

# AUTO SPORTS

AN INTERNATIONAL RACING MAGAZINE

1963 GRAND PRIX AWARD  
FOR FASHIONABLE STYLING  
and LUXURY-PERFORMANCE

TO

*Pontiac Grand Prix*



**PURE OIL TIME TRIALS • SCCA NATIONAL RACE  
and NATIONAL CONVENTION • MONTE CARLO RALLYE  
WINTER NATIONAL DRAGS • DAYTONA 3-HOUR RACE**



# ***AUTO SPORTS***

## **NAMES**

*Pontiac Grand Prix*

**QUEEN OF THE ROAD**





Here she is, the winner of the 1963 **Auto Sports** International Grand Prix Award for styling and luxury performance—the Pontiac Grand Prix, a two-door sports coupe with all the features of a stately queen.



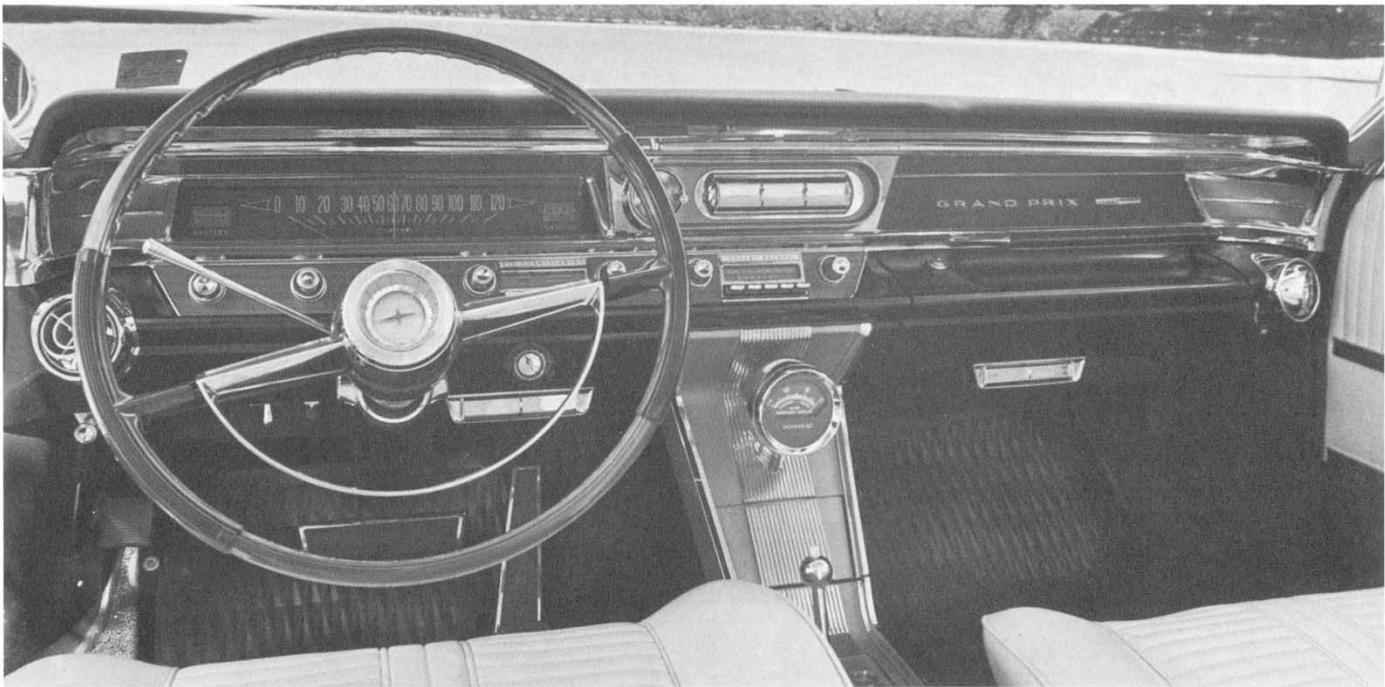
Pontiac's great lady of the highways, the '63 Grand Prix, has the unbeatable combination of beauty and brains. She has power and grace and all the elegance of of a Miss America, a Miss Universe and a grand duchess rolled into one.

It's because of her quiet elegance, superb performance, and sportsmanship that she won the 1963 *Auto Sports International Grand Prix Award*. To *Auto Sports* editors this highway queen best expresses "the skill of engineers, designers, and manufacturers in combining powerful engines in cars designed to provide maximum comfort and to make driving pleasant either on the highway or the raceway."

The award, a golden trophy, was presented to Pontiac in a coast-to-coast closed circuit television broadcast viewed by more than 16,000 persons at the time of the company's sales meetings to celebrate its third-place position in national auto sales for '62. *Auto Sports* Editor-Publisher Larry Tomaras presented the award to E. M. Estes, General Motors vice president and general manager of the Pontiac Motor division, reading the inscription on the award: "Presented to Pontiac for the fashionable styling and luxury performance of the Pontiac Grand Prix."

This handsome auto made her debut in 1962. Her sports car appeal, clean and exclusive styling, front bucket seats and a floor console made her an immediate favorite with car buyers everywhere. More than 32,000 drivers gave her a vote of confidence during that first year and are enjoying her performance in their daily driving on highway or speedway.

For so great a lady it almost seems indelicate to mention her dimensions. She's a two-door sports coupe built on a 120 inch wheelbase and has clean-flowing lines in her rear styling to enhance the lower,



The speedometer is easily seen through the steering wheel on this winner of the **Auto Sports Grand Prix** award for '63. Tachometer, floor console, and the neat arrangement of instruments have special appeal for the men in the Grand Prix's life.

wider, longer look. One is first impressed with her sweeping grille, sculptured side panels, and her concave rear window.

Like the fashion plate she is, the Pontiac Grand Prix wears a simple dress. Her unadorned exterior styling is her trademark. Like the lady who is elegant in basic black, the Grand Prix expresses her elegance in 15 long-lasting luxurious solid colors. The only accents in this classic costume are the GP emblems centered between the two deep and narrow air scoops that form the grille, and far back on the rear fenders. Her name in block letters appears on the front fenders, and she's so distinctive, that, like royalty, she doesn't use her family name of Pontiac on any of her personal possessions.

Sparing use of chrome trim; integrated tail lamps—part of the rear end panel and not in the fender; twin vertical head lamps flanked by parking and turn signal lamps are other fashion tricks this beauty has used.

She's a man's woman, as well as a lady's lady, meeting all of the standards of the most discriminating driver. Under her hood beats a V-8 power plant with a premium fuel engine. However, other engines are offered including either automatic, four-speed synchromesh, or standard three-speed synchromesh transmissions.

The lining of her glamorous solid-colored costume hints of her gaiety, since interiors are offered in red, dark aqua, dark blue, black, and parchment with black, saddle, or red components.

Silver headlining, and a star pattern in the headlining and the nylon blend carpeting on the floor and lower door panels are other beauty marks in this great sports coupe.

Expanded Morrokide is the fabric she has chosen



The concave rear window of the Grand Prix is an industry first. It's an important line in the smooth flowing contours of this highway-speedway title winner.





Sculptured side panels, solid colors, and not even the word "Pontiac" give the Grand Prix a high fashion look which appeals both to women and sportsmen.

for the interior, which offers bucket seats as standard equipment.

She's a joy to have around, is what *Auto Sports* editors agreed. They felt her bucket seats so comfortable they forgot for a moment that they were doing the driving! And her unruffled attitude, regardless of road conditions, also made an impression. The secret of this smoothness is ball-joint front suspension and four-link rear suspension. Her confidence also comes from the self-adjusting, air cooled internal expanding hydraulic-type brakes that bring her to straight-line stops every time. And her slim aluminum wheels contribute rapid cooling to the braking system, while offering a design accent at the same time.

Like the lady she is, the Grand Prix is quiet, too, since noise reduction has been achieved with improved body insulation and insulation on the dash board.

She's a sportswoman, too, and she's ready for the hard driving of the speedway. Meters on her instru-

ment panel indicate that: there's a tachometer placed significantly among the gasoline, and alternator gauges, clock, radio, speedometer and other controls. Drivers like the way they can see the speedometer through the steering wheel, and the way the dash is trimmed in a simulated wood panelling to add to the indoor luxury.

In addition to her distinguishing features such as the concave rear window—an industry first—and aluminum wheels, Grand Prix takes after the GM side of the family, incorporating such features as the Delcotron generator, a brakerless ignition system, self-adjusting brakes, less owner maintenance design, and such optional features as a tilting steering wheel, AM/FM radio, and Circ-L-Aire Conditioner.

From every angle Pontiac and General Motors have reason to be proud of this great lady, as *Auto Sports* is proud to have her named their queen for '63.



Built on a 120-inch wheelbase the Grand Prix has a quiet look of elegance. Contributors to that look are the aluminum wheels, sweeping grille, vertically mounted headlights, and the simple adornment of the Grand Prix letters.



Bright colors, nylon carpeting, Morrokide fabrics for the bucket seats and solid comfort are features of the Grand Prix interior



Chrome trim on the Grand Prix is sparing. One of the few pieces is this gleaming front bumper, really an intrinsic part of the graceful body.

# BORN TO BE BEAUTIFUL



Like the final fitting for a dress, the fiberglass model of the Grand Prix is used to determine size, shape and placement of name plates and crests.

When you talk to the boys in the Pontiac engineering department, they give you the impression that the designing of the Grand Prix was all in a day's work. Yet their creation of this queen of the road was as deliberate and dramatic as the job Pygmalion did on the statue of Paphos, which he wished into mortal being; or that Professor Henry Higgins did to create the grand lady Eliza Doolittle out of the cockney flower girl in "My Fair Lady."

In fact, the Pontiac team started from clay to create the Grand Prix. Early thinking for the car was checked out with the making of a full-size clay model.

J. Z. DeLorean, chief engineer, told us the steps involved in the development of what they affectionately call "The GP."

"We started out deliberately to capture a first impression of 'Quiet Elegance,'" DeLorean says. "We wanted her to be aesthetic, yet functional. For example, the grille is designed to funnel all ram air over the radiator and into the engine compartment for maximum cooling, yet it adds a dramatic touch. And the rear end styling is simply integrated into the body surfaces with a broad applique to emphasize width, while at the same time providing distinction. Stop and tail lamps are integral with this applique and are obviously visible only when the lamps are lighted."

Like the dress designer who uses beautiful lines rather than gimmicks to accent a woman's beauty, the Pontiac styling engineers used a minimum of bright metal ornamentation to "emphasize the restrained dignity of classic styling," they told us.

One of them said matter-of-factly that the GP is so simple and straight forward it's hard to talk about her. "She's just a beautiful car!"

Yet it took thousands of detail and layout drawings to make her that way. Miles and miles of blueprints and thousands of experimental parts were made or tools machined in the engineering machine shop. "We used the latest facilities, analog and digital computers to get rapid answers to design problems; and advanced photostress techniques to confirm the design adequacy of some of the intricate castings, stampings, forgings and their method of attachment," DeLorean explained.

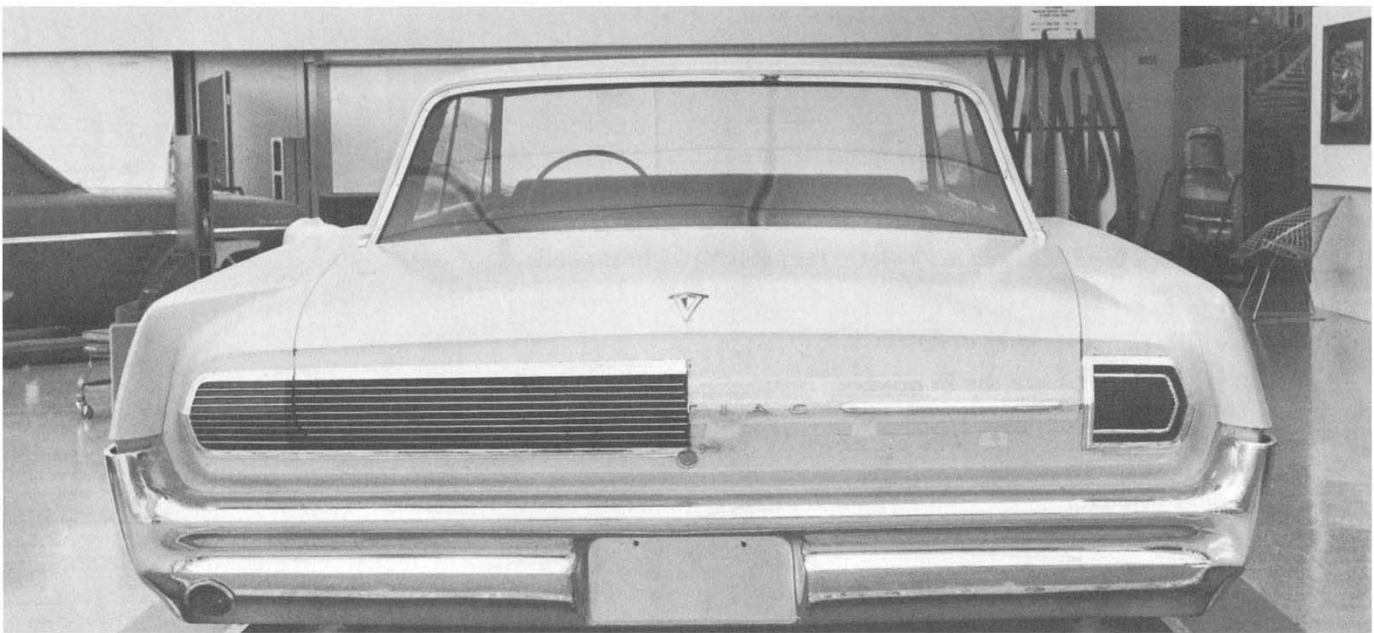
As they checked these innerworkings for strength, the design team was also thinking of maximum safety and passenger comfort, as well as the durability of the GP.

"We estimate that more than 135 safety features are in the '63 GP, as well as the remainder of the Pontiac line," DeLorean commented. "Our engineers continue to search for new means of advancing auto-





This full-size clay model shows an early stage in the evolution of the distinctive 1963 Grand Prix front end design.



A rear view of a full-size fiberglass model shows how the exclusive Grand Prix rear panel design was evolved.

motive safety. Every new feature or design change is made with a primary consideration given to safety and durability. It's this program which has brought some 50 safety features in the body, and more than 60 in the chassis design, as well as others which relate to the stability of the car, direct protection to the driver, and driver controlability."

The body of the GP has a reinforced construction with a perimeter frame which completely encircles the passenger compartment to provide maximum protection for the occupants. Chair-high comfortable seats minimize driver fatigue; visibility is unre-

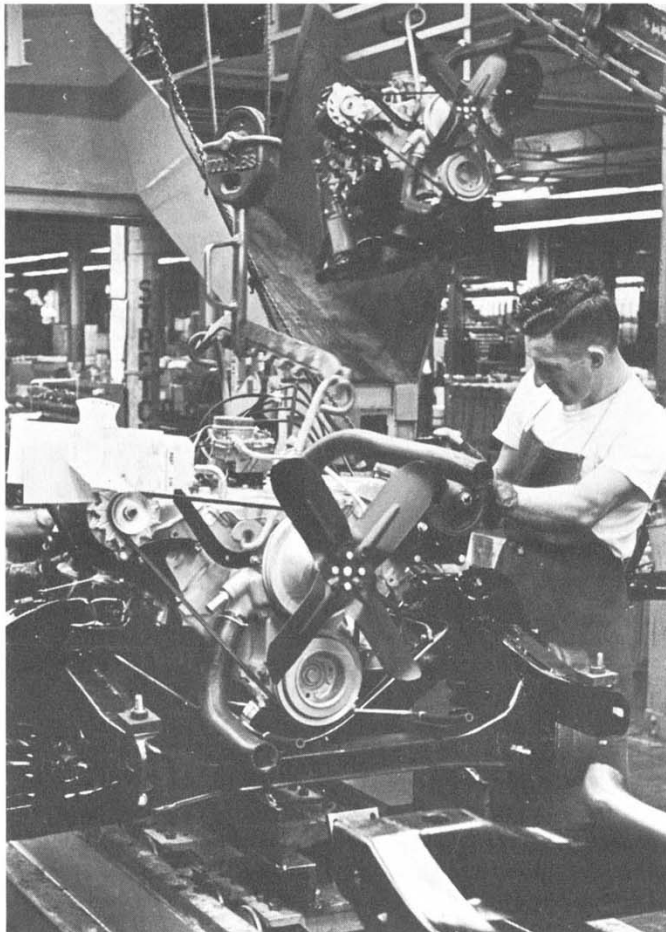
stricted with a wide vision windshield of special safety glass; and the now-famous wide-track with balanced braking provides excellent stability, ride and handling characteristics for better driver control, this chief engineer proudly pointed out.

"We built the GP to provide a quiet smooth ride," he said.

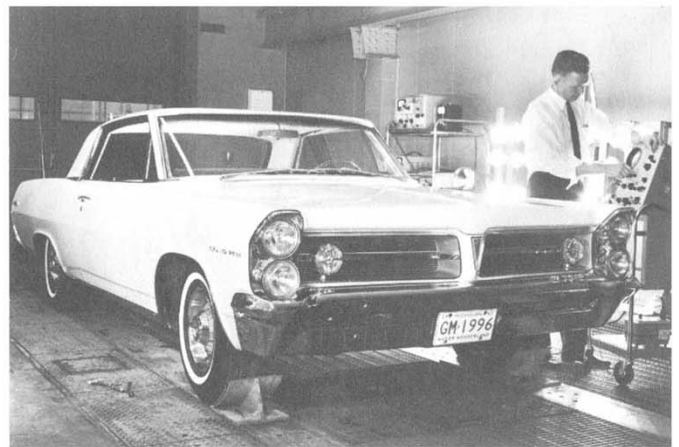
Front and rear suspension parts have improved, rubber cushioned joints to insure the car's quiet, smooth performance, and minimize the need for lubrication.

"Automatic self-adjusting brakes were put in to





Built with custom care the Grand Prix's are assembled at each of the seven Pontiac assembly facilities in the United States. The V-8 engines, manufactured in Pontiac, Mich., are installed on the chassis.



Vinton Birch, Pontiac instrumentation engineer, puts the '63 Grand Prix through some paces to be sure she passes all tests. Now he's concerned with the car's air conditioning. In the Pontiac engineering dynamometer or "hot room" the temperature is made as high as 110° to test the car. Infra red lamps help to raise the interior temperature of the car to those equivalent to hot weather conditions.



Following the installation of the hood, grille and front bumper, shown here, the car is thoroughly inspected and tested before being OK'd for shipment to the customer.

minimize maintenance and other engine refinements improve her performance."

He referred to the Delcotron Alternator electrical system which provides electrical energy at idle and increases the maximum output for more dependable performance as another of the features of the GP.

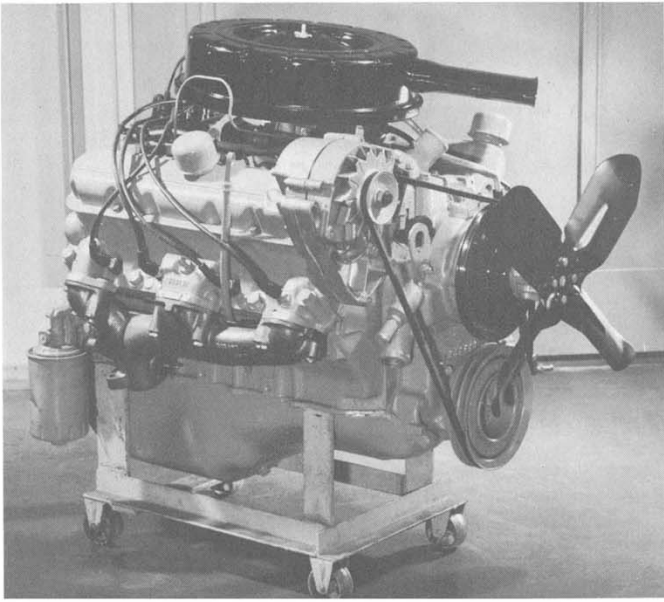
Just as Professor Higgins took Eliza to tea with is mother to test her, so the Lady Grand Prix was put through her paces. She did her first riding at GM's Technical Center in Warren, Mich.; at the Proving Grounds at Milford, Mich., and Phoenix, Ariz., as well as at the Sun Laboratory in Florida and the GM test facility at Pike's Peak, Colo. In this way they knew she could take the city traffic, hills like those in San Francisco, open plains, desert heat, northern cold and high altitudes without showing a sign of unlady-like behavior.

When you ask the engineers about her engine, they just tell you that they gave her the best! "The standard model has our proven and rugged 389 cubic inch, 10.25 to 1 compression ratio premium fuel Trophy V-8 engine to deliver 303 horsepower at 4,600 engine r.p.m., "DeLorean said succinctly.

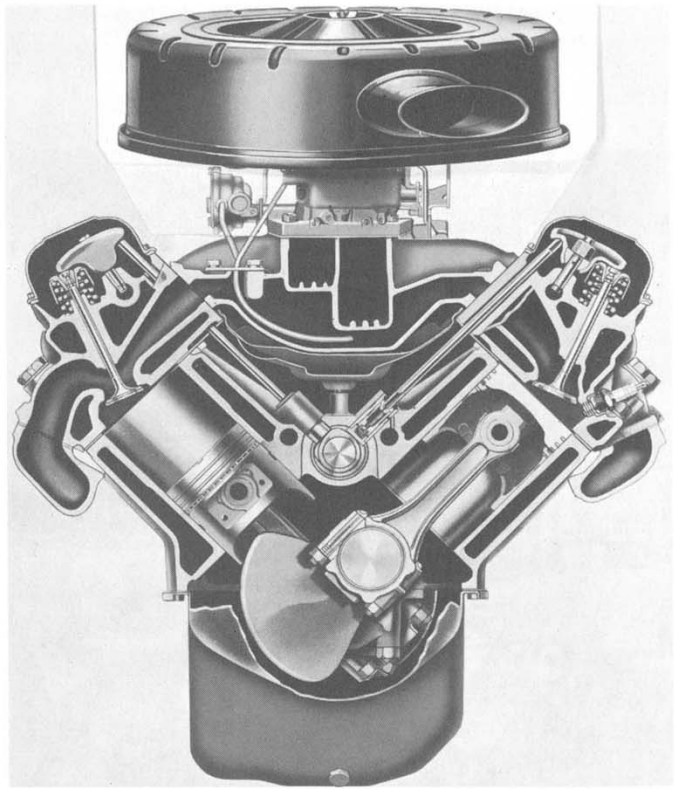
Then he outlined the other engines which can be had, including the 421.

Final touch on this regal beauty is the interior styling. "We wanted it to have the flavor of 'Quiet Elegance,' too," he said. "Bucket seats, and optional 4-speed synchromesh and automatic transmissions all add to her functional beauty."

He finally admitted that there is a satisfaction in seeing a clay model come to life with the power and grace of the Pontiac Grand Prix. Maybe her first name is Paphos!



Now don't get the idea that the 389 engine is to be sneezed at. This standard equipment on the Grand Prix deserves to be put on the pedestal it's on right here—waiting to be installed in a production car.



Here's a cut-away drawing of the 421 H.O.—High Output—engine to give you an inside look into this power plant.

In the days when our primary means of transportation was the horse, the man we all envied was the proud proprietor of a stately black stallion or perhaps a regal Palomino. These animals were few and far between—extraordinary species of horseflesh which were possessed of such natural beauty as to outshine the fairest maidens and intimidate truly fleet animals with the powerful manner in which they pranced about.

Today, one may achieve much the same pleasurable feeling by taking possession of a 1963 Pontiac Grand Prix which packs the 421 cubic inch High Output Trophy V-8 engine with three two-barrel carburetors and automatic transmission. If ever there was a machine capable of stirring a man's soul, this is it.

Pontiac rates the car at 370 horsepower, hardly the most potent package Detroit turns out, but it is the overall appeal which sets this 421 Grand Prix apart. Assuming that a man investing in the \$4,500 price range would have a taste for the finer things, we requested the "works" on our test cars—air conditioning, full power equipment, etc. One car was equipped with Pontiac's normal suspension, the other with optional stiff springs and shocks. Otherwise, there was no difference.

The stiff-sprung Grand Prix was a new gold color with white leather interior. The softer model was a deep red outside with black leather interior. Both of course carried the new Pontiac "421" emblem just beyond the door on each front fender.

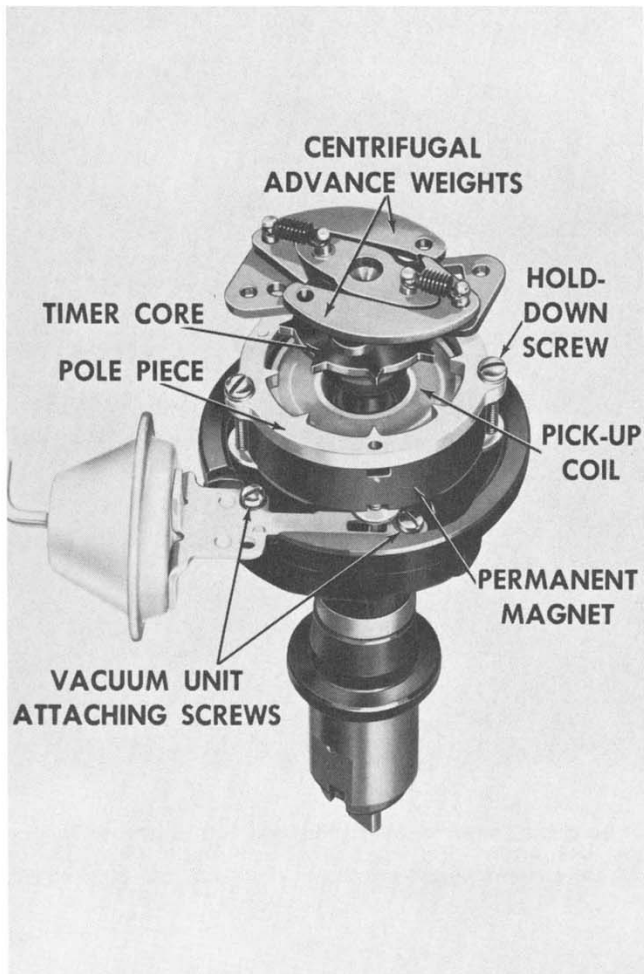
The immediate problem encountered with this vehicle is a matter of getaway. Not getaway punch, mind you, but simply getting away from people who

catch you unlocking the door at the curb and want to take a look inside and under the hood. Looks are a very large part of the 421 Grand Prix's appeal, however, and there was never an owner so modest as to be genuinely displeased with a stranger's admiration for his automobile.

From the glamor standpoint, the Grand Prix has virtually everything a man could desire in such a versatile machine. Its exterior is distinctive yet dignified and authoritative. Chrome-haters can find little to complain about. The most striking styling effects are achieved through body sculpturing rather than reckless splashes of bright metal. From front, side or rear there is no mistaking the grand Grand Prix, even without the last-touch aluminum wheels which comprise the only noticeable exterior option. Inside, the car is as tastefully appointed as its exterior, with the emphasis on elegance rather than the gaudy. Focal points are ample bucket seats in front, the between-seats console with ash tray and glove compartment, the instrument panel safety assist bar and the tachometer or manifold vacuum gauge (or, as was the case on our cars, both).

When both tachometer and manifold vacuum gauge are offered, the tachometer is attached to the left of the steering wheel on the instrument panel and the manifold gauge mounted on the console at about knee-level. The new manifold vacuum gauge at first seems little more than a showpiece, but with a bit of experimentation can be put to surprisingly good use. In addition to numerical graduation, it is divided into three colored areas: green, labeled "economy;" a neutral orange zone between the

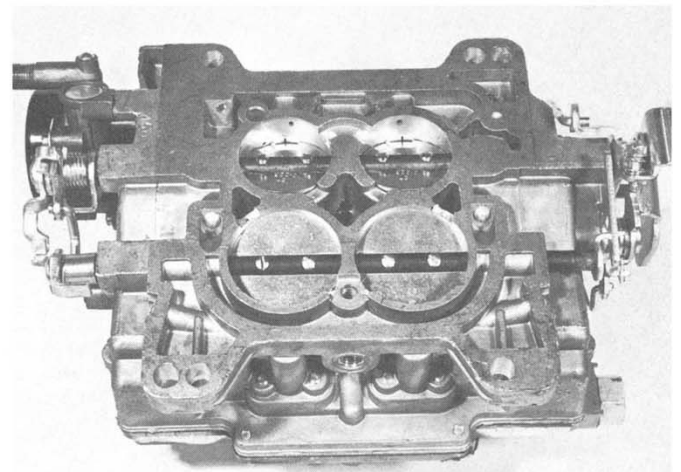
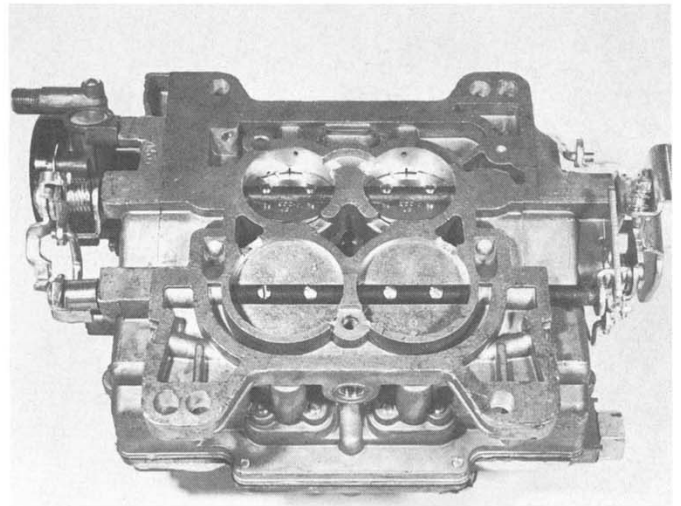




Delco breakerless distributor is standard for the 390 hp engine, optional for others. Magnetic pickup triggers small current to a transistor pack; improves performance at all speeds.

“economy” and “power” markings; and a bright red “power” zone. A red needle hovers in the appropriate area of performance—in the green zone, if the accelerator pressure is light enough to enable “economy” operation, in the red zone, if accelerator pressure is calling on the “power,” or in the intermediate orange zone if the driver’s style is somewhere in between. Of course on throttle-stomping take-offs, the driver’s head is pressed too firmly back to be turned toward the gauge, which is bottoming out in the red zone. The primary value of the gauge, in our opinion, is its assistance in setting the most economical highway cruising pace for long trips. Most drivers, we suspect, would be surprised in comparing manifold pressure readings at 60 and 65 m.p.h.

But the Grand Prix’s beauty may be appreciated without turning a wheel. What happens when the ignition key is switched on? Precisely what the master commands. The thunder lurking under the hood is so well tamed that a noticeably hard idle means the mill is out of tune. Coupled to Pontiac’s time-proven Hydra Matic transmission (although a four-

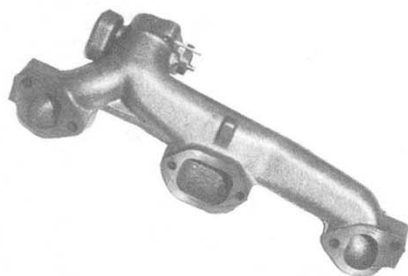
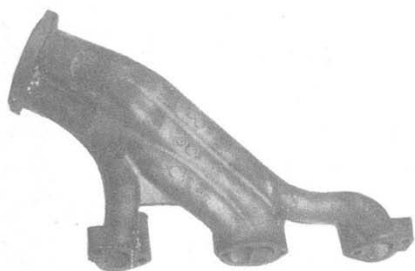


The Carter AFB 4-barrel carburetor is used in the Grand Prix 421 H.O. Shown here barrel size of the primary barrels, foreground is 1.438 inches, while secondary barrels at the top are 1.688 inches.

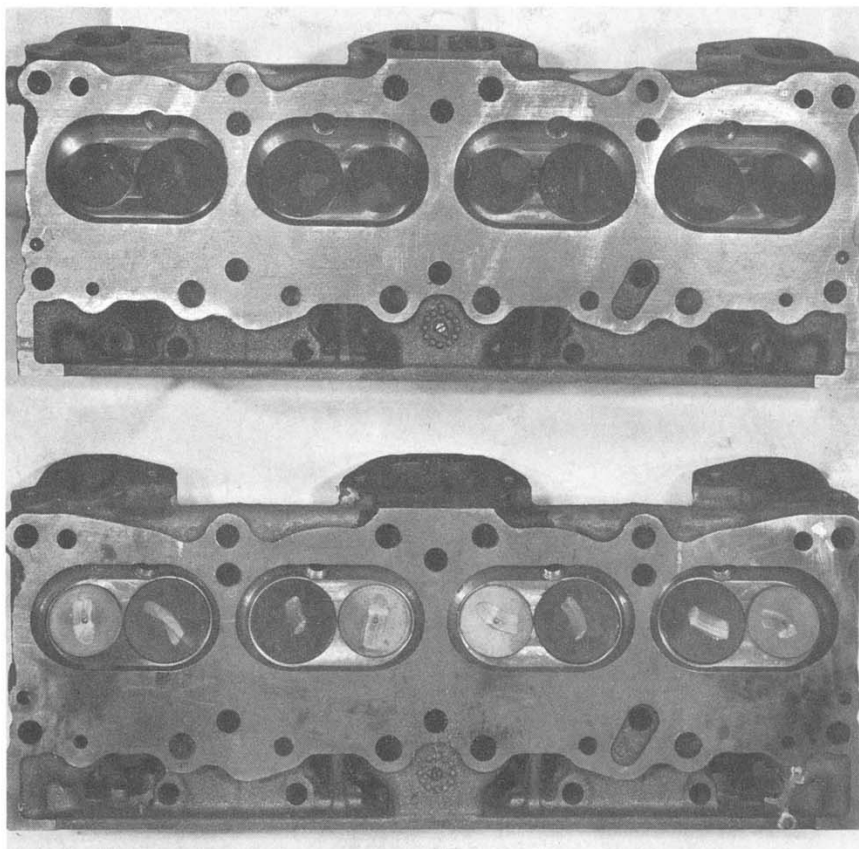
speed synchromesh gearbox is available), the three-deuce 421 engine can purr through its paces in the heaviest traffic without the slightest balk or cause pedestrians to scramble for the nearest fallout shelter when the right foot goes to the floorboard.

In full-bore flight, the 421 Grand Prix is no super stock drag winner, although its zero-to-30 getoff makes you want to look and see if the air conditioning and power equipment is really hooked up. Even “loaded” it is not too much to ask this one to have you rolling at 60 m.p.h. in less than 10 seconds, which not too long ago was an extraordinary feat for even stripped-down Detroit machinery. It comes out of low gear in the automatic transmission version at about 50 m.p.h. and out of second into high at about 80 m.p.h. (Both test cars carried 3.42:1 axles.)

This blending of true docility and neck-snapping punch is a significant feature of the Hydra-Matic 421 three-deuce Grand Prix. Few, if any, automobiles of such potency can perform so quietly and smoothly without alterations. Few, if any, of such classic plushness can deliver truly impressive acceleration



Better flow of exhaust is provided in the 421 H.O. engine with this exhaust manifold, shown at the top. For comparison, the Pontiac 389 manifold is shown at the bottom.



Here's the evidence of the greater power of the Pontiac 421 H.O. engine. At the top is the standard 389 cubic inch engine. The larger valves and bigger ports which give more breathing room to the powerful engine are shown in the 421 H.O. pictured at the bottom.

when loaded with power-sapping options. In other words, it is glamorous and well-behaved enough to carry the governor in style in the Christmas parade and powerful enough to double as a superb getaway car.

Handling characteristics of the two cars differed rather pointedly due to the different suspensions. The "stiff" Grand Prix proved capable of holding a true line in a high speed curve with a minimum of pitch as fast as 90 m.p.h.—enough to satisfy discriminating race drivers. The "soft" car was noticeably more comfortable in city and particularly suburban driving but was bouncier and less stable at highway speeds. Our personal preference was the "stiff" GP, whose sporty nimbleness more than made up for a slightly more sensitive interpretation of manhole covers and railroad tracks.

The 421 Grand Prix seems tailor-made for the man who seeks an automobile handsome enough to provoke street corner stares, yet possessed of rare

performance and comfort. Such features as the adjustable steering wheel level and suspension options enable the driver to play racer or dignitary as the spirit moves him.

There may be some who object to the fact that front bucket seats are standard equipment on the Grand Prix, but this is an important identity feature of the automobile, which would not be the same without them. The 421 engine is a wonderful package, but the one thing it is not is a mileage-maker. Fuel consumption can be rather staggering if the driver regards every stoplight as the starting point for a private drag race, although the big 25-gallon fuel tank helps minimize trips to the gas pump.

As is true of the entire Pontiac line, the Grand Prix can be purchased in any number of combinations, but let it be known that the auto enthusiast "ain't seen nothin'" until he has experienced the fully-equipped 421 Grand Prix in all its many-splendored glory.