



DPL comfort or SST sporty flair share same basic body for '67

American Look-alikes



BY STEVEN KELLY

NO MATTER WHERE WE TOOK our test Rebel SST or Ambassador DPL, people had to ask the name of the good looking car we were driving. No one immediately recognized it as a Rambler. The younger set snapped their heads our way whenever we approached in the SST, and drivers of competitive "plush" sedans were quick to pull alongside and ask the DPL's origin. Comments from passersby confirmed our opinion that the '67 Rebel and Ambassador lines are both top candidates for a best-looking car award.

Driving them is as pleasant as looking at them. Both cars were equipped with AMC's new 343-cu.-in., 280-hp V-8.

Three-speed automatics were mated to the new engines, but the SST had a Shift-Command console selector which allowed better up and down shift control than the DPL's column lever.

The new-for-'67 rear suspension on both cars strongly resembles the '65-'67 Ford design with its coil suspension, 4-link trailing arm location and torque arms. The best news about the rear suspension is the open drive line that replaces the closed torque tube which required a lot of work to remove and also made the car a bit too rigid. Handling and riding qualities are vastly improved for '67.

Our SST was equipped with Good-year Wide-Tread tires which contribute greatly to the car's stability and braking ability. Heavy-duty springs and shocks are also desirable options in the SST. They give a solid ride at all times, but without excessive harshness. We did notice, however, that the front end has a tendency to wash-out when the car is put through a hard turn at a rapid pace, but nowhere near as much as last year's model. Normal situations such as cautious mountain driving won't reveal this tendency; it's evident mainly on a quick 90-degree corner.

Acceleration times of the SST are below par. Our test car was hindered by the high ratio axle (low numerically) and lack of a strong valve train. Rumor has it that both conditions will soon be rectified by options to make it a stronger performer. Until that time though, wheel-spinning take-offs, low acceleration times and engine rpms over 5000 are out of the question.

The engine would also benefit from the installation of dual exhausts. American Motors is planning on offering this option, but private installation can easily be accomplished by SST owners. As it is now, the 343 engine is panting for breathing space at a sustained speed of 60 mph or more.

Pleasant touring is one of the SST's strong points, and it's a car that absolutely begs to be driven for hours at a time. Our test car had the optional tilting wheel which allowed instant position change when arms became restless. We did find the seats positioned too low for genuine comfort, and this applies to 6-footers as well as drivers under 5'8". Also, you literally bottom on a severe bump due to lack of sufficient seat springing. No power seat is offered so potential buyers should have a trial sit-

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continued

ting before plunking their money down.

Individually adjustable, reclining bucket seats are standard in the SST, and ours had the optional deluxe trimmings added to it. This consisted of adjustable headrests, checkerboard pattern fabric surrounded by vinyl bolsters and a pair of throw pillows. The butterscotch color grabbed everyone's eyes as soon as they were within range of the car.

Interior noise in this particular SST was a few decibels louder than is desirable due to improper sealing of the windows to the weatherstripping and a large gap under the top outside windshield molding. The optional vinyl roof may have been the culprit here as the trim around the edges didn't seal tightly to the front or rear glass.

Brakes on our SST were the optional front-disc/rear-drum type with power assist, and as evident in the performance chart, they stopped the car quickly. Not

entire brake system carefully checked.

The Ambassador DPL is one of the plushest, most comfortable town or highway cars we've ever driven. Its overwhelmingly rich interior was compared to everything from a 19th century gaming house to the fabrics that might be encountered in the executive wash-room of a Madison Ave. ad agency. Front and rear fold-down arm rests, a pair of throw pillows, reclining front seatbacks, just-right seat altitude, all constitute DPL's contribution to the War on Poverty.

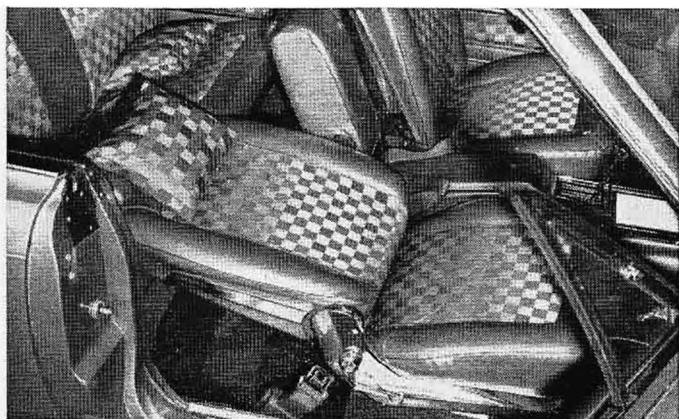
Our test DPL was equipped with H-D front and rear suspension, but rode much softer than the SST due to a longer wheelbase and greater weight. We'd advise that all DPL's receive the H-D components as they create a just-right combination of luxury softness and "feel of the road."

This DPL had air-conditioning so we had the windows up the majority of the time. Wind noise was very minor, though it would benefit AMC to work their way around the car with more sound-deadening material and vibration dampeners. There is a bit of flutter in

out bothering to change the manual ratio, also a slow proposition.

Dashboards have the same layout for Rebels and Ambassadors and, with exception of the exposed tachometer, the design should satisfy the most severe safety critic. Nothing is even near the passenger's side which might do him damage, and all the instruments and controls — directly in front of the driver — are surrounded by a padded ridge sticking out an inch or so. The speedometer on the DPL is graduated in one-mile-per-hour increments while it is only marked every 5 mph on the SST. The wide needle of the SST meter covers at least a 3-mph span, making calibration tricky indeed.

Inertia-reel-retractor seat belts were in both cars and they are the answer to what to do about loose belt ends. All the wearer has to do is pull the belt out of the retractor, snap it to the buckle, and let go. The take-up reel in the retractor pulls it snug and a ratchet device keeps it from pulling out. This is a fine AMC exclusive. So too is the AMC foot pedal material that is as sticky as fly-paper. Wet or dry, once you've placed your



Optional interior with slim buckets, center console with arm rest, and head rests add to SST's overall value and appeal.



Front and rear fold-down arm rest, throw pillows, reclining front seats, are all standard in richly finished DPL interior.

only did they provide quick stops, but the car stayed unusually straight and true, with the front wheels remaining under the driver's control at all times.

Our first attempt at "panic" stopping at 30 mph resulted in just that — panic. The instant the pedal was pushed a loud crunch emanated from the right front wheel, the car only slightly slowed and the brake failure light glowed red. After coasting to a stop we found that the Bendix caliper unit had broken loose from its moorings and rotated with the wheel. This released all the fluid from the front system and gave us only the rear brakes for stopping. The cause of the breakage — a one in ten million fluke — was improper assembly at the factory and no damage was recorded to us (other than nerves) or the car. The stopping distances listed were registered after a new caliper was installed and the

the suspension at 55 to 60 mph, and engine noise is apparent at speeds over 50 mph.

Being heavier than the SST, the DPL naturally ran a bit slower — but not much. It has a 3.15:1 rear gear, (which should have been in the SST) and recorded acceleration figures which are better or at least equal to equally geared mid-engined competitors. It most certainly can't be called a slouch, and has enough power reserve at any legal highway speeds to let you pass slower vehicles with safety.

The new smaller diameter steering wheel on both the DPL and SST is more comfortable, and the deluxe versions with wood inlay are real sporty looking. There is a vast improvement this year over the painfully slow steering of past Ramblers. It was almost as though they tacked a power steering pump on with-

number-nines on the pad, they don't accidentally slip off.

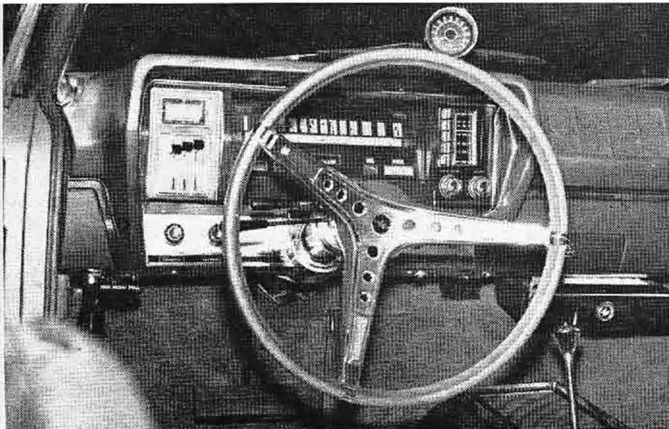
Transmission action on both DPL and SST was always quick and smooth. An altitude compensator in the vacuum modulator keeps the transmission shifting the same in high country as it does in the lowlands.

A number of built-ins make the Rebel and Ambassador lines safe and economical cars. The ceramic-coated exhaust system is still exclusive. Then there are the impact-absorbing steering column, the 5-year or 50,000-mile warranty on major drive train items, unusually spacious and comfortable passenger compartments, plus well-planned overall design. It all adds up to cars that are easy to look at, that are *getting* to be fun to drive, with the clincher being a well-earned reputation for quality construction.

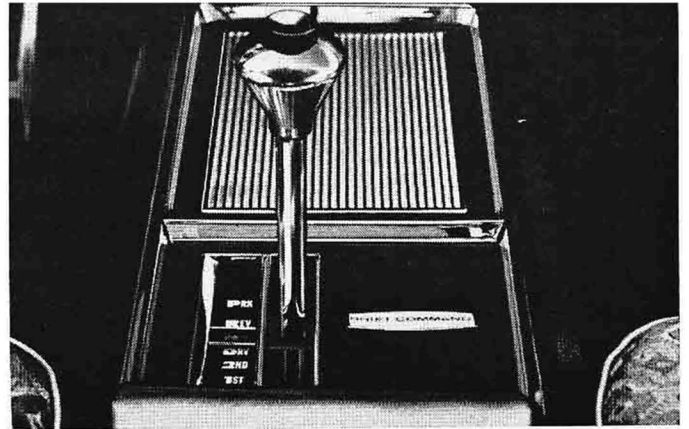
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DPL instruments are well lit and easy to read. Speedometer is marked every 1 mph. Idiot lights remain for amps and oil.



Both cars have instruments and controls right in front of driver, but SST lacks close-marked speedo. Tach is optional.



Console selector — optional on V-8 SST or DPL — gives precise shift control, but needs stronger lockout between ranges.

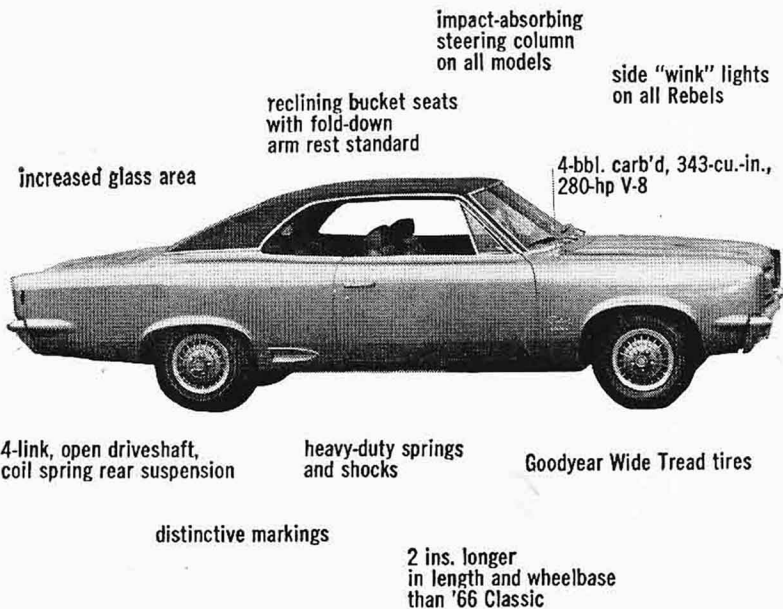


"Wash-out" tendency of SST is revealed on hard corners, but normal use shows front suspension strong, stable and firm.



Park/turn lights are high enough to be easily spotted by on-comers. DPL bears resemblance to GM and Ford intermediates.

SST REBEL VS. STANDARD — AND '67 VS. '66



increased glass area

reclining bucket seats
with fold-down
arm rest standard

impact-absorbing
steering column
on all models

side "wink" lights
on all Rebels

4-bbl. carb'd, 343-cu.-in.,
280-hp V-8

4-link, open driveshaft,
coil spring rear suspension

heavy-duty springs
and shocks

Goodyear Wide Tread tires

distinctive markings

2 ins. longer
in length and wheelbase
than '66 Classic

SST side scoops are non-functional but would be perfect spot to put courtesy lights.



cars at a glance . . .

(SST) Well built, solid road car with easy riding virtues for short trips or long hauls . . . not the performer its competitors are but minor changes could bring it closer . . . front end shows tendency to "wash-out" on hard turns, but car is predictable and stable in normal driving . . . styling is not recognizable as AMC, which is to car's advantage. (DPL) One of the plushest cars we've ever tested, though not one of the quietest . . . rides smoothly on any type surface with full load of passengers, though front-end shocks are vibrated through steering wheel . . . assembly quality is low on interior finishings, causing many annoying squeaks and rattles . . . styling is excellent by any standard.

how the car performed . . .

ACCELERATION (2 aboard :		SST	DPL
0-30 mph	3.5 secs.	3.6	
0-45 mph	5.8 secs.	6.0	
0-60 mph	9.0 secs.	9.9	
0-75 mph	13.3 secs.	14.5	
TIME & DISTANCE TO ATTAIN PASSING SPEEDS:			
40-60 mph	4.1 secs., 300 ft.	5.0 secs., 366 ft.	
50-70 mph	5.4 secs., 475 ft.	5.2 secs., 457 ft.	
STANDING START QUARTER-MILE:			
	16.9 secs., 83 mph	17.4 secs., 82 mph	
SPEEDS IN GEARS @ SHIFT POINTS:			
Rebel SST	rpm	Ambassador DPL	rpm
1st	50 mph @ 5000	1st	48 mph @ 5000
2nd	81 mph @ 5000	2nd	78 mph @ 5000
MPH PER 1000 RPM: SST, 23 mph; DPL, 21.67 mph			
SPEEDOMETER ERROR:			
Electric Speedometer	30	45	50 60 70 80
Car Speedometer (SST)	31	45	50 60 70 89
(DPL)	34	49	54 62 72 82
STOPPING DISTANCES:			
(SST) from 30 mph,	29.5 ft.;	from 60 mph,	142 ft.
(DPL) from 30 mph,	37 ft.;	from 60 mph,	164 ft.

specifications . . .

ENGINE: Ohv V-8 (both cars) 4.08 x 3.28
Bore and stroke (ins.) 343
Displacement (cu. ins.) 343
Horsepower: 280 @ 4800 rpm
Max. torque: 365 lbs.-ft. @ 3000 rpm
Compression ratio: 10.2:1
Carburetion: Single 4-bbl. Carter

TRANSMISSION: (both cars) Automatic; Borg & Beck/Long Torque converter with planetary gears. 3-speed, 2.40, 1.47, 1.00:1 ratios. SST, console lever; DPL, column selector.

FINAL DRIVE RATIO: SST, 2.87:1; DPL, 3.15:1

SUSPENSION: Front — independent direct-acting with coil springs. Telescopic shock absorbers with internal provision for bottoming control. Conventional "live" rear axle with coil springs each side, 4-link trailing arm location and torque arms. Telescopic tube shocks. H-D suspension on SST.

STEERING: Optional power (both cars). Integral rotary valve with Saginaw gear box. Recirculating ball-type gear. Turning diameter: SST, 37.6 ft. curb-to-curb; DPL, 39 ft. Turns lock-to-lock: 4.4.

WHEELS: Pressed steel disc. 5.5-in. width x 14-in. dia.

TIRES: SST, F70-14 Goodyear Wide-Tread, 4-ply rated. DPL, 8.25 x 14, Goodyear, 4-ply rated.

BRAKES: (both cars) Bendix dual, tandem master cylinder. Caliper disc front, drum rear. Power assist. Self-adjust. Front discs, 11.19 ins. dia. Rear drum, 11.0 ins. dia. Effective lining area: 106.6 sq. ins.

FUEL CAPACITY: (both cars) 21.5 gals.

BODY AND FRAME: Single unit body-and-frame, 1-piece uniside, inner & outer. Outer front fenders bolted.

DIMENSIONS: Wheelbase: SST, 114.0 ins.; DPL, 118.0. Track: (both cars) front, 58.58 ins.; rear, 58.50 ins. Overall: (SST) length, 197.0 ins.; width, 78.36 ins.; height, 53.49 ins. (DPL) length, 202.50 ins.; width, 78.36 ins.; height, 53.57 ins.

USABLE TRUNK CAPACITY: (both cars) 18.2 cu. ft.

CURB WEIGHT: SST, 3740 lbs.; DPL, 3920 lbs.

prices and accessories . . .

MANUFACTURER'S SUGGESTED RETAIL: (includes federal excise tax, but excludes state and local taxes, license, options, accessories and transportation)
Rebel SST, 290-cu.-in. V-8, 200 hp. — \$2710, base;
Ambassador DPL, 290-cu.-in. V-8, 200 hp. — \$2958.

OPTIONS AND ACCESSORIES	SST	DPL
343-cu.-in., 280-hp V-8	\$ 90.65	\$ 90.65
Automatic transmission	204.70	217.00
H-D springs and shocks	7.80	7.80
Auto-Lock seat belts	10.30	10.30
Power front disc brakes	90.60	90.60
Air conditioning	349.65	349.65
Twin-Grip differential	36.85	41.90
Power steering	84.40	95.00

Look-alikes continued



Trunk liftover height is just over 2 ft. Fuel filler has tendency to "spit back."



150-ft. stops from 60 mph are easy for SST. Note small gas spillage from tank vent.