



The Hairiest Oldsmobile

Mr. Hurst and Dr. Oldsmobile build the mind shatterer.
Or, why Lucille will never be the same again.

Text and photography by Eric Dahlquist

"We like your car," the paper said. They were about fourteen, miniature replicas of the American dream, the California golden girl, with yellow hair and outlined eyes, and they had written their feelings on a page from a junior high school notebook and put it against the window of their '64 Chevelle wagon. Here we were, hurtling over the gray concrete of the Santa Ana freeway toward Los Angeles at 65 mph and these two teeny-boppers were blowing their collective minds over our car, sending the message out across the chasm of a white lane divider from their rectangular steel world. Hurst and Oldsmobile had just scored ten on the Richter Scale of market impact.

Only a machine like the Hurst/Olds can do it; a hood-scooped, panel-painted, mag-wheeled, trunk-spoilered antidote for our uptight anonymous world. Your car is you or the Walter Mitty dream of you your mind has on instant, stop-action replay. It is the natural law of youth that a groovy guy always owns a groovy car and if you've got the car, groovy chicks will be in it. The Hurst/Olds is a money-back guarantee. And it is also an insurance policy against premature old age, like studded snow tires to keep you from sliding down the icy slope on the shaded side of 30.

Hurst's part in the cycle is to take a very good car, the 4-4-2 Oldsmobile, and make it better, faster and more obvious. The empire built on engine mounts and shifters has moved out from the small garage in Pennsylvania across the weathered Alleghenys to the Midwest flatness of Michigan to make automobiles for Motown that Motown can't make for itself. Because, you see, Detroit, like this country's

defense system, is primed for nine million unit market overkills, not brushfire skirmishes. Hurst is a handy expedient to circumnavigate corporate no-nos such as General Motor's ten-pounds-per-horsepower-in-A-bodied-sedans-ceiling. The 455-inch Hurst/Olds, built by Hurst but distributed by Olds dealers, gives the division a kilopower 4-4-2 without the mushrooming cloud of fallout from the fourteenth floor.

In essence, the HO is a 4-4-2 whose 325 horsepower 400 cubic inch engine is superseded by a 380 horsepower 455 cubic inch one, the same used in Police Specials and the Toronado GT. Behind it, a Turbo Hydra-Matic three-speed has had its throttle body tampered with to issue instant shifts at the optimum power which happens to be 4900-5000 rpm. And, yes, on the transmission is a Hurst, dual-gate shifter, the one that makes it better than a positive manual or full automatic. In last year's HO-edition, there was a normal engine, plus a slightly detuned version for air conditioned models. Now that is changed, the milder cammed '68 AC unit is standard across the board. But performance is up instead of down. For '69 all W-30 cold-air Olds received a specially curved distributor providing better low end response and the HO has it. Also, all 400 and 455 engines saw the light of '69 with wider spaced center ports in the exhaust manifold and this has helped, too.

Although the '68 HO 455 was an immediate success, the car's exterior differed little from a regular 4-4-2 which (a) made it a sleeper, and (b) forfeited much of its visual identification. This will not happen in '69. Right there in front of the world sits Hurst's contender for the year's largest

scoop honor, a fiber glass bolt-on that probably works better than the W-30 under-the-bumper ducts because those long tubes have high internal air friction. An added bonus is that the engine is easier to service and has better visual impact, not hiding its chrome valve covers under a large air cleaner and two air ducts that look like giant caterpillars.

If the front has its scoop, the rear has its spoiler. No supercar is complete without one these days. Olds being Olds, theirs is not just decoration. It generates 64 pounds of down thrust at 120 mph, 35 at 90 and 15 and 60. You can never tell when you'll want to go to Bonneville.

The drag strip is a more likely destination. For a 3855-pounder, the HO flat makes it. With only 600 miles on the engine, the car went 13.98 @ 101.28 in the quarter street stock — no headers, no tires, no nothing. Slicks probably wouldn't help that much anyway. All HOs are shod with F-60 x 15 Polyglas boots eight inches across instead of the F-70 x 14s standard on the 4-4-2. Seeing an eight-inch wide black rubber track has about as much effect on your competitors as Friday's footprint on Robinson Crusoe. Traction is unbelievable even on water. Goodyear is probably as responsible for the HO's consistency as the drivetrain. On eight succeeding passes, the car varied a miniscule .77 mph and .13 second.

Excellence abounds in the Hurst/Olds. Take handling and braking. Because the 455 engine is actually some ten-twelve pounds lighter than a 400, adding a heavy-duty radiator and giant 71-amp battery created an identical weight balance as the 4-4-2. Only a little initial understeer surfaces in the bends and it can be quickly overridden with the throttle. It is quite possibly the best handling domestic sedan in the country. Goodyear strikes again in stopping. When you have an art-gum tire like the F-60, traction rises to the point where the 4-4-2's already good brakes will take a little more rear stamina without locking up. Covering just 115 feet of asphalt to halt from 60, the HO registered slightly more than 1g. and not many cars of any type can say that.

The Hurst/Olds is intended to be a kind of American Grand Touring machine and it succeeds admirably. It accelerates like a rocket-sled, stops and corners better than many of its European peers and is uncannily smooth on the road. If it has any faults, the rather floppy front fender/hood assembly does not create in the observer much feeling of strength and a rear-view mirror which provides an exceptionally narrow field of vision. These things and \$4300 are the price of catching a dream. /MT

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine: V-8. **Bore & Stroke:** 4.126 x 4.250. **Displacement:** 455 cu. in. **Hp:** 380 @ 5000 rpm. **Torque:** 500 lbs.-ft. @ 3200 rpm. **Compression Ratio:** 10.0:1. **Carburetion:** 1 Rochester 4 bbl. **Transmission:** Turbo Hydra-Matic. **Final Drive Ratio:** 3.90. **Steering Type:** power. **Ratio:** 24:1. **Turning Diameter:** 40.9 ft. curb-to-curb, 5.6 turns, lock-to-lock. **Tires:** F 60 x 15. **Brakes:** Front disc, drum rear, power assisted. **Suspension:** Front: Independent coil. Rear: Live axle, with trailing links, coil sprung. **Body/Frame Construction:** All steel body on separate frame. **Dimensions, Weights, Capacities:** Overall Length: 201.6 ins. Overall Width: 76.6 ins. Overall Height: 52.8 ins. Wheelbase: 112 ins. Front Track: 59 ins. Rear Track: 59 ins. Curb Weight: 3855 lbs. Fuel Capacity: 20 gals. Oil Capacity: 5 qts.

PERFORMANCE

Acceleration: (2 aboard)

0-30 mph	2.5 secs.
0-45 mph	4.0 secs.
0-60 mph	5.9 secs.
0-75 mph	8.6 secs.

Standing Start 1/4 mile 101.28 mph, 13.98 secs.

Speeds in Gears:

1st	42 mph @ 5000 rpm
2nd	69 mph @ 5000 rpm
3rd	102 mph @ 5000 rpm

MPH per 1000 RPM: 20.4 mph

Stopping Distances:

from 30 mph	24.3 ft.
from 60 mph	115.3 ft.

Mileage:

Range: 8-12 mpg; Average: 10 mpg.

A flash of light, a cloud of dust (opposite page) and away goes the '69 Hurst/Olds, just possibly one of the best sedans ever built in this country. Taking it from the top (right) H/O has candy gold panel paint, hood scoop, rear deck spoiler, racing mirrors and all that good stuff. The breathing air is rammed into the big daddy of all supercar engines (right, middle), a 10:1 compression wonder that puts you in and out of the quarter-mile lights at 14.11 @ 99.88. On the inside (far right) there is a Hurst dual-gate shifter and dash plaque with your name and number. Polyglas F 60 x 15s (below) put down eight inches.

