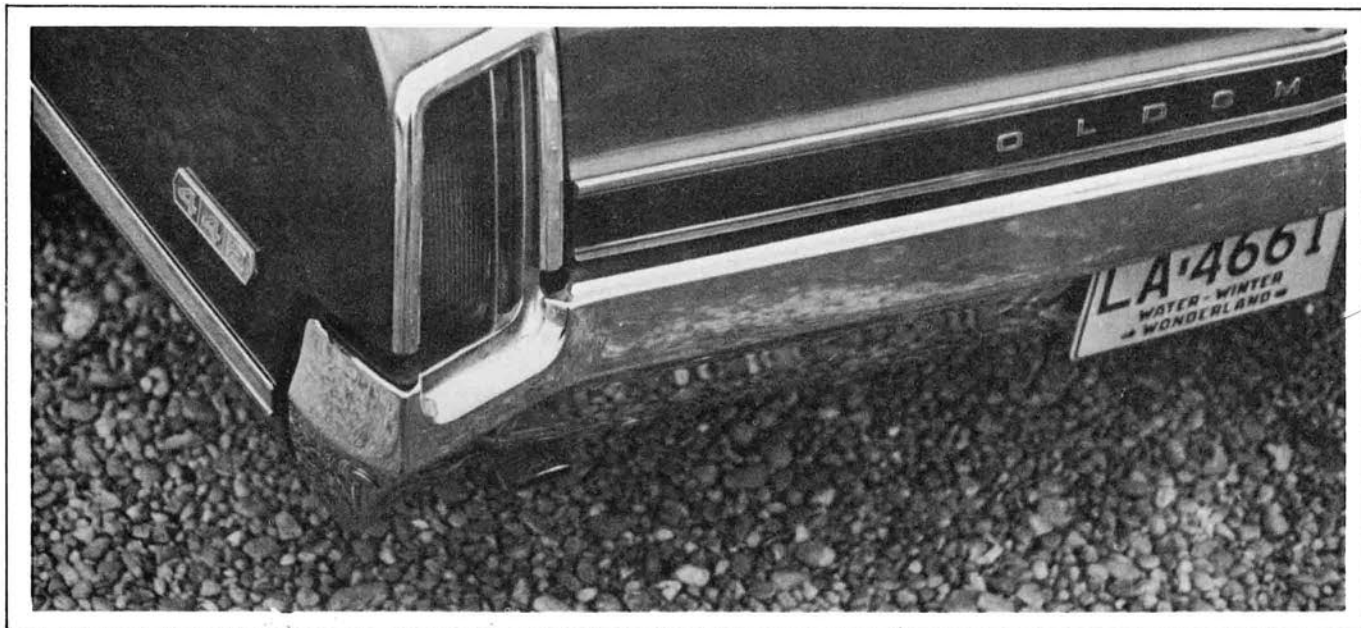


Old's 4-4-2 is now a Tri-Power Rocket

■ IF YOU THINK of Oldsmobiles in terms of staid, grey haired gentlemen stepping out of a 98's complete with air conditioning and power seats, take a quick glance at a 4-4-2 and think again. It will show you all the action you want — and then some. This package isn't small or even compact. It is that of a full grown car with enough power for a drag strip. Yet the 4-4-2 happens to be smooth and friendly and will behave sensibly in traffic or step out with the best of them on fast expressways.

You can do 0 to 60 in 8.7 seconds with a Rochester Quadrajet under the air cleaner or in the



Old's 4-4-2

6.5-second bracket with a new tri-power setup that's had nothing more than a cursory tuneup.

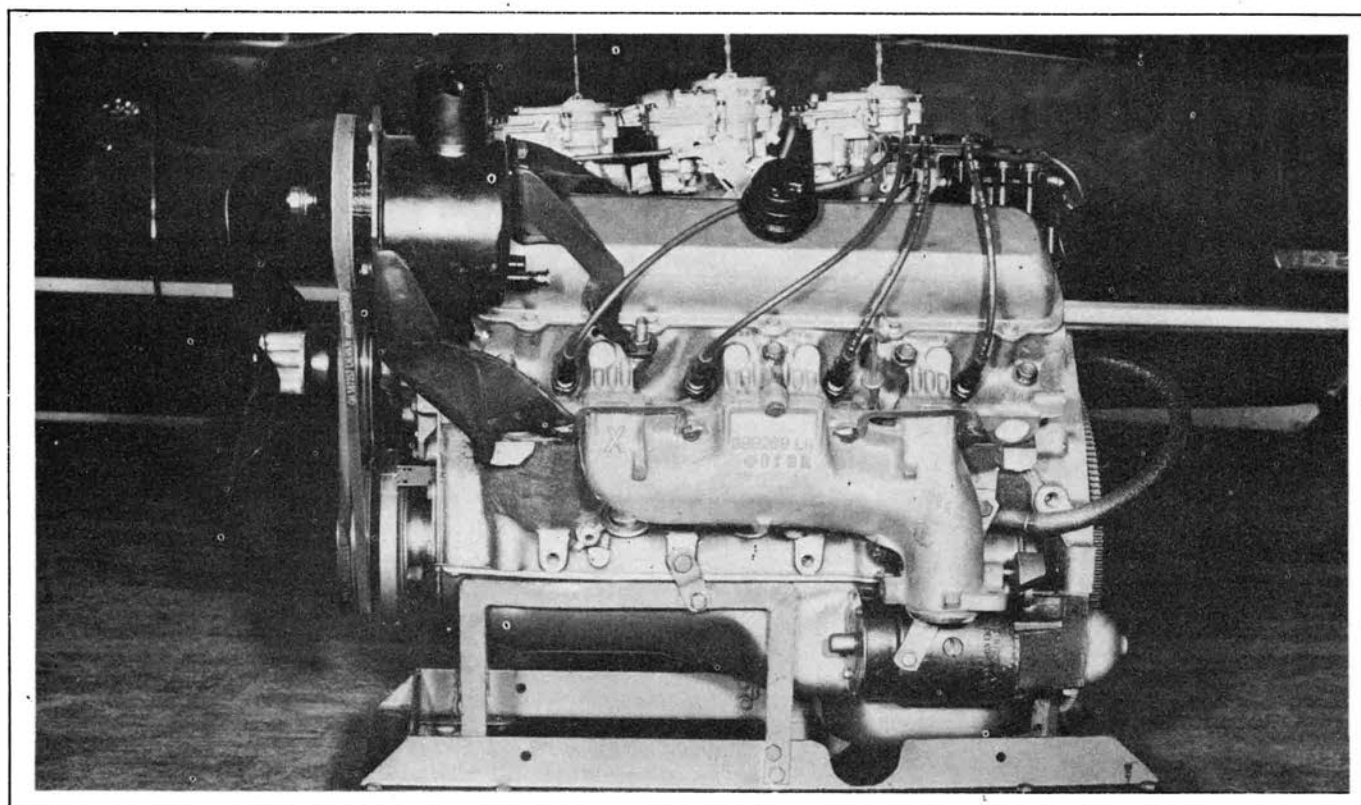
Exterior styling needs no introduction and a few discreet 4-4-2 emblems do not needlessly attract attention when you are on a normal cruising trip. We don't agree with some of the styling details, such as a backlight flanked by two fin-like extensions or with inward facing tail lights that are hard to see from the side when you pull out of a driveway. However, that wouldn't for a minute keep us from placing a 4-4-2 order after spending a couple of weeks of exciting driving time with the car.

GM may be out of racing as such but that doesn't mean that Oldsmobile is out of performance. You'll



visible, and a speedometer that you can see in any normal steering position. On the tri-carb job with a center console you'll find a little vacuum gauge close to floor level. But who thinks about vacuum at full throttle? And who can drive and look at a floor-mounted gauge?

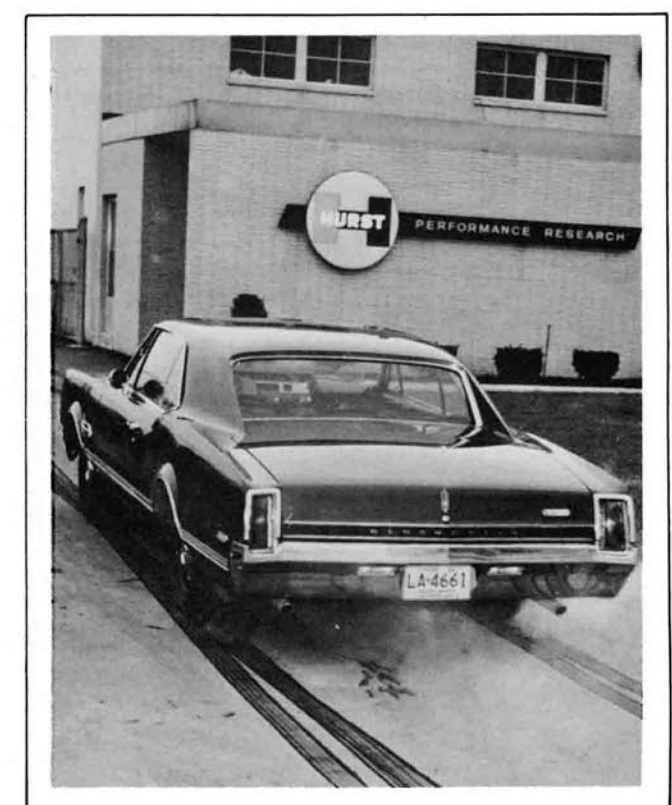
Tromp on the accelerator in a single four-barrel 4-4-2 while you are cruising at 70 mph and the car immediately begins to pick up speed. Then, within a fraction of a second, you hear a whoosh as the main part of the Quadrajet kicks in and you're off. We don't know if the speedometer is that accurate but we can guarantee that it *can* be pegged and — what's more — the

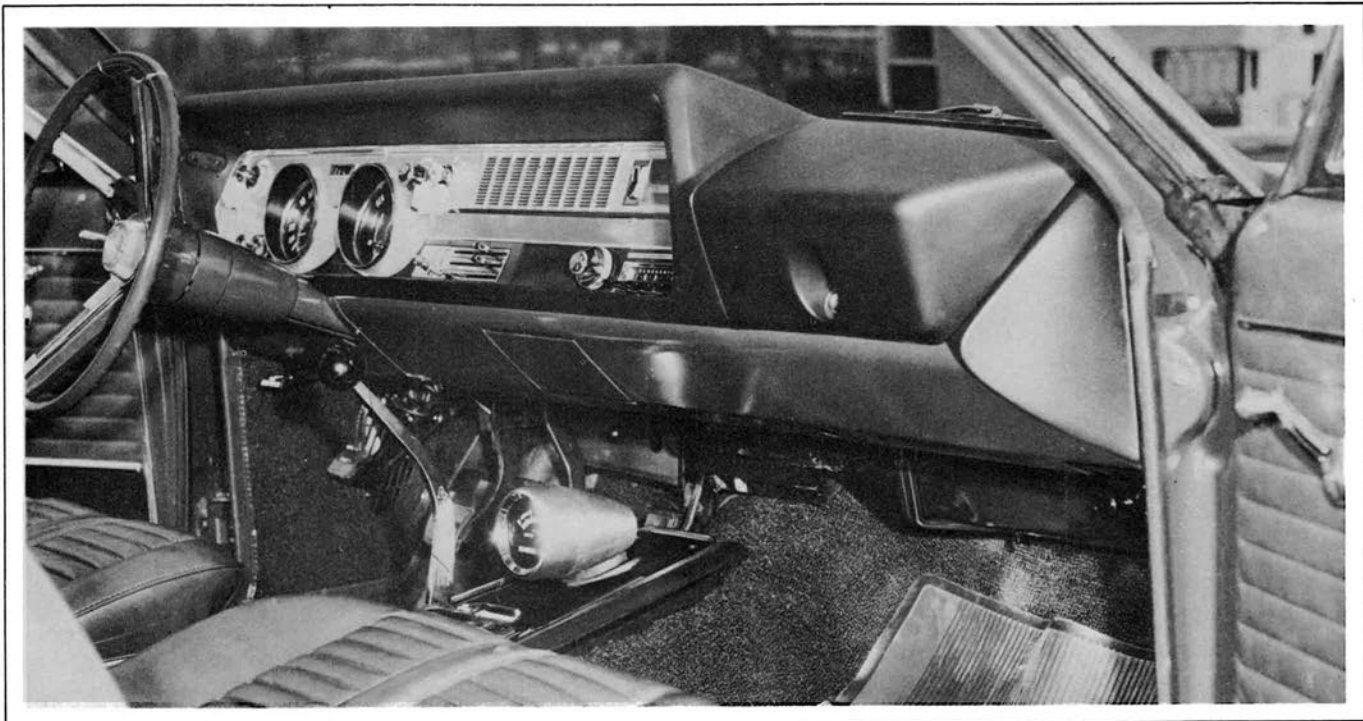


find some rather interesting goodies on this car, such as a pair of small covers fitted with baffles right at the crossover passage of the tri-carb manifold. If you want a little Sunday action at the local drag strip, undo two bolts on each side and turn them at 90 degrees to block off exhaust heat. How many Detroit products do you know that offer *this* type of convenience to the enthusiast?

Slide into the driver's seat and you'll find a clean instrument panel with a minimum of chrome and overhang, and no windshield reflections. We say instrument panel with tongue in cheek because while the dial has a series of neat looking graduations, the only thing left out was the gauges. There is, however, a tach mounted on the left and fairly

Old's unusual valve sequence eliminates interference between ports and rods and accounts for the short exhaust manifold. No car would be seen headed for Hurst if it didn't already sport a Hurst shifter! Large tail lights on the '66 wedge inward while fin like projections extend beyond light.





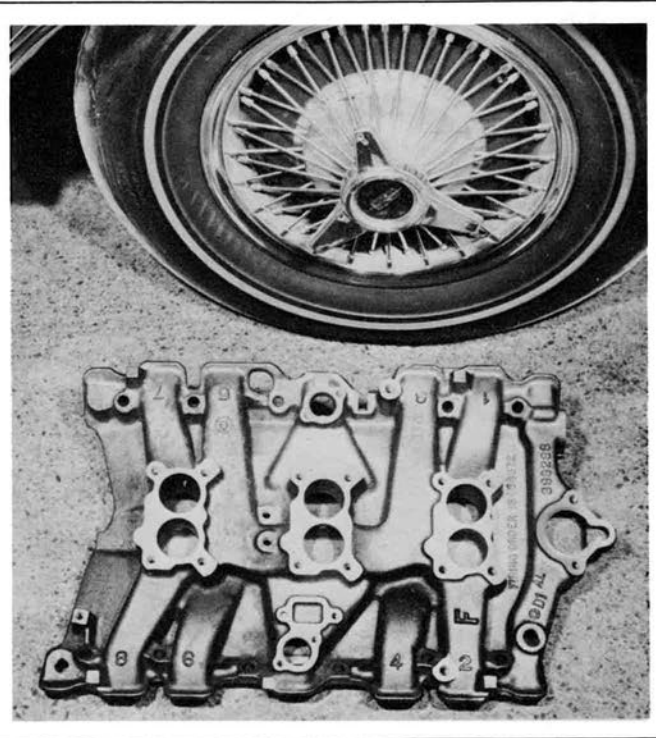
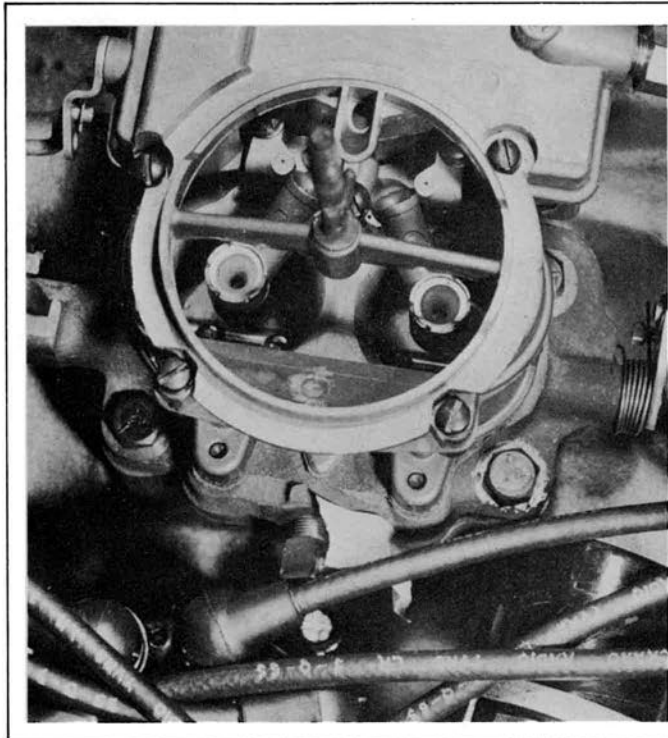
Simple, functional dash is about devoid of gauges although manual transmission cars have small tach.

Old's 4-4-2

4-4-2 remains perfectly maneuverable. You feel at ease at the indicated 120 mark. The muffler and air cleaner provide all the silence you want at part throttle openings, but when you are on it all the

The center of the three carbs has a choke. End units have main jets only sans idle. Linkage is progressive.

New two-level tri-carb manifold operates on center carb up to 40-deg. throttle opening. There are no hard spots.



way there is a comforting and reassuring sound of full power. While the red tag on the dash warns a new owner to use only premium or super premium, we did put in one tankful of Sunoco 240 without hearing a peep out of the engine.

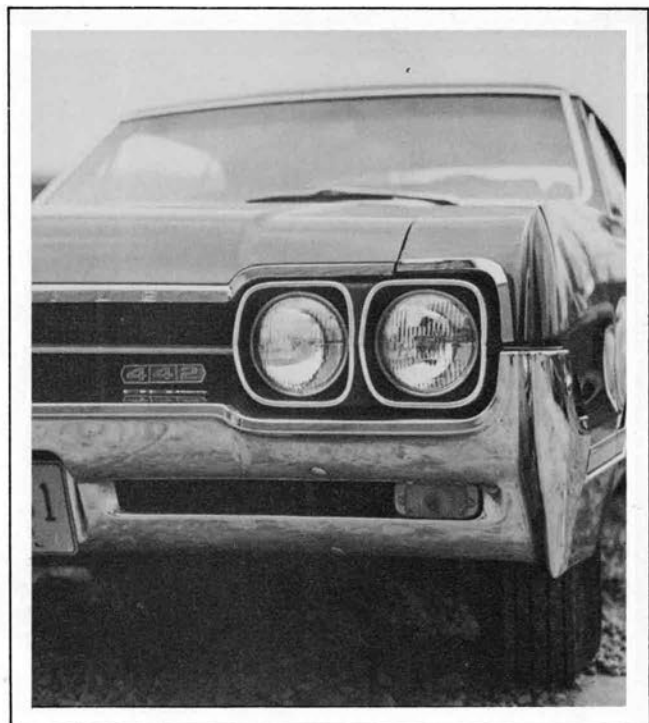
You can't help but notice the 4-4-2's sharp looking bucket seats which give you ample shoulder support, especially when you floor that throttle. The ribbing seems to work because the seat remains cool and comfortable, even after a long haul. If you want to stop in a hurry Olds brakes are firm and predictable. You can play heel and toe when downshifting and braking simultaneously, but the brake pedal is a little too high above the accelerator when you first try it.

After a while you get used to the odd position and the maneuver comes more naturally. There is very little lean on turns, and the manual steering gives you a quick, firm response. In tight parking spaces you need a little muscle power but nothing that your girl friend couldn't handle in style. With power steering comes a 17.5-to-1 ratio, but we prefer the feel of the manual steering.

Looking under the hood one finds a new two level tri-carb manifold. End barrels do not have choke or choke housings, so the center carburetor sits taller than the end ones. The choke thermostat of the center carb mounts on a manifold and an idle compensator in the form of a bimetal spring between the two venturis vents the fuel bowls and leans the mixture when things get hot.

A progressive linkage has idle taking up two to three degrees of initial throttle opening and pickup

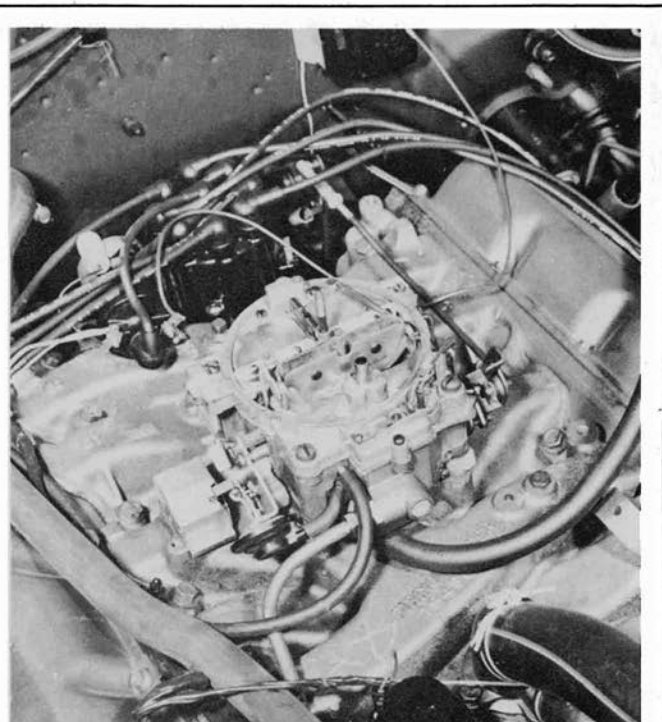
The latest carburetion system uses three Rochester 2 GC's. Unsilenced polyurethane filter elements breathe well.



of the end carburetors occurring at 40 degrees. Total throttle travel on a center carb is 83 degrees. The two end carburetors are connected by a single rod and, to compensate for production tolerances, the hole in the rear lever is slotted. If you were to prepare the car for all out drag racing it would probably be a good idea to use an adjustable rod in the close fitting hole.

The center carb throttle lever has several ball positions and you could set the end carb opening to
(continued on page 68)

Rochester Quadrajets offers remarkably smooth idle and tip-in. Big secondaries cut right in on hard throttle.



shafts. The hot rod suppliers were hard put to find anything to hop!

■ So for these reasons you will find a rather weird situation on special speed equipment for the 426 hemi. For example there are not yet any special intake manifolds available. Just the factory stuff (which would include dual and single four-barrel racing types plus the new dual-quad street manifold). I know of no special manifolds to mount Weber racing carburetors.

■ Stuart Hilborn of Fuel Injection Eng. has recently developed a fuel injection system for the 426 hemi, and this is now available to the public. Of course this is strictly for all-out racing. Some of the Dodge-Plymouth "funny" match race cars used this new Hilborn injection system last summer with rather indifferent results on gasoline. But it has been a *terror* on fuel. So right now this Hilborn injection seems to be the most promising unblown fuel system (and of course it's a must if you want to run fuel unblown, as you can't flow sufficient alcohol and nitro through carburetors).

■ The factory lightweight racing manifolds (single and dual four-barrel) would rank next. And the new inline dual quad would be the *only* thing available that's suitable for street driving.

■ The situation is a little better in camshafts. Some of the big cam grinders have special cams and valve gear kits (pushrods, lifters, springs, etc.) available for the hemi. But these are all strictly competition cams. However now, with the street hemi out, I'm sure they'll have street grinds available within weeks.

■ The all-out racers, of course, want to use supercharging. Supercharging equipment was a long time coming for the 426 hemi because of the limited market. But it's here now. There's quite a choice of equipment for using the basic GMC 6-71 blower. Weiland and Cragar make special manifolds

to mount the 6-71 and several companies now offer complete conversion kits for three-inch cog drive belts based on these manifolds. This engine responds mightily to 20 pounds boost pressure or so, and 75 percent or more nitro fuel.

■ We have a big choice of equipment for the lower end because these parts are often made up from billets and blanks and readily can be adapted to a wide variety of engines. We have cast and forged pistons for any bore and stroke and any compression ratio, special steel and aluminum high strength rods and stroker crankshafts with up to 5/8-inch over stock stroke (4 3/8) to give up to 500 cubic inches! Most of this equipment was adapted from 426 wedge engine stuff. However keep in mind that the 426 hemi has longer connecting rods than the 426 wedge (6.86 inches vs 6.77 inches center-to-center), so they generally use the shorter 6.77-inch length rod when using a long stroker crank in either block.

■ There may be meat in the valve gear, even for the street. The factory 312-degree competition cam would be a possibility. Or you can go even more wild with one of the California racing grinds for flat lifters. Or one of the new roller kits. But here's a word of caution: *Don't* get too frisky with valve spring pressures with these flat lifter kits when using them on the street.

■ For instance the factory racing valve springs give 340 pounds of spring pressure with the valve open (at .520 lift). This is too much for long cam-lifter life. Better stick with the stock street springs and 275 pounds pressure. You'll live longer. These should give 6,500 rpm even with the relatively heavy valve gear on this hemi engine. You won't be able to get the 7,500 rpm they get with the competition springs; but you also shouldn't have to replace the cam or lifters every 2,000 miles.

■ Also remember that these hot-

ter, longer duration cams will hurt the idle and low end torque. You won't get the benefit of them until you're over 4,000 rpm, maybe more. So think seriously before you stick one in a basically street machine. In my opinion the factory has a terrific compromise in their 276-degree cam with .460 lift for the stock street hemi. It gives a decent idle at 800 to 1,000 rpm, nearly 500 lbs./ft. of torque at around 4,000 rpm and keeps right on hauling up to 6,000 revs in the gears. Try it before you jump for something more wild.

■ If you're going racing with the 426 hemi you have other problems. I should mention first that it's still a pretty heavy engine, with these complex head castings. The cast iron street version weighs around 780 pounds with exhaust headers (but no flywheel). I understand the light 1965 racing version, with aluminum heads, magnesium manifold, aluminum water pump and light tubing headers, was over 100 pounds lighter — around 660. (The street hemi has the aluminum water pump.)

■ I would have to suggest these lightweight parts if you're going racing with this engine. They're expensive, but cutting weight is just as good as adding horsepower in any kind of racing. Also remember the special tuned exhaust headers, not only to add power but to save weight.

TRI-POWER ROCKET

occur earlier. However those wily Olds engineers figured that when the pickup occurs too early you get into a hard spot in a frequently used throttle position. And that could be inconvenient when you are trying to feather the throttle during a turn. The 4-4-2 completely avoids this pitfall and allows you to trim power to perfection when trying to hang out the rear.

All of the 2 GC's in the Tri-carb setup have 1 11/16-inch throttle bores. The end carburetors are fitted with main jets only.

The air cleaner atop the four-barrel is somewhat unusual in that it uses oil-wetted paper — in direct conflict with stern warnings handed out with the first paper air cleaners to appear. These said keep them dry and free from finger marks. In the Olds application the dust seems to land on the oil, absorb it, and add to filter trap area. As a result the surface area doesn't decrease as fast as the dust builds up, and restriction is very low even after substantial mileage.

The three two-barrel uses polyurethane individual filter elements that can be serviced by washing them out in gas. We are a little baffled by the fact that an air induction package similar to the one released for the GTO is unavailable on the 4-4-2. If released, it should prove to be a boon.

The original 4-4-2's suspension had been released previously as a police package with fairly stiff springs to match the weight increase of a bigger engine (cubic inches ran up from 330 to 400 at that time). The suspension was softened in mid '65 and softened again by another 15 percent or so for '66 introduction. The result is quite noticeable in terms of a much more pleasurable ride that does not seem to sacrifice anything in handling.

Figures speak louder than words, so here are some representative times we gathered during our road tests. Our test cars were completely stock and both seemed to carry substantial potential for souping. For instance, we know of one 4-4-2 with slicks and a race suspension that cranks out 12.67 ET's and 109 mph on hydraulic lifters. And Buck Baker was due to compete in the Daytona 500 Stock Car Race behind the wheel of a 4-4-2!

4-4-2 Tri-Carb
0-60 6.5 seconds

¼-mile 14.6 seconds @ 98 mph

4-4-2 Four-Barrel
0-60 6.7 seconds

¼-mile 14.8 seconds @ 96.5 mph

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