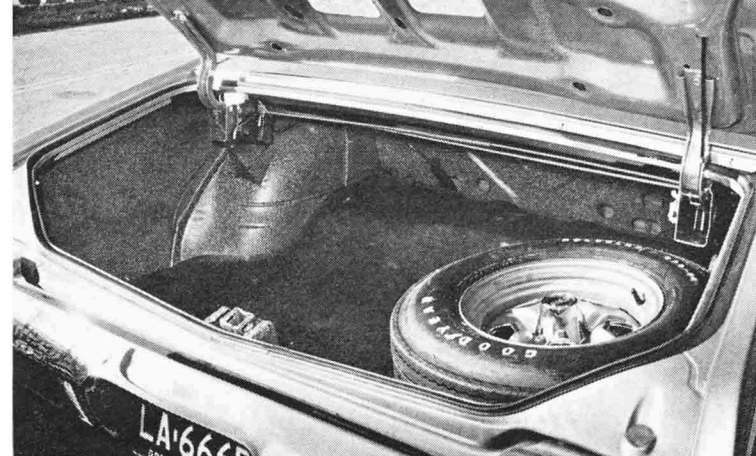




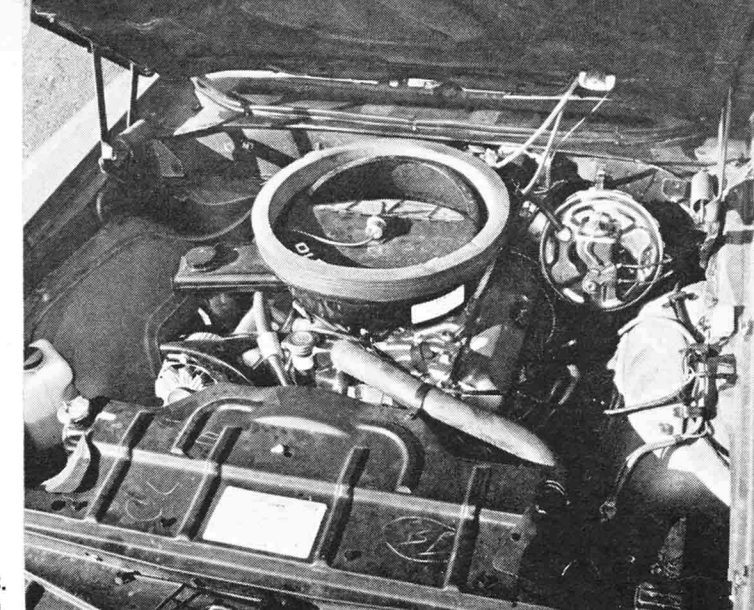


HEFTY Grand-Prix-styled steering wheel heightened performance feel. Shifter was Hurst Dual-Gate, on a Turbo Hydra-Matic.

STRATO buckets were wide and raked. Minimum leg room plus low rear window made back fit only for jockeys and kids.



OPEN Sezme. Trunk holds 17 cu. ft., but tire invades space. High liftover height requires muscles when loading up.



GOOD Doc's Monster Mill! Hood ducts sock air to 455-cid V-8. With 370 bhp, W-30 beats plain 4-4-2's 365-bhp rating.

high rpm, encounter a time lag and then suddenly the car would jerk just like he'd slammed on the brakes as the downshift finally took effect.

This is because, with the W-30, Olds only offers the M40 beefed version of the Turbo Hydra-Matic 400. It's got a high-performance torque converter, high rpm shift points and

firmed up shifts. This trans is designed to protect the synchronizers until the rpm drop to an acceptable level to mesh the gears without messing them.

If you want a smoother shifting Turbo with your 4-4-2, there's a way to opt out. Just buy the regular 4-4-2 and order the Turbo and W-25 forced air package. With this, you'll be more

comfortable on the street, but not as ready for any competition-type loads on the trans.

When you order the manual transmission in the W-30, they only give you one way to row—the close-ratio *heavy-duty* four-speed. Sort of an Oldsmobile version of Chevy's M-22 "Rock Crusher," this hefty trans is

cased in aluminum, and features helical cut forged gears and a Hurst Competition Shifter.

While the standard rear gear on the W-30 4-4-2 is 3.42:1, you can order a 3.91:1 in what they call a G88 Performance Axle Package. This includes the Anti-Spin option already required for 3.42, 3.91 or 4.33:1 gears plus

heavy-duty axle shafts and an extra-heavy duty radiator. The 4.33, 4.66 and 5.00:1 ratios are awfully noisy for the street and have to be dealer installed.

It took the success of the Hurst/Olds combo to break the ice last year on GM's rule forbidding more than 400 cid in any engine installed in an

A-bodied car. Hurst merely ordered the engines from Olds, dropped them in and passed on the cost to the dealers.

Now, you can order a 455 direct from the manufacturer. While we're small-block fans (ever see a horsepower chart on a Z/28?), we're not against Oldsmobile raising the cubic

## 1970 OLDS 4-4-2

W-30



### DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase, in.	112
Track, f/r, in.	59/59
Overall length, in.	203.2
width	76.2
height	52.8
Front seat hip room, in.	25 x 2
shoulder room	58.3
head room	38.2
pedal-seatback, max.	40
Rear seat hip room, in.	52
shoulder room	57.1
leg room	34
head room	36.4
Door opening width, in.	43
Trunk liftover height, in.	28

### PRICES

List, FOB factory	\$3376
Equipped as tested	\$5016
Options included: W-30 package, \$321; Turbo Hydra-Matic trans., \$227; anti-spin rear axle, \$42; heavy-duty radiator, \$16; Vari-Ratio power steering, \$105.	

### CAPACITIES

No. of passengers	5
Luggage space, cu. ft.	17
Fuel tank, gal.	20
Crankcase, qt.	4
Transmission/dif., pt.	5/3.69
Radiator coolant, qt.	16.2

### CHASSIS/SUSPENSION

Frame type: Perimeter.  
Front suspension type: Independent by s.l.a., coil springs, antiroll bar.  
ride rate at wheel, lb./in. 154  
antiroll bar dia., in. 0.937  
Rear suspension type: Live axle, link coil spring, antiroll bar (0.875 in. dia.).  
ride rate at wheel, lb./in. 150  
Steering system: Integral power assisted recirculating ball.  
overall ratio 20.7:1  
turns, lock to lock 4.3  
turning circle, ft. curb-curb 40  
Curb weight, lb. 3755  
Test weight 4195  
Distribution (driver),  
% f/r 57.5/42.5

### BRAKES

Type: Power assisted disc/drum.  
Front rotor, dia. x width, in. 10.88 x 1  
Rear drum, dia. x width 9.5 x 2.0  
total swept area, sq. in. 345.6  
line psi at 100 lb. pedal 560

### WHEELS/TIRES

Wheel rim size 14 x 7J  
bolt no./circle dia. in. 5/4.75  
Tires: Goodyear Polyglas.  
size G70x14

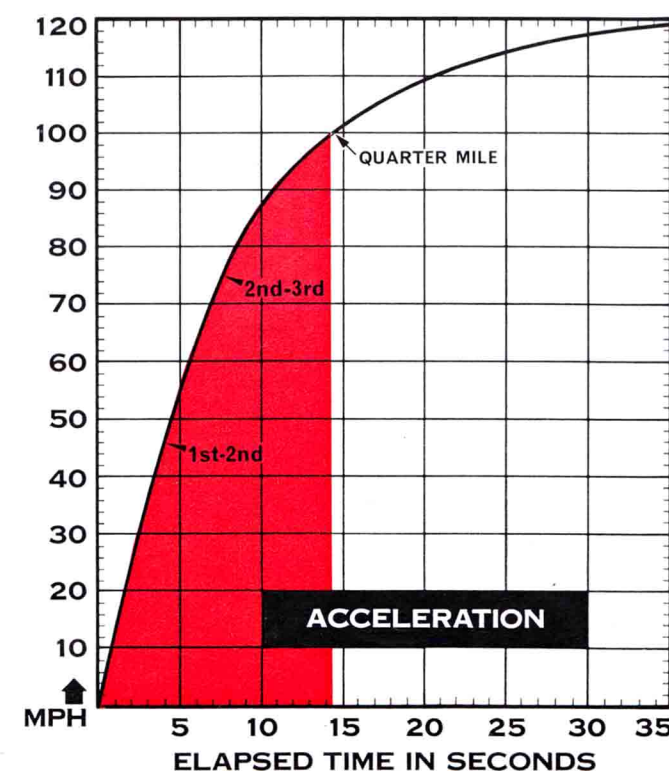
### ENGINE

Type, no. of cyl. V-8  
Bore x stroke, in. 4.125 x 4.250  
Displacement, cu. in. 455  
Compression ratio 10.5:1  
Fuel required premium  
Rated bhp @ rpm 370 @ 5200  
equivalent mph 113  
Rated torque @ rpm 500 @ 3500  
equivalent mph 78  
Carburetion: Rochester 1x4.  
throttle dia., pri./sec. 1.375/2.25  
Valve train: Overhead valves, rocker arms, pushrods, hydraulic valve lifters.  
cam timing  
deg., int./exh. 56-92/96-52  
duration, int./exh. 328/328  
Exhaust system: Dual straightthrough mufflers.  
pipe dia., exh./tail 2.25/2.00  
Normal oil press. @ rpm .35 @ 1500  
Electrical supply, V./amp. 12/37  
Battery, plates/amp. hr. 66/74

### DRIVE TRAIN

Transmission type: Three-speed automatic, Turbo Hydra-Matic 400.  
Gear ratio 3rd (1.00:1) overall 3.42  
2nd (1.48:1) 5.08  
1st (2.48:1) 8.46  
1st x t.c. stall (2.30:1) 19.46  
Shift lever location: Console  
axle ratio 3.42

## CAR LIFE ROAD TEST



### CALCULATED DATA

Lb./bhp (test weight)	11.3
Cu. ft./ton mile	167.0
Mph/1000 rpm (high gear)	21.7
Engine revs./mile (60 mph)	2760
Piston travel, ft./mile	1955
CAR LIFE wear index	54

### SPEEDOMETER ERROR

Indicated	Actual
30 mph	26.0
40 mph	36.0
50 mph	47.0
60 mph	58.0
70 mph	66.0
80 mph	76.0
90 mph	85.0

### MAINTENANCE

Engine oil, miles/days	6000/120
oil filter, miles/days	12,000/2400
Chassis lubrication, miles	12,000
Antismog servicing, type/miles	check/6000
Air cleaner, miles	24,000
Spark plugs: AC-R44S	
gap, (in.)	0.030
Basic timing, deg./rpm	6-10/850
max. cent. adv., deg./rpm	17.3-21.3/1250
max. vac. adv., deg./in. Hg.	14.5-20.2/18.5
Ignition point gap, in.	0.016
cam dwell angle, deg.	29-31
arm tension, oz.	19-23
Tappet clearance, int./exh.	0/0
Fuel pressure at idle, psi	6
Radiator cap relief press., psi	15

### PERFORMANCE

Top speed (5400), mph	116
Test shift points (rpm) @ mph	
2nd to 3rd (5100)	75
1st to 2nd (5200)	46

### ACCELERATION

0-30 mph, sec.	2.6
0-40 mph	3.5
0-50 mph	4.5
0-60 mph	5.7
0-70 mph	7.0
0-80 mph	8.6
0-90 mph	10.8
0-100 mph	14.3
Standing 1/4-mile, sec.	14.36
speed at end, mph	100.22
Passing, 30-70 mph, sec.	4.4

### BRAKING

Max. deceleration rate and stopping distance from 80 mph	
rate, ft./sec./sec.	25
distance, ft.	325
Rate and distance after 6 1/2-G stops from 80 mph	
rate, ft./sec./sec.	25
distance, ft.	325
Control loss? None	
Overall brake performance	good

### FUEL CONSUMPTION

Test conditions, mpg	12.2
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# ESCAPE

continued

inch capacity of the 4-4-2 from 400 to 455 when the engineers did it without adding a pound of weight to the engine. It's all gravy.

While the W-30 engine is basically the same as the 4-4-2 engine, with a 10.5:1 compression ratio, 2-in. intake and 1 5/8 in. exhaust valves, low-friction engine bearings and low-restriction dual exhausts, Oldsmobile throws in a lightweight aluminum intake manifold, ventilation filters in both valve covers and a six-bladed fan with a free-wheeling clutch device to save power instead of the standard four-bladed.

The big thing, of course, is the high lift, longer duration cam, and the forced-air induction system to keep the little fresh-air fiend happy. The regular 4-4-2 is rated at 365 bhp at 5000 rpm while the 4-4-2 equipped with W-30 is rated at 370 bhp at 5400 rpms. The torque is the same, 500 ft.-lb., calculated at 3200 rpm for the

standard 4-4-2 and 3600 rpm for the W-30.

Oldsmobile, while not exactly experienced at budget pricing, has figured out ways to make the good stuff available in less expensive cars. You can order a forced-air package called the W-31 with the Cutlass S or F-85 coupe if they have the 350-cid V-8. Like the W-30, you'll get a high-lift cam, dual exhausts, a lightweight intake manifold and special identification.

If all you want for the 4-4-2 is the forced-air induction, Olds will let you order it by its lonesome in an option code-named W-25.

It was while trying to decipher these code names that we came across several other goodies that look like winners. Among them:

- An auxiliary oil cooler. Available with automatics, this unit keeps your transmission cool when you're hauling that trailer over the mountains.

- Superlift shock absorbers. An air valve allows you to adjust the riding level of your car even if you've got a trunk full of bullion.

- The W-27 lightweight aluminum rear axle carrier and cover. Available for both the W-30 and W-31, this baby chops off 22 pounds and is a

look-alike for a Halibrand quick-change.

We can't go on without mentioning Oldsmobile's ballyhooed but little-understood Engineering Triumph. We were tempted at first to rank it alongside Chevy's Electro-Tip windshield wiper lever until we looked into it and discovered how good they are. We're speaking, of course, about Old's Positive Valve Rotators.

Valves collect deposits. They cake up, then flake away in irregular patterns, depriving your valves of the ability to seal tightly at the ends of their cycles. Oldsmobile, taking a tip from the designers of heavy-duty truck engines, who, in turn, copied the practice from some of the old straight-eights, merely made the valve spring retainer do double duty, rotating the valve as well. Now, the deposits are wiped off by constant rotation ensuring constant polishing, better sealing, better compression and like that.

Quarter-mile acceleration is usually a good test of the development of a car over the years. Differing tires, though, on the three 4-4-2s we've tested since '68, muddy the comparisons. We ran G70 x 14 fiberglass-belted tires on our '70 while our '69

Hurst/Olds ran wider F60 x 15 Polyglas tires and our '68 4-4-2 ran F70 x 14 Firestone Super Sports Wide Ovals.

The fastest of the three in E.T.s was the Hurst/Olds, which posted a 14.1 E.T. compared to the '70 4-4-2s 14.36 E.T. In miles per hour, both the '70 and the '69 H/O broke the 100-mph barrier in the quarter while the '68 only got it up to 92 mph by the time it hit the traps.

The belted tires perform well. We threw the 4-4-2 bodily into curves, cranking the wheel over to deliberately try and break the back end loose. It was more trouble than it was worth. Those babies hung on. Our test convinced us that no ordinary curve on an ordinary highway is ever going to scare a 4-4-2.

In fact, even the dreaded Baja Mexican 1000 run—enough to make strong cars cringe—doesn't scare the 4-4-2. A Vic Hickey (of Baja Boot fame) prepared 4-4-2 was driven by movie cowpoke Jim Garner and Dave Maurer to second place (Class 1) in the '69 version of the 830-mile race.

The front disc brakes, backed by 9.5-in. drums out back, came through the brake fade test smoking but working well. The front discs are standard

on the W-30 4-4-2, optional on the standard 4-4-2.

Olds engineers burned the midnight oil to come up with a solution to one problem which occurs with a high-overlap cam and power disc brakes. It turns out that the high-lift cam can't come across with enough engine vacuum to energize a power brake booster at low speeds. This could result in a parking lot fender bender.

Olds plays it safe by only offering non-power front disc brakes as standard on the manual shift 4-4-2 W-30 and, if you buy a 4-4-2 W-30 with Turbo Hydra-Matic, Olds will give you front power discs but a slightly milder cam.

Why is the 4-4-2 such a good handler when the Buick Grand Sport and the Chevelle get handed almost the same suspension initially from General Motors? Basically, it's where Olds has gone from there. It's not that Olds has gone so far in handling progress, it's more like Buick and Chevy haven't come far along the road at all with their A-bodied cars.

At one time, the gulf between the cars that handled, but wouldn't go fast, and the cars that would go fast but wouldn't handle, was clearly visible. That's why it's a joy to discover

cars like the 4-4-2. At last the people who want more power, but still want their car to handle, have a car that does both.

One more point about the handling: The 4-4-2 is one of the two or three American cars that is *forgiving*. That means, when you do something dumb, like making a turn after you're almost past the intersection, it'll do it with a minimum of backtalk and embarrassing curb-scraping by the rocker panel.

We think "Doctor" Oldsmobile deserves his title, even if he is a mad scientist (the contributions of Transylvania go unrecognized too much!). The '70 4-4-2, especially with the new W-30 package, is a well thought out car. You might even call it an *educated* car, one which takes advantage of a lot of knowledge that's been tucked away because of budgetary considerations, or lack of salability or some other excuse.

But the consumer's getting hip. He *knows* about things like anti-roll bars and high-lift cams. In the '70s, it's going to take more than a rearrangement of chrome to sell a car. Oldsmobile's got the message and cars like the 4-4-2 show it. Let's hear it for the good Doc! ■

BY ALLAN GIRDLER

THERE ARE PEOPLE of high position in Detroit who do not understand the family man. This is odd because they are themselves, for the most part, in that category, but they have the idea that the man who needs to carry a large number of small people has lost his interest in the automobile as entertainment. They divide the market into groups. On the one side, with the performance cars, we have youth or carefree bachelors, coupes with tuned engines and handling options. For the station wagon set, fighters of crabgrass and organizers of car pools, there are elegant wagons, and workhorse wagons, but no performance packages. The engines are better suited to the plow than the saddle, and the suspensions will carry weight, not conquer corners.

Getting personal, Oldsmobile builds a superior Supercar, the 4-4-2. The Olds Cutlass is a comfortable station wagon. But those who have the power to make the decisions have spoken: the two cars cannot be combined. You can have a W-30 4-4-2, and you can have a Cutlass wagon, but you'd better have a two-car garage.

There are people at Oldsmobile who

# WONDER WAGON

## The Van of Steel



do not agree with this. They built a combination, as an experiment, and loaned it out. Fire it from your cannon, they said, and we'll see what it does to the fort.

We call it Wonder Wagon. We would have called it Wonder Wart Hog, but there may be readers who do not read comics and Tom Wolfe books and who do not know that Wonder Wart Hog (The Hog of Steel) is a hero, and the name is complimentary. Wonder Wagon is a keen piece of equipment, and we wish you could buy one.

What it is basically is a W-30 4-4-2 Cutlass wagon. Everything in it comes from Oldsmobile, which is one of the lessons of this equipment. The same effect could be achieved via Crower, American Racing, Chapman, ADDCO, etc., by an owner who doesn't mind building his own enthusiast wagon, but that would mar the moral: If Olds would build Wonder Wagon, Olds could.

Start with a Cutlass wagon, 116-in. wheelbase, 455-cid V-8 in standard wagon tune. Into the engine goes the W-30 camshaft, one of the wildest cams offered in a production car, but with quiet, reliable hydraulic lifters. Atop it is the aluminum intake manifold that comes with the cam in the