

Hot car or road car,
Buick offers both
in separate packages
with a little of each
in all their lines.

BY STEVE KELLY

THE BIG, SOLID, HEAVY, roadworthy Buick that your dad used to drive never conjured up much of a "hot rod" image for anyone, much less your father. Fortunately, for all who like a big, solid car, Buick still makes such a machine. But they also make a semi-luxury car on a smaller scale, and a "performance" car that'll shut down the best of them over a quarter-mile, burn the rear tires like a drag strip "rod," and then drift quietly all the way home with never a trace of roughness.

The Buick Skylark series now encompasses a thin pillar coupe and sedan, a hardtop coupe and sedan, and a convertible. Last year's Gran Sport series is no longer in the Skylark line, having its own GS 400 category. Our "soft" part of the test was done in a 4-door hardtop Skylark, having a 340-cu.-in. V-8, 2-speed automatic, air conditioning, power seat and windows, and a host of other options which help make life comfortable. This car fell right in with the perfected Buick image of sturdily built cars, with all the durability of a mountain goat and comfort rivalling a millionaire's drawing room.

The "un-Buick like" GS 400 made up the other half of our test, and our primary test car had the standard 340-hp, 400-cu.-in., V-8, 3-speed Super Turbine automatic transmission, power steering, front disc/rear drum brakes with power assist, but was otherwise missing the comfort and convenience of the Skylark. We briefly tested a 4-speed GS 400 which, compared to the automatic, had only the bare necessities. Both GS's had power to spare and handling prowess that would make a dyed-in-the-wool sports car buff green with envy.

We took particular note of the quality finishing applied to both models, and didn't detect any extra bolts and nuts rattling around, all the trim work fit properly, and the paint had no flaws. A welcome surprise to say the least.

A high-mileage weekend trip brought out the Skylark's smoothness and comfort, but also revealed a couple of weak points. It is definitely not a car built for cornering. Pushing the sedan through a curve a bit too fast, the driver quickly gets a feel of the rear end starting to climb. The front coils are too soft to resist transferred weight without giving quite a bit, and there is no rear stabilizer bar to help remedy the situation.

continued

ROAD TEST

SKYLARK & GS 400



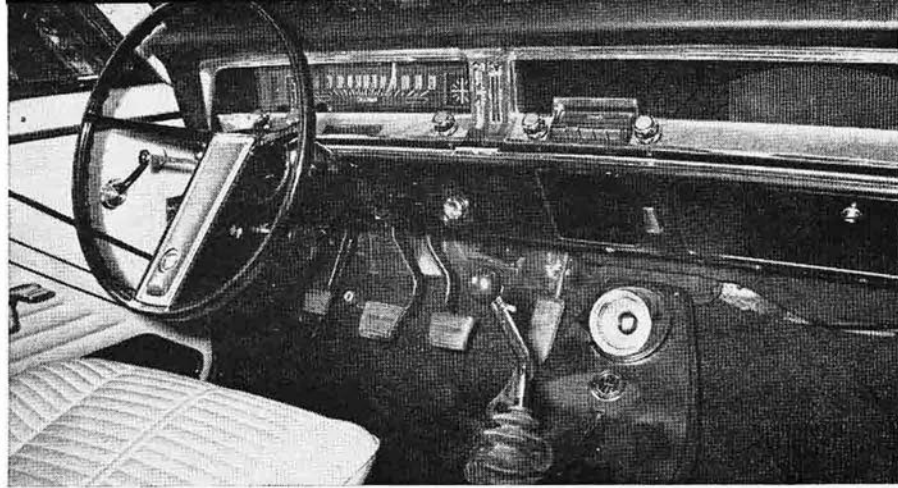
GS 400's reaction to curves and rough roads prompts drivers to take the long way home.



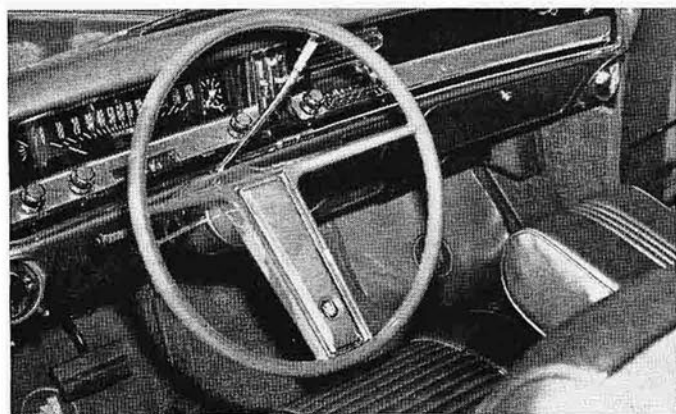
Skylark takes rough roads in stride but reveals its true virtues on a paved boulevard.



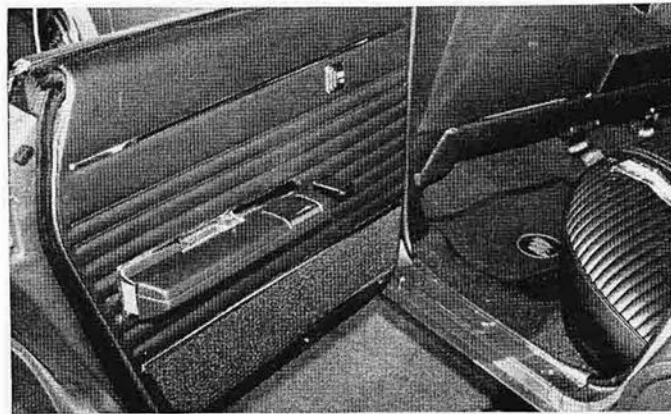
GS 400 optional console holds shifter and extra-cost, out-of-easy-sight, tachometer



Dash is clean and functional, though not the most glamorous we've ever seen. Padded steering wheel spoke is also horn button which requires some getting used to.



Skylark has same dash as GS 400 except for shifter location. Air-conditioning controls are greatly simplified for easy use.



Well finished Skylark interior is small only by limousine standards. Rear compartment entry and foot room are spacious.

SKYLARK AND GS 400

continued

Tall drivers have difficulty getting the seat back far enough in the 4-door, especially with a 4-way power assist. The power unit only moves the bench on a pivot, using the front mounts as the pivot point. It does go rearward, but downward at the same time, giving you more room for legs, but sitting high and to the rear isn't jointly possible.

Strict observance of moderate speeds around bends is all that's required to enjoy an extremely pleasant ride. Tight fitting side windows keep noise from reaching interior, allowing the radio volume to stay the same as when stopped. Back seat passengers aren't cramped in the least.

The Skylark's optional 340-hp engine isn't going to push the car to any world's speed record, but it can't be considered a "slug" either, especially when its gas-saving virtues are considered. Initial acceleration is rather slow, but the 2-speed torque converter soon overcomes the car's weight, and off you go. It slowly reduces low-speed reduction until second gear is reached and then makes a smooth transition from gear to gear. We

were satisfied that the Skylark registered as good acceleration as could be expected, and high cruising speeds found the car remaining flat and level with no tendency to become skittish. There is slight oversteer which is easily corrected.

We put in a lot of highway time in the GS 400, logging up a thousand miles or so over all types of road. It's just the opposite of the Skylark on a twisting road, where curves are the car's forte, and sway is a term hardly applicable to its handling ability.

Even backing out of a driveway, our GS 400 exhibited a heavy "feel" similar to a much bigger car, but which enables the GS to hang onto the road as if it were being pushed down from above. We appreciate this feeling in any car, and in the GS 400 it adds to the total pleasure.

The completely new engine for '67 GS's is a 400-cu.-in., 340-hp V-8 with lightweight construction and good breathing characteristics. We found out how potent the new motor is on our first pass for acceleration times. Slight pressure on the accelerator put the rear wheels in a spin, resulting in lots of smoke but very little acceleration. We quickly decided on a lighter foot for the gas, and received quick times in return. The engine easily went to 6000 rpm which is beyond the maximum torque

and horsepower range, but shifting out of 1st at 6000 and out of 2nd at 5500 rpm gave us the best times. We listened for valve float but never heard a sound.

Although the times listed aren't earth-shaking, remember that two people, a full tank of gas, and all our test equipment were aboard during the runs. We've seen stock GS 400s clock times at local drag strips in the 14.20-seconds region without slicks.

An astounding point we noticed is the almost eerie silence of the big V-8. After an acceleration run, we'd stop and try to catch any engine noise, but failed every time. It's enough to make a fellow look down at the key when he stops to make sure he hasn't shut the engine off. As quiet as the 340 engine in the Skylark is, it still isn't as noiseless as the 400-cu.-in. GS. Buick has arrived at a great combination in their new powerplant: the ability to perform at near 100-mph speeds in a quarter-mile without showing it in normal use.

The 4-speed GS 400 showed more potential than the automatic for fast acceleration, registering quicker times with a 3.36:1 rear end ratio than the 3.90:1 equipped Super Turbine. Driving it in traffic though isn't the most fun we've ever had, as we much prefer to put a transmission in one position and leave it there while driving around town.



Difficult roads bring out the best of stylish GS 400, and the almost non-existent lean hardly gives driver a clue to the highway's path. Limited-slip differential can put both wheels in a spin at the whim of gas pedal operator, though it's not recommended for long tire life or low acceleration figures.

No complaints on the 4-speed linkage were heard, and it's the smoothest setup we've ever driven on a stock car. There's no "hang up," and it has a fairly close gate and short throw.

We didn't keep the 4-speed car very long, but if we had there might have been another contender in the "Mr. World" contest next year. The car was sadly lacking power steering, and the manual steering on GS 400s is similar to trying wheel turns on a power steering car with the engine off. The fellow who has a GS 400 without the power assisted steering and doesn't mind it, is one we would recommend not taking on in a fight. He's had plenty of arm building exercises from steering his car.

With its power front disc/rear drum brakes, the 3-speed automatic GS came to a halt from 60 mph in a scant 155 feet. This isn't a light car either, but you'd think it was the way it slowed from 60 to rest. It hardly deviated from a straight line, and the driver retained directional control. We couldn't find any real fault with the drum-braked Skylark, but it did travel farther before stopping. The sedan stayed in the same straight line pattern as the GS 400, but front wheel steering, once the brakes took over, wasn't as easy as with the discs. The stripped down GS 400 4-speed had drums and stopped shorter than the Sky-

lark due to its lighter weight and road-gripping, no-cost-optional Wide Ovals.

The tires, wheels, steering and suspension of our GS 400 automatic all combined to give it the best road behavior of any car we've driven in quite a while. It reacts harshly to any severe bumps and dips, but not enough to embitter anyone against the stiff suspension. Steering — power that is — has an almost neutral condition, with a trace of oversteer once the wheels are cocked and set in a turn. We thought the manual unit was typically understeer before we concluded it was more the inability to quickly turn the wheels due to the drag, than to inherent understeer.

Interior layout is the same on both the Skylark and GS 400, including the absence of tell-tale instruments. Warning lights are used for oil, amps and temperature, and a tachometer may be ordered. We doubt if this is any great drawback in the Skylark, but a GS 400 owner should be entitled to keep track of what's going on inside his engine and not have to wait until a red light comes on telling him something has already gone wrong.

The bench-seat Skylark proved itself more comfortable after a long duration behind the wheel than the bucket-seated GS 400. The sporty buckets are well built and padded, but they cradle the

driver too much, keeping him from shifting around slightly when belted in.

Dashboard design is a carryover from last year and is laid out with the driver's ease of reaching needed controls the prevailing influence. It's clear of any intrusions which might endanger a passenger thrown forward, and the center-mounted Sonomatic radio has the great tonal quality enjoyed in dad's Buick.

The performance-minded GS 400 has most of the qualities of the Skylark, but is more expensive to operate, and initial purchase price — with comparable equipment — is higher. Less of a performer than the GS 400, the Skylark is best termed a "little Electra" in riding quality, comfort, and even appearance.

Buick has joined other manufacturers in offering a car for the young performance-minded buyer — or old one — in a medium-sized automobile. But yet they haven't done it at the sacrifice of quality — which they established long before the industry ever heard of "4-on-the-floor," consoles or bucket seats. They've simply added "soup" to the nuts and bolts which hold their cars tightly together.

They've started a new image and kept the old one — a not-too-easy accomplishment — but one which provides an "in" car with an almost "out" facet of construction: quality and long life for the product.

(Specs on next page.)

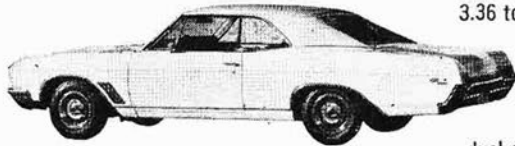
GS 400: SURPRISE PERFORMER

base price includes
400-cu.-in. 340-hp V-8

3-speed automatic or
4-speed manual optional

sturdy, rattle-free
construction

axle ratios:
3.36 to 4.30



choice of F70-14 whitewall
or Red Line tires

power front disc-
rear drum brakes available

dual exhaust
standard

Front fender "slashes," hood scoops, pin striping and name-plates set off Buick's bid in the high-performance market.

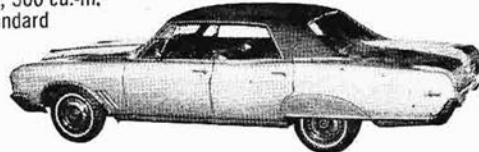
BUICK SKYLARK: SMALL-SCALE LUXURY

pillarless design
free of rattles, leaks

front fold-down
arm rest

good rear
compartment room

210-hp, 300 cu.-in.
V-8 standard



optional automatic,
2-speed only

road noise, harshness
filtered from interior

fender skirts
standard

Fender skirts have been revived as standard items on Skylark. Compound-curved rear glass flows top line smoothly into deck.

SKYLARK & GS 400 *continued*



skylark at a glance . . .

Intermediate-size car with all the features and feel of a full-scale luxury car... smooth riding on all surfaces, but rather "loose" in turns... "hardtop" styling is well carried out... little or no outside noise enters passenger compartment... tight construction all around precludes squeaks, rattles, or wind noise, making it extremely pleasurable car for any type of driving.

how the car performed . . .

ACCELERATION (2 aboard):	
0-30 mph	4.1 secs.
0-45 mph	7.1 secs.
0-60 mph	11.0 secs.
0-75 mph	16.4 secs.
TIME AND DISTANCE TO ATTAIN PASSING SPEEDS:	
40-60 mph	5.2 secs., 380 ft.
50-70 mph	6.2 secs., 545 ft.

gs 400 at a glance . . .

Surprising performer with tire spinning available at the touch of a toe... solid handling and riding with a good share of "heavy" car feel... extremely quiet engine, especially for its size and potential... interior is silent and solid with no squeaks or rattles... dashboard is solid lacking in proper instrumentation, and optional tach is placed too low for convenient use.

how the car performed . . .

ACCELERATION (2 aboard):			
0-30 mph	Automatic	4-spnd.	2.6 secs.
0-45 mph			2.9
0-60 mph			4.5
0-75 mph			6.6
TIME AND DISTANCE TO ATTAIN PASSING SPEEDS:			
40-60 mph	3.2 secs.,	234 ft.	2.9 secs.,
50-70 mph	4.0 secs.,	352 ft.	3.8 secs.,
STANDING START QUARTER-MILE:			
	15.2 secs.,	93 mph	15.2 secs.,
			95 mph
BEST SPEEDS IN GEARS @ SHIFT POINTS:			
	Automatic	4-speed	
1st	40 mph @ 6000 rpm	1st	54 mph @ 5500
2nd	60 mph @ 5500 rpm	2nd	73 mph @ 5500
		3rd	94 mph @ 5500
MPH PER 100 RPM: Automatic, 19.0; 4-spnd., 22.2			
SPEEDOMETER ERROR:			
Calibrated Speedometer	.30	45	50
Car's Speedometer	.29	43	47
	57	67	77
4-speed	.30	45	50
	60	70	80

STANDING START QUARTER-MILE:	
	18.0 secs., 78 mph
BEST SPEEDS IN GEARS @ SHIFT POINTS:	
1st	71 mph @ 4500 rpm
MPH PER 1000 RPM: 27.0	
SPEEDOMETER ERROR:	
Calibrated Speedometer	.30 45 50 60 70 80
Car's Speedometer	.29 44 48 58 66 76
STOPPING DISTANCES:	
From 30 mph, 39.0 ft.; from 60 mph, 189 ft.	

specifications . . .

ENGINE: Ohv V-8
Bore and stroke (ins.): 3.750 x 3.850
Displacement (cu. ins.): 340
Horsepower: 260 @ 4200 rpm
Max. torque (lbs.-ft.): 365 @ 2800 rpm
Compression ratio: 10.25:1
Carburetion: 1 4-bbl. Carter

TRANSMISSION: Super Turbine 2-speed. auto. with torque converter. Lever mounted on column. Drive ratios of 1.765 in low, 1.00 in 2nd.

FINAL DRIVE RATIO: 2.78:1

SUSPENSION: Independent front with coil springs and ball joints. 1-piece rear axle housing with coil springs each side, and control arms for location and torque resistance. Tube shocks at each wheel.

STEERING: In-line rotary valve power unit. Recirculating ball nut-type gear, with integral power piston. Turning diameter: 40.6 ft. curb-to-curb. Turns lock-to-lock: 4.06.

WHEELS: Steel disc, 14-in. dia. x 6-in. wide, standard.

STOPPING DISTANCES:	
From 30 mph, (auto.)	42.5 ft., (4-spnd.) 40.8 ft.,
from 60 mph (auto.)	155 ft., (4-spnd.) 176 ft.

specifications . . .

ENGINE: Ohv V-8 (same engine for both cars)
Bore and stroke (ins.): 4.040 x 3.900
Displacement (cu. ins.): 400
Horsepower: 340 @ 5000 rpm
Max. torque (lbs.-ft.): 440 @ 3200 rpm
Compression ratio: 10.25:1
Carburetion: 1 4-bbl. Rochester

TRANSMISSION: Super Turbine: 3-spnd. auto. with torque converter. Column-mounted lever standard, console optional. Drive ratios of 2.48 in low, 1.48 in 2nd, 1.00:1 in 3rd. 4-speed: manual type 4 forward speeds, all synchronous. Floor-mounted lever. Drive ratios of 2.20 in 1st, 1.64 in 2nd. 1.28 in 3rd, and 1.00:1 for high gear.

FINAL DRIVE RATIO: (Auto.) 3.90:1, (4-speed) 3.36:1

SUSPENSION: (both cars) Independent front with heavy-duty coil springs, and ball joints. Link-type stabilizer bar. Single-unit rear axle housing with coil springs and torque and location control arms. Tube shocks at each wheel.

STEERING: (Automatic) Recirculating ball nut, integral with power piston. In-line rotary valve power assist, 4.06 turns lock-to-lock. (4-speed) Recirculating ball nut manual. 5.56 turns lock-to-lock. (both cars) Turning diameter: 40.6 ft. curb-to-curb.

WHEELS: (both cars) steel disc, 14-in. dia. x 6-in. wide. TIRES: (both cars) F-70-14 (Redstripe) Wide Oval or Wide Tread.

BRAKES: Dual-system hydraulic. Automatic: Optional front disc/rear drum with power assist. Dia. of front disc, 11.0 ins.; dia. of rear drum, 9.5 ins.

TIRES: 7.75 x 14 2-ply with 4-ply rating. Rayon tubeless. 8.25 x 14 optional.

BRAKES: Dual-system hydraulic. Duo servo drum-type standard. Dia. of front drum, 9.5 ins.; rear drum, 9.5 ins. Effective lining area: 152.0 sq. ins.

FUEL CAPACITY: 20 gals.

MILEAGE RANGE: 13.0 - 15.4 mpg.

BODY AND FRAME: Separate construction. Perimeter-type frame.

DIMENSIONS: Wheelbase: 115.0 ins. Track: front 58.0 ins., rear 59.0 ins. Overall length 205 ins., width 75.4 ins., height 54.1 ins.

USABLE TRUNK CAPACITY: 18.9 cu. ft.

CURB WEIGHT: 3988 lbs.

prices and accessories . . .

MANUFACTURER'S SUGGESTED RETAIL: (includes federal excise tax, but excludes state and local taxes, license, options, accessories and transportation)	
4-door hardtop Skylark sedan \$2950 (with 300-cu.-in., 210 hp V-8)	
OPTIONS AND ACCESSORIES:	
260-hp, 340-cu.-in. V-8	\$ 21.06
Super Turbine transmission	205.24
Power steering	94.79
Power brakes	41.60
AM radio	64.25
AM/FM radio	133.76
Air conditioning	343.20
Power seat (4-way bench)	69.51
Power windows	100.05
Tilt steering wheel	42.13
Vinyl top	73.72

Effective lining area: 110.2 sq. ins. 4-speed: Standard drum brakes without power assist. Dia. of front aluminum body drum, 9.5 ins.; dia. of cast-iron rear drum, 9.5 ins. Effective lining area, 152.0 sq. ins.

FUEL CAPACITY: 20 gals.

MILEAGE RANGE: 10.8 - 15.1 mpg (both cars)

BODY AND FRAME: Separate construction. Perimeter-type frame.

DIMENSIONS: (both cars) Wheelbase: 115.0 ins. Track: front 58.0 ins.; rear 59.0 ins. Overall length 205.0 ins., width 75.4 ins., height 53.1 ins.

USABLE TRUNK CAPACITY: 18.9 cu. ft.

CURB WEIGHT: Automatic, 3817 lbs.; 4-speed, 3747 lbs.

prices and accessories . . .

MANUFACTURER'S SUGGESTED RETAIL: (includes federal excise tax, but excludes state and local taxes, license, options, accessories and transportation)	
2-door hardtop Skylark GS 400 \$3019 (with 400-cu.-in., 340 hp V-8)	
OPTIONS AND ACCESSORIES:	
Super Turbine transmission	\$236.82
4-speed manual transmission	184.31
Limited-slip differential	42.13
Power front disc brakes	147.00
Power steering	94.79
Tilt steering wheel	42.13
Tachometer	47.39
Full console	57.93
Console	36.86
Chrome-plated wheels	90.58
Air conditioning	343.20
Power windows	100.05
AM radio	64.25