

## CAR LIFE ROAD TEST



SCOTT MALCOLM PHOTOS

# ALL-AMERICAN V-8

## *Can an Over/Underdog Survive the Catcars?*

**A**MERICAN TRADITION is to champion the underdog—even though it may display the earmarks of an overdog. Such an over/underdog is the Rambler American Rogue, powered by American Motors Corporation's new Typhoon V-8 engine.

The sleek overdog look from the underdog corporation is a strong effort toward catching up, an attempt to join the Big Three-created mainstream of sporty personal cars for the "youth market" and for people whose thinking grows steadily younger, and a large part of a concerted corporate drive to bolster sagging sales figures.

It's obvious that one new car or one new engine, even the over/under-

dog Rogue and similar sports/luxury variants such as the Marlin and DPL in AMC's Classic and Ambassador lines, respectively, can't accomplish this multi-faceted task overnight. The Rogue, however, and cars of the same skein, can help swing the balance, establish the new image and once and for all destroy the unfortunate stereotype that all American Motors cars are for people more than 58 years old.

People who now are grandparents experienced the Great Depression. Their children grew up in World War II and the economic expansion of the 1950s. Their children's children have arrived at automobile ownership age, money in pocket, in the midst of the

greatest prosperity ever experienced in the U.S. Grandparents', parents' and children's ideas have swung toward a family or personal car with a bit of git-up-an'-go, a bit of dash and flash. American Motors' advertising campaigns based on economy and durability would seem to have missed the mark in an era of affluence, the expensive and sporty.

The Typhoon-engined Rogue may be AMC's breakthrough, although the car must follow such tough acts as Ford Mustang, Dodge Dart GT, Plymouth Barracuda and Chevy II Nova Super Sport. Additional competitors in the 1967 model year will be Lincoln-Mercury's Cougar (an elongated, but very smooth Mustang) and Chev-

# AMERICAN

rolet's Super/Chevy II, the now-called Panther.

Can a Rogue compete in a year of catcars? What does the Rogue have going for it that can help it meet and, AMC hopes, surpass this rugged competition?

First of all, the Rogue is downright cute. The exact words, "What a cute little car," were spoken enthusiastically everywhere the Rogue was taken during the *CL* test period. The car was one of 1700 off the AMC production line given special treatment in paint and trim to be particularly attractive in dealers' showrooms as a means of introducing the new V-8 engined American. Roof and rear deck were painted glossy black. The lower body and hood were of a special metallic "Sun Gold" tone. The test car also was fitted with special rocker panel moldings, spinner wheel discs, a grille painted in non-specular flat black and whitewall tires. The dress-up list seems long enough to make the Rogue appear gaudy, but such was not the case; these trim items only characterized the Rogue as brisk, bright and blatantly youthful.

The Rogue's interior featured wide bucket front seats with a fold-down arm and foam-padded bolster between, which created a 3-passenger bench for persons on good acquaintance. (Narrower buckets with no bolster, but a console between is an alternative available to prospective purchasers.) The rear bench seat required

that two adults or three children be even chummier than three front-seaters. Full-sized persons in the rear seat were wont to bump their heads on the rear window molding when the car passed over a bump, indicating lack of headroom and an occasional-passengers-only rating.

Upholstery was in black vinyl; carpeting was black loop-pile nylon; the AMC-type fiber foam one-piece headliner was in waffle patterned white. People who think "stodgy" with regard to Ramblers haven't taken a close look at one in a good while.

Water temperature, speedometer, odometer and fuel remaining were instrumented in a rectangle in the Rogue—presentation was conventional, but highly readable white-on-black. An ammeter, an oil pressure gauge and a tachometer, to go with the 4-speed gearbox, would have been welcome.

Secondly, in regard to the Rogue's ability to compete, is that the car is downright fun to drive. The Rogue is an enthusiast's Rambler. As tested by *CAR LIFE*, the Rogue proved a happy combination of fairly light unit-body construction, a small but healthy V-8 engine, a usable selection of gears in a 4-speed case, heavy-duty springs and shock absorbers and a disc front/drum rear braking system. And, this combination, though not the quickest, most nimble vehicle on the road, created the sensations that are the rewards of enthusiastic driving.

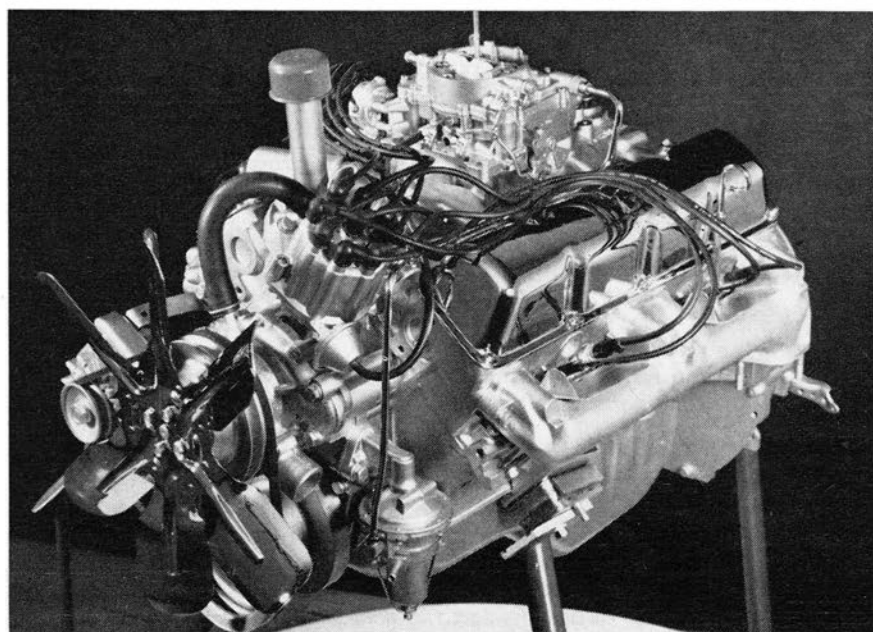
The Warner Gear T-10 4-speed

transmission, with ratios 2.43, 1.76, 1.47 and 1.00, coupled to the 3.15 rear axle, provided close enough spacing and a degree of acceleration quite acceptable to any but the all-out drag racer. This manual transmission permitted downshifts at 60 mph or so to power through a bend with the vigor and precision often lacking with automatic transmission-equipped machinery. Power steering was precise.

**T**HE CORNERING ability of the Rogue is aided in no small way by the optional heavy-duty suspension components, special coil springs and telescopic shock absorbers, which raise the front ride rate at the wheel from the standard 80 to 99 lb./in. and the rear ride rate from the standard 91 to 102 lb./in. Body lean, even in brisk, tight cornering, is held to a minimum by an 0.81-in. diameter link-type anti-roll bar. It is a very tight, very fast corner indeed that puts the handling package-equipped Rogue body over on the stops.

Third, with respect to the competing Rogue, is unitized body construction—relatively free of the squeaks and rattles that, in time, seem to plague cars of separate frame and body.

Fourth to be considered from the point of view of competition is the Typhoon engine (*CL*, May '66). This new V-8 is of a size to be called "cute" by the engine enthusiast, just as the Rogue's exterior was "cute" to the casual passerby. Light and compact, lighter in fact by 85 lb. than AMC's 287-cu. in. V-8 and more compact than other current V-8s, the Typhoon appears designed to meet the performance standards of a V-8 educated



**TYPHOON 4-barrel-carburetor engine and Bendix disc front brakes are among Rogue options. Power steering, 7.35-14 tires and special suspension also are available.**



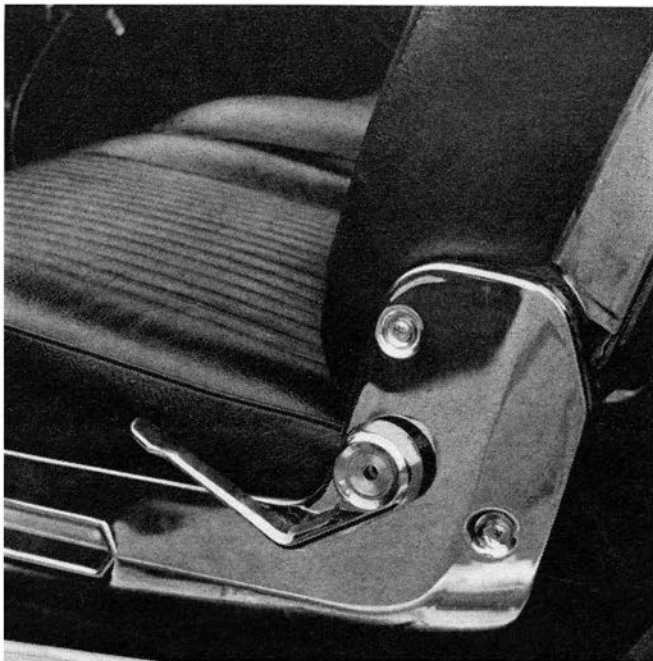
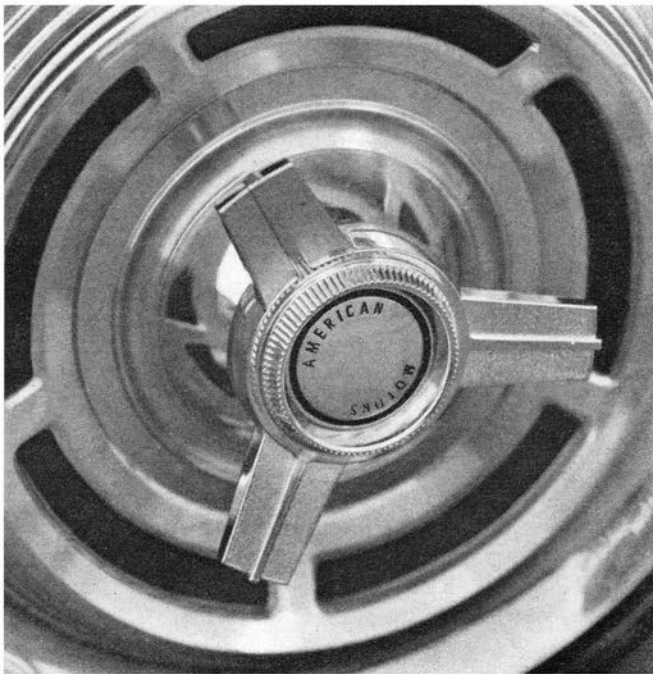
generation. Large valves, clean intake and exhaust ducting for free breathing, and lightweight valve gear all contribute to a satisfactory high rpm potential for the Typhoon V-8. The camshaft is a bit mild for the enthusiastic driver, but the custom grinders could remedy that situation. With the standard Holley 2-barrel carburetor and 9.0:1 compression ratio, the Typhoon engine is rated at 200 bhp at 4600 rpm and delivers 285 lb.-ft. of torque at 2800 rpm.

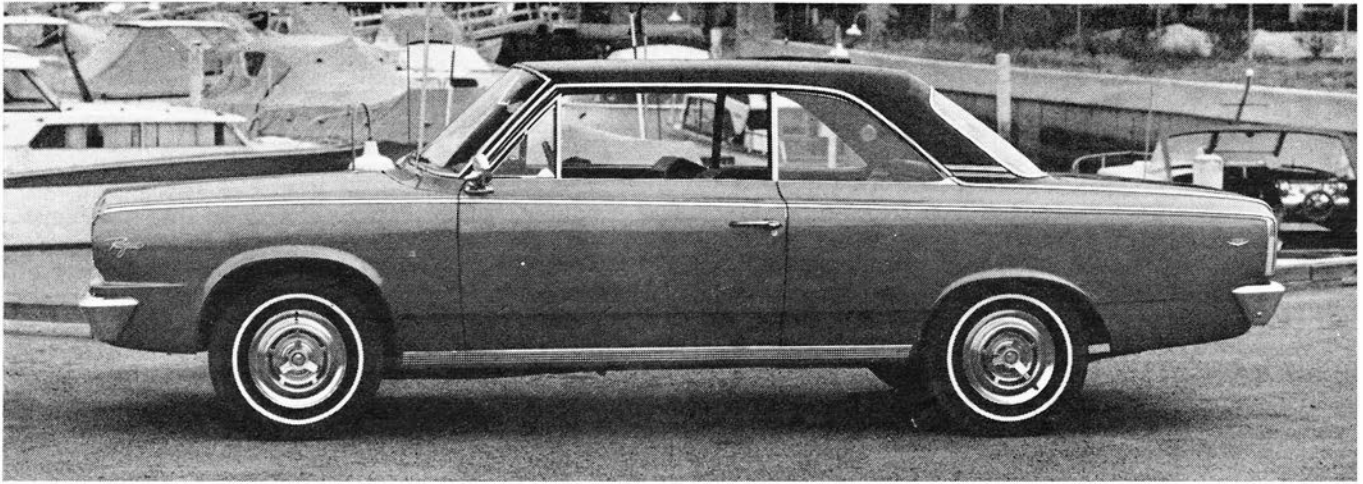
Perhaps, because it was making its debut, the Typhoon V-8 in *CL's* test

car demonstrated a slight case of the carburetor flutters. The engine, when turning at medium rpm under light load for example at 30 mph in third gear, tended to stumble as if the 2-barrel carburetor were having difficulty in deciding upon the proper fuel/air mixture. This slight hesitation also was apparent at freeway speeds of 65 mph or so. Tuning, in all probability, could eliminate this condition.

Though the Rambler American optional disc/drum, vacuum-assisted dual brake line system is worthy in concept, its performance in the *CL* test Rogue

fell short of expectations. The penchant for front and/or rear wheel lockup during all-on deceleration trials may well have been a function of the Rogue's 60% frontward weight bias amplified by the apparent forward mass transfer during braking, or may simply have been maladjustment of brakes. In two braking runs, smooth retardation by the system was interrupted by the tendency of one or more, front or rear, wheels to lock up and slide, a condition which caused the Rogue to change direction frequently as it slowed to a halt. A bet-





**SMALL, SMART and sporty, the American Rogue V-8 can do much to change the American Motors image. The car incorporates a sprightly engine, special sporting trim, heavy-duty suspension and a tight unit body in a delightful-to-drive package.**

ter balance between the independent front and rear hydraulic systems would seem to be called for. It could be, in all fairness to the Rogue, that these braking troubles were symptoms of *earlymodelitis*.

And, with early models it is not unusual for something not securely tightened at the factory to fall off the new car. When it is the locknut for the control rod in shift linkage for reverse gear that falls off in a down-

town parking garage, however, it can be embarrassing. The shift linkage for the other four gears seemed about 10 years behind the times—it certainly was no match for the quick, precise gear-changing mechanisms supplied by speed equipment merchants and copied by performance-minded car manufacturers. AMC might well study Hurst if it wishes to develop the Rogue into the smallest of American-made high-performance cars.

Only sales figures for the ensuing five years will show whether American Motors' policy change, from sedate to sparkling, will bear fruit—whether the Rogue can compete in the crowded marketplace of small, V-8 engined personal cars.

At a base price of \$2668 with V-8 and 4-speed transmission (or alternative 3-speed automatic), plus \$342 for the optional trim items, and ride and handling equipment, the Rogue is a

## 1966 RAMBLER AMERICAN ROGUE V-8



### DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase, in.....	106.0
Track, f/r, in.....	56.0/55.0
Overall length, in.....	181.0
width.....	69.5
height.....	53.7
Front seat hip room, in.....	22 x 2
shoulder room.....	54.8
head room.....	38.2
pedal-seatback, max.....	51.0
Rear seat hip room, in.....	56.2
shoulder room.....	54.2
leg room.....	36.0
head room.....	36.5
Door opening width, in.....	43.1
Floor to ground height, in.....	11.5
Ground clearance, in.....	7.5

### PRICES

List, fob factory.....	\$2668
Equipped as tested.....	3080
Options included: Power disc brakes, power steering, radio, whitewalls, undercoating, electric windshield wipers, special trim, wheel covers, HD shock absorbers and springs, special paint.	

### CAPACITIES

No. of passengers.....	5
Luggage space, cu. ft.....	12.0
Fuel tank, gal.....	16.0
Crankcase, qt.....	5.0
Transmission/diff., pt.....	3.5/4.0
Radiator coolant, qt.....	14.0

### CHASSIS/SUSPENSION

Frame type.....	unitized
Front suspension type: Independent by s.l.a., coil springs, telescopic shock absorbers, link-type stabilizer.	
ride rate at wheel, lb./in.....	.99
anti-roll bar dia., in.....	0.81
Rear suspension type: Live axle, 4-leaf semi-elliptic springs, telescopic shock absorbers.	
ride rate at wheel, lb./in.....	1.02
Steering system: Power, rotary valve integral with gearbox; leading transverse drag link and tie rods.	
gear ratio.....	17.5
overall ratio.....	21.2
turns, lock to lock.....	4.3
turning circle, ft. curb-curb.....	36.0
Curb weight, lb.....	3010
Test weight.....	3400
Weight distribution, % f/r.....	60/40

### BRAKES

Type: Dual-line hydraulic, caliper disc front; composite drum, non-servo rear.	
Front disc, dia. x width, in.....	11.19 x 2.31
Rear drum, dia. x width.....	10.0 x 1.75
total swept area, sq. in.....	371
Power assist.....	integral, vacuum line psi @ 100 lb. pedal..... 680

### WHEELS/TIRES

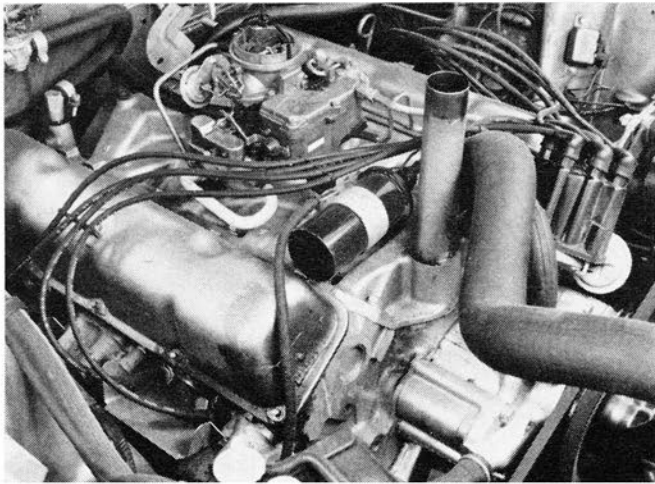
Wheel size.....	14 x 5.5K
optional size available.....	14 x 5.0K
bolt no./circle dia., in.....	5/4.50
Tires: B. F. Goodrich Silvertown 660 size.....	6.95-14
recommended inflation, psi.....	24
capacity rating, total lb.....	4470

### ENGINE

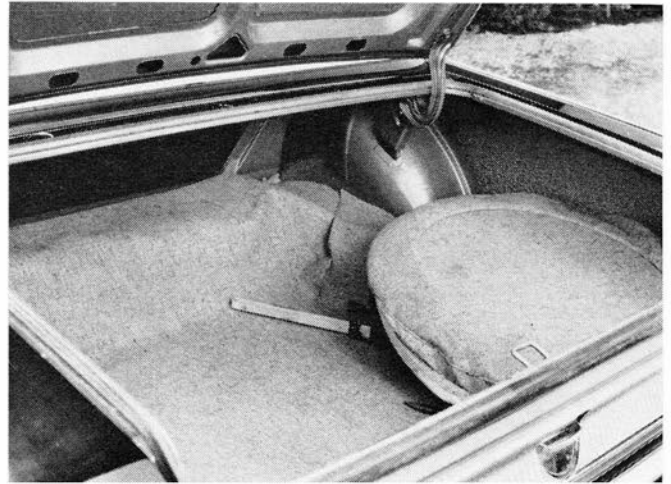
Type, no. cyl.....	V-8, ohv
Bore x stroke, in.....	3.75 x 3.28
Displacement, cu. in.....	290
Compression ratio.....	9.0
Rated hhp @ rpm.....	200 @ 4600
equivalent mph.....	106
Rated torque @ rpm.....	285 @ 2800
equivalent mph.....	65
Carburetion.....	Holley, 1x2
barrel dia., pri./sec.....	1.5
Valve operation: Hydraulic lifters, pushrods, overhead rocker arms.	
valve dia., int./exh.....	1.787/1.406
lift, int./exh.....	0.425/0.425
timing, deg.....	18-67, 60-25
duration, int./exh.....	266/266
opening overlap.....	44
Exhaust system: Single with crossover.	
pipe dia., exh./tail.....	2.0/2.0
Lubrication pump type.....	gear
normal press. @ rpm.....	10 @ 600
Electrical supply.....	alternator
ampere rating.....	35
Battery, plates/amp. rating.....	54/50

### DRIVE-TRAIN

Clutch type: Dry, semi-centrifugal, Borg & Beck.	
dia., in.....	10.0
Transmission type: Manual, 4-speed.	
Gear ratio 4th (1.00) overall.....	3.15
3rd (1.47).....	4.64
2nd (1.76).....	5.55
1st (2.43).....	7.65
synchronous meshing?.....	all four
Shift lever location.....	floor
Differential type: Hypoid, 8.75 in. ring gear.	
axle ratio.....	3.15



**TWO-BARREL** version of the Typhoon V-8, rated at 200 bhp, produced brisk acceleration, effortless cruise.



**NO LACK** of luggage space was apparent in the Rogue, though spare, fuel filler pipe and jack intruded.

dollar-for-dollar match for the more-than-a-million-produced Mustang.

The Rogue's best quarter-mile time was 17.5 sec., as compared with 16.4 for a Dodge Dart GT (CL, Oct. '65). The Dodge, however, was fitted with optional 4-barrel carburetion and rated at 235 bhp. American Motors, by the time this reaches print, will be readying its own optional 4-barrel, 225-bhp version of the Typhoon engine.

The Barracuda, of course, offers as

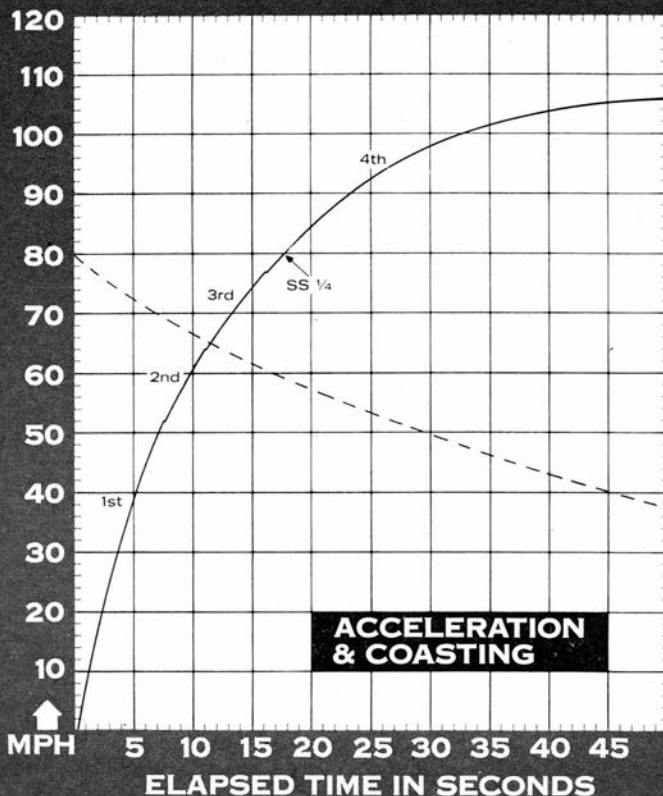
standard the fold-down cargo deck and a range of performance equipment not yet available to the Rogue buyer. The Barracuda-plus-options price, however, can far exceed the just over \$3200 top price of the Rogue.

The 283-cu. in. engine equipped Chevy II Nova Super Sport is offered in 195 and 220-bhp configurations—with 2- and 4-barrel carburetion, respectively—and thus is probably the car most comparable to the Rambler

American Rogue V-8 in price, performance and handling. The buyer who chooses one over the other must do so on merits of styling, interior appointments and just plain individual taste.

The buyer, grandfather, son or grandson, who chooses the Typhoon V-8 Rogue probably does so because he enjoys championing the underdog—while at the same time driving a well-put-together automotive overdog. ■

## CAR LIFE ROAD TEST



### CALCULATED DATA

Lb./bhp (test weight)	17.0
Cu. ft./ton mile	128
Mph/1000 rpm (high gear)	23.0
Engine revs./mile (60 mph)	2600
Piston travel, ft./mile	1422
Car Life wear index	36.9
Frontal area, sq. ft.	20.7
Box volume, cu. ft.	391.5

### SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph, actual	30.3
40 mph	39.8
50 mph	50.1
60 mph	59.2
70 mph	69.0
80 mph	80.3
90 mph	90.9

### MAINTENANCE INTERVALS

Oil change, engine, miles	4000
transmission/differential	4000
Oil filter change	4000
Air cleaner service, miles	24,000
Chassis lubrication	32,000
Wheelbearing re-packing	24,000
Universal joint service	32,000
Coolant change, mo.	24

### TUNE-UP DATA

Spark plugs	Champion N-14Y
gap, in.	0.033-0.037
Spark setting, deg./idle rpm	0/800
cent. max. adv., deg./rpm	34/4400
vac. max. adv., deg./in. Hg	24/18.5
Breaker gap, in.	0.016
cam dwell angle	29-31
arm tension, oz.	17-21
Tappet clearance, int./exh.	0/0
Fuel pump pressure, psi	4.0-5.5
Radiator cap relief press., psi	14

### PERFORMANCE

Top speed (4600), mph	106
Shifts (rpm) @ mph	
3rd to 4th (4900)	77
2nd to 3rd (4900)	64
1st to 2nd (4900)	53

### ACCELERATION

0-30 mph, sec.	3.6
0-40 mph	5.2
0-50 mph	7.2
0-60 mph	9.9
0-70 mph	13.5
0-80 mph	17.6
0-90 mph	23.2
0-100 mph	32.7
Standing 1/4-mile, sec.	17.6
speed at end, mph	80.0
Passing, 30-70 mph, sec.	9.9

### BRAKING

(Maximum deceleration rate achieved from 80 mph)	
1st stop, ft./sec./sec.	21
fade evident?	no
2nd stop, ft./sec./sec.	24
fade evident?	yes

### FUEL CONSUMPTION

Test conditions, mpg	12.0
Est. normal range, mpg	11.5-12.7
Cruising range, miles	184-202

### GRADABILITY

4th, % grade @ mph	12 @ 63
3rd	18 @ 59
2nd	23 @ 50
1st	33 @ 36

### DRAG FACTOR

Total drag @ 60 mph, lb.	76.5
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