

DRIVING THE HOT '67s | PONTIAC GRAND PRIX

Which goes to show that a luxurious car can also be a performer . . . and vice versa.

OUR GP WAS A CONVERTIBLE, the first time this body style has been offered in the Grand Prix series, and it has all the outward qualifications of a "hog": 400 cubic inches, 350 hp, weight in excess of two tons, power steering and air conditioning. Even with all of this against it, several circuits of the ride and handling course executed with great verve proved that if not quite as sure-footed as a tiger, the GP was closer to a cat than a hog. Even on a wet surface with four people in the car it showed excellent road manners. We once came over a rise in the middle of a sweeping bend and got slightly airborne. Coming down, the right rear suspension bottomed out, but although the body pitched a bit, the car maintained its direction with only slight steering correction and no change of speed.

Grand Prix engines have a revised cylinder head design not used in the other series. By spacing the valves farther apart it has been possible to make them bigger, and breathing has further been improved by making the valve angle nearly vertical, permitting more complete removal of burned gases during the exhaust cycle. The result is 350 hp from an engine that delivers only 335 in the other series.

Grand Prix styling is also different from other Pontiacs. Only the GP, for example, has the headlights hidden behind pivoting eyelid-type doors in the grille. The parking lights are semi-concealed behind louvers in the fender extensions. Two pin strips run the full length of the car on the upper fender peaks. On the hardtop coupes the front vent windows have been eliminated and the GP monogram is frosted into the glass.

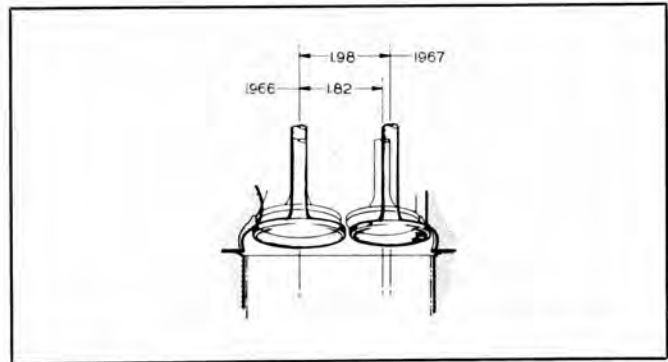
The front bumper completely surrounds the grille, while the windshield wipers—in common with the Bonneville, Catalina and Ventura models—disappear into a slot in front of the windshield when not in use. Pontiac engineers claim that there will be no problems with ice freezing in this slot in sub-zero weather.



The big Grand Prix was amazingly stable when driven hard. Note left front wheel off the ground as it tops a rise at speed.



Grand Prix tail light treatment is similar to the GTO, but it has fewer though larger slots. Rear window has concave curve.



Respacing intake and exhaust valves allows them to be bigger, provides better breathing. This head is used only on the GP's.

The Grand Prix hardtop has no front vent windows. Headlights are hidden behind grille/bumper, parking lights behind slits.

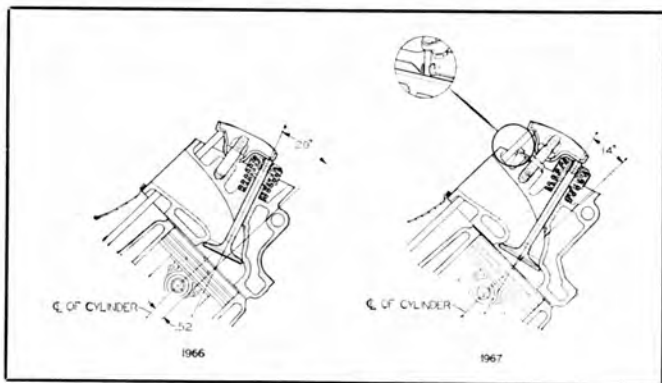




Grille section flips out of the way, exposing headlights. Note eyebrow-hooded parking light, above. Turning lights are options.



Pontiac people insist there will be no problem of ice locking wipers in the slot. The main advantage is elimination of glare.



Along with valves' change in spacing shown on opposite page, they enter combustion chamber at steeper angle in GP head.



Hood mounting of optional tach permits easy reading, but leaves it highly vulnerable to theft and sheetmetal damage.

PONTIAC 428 2+2

A slick, sexy sleeper.

ALTHOUGH NONE WAS AVAILABLE to drive, Pontiac has a real attention-getter in Ventura 428 2+2. It is the only Pontiac with a real fastback look, has the biggest sheetmetal change in the line, and was a target for the photographers.

The car shown here is a fiberglass prototype with different identifications on the two sides. This might indicate that the body will be available in more than one series, but in the past Ventura has been a Catalina interior option.

This car, which could be the sleeper of the Pontiac offerings, has the 428-cubic-inch engine. This replaces last year's 421 and puts out 360 hp with options up to 385.

As with all Pontiacs, standard equipment is a 3-speed manual transmission, and either the 4-speed manual or 3-speed automatic is optional.



Fastback 2+2 is sleekest of the new Pontiacs, but its debut was "Look, don't touch" as none was available for driving. Headlight treatment (above) is different from other models, while concave tail lights (below) conform to body contours.

