

GALAXIE



BIGGEST, boldest Ford street machine...and a strong contender for AA/Stock honors at the strip

427

by Eric Dahlquist/tech editor

FLASH! — Immediately upon conclusion of HRM test, Ford announced a mid-year change in 427 V8. The many refinements, while not in test machine, are shown here. Larger and lighter exhaust valves now have hollow stems and thin, flexible heads with narrow seats in conjunction with lighter lifters that allow 1000 more rpm! To stand the revs, beefed rods with cap alignment held by pressed-in dowels and cap screw threaded into rod proper. Three-arm control on rear axle holds start-stop torque; side sway is held by horizontal bar. Springs act only as load carrier.



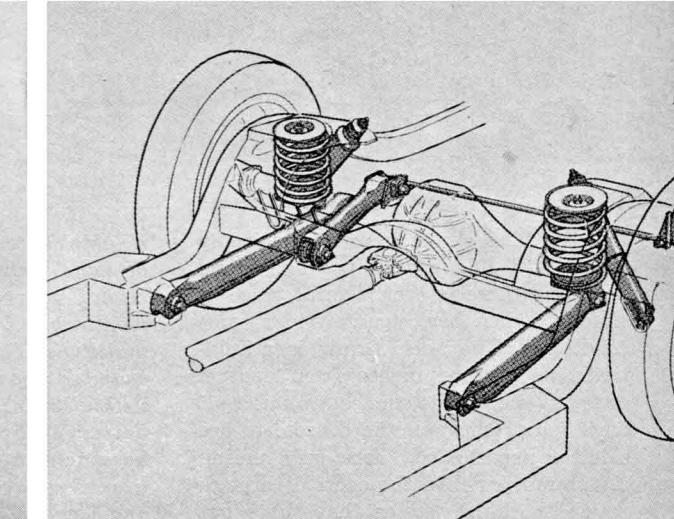
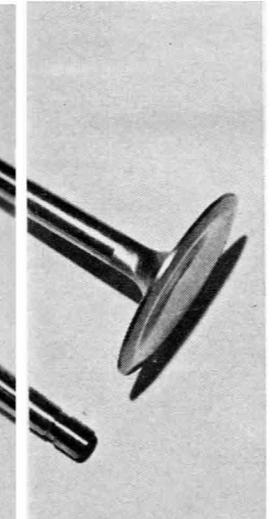
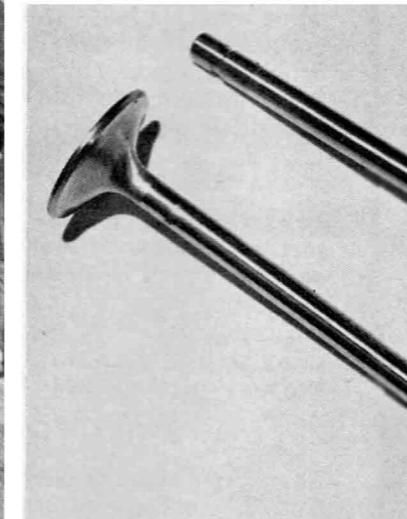
Several years ago, HRM ran a cartoon about a slick strip artist who couldn't find a match for his car because of an obviously loud and erratic engine idle that sounded as if the horses under the hood would snap your arm off. The kicker turned out to be a record player spinning under the hood, causing all the noise. When we first heard the approach of our test vehicle this funny popped into memory, but the noise from under the Ford Galaxie's bonnet was anything but a ruse—425 spirited ponies really were in that 427-inch corral just waiting to be turned loose.

This is the year of Ford's big change inside and out and although styling is strictly a matter of personal taste, the lines are crisp, definitely not as revised as the competition but none the less entirely capable of rousing public attention. Unseen and more important than the redone sheet metal is the all-new rear suspension where Ford has finally forsaken fifteen years on semi-elliptic springs for a set of coils positioned by a pair of parallel trailing arms. Additionally, there is also a hefty torque reaction member installed between the right side of the differential at the top of the axle housing and the frame crossmember. Helping to keep the axle centered and at the same time control side sway is a stabilizer bar that is part of the police and a high speed handling package, therefore a bit thicker than the normal job at .88 inch. As a matter of fact, Fords equipped with the 427 have extra-duty equipment all around, including stiffer shocks and coils that have about again as much spring rate as the regular components.

to impress viewers when the hood is raised. A single four-barrel carb is optional, known as the NASCAR version. Ford had also thoughtfully placed one of their transistorized ignitions on this engine which nicely rounded out the impression that the thing was meant for business and lots of it.

Backing up the healthy horsepower was the Ford-built four-on-the-floor box (new last year) with gears that have been proven fully capable of withstanding the weekend after weekend onslaught of power-shift abuse on the nation's drag strips. But this is only as good as the pressure plate/clutch assembly that feeds torque to it so some substantial parts in the bell housing were bolted in at the factory. The 11.5-inch woven asbestos disc should have enough contact area at 121 square inches and in conjunction with the 2100 lbs. plate pressure ought to link things up tight in a hurry. 8.15 x 15 4-ply nylon tires capable of high speeds were thoughtfully fitted on six- instead of five-inch stamped steel rims for better support. The non-power brakes were enlarged for the 427 also, having a swept drum area of 365 square inches, 35 inches more than stock for the expected harder use. By way of summation then, the hardtop was built for getting down the road in a hurry, if even only 1320 feet at a time.

The inside scoop was that this was one of Ford's more plush cruisers, what with luxurious simulated leather vinyl upholstery in tasteful two-toned muted gold, deep bucket seats with four-way power on the driver's side, padded dash, AM/FM radio, generous, yet tasteful chrome application and door to door deep pile carpeting. Even the headliner was snug fitting with no ragged edges and when the



photography: Eric Rickman

The 427 cubic inch engine available for '65 Ford cars has the expected 4.23 x 3.78 inch bore and stroke with the 11.1 to 1 forged aluminum pistons that prefer premium fuel. Contributing to the "rump-rump" nature of the engine is the .524-inch lift camshaft and associated valve gear that produces a seemingly one-grand idle at rest and makes the engine about as wild an outfit as can be purchased for street use. The bottom end of course is well stressed and features the famous 4-bolt mains brought over from racing activities, and should therefore be long lived even under severe usage. Capping our test car engine was a dual Carter four-throat assembly that has often been referred to as an eight-barrel carburetor and literally has no end of power

material was pushed against the roof, there was insulation in there rather than the empty void of several popular cars that come to mind. General execution and fit of the ornamentation was well up from previous offerings and reflected the result of the strict quality control program Ford has emphasized for the last several years. And things like the placement of the cigarette lighter mounted in the ash tray nacel that was concealed when the tray was pushed closed endeared us with its creative approach as did the suspended accelerator pedal that self adjusts to any foot angle. Another nice touch in a small package is the reversible key design which falls under the heading of "why didn't someone think

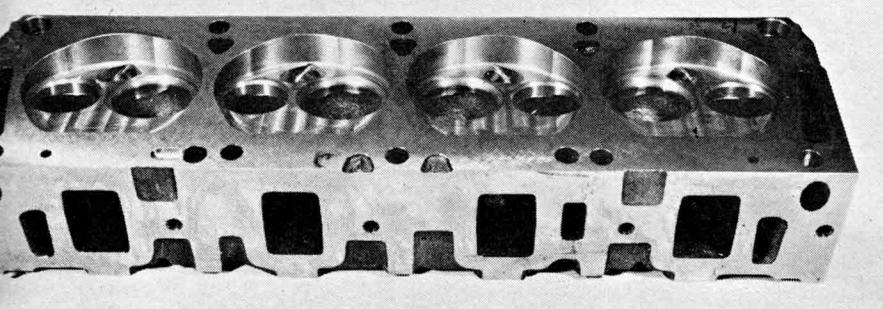
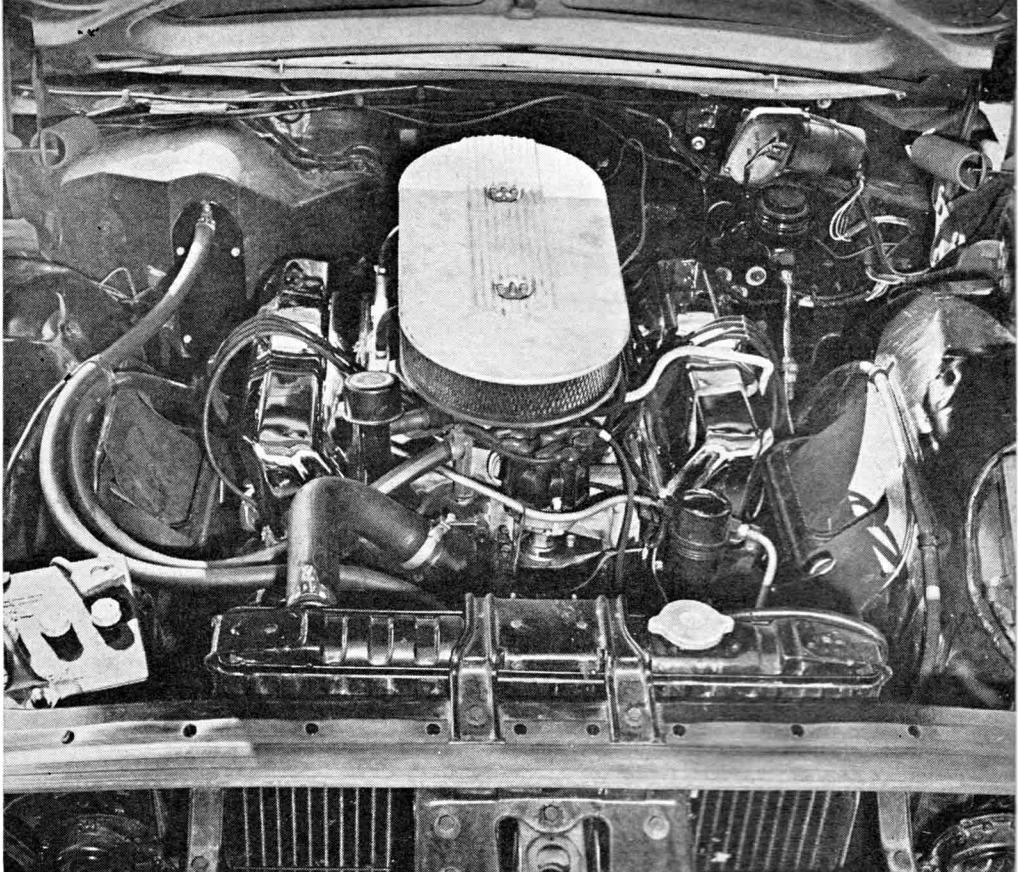
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GALAXIE 427

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of it before" and will no doubt earn the gratitude of the owner caught in a downpour on a dark night who doesn't have to fumble to find which side of the key is up. The only improvement we would suggest is that the ignition and trunk keys be more dissimilar in shape so that there would be no doubt about which is which.

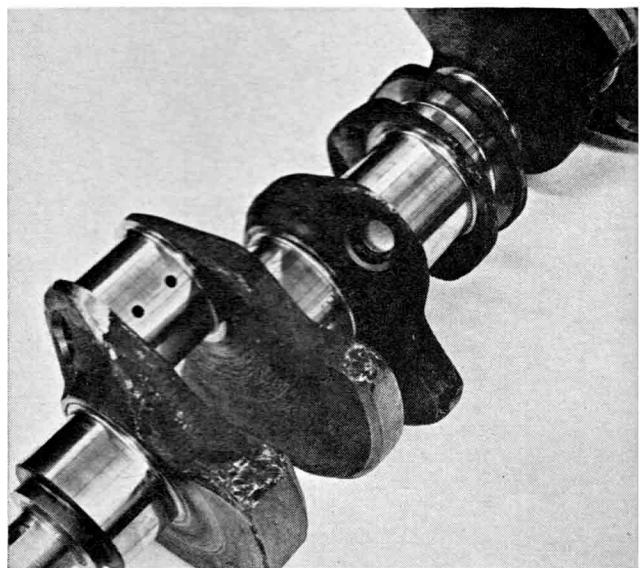
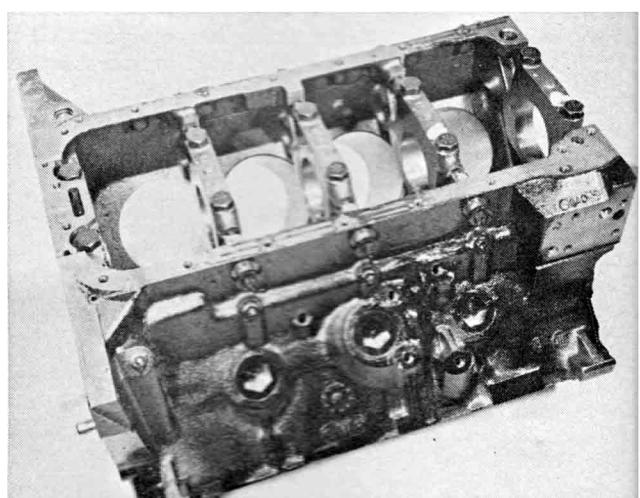
But however good the car appeared we were anxious to learn how it *felt* in track and traffic situations. First off, we are probably surprising no one by saying that this particular model is not quieter than a Rolls Royce inside or out and the potential buyer knows that healthy engines emit healthy sounds and wants it that way. Secondly, this is truly a man's machine with no power brakes, steering or automatic trans-



mission. The clutch pedal is decidedly on the stiff side, especially when brand new, and there is even a faint trace of shudder when backing up under some conditions. The shift throw is a relatively short four inches from neutral gate but the handle snakes around a bit as it winds through the console to the selector arms. Also, there is a sliding aluminum panel in the console through which the shift passes that shuts out transmission noise and offers a neat appearance but gives a little resistance to movement. Shifting is relatively swift but the serious racer would do well to install something a little less complicated. Braking was adequate but on several occasions where quick stopping was the order of the day, the wheels locked up almost without warning, and with a 3900-pound car this condition left some margin for improvement.

In direct contrast to stopping ability was the surprisingly good nature of the ride despite the stiff suspension. The

Engine in test Galaxie at top of page looks same as newer High Performance 427 due this month, but inside there are a multitude of refinements. Head chamber capacity is controlled with all-machined surface, and better breathing is allowed by machine-contoured relief around valves. Port size and angle are also improved. Upended block shows cross-bolted main caps. Not seen are scalloped cylinder bores around inlet valves for added breathing. Main oil gallery was relocated lower in block to allow larger diameters, increased volume, more direct routing to mains. Former nodular iron crank is now forged steel with huge reserve oil capacity in hollow crank journal instead of small rifle-drilled oil-way (note access plugs in cheeks of crank). Hollow journal is lighter too.



XL cruised along in the best boulevard manner yet didn't wallow or have excessive rebound after negotiating bumps. This is Ford's first year with rear coils so it is a feather in their engineering caps that they constructed a relatively large machine such as this that will run hard into a corner, lift the rear end on the inboard side ever so slightly and remain there the rest of the way through without swapping ends. Make no mistake, these machines handle but they are no match for such as some of the lighter sports rigs unless prepared by someone like Holman & Moody who got Dan Gurney around the Riverside course at practice laps of 103.5 mph prior to this year's 500.

In general daily driving situations the XL is excellent, after your left leg gets acclimated to the stiff clutch. This is definitely not an economy car by any stretch of the imagination and while our overall average was between 8-9 mpg, this isn't as bad as it sounds because the car was continually accelerated and even run at the drag strip during the mileage check. Our greatest complaint was the instrumentation, or rather lack of it. There was no ammeter, oil pressure or temperature

even on the slickest surface. Immediately a few of you sharper spotters are probably wondering if the tire size mentioned is a misprint or whether we just picked up the wrong skins. Actually neither is the case, but because our XL was geared 3.50 to 1 it was thought that the car's relatively high weight would need a little ratio help from a smaller tire size.

Our first strip outing nearly took the edge from our enthusiasm, for although the Casler tires got us down into the mid-15's after running a full second slower without them, the engine felt slightly off key, so the car was driven out to Ak Miller's famous garage for a full tuneup. First order of business was to run through the valves with the engine warm, maintaining a lash adjustment of .025-inch for both intakes and exhausts. Next, the timing light was broken out and the ignition set at 8 degrees static advance on the crank pulley. Finally, the old spark plugs were yanked and replaced by a set of new Auto-Lite BF-32's gapped at .030-inch. Everything else was left untouched, including the stock carburetor jetting which, it was felt, is adequate.

Back at the Beach (Lions Long Beach

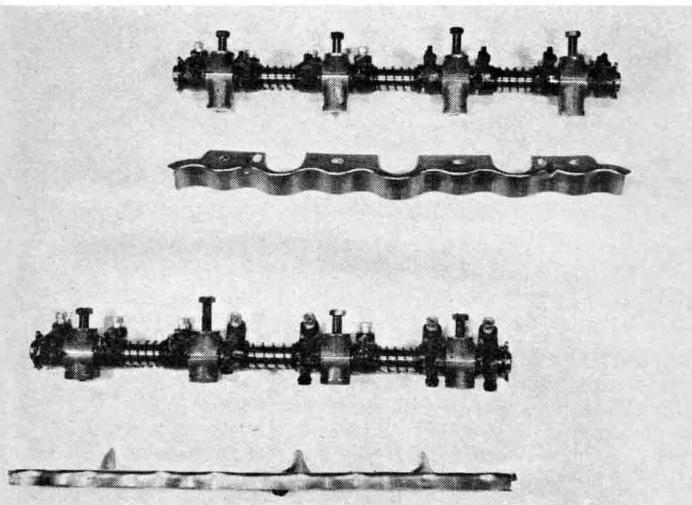
might comment here that with the exhausts uncorked the sound-producing capabilities of this engine are second to none and although this will never win races in itself, the noise volume will surely instill a healthy respect for the car in competition.

On the next pass, the big Ford lunged out of the chute with a hoarse roar, and as the car cleared the last set of lights, we knew this would be a memorable run. 108.04 mph, 14.43 e.t.! The figures on the timing slip were magnified with the realization that nothing out of the ordinary had been done to the car and that fourth gear hadn't even been used, or needed for that matter, what with the high rear end ratio. Ak indicated that with a set of 4.11's in the differential, 110 mph was well within reach. And the results of a similar Galaxie at the Winternationals bears this out. Mike Schmitt, handling his new Desert Motors '65, racked up a solid 114.77 mph in 12.77 seconds as he waltzed away from the competition on the trophy run in AA/S. Tuned by Performance Associates and utilizing seven-inch Casler recaps on five-inch Cragar rims, Mike's car wasn't much different from ours except that he had bolted on a set of Balanger headers and added 90/10 Up-Loc shocks in front and 60/40 Down-Loc Cure Rides in back. Spring wedges had been driven into the front coils and the wheel bearings repacked with an STP Lubriplate compound for less drag. The only item removed from the machine was the automatic brake adjusters, and even the snaky floor shift was retained.

The critical point of this discussion about Mike's '65 is that there is no insurmountable discrepancy in performance between his expertly prepared car and the stock one. This speaks very well for Ford's approach to mass-producing fast iron, in that the fellow who lays out his loot for a drag race machine will get one that is competitive as is, and therefore will not be required to spend great additional amounts to bring home the bacon.

The trip to the strip turned up a few other points too—Ford's stamina. The new rear coil spring arrangement and torque reaction member allows strong starts without wheel hop or wasted motion. Although these runs were made in rapid succession, there was no sign of clutch fade, and the gearbox ratios of 2.32, 1.69, 1.29, and 1:1 are nearly ideal for competition. Running in AA/Stock, we would suggest the Galaxie as a good means of getting to the top.

All in all the Galaxie 500 XL is a reliable, fast car that will attract attention wherever those in the know hear that wicked idle. At the going price of \$4725, as equipped, f.o.b. Detroit, it isn't cheap, but then quality and performance never are. ■ ■



Rockers are heavy-duty adjustable with malleable iron stands for close control of clearances and flexing. The included metal stampings channel oil away from the guides and back to push rods and return passages.

gages, and no tach. We could understand that an acceptable rev counter might be too expensive as standard equipment, but the use of "idiot lights" instead of readable instruments is not in keeping with the car's character. An engine with this potential requires a tachometer for safety's sake as well as for maximum performance.

Some of you have no doubt been bearing with us, waiting for our usual quarter-mile tries that really ought to be sensational considering the powerplant. We expected as much, so for this test the Casler Tire Company, makers of the recaps that became synonymous with winning stock-class drag racers, supplied us a set of 8.00 x 14 "cheater slicks" with a seven-inch wide cross-section that will make a fair footprint

Drag Strip) our initial blast produced an unexpected sizzling 101.69 mph in 14.93 seconds. That a show-room machine with no special chassis tuning or engine blueprinting can run this well is truly sensational but there were still a few additional avenues of steam that beckoned, so it was back to the pits. Ford had thoughtfully supplied a shapely set of stock cast iron manifolds on the 427's, so their head pipes were unbolted and swung down out of the way. Under the hood things were pretty much in control but the fan, which was without benefit of a viscous coupler, was taken off to reduce possible power loss. With these two things accomplished, the hood was dropped and the Galaxie was driven back for another shot at the quarter. As a note in passing, we