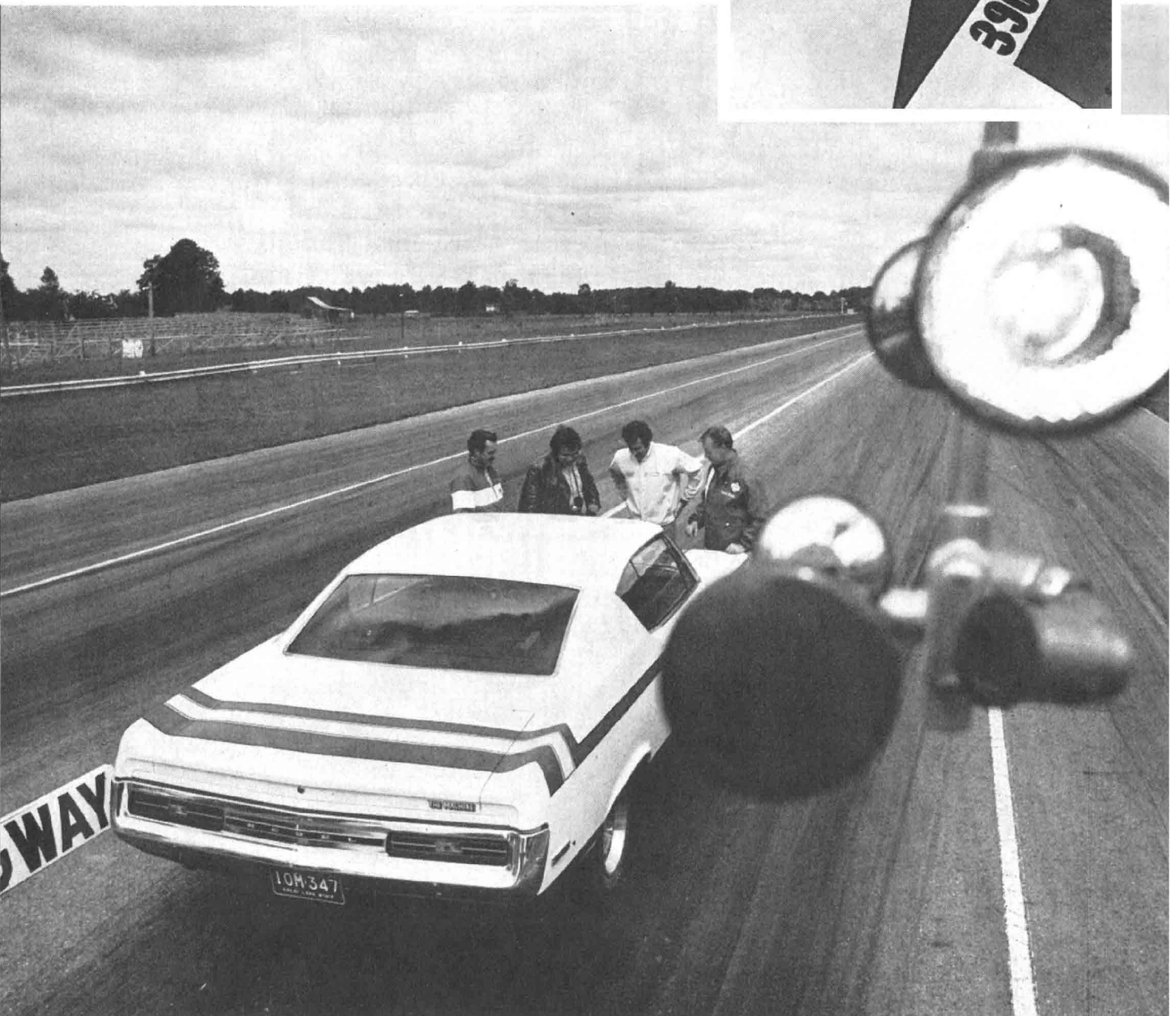
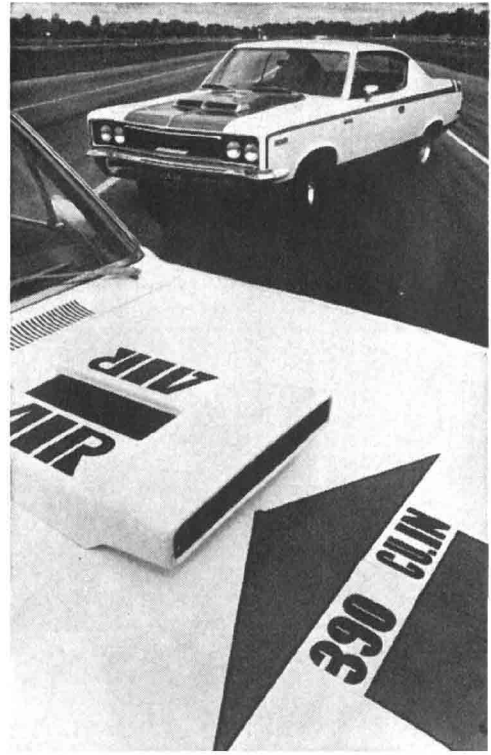


UP WITH THE REBEL MACHINE

By Bill Sanders



American Motors continues its trendy, trippy put-on of all the super car sacred cows.

That area beyond the Mason-Dixon line used to be the only place you could find an authentic rebel. Things have changed though. Everybody is his own rebel today. "Do your own thing, baby." That's the scene now. From politics to dress, there aren't any more hangups. The establishment is on trial. A few years ago the late James Dean, Natalie Wood and Sal Mineo made a picture called *Rebel Without A Cause*. That was sort of a beginning. In a way, rebellion has fostered a sublime "put-on" psychology in every area it has touched. The establishment is being put on and it doesn't even know it.

Now comes the great put-on of the motor world. It's the *Rebel Machine*, from whom else but American Motors, an outfit that has been very cool recently in putting on a lot of people. Their Hurst-Scrambler is a good example. A lot of people took it seriously on the outside but not seriously enough at the drag strip where performance counts. In a game of "can you top this," they're at it again. The super car field has become filled with a plethora of gadgets and gimmicks, consisting of tricks, scoops, spoilers and stripes, with profound promoters seriously extolling the virtues of cubic inch masterpieces. All, that is, except the prosaic Rebel from AMC. There's been an SST version to be sure,

but it's never been out there on Woodward Avenue or Van Nuys Boulevard with the heavy cats.

That dearth of competition is over. Now it's "Up With The Rebel Machine," a car that has to be a put-on of the put-ons. But don't be fooled. The put-on is only skin deep. For \$3300 to \$3400 you can get a machine that's pure guts. For instance, it has a 390-cubic-inch engine that's been reworked for 340 horsepower. That's 15 more than the biggest optional AMC 390 with 325 horsepower. The Rebel Machine engine has special heads, valve train, cam and a re-designed intake and exhaust system, specially produced for the car. A four-barrel 680 cfm carburetor gives it extra push. And, that's not all. It also has a reworked chassis with special rear springs and shocks that give it a built-in two-inch rake. A large diameter rear stabilizer bar holds it steady on the strip and in the corners.

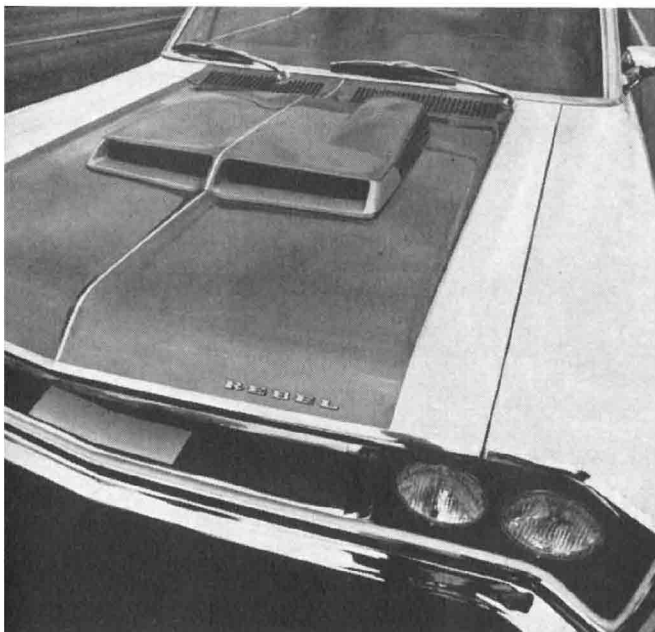
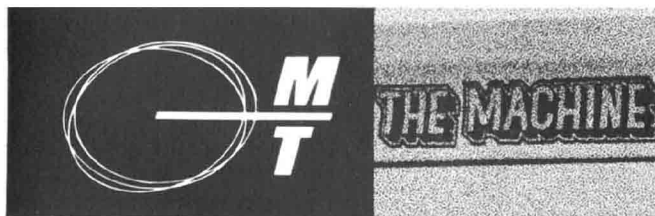
Some of the standard items for the price include a hood-mounted tach which is built into the hoodcoop, a neat little trick of put-on design, E60 x 15 tires wrapped around all-new wheels from Kelsey-Hayes that are being seen for the first time on the Machine, a four-speed manual transmission with a genuine Hurst floor shifter, front disc brakes, high-back bucket seats and a heap of other fascinating super car-type ornaments. What it turns out to be is a Rebel of another magnitude. Surrounding all the good stuff is a two-door hardtop that's been painted red, white and blue, with stripes, decals and hoodcoops that would make a purist shudder. At least the first 1000 cars produced will be red, white and blue. After that you have your choice of colors. Even the front seat center armrest, the "T" handle shifter and part of the dash will be red, white and blue. It's like America. You'd better love it or leave it.

Being the last entrant in a class of cars that has been increasingly dominating the market in the last few years, the Machine needed a different approach. Actually AMC was ready to go ahead with a super car two years ago. Management was talking about a Machine-type Rebel in '68 and '69, but the sales department set a standard of 350 horsepower so it could compete. Now they've got what they feel is a promising contender. Actually, the name and decal were going to be an extension of the put-on theme. A hip-type cat riding a gear and holding a flag "Up With The Rebel Machine" was to have been the decal, but AMC's Board of Directors saw it on a tour of the corporate headquarters and felt it went a little too far. They felt there was enough protesting already so "The Machine" was the result. Even AMC's swinging ad agency, Wells, Rich, Greene, didn't get the put-on and wanted to do a serious ad campaign. Hurst Performance Incorporated, who built the car, knew they had to continue the put-on theme and the ad campaign should be trendy, and W-R-G had to go along. The first ad states: "Whoever saw a car built that way!"

For a price below \$3500, The Machine performs like a champ, both in straight-out acceleration and excellent handling. The increased rate springs and shocks both front and rear, especially in the rear, eliminate any mushy, sedan-type bounce without making ride qualities overly harsh. The special rear stabilizer bar eliminates wheel hop during acceleration and keeps down body roll while going through the corners for well-rounded performance benefits. The Machine understeers slightly in extremely tight corners, but generally stays flat, even when pushed hard.

If you don't have a cause célèbre, The Machine won't turn you into an instant rebel. But, when you start dusting off some heavy wheels, you'll know the sweet taste of a real put-on. You'll be laughing last.

/MT



American Motors set out to build a Super Muscle Car. The result is a sometimes hedonistic state of mind; what else could a car called "The Machine" be? As a put-on of the stripes and scoops philosophy it succeeds. But watch out, there's plenty of stuff underneath to dust off many a wheel.



Acceleration: (2 aboard)	
0-30 mph	2.2 secs.
0-45 mph	4.5 secs.
0-60 mph	6.4 secs.
0-75 mph	10.0 secs.
Standing Start 1/4-mile	99.0 mph, 14.4 secs.
Passing Speeds: (3rd gear)	
40-60 mph	3.2 secs.
50-70 mph	3.8 secs.
Stopping Distances:	
from 30 mph	27.3 ft.
from 60 mph	119.5 ft.