

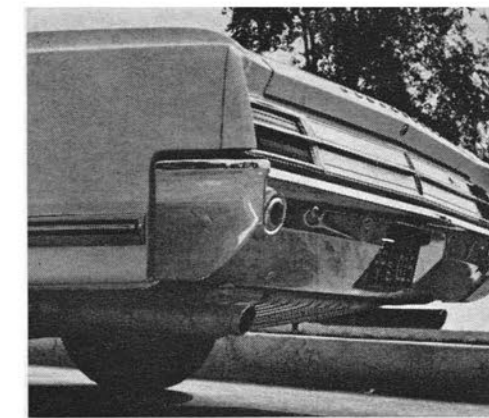
ROYAL red-line tires are fitted to handle high speed potential.



GOING OR coming, or just plain parked, Oldsmobile Cutlass displays styling lines of unobtrusive good taste.



INSTRUMENT panel below deep lip is similar to last year's panel.



DUAL pinch-pipe exhausts supply "2" of "442."

# OLDSMOBILE CUTLASS 442

Handle Bars Make the Difference!



SCOTT MALCOLM

**Q**UESTIONING THE concept of big-engined/little cars, which means in these days really big-engined/standard-sized cars, is somewhat like doubting the sanctity of motherhood and the flag. Skepticism of this sort brings forth the flat assertion: "That's what people want, so that's what we give 'em." The grain of truth in this is, in typical Detroit fashion, magnified to become a sea of sand, a featureless wasteland without point of reference.

Standing in the middle of such a desert, the grains in one hot fistful of sand are identical to those in another when inspected with the naked eye. But a strong glass focused on four specific grains, those stamped with the mark of GM (four of its five divisions), reveals one with an aberration which Nature has engineered into it. Microscopic though it be, this unique non-conformity is what sets this grain apart and makes it different.

It's called a rear stabilizer bar, and it's what gives distinction to Oldsmobile's impressive 442 package. Otherwise, the big engine, the fat black tires, and the Body-by-Fisher are virtually all from the same mold. A bar of SAE 1070 steel bent into a wide-based U, with flattened ends that bolt to the lower rear control arms, makes the difference.

This addition makes the best of a bad—or at least unhappy—situation. A front-heavy car with a steeply angled roll axis is going to have trouble keeping its rear wheels stuck on the ground where they can do their fair share of the work. When the solid rear axle is softly suspended, the work load is most unequitable. So stiffer springs are installed (130 lb./in. at the wheel, in place of 109), as is the custom industry-wide, but these alone aren't enough to control the body lean that lessens rear wheel adhesion. The anti-roll bar, though, goes a long stride further towards tying down the tail.

To accommodate the massive engine, front spring rates also have been increased, to 124 lb./in. (from 95),

and a heftier anti-roll bar (0.937 in. dia.) fitted to raise the roll moment at that end. That is what all the 442's competitors do, too, and of course is necessary.

To round out the suspension work modification for the 442, Olds specifies the U.S. Royal 800 tires, last year's almost-exclusive "Tiger Paws" for the GTO, which are designed for high speed use (up to 120 mph). They are fairly conventional tires of tougher than usual construction, and they complement the stiffened suspension so that ride doesn't suffer all that much. But they demonstrate few other virtues: Handling is not appreciably improved with this rubber and, in fact, tends to be something less than ideal when there's moisture on the pavement. The unfavorable weight bias still contributes to this problem at the rear and cornering in the wet can be as uncertain as if that rear anti-roll bar were non-existent.

Most of this is really continued development of what Olds had done last year when the 442 first appeared and its first digit meant "4-on-the-floor." But that model's appeal must have been limited by the concentration on suspension, a sophistication seemingly lost on most of the big engine/little car devotees. Now, however, Olds joins the bigger-inch crowd with another meaning for that first "4"—400 cu. in.

Olds engineers, it will be recalled, tried another method of propping up the output for their hot smaller car. Just two years ago, they were producing the Jetfire version of the F-85 with a Thompson-Ramo-Wooldridge turbo-supercharger. Although this produced an excellent response, the price was one of excess complexity and another reservoir to keep full—the fluid injection supply. So, they admitted to what hot rodders have been saying for years, that there's no substitute for cubic inches. The cubic inches, 330 of them at least, were available last year and a bit of work with the camshaft, com-



# CUTLASS 442

pression and carburetion got it up to 310 bhp. But more was needed.

A solution was the new 425-cu. in. block, with 0.125 in. smaller bores for a total displacement of 400 cu. in. Even with a mild cam, this gambit meant 35 more bhp. It oozes out 345 bhp without trying, hinting of things to come if this big engine/little car kick lasts. There's the little matter of power peak, also, which now occurs at 4800 instead of last year's 5200 rpm.

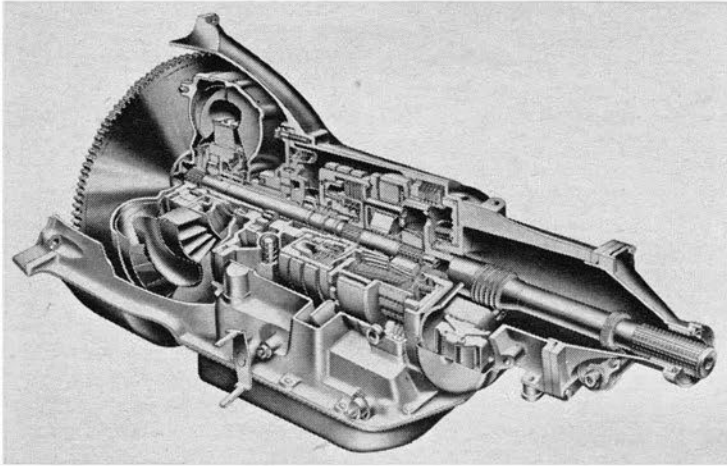
This engine gargles and gurgles at idle, thanks to its dual multi-pinch tailpipes, in a manner suggesting a fire in the belly about to be spewed forth from the pipes. (Even with throttle closed, it will accelerate of its own accord to 9 mph once the driver takes his foot off the brake.) But in ordinary driving, it is completely docile and does its job with adequate unobtrusiveness.

Three things happen almost—but

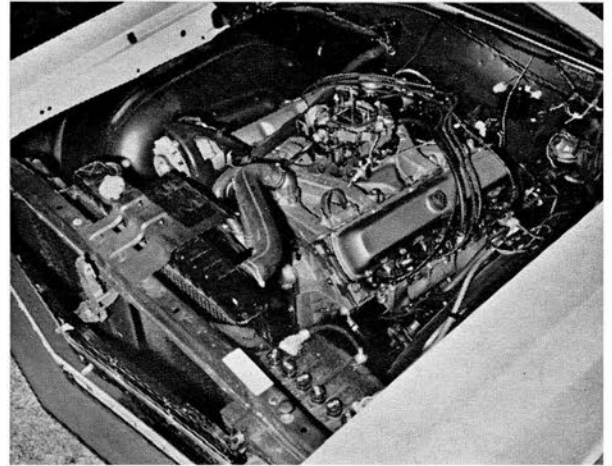
not quite—simultaneously when the belch-button is pushed: The 1.69-in. carburetor secondaries open, the transmission takes a hammerlock on Low (if speed is below 60 mph) and the torque converter switch-blades slash down to low pitch for maximum multiplication of an already frightening amount of torque. The sensation is quite unlike anything apt to be experienced in more mundane vehicles. And, the onset of such ferocity is enough to skitter the rear wheels about, much in the manner of early f.i. Corvettes.

All of this points up one problem which the 442 still must have sorted

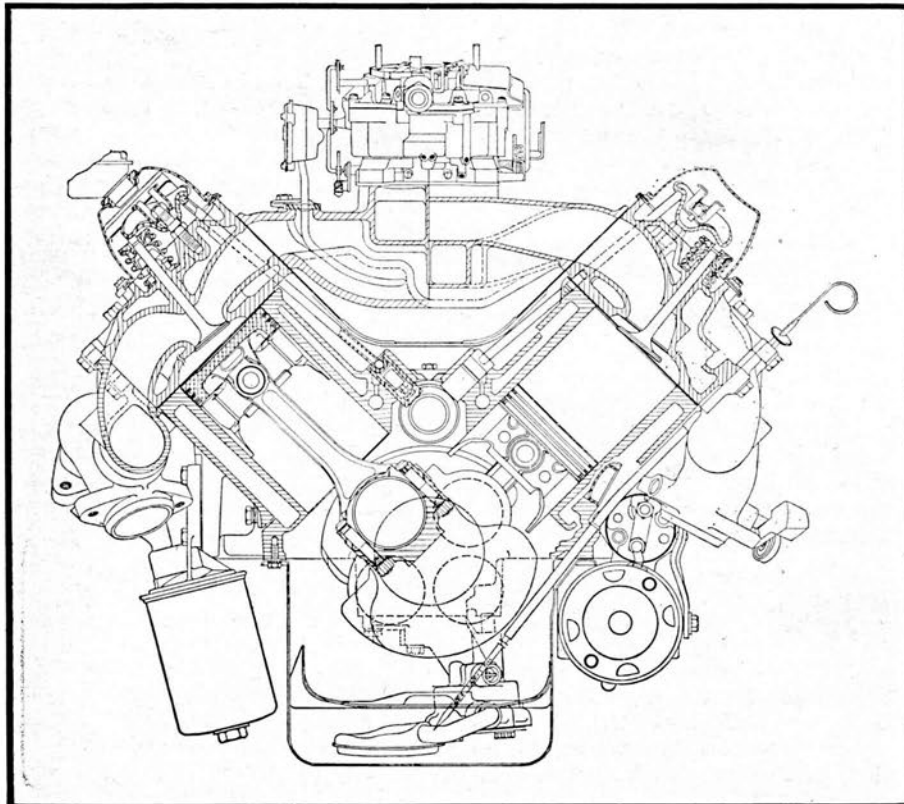
**JETAWAY AUTOMATIC** is smooth 2.5-speed unit with switch-pitch converter blades but lacks versatility of 4-speed manual.



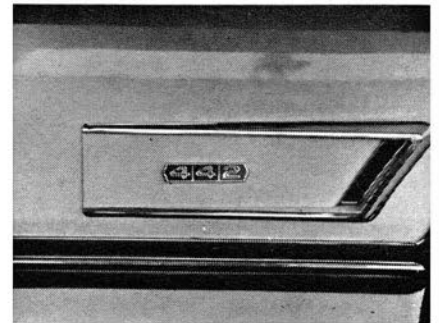
**EVERYTHING** about the 400-cu. in. engine is where it can be easily reached for service.



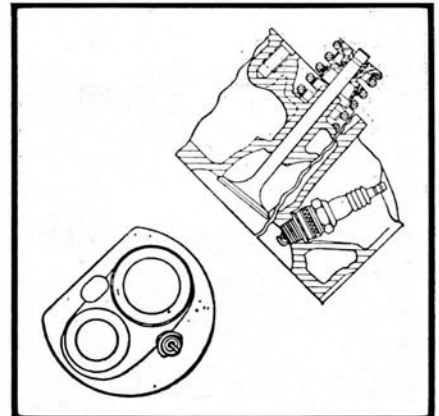
**CROSS SECTION** of Oldsmobile's new engine illustrates sturdy lower end. Note "semi-cylindrical" rocker arm design.



**HEAVY** brand on flank marks 442 equipment.



**HEAD DESIGN** allows generous valves, good plug position.



out—steering. The non-powered standard steering has the required heaviness to remind the driver that he's got lots of something under the hood. But when the something gets to restraint-shattering proportions, opposite rudder and overcontrol are hardly problems. Turn the wheel a little bit, nothing happens; turn it a little more, still nothing happens; fight off panic to spin it briskly and a little bit begins to happen. The moral is simple: Get the faster-gear (20.7:1 overall, 4.06 turns) power steering if there's any

remote desire for a modicum of quickly applied directional control.

Olds gets an A for effort in the brake department, despite the miniscule drums. Olds fits "fade resistant" organic linings—so-called heavy duty—in the 442 and hopes for the best. Surprisingly, it works—at least to the point of being somewhat above average for the car (though not in proportion to the improvement in performance which the big engine produces). Our stopping tests registered decelerations up to 26 ft./sec./sec. without

notable fade. The action was so unexpected that several stops were tried, averaging around a 23 reading until the drums just got too hot and gave up.

The 442 last year earned a CL accolade as "the best-handling of the GM A-bodied cars" and there's no reason to change that judgment this year. But where one of its kissin' cousins might have run off and left it then, there's more of a contest now. This would be particularly true if the close-ratio 4-speed manual transmission was part of the package ordered. ■

## CAR LIFE ROAD TEST

### 1965 OLDSMOBILE Cutlass Holiday 442

#### SPECIFICATIONS

List price.....	\$2784
Price, as tested.....	3371
Curb weight, lb.....	3560
Test weight.....	3890
distribution, %.....	56/44
Tire size.....	7.75-14
Tire capacity, lb. @ 24 psi.....	4480
Brake swept area, sq. in.....	267.8
Engine type.....	V-8, ohv
Bore & stroke.....	4.00 x 3.975
Displacement, cu. in.....	400
Compression ratio.....	10.25
Carburetion.....	1 x 4
Bhp @ rpm.....	345 @ 4800
equivalent mph.....	113
Torque, lb.-ft.....	440 @ 3200
equivalent mph.....	75

#### DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase, in.....	115.0
Tread, f & r.....	58.0
Overall length, in.....	204.3
width.....	74.4
height.....	54.0
equivalent vol., cu. ft.....	479
Frontal area, sq. ft.....	22.3
Ground clearance, in.....	5.8
Steering ratio, o/a.....	28.3
turns, lock to lock.....	5.6
turning circle, ft.....	41.0
Hip room, front.....	2 x 25
Hip room, rear.....	59.9
Pedal to seat back, max.....	42.0
Floor to ground.....	10.0
Luggage vol., cu. ft.....	16.1
Fuel tank capacity, gal.....	20.0

#### EXTRA-COST OPTIONS

442 pkg., auto. trans., radio, wire wheel covers, anti-smog, outside mirror, anti-spin diff., tinted windows, retractable seat belts.

#### GEAR RATIOS

2nd (1.00) overall.....	3.23
2nd (1.00 x 2.45).....	7.91
1st (1.765).....	5.70
1st (1.765 x 2.45).....	13.95



#### CALCULATED DATA

Lb./bhp (test wt.).....	11.3
Cu. ft./ton mile.....	152
Mph/1000 rpm.....	23.5
Engine revs/mile.....	2550
Piston travel, ft./mile.....	1690
Car Life wear index.....	43.1

#### PERFORMANCE

Top speed (5000), mph.....	118
Shifts, @ mph (auto.).....	
3rd ( ).....	
2nd ( ).....	
1st (4300).....	57
Total drag at 60 mph, lb.....	140

#### SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph, actual.....	28.1
60 mph.....	58.8
90 mph.....	90.0

#### ACCELERATION

0-30 mph, sec.....	3.3
0-40.....	4.7
0-50.....	6.2
0-60.....	7.8
0-70.....	9.8
0-80.....	12.3
0-100.....	20.1
Standing 1/4 mile, sec.....	15.5
speed at end, mph.....	89

#### FUEL CONSUMPTION

Normal range, mpg.....	12-15
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