

OLDS 4-4-2 ROAD TEST

(The "2" could also stand for "dual personality")

LET'S SUPPOSE for a moment that you're an automotive engineer. Your boss, fresh back from a meeting with higher management, has just handed you a list of specifications on a new performance car and asked you to come up with a preliminary design. The usual things one expects in a performance car are all there: high power-to-weight ratio for good acceleration, distinctive trim and identification to set it apart from other models in the line, and a list of options from which the buyer may choose to suit his individual tastes.

So far so good. But as you read on, you realize you have the proverbial tiger by the tail. The specs not only call for superior performance but that the car should run at or near the top of its class

at the drags in the hands of *private individuals* (your company doesn't race).

This means that the design must be basically good enough so that a person with at most dealer help can "blueprint" the engine and do all the things necessary to carry your company colors with honor in public competition against all comers—some of whom may be factory supported. It further must appeal to the Sunday racer who, by simply adding slicks and headers, can "put one on" random opposition often enough to make him proud of the car.

But that's not the half of it. There were others on the Camel Committee, as the fellows in the department jokingly call the session your boss just came from (after the epigram, "A camel is a horse designed by committee.") who had

other concerns. Somebody—probably your boss, who is known to harbor an interest in road racing and is said to have owned a small imported sports car in his salad days—stipulated that the car must excel in turns as well. This means that it must handle well enough to please or even surprise persons who are appreciative and critical of this aspect of performance.

Probably as a result of collusion between the marketing and fiscal members of the committee, the car is to be full-sized, competitively priced, and as far as possible, be all things to all people. The fiscal man, who doesn't know beans about engineering and couldn't care less about any form of racing, had insisted that the car be quiet, not temperamental, and under no circumstances was it to



UNCORKING PERFORMANCE-PACKAGED 4-4-2 BRINGS INSTANT ACCELERATION AT ANY SPEED — VERY HANDY FOR PASSING ON 2-LANE ROADS.

"ride like a truck." He can't be ignored because he carries a big stick and is one of the men to give final approval to any design. Maybe he has a boil or something, but with his tastes, this means that the yet-to-be car can give very little away to the regular models in the ride department. . . .

A few years ago, any advice we could give to aid you in your hypothetical role would have been very sketchy indeed. With all those conflicting requirements, any engineer would have his work cut out for him. But now that we're familiar with the Olds 4-4-2, we would advise going down to the engineering garage, where the company keeps competitors' cars, and take a good look at a 4-4-2. We say this after having picked up our test 4-4-2 with less than 100 miles on it and living with it for a very impressive 3000 miles.

Actually, if you stick to the original scheme of naming the car — 4-barrel carb, 4-on-the-floor, and 2 exhausts — our test car would be a 6-4-2 because it had the optional Tri-Carb performance package (three 2-barrel carbs). The 4-barrel setup is still standard and does a remarkably good job, but the 3-2 arrangement brightens performance several magnitudes.

What's more, we discovered there's nothing tricky about the progressive linkage. Transition from the middle carb to the other two is smooth and controllable. From new to over 3000 miles, which included all kinds of driving and performance testing, the idle remained smooth and constant.

Other than carbs, intake manifold and brakes, the rest of our test car was pretty much standard 4-4-2, including the rear anti-sway bar. Attached to the trailing arms and passing under the differential,



Custom wheels mirrored in pool come from Hurst, go especially well with 4-4-2.

PHOTOS BY DARRYL NOREBERG



A LITTLE EXTRA AIR IN TIRES AND AWAY WE GO 'ROUND ALL SORTS OF BENDS — DOWNRIGHT FUN, BECAUSE 4-4-2 IS EXCEPTIONAL AT IT.

OLDS 4-4-2

continued

this bar is one of the secrets behind the excellent rear-wheel traction and good road manners of this car. The only comment we have about the heavy-duty brakes (metallic) is that they cost \$25.62 and no 4-4-2 should be without them.

We thought at first we might test two 4-4-2s, one for the street and the other set up for the strip. But we later decided that testing the same car — first in stock condition, then with slicks and headers — would be a better comparison.

As with both pros and the occasional Sunday racer, good headers are a must, so we had a set of Doug's headers in-

stalled. These are the kind that use the regular muffler for the street, but are disconnected at a flanged fitting for maximum performance. A pair of Casler slicks on the rear completed our preparation. The front tires were inflated to 50 psi and the rears to 20 for performance work.

Incidentally, the 4-4-2 lost little of its civilized feeling in this condition. With the headers opened up, however, the car became a bellowing monster, stopping passersby at the deserted Irwindale and Carlsbad strips where we were doing our private testing.

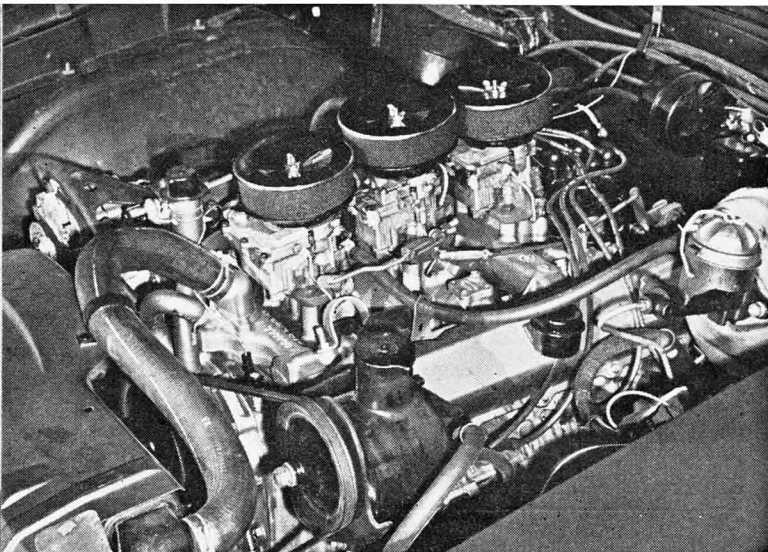
In our spec panel, we've recorded two sets of performance figures. The first was obtained with the car in stock trim and normal pressure in the U.S. Royal red-line tires. The second we got with

headers and slicks as stated above, and with the manifold heat risers blocked off. Nothing was done to the suspension, nor was the standard 3.55-to-1 ratio changed.

Modifications beyond those we carried out are necessary for all-out competition, but they net only a precious few tenths of a second better time and make the car far less suitable for general driving. As it stands, we personally would be hesitant to do *anything* to the suspension that couldn't be restored to original when we leave the strip because it's such a fine road car.

If the 4-4-2 doesn't do all the things you want a car to do, you need more than one car. We would be hard put to find another car that does so many things so well.

— John Ethridge



Olds thoughtfully included provision for blocking heat risers. Remove screws, rotate two small plates 90 degrees, job's done.



Test car had two comfortable bucket seats with head rests plus host of comfort and convenience items to make it very livable.

OLDSMOBILE CUTLASS 4-4-2

2-door, 5-passenger sport coupe

SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER

ENGINE IN TEST CAR: Ohv V-8
Bore and stroke: 4.00 x 3.975 ins.
Displacement: 400 cu. ins.
Advertised horsepower: 360 @ 5000 rpm
Max. torque: NA
Compression ratio: 10.5:1
Carburetion: 3 2-bbl.

TRANSMISSION TYPE & FINAL DRIVE RATIO: 4-speed manual, fully synchronized; floor-mounted lever. 3.55:1 rear-axle ratio

SUSPENSION: Independent front with coil spring, semi-floating rear-axle shafts in 1-piece housing with coil-spring rear suspension. Direct-acting tubular shocks at each wheel

STEERING: Saginaw integral-gear power assist
Turning diameter: 41.0 ft., curb to curb
Turns lock to lock: 4.06

WHEELS: Welded, stamped steel; 14-in. dia. (15-in. optional)

TIRES: 7.35 x 14 tubeless, 4-ply-rated. Rayon std., nylon optional

BRAKES: Hydraulic duo-servo, single system, self-adjusting
Diameter of drum: front, 9½ ins.; rear, 9½ ins.

SERVICE:
Type of fuel recommended: Premium
Fuel capacity: 20 gals.

Oil capacity: 4 qts.; with filter, 5 qts.
Shortest lubrication interval: 6000 mi.
Oil- and filter-change interval: 6000 mi.

BODY & FRAME: Separate construction; "C" section frame with torque boxes
Wheelbase: 115.0 ins.
Track: front, 58.0 ins.; rear, 58.0 ins.
Overall: length, 204.2 ins.; width, 75.4 ins.; height, 53.6 ins.
Min. ground clearance: NA
Usable trunk capacity 20.1 cu. ft.
Curb weight: 3600 lbs.

PERFORMANCE

ACCELERATION (2 aboard)

0-30 mph	3.0 secs.
0-50 mph	5.8 secs.
0-60 mph	7.2 secs.
0-75 mph	9.9 secs.

TIME & DISTANCE TO ATTAIN PASSING SPEEDS

40-60 mph	3.0 secs., 220 ft.
50-70 mph	3.5 secs., 308 ft.

STANDING-START QUARTER-MILE: 15.16 secs. and 56.56 mph

BEST SPEEDS IN GEARS @ SHIFT POINTS

1st	44 mph @ 4800 rpm
2nd	58 mph @ 4800 rpm
3rd	76 mph @ 4800 rpm
4th	71 mph @ 3000 rpm (not maximum)

MPH PER 1000 RPM: 23.6

SPEEDOMETER ERROR AT 60 MPH: 3% slow

STOPPING DISTANCES: from 30 mph, 37.5 ft.; from 60 mph, 169½ ft.

PERFORMANCE AFTER MODIFICATIONS

(headers, slicks, etc.)

ACCELERATION (2 aboard)

0-30 mph	2.7 secs.
0-50 mph	4.5 secs.
0-60 mph	5.8 secs.
0-75 mph	8.5 secs.

STANDING START ¼-MILE: 13.8 secs., and 103 mph

ACCESSORY PRICE LIST

Engine options: to 360-hp (Incl. 4-4-2 pkg) \$264.54
Automatic transmission 205.37
*4-speed transmission (wide ratio) 182.98
Overdrive —
*Limited-slip differential 41.82
*Heavy-duty suspension (part of 4-4-2 pkg.) —
Whitewall tires (no-cost option on 4-4-2) —
Disc brakes 41.30
*Power brakes 94.10
*Power steering 105.05
Power windows 69.51
Power seat (4-way) 63.78
*Radio AM —
Radio AM/FM —
Air conditioning 343.20
*Tinted glass 30.32
*Bucket seats std.
*Adjustable steering wheel (Tilt-Away) 41.82
*Clock 15.68
*Tachometer 52.28
Automatic headlight dimmer —
Automatic speed regulator 41.60
*Vinyl roof cover 83.65
*Head rests (pair) 31.37
*On test car

Dash (—) — not offered
MANUFACTURER'S SUGGESTED LIST PRICE: \$2750 (incl. taxes, safety equip't & PCV device)
PRICE OF CAR TESTED: \$4139.72 (incl. excise tax, delivery & get-ready charges, but not local tax & license)
MANUFACTURER'S WARRANTY: 24,000 miles and/or 24 months