



CAR and DRIVER ROAD TEST

# BARRACUDA FORMULA S

Unquestionably the best-looking car  
out of Detroit in 1967



The new Barracuda is unquestionably the best-looking car out of Detroit in 1967. It has a tautness of line and an integrity of design matched by few American cars of any vintage. It's been several years since either division of the Chrysler Corporation has produced a notably handsome car; Plymouth's old Barracuda was hardly the exception.

By a narrow margin, the old 'Cuda was America's first "sporty" fastback, but it was an aesthetic disaster. Hastily cobbled up from Valiant body and chassis parts, the first Barracuda had an ungainly, tail-heavy air about it. Initially, its over-

the-road performance was as inept as its looks, and we came down pretty hard on it (*C/D*, May '64). Later, Plymouth improved practically everything but the body—particularly in the nimble Formula S models—and the car sold fairly well despite its dubious lines. Lately, however, sales have fallen off, and it became obvious that something else had to be improved.

And so, an all new body. Its proportions give it a strong family identity with its predecessor, but the overall effect is altogether different. The backlight, which used to wrap all the way around the rear

quarter, now arcs flatly across the tail while the rear quarter is "blind" sheet metal. The fastback terminates abruptly in a Detroit interpretation of the Kamm-theory tails so fashionable on modern racing cars. Plymouth bills the manx tail as an "aerodynamic spoiler" but it is neither—only a smart gimmick.

The front end continues the original Barracuda's divided grille theme, but with considerably more emphasis. The center of the radiator is completely shielded, and cooling could conceivably suffer under extreme conditions such as prolonged driving in the desert or racing. Dual

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headlights are continued, set within the deep bezels surrounding the twin grilles. The front turn indicator lights, as before, are styled to resemble Cibié driving lights. Seeing either the front or rear running- and taillights is nearly impossible from the side.

In profile, the new Barracuda's fender lines closely follow the wasp-waisted shape pioneered by Pontiac in 1963, except that the front fender crease doesn't quite meet with the rear's, which overlaps it by a couple of inches. It is in side view that the Barracuda's almost complete lack of chrome is most dramatically evident. By any standards, it's a remarkably clean, uncluttered design.

The '67 Barracuda is mechanically a twin sister of the '67 Plymouth Valiant (and Dodge Dart), which means that the major changes from '66 are a 1.8-inch wider front track and a 2.0-inch wheelbase (now 108

inches). The new 'Cuda is longer, wider and lower than the '66; the biggest change is in overall length, up five inches to 193.

There is another difference, and a jolting one. The hottest engine available in Valiants and Darts is the 235-hp, 273 cu. in. V-8; the Barracuda's tiger-hunting engine is a whopping 110 cu. in. larger: the 4-bbl., 383 cu. in. V-8 (as used in the C/D "Boss Wagon").

Chrysler has two families of V-8 engine blocks (three, if you count the thunderous Hemi racing engine). The teeny-boppers are the 273 and 318; the heavy iron includes the 383, 413, 426 (wedge), and 440. When we learned that the engine bay of the Valiant/Dart/Barracuda body shell had been widened, and that the 318 cylinder heads had been narrowed to the same width as the 273's, we jumped to the conclusion that the 318 would

be available in these cars. Apparently, Plymouth felt that the 230-hp 318 wouldn't be competitive enough with the Camaro's 295-hp, 350 cu. in. V-8 or the Mustang's 320-hp, 390 cu. in. V-8, so the 383 was shoe-horned in. Later, any of the larger V-8 family, up to the 375-hp, 440 Super Commando, can be installed easily, but for now, the lively 383 ought to be more than enough to make the Barracuda the fastest of the sporty compacts.

There's one catch. We put in our request for a '67 Barracuda so early that all Plymouth could give us was a 235-hp 273. We'll have a road test of the 383-engined car later, probably the notchback or the convertible.

Our 273 'Cuda sported the Formula S package, which includes a handling package, high-performance tires, a tachometer and some special decor, as well as the 235-hp engine. It also had a 4-speed manual transmission, disc brakes, a tighter (3.91) rear axle ratio, no power steering, no power brakes and the wrong tires. The test car was equipped with last year's Formula S tires (Goodyear Blue Streaks), as none of the new Goodyear Red Streaks were then available. Radial-ply tires will soon be options.

The 3.91 axle and manual gearbox made this car considerably quicker off the line, and a full second faster in the quarter-mile acceleration runs than the '66 Formula S Barracuda we tested six months ago (which had an automatic transmission and the standard 3.23 axle). The 0-60-mph times were actually a fraction slower in the '67. In a drag race, the '67 would reach 60 mph later, but would be farther down the strip when the old car hit 60.

We would have preferred the automatic transmission, power steering, and power brakes, because the car is a bear to drive without them. The 4-speed is the big Chrysler unit, nearly unburstable, and a delight to use. The automatic is all that too, as well as more appropriate in nearly any driving situation we can imagine. The steering effort is extremely heavy, and full of springy,



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self-centering caster return. The high energy levels required to steer the car tend to mask the car's handling characteristics, but it's obviously on a par with the best of the big sports sedans. Unfortunately, power steering won't be available with the 383 because the engine is so wide that the power steering unit just won't fit. Disc brakes will be standard with the 383 Formula S package; it'll need it. And power assistance is a must with discs.

The instrument panel has been redesigned to include a hole between the two main dials flanking the steering column. Into the center hole goes either a vacuum gauge or a tachometer (standard with the Formula S). The tach is right in front of the driver, easy to read, and—with the quick-winding 273—necessary. One of the main dials contains the usual collection of gauges and winking lights, while the other

houses either the standard 120-mph speedometer or the optional 150-mph job—useless in a car geared for 112 mph.

While the rear-seat area is none too comfortable for human beings for any length of time, the fold-down seat feature turns the Barracuda into a unique, compact station wagon (albeit with a sharply sloping roof). The rear seat/cargo area is separated from the trunk by a "security panel" operable only from the trunk, so that nobody can rifle that compartment if the car is left unlocked. With this panel open, the floor is seven feet long, and a very practical platform for carrying long, low objects.

Standard safety features include lateral-pull door handles, dual master brake cylinders (and warning light, should half the system fail), an energy-absorbing, telescoping steering column, a thicker steering

wheel rim, horn buttons on the spokes of the "woodrim" steering wheel option, anti-glare windshield wipers, four lap belts, four-way emergency flashers, recessed knobs and switches, *et ad infinitum*.

In sum, the Barracuda 273 is a practical, well-balanced, sassy little car whose sporty overtones are justified by exceptional roadworthiness. Chassis, engine, suspension, brakes, drive train and running gear are all well-proved and reliable. Chrysler Corporation has built up the best reputation in the industry for quality control over the past three years, and we wouldn't hesitate to recommend the '67 Barracuda to anyone in the market for a sporty compact. On top of it all, it looks like a million bucks. But we can't wait to get our hands on one of those fire-breathing 383s, thrill-crazed, speed-hungry fun-seekers that we are. **c/d**

Specifications overleaf



## BARRACUDA FORMULA S

**Manufacturer:** Chrysler-Plymouth Division  
Chrysler Corporation  
12200 East Jefferson  
Detroit 31, Mich.

**Number of dealers in U.S.:** 4000

**Vehicle type:** Front-engine, rear-wheel-drive, 2+2-passenger sports/"personal" car, all-steel integral body/chassis

**Price as tested:** \$N.A. (Prices for the 1967 models had not been released by the manufacturers at press time. Our unofficial estimate would be ca. \$3200.00, as our test car was equipped)

**Options on test car:** Formula S (273 4-bbl engine, suspension package, high-speed tires, wheel covers, tach), interior decor group, console, 4-speed manual transmission, front disc brakes, fast (16:1) manual steering, 150-mph speedometer, headrests, bucket seats, AM radio, shoulder belts, remote control mirror, 3.91 rear axle ratio, limited slip differential

### ENGINE

Type: Water-cooled V-8, cast iron block and heads, 5 main bearings  
Bore x stroke 3.63 x 3.31 in, 92 x 89 mm  
Displacement 273 cu in, 4481 cc  
Compression ratio 10.5 to one  
Carburetion 1 x 4-bbl Carter  
Valve gear Pushrod-operated overhead valves, mechanical lifters  
Power (SAE) 235 bhp @ 5200 rpm  
Torque (SAE) 280 lbs/ft @ 4000 rpm  
Specific power output 0.86 bhp/cu in, 52.5 bhp/liter  
Max. recommended engine speed 5500 rpm

### DRIVE TRAIN

Transmission 4-speed manual, all-synchromesh  
Clutch diameter 9.1 in  
Final drive ratio 3.91 to one

Gear	Ratio	Mph/1000 rpm	Max. test speed
I	3.09	6.6	36 mph (5500 rpm)
II	1.92	10.6	58 mph (5500 rpm)
III	1.40	14.5	80 mph (5500 rpm)
IV	1.00	20.3	112 mph (5500 rpm)
R	3.09		N.A.

### DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Wheelbase 108.0 in  
Track F: 57.4 in, R: 55.6 in  
Length 193.0 in  
Width 71.6 in  
Height 53.5 in  
Ground clearance 5.5 in  
Curb weight 3373 lbs  
Test weight 3851 lbs  
Weight distribution, F/R 55.3/44.7%  
Lbs/bhp (test weight) 16.4  
Battery capacity 12 volts, 48 amp/hr  
Alternator capacity 470 watts  
Fuel capacity 18.0 gal  
Oil capacity 4.0 qts  
Water capacity 19.0 qts

### SUSPENSION

F: Ind., unequal-length wishbones, torsion bars, anti-sway bar  
R: Rigid axle, asymmetrical semi-elliptic leaf springs

### STEERING

Type Recirculating ball  
Turns, lock-to-lock 4.74  
Turning circle 38 ft

### BRAKES

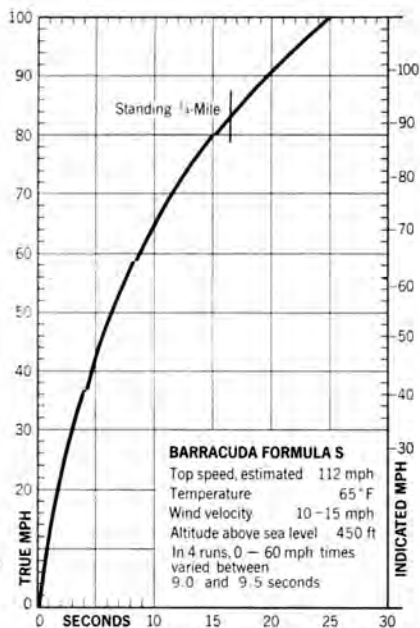
F: Kelsey-Hayes 11.125-in vented discs  
R: 10.0 x 1.75-in drums  
Swept area 314.7 sq in

### WHEELS AND TIRES

Wheel size and type 5.5 x 14-in, pressed steel disc, 5-bolt  
Tire make, size and type Goodyear 6.95-14 Blue Streak (4-ply nylon tubeless)  
Test inflation pressures F: 24 psi, R: 24 psi  
Tire load rating 1050 lbs per tire @ 24 psi

### PERFORMANCE

	Seconds
Zero to 30 mph	3.3
Zero to 40 mph	4.9
Zero to 50 mph	6.7
Zero to 60 mph	9.2
Zero to 70 mph	11.8
Zero to 80 mph	15.1
Zero to 90 mph	19.6
Zero to 100 mph	25.1
Standing 1/4-mile	16.6 sec @ 83 mph
80-0 mph	287 ft (.74 G)
Fuel mileage	14-18 mpg on premium fuel
Cruising range	252-324 mi



## CHECK LIST

### ENGINE

Starting Fair  
Response Good  
Vibration Excellent  
Noise Fair

### DRIVE TRAIN

Shift linkage Very Good  
Synchro action (man.) Excellent  
Clutch smoothness (man.) Very Good  
Drive train noise Good

### STEERING

Effort Poor  
Response Good  
Road feel Good  
Kickback Fair

### SUSPENSION

Ride comfort Good  
Roll resistance Very Good  
Pitch control Very Good  
Harshness control Fair

### HANDLING

Directional control Good  
Predictability Good  
Evasive maneuverability Good  
Resistance to sidewinds Good

### BRAKES

Pedal pressure Fair  
Response Good  
Fade resistance Very Good  
Directional stability Very Good

### CONTROLS

Wheel position Very Good  
Pedal position Good  
Gearshift position Good  
Relationship Very Good  
Small controls Excellent

### INTERIOR

Ease of entry/exit Very Good  
Noise level (cruising) Good  
Front seating comfort Very Good  
Front leg room Very Good  
Front head room Very Good  
Front hip/shoulder room Good  
Rear seating comfort Good  
Rear leg room Poor  
Rear head room Poor  
Rear hip/shoulder room Good  
Instrument comprehensiveness Very Good  
Instrument legibility Very Good

### VISION

Forward Very Good  
Front quarter Very Good  
Side Excellent  
Rear quarter Poor  
Rear Good

### WEATHER PROTECTION

Heater/defroster Good  
Ventilation Good  
Weather sealing Good

### CONSTRUCTION QUALITY

Sheet metal Very Good  
Paint Very Good  
Chrome Very Good  
Upholstery Very Good  
Padding Very Good  
Hardware Very Good

### GENERAL

Headlight illumination Very Good  
Parking and signal lights Fair  
Wiper effectiveness Good  
Service accessibility Very Good  
Trunk space Fair  
Interior storage space Very Good  
Bumper protection Good

