

Ignorance being bliss, our editor hurls the Falcon Futura Sprint into a 70-mph bend at Ford's Dearborn proving ground.



Less roll and more stability; notice acute angle of inside front wheel. Front end had 1° negative camber, 3/8-inch toe-out.

There were a lot of wisecracks from the "experts" when Ford decided to enter the

Ford Falcon Futura Sprint:

For some reason, this magazine had never tested a Falcon. Perhaps it was because the Falcon was dull as dishwater for most of its young life and seemed a trifle tame for our enthusiastic readers. From time to time we'd hear rumblings from Detroit about a possible V-8 engine option but nothing ever came of the rumors. Not until this, the year of our Ford, 1963 1/2.

In January, Benson Ford took a plane-full of press to Monte Carlo and announced a gaggle of new "1963 1/2" models, the Falcon Futura Sprint among them. At that time, he also announced that Ford had decided to field a team of these self-same Falcons in the Monte Carlo Rally. The rally is now history and Ford hopes you think they won. They didn't, but it wasn't for lack of a first-class rally car. The Swedish ice-racing champion, Bo Ljungfelt, set fastest time in all the timed tests, the first time in the history of the Monte that this had been done. If Ford ballyhooed it up a bit, and maybe forgot to mention that somebody else actually won the rally, we can chalk it up to the youthful enthusiasm of the novice in rally competition.

A number of factors figured in the success of the Falcon. The basic car is strong, fast and uncomplicated. The drivers were the very best around, and the cars were prepared and maintained with the painstaking

attention to detail that we normally only associate with all-out racing efforts like Mercedes-Benz, or NASCAR teams. One of the most significant factors, however, and one that showed up prominently in our tests, was tires. In the rally, the Falcons alternated between Dunlop SPs and a special spiked tire made by Fagersta Bruk of Sweden and carrying about 600 half-inch tungsten studs per casing. The tires made the difference. They made it possible for the Falcons to get their power on the ground, and thus simply overpower everybody else in the special stages.

Our tests were carried out on a nasty, blustery spring morning, and when we first got onto the Ford handling loop, there was melting snow and slush everywhere. On our first tour in the rally car, we took it easy and felt things out. Next time we went a little faster, and on the third lap we were beginning to commit the car completely at near-racing speeds. To our dumbfounded amazement, not to mention that of the intrepid Ford engineer who was riding shotgun, the car was absolutely stable, even in a half inch of greasy slush. We'd sail into a slick patch, all four wheels would break loose momentarily, the car would move a few feet outside the normal line, then the tires would bite and *voilà*, a nice full-power sliding turn! We did this over



Deep-dish steering wheel intrudes upon living space, makes it uncomfortable for tall man to drive. Flat wheel would help.



Not what you'd call jazzy, the rally car's interior is all business. Note tachometer's tell-tale lodged at 7,000 rpm.



We cannot understand the need for phony knock-offs on good cars. It's one thing if the car's a bad one, but this isn't.



This is serious business, men. All auxiliary road lamps are Lucas, headlights Cibí. The 15-inch wheels are optional Ford.

Monte Carlo Rally—now Ford's put up and they've shut up

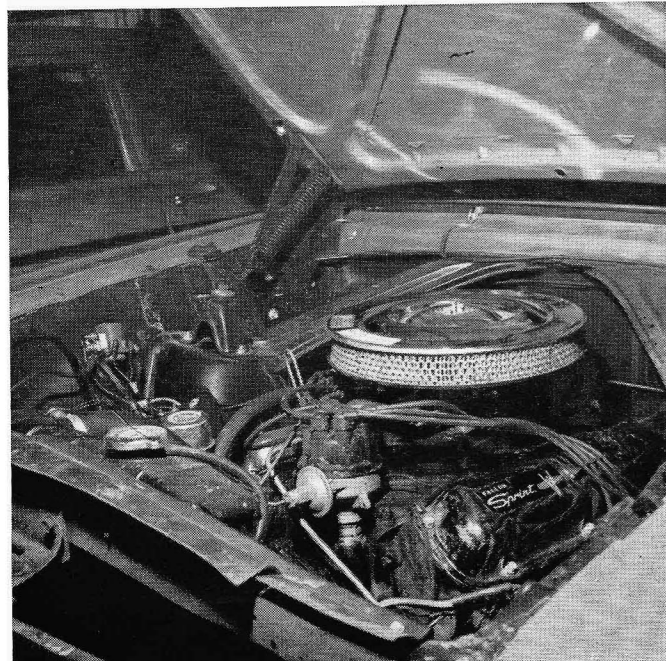
Stock and Monte Carlo Versions

and over again, and fell absolutely in love with Falcons that scream like Ferraris and Dunlop SPs that stick like ticks on a bird dog's ear. The stock Sprint was an altogether different situation. It was equipped with normal 4-ply 7.00 x 13 whitewall tires that broke loose, front-first, the moment the car was committed to a turn and the side loads started to build up. Not that the stock car was unpleasant or frightening; it is simply a modern American passenger car with a long steering ratio, little-bitty wheels, and good intentions. It is obviously aimed primarily at the Corvair Monza-Tempest LeMans pseudo-sports car market. Its great charm for the enthusiast is that it responds better to hopping-up and suspension improvement than either of the above-mentioned swing-axled worthies.

The difference between the rally car and the stock car lies in the suspension and the available power. The stock Sprint, both coupé and convertible, is built on the stiffened Falcon convertible chassis and most of the suspension is stock Fairlane, which means slightly stiffer springs, shocks, and a front anti-roll bar. The standard engine is the Fairlane's 260-cubic-inch, 164-bhp unit. The rally car has an over-all steering ratio of 17-to-1 (compared to the stock Sprint's 27-to-1), Koni adjustable shocks set at their firmest setting all around,

and an extra leaf in the rear spring. The original Holman-Moody set-up used dual shocks on all four wheels, but these were discarded in favor of the Konis in Monte Carlo. The rear-spring arrangement is interesting, too. The extra leaf is a little more than half the length of the others, laid on top of the stock spring and running from the front mount, where it wraps clear around the spring eye, to just past the spring-axle junction, where it ends. Its function was not to stiffen the rear end on the road, but to prevent axle windup, which was a problem. The short steering ratio was effected by Holman and Moody with modified pitman and idler arms. The most bizarre thing of all however, is the front-end geometry. The front wheels toe out three-eighths of an inch, and have one degree of negative camber, giving the car the same peculiar stance as last year's Ferrari GP cars, that is to say knock-kneed. Bizarre or not, though, it sure handles. The effort required to steer the mother is herculean, and it's a bit loath to leave a straight line, but it is stable!

The rally car uses the Cobra engine, developing 260 horsepower at 5,800 rpm. The transmission is the same as that used in the competition Corvette with a long first gear, and nice close ratios. The differential is a Galaxie unit with a limited-slip and a ratio of 4.51 to 1.



Standard Sprint's engine compartment is stuffed full of V-8 brute force where only a gentle little six was meant to live.



Rally Sprint's engine room shows few differences except for bigger carb air cleaner and tank for air horn (at far left).

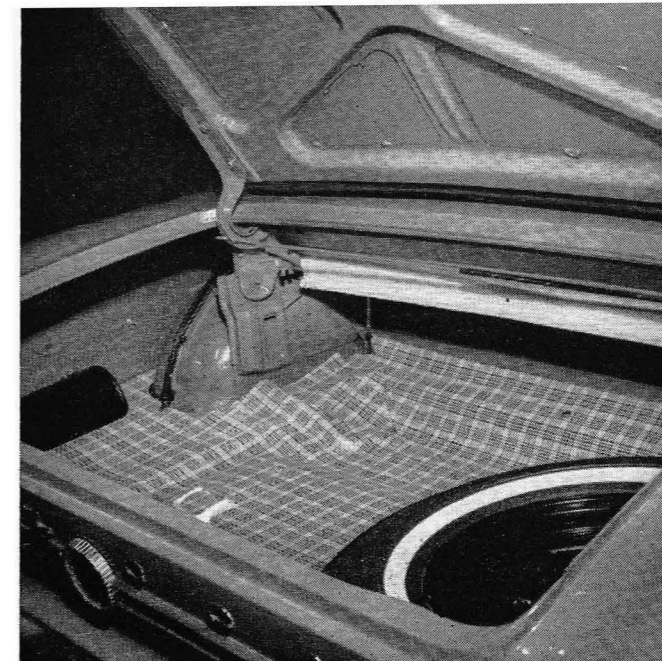
Again, the limited-slip units were not installed until Ford had flown the cars to Monte Carlo for final preparation. We hesitate to think what this car might be with the full 350-horsepower Cobra competition engine, but we'd love to have a go in one!

Seating positions in the two cars are quite different, with the rally car getting the nod for a truly heroic, arms-out-straight kind of wheel and seat relationship. The driver's seat in the rally car is a true competition bucket seat much better suited to wasp-waisted little jaspers like Peter Jopp and Trant Jarman than to, shall we say, more substantially constructed drivers. As a result of our high-speed maneuvering we suffered a pretty decent bruise on the old editorial posterior from the steeply raked side-supports. The driver's floor panel in the rally car has been recessed to allow additional pedal travel for the heavy-duty clutch, and both clutch and brake pedals are mounted on specially fabricated shafts that look like cast-off crank billets.

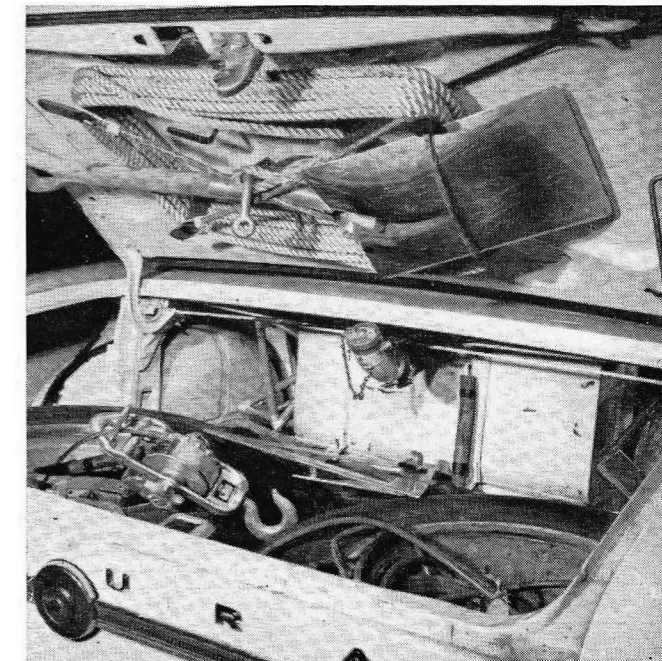
The interior of the stock Sprint, from a driver's viewpoint, is good looking, well appointed and uncomfortable. There is insufficient seat travel, and the extreme deep-dish steering wheel is practically up against

the driver's chest, dictating an elbows-flailing driving style. The instruments are just so-so, with the usual complement of warning lights and a fuel and temperature gauge. The tachometer, however, deserves special recognition. It is easy to read, and it's mounted in the center, right below the rear-view mirror, where it can be seen instantly. It's nice to find a tach on an American car that isn't on the floor, or under the dash, or in the back seat. The unfortunate driving position could be easily corrected with greater rearward seat travel and a flat steering wheel. There's nothing wrong with the length of the steering column, it's just the silly, exaggerated dished wheel.

The rally car has no instruments for the driver except a fuel gauge and a tach reading to seven grand. The navigator acts as engineering officer with more complete instrumentation on his side. The whole dash panel had been sprayed flat black and gave the car's interior a distinctly gung-ho appearance. There was no speedometer of any kind in the car, the reason being that Ford had no drive gears for a Falcon with a 4.51 final-drive ratio and the resultant speedometer error was huge. A Halda Speedpilot was fitted on the passen-



Normal Sprint trunk is typical American-car luggage compartment, complete with ill-fitting oilcloth and obtrusive spare.



Set-up for Monte Carlo, the rally Sprint's trunk is crammed lid-full of spares, emergency gear, and an auxiliary gas tank.

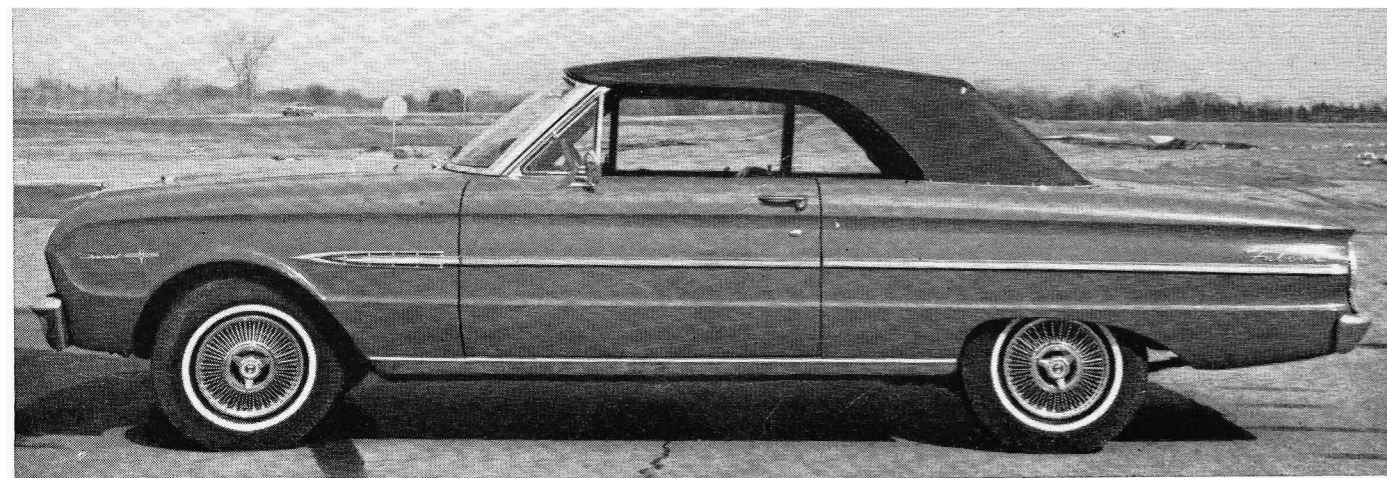
ger's side, and this worked as odometer and speedometer both. The utter lack of any elaborate rally equipment is an indication of the nature of the Monte Carlo Rally; you're there to prove your own strength, ability and endurance along with that of the automobile. It is not a cerebral exercise for the mathematically minded.

The stock Sprint had a very strong flavor of Ford tradition about it. Ford-lovers will be pleased to know that this car is much more like the zippy flat-head V-8s of yesteryear than any Ford since 1948. It makes the same kind of noise, it has the same quick reflexes, and it seems to sit much the same way. Actually, it is closer in size to our favorite, the 1940, than is the Galaxie, which makes one wonder if maybe Detroit couldn't save some money on sheet metal.

Passenger accommodations are typical of American compacts. The front-seat passenger is very comfortable, with good legroom and plenty of wiggling space for even the most broad-beamed. The rear-seat passengers don't fare quite so well, since they must ride with their knees against the front seat backs and their spines braced in a position more vertical than is generally considered comfortable. Tall drivers are evidently ex-

pected to wear berets or stocking caps since there's no room for any other kind of headgear, but then this is true of most cars today. If the hat-makers ever get a strong lobby in Washington we're going to see a revolution in car design. Luggage space is excellent and very accessible. The spare tire intrudes some, being mounted flat on the trunk floor, but some juggling and fitting of suitcases would get everything in for a normal family on a normal trip.

The two cars were equally easy to drive. Neither had any unpleasant tricks or bad habits. The rally car is hard work, but fun. Getting off the line in the stock Falcon was easy, with a nice ratio of wheelspin to acceleration. On the rally car, however, fast starts were tough, because the Dunlop SPs had such great traction. They simply refused to spin until we got the revs up to about 4,500 and gingerly dropped the clutch. The Cobra engine in the rally car had a delightful yowl, and there was enough panel noise and resonance in the car to give it just the sort of noise to bring tears to a jaded old road-tester's eyes. The thing would wind to a spine-tingling 7,000 rpm, but we held our revs to 6,000, and were still astonished by the performance.





If you get this view of a Falcon in a stoplight grand prix, it's a Sprint. Wire wheel covers confirm the identification.

Our first acceleration runs in the rally car were made with one of Ford's drag-racing aficionados at the wheel. His shifts were very fast, but very brutal, and the drive train gave a protesting crash every time he let the clutch fly out. Smiling a secret, superior smile, we took over and proceeded to turn in a series of smoother, slower times. The car was in exactly the same state as it had finished the rally, and we didn't want to thrash it beyond endurance. Our best time for the quarter mile was 16.8 seconds, our worst 17.7. Good times were a direct result of a clean start with reasonable wheel-spin; bad runs happened every time we tried to get away without squealing. The car was turning exactly 5,000 in fourth at the end of the quarter, and this works out to 85 miles per hour.

The stock Sprint was redlined at 5,000, and that's where we held it. Although the rally car is noticeably faster, the difference is not dramatic. Even with only 164 bhp to the rally car's 260, the stock Falcon was getting 0-to-60 in less than 11 seconds consistently, and quarter-mile times were right in the high seventeens and low eighteens.

Brakes on the stock Sprint, 10-inch drums all around, were adequate but not spectacular. The car stopped when bidden to do so, but we got the feeling that they were insufficient to the V-8 engine's demands in any kind of a continued high-speed driving situation. The rally car, on the other hand, stopped like it had run



Rally car has tow hooks, back-bumper footrests, handles on deck lid—perfect perch for inept navigator or mother-in-law.

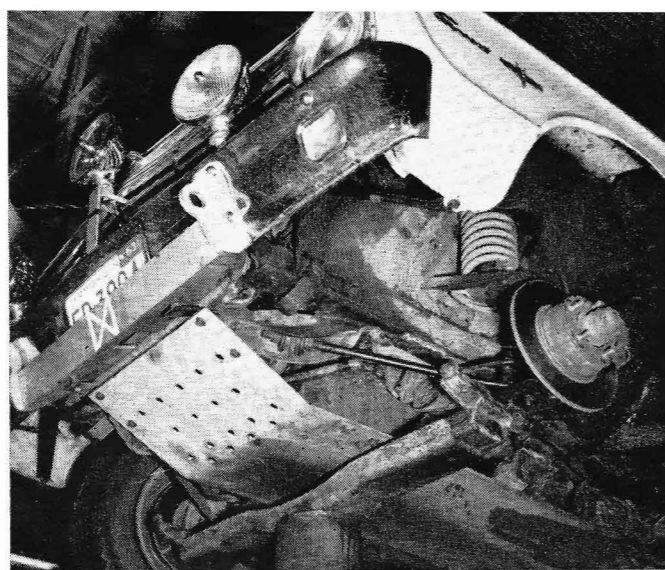
into something. With 11½-inch Bendix-Dunlop discs on the front and 11-inch drums on the rear, all stops, from whatever speed, were smooth, safe, and fade-free. The disc brakes are described as a "special factory option," but we imagine that the average consumer would be hard pressed to get them from his friendly neighborhood Ford dealer. Whatever the problems involved in the getting, the marvelous stopping power of the discs is well worth the having.

In our estimation, the Falcon Futura Sprint is a car with great possibilities for the American enthusiast. In its stock form, fitted with Michelin X, Dunlop SP, or Pirelli tires it could be fast and stable. It could develop the way the Anglia and other Fords have in England; i.e. a gold mine for the performance-equipment manufacturers. A man driving a Sprint with Koni shocks, faster steering, good tires and disc brakes is going to have an awful lot of fun and show a clean pair of heels to a lot of expensive iron. A man with a stock Sprint without any of the above will have smooth, quiet, reliable transportation. He won't be driving a true sports car, or even a GT machine, but this is not necessarily bad. He'll have a car he can use for nearly anything a real sports car is used for. It can certainly qualify as a fine sports sedan, in the manner of a 3.8 Jag. We'd prefer it with one of the braced-tread tires we mentioned earlier, and a flat wood-rimmed wheel would be a must, but Ford's getting close!

c/d



Europeans were amazed by the vast assortment of spares and emergency gear carried by Ford team. It's understandable.



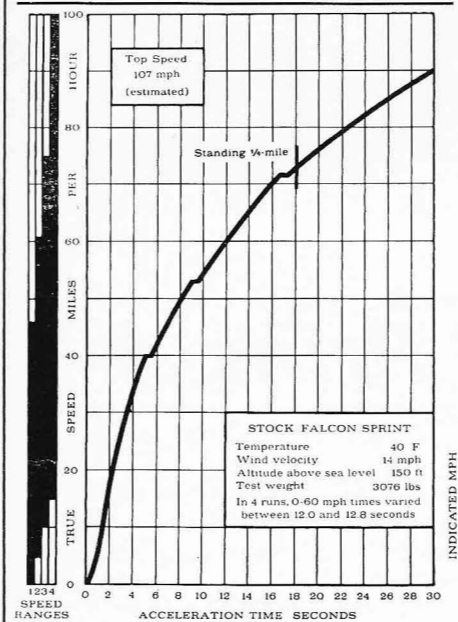
There are two ways to avoid breaking sump or transmission housing: you can cover everything with armor—or stay home.

FORD FALCON SPRINT

Price as tested: \$2,595
 Manufacturer: Ford Division
 Ford Motor Company
 Dearborn, Michigan

ACCELERATION:

Zero to	Seconds
30 mph	3.6
60 mph	12.1
90 mph	29.5
Standing start 1/4	18.0 at 73 mph

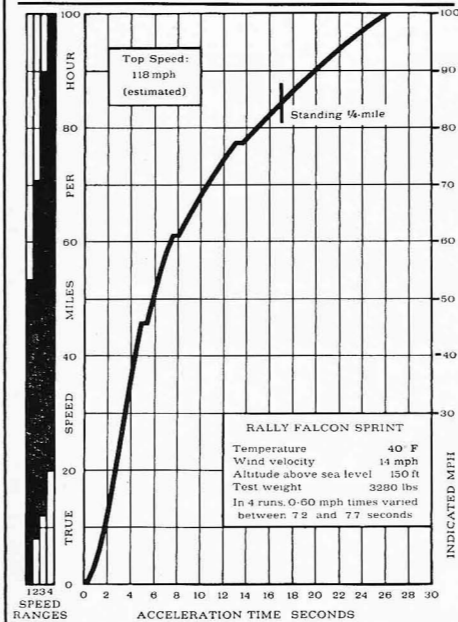


FORD FALCON SPRINT (Monte Carlo Rally Version)

Price as tested: N.A.
 Manufacturer: Ford Division,
 Ford Motor Co.
 Dearborn, Michigan

ACCELERATION:

Zero to	Seconds
30 mph	3.5
60 mph	7.5
90 mph	19.7
Standing start 1/4	16.8 at 85 mph



ENGINE:

Displacement..... 260 cu in, 4,261 cc
 Dimensions..... 90° V-8, 3.80-in bore, 2.87-in stroke
 Valve gear..... Pushrod-operated ohv, hydraulic lifters
 Compression ratio..... 8.7 to one
 Power (SAE)..... 164 bhp @ 4,400 rpm
 Torque..... 258 lb-ft @ 2,200 rpm
 Usable range of engine speeds..... 500-5,800 rpm
 Carburetion..... Single two-barrel
 Fuel recommended..... Regular
 Mileage..... 14-20 mpg
 Range on 14-gallon tank..... 196-200 miles

CHASSIS:

Wheelbase..... 109.5 in
 Track..... F 55.0 in, R 54.5 in
 Length..... 181.1 in
 Ground clearance..... 7.3 in
 Suspension..... F: incl. wishbones and coil springs, anti-roll bar, telescopic shock absorbers
 R: rigid axle, semi-elliptic leaf springs, telescopic shock absorbers
 Steering..... Recirculating ball
 Turns, lock to lock..... 4.6
 Turning circle diameter between curbs..... 38.8 ft
 Tires 650 x 13 OE, 4.5 in rim, 859 revs per mile
 Pressures recommended..... F 28, R 24 psi
 Brakes..... F and R: 10-in drums, 251.3 sq in swept area
 Curb weight (full tank)..... 3,076 lbs
 Percentage on the driving wheels..... 44

DRIVE TRAIN:

Clutch..... 10-in single-plate
 Gear Synchro Ratio Step Over-all rpm
 Rev No 2.81 — 9.14 —7.7
 1st Yes 2.73 32% 8.87 7.9
 2nd Yes 2.04 37% 6.63 10.5
 3rd Yes 1.51 51% 4.91 14.2
 4th Yes 1.00 — 3.25 21.5
 Final drive ratio..... 3.25 to one

ENGINE:

Displacement..... 260 cu in, 4,261 cc
 Dimensions..... 90° V-8, 3.30-in bore, 2.87-in stroke
 Valve gear..... Pushrod-operated ohv, solid lifters
 Compression ratio..... 10.0 to one
 Power (SAE)..... 260 bhp @ 5,800 rpm
 Torque..... 269 lb-ft @ 4,800 rpm
 Usable range of engine speeds..... 600-7,000 rpm
 Carburetion..... Single four-barrel Holley
 Fuel recommended..... Premium
 Mileage..... 12 mpg
 Range on 14-gal tank (plus 12-gal tank): 312 miles

CHASSIS:

Wheelbase..... 109.5 in
 Track..... F 55.0 in, R 54.5 in
 Length..... 181.1 in
 Ground clearance..... 8.3 in
 Suspension: F: incl. wishbones and coil springs, anti-roll bar, telescopic shock absorbers
 R: rigid axle, semi-elliptic leaf springs, telescopic shock absorbers
 Steering..... Recirculating ball
 Turns, lock to lock..... 2.75
 Turning circle diameter between curbs..... 27.5 ft
 Tires..... 7.00 x 15 Dunlop SP, 5-in rim, 788 revs per mile
 Pressures recommended..... F 32, R 32 psi
 Brakes..... F: 11½-in discs, R: 11-in drums, 288 sq in swept area
 Curb weight (full tank)..... 3,280 lbs
 Percentage on the driving wheels..... 48

DRIVE TRAIN:

Clutch..... 10-in single-plate
 Gear Synchro Ratio Step Over-all rpm
 Rev No 2.26 — 9.96 —7.5
 1st Yes 2.20 33% 9.92 7.7
 2nd Yes 1.66 27% 7.49 10.2
 3rd Yes 1.31 31% 5.91 12.9
 4th Yes 1.00 — 4.51 16.9
 Final drive ratio..... 4.51 to one



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