

# SUPER COOL OLDS 4-4-2

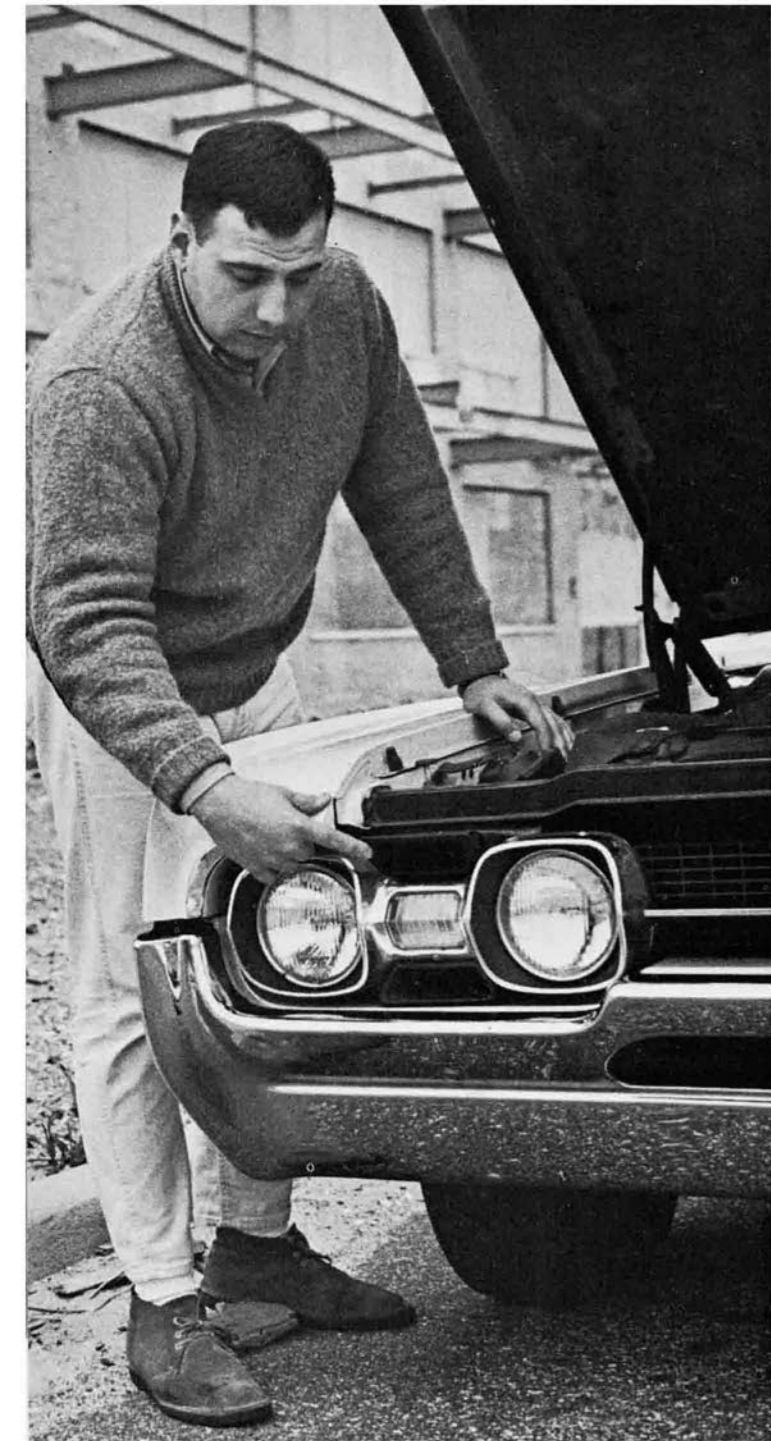
BY FRED MACKERODT

Can a breath of fresh air put the 4-4-2 on the drag map?  
We street-and-strip test the Cold Air Induction Package

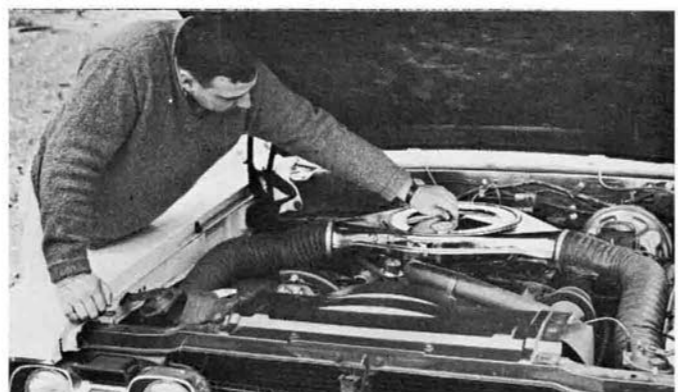
WHEN THE CAR cobblers down in Lansing, Michigan threw Lucille out of the Merry Oldsmobile and began thinking performance a few years ago, they put together a supercar which they dubbed the 4-4-2. Over the years this car has been applauded by people in the know as the finest all-around supercar on the market, mostly because of its superior handling qualities. But the 4-4-2 has never really cut it with the stoplight competition troops. To the majority of drag addicts, 4-4-2 is a series of numbers which add up to about 10. With the above in mind, we decided to test the hairiest Oldsmobile we could lay our hands on to see if the car really deserved the lukewarm reputation it had with the strip set. We tried since last September to get our hands on the

all-out "W30 Cold Air Induction Package" which was supposed to be available at the beginning of the '67 production run. But because of parts availability problems, the W30 package wasn't available to us until late last spring. When we got the word that W30's were rolling off the line, we attacked an order blank with gay abandon in an attempt to turn a plain Cutlass hardtop (with starting price of \$2932.50) into the hairiest Olds 4-4-2 possible (at \$4369.45). The big items that went into our \$1400 option spree began with the 4-4-2 engine and trim option (\$184.31). Then came the close-ratio four-speed stick with Hurst shifter (also \$184.31). The capacitive-discharge ignition system came next (\$100.05). This setup

will fire the most fouled up plugs, and this is great if you want to run cold plugs at the track to avoid top end detonation, while leaving them in on the street without running into everyday-operation fouling problems. We opted for the lowest-ratio limited-slip rear, a 4.33 (\$42.13), to get the most out of the 400-cube engine's high-rev potential. This is *not* the ideal ratio for normal use because with a multiple of 17 mph for each 1000 rpm, the crank is twisting at 3000 for only 51 mph on the speedo, 4000 at 68, etc. It is the *only* rear to have, however, if your only concern is off-the-line work. The heavy-duty radiator (\$21.06) is cheap when you consider that it's capable of keeping the temperature below the critical point in almost any situa-



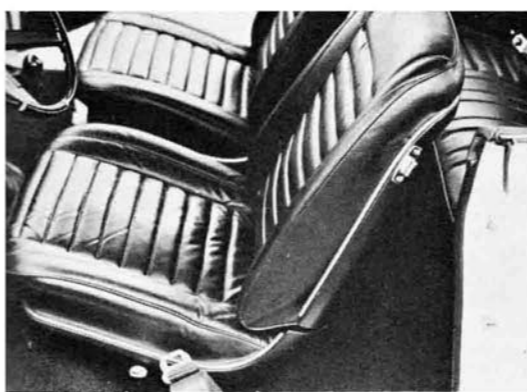
Intakes above and below parking light scoop fresh air.



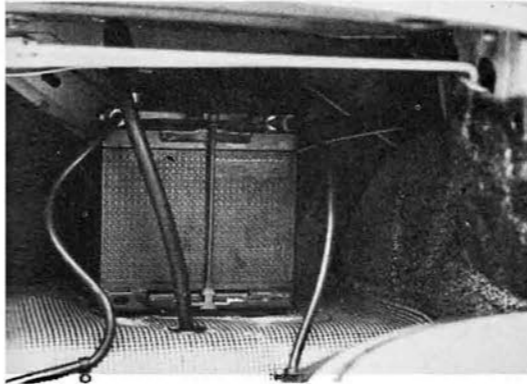
Special air cleaner forms a sealed chamber over the carburetor.



The cleaner lifts easily off Quadrajets when wing nut is removed.



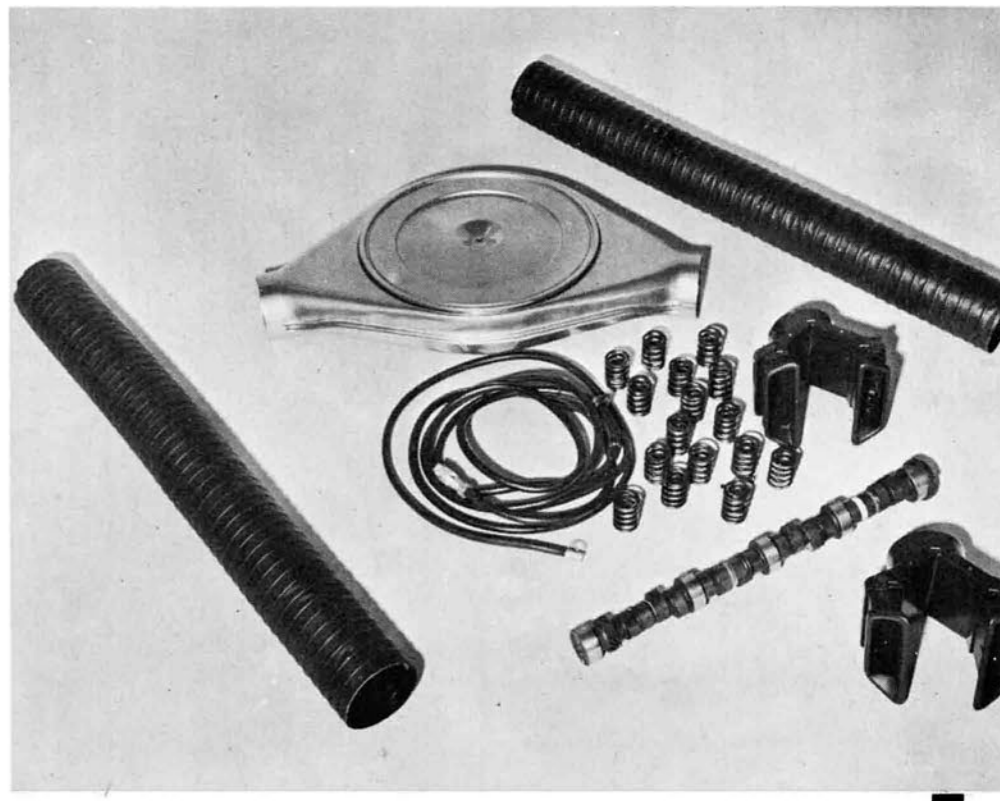
Posh buckets are part of the 4-4-2 package.



Battery in inducted cars is in the trunk.



Wide Ovals bite nicely when coming off the line, but slicks would improve times.



Package consists of air cleaner, hoses, scoops, cam kit and long battery cable.

tion. The disc brakes (\$104.72) are also a good buy when you take into account the performance and top-end potential of the car.

The most expensive option on our test car was the fabled Cold Air Induction Package (\$263.30). It consists of two big hoses which connect snorkels at each side of the grille to a sealed-chamber air cleaner which forms a sealed chamber over the Rochester Quadrajets 4MV carburetor. (From the look of this setup, it seems that Electrolux engineers had a hand in designing it. Just imagine, a 400-hp vacuum cleaner!)

The idea behind the induction package is to deliver cold air to the carburetor, because cold, outside air is denser than hot, underhood air, and the denser the air, the more oxygen can be stuffed into a cylinder. The air rushing into the snorkels also provides a slight supercharging effect, but only at higher speeds—say over 60 mph. Another benefit of the package is that it looks wicked when the hood is popped, and that's half the battle when you're competing in a Drive-In Derby.

But there's a lot more to the option than a couple of hoses and a special air cleaner. Also included in the tariff

is a longer-duration hydraulic cam and stiffer valve springs. This cam kit is designed especially for the induction package, but it can be had separately from Olds Dealers. The cam is identified by four orange stripes and the kit carries part number 397329. Since the hoses leave very little room in the engine compartment, the battery is mounted in the trunk, and a set of long battery cables are, naturally, a part of the package.

When our canary yellow Cutlass arrived from Lansing, it had 2500 miles on the odometer. Rather than feeling that we had been given a used car to

test, we welcomed the mileage because from past experience we knew that Olds sets up their engines with close tolerances and it takes at least 1000 miles before the powerplant really begins to turn on. The engine in our test car was as loose as Mata Hari's morals and ready for some immediate strip work.

We checked out the handling first and found it to be up to Olds' standards and reputation. Their unique front-and-rear sway bars give a firm but comfortable ride. One of our testers, Joe Oldham, complained that it was a little mushy coming off the line, but we disregarded this remark as this particu-

lar tester always has to find something to complain about, no matter what car he's driving.

Combined with the F70-14 Wide Oval tires, the suspension provides the best handling compromise available in the middleweight supercar market.

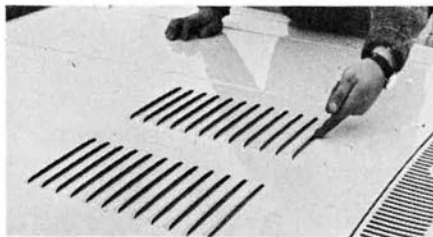
One thing that did bother us at the strip was the Rocket Rally gauge option (\$84.29). This groups the tachometer in one cluster with the amperage, temperature and oil pressure gauges, and also includes a clock to boot. A couple of times we found ourselves shifting at 5:00 PM because the clock is much easier to read than the tach.

The cluster is positioned right in front of the driver's line of sight, but the tach is just too small to be really useful. It's too tiny for accurate monitoring.

Getting back to performance, our off-the-line technique consisted of revving to 4000 and dumping the clutch on the green. The Wide Ovals provided excellent bite for street tires under these conditions. We used a 5800-rpm shift point, although the engine would come on strong up to 6000 and the valves wouldn't begin to float until around 6200. The 4.33 rear end ratio proved to be perfect as the



Adjustable steering wheel is operated by lever on the left side of the column.



Louvers look good but are non-functional.

engine was wound up tight in fourth just as the car came into the traps.

Completely stock as received from the factory, except for some fine tuning and the addition of cold, Champion J10Y plugs, our test 4-4-2 collected consistent quarter-mile tickets in the 14-second, 100-103-mph range. The street readings were between 6.5 to 6.7 seconds for the 0-to-60 mph trek. This is for a stock car with stock mufflers and street tires. A set of headers and a pair of slicks would improve these times considerably. The headers are the most important item because the induction package is really designed for wide-open operation, both intake and exhaust.

Olds is now producing a fully competitive car with very nice street manners. They've finally thrown Lucille out, and all they have to do now is get some rodders behind the wheel. (As this article went to press we were shown pix of the '68 Olds 4-4-2 with the induction package. After seeing this car, we prophesy that the 4-4-2 population at the strip will just have to go up by leaps and bounds next year.)

## OLDSMOBILE 4-4-2 SPECIFICATIONS

### ENGINE

Type.....	OHV V-8
Displacement.....	400 cubic inches
Compression Ratio.....	10.50-to-1
Carburetion.....	Cold Air Induction, Quadrajet
Camshaft.....	Hydraulic, .474-inch lift
Horsepower.....	350 @ 5000 rpm
Torque.....	440 foot/pounds @ 3600 rpm
Exhaust.....	Dual headers, dual pipes
Ignition.....	Capacitive Discharge

### TRANSMISSION

Make.....	Close-ratio four-speed
Control.....	Hurst

### REAR END

Type.....	Limited slip
Ratio.....	4.33-to-1

### BRAKES

Front.....	11-inch power-assisted discs
Rear.....	9.50-inch power-assisted drums

### SUSPENSION

Front.....	Independent, HD coil springs, HD shocks, sway bar
Rear.....	HD coil springs, HD shocks, sway bar
Steering.....	Quick ratio, manual
Overall Ratio.....	N/A

### GENERAL

List Price.....	\$2933
Price As Tested.....	\$4369
Weight.....	3750 pounds
Wheelbase.....	115 inches
Overall Length.....	204.2 inches
Tire Size.....	F70-14 Firestone

### PERFORMANCE

0 to 60 mph.....	6.6 seconds
Standing 1/4 mile.....	103 mph
Elapsed Time.....	14.10 seconds
Top Speed.....	109 mph (EST)
Fuel Consumption.....	8-12 mpg