



THE 1968 JAVELIN, American Motors' venture into the Ponycar field is being billed by AM as, "The all-new Javelin 2-door sports hardtop; unique among today's breed of sporty-type cars, because it is a full 4-passenger car, blending sportiness with function and comfort."

Sixth in the line of Ponycars—Mustang, Barracuda, Camaro, Cougar and Firebird—AM's Javelin has a rough row to hoe. Like it or not, the Javelin will have to be compared to the five-of-a-kind that preceded it into the market place. And while it is an appealing package in form, proportion and size, it is, nonetheless, not all *that* different from its brethren which had from six months (Firebird) to three years (Mustang) head start.

The smaller manufacturer in almost any field should expect to take its lumps if it insists on fighting the industrial giants on their own terms, and this is just what AM is doing with the Javelin. The AM 2-seater AMX, due out early in 1968, truly is a different vehicle from any that now exist in the U.S. market, but the Javelin—at least on first impression, appears to be a virtual carbon copy of its quintet of predecessors. But is it?

Javelin styling, as on other AMC cars for 1968, is clean and uncluttered with a good sense of proportion and form. It is, in fact, one of the best of its group, visually. The long-hood, short-deck look coming back in the U.S. auto industry is an attempt to revive the Classic Era as exemplified by the L-29 Cord, Ruxton and J Series Duesenbergs. *CL* has no quarrel with that. Unlike those earlier cars, however, which had wheels planted squarely at all four corners, the Classic Long Hood Look of the Sixties is accomplished by the simple, if not altogether satisfying, means of greater front overhang.

In keeping with the clean look for '68, the Javelin's door handles are flush with the body (standard on AM line for '68), the side windows are frameless, and the vent windows have been eliminated. Interior ventilation is

accomplished by cowl intakes that provide air to the passenger compartment through twin grilles in the dash panel; air then exhausts through the rear edges of both doors, regulated by manually controlled openings in the armrests. A continuous supply of fresh air is assured, if the car is moving, even though all windows are closed. All windows roll down completely out of sight.

Bucket front seats are standard on the Javelin. SST models have reclining seatbacks and, in all cases, seats are individually adjustable fore and aft. Both types have manual release locks to prevent the seatbacks from moving forward under braking or impact. Three interior color combinations are available. A bench-type front seat is not available.

One body style (no convertible has been mentioned) in fourteen colors is offered. No 2-tone paint combinations are listed for the Javelin series. However, on the Javelin SST, black or off-white vinyl tops are offered to very effectively create 2-tone combinations. All Javelins have thin-line paint striping at the belt line, and an optional "wide stripe" with the Rally-Pak.

The "Adjust-O-Tilt" steering wheel, and quicker steering ratios are available on all Javelins. Standard steering is by Saginaw recirculating ball with a gearbox ratio of 20.0:1, an overall ratio of 24.1:1 and 5.1 turns lock-to-lock. With power steering (Saginaw gearbox with integral rotary valve and Thompson engine belt-driven pump), the ratios are 15.0:1 in the box which results in 17.1:1 overall and 3.6 turns lock-to-lock. The optional quick manual steering provides a box ratio of 16.0:1, with 19.3:1 overall and four turns lock-to-lock. In all cases, turning diameter is 36.8 ft.

Suspension is contemporary AMC American, with coil springs and short and long arm location in front, with semi-elliptic leaf springs at the rear. The rear springs are 1 in. longer, at 53 in., and 0.5 in. wider, at 2.5 in., than the similar units on American

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1968 JAVELIN

This Ponycar Arrives Amid Cutthroat Competition





1968 JAVELIN

models—the only other AMC car to employ leaf springs at the rear.

Handling packages available on 6-cyl. models amount to front anti-roll bars and heavy-duty springs and shock absorbers. V-8 handling packages feature larger diameter front anti-roll bars, heavy-duty springs and shock absorbers, and 5.5-in. wheel rims. In addition to factory-installed handling kits, rear traction bars are available as a dealer-installed option.

Brakes are identical to those on Americans—9-in. diameter drums on the Sixes, 10-in. diameter drums for the V-8s. Front disc brakes (Bendix 11.19-in. diameter solid rotor units) are an optional extra on V-8s only. Power assistance is utilized with the disc/drum system. A proportioning valve regulates front-to-rear braking

effort in the 2-circuit disc/drum installation.

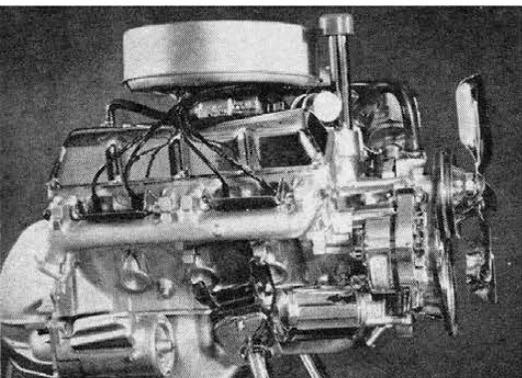
The basic Javelin engine is the 232-cu. in., 145-bhp Six, coupled to a 3-speed manual transmission with column shift control. Floor shifts are not available with any Javelin Sixes. Optional combinations, shown in the accompanying table, offer a wide variety of V-8 engines, manual or automatic transmissions, with optional floor shift control. The 3-speed manual is column controlled on both Six and V-8. Both 3- and 4-speed manual transmissions are all-synchromesh for 1968.

Some engine changes have been made for 1968. All 343-cu. in. engines—2- and 4-barrel—carry revised cylinder heads with new high-flow intake passages. Intake valve diameter is increased 0.025 to 2.025 in.

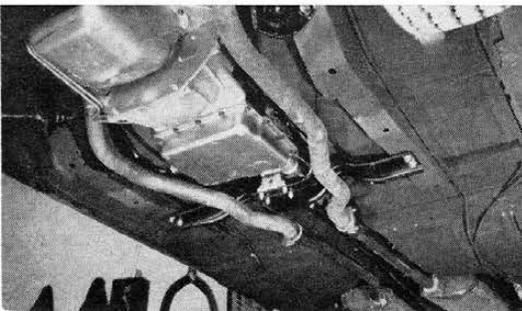
Two emission control systems are utilized in the AM lineup; the "Engine Mod" system, which includes a thicker, composition head gasket and revised carburetor and distributor specifications, will be used on all Sixes regardless of transmission, and on the V-8s with automatic transmission. The "Air Guard" system that uses an air pump will be used on all V-8s with manual transmissions.

At its dimensions of 109-in. wheelbase, 189.2 in. overall and 71.9 in. width, the Javelin is about in the middle of the six sporty cars in size. Mustang and Barracuda have the shortest wheelbase at 108 in., Cougar the longest at 111. Mustang is the shortest overall at 183.6 and Barracuda the longest at 192.8 in. No weight was given for the Javelin, but a safe esti-

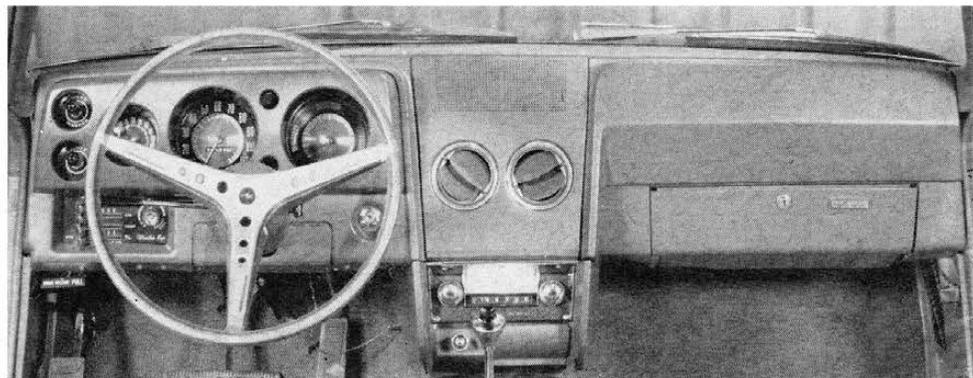
THREE V-8 engines; 200, 225 and 280 bhp, are available at this time.



DUAL exhaust system is optional on V-8s with 4-barrel carburetors.



JAVELIN instrument panels are constructed of one piece injection-molded ABS plastic with heavy padding overlays.



UNITIZED body/chassis of Javelin is lighter than separate frame/body and should stay rattle-free longer.





CARGO space is ample but spare intrudes, limiting usefulness.

mate is that it is between Mustang and Cougar, at approximately 2900 lb.

American Motors claims that "the Javelin 2-door sports hardtop is unique among today's breed of sporty cars, because it is a full 4-passenger car. . ." This is fancy rather than fact by *CL*'s definition of a full 4-passenger car. Four persons may be carried in the Javelin, just as they can in the other five sporty car models and, as in the case of the other five, the Javelin must be considered a 2-plus-2. And, like its competitors, the Javelin's usable trunk space is limited severely by the short rear deck—a sacrifice to styling considerations.

Driving impressions and performance analysis must wait until road test cars are available, as the two Javelins shown at AMC's preview were hand-

assembled prototypes. Neither car could be assessed fairly as an indication of the performance of the production run machines. Undoubtedly some early "road tests" will appear in print, but will be largely fiction, as neither car could be driven far enough, fast enough or long enough to conduct a test with accuracy of value to potential buyers.

CAR LIFE staffers anticipate living with a Javelin for a week or two, as it is an indication of a new spark of life at American Motors. The car is attractive and can hold its head up in any save the most exotic company. It has the potential to return American Motors Corp. to its rightful place in the U.S. auto market.

If the Javelin can be faulted, it can be only from the viewpoint that the

car may be too little too late. No. 6 in line among six Ponycars, in point of time and development, it performs has a difficult furrow to plow. Five of the six are already more or less firmly ensconced in the automotive market.

Nevertheless, AMC's Javelin carries with it an excellent opportunity for success in the Ponycar class, which comprises an annual million-unit sales figure; 12-15% of the U.S. total.

Javelin styling is crisp and clean, certainly the equal of its contemporaries. The rear seat is roomier. AMC engines display as up-to-date engineering as any in the industry.

AMC may be short on performance options, but not everyone desires 300-plus bhp. AMC's estimate of 35-40,000 annual sales appears a bit conservative. ■

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION/GEAR RATIO AVAILABILITY CHART

cyl.	cid	Engine			fuel	Transmission & Controls with		Gear Ratios
		carb.	bhp/tor.	cr		3-S/gears	O/D	
6	232	1-b	145/215	8.5:	reg.	ST/3.08 st 3.31 op	n.a. opt/3.08 st* 2.73 op* 3.31 op*	n.a.
V-8	290	2-b	200/285	9.0:	reg.	ST/3.15	n.a. opt/3.15 st 2.87 op	opt/3.15 st 3.54 op 4.44†
V-8	290	4-b	225/300	10.0:	prem.	n.a.	n.a.	opt/3.15 st 3.54 op 4.44†
V-8	343	4-b	280/365	10.2:	prem.	n.a.	opt/2.87 st 3.15 op	opt/3.15 3.54 4.44†

Notes: *6-cyl. cars have only column shift levers. V-8s have column levers for 3-speed manual and automatic transmissions, with optional floor/console mountings for automatics and 4-speed manuals.

†Dealer-installed option.

All gears in 3- and 4-speed manual transmissions are fully synchronized.

PONYCARS AT A GLANCE

	WB	OAL	Width	Weight
Javelin	109	189.2	71.9	n.s.
Mustang*	108	183.6	70.9	2696
Cougar*	111	190.3	71.2	3119
Barracuda*	108	192.8	71.6	2950
Camaro*	108.1	184.6	72.5	2900
Firebird*	108.1	188.6	72.6	3089

*Based on 1967 specifications.

RECLINING seats, and headrests are standard on Javelin SST.



C PILLAR "sail area" extends rearward alongside trunk lid into fender tips. Entire car has clean look.

