

CONDUCTED BY THE MILL-MASTERS SAFETY CLUB, BERWYN, ILLINOIS

"Man, this is the way to live. Cooling it in a new iron in the land of the auto!" That was the comment of one crew member as we headed back toward Detroit. We, the four lucky guys from the Mill-Masters Safety Club of Berwyn, Illinois, had just completed a really exciting day. A couple of weeks earlier, we'd received a letter from Tex Smith in Los Angeles asking if our club would like to participate in a special motor city road test. He said we'd been selected by the Car Craft staff and could send along four members for the operation. Well, the decision as to what four members would go took some doing.

We flew over to Detroit the night before the big day. Tex called with the news that we'd been assigned a real dandy—the new Oldsmobile 4-4-2. Next day he came by in a big 98

sedan to take us to the test area, which turned out to be the excellent new drag strip at Milan, Michigan. On the trip out, we got a chance behind the wheel of the big car and guess what? It is sure enough a luxury class vehicle. But, frankly, the soft detached sort of ride these big machines give isn't exactly the kind of thing we really dig. We got that a little later.

Cliff Riley's quarter-mile of velvet smooth asphalt is located in the little town of Milan, just south of Ann Arbor. A very picturesque place, with lots of green grass and trees. A tornado had passed the area the morning before, but nothing was harmed at the strip. By the time we arrived, Cliff had the clocks all set up and everything waiting.

Our car arrived from Oldsmobile shortly after we got there. And it was a beauty; sort of cream-colored (actually stronger to the yellow than anything) with a wild competition (called Rally by those folks) stripe over the hood and top. Man, you'll never know how eager you can get to drive a car like that. It just looks mean sittin' there!

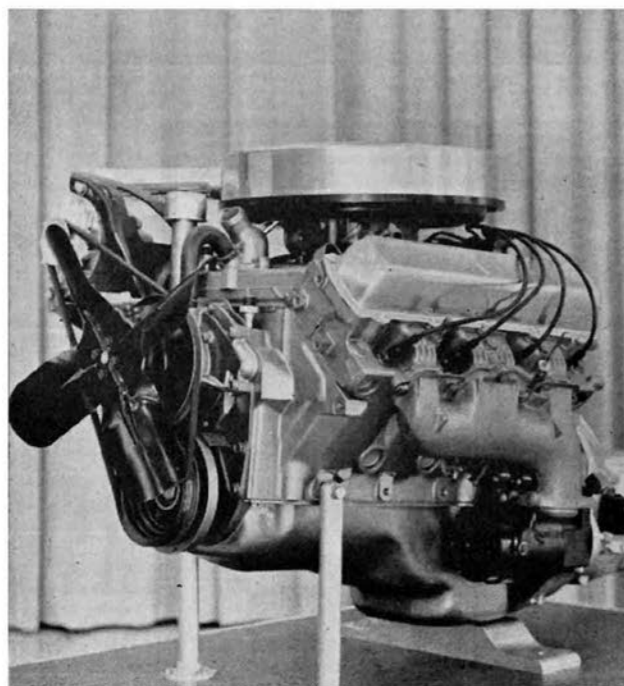


Tex Smith, center, discusses testing procedures with members of the Mill Masters of Berwyn, Ill. ICCA club used spacious facilities of the Milan Dragway just south of Ann Arbor, Mich., for test of Olds' hottest number.



These are the call letters for Olds' hottest new number. In short they mean 400 cubic inches, 4-barrel carb and dual exhausts. But the Mill-Masters Car Club road test crew have their own interpretation — "It just looks mean sittin' there — and when you stand on it..."

Coordinated by LeRoi Smith, ICCA Field Director



Above—Cliff Riley, operator of drag strip, classifies the 442 while club members go over it in thorough safety inspection. The car normally competes strong in B/Stock.

Far left—A Hurst shifting arm is used with manual transmissions, is within easy reach. Club would prefer tachometer be mounted in or on top of dash, not on console. 4-speed trans option offers ratios of: 2.20 in 1st; 1.64 in 2nd; long 1.28 in 3rd.

Left—Heart of new Oldsmobile performance image is powerful 400 cubic inch ohv. Basically just a 425 c.i. mill with a smaller bore, the engine features forged steel cranks and rods, high capacity fuel pump and special rocker arm guides and rocker studs. Note that the block has been redesigned to eliminate bulky cast iron water pump housing and transfer. In stock form, the engine delivers 345 horsepower.

Right—With heavy-duty suspension installed, the 442 handles exceptionally well, especially on a loose surface. Car would roll to a firm position on hard corners and stay there. 20 to 1 power steering ratio was quick enough to handle nearly all situations. With the rally strip in place, 442 begins to suggest performance while parked. Simulated air scoop just ahead of rear wheels, twin exhaust and wire spoke wheel covers are part of special 442 insignia.



Tex gave us a briefing on our schedule and a listing of all the things we were to do for a complete test. We were only going to have the car for the day, so lots of work had to be packed into so many short hours. Before anything else, and while the photographs were being taken, we checked out the important specs on our 4-4-2 hardtop. This is what we found.

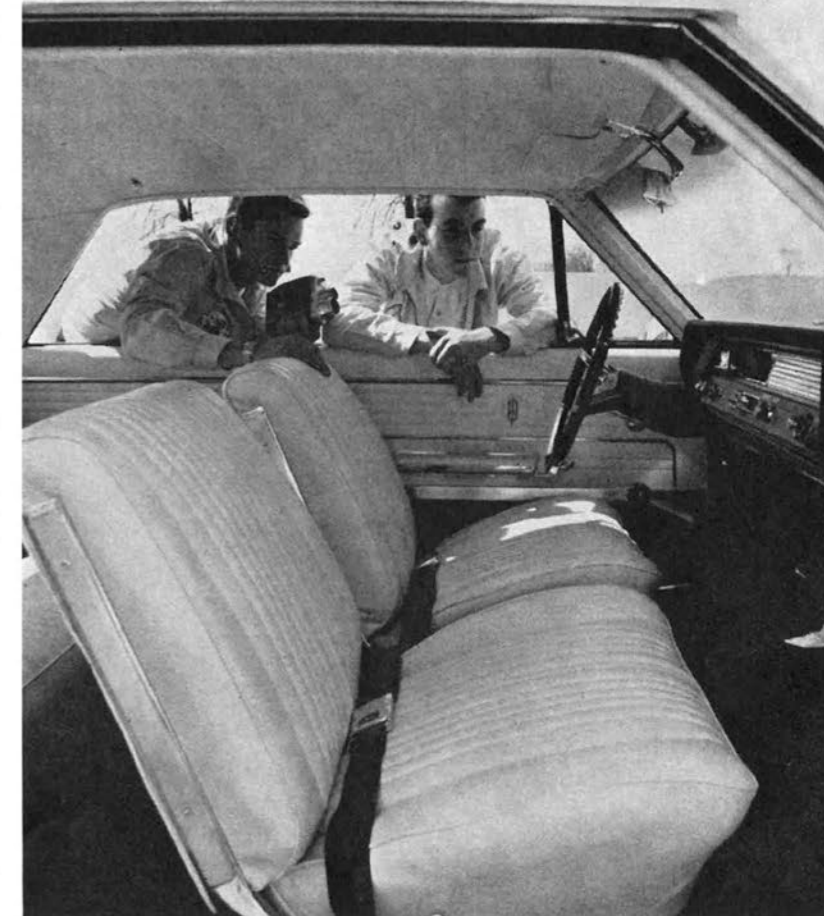
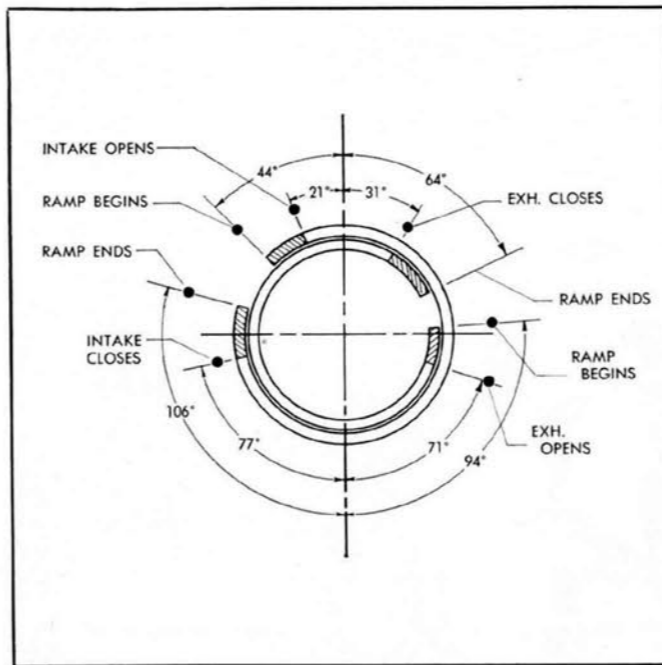
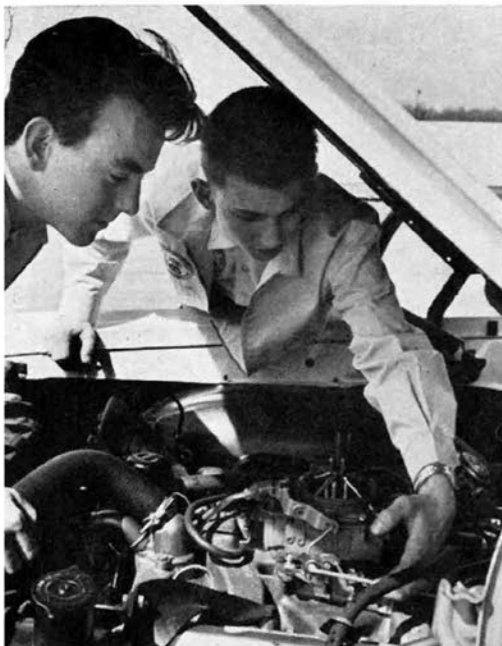
CHASSIS

The '65 4-4-2 has a lot of really new things going for it. For instance, it has a totally reinforced frame of the perimeter design, very stiff and very effective. The shock absorber control rate has been modified extensively, especially in the low and very high frequency ranges. Special stabilizer bars have been added at the front (.937-inch) and rear (.875-inch) for better roll control; the idea of a rear stabilizer seemed most practical and certainly proved its worth.

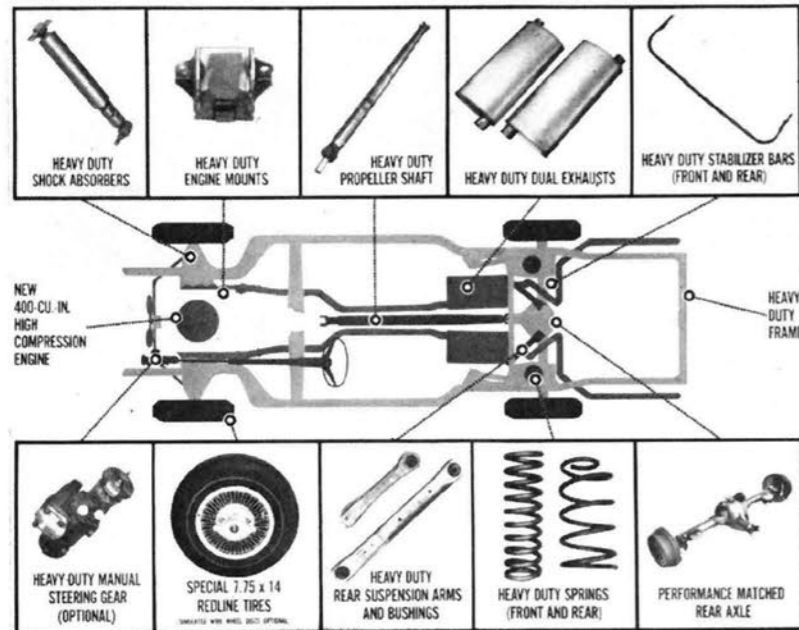
The coil spring rates have been changed considerably, approximately 50 percent greater, to produce a very stable —yet comfortable—ride. You really begin to notice the better springs when you have to get on the binders hard. Almost no nose dive.

The already proven heavy duty rear end units have a rather sensible "twin triangle" locator system. In this arrangement, there are two lower stamped steel control arms that run straight forward from the axle to the frame. On the top side, two shorted arms run from points on the gear

(continued on following page)



Above left—The boys get to the heart of things while checking out new Rochester 4GC carburetor. They found that carb has been redesigned with horizontal primary main metering jets to eliminate fuel washing away from jets during hard acceleration. Primary barrels are 1.56, secondaries are 1.69. Above right—Length of the Milan Dragway was put to good use in braking tests, where car reacted favorably to repeated stopping from high speeds. Excessive nose-dive is eliminated through use of heavy-duty springs and shocks. Right—Riley punches the button to get Chrondek lights and Olds 442 off the line. Club didn't have chance to drive a fully set-up dragging 442, but typical West Coast times are just under 110 mph in the very low 13-second area.



Above—Valve timing chart of the 400 c.i. 442 engines illustrates why the ohv runs so well throughout its power range. Intake duration of 278 degrees is just 4 less than exhaust, total opening overlap is 52 degrees. Right—A Grecian simplicity is keynote of 442 interior. Vinyl upholstery is available in number of colors, a tilt-steering wheel is also special order. Seating is ample for average person, tall people may have some knee-room trouble in hardtop back seat. Below—Air filter has enlarged intake for easier breathing, power steering pump support bracket must be removed for valve adjustments. There are a number of vital small improvements that can be made to the engine to bring it up to blueprint specifications. The Mill Masters point out great flexibility and future of this powerplant.



adjusting type, the shoes contact centrifugally cast iron drums. Lining area is 155.6 inches, based on 9.5-inch drums.

REAR END

There are several different rear axle ratios available. In stock form, the 4-4-2 is delivered with a 3.55:1 ratio for the manual transmissions, and 3.23:1 for the automatic. In addition, there are three options: 3.90 to 1, 4.11 to 1, and

INTERIOR

Bucket or bench seats are available with or without 4-way adjustments. Either vinyl or cloth trim is used, depending upon the body style ordered. A special console is an option, and mounts a tachometer just below the dash. A tilt-wheel steering wheel can be ordered for finite adjustment, if

ENGINES

This is where the 4-4-2 comes on in '65. 400 cubic inches, four-barrel carburetion and dual exhausts. Because the 4-4-2 is off the A-series body, the 400-inch limit was set by Olds top brass who felt the combination best suited for the purpose. (Of an all around street machine, that is.) Essentially the bigger 425 incher that sort of sneaked in to the Olds line-up last year, the 4-4-2 engine has a 4-inch bore and 3.975 stroke.

A hydraulic camshaft is fitted, pumping 2-inch intake and 1.625 exhaust valves. There is 278 degrees intake, and 282 degrees exhaust overlap, with the lift strong at .431-inch. The result is a very smooth engine, with lots of bottom end and a long winded top.

The compression ratio of 10.25 to 1 is a healthy reminder to use premium gasoline. All totalled, these things help the V8 pump out 345 h.p. at 4800 rpm, with 440 lb/ft torque at 3200 rpm. This all amounts to a horsepower/weight factor of 10.06 for the Holiday coupe, 10.00 for the sports coupe, 10.36 for the convertible, and 9.85 for the club coupe.

(continued on page 78)

(continued) **4-4-2**

housing at about a 45 degree angle outward to the frame. New rubber bushings have been used in these control arm ends to produce a more positive control of axle wind-up and wander. With such a set-up there is definitely no danger of the rear end moving out of its place.

A stronger propeller shaft has been included with the '65 package, assembled in such a way (when mated to the differential) that the residual unbalances in the shaft and companion flange offset each other.

STEERING & TIRES

Our particular car was equipped with power steering, which has a ratio of 17.5 to 1. Manual steering ratio is 24 to 1 stock, with a 20 to 1 option available.

The 4-4-2 comes stock with red streak premium nylon tires for sustained high speed driving and are mounted on wider (1-inch) wheels. The tires are tested for 100 miles at 120 mph (70 degrees F) to make sure they are suitable for the type of use the average 4-4-2 buyer might dictate.

TRANSMISSION

There are several transmissions available in this car, basically grouped as full synchromesh three-or four-speed

and JetAway. The 3-speed trans has ratios of 2.42 in 1st, 1.61 in 2nd, and 2.33 in reverse. The 4-speed lists a 2.20 1st, 1.64 2nd, 1.28 3rd, and 2.27 reverse.

The automatic transmission has 1.76 in low, 1 to 1 in high and 1.76 in reverse. The engineers decided to retain the two-speed auto for this car, including the torque converter, since it seems the best all around unit.

A Hurst floor shift mechanism is used, which should satisfy all the purists and impress all the bubble gummers.

BRAKES

Unlike so many counterparts, Olds has elected to stay with the duo-servo Bendix brakes on this car. Of the self-

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The fuel system of this engine has been specifically designed to operate well under strong acceleration. For instance, the fuel line from tank to carb has been increased from 5/16-inch to 3/8-inch. A special high-dome fuel pump is now standard equipment, along with the tried and true Rochester 4GC carb. The latter is now equipped with horizontal primary main metering jets to keep the gas from washing away from them during "stand on it" time.

These are some of the basic things we found before starting the actual driving part of the mechanical inspection. Opinion is a difficult thing to assess, especially when it comes to a car. But as Tex pointed out to us, all cars are built to do a job. Consequently, they must be tested upon that basis. But we couldn't help but feel that the 4-4-2 is one of the best all around performance cars we've had the pleasure to drive. And between the four of us, that's a lot of miles.

Our particular car did not have enough miles on it for some all-out

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charges at the clocks, but we did have a chance to stab-and-steer it off the line. It's healthy, very healthy. By checking with friends who own similar cars, and checking out the drag mags, average quarter-mile performance in the low 14-second, 105 mph range are common. Tex tells us of one little 330 c.i. Cutlass on the west coast turning speeds near 110 mph in the high 12's.

So, for the 1320-foot sprint, we'd expect that cheater slicks, some Air Lifts properly inflated in the rear coils, and headers would really turn this bomb on.

The Milan drag site has lots of room, with plenty of pavement and varying surface dirt roads adjacent. This makes for super boss testing. Handling of the 4-4-2 is excellent, even deceptive. What with the absence of road and wind noise, you're liable to get into a turn much over your head. Even so, the car seems to just take a set and tool around the

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corner. The power brakes and steering make control ultra-simple, with throttle response perfect for drift control, etc.

If we were to do much work with such a car, we'd personally replace the tires with something a little more sticky, especially for hard acceleration.

Our comment on the general overall styling is straight. It's a conservative design neither outstanding or atrocious. It's pleasant, both inside and out, and would undoubtedly be able to carry the personal touch of an enthusiast very well. We'd probably go for some special wheels, maybe some of the chromed Astro units, and certainly add headers to the engine. A dual quad set-up would also be our "druthers," to help out way up on the top end at the digs. With the stock quad, we picked up a handsome 16 mpg which can't be sneezed at from such a big engine. This would probably drop ever so slightly, however, if lots of high speed freeway work were done.

We drove into Ann Arbor and toiled around town to get an idea of how the machine handled in traffic. The driver always has absolute control, which is a pleasant departure from some of the recently introduced bombs. We made it over by the local college to check out the chicks. No, really, this is one of the things Tex required us to do. We had to talk with some girls and get their general reaction to the car (which was "groovy," the word in itself explaining about how much a girl knows about cars).

During all this time, we had the four of us in and out of the car dozens of times. Everybody got to drive and try little pet things. Comfort was excellent for four, five would be crowding things a bit. While driving around we had a chance to sort of evaluate the production control used on the car and found it to be better than normal. The paint job was exceptionally well done and all the chrome trim fit where it was supposed to.

But we can't leave everything on such a high note. Please, please Mr. Oldsmobile, make the glove box door hinge on the bottom—and add places to set cokes ! ! !



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