

DRIVING THE HOT '67s | BUICK GRAN SPORT 400

...more of just about everything for the performance-minded

BEFORE THE WHEELS had made their first revolution we immediately noticed that the 1967 GS 400 was going to be an even far stronger performer than its 1966 counterpart—which was itself no slouch (July 1966 MT). We had expected some improvement in performance because of the new 400-cubic-inch engine (September 1966 MT). But a pleasant surprise came when we felt the highly responsive automatic transmission shift *twice* instead of only once as on previous models. The good news is that the GS 400 shares the

3-speed, variable-pitch-stator Super Turbine 400 transmission with the larger Buicks.

Although it has the same basic chassis as the Special and Skylark, the GS 400 has enough exclusive features to permit Buick to divorce it from the Skylark this year. It now is a separate series by itself.

Standard suspension for the GS 400 includes springs giving front and rear wheel rates of 133 and 116 pounds per inch respectively, plus a .937-inch diameter front stabilizer bar. These compare

to the wheel rates of 94 and 107.5 front and rear and a .781-inch-diameter stabilizer bar for the standard Skylark suspension. With a somewhat firmer feeling ride than that of a Special or Skylark, the GS has quicker steering response, less lean for a given corner and speed, and more resistance to bottoming on severe dips.

Those familiar with the Skylark Gran Sport will recall that it's fairly easy to induce wheelspin on cars with automatic transmissions up to as high as 40 mph by simply jabbing the throttle. The car

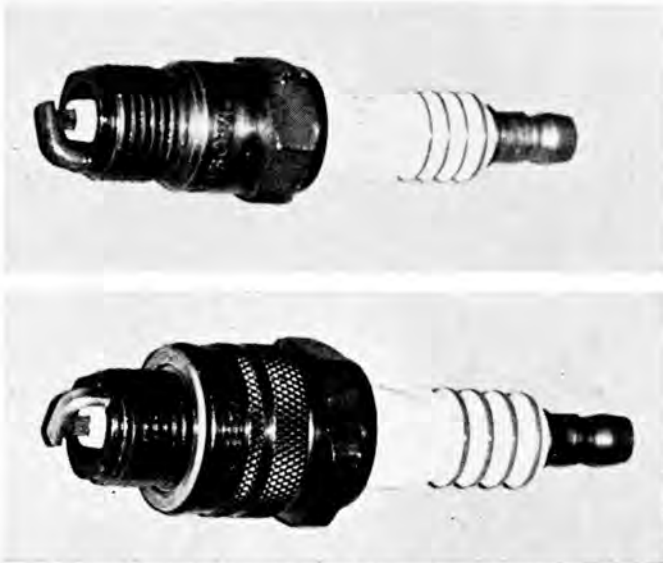
PHOTOS BY JOHN DOWLING; JOHN ETHRIDGE; BUICK DIVISION



GS 400 CORNERS QUITE WELL WITH WIDE-OVAL TIRES INFLATED TO NORMAL PRESSURE BUT WILL FURTHER IMPROVE WITH 3 OR 4 PSI MORE.



Convertible, thin-pillar coupe models are available in addition to hardtop shown. Single horizontal bar with GS emblem in grille, hood scoops identify all from the front.



If new design of AC spark plug (above the conventional plug) catches on, millions of 13/16 deep sockets will gather dust because new plug uses 5/8 hex. First seen on '67 Buick V-8, type-T plug has conical seat, requires no washer, retains 14mm thread. Slimmer design allows more water jacket space.

we drove had optional F70-14 Wide-Oval tires instead of the standard 7.75 x 14s, however. With the wide tires, tramping the throttle at a standstill produced wheelspin only for a short distance, then the rear wheels got a good solid bite and away we went like a shot. We also found it very difficult to break traction by application of power once the car was moving with any speed.

Stopping the GS 400 proved to be almost as much fun as accelerating it, for the particular car we drove had the optional Moraine discs up front. These reduce speed or bring the car to a halt from any speed it's capable of in a most reassuring and controllable manner. After hard stops we noticed they emitted a strong phenolic odor which is characteristic (and indicative of no harm) of the pad material used.

After describing a good optional brake such as the Moraine discs, it's usually our sad duty to recommend that everyone take these and forget the others on a hot car like the GS. But Buick, who for some years has been more mindful of brakes than most others, offers a really good set of standard brakes. At the front are finned, cast-iron-lined aluminum drums giving more rapid heat dissipation and fade-resistance than normal drums. These also happen to be standard on the Sportswagon which we drove. They were remarkably free of side pull for drums, and we noticed no change in braking characteristics after several applications. We still prefer the discs, but it's not the black and white case we usually find.

The new GS 400 is more of an enthusiast's car than ever and will deliver more satisfaction performing any task than any of its predecessors.



Exhaust manifolds for 400-, 430-cu.-in. engines have separate header-like ducts.



Unwary onlookers who miss GS letters on fender and near tail lamp may mistake car for Special — but not for long if lucky owner happens to be in a hurry to get somewhere.

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BUICK RIVIERA

...styling unblemished by change with numerous improvements under the skin

THE NEW 430-CUBIC-INCH, 360-hp engine and the standard Riviera GS 3.42 rear axle combine to give the car noticeably more snap than last year's model, which had less power and a 3.23 ratio. (For those who want even more, there's an optional 3.91 gearset which should make for really scorching performance. Those interested in economy should take the non-GS Riviera, which has a 3.07 rear end.)

The Riviera's standard brakes, shared with the Wildcat and Electra, are improved over last year's which were themselves above average. The number of fins on the front aluminum cast-iron drums has been doubled to 90 and the inside lip has been extended .50-inch to reach further into the cooling air. A new lining material having more fade resistance and a greater thickness for longer life has been adopted.

Finally, the vacuum booster has been increased in size to give 40% greater power assist. In driving the car there's not much difference in pedal feel, apparently because the harder lining offsets a good part of the increased boost. We experienced no fade or unevenness after several abrupt stops and got the feeling that only severe abuse would cause these brakes to falter.

Ventilated Kelsey-Hayes discs are available in the Riviera and all other large Buicks for those who want the ultimate in stopping power, however.

The 1967 Riviera retains the responsive handling, which stems from somewhat higher than ordinary wheel rates, combined with a quiet luxurious ride — and these, along with good looks, make it a perennial favorite.



WITH GREAT WISDOM, RESTRAINT BUICK OPTED TO LEAVE RIVIERA'S STYLING LARGELY UNCHANGED. SCRIPT EMBLEM REPLACES BLOCK LETTERS.



UNMISTAKABLY RIVIERA FROM EITHER FRONT OR REAR, STYLING RELIES ON FORM AND SHAPE RATHER THAN GEWGAWES OR FANCY DETAILING.

BUICK

...the traditionally prim
and stately lady
becomes a wailer

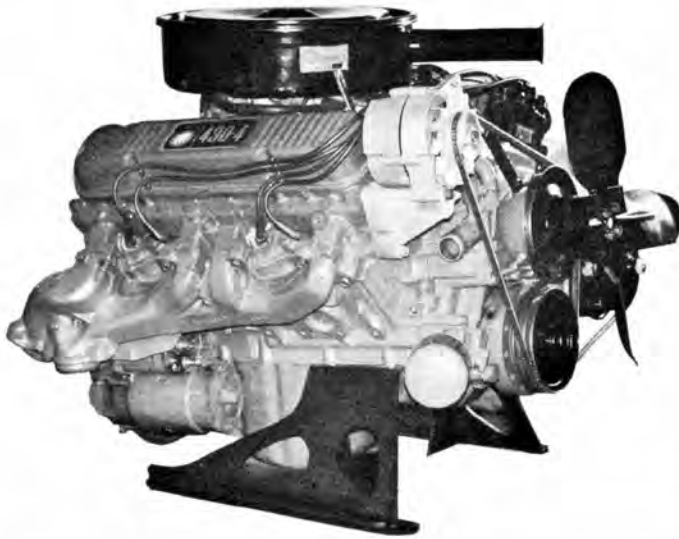
ELECTRA 225

WE WERE CURIOUS with the new 360-hp, 430-cubic-inch engine would do in a big Buick, so we tried one of the biggest of them all — the Electra 225. Although there are no twin exhausts like on the Riviera, the power shows through even more in the big car. We also chanced to observe two Electras undergoing some sort of a test on the high-speed oval at GM's proving grounds. So impressive were they as they hissed by at what appeared to be a speed in excess of 120 mph, some wag announced, "There go the NASCAR Electras!"

—John Ethridge



Restyled rear roof line, kicked-up fender give Electra 225 new longer, lower silhouette.



(Above) Downward sloping line in Electra 225's side is shared with all other '67 big Buicks. (Left) New 360-hp, 430-cubic-inch V-8 will power Electra, Riviera, Wildcat. (Below, left) Massive cast crankshaft for new engine is same for both 430- and 400-cubic-inch versions. (Below) Odd cranked appearance of distributor/oil pump drive gear on front of new cam is illusory. The fuel pump eccentric adjacent to it creates effect.

