

RALLY PACKED BARRACUDA



Lite lines and lively performance match solid suspension

by Bob McVay
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IT'S A BUYER'S market in this year of 1965, and from the looks of things, buyers are becoming more and more demanding. A new youth market, plus the so-called young-at-heart want sportier cars—cars they can enjoy driving, cars that are fun. How Detroit manufacturers answer this challenge is interesting, but they *are* answering. And we like their answers, because sportier cars are safer cars. Cars that are fun to

drive necessarily have to perform, handle, and stop better than their sedan counterparts.

Call it what you will, the back-to-fun-driving movement has brought out many interesting options and accessories that add performance and safety to the American automotive scene. Performance enthusiasts have demanded (and gotten) bigger, more powerful engines, sturdier, smoother four- and even three-speed floorshift transmissions, and better suspension systems. This year has seen almost every manufacturer follow Studebaker in offering disc brakes on their sportier models—some as standard

equipment, some as options—but the fact remains that better brakes, discs or not, are now available on American automobiles.

Still not happy with the performance, handling, and stopping options on their full-sized family transportation, certain buyers (and quite a few of them) expressed considerable interest in sports car performance in a smaller package. Yet it had to have room for at least four people, and at a reasonable price. A big order.

Chrysler Corporation's answer is the Barracuda, introduced in mid-1964 in fastback form. The result speaks very





A blast through Turn Eight at top speed brought out understeer, but nothing excessive. Control was good despite slow steering.



Heading through pylon gate at 35 mph with four aboard, the car showed only slight body lean, actually handled better with load.

BARRACUDA *continued*

well of their efforts. Chrysler has come up with a car that's exciting and fun to drive. It handles like a champ, yet offers a tremendous amount of utility. And they've kept it a quiet, comfortable, pleasant car to drive on extended trips. The standard braking system does its job well enough, but a dealer-installed option, front-wheel disc brakes, should satisfy even the most demanding fan.

With a starting price of \$2571 for the Barracuda V-8, buyers can tailor the car to suit their needs. A quick look at the option list shows that ours was built for the performance enthusiast. If it were our own personal car, we'd add disc brakes and power steering (for the quicker 3.5 turns) plus possibly belted-tread tires for a better road grip.

As supplied, the Barracuda was a charger capable of hustling its owner and friends from point to point in minimum elapsed time, yet it was also smooth, quiet, and comfortable.

Fitted with Barracuda's top engine option, a 235-hp, high-performance, 273-cubic-inch V-8, our test car had Chrysler's excellent four-speed transmission topped off with a Hurst shifter. A 3.55 rear axle plus a limited-slip differential made our Barracuda able to leap from rest to 60 mph in eight seconds flat and sail through the quarter-mile traps in a shade over 16 seconds. Its biggest problem was wheelspin. Keeping it at a minimum took some doing, because the willing V-8 would climb right up to 6000 rpm and more in what seemed like no time at all.

Hurst's excellent shifter, with its fist-filling, large, round, black knob couldn't be faulted no matter how fast we

shifted. In our book, the Chrysler-Hurst combination is tops.

The Barracuda's passing power was most impressive, as our spec chart shows. This meant less time on the wrong side of the road. Third gear was good for an honest 92 mph, and second peaked out at 67 mph, so both were handy for emergency passing and high-speed cornering.

We were equally impressed with Plymouth's combination of a smooth, comfortable ride and a minimum of body lean. With tires pumped up to 31 psi front and 29 rear, the Barracuda handled very well indeed. Understeer was noticeable, but at a much higher speed than in the last Barracuda we tested with standard Valiant suspension—and the standard Valiant V-8 handles well in its own right.

Only the car's slow steering ratio, 5.3 turns between locks in standard form,



From the rear, still not much body lean. Car's adequate fresh-air vent system kept occupants cool, helped de-mist rear glass.



At point of maximum lean, car still felt stable and under control. Rear end could be hung out at will and brought back quite easily.



Cruising at 60 mph with vent panes and air vents open, temperature at back of seat registered 98° vs. 82° at window.



Tinted rear window's heat-absorbing qualities eliminate 33% of sun's spectrum, remove 45% ultraviolet, 35% infra-red rays.

made things touchy at high speeds. Although smooth and quick enough on the freeway, tight turns and winding mountain roads weren't easy with this ratio. We had to do too much wheel-winding for really precise control. The driver who likes quicker steering will check off Chrysler's power-steering option. Its 3.5 turns, good road feel, and light positive action make it a natural for better control.

With plenty of power on tap, the Barracuda could be drifted through fast bends at will and brought back into a straight line at the driver's discretion by pressing the accelerator. Our only small complaint here was a slight hesitation and carb flooding when we heeled the car over in a tight turn.

The best thing about the heavy-duty suspension system was that the Barracuda's comfortable ride hasn't suffered noticeably. We could feel the firmer

reaction over washboard roads and deep potholes, but it certainly couldn't be called uncomfortable. It was nice and firm and held bouncing to a minimum, which we feel is an improvement.

Our test car's power-brake option located the pedal lower than with standard brakes, making it quicker to use. Only a slight swivel of the heel, and our accelerator foot was on the brake. Action proved light and progressive at all times and was, under normal and faster-than-normal driving, perfectly adequate for the car's weight and performance.

Out on the track, when we used the brakes hard during our acceleration runs, we called on them to slow us from nearly 100 mph time after time. Without much time for cooling, they did show signs of fading, with some lock-up. Our first panic stop from 30 mph found one front wheel locking up and the car stopping short but nearly side-

ways on the track. After backing up a few times and hitting the pedal for automatic adjustment, we made our 60-mph stops without noticeable swerving. The rear wheels tended to lock up and hop during the 60-mph stops, but the car did make it in a straight line.

The dealer-installed disc-brake option for front wheels only would be our choice for consistent high-speed stopping power.

Improvements for 1965 in the Barracuda line include a heavy-duty thrust bearing in the three-speed automatic transmission's output shaft, plus ignition and electrical refinements. A factory-installed air-conditioning system and lots of new options are the big news for the 1965 Barracuda.

For our technical readers' information, top engine option is a 235-hp V-8 with a high-lift, high-overlap camshaft, dome-shaped pistons, solid lifters, dual



Security panel folds down to give huge, useful carrying space. There's enough room for two to sleep comfortably if necessary.



With panel closed, there's room in trunk for suitcases. Twin exhaust vents under lid let stale air out of passenger area.



A REAL ROAD-BURNER, BARRACUDA WAS STRONG, WELL BALANCED AT HIGH SPEEDS. GAS MILEAGE RANGED FROM 12 TO 19 MPG DURING TEST.

BARRACUDA *continued*

breaker points, and an unsilenced air cleaner. Our ears also got a big treat from Barracuda's low-back-pressure exhaust system. Its big, rectangular-shaped exhaust pipe emits a beautiful sound, especially during acceleration runs and around high-speed bends. An engine dress-up kit tops off the high-performance package.

The Rallye Suspension Package—heavy-duty torsion bars and anti-sway bars up front plus stiffer leaves in the rear along with another option, Firm-Ride shocks—provided better handling for our test car. It's available on all Barracudas.

Special paint and five different colors of racing stripes plus color-keyed interiors (bucket front seats standard) help buyers choose their personal preference.

It's a buyer's market all right, and Chrysler Corporation has certainly put forth a maximum effort to please all its customers all the time. In standard form, with a 225-inch, 145-hp Six and three-speed manual transmission, or in very sporty form, like our test car, the Barracuda offers a wide, wide range of performance with utility. It's roomy and comfortable for five (more so for four), yet its handling is still good, improved if anything, by the extra weight. With only two aboard, luggage space is tremendous.

We were impressed with this sportiest of Barracudas. Long on performance, handling, and utility, it offers the family man a package that should be darn near impossible to resist. /MT

PLYMOUTH BARRACUDA

2-door, 5-passenger fastback coupe

OPTIONS ON CAR TESTED: Commando 235-hp V-8, 4-speed transmission with Hurst linkage, Sure-Grip differential, heavy-duty suspension, power brakes, radio, whitewalls, misc. access.

BASE PRICE: \$2571

PRICE AS TESTED: \$3344.40 (plus tax and license)

ODOMETER READING AT START OF TEST: 1391 miles

RECOMMENDED ENGINE RED LINE: 6000 rpm

PERFORMANCE

ACCELERATION (2 aboard)

0-30 mph.....	3.0 secs.
0-45 mph.....	5.0
0-60 mph.....	8.0

PASSING TIMES AND DISTANCES

40-60 mph.....	3.7 secs., 270.1 ft.
50-70 mph.....	4.8 secs., 422.4 ft.

Standing start ¼-mile 16.1 secs. and 87 mph

Speeds in gears @ 6000 rpm

1st.....	41 mph	3rd.....	92 mph
2nd.....	67 mph	4th.....	110 (observed)
			@ 5500 rpm

Speedometer Error on Test Car

Car's speedometer reading.....	31	48	53	64	75	86
Weston electric speedometer.....	30	45	50	60	70	80

Observed miles per hour per 1000 rpm in top gear.....20 mph

Stopping Distances — from 30 mph, 34.5 ft.; from 60 mph, 164.5 ft.

SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER

Engine

Ohv V-8
Bore: 3.63 ins.
Stroke: 3.31 ins.
Displacement: 273 cu. ins.
Compression ratio: 10.5:1
Horsepower: 235 @ 5200 rpm
Horsepower per cubic inch: 0.86
Torque: 280 lbs.-ft. @ 4000 rpm
Carburetion: 1 4-bbl.
Ignition: 12-volt coil

Gearbox

4-speed manual, all synchro; floormounted, with Hurst linkage

Driveshaft

1-piece, open tube

Suspension

Front: Heavy-duty (Rallye Suspension Package) torsion bars, double-acting, tubular, Firm-Ride shocks
Rear: Rigid axle, with heavy-duty, 5.5-leaf, semi-elliptic springs, double-acting, tubular, Firm-Ride shocks

Differential

Hypoid, semi-floating
Standard ratio: 3.55:1

Steering

Worm and ball nut
Turning diameter: 37.1 ft.
Turns lock to lock: 5.3

Wheels and Tires

5-lug, steel disc wheels
7.00 x 13 whitewall tires

Brakes

Hydraulic, duo-servo, with self-energizing shoes
Front: 9-in. dia. x 2.5 ins. wide
Rear: 9-in. dia. x 2.0 ins. wide
Effective lining area: 153.5 sq. ins.
Swept drum area: 254.5 sq. ins.

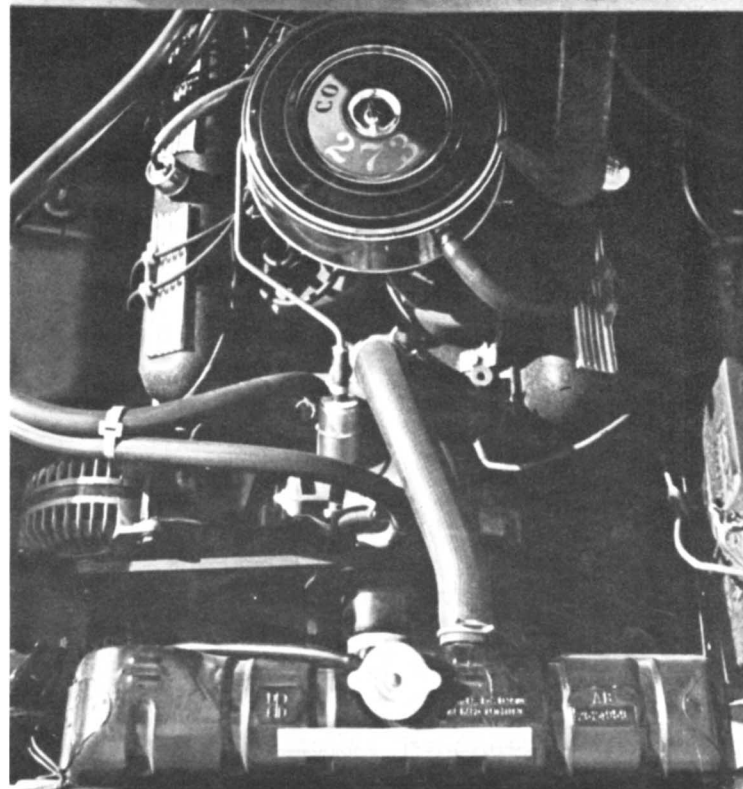
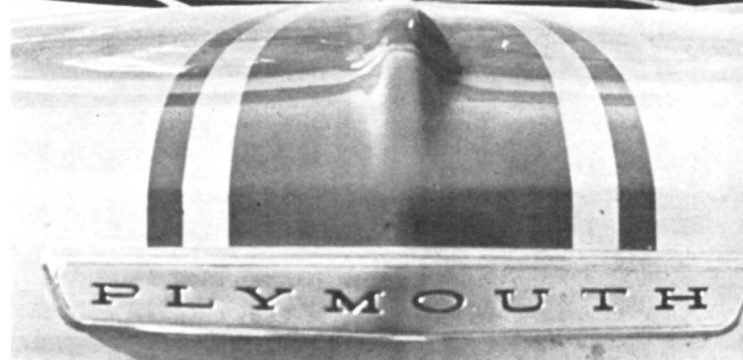
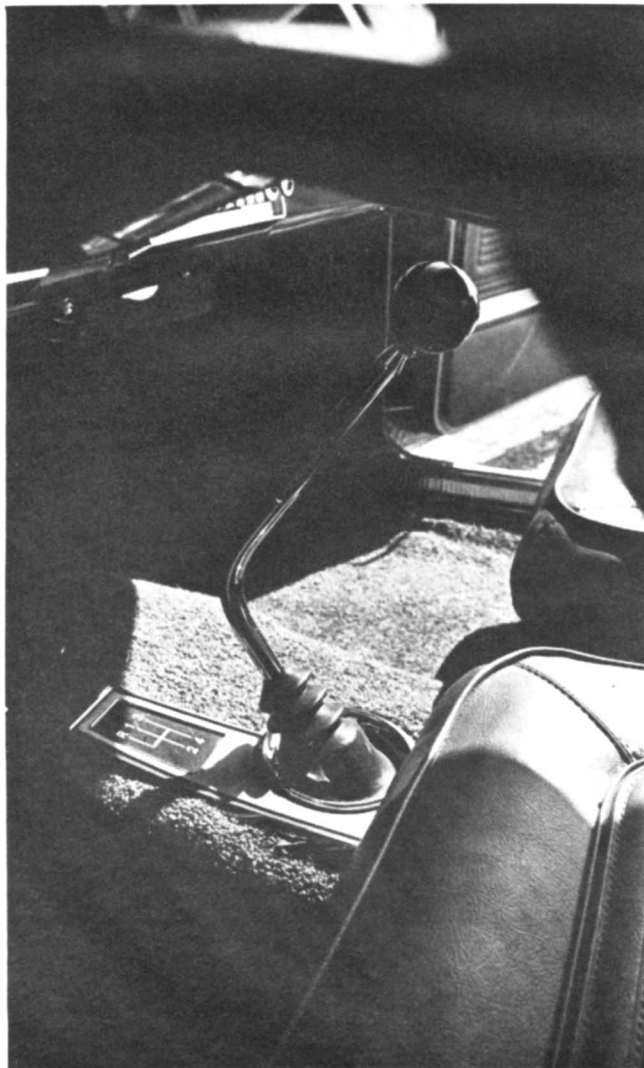
Body and Frame

Unit construction
Wheelbase: 106.0 ins.
Track: front, 55.9 ins.; rear, 55.6 ins.
Overall length: 188.2 ins.
Overall width: 70.1 ins.
Overall height: 53.5 ins.
Curb weight: 3170 lbs.



Plymouth's combination of 235-hp V-8, Sure-Grip differential with 3.55 gears, and four-speed gearbox add up to a hot performer.

Hurst shifter and Chrysler's four-speed transmission make quite a pair. Shifting proved to be quick, sure, and extremely smooth.



Powerful V-8 and racing stripes aid performance and looks. Front buckets give good leg and back support, no lateral help.