



first drive: 383 Barracuda

KUDOS FOR THE CUDA

Finally! Plymouth cobbles up a brand new fighting fish and stuffs it with 383 sharp teeth to come up with some real competition for the tail-less trio

BY MARTYN L. SCHORR

IT'S A BIRD! It's a plane!
It's a superfish! For the first time in its very short career the Barracuda can truly be called a supercar. In stock form it has image written all over it, and if the right boxes are checked you can get matching muscle under the bonnet.

The original compact sporty fastback, which suffered since 1964½ from half-fast styling (fastback body with Valiant front end) and limp merchandising, has been completely restyled and repowered for 1967. The aerodynamic styling is straight from the "land of the leaning tower" and the new 383-cube power option puts it in contention for honors in the

supercar sweepstakes.

For the first time members of the supercar set can order the Barracuda with a 383-cube four-barrel engine which has been used with great success in the middleweight Mopars. A reasonable amount of rear end cogs, choice of either the "dial-a-win" three-speed or "do-it-yourself" four-speed, disc brakes and a full complement of suspension parts back up the new super-power option.

Although totally new, the sleek 1967 model retains the basic lines which made the previous models distinctive. The 'Cuda's still a two-door full fastback hardtop with a large rear window. The charac-

teristic rear window, however, does not wrap into the body sides as on previous models. Stylists under the direction of "boss designer" El Engel chose sculptured metal over chrome ornamentation to emphasize the new front and rear fenders, side panels and the overall flowing lines. Leading edges of the front fenders protrude beyond the grille and the tops of the fenders form peak lines which are carried back the full length of the car, rising gradually in the area above the rear wheels. The sleek aerodynamic lines are further enhanced by the addition of curved glass side windows.

The original weak link

in the car's design, the grille area, has been strengthened this year. Design of the grille is new, for Plymouth at least, although it is divided in the center to retain the head-on identity established by earlier models. European-styled road-type parking lights are located in the continental grille. The pancaked hood is also new as are the scoop-type trim panels. Since Chrysler-Plymouth is trying to influence both the sports car and image-mobile enthusiasts, we couldn't figure out why they didn't take some of the fakery out of the Barracuda and use functional hood scoops. I guess it's much cheaper to bolt



Sleek sportster handles like a dream with beefy 'S' suspension package.



Split front end houses sporty mesh grille and rectangular parking lights.



Fully-instrumented dash is all-new. Buckets are optional at extra cost.



Sure-footed Goodyear Blue Streaks are standard with 'S' suspension setup.

on bright-work stampings than to actually handcraft a scooped hood and play it straight.

From the rear the new Barracuda also comes on like a European GT machine. The polished aluminum snap-open gas filler looks like a refugee from a racing machine. The plano-concave rear end treatment takes on the appearance of a semi-spoiler and works well with the tailored tail blinkers.

The unique utility-plus feature of the Barracuda has been retained and refined for 1967. Because of the design of the deck lid it's easier to get into the seven-foot-long cargo area. The folding rear seat is

now fitted with a floor catch which eliminates the noise-making old-style catch bar. A new bench-type front seat with a folding arm rest is now standard with newly-styled buckets being optional at extra cost. The three-gauge instrument cluster is also new this year and features a standard vacuum gauge and an optional tach. Interior options include a wood-grained instrument panel and door trim accents and brightly-trimmed pedals.

Before driving the 383 model, which was equipped with four-speed, disc brakes, Formula S suspension and 3.55-to-1 Sure Grip gears, we had en-

visioned all sorts of handling problems. We figured that the extra weight of the 383 (approximately 100 pounds heavier than the standard engine) would have some ill effects on the excellent handling qualities of the Formula S models. We were pleasantly surprised as the 383 'Cuda handled with a most forgiving nature, cornered almost as flatly as a 273 model and had a fantastic amount of torque on tap out of corners. The 1967 model is lower, longer and wider than its predecessor. Wheelbase now checks out at 108 inches (two inches longer) and the overall length checks out at 193 inches

(nearly five inches longer). Heavier duty 14-inch wheels are standard this year regardless of engine-suspension choices.

Performance of the 383 'Cuda is very similar to that of a new 440 cube GTX with basic equipment. The 383 engine carries a 325-hp rating and pumps out 425 foot pounds of torque at 2800 rpm. Compression is a mild 10.0-to-1. These specifications may change slightly when the car is ready for marketing, as the car we drove was an engineering prototype.

Using the Chrysler clocks we ran our *one-off* 383 through the traps (Continued on page 78)



Flat-folding rear seat has new rattle-proof release mechanism.



With 383 cubes 'Cuda has 120-mph top end plus super-hot dig.



Spoiler-styled rear incorporates contoured blinkers.



Hot 383 "fish" should make front page news on the sedan race circuit.

pretty high with its energy-absorbing steering column which telescopes at a controlled rate in the case of a collision and dual master cylinder braking system. Each system has its own master cylinder, and a warning light on the dash keeps the driver informed if there is a loss of pressure in the system.

Because of the nature of the beast (an engineering prototype) it was impossible to completely drag and road test it for this issue. As soon as the first ones roll off the production line, we'll put one through a 500 mile test jaunt and fill you in on the fine points.

BARRACUDA continued

three times to familiarize ourselves with the new package. Because of the hydraulic lifter cam, mild valve timing and street exhaust system the engine sounded almost as quiet as a stock 273. The best time posted with the 3.55-gearing 'Cuda was 15.2 seconds, 95 mpg. With open pipes, proper tire pressures and a good competition tuneup the stock 383 machine should be good for mid-14 second sets with top speed up around 100 mph.

On the high speed oval we managed to crank out a few 120 mph runs indicating that this new super sportster will be a match for the bigger, hairier street champs. We found the combination of front disc and rear drum binders to be efficient under all panic stop conditions, and the Goodyear Blue Streak tires to be a perfect choice for high speed, street or rallye driving.

Safetywise the hot new 'Cuda rates