

FORD TORINO

A slick looking car with an Italian name, but with performance and quality that didn't live up to its appearance

FORD'S NEW TORINO is a handsome automobile and, in some ways, a frustrating one. The more we drove this sleek family car, the more obvious it became that its *raison d'être* was to enable the family man to look more sporting while trundling the family about.

Good seats and driving position made the Torino a pleasure to drive on turnpikes and freeways, and mile after mile of open road could be covered in ease and comfort. The non-power steering of our test car was acceptable in this type of driving and should prove little problem to the weaker (?) sex for most driving situations. . . .

But the Torino was not at home on winding mountain roads. A combination of nose-heavy weight distribution, causing the predicted understeer, and heavy steering from the lack of power boost, caused a lot of strong-arm winding, and made curving roads a chore to negotiate. Under these circumstances, or in heavy traffic conditions, a woman would not enjoy driving the car.

Oversteer could be induced in some situations by a hard application of power at just the right time, but proved difficult to control with the slow steering ratio furnished.

The brakes, too, were not power boosted and took considerable effort to use. In our brake test (eight successive panic stops from 80 mph—or until 20% fade is reached, whichever comes first) brought on less than 20% fade and stopped the car in a straight line with no loss of control. Once the driver became used to the braking effort he could compensate by thinking about braking sooner and applying more effort at the start.

The standard Torino engine is Ford's 302-cid/210-bhp V-8 equipped with a single 2-barrel carburetor. This engine, requiring only regular gasoline, is derived from the very successful 260-289 cid Fairlane V-8 introduced in 1962, and is still one of the best engines in any U.S. automobile. The engine in our test Torino, however, was the optional 390-cid V-8. With single 4-barrel carburetor, it is rated at 315 bhp at 4600 rpm. Drive



PAUL E. HANSEN PHOTOS

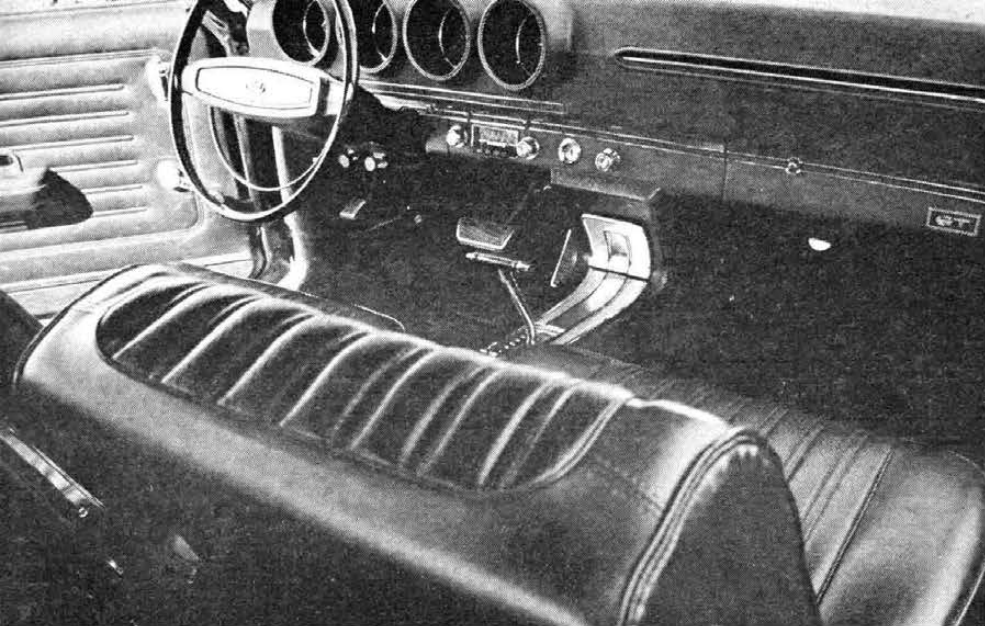
PLEASING LINES of the Ford Torino, a combination of Ford big-car front and Mustang back, are the best of the big-car fastbacks built in U.S.

was taken through the Cruise-O-Matic, 3-speed automatic transmission, which is one of the two (with 4-speed manual) available transmissions for this engine, and the standard 3.25:1 (3.00:1 optional) rear axle ratio.

Starting the engine requires the shift lever to be in either Park or Neutral, as is true with most cars with automatic transmissions (some will start in Park only), and start it did—rain or shine. After the Torino had been sitting for any length of time, however, it proved necessary to let the engine warm up before engaging Drive or Reverse. The idle speed was so high that it caused the car to lurch dangerously unless one foot was kept on the brake pedal, in which case the engine quit. This is not something native to the Torino, however, as every 1968 auto-

matic transmission-equipped car we've driven has been afflicted with this same ailment. It is caused by the fast idle necessary to compensate for the emission control systems and will be with us until the industry develops better ways of meeting the standards.

While the seating and headroom, front and rear, rated good marks, the instrument panel and controls need help. Our chief gripes about this are the difficult-to-read names on a strip below the four instrument dials which designate heater controls, windshield wipers, etc. A driver simply cannot take his eyes that far off the road for the length of time it takes him (safely) to identify the correct controls. And, control knobs adjacent to each other that pull (fresh air vent) or twist (radio speaker control) and are shaped



DEEP-SET instruments are generally easy to read, causing no reflections in the windshield, but placing the low-fuel warning light in the right dial, when the fuel gauge is in the left dial, is puzzling. The radio is within easy reach of the driver only, and the ashtray, at front of console, is awkward for driver or passenger.

TORINO

continued

alike give no physical or visual identity to the knob's function. Consequently, the radio speaker knob got pulled off on several occasions by a driver reaching for the air vent control.

The interior was done with restraint and was generally pleasant, if a bit

somber with everything in black—seats, floor mats, side panels and instrument panel. Safety considerations dictate much of the interior of 1968 automobiles and the evidence is everywhere in the car; padded instrument panel, sun visors, door posts and armrests; non-glare finish on brightwork; and a maze of safety webbing (much of which went unused while we drove the car) make the inside look like a padded "jungle gym." CAR LIFE staffers are firm believers (and users) of seat belts at all times, and shoulder harnesses when they are practical. We do not feel that most U.S. car builders have figured out the shoulder harness combination yet (for good examples see Volvo and Volkswagen).

A true fastback body shape seldom works well on a large chassis (for examples, see early Barracuda, Marlin and Charger) but Ford stylists have created what we think is the best large-car fastback design yet. In the rear views, the Torino bears a family resemblance to the fastback Mustang, while the front leans more toward the bigger Ford line and it is a happy wedding of the elements. We weren't enthralled with the paint striping on our test car (it's optional anyway); if the sides had been big flat expanses of metal we'd say the striping filled the

1968 FORD TORINO FASTBACK 2-Dr. HARDTOP



DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase, in.....	116.0
Track, f/r, in.....	58.8/58.5
Overall length, in.....	201.0
width.....	74.6
height.....	53.4
Front seat hip room, in.....	23.5 x 2
shoulder room.....	57.4
head room.....	37.4
pedal-seatback, max.....	38.0
Rear seat hip room, in.....	52.8
shoulder room.....	56.7
leg room.....	33.2
head room.....	36.1
Door opening width, in.....	40.0
Ground clearance, in.....	6.0
Trunk liftover height, in.....	33.8

PRICES

List, FOB factory.....	\$2743
Equipped as tested.....	\$3787
Options included: 390 V-8, bucket seats, Select Shift Cruise-O-Matic, visibility, convenience and protection groups; console, rear window defogger; am/fm stereo radio, tinted glass, rear shoulder belts, deluxe seat belts, tachometer.	

CAPACITIES

No. of passengers.....	5
Luggage space, cu. ft.....	16.2
Fuel tank, gal.....	20.0
Crankcase, qt.....	4
Transmission/dif., pt.....	20.5/2.9
Radiator coolant, qt.....	20.5

CHASSIS/SUSPENSION

Frame type: Uniltized.	
Front suspension type: Independent by s.l.a., drag struts, coil springs, telescopic shock absorbers.	
ride rate at wheel, lb./in.	n.a.
antiroll bar dia., in.....	0.65
Rear suspension type: Hotchkiss live axle, multileaf springs, telescopic shock absorbers.	
ride rate at wheel, lb./in.	n.a.
Steering system: Recirculating ball gear, parallelogram linkage behind front wheels.	
overall ratio.....	29.4:1
turns, lock to lock.....	5.25
turning circle, ft. curb-curb.....	41.5
Curb weight, lb.....	3760
Test weight.....	4150
Distribution (driver)	
% f/r.....	56.1/43.9

BRAKES

Type: Duo-servo cast iron drum, front and rear.	
Front drum, dia. x width, in. 10.0 x 2.5	
Rear drum, dia. x width.....	10.0 x 2.0
total swept area, sq. in.....	282.4
Power assist.....	none
line psi at 100 lb. pedal.....	n.a.

WHEELS/TIRES

Wheel rim size.....	14 x 5.5JK
optional size.....	n.a.
bolt no./circle dia. in.....	5/4.5
Tires: Firestone Super Sport Wide Oval.	
size.....	F70-14
normal inflation, psi f/r.....	24/24
Capacity @ psi.....	5120 @ 24

ENGINE

Type, no. of cyl.....	ohv 90° V-8
Bore x stroke, in.....	4.05 x 3.78
Displacement, cu. in.....	389.568
Compression ratio.....	10.5:1
Fuel required.....	premium
Rated bhp @ rpm.....	315 @ 4600
equivalent mph.....	103
Rated torque @ rpm.....	427 @ 2800
equivalent mph.....	62
Carburetion: Holley 1x4.	
throttle dia., pri./sec.....	1.44/1.56
Valve train: Hydraulic lifters, push-rods and overhead rocker arms.	
cam timing	
deg., int./exh.....	18-72/82-28
duration, int./exh.....	270/290
Exhaust system: Dual, reverse-flow mufflers and resonators.	
pipe dia., exh./tail.....	2.0/2.0
Normal oil press. @ rpm.....	n.a.
Electrical supply, V./amp.....	12/42
Battery, plates/amp. hr.....	66/55

DRIVE TRAIN

Transmission type: Three-speed automatic with torque converter.	
Gear ratio 3rd (1.00:1) overall 3.25:1	
2nd (1.46:1).....	4.74:1
1st (2.46:1).....	7.99:1
1st x t.c. stall (2.10:1).....	16.78:1
Shift lever location: Console.	
Differential type: Hypoid.	
axle ratio.....	3.25:1

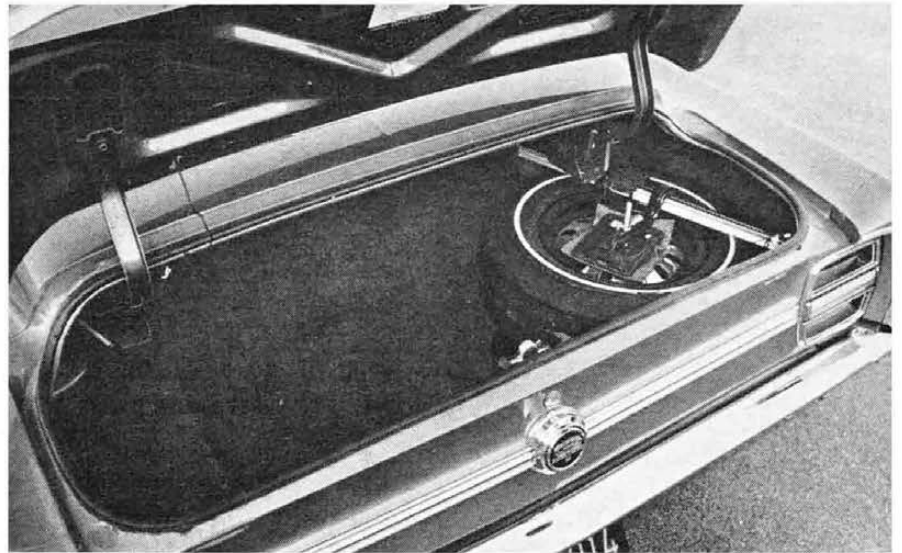
need of visual relief from the flat areas.

The very features that make the Torino so attractive also contribute to several of its faults: a rear window on a back slope this slight, first is a tremendous gatherer of dust and dew, making it necessary to wipe the rear window off daily to insure some semblance of rearward vision, and second, the length necessary to gain enough vertical height (for rearward vision) takes the lower edge of the window into the area that could be more usefully served by a larger trunk opening.

Driver visibility seemed good in any direction but the rear quarters. Part of this was overcome by a good outside rearview mirror which was easily adjusted from inside, but those long quarter panels did constitute big blank areas and extreme care on the part of the driver is called for while changing lanes or backing up.

The FOB Dearborn price of \$2742 rose to \$3927 equipped as tested, which included \$141 transportation cost to the West Coast. This places the Torino smack in the middle of the price spread on U.S.-built cars.

We would recommend ordering the Torino with either the 302 or 427-cid V-8. The 390, in our estimation, is a neither-nor powerplant, so the 302



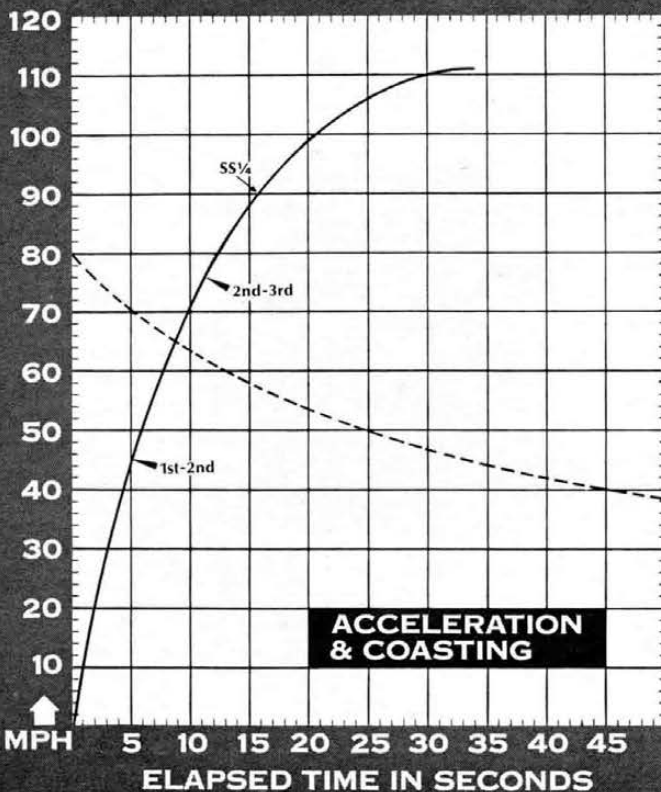
TRUNK SPACE is small for a car of this size, and spare tire and trunk lid hinges encroach on usable space. Loading is difficult because of lift-over height (33 in.) coupled with the narrow opening. The opening is the result of the long rear window (needed for vertical height, for rearward vision) of the fastback design.

with its lighter weight would offer adequate power with better weight distribution and subsequent better handling for the driver interested in that aspect of motoring. The 427 would give far better performance for the Saturday afternoon drag racer, yet would be docile enough for everyday

driving if one wasn't interested in an outstanding handling package.

What does the buyer get for his money? A good looking, relatively roomy, comfortable car, neither at the top nor the bottom of the performance spectrum and one with a certain amount of visual distinction. ■

CAR LIFE ROAD TEST



CALCULATED DATA

Lb./bhp (test weight).....	13.2
Cu. ft./ton mile.....	141.3
Mph/1000 rpm (high gear).....	22.3
Engine revs/mile (60 mph).....	2690
Piston travel, ft./mile.....	1695
CAR LIFE wear index.....	45.6
Frontal area, sq. ft.....	22.1
NHRA-AHRA class.....	n.a.

SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph, actual.....	28.2
40 mph.....	38.2
50 mph.....	48.2
60 mph.....	58.1
70 mph.....	68.2
80 mph.....	77.5
90 mph.....	87.0

MAINTENANCE

Engine oil, miles/days.....	6000/180
oil filter, miles/days.....	6000/180
Chassis lubrication, miles.....	36,000
Antismog servicing, type/miles.....	change PCV valve/12,000, tune check/12,000
Air cleaner, miles.....	replace, 36,000
Spark plugs: Autolite.....	
gap, (in.).....	0.032
Basic timing, deg./rpm.....	n.a.
max. cent. adv., deg./rpm.....	n.a.
max. vac. adv., deg./in. Hg.....	n.a.
Ignition point gap, in.....	0.014
cam dwell angle, deg.....	.26
arm tension, oz.....	.17
Tappet clearance, int./exh.....	0/0
Fuel pressure at idle, psi.....	4.5
Radiator cap relief press., psi.....	12

PERFORMANCE

Top speed (5000), mph.....	111
Test shift points (rpm) @ mph.....	
2nd to 3rd (5000).....	76
1st to 2nd (5000).....	45

ACCELERATION

0-30 mph, sec.....	3.1
0-40 mph.....	4.5
0-50 mph.....	6.0
0-60 mph.....	7.7
0-70 mph.....	9.8
0-80 mph.....	12.3
0-90 mph.....	15.8
0-100 mph.....	21.0
Standing 1/4-mile, sec.....	15.8
speed at end, mph.....	90.0
Passing 30-70 mph, sec.....	6.7

BRAKING

Max. deceleration rate from 80 mph.....	ft./sec. ²21
No. of stops from 80 mph (60-sec. intervals) before 20% loss in deceleration rate.....	6
Control loss?.....	Moderate.
Overall brake performance.....	fair

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Test conditions, mpg.....	13.1
Normal cond., mpg.....	12-15
Cruising range, miles.....	225-280

GRADABILITY

4th % grade @ mph.....	
3rd.....	19 @ 58
2nd.....	28 @ 40
1st.....	off scale

DRAG FACTOR

Total drag @ 60 mph, lb.....	180
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