



5600 rpm, a region completely abhorrent to the VW. The Opel will beat the 1300 VW across the quarter-mile by a full second, eventually ease past it on the freeway at an honest 80 mph, and then stop with greater effectiveness than the fondest aspiration of any Beetle. Moreover, the Opel is recording gas mileage figures as healthy as his VW-driving neighbor, although it's premium fuel only for the GM-wagen.

The Opel is, of course, a conventional automobile; that is, it has a water-cooled 4-cyl. engine under the front hood. A 4-speed manual transmission, all synchronized, is operated in the Coupe by a stubby remote shifter jutting up from the decorative console plate. Drive is via a long shaft to the rear wheels, with a typical Hotchkiss arrangement for the leaf-sprung live rear axle. Unequal length upper and lower arms are used for front suspension, with a 2-leaf transverse spring connecting the lower arms. Steering is an admirable rack and pinion, 3 turns lock-to-lock, which manages to damp road shocks completely.

Front wheel disc brakes are part of the S package (which \$55 extra puts on any Kadett wagon or sedan) and account largely for the car's excellent stopping ability. These have two pistons per caliper and are steady and progressive in action, without upsetting the proportion of work done by the rear drums. It was only possible, in fact, to induce rear drum lock-up by exceeding the adhesion limits reached at a full 1-G stop. There was no fading tendency; the brakes stopped in direct proportion to the amount of pressure applied to the pedal.

Oversize tires—6.15-13s—are also part of that S package, but even this option is not enough to overcome the undershod appearance of the car. In



SCOTT MALCOLM PHOTOS

THE OPEL may be a fatuous fastback, but remains an example of what a stylist can manage if he happens to be a good cost analyst.

OPEL KADETT S

Down to Mirth Transportation

ONE OF THE most difficult things a person can be called upon to do is to take something like the Opel Kadett S Coupe seriously. It just doesn't seem to be much more than a joke, good for funnin' around with for the guys down at the gas station. *CL* had its fun with an Opel last April Fool's Day, but now there's this new super sports model that is supposed to be, really, a car. How can the giggles be controlled when you've got a car that is a satire, a parody on all the foolish fastback styling that is dusted off and offered to a gullible public as fresh merchandise? What's to choke off the guffaws when GM's much-admired Coke-bottle shape is reduced to a ridiculous overall length? For a side-splitting thigh-slapper, not much around can top the tipsy look of a car

perched on tiny wheels—a visual blockbuster which has brought the well-deserved stigma of "roller skate" upon many foreign economy sedans.

Unquestionably, in the U.S. imported car sales theater, Opel has in VW a very funny act to follow. VW advertising recognizes the humor in the bug and consequently approaches the level of classic jest, somewhat on the order of the *Joe Miller Joke Book*. Still, the economists at Volkswagenwerk already have recognized the dwindling of a market for 1100-cc cars and broadened into the 1.5-liter field.

Before proceeding in this analysis of mirth, perhaps it would be well to point out some basic beliefs. The Opel is closer to the size, in box volume, that *CL* staff members personally favor than all but North America's initial

compact cars. Despite its obvious mismatches, it illustrates the generalization sometimes made that imported cars often appear to be the work of one stylist, rather than the result of camel-committee deliberations. And the Opel is an excellent example of what the one stylist can do if he also happens to be a highly competent cost analyst.

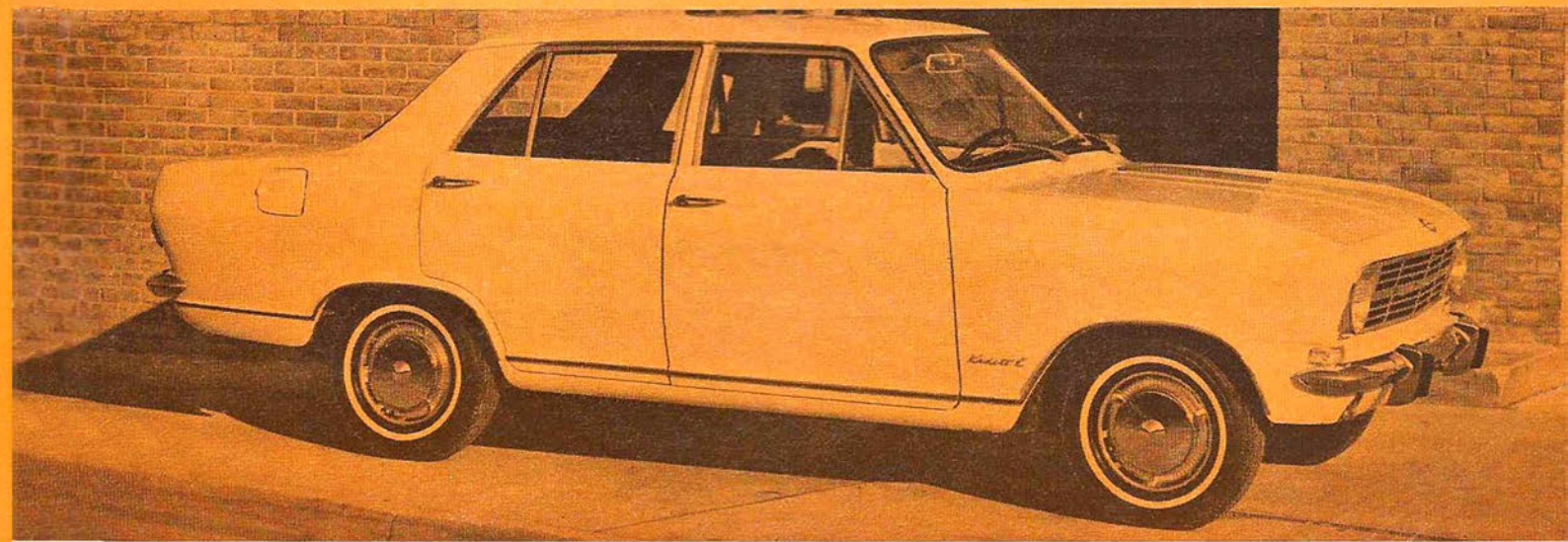
Uncontrollable chuckling must start once the Opel driver realizes that he is outperforming all the VWs, in just about every way imaginable. This is done with 10 fewer cu. in., but at the price of frightening rpm levels. The S engine, installed in the test Coupe, develops 5 bhp more than the standard version and gets an advertising agency bonus of one additional bhp to round it off at 60. This bhp peak comes at

fact, one of the basic moves which could be made to make the Opel look more carlike would be to fit low-profile tires of a fat, healthy cross-section. Not only would this be an appearance enhancer, it would also be psychologically satisfying. There was something

unsettling about churning down the freeway at full whine, knowing the effort those tiny tires were trying to exert and fearing the disintegration of one.

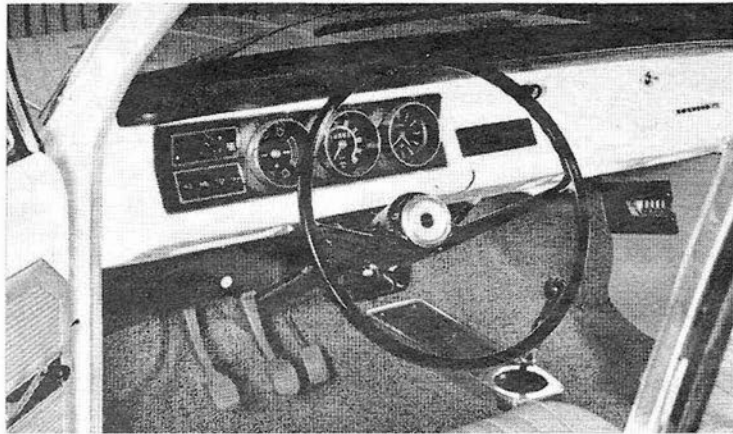
Another aspect of the car tending toward unpleasantness is its unhappy

1966 IS the first model year in which GM of Germany has offered a 4-door Opel Kadett. This model is 164.6 in. overall, carries 54 bhp and can be fitted with disc brakes for \$55 extra. The GM 2-year/24,000-mile warranty is standard.





ROLLER SKATE appearance comes from tiny wheels. Larger diameter would be more reassuring.



ROCKER SWITCHES, easily read gauges, suspended pedals and high seating position mark operational comforts.

KADETT

pitching tendency. This is often the price one pays for short wheelbases and Opel is a typical offender. The Kadett does have a 3.6 in. longer wheelbase than 1963-65 models, and while the choppiness has been reduced in this latest model, it still is far from suitably controlled.

Its stubby nature makes the Kadett

quite ideal for around-town errand running. In fact, everything about the car suggests that this is its most logical mission in life. The doors are ample for easy entrance and exit. Seats, including the so-called bucket seats in front, are flat perches which provide no lateral hindrance against sliding in and out. The seating position is like that at the kitchen table. In the rear, excess knee and foot room has been whittled away.

GM's Continental cousins do some things in a manner that might well be

examined closely by its domestic designers. One such item: a hand-span array of rocker-type buttons on the dashboard instead of switches for lights, wipers, heater blower. Another: The all-purpose signal arm to the left of the steering column, which not only activates turn signals, but also switches headlight beams, flashes the headlights for a daytime passing signal, and sounds the horn with a tap on the button end of it. And there was that old friend, the pull-up "emergency" brake lever, located atop the tun-

1966 OPEL KADETT COUPE



DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase, in.	95.0
Track, f/r, in.	49.2/50.4
Overall length, in.	164.7
width	61.9
height	54.8
Front seat hip room, in.	2 x 21
shoulder room	49.8
head room	38.2
pedal-seatback, max.	40.3
Rear seat hip room, in.	49.3
shoulder room	49.9
leg room	32.0
head room	36.1
Door opening width, in.	37.5
Floor to ground height, in.	8.0
Ground clearance, in.	6.8

PRICES

List, p.o.e.	\$1899
Equipped as tested	1976
Options included: High-performance S engine and disc brakes, wsw tires.	

CAPACITIES

No. of passengers	4
Luggage space, cu. ft.	11.6
Fuel tank, gal.	10.6
Crankcase, qt.	2.9
Transmission/diff., pt.	1.5/1.4
Radiator coolant, qt.	5.2

CHASSIS/SUSPENSION

Frame type	untilted
Front suspension type: Independent by s.l.a.; transverse leaf spring, telescopic shock absorbers.	
ride rate at wheel, lb./in.	78.4
anti-roll bar dia., in.	none
Rear suspension type: Live axle with longitudinal, parallel, 2-leaf springs; telescopic shock absorbers.	
ride rate at wheel, lb./in.	102
Steering system: Rack and pinion with 2 transverse tie-rods.	
gear ratio	n.a.
overall ratio	17.6
turns, lock to lock	3.0
turning circle, ft. curb-curb	32.2
Curb weight, lb.	1620
Test weight	1960
Weight distribution, % f/r	52.8/47.2

BRAKES

Type: Single-line hydraulic with self-adjusting caliper disc fronts and duo-servo shoes in cast iron drums in rear.

Front disc, dia.	9.37
Rear drum, dia. x width	7.87 x 1.10
total swept area, sq. in.	n.a.
Power assist	none
line psi @ 100 lb. pedal	n.a.

WHEELS/TIRES

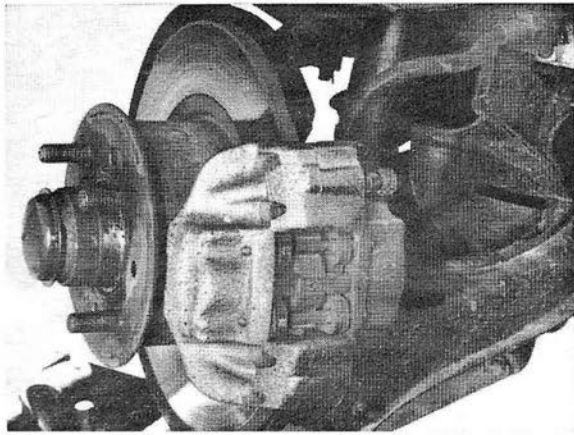
Wheel size	4.5 J x 13
optional size available	4.0 x 12
bolt no./circle dia., in.	n.a.
Tire make: Continental Schliuschles size	6.15-13
recommended inflation, psi	19/25
capacity rating, total lb.	2976

ENGINE

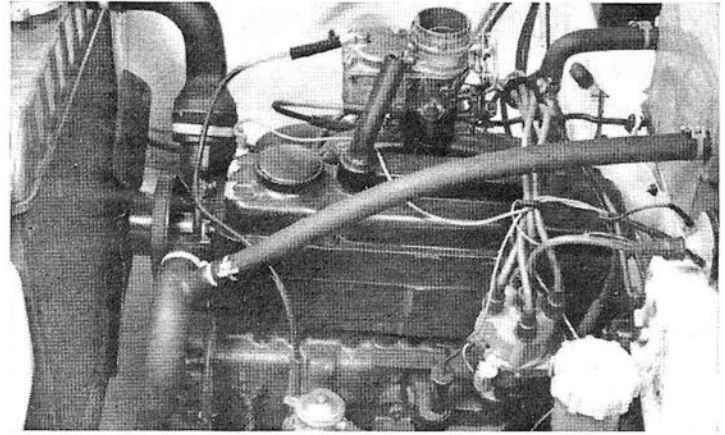
Type, no. cyl.	ohv 4
Bore x stroke, in.	2.95 x 2.40
Displacement, cu. in.	65.76
Compression ratio	8.8
Rated bhp @ rpm	59 @ 5600
equivalent mph	92
Rated torque @ rpm	63 @ 3000
equivalent mph	49
Carburetion	1x1 barrel dia., pri./sec.
Valve operation: Solid tappets, push-rods, rockers with adjusting screws.	
valve dia., int./exh.	1.26/1.06
lift, int./exh.	0.346
timing, deg.	36-78, 86-50
duration, int./exh.	294/316
opening overlap	86
Exhaust system: Single with reverse flow muffler.	
pipe dia., exh./tail	1.38/1.26
Lubrication pump type	gear
normal press. @ rpm	28 @ 500
Electrical supply	generator
ampere rating	25
Battery, plates/amp. rating	9/44

DRIVE-TRAIN

Clutch type	single-plate, dry disc
dia., in.	6.69
Transmission type: Manual shift, all-synchromesh 4-speed.	
Gear ratio 4th (1.00) overall	3.89
3rd (1.43)	5.56
2nd (2.22)	8.63
1st (3.87)	15.1
1st x t.c. stall ()	
synchromeshing	all four
Shift lever location	console
Differential type: Hypoid, semi-floating shafts.	
axle ratio	3.89



DUAL PISTON disc brakes are part of the optional 60-bhp S performance package.



THE OPEL'S 1100 cc will beat the VW's 1300 on either dragstrip or freeway, but on penalty of 5600 rpm.

nel and between the seats. Very handy. What Buick has in mind to justify marketing the Kadett in this country is difficult to determine. The individual of iconoclastic inclinations will turn elsewhere to find a car of technical novelty and appeal. Only a frantic few unable to see beyond the low initial price will find it acceptable as primary transportation.

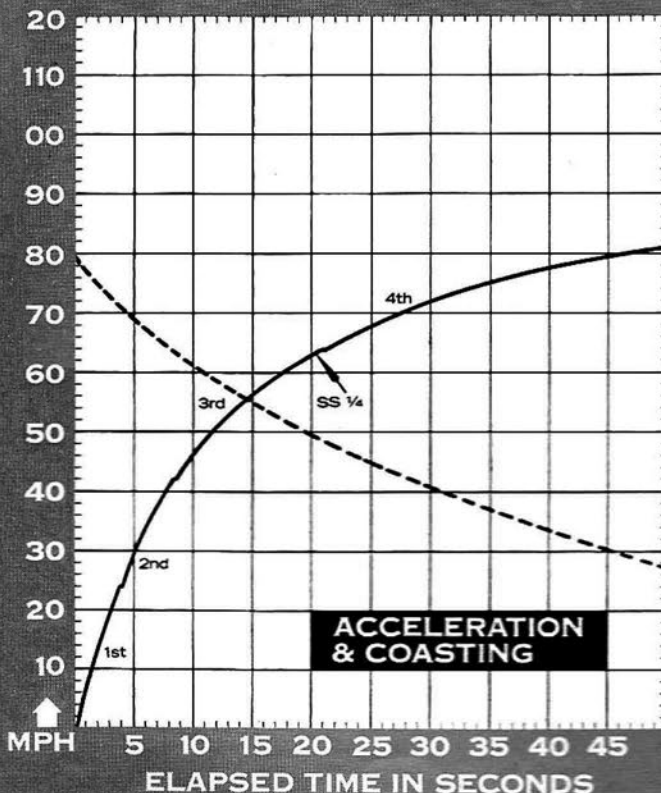
Yet, Kadett sales are increasing. From some 13,000 sales in 1964, dealers moved an additional 18,500 last year (half of them were station wa-

gons) and can draw upon a production volume of as high as 40,000 this year, should sales warrant it. All of the 600-odd Opel dealers are concentrated in the 387 counties with the highest imported car registrations. Price, and a standard GM 2-year/24,000-mile warranty, must be the reason or at least part of the reason for the sales.

Price is surely the reason why Opels of a more suitable nature aren't imported. The Rekord series cars are 177 in. in overall length on a 103.9-in. wheelbase. Either a 102.5-cu. in./68-

bhp Four or a 159-cu. in./117-bhp Six is available in that class. But while the Rekord would complement the Buick line on a size basis, it would conflict in the pricing area with 6-cyl. Specials. Therein lies the Kadett's attractiveness to the dealers. There's another suggestion which might be made to Adam Opel A. G. and its Buick marketeers: Put the Rekord engine and drive-train under the Kadett bodywork, so that American freeways and highways can be managed with less driver strain—and split the difference in pricing. ■

CAR LIFE ROAD TEST



CALCULATED DATA

Lb./bhp (test weight)	33.3
Cu. ft./ton mile	70.9
Mph/1000 rpm (high gear)	16.4
Engine revs./mile (60 mph)	3650
Piston travel, ft./mile	1460
Car Life wear index	53.3
Frontal area, sq. ft.	18.8
Box volume, cu. ft.	322

SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph, actual	27.7
40 mph	37.5
50 mph	47.6
60 mph	57.7
70 mph	67.7
80 mph	79.7
90 mph	

MAINTENANCE INTERVALS

Oil change, engine, miles	3000
transmission/differential	as req.
Oil filter change	6000
Air cleaner service, mo.	6
Chassis lubrication	none
Wheelbearing re-packing	n.a.
Universal joint service	none
Coolant change, mo.	24

TUNE-UP DATA

Spark plugs	Bosch W175 T1
gap, in.	0.028-0.032
Spark setting, deg./idle rpm	n.a.
cent. max. advance, deg./rpm	35-40/4000
vac. max. adv., deg./in. Hg.	13/7.4
Breaker gap, in.	0.016/0.02
cam dwell angle	48°
arm tension, oz.	14.1-18.7
Tappet clearance, int./exh.	0.006/0.01
Fuel pump pressure, psi	2.13-2.84
Radiator cap relief press., psi	7.8-9.2

PERFORMANCE

Top speed (5200), mph	85
Shifts (rpm) @ mph	
3rd to 4th (5600)	64
2nd to 3rd (5600)	42
1st to 2nd (5600)	24

ACCELERATION

0-30 mph, sec.	4.8
0-40 mph	7.7
0-50 mph	11.6
0-60 mph	17.8
0-70 mph	27.5
0-80 mph	46.5
0-90 mph	
0-100 mph	
Standing 1/4-mile, sec.	20.7
speed at end, mph	83
Passing, 30-70 mph, sec.	22.7

BRAKING

(Maximum deceleration rate achieved from 80 mph)	
1st stop, ft./sec./sec.	27
fade evident?	no
2nd stop, ft./sec./sec.	27
fade evident?	no

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Test conditions, mpg	28.0
Normal cond., mpg	27-30
Cruising range, miles	286-318

GRADABILITY

4th, % grade @ mph	7 @ 51
3rd	11 @ 43
2nd	18 @ 32
1st	25 @ 23

DRAG FACTOR

Total drag @ 60 mph, lb	104
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