

# trackin' the

# CAT

By A. B. Shuman



*LEFT* — Early tests were conducted at Irwindale Raceway. Only change made was the inclusion of Jardine Headers.

*BELOW*—CC Editor, John Raffa, and Don Nicholson get familiar with the 428 mill. Don later gave CJ full Stoker treatment.

*BOTTOM* — Project Cougar will be the top prize in a national contest to be conducted by The Coca Cola Co. later in '69.

**The Cougar's appointments are fit for a king, but its performance turns out to be mannered more like an alley cat...ferocious!**

To most, the Cougar is just "an extra nice Mustang," a little heavier and a lot more posh. True, when one is plunked down in the midst of all the creature comfort in Merc's sports compact, it's hard to expect too much in the way of performance, even when it's equipped with the highly-touted 428 CJ and a four-speed. So, it was with some misgivings that we climbed aboard the Pure Stock version of our "Super Cat" Project Car and put the big feline through her paces. Those doubts were rapidly dispelled by just one full-throttle trip through the gears. Running at Irwindale Raceway, we picked up a Polyglas-melting 14.18 and 100.55 clocking. By changing our driving technique and playing around with the tire pressure, obtaining best results by running the Wide Treads with 32 p.s.i. and shifting at 5500-5600 rpm, low e.t. was a quite creditable 13.93 and best top end speed was 102.38.

With considerably more enthusiasm, we took the "Cat" to Ray "Chicken Bwana" Alley's Engine Masters shop in Garden Grove for installation of Lakewood traction bars, and were pleasantly surprised at how easily they bolted on. Next stop was Jerry Jardine's shop, also in Garden Grove, for a set of his JF4B competition four-tube headers. These hang a little low and Jerry has a street model (JF6) which provides more ground clearance.

Bolting on the headers suddenly grew into a two day project, as the very limited clearance between the engine and the shock towers complicated what should have been a simple job. (Anyone planning to put headers on his Cougar had best take heed and let a fully-equipped shop handle it.) This unforeseen delay blew our already tight testing schedule right

*(continued on page 88)*





TOP — The '69 Cougar lines are complemented by imaginative lettering by Kelly of Downey, Calif.

ABOVE—Hood scoop and pins are part of Cougar's 428 CJ performance package. They're functional.

LEFT—"Dyno Don," on the Funny Car bandwagon for several years, gets feel of things in the Stocker.

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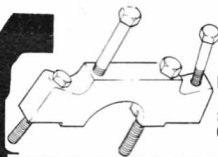
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## TRACKIN' THE CAT

(continued from page 47)

out of the water, forcing us to run our next series without benefit of rear axle gear change, slicks or suspension tuning. At any rate, we did get to see that all the thrashin' to get those headers on was worth it—to the tune of .47-seconds—and those Lakewood bars didn't hurt either, though stiffer rear shocks were needed. Best run was a 13.46, with a top end of over 105 mph. Not too bad for a 3600-pounder.



Don Nicholson, on hand for the runs, thought he'd better take away our toy before we broke it, and hustled off to his "underground" workshop. The full details of his preparation of the 428 for F/Stock were included in our March '69 issue. In addition, the car got a set of 90/10 Cure-Rides up front and a set of 50/50's for the rear. Also at the back 4.56 gears were installed and the Cragars shod with 9.00 x 15 D-4 Good-year slicks. The stock shift linkage works very well, but Don prefers a Hurst Competition-Plus setup.



The complete engine, fitted with a Schiefer clutch and flywheel and Lakewood bellhousing, was eased back into the car, and the "Cat" brought out for the final round of runs. Nicholson did the honors this time, getting a best of 12.78 and 109.35. Now, what's that about "posh luxury cars"?

The Coca-Cola Company will be giving away the "Super Cat" as top prize in a soon to be announced national contest; watch CC for details.

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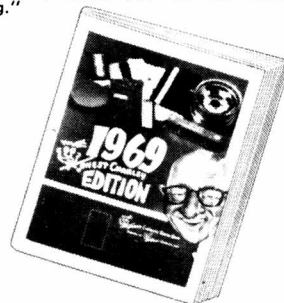
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