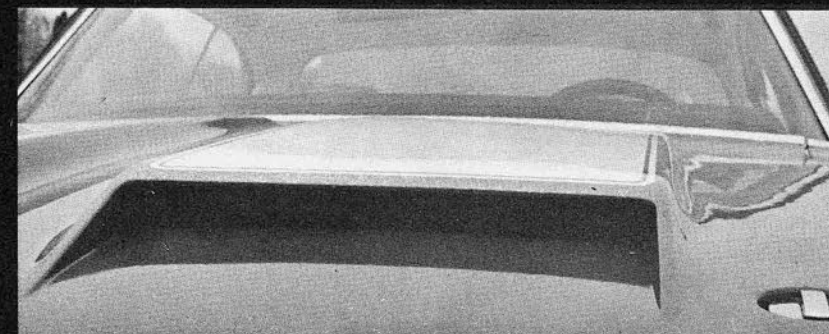




By Jim McCraw

FACTORY- BLUEPRINTED OLDS 4-4-2

The 455 W-30 package turns Olds' dressed-up Cutlass S into an animal.



IN THE FALL ISSUES of many of the automotive magazines in 1964, there was a page-and-a-third ad that said, and we quote faithfully "HOT SEAT! 400-cubic-inch V-8, 4-barrel carb and twin pipes make Olds 4-4-2 the action package of the year!" With the initial attention-getting taken care of, the ad proceeded to declare the virtues of this newest of all Olds models, the 4-4-2, which wasn't even shown at the press previews that year: "Buckle yourself into this bucket, brother, and you'd better be out for kicks because that's what you're in for! Let's face it, those 400 cubes even sweeten up trips to the supermarket. But out there with the open road stretching before you, that's when 345 horses, heavy duty frame and suspension, and front and rear stabilizers really begin to pay off... There's more cool action over the 4-4-2's red-line tires than you can flick a stick at!"

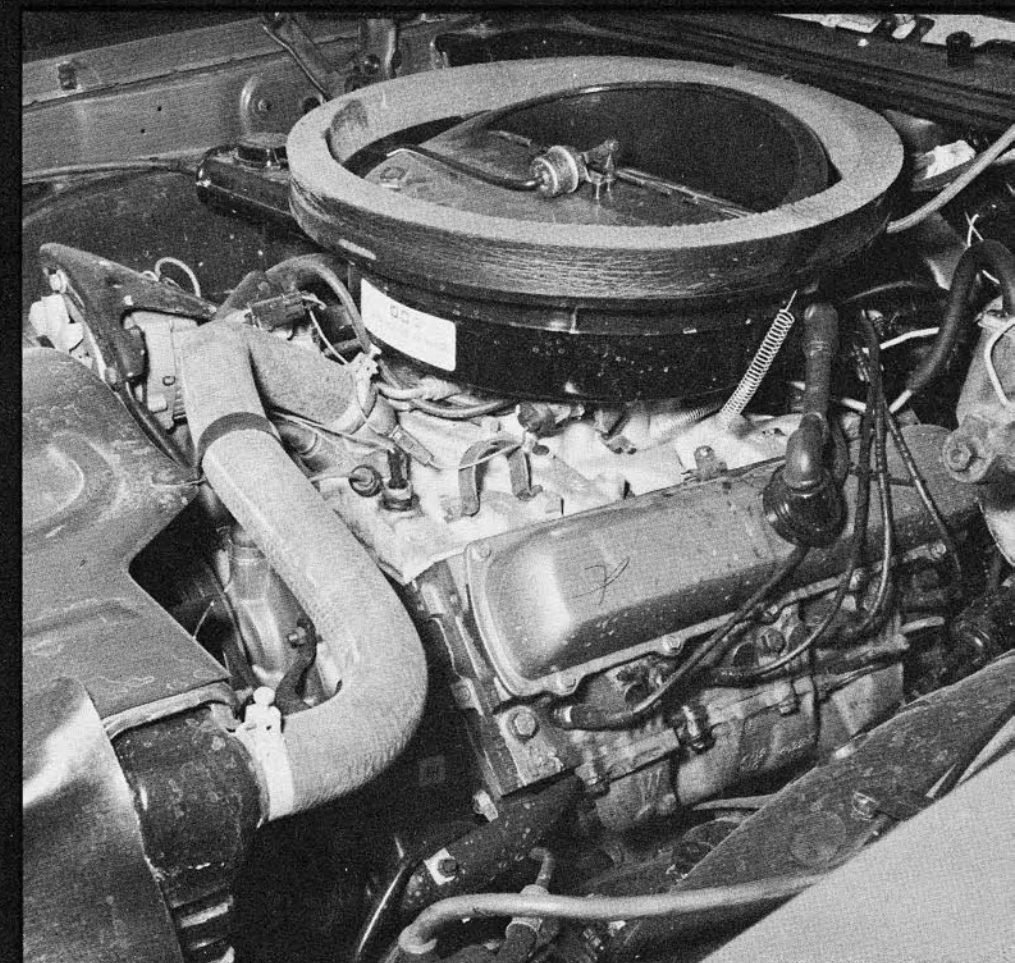
It's hard to believe some of the changes that have taken place in the automotive world since that ad appeared over seven years ago. Red-line tires have been displaced by raised-white letter models. The use of the word "cool" dates the ad and all those who were reading it at the time. The quotation of horsepower figures simply isn't done anymore, and any copywriter submitting a car ad headlined "HOT SEAT!" in this day and time would shortly be assigned to the widget account, working out of the Kuala Lumpur regional office. But, thankfully, the Olds 4-4-2 is still with us, and it is so much more car now than it was then that comparisons are almost impossible.

The 4-4-2, like all other performance models, has seen its peak of emphasis and appeal. For 1972, the 4-4-2 model of the intermediate line has been converted into an optional package. This year, you can buy a 4-4-2 package on any of four cars: the Cutlass hardtop, Cutlass S coupe, Cutlass S hardtop, or the Cutlass Supreme convertible. The package consists of FE2 suspension with heavy duty shocks, arms, and front and rear stabilizer bars, 14x7 wheels, nonfunctional louvered hood, special grille, paint stripes and identification front side and rear. Along with the four available body styles

to accept the package, you are allowed a choice of 350 2-barrel, 350 4-barrel, 455 4-barrel, or W30 455 engines, a variety of 3- and 4-speed manual and two kinds of automatic transmissions, as well as a selection of rear end ratios from 2.73 to 3.73, depending on other equipment ordered. And of course, there are tons of options and dealer-installed goodies.

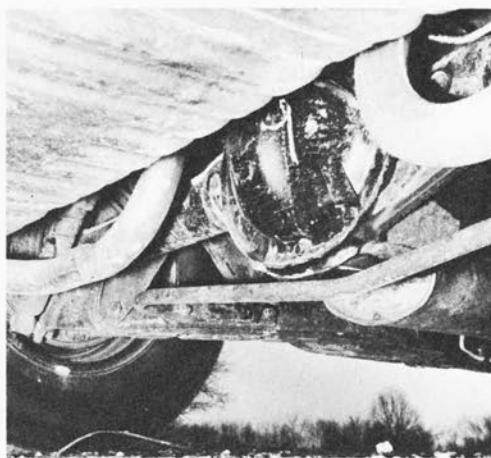
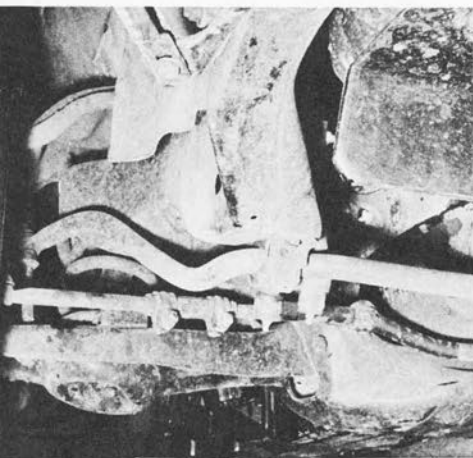
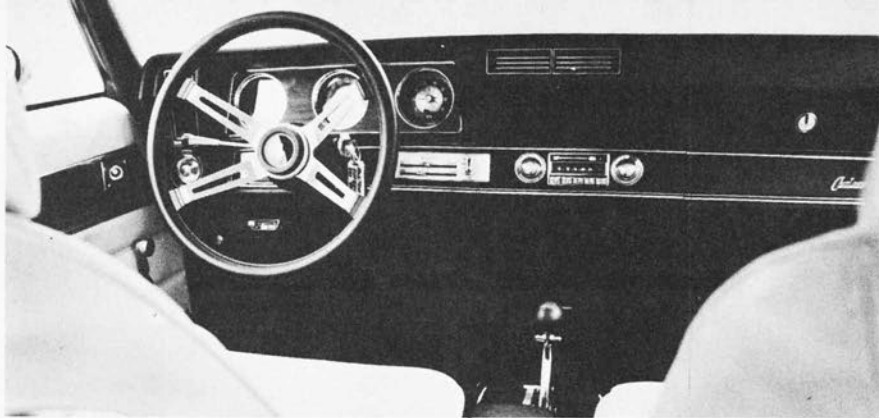
When we were offered this extremely wide choice from which to build a test car, we naturally went the whole route, choosing the Cutlass S hardtop, 4-4-2 package, and W30 engine with the M40 Turbohydramatic

transmission. That was the basic car, but the option list got to us, and we ended up with bucket seats, floor mats, woodgrain dash trim, console and floor shifter, power disc brakes, power steering, Super Stock III wheels with slot styling and chrome-and-body-color finish, inside hood lock, rallye instrumentation, AM-FM monaural radio with rear speaker, and the Custom-Sport steering wheel. Before we lay the sticker price on you, you should know that the \$640 W30 package includes the L77 455 factory blueprinted, hand-assembled engine, fiberglass hood with twin functional



TOP—The W-30 package includes a pair of functional scoops set into the fiberglass hood; twin lock-down pins and inside hood lock are standard on this model. ABOVE—The L77 455 CID power plant is factory blueprinted and hand assembled. The advertised power

figures for this year are 300 net horsepower at 4700 rpm and a net torque of 410 foot-pounds at 3200 rpm. We feel that both figures are well on the conservative side however. Big valves, 2.07" intake and 1.62" exhaust, contribute to brutal torque produced by this motor.



TOP—Interior features very comfortable Custom-Sport steering wheel and Rallye instrumentation group. The wheel blocked the lower portion of tachometer, but left the vital 4500-6000 rpm section visible. ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT—Olds FE2 suspension system includes front and rear stabilizer bars, each almost a full inch in diameter.

FACTORY-BLUEPRINTED OLDS 4-4-2

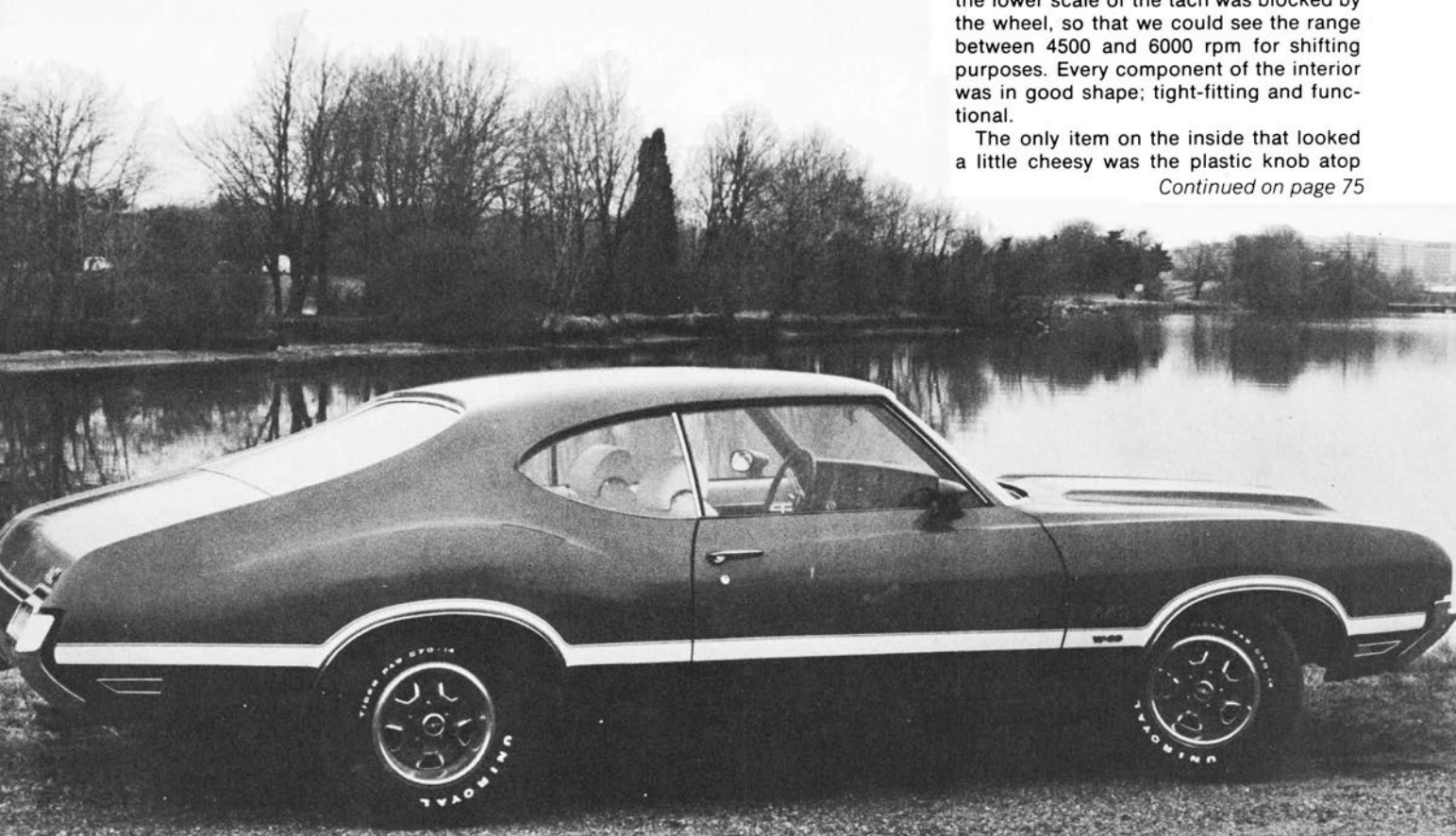
scoops and special air cleaner, special hood paint scheme, heavy duty radiator, 3.42 anti-spin rear, twin body color mirrors with inside adjustment on the left, G70-14 RWL tires, and also includes the full price of the 4-4-2 package. That is to say, you can buy a 4-4-2 without the W30, but not the other way around. Anyway, the base Cutlass S hardtop coupe starts at about \$3150, and our test car stickered out at over \$4600. Out front, we wouldn't have had it any other way.

The Flame Orange test car carried white hood panels and white side striping with the usual number of ID tags for the 4-4-2 and W30 packages, white, horizontally sectioned bucket seats, woodgrain inserts on console, dash, and doors, Flame Orange and chrome slotted wheels, and Uniroyal G60 RWL tires (Ugh!). Stationary and unstarted, the 4-4-2 came off as a very nice looking car. With a flick of the key the car turned into an *animal*! The W30 455-inch engine comes equipped with dual exhausts, but the mufflers used are quite small and of low-restriction design, without resonators.

The noise level, combined with the radical, surging idle of this particular engine, was very impressive but not disturbing or uncomfortable to listen to. The interior finish on the 4-4-2, the thickness and contour of the seats, were above average, and the feel of the vinyl material was softer and more leather-like than we've seen in most of the competition. Gages are arranged in three pods, with instruments for everything but the alternator in the left pod, speedo at center, and tach/clock in the right hand pod. With the same kind of seating position and steering wheel configuration as our LeMans GT car of last month, the problems were the same: discomfort on long trips and a limited, if slightly better view of the instruments. Fortunately, only the lower scale of the tach was blocked by the wheel, so that we could see the range between 4500 and 6000 rpm for shifting purposes. Every component of the interior was in good shape; tight-fitting and functional.

The only item on the inside that looked a little cheesy was the plastic knob atop

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FACTORY-BLUEPRINTED OLDS 4-4-2

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the shift lever, painted to look like wood, but not coming off too well. The stick is fitted with detents for downshifting, so that the knob must be depressed to select park, reverse, second, or low, but not drive, and the detents only work in that direction. Upshifting the 4-4-2 was a hit-and-miss proposition with no detents built in to prevent hitting neutral and overrevving the engine. Such a jive shifting mechanism in a car with a W30 4-4-2's capabilities is an engineering mistake. It should have detents in both directions for maximum protection of an expensive transmission.

In motion, the 4-4-2 tells you everything you always wanted to know about what a performance car should be. There's a slight flat spot just off idle whether the engine is hot or cold, due to the 455's engine-mod emission control system package, but it's easy to get used to. The low-end torque of the 455 W30 engine is unreal, rated at 410 foot-pounds *net* at 3200 rpm, with a net horsepower figure of 300 at 4700 rpm. This engine uses the larger 2.07" and 1.62"

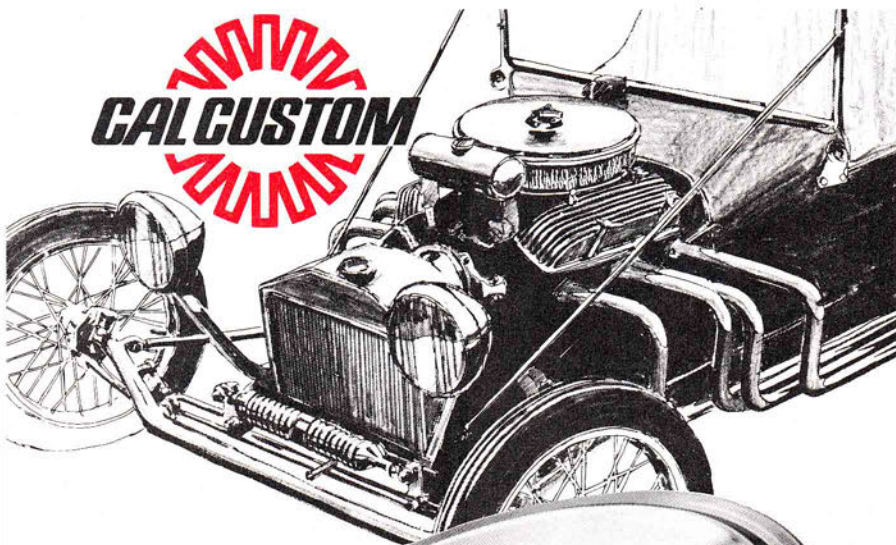


ABOVE—The under dash hood lock unit will keep prowlers out of the W-30 motor.

intake and exhaust valves as opposed to the 1.99" and 1.68" valves used in low-performance 455 engines. Of course, there has to be a discrepancy somewhere in the rating system, since the net rating system could not possibly account for the close tolerances employed in assembling W30 engines, and the system certainly can't measure the effect of a twin cold air induction system on a stationary dynamometer. In other words, the W30 engine installed and moving down the road should put out more power for a longer period of time than the figures indicate at a glance.

With a 4.125" bore and a long 4.250" stroke, the 455 isn't a 7000, or even a 6000 rpm engine in stock form. It will stand all you can give it up to about 5800 rpm, and that's all. But then, that's all that's needed. The M40 Turbohydramatic's ratios of 2.48, 1.48, and direct, coupled with the middle-of-the-road 3.42 anti-spin rear provide just-right gearing for highway cruising with an occasional through-the-gears number thrown in now and then. With the low-pro-

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FACTORY-BLUEPRINTED OLDS 4-4-2

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file tires, the 3.42 lets the engine run 3500 rpm, just above the torque peak, at 70 miles an hour, according to the car's own instruments. By the time the car and engine have reached these speeds, the lumpy idle is gone and the car is quiet inside, indicating that the noise insulation and the viscous-drive fan are doing their jobs. Should the driver floor the pedal, the transmission downshift, secondary throttle opening, air flapper door opening, and instant acceleration all happen in sequence and immediately. A pass maneuver from 50 to 80 mph happens so fast and so smoothly that it's almost imperceptible. You're just suddenly going 30 mph faster than you were a second ago.

When it comes to handling, the 4-4-2 Cutlass S certainly qualifies as something more than an ordinary intermediate car.



ABOVE—Trick chrome-and-body-color wheels were great, but Tiger Paws were disappointing.

It's 112" wheelbase, 59.3" tread width, and 203.6" overall length carry and distribute the car's 3700 pounds quite well, and the suspension is very well suited to the performance character of the car. At speeds under 50 mph, the 4-4-2 ride can best be described as choppy, as the heavy duty components return tires to pavement as fast as they can after a bump or rut is encountered. The faster it goes, the smoother the ride becomes. The Uniroyal Tiger Paw tires on 14x7 wheels didn't have as much side bite and flat pavement traction as we would have liked to have available with this car, and the tires accounted for the few bad moments we had with the car in deliberately squirrely situations. The shocks, springs, and dual anti-sway bars did a good job of holding the car level and straight through high-speed turns until the tires broke loose. Even then, backing off the throttle and setting up quickly for the balance of the maneuver took little time or effort. The steering is quick, maybe a little too quick, and road feel on center isn't up to what it has been in intermediate Olds cars in the

We held our acceleration tests at York US30 Dragway after fighting off temptation for almost a week, driving slowly and carefully on the highways, constantly on the alert for the gendarmerie, who, as a group, were very suspicious of the car's sound and

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appearance. Once inside the York fences, we warmed the tires at great length, practiced launching, and got on with the business at hand. Frankly, it was too darn cold to try to play with the engine any; so we made eight runs in a fairly short period of time. The times ranged from a 14.94, shifting automatically at an indicated 5200 rpm in second and third, to a fine 14.47, easing out and shifting manually at an indicated 6000 rpm. Speeds in the traps ranged from 97.21 to 100.34 miles an hour, indicating that the 300 horsepower net figure is a charade and that the 4-4-2 will be making its mark in the Pure Stock racing this year. Undoubtedly, the car's performance was helped by the 44-degree outside temperature, the fresh air induction system, and tires that were almost gooey when we got through heating them up. In the grand tradition of drag-strip Olds 455's, the front end lifted high and beautifully on every run, tossing the weight onto the G-series tires and allowing pretty good medium-throttle getaways every time.

By this time, we knew the 4-4-2 was quiet, powerful, plenty quick, and quite roadworthy, and we had an idea that it would stop pretty well, too. With smallish 9.5" drums at the rear and power discs up front, the Olds made four straight panic stops from 60 mph seem easy, exhibiting some rear tire problems, but generally getting the job done with a minimum of fuss and a slight nose dip.

The Flame Orange test car showed us plenty of class after a couple of thousand miles of test-driving. It could have had better OEM tires on it. There was one intermittent rattle in the left rear of the passenger compartment that we never did track down. Some of the interior trim pieces, like the shift knob, could be better, and the seating position is definitely not the best for 6'3 1/2" drivers, with too much verticality in the seatbacks and not enough distance between seat and dash even in the rearmost position. In the face of 4-4-2's appearance, good manners, and outstanding performance, though, that's not much to complain about. It was a great car in 1965, and it is still a great car. ■

MAGICAL MOTOR TOUR

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inch titanium TRW intake and 1.6-inch stock TRW exhaust valves and equalized the combustion chamber c-c's at 60.

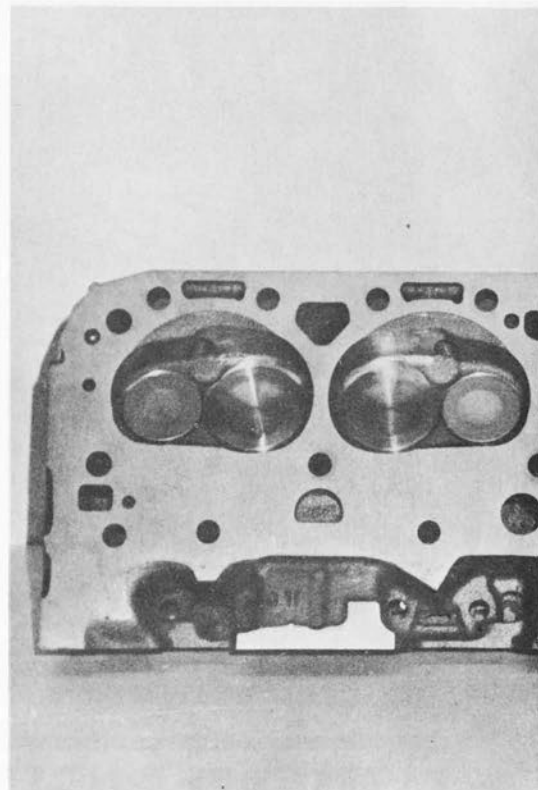
CAMSHAFT AND VALVE TRAIN

For this application, T-K chose the General

Kinetics CIM-332B hardface camshaft. The specs are as follows: gross lift .557-inch; duration 332°; 108° lobe centers; intake valve centerline 108°. Valve springs are Racer Brown 951A outers and 951C inners, installed at 120# seat pressure and 400# pressure at full lift. Racer Brown's retainers keep the springs in place, while stock Chevy pushrods are actuated by chilled iron General Kinetics lifters (for use with the hard face cam). Multiplying the cam lift and actuating the valves are Crane aluminum roller rockers with a 1.5:1 ratio. For 1972, the MM will sport the new 1.6:1 General Kinetics rockers. Cam timing is changed by utilization of the "Quick Change Cam Timer", manufactured by Trix Race Car Products and described elsewhere in this issue.

INTAKE AND CARBURETOR

Simple. An Edelbrock Tarantula with a 3/4-inch aluminum spacer and an R-4296-AAS 850 cfm double pumper Holley. The Chevy part number for the carburetor is



3955205. Jetting depends on strip and weather conditions, of course, but usually runs #79 primary jets and #81 jets for the secondaries. Scott likes to keep the primaries a little lean and modify the idling circuit to avoid excessive wash down of the cylinder walls.

IGNITION

Nothing trick here, either. A Corvette dual point, solid plate tach-drive distributor (part number 1110985) is used in conjunction with a Prestolite transistor unit and Accel components. Total advance depends on a lot of things, but the Magical Motor runs best at 40°.

LUBRICATION

A Moroso #2210 oil pump is used and was chosen for its high speed stability and

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