

'93 GMC TYPHOON



Life In The Eye Of The Storm

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When describing the Typhoon adjectives like; awesome, intense, adrenaline rush and mind-blowing come to mind. Have these appraisals been made in haste, after one quarter-mile blast or 0-60 sprint? When we lined up our '93 tester, we scheduled it around a getaway so we could subject the Typhoon to our Road Trip Road Test. This would enable us to evaluate the vehicle on a five hour trip to Carmel as well as five second trips to 60 mph. We would endeavor to

look beyond the truck's acceleration and handling performance, if possible, and report on comfort, ride and day-in and day-out performance.

The '93 version of the Typhoon has been refined and improved by GMC engineers. The lion's share of the refinements were to the interior. The Typhoon is now equipped with an overhead console that houses two reading lamps and nifty storage bins for sunglasses and a remote garage door opener. Standard seating consists of leather-trimmed buckets. The driver's seat features six-way power adjustment and power lumbar support. The passenger side bucket also comes

with power lumbar adjustment. In the cargo hold of the Typhoon a webbed nylon netting keeps packages and gear secured. Considering the high probability of spirited dri-



The interior is the perfect blend of performance and luxury, featuring a full-zoot gauge cluster and leather-clad interior.

ving this is a most useful addition. There are two exterior changes worth noting. The first is the addition of a body-color grille that unifies the front of the truck. The second is a monochromatic white-on-white color package. The only design change that affects performance is a retuned rear suspension that increases road feel and lateral acceleration.

When looking at the performance ledger, the Typhoon lives up to the adjectives used at the beginning of this article. The truck is so quick that sometimes it's difficult to find the adjectives to describe it. The Typhoon's speedo needle sweeps across the dial faster than most truck's tach needles. The GMC's blistering performance comes from the potent 285-horse, turbocharged and intercooled Vortec V6. Peak horsepower is realized at 4400 rpm and torque is rated at 360 lbs/ft at 3600 rpm. At idle the engine conveys a sense of eagerness to the driver. Slip the 4L60 into gear and the truck lurches forward in anticipation. What transpires next is totally up to the driver. A swift push to the floor with the right foot and your back is pinned to the seat. Our empirical testing netted some impressive results. We posted 0-60 times of 5.4, 5.6 and 5.8 seconds. The scorching 5.4-second run ate up 269 feet of road and registered a whopping 1.016gs off the line. But



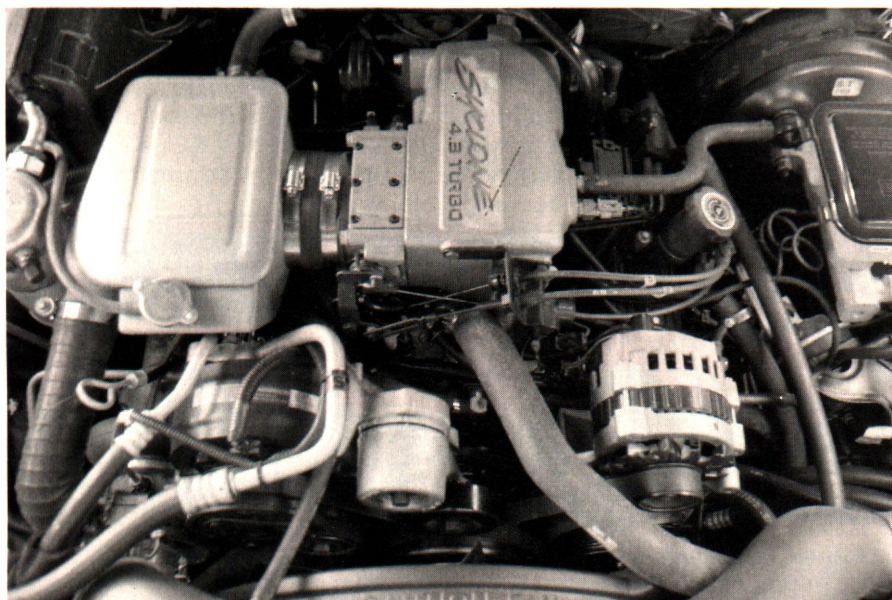
New-for-'93 is the addition of a body-color grille that unifies the front of the truck. A monochromatic white-on-white color package has also been added to this year's line up.

the motor idles quite smoothly and will behave in a more civilized manner when that necessity arises. It can creep away from stoplights slow enough to make people think a little old lady from Pasadena is at the wheel. No matter how the truck is utilized, the Typhoon owner doesn't pay the price at the pump. With EPA estimates of 14 mpg city and 18 mpg highway, our Typhoon was right on the mark, checking in with an average of 16 mpg. These figures are about average for the sport/utility market segment.

A major factor in acceleration performance is being able to trans-

fer the power generated in the engine bay through the drivetrain and onto the pavement. The smooth but concise shifts of the 4L60 four-speed automatic with overdrive combined with the Borg-Warner 4472 all-wheel drive transfer case with viscous coupling give the Typhoon sure-footed traction despite road conditions. The unit is set up to funnel 35-percent of the available power to the front wheels and 65-percent to the rear. The Borg-Warner 4472 limits wheel spin during hard acceleration and enhances cornering by using the viscous coupling to distribute power to the wheel with the best grip, which improves adhesion.

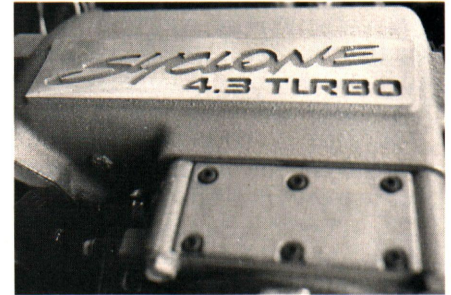
A key player in adhesion and traction is the suspension. The unequal-length control arm with torsion bars and stabilizer bar front independent suspension and two-stage, semi-elliptic multi-leaf spring rear suspension with electronic load-leveling shocks and integral air bags works hard keeping the tires in contact with the road, yet provides a soft, confident ride. Many sport-tuned cars produce their performance by sacrificing ride comfort, the Typhoon is one of the few performance vehicles that truly blends ride and handling. The '93 revisions are noticeable, the suspension conveys a sense of intelligence, knowing when it needs to be firm and when it needs to be soft. When the Typhoon's cornering capabilities are challenged, the



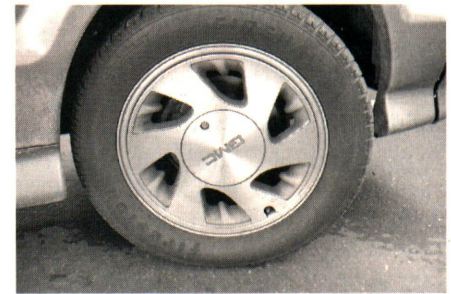
The potent, turbocharged and intercooled Vortec V6 reaches its peak of 285 horsepower at 4400 rpm. Torque is rated at 360 lbs/ft at 3600 rpm. This sport/utility has the goods to back its aggressive looks. It blazed to 60 mph in 5.4 seconds and registered a whopping 1.016gs off the line.



One of the most appreciated interior upgrades is the stylish gauge cluster, originally offered in the now defunct Cyclone and Sonoma GT pickups. The cluster features traditional sweep-needle, dial-style gauges not the bar-graph units offered in tamer S-series sport/utilities.



Since the Cyclone is no more, the turbo motor's manifold castings are probably on borrowed time.



Rolling stock consists of distinctive 16x8 cast aluminum wheels and sticky P245/50VR16 Firestone Firehawk SVX high-performance, all-season radials.

suspension reacts quickly and confidently to driver input. The massive P245/50VR16 Firestone Firehawk SVX tires prove their worth, clawing through apex after apex with little effort. The components work as one, making the Typhoon feel like it's riding on rails. On the open highway the GMC glides over road irregularities and expansion joints. Even potholes are endured without concern. As the longest leg of our road trip came to an end, we found ourselves fresh and ready for a night on the town.

The smoothness of the truck's ride is only partially responsible for the comfort of the Typhoon. Often in performance vehicles interior creature comforts are overlooked entirely or are afterthoughts at best. The Typhoon's interior is impressive, but usually overshadowed by the truck's outrageous performance. Everything you touch is leather; the seats, door panels, steering wheel and shifter knob. The driver's bucket seat is six-way power adjustable, including lumbar support. While some "adjustable" seats contort into every imaginable position except one that is comfortable, these seats are standouts. They didn't cut off circulation to the lower extremities after hours in the saddle and were up to the task when the Typhoon was driven to the edge, providing excellent lateral support. One of the most appreciated interior upgrades is the stylish gauge cluster, originally offered in the now defunct Cyclone and Sonoma GT pickups. The cluster features traditional sweep-needle, dial-style gauges not the hard-to-read bar-graph units offered in tamer GM S-series sport/utilities. The Typhoon has room to comfortably seat five and does live up to the "utility" portion of its name as

well as the "sport". With the rear seats in place there is 28.1 cubic-feet of cargo area. Fold down the seats, and the Typhoon can carry 67.2 cubic-feet of groceries or cargo. The Typhoon has a modest 900-pound payload and no available towing capacity. The Typhoon's MSRP is in the \$29,000 ballpark, we have seen fully loaded minivans with similar price tags. One reason many potential buyers are forced to decide against the GMC is its configuration. Minivan's have sliding rear doors while the Typhoon is available only in two-door configuration. While this may change, rumor has it that a four-door Typhoon test mule has been developed by PAS, Inc. the company that installs the turbos and other Typhoon-exclusive parts for GMC. Imagine that, the best of both worlds, a vehicle that can quicken the pulse to the tune of 0-60 in under six seconds and accommodate the needs of a growing family, car seat and all. □



The Typhoon offers the best of both worlds, an all-wheel drive, turbo-powered drivetrain and leather trimmed seating for five.

TYPHOON PERFORMANCE UPGRADES... OUR CUP RUNNETH OVER

Right off the dealer's lot the Typhoon offers practically unfathomable performance for a truck. However, for hard-core performance enthusiasts the Typhoon's 14-second 92+ mph quarter-mile performance is just enough to whet the appetite.

There is a cornucopia of high-performance products available for the Typhoon. The modifications can be as simple as computer chips, upgraded fuel pressure regulators, larger capacity intercoolers. They can be more involved utilizing bigger turbos or twin turbo kits, larger injectors, camshafts, valves, valvesprings, pistons, transmission kits and a host of suspension modifications.

One of the benchmarks of modified Typhoon's is Mechtech's aqua blue Typhoon that appeared on our December cover. The GMC evolved in three stages, each stage giving birth to a new performance package. Stage I consisted of an HKS Electronic Valve Controller, an Applied Technologies performance chip, 45 lb/hr Lucas injectors, a Conley's Performance Plus air/water intercooler, a Borla exhaust system and a K&N air filter. The '92 Typhoon baselined 0-60 at 6.05 seconds. With the Stage one products in place the Typhoon zipped to 60 mph in 5.43. (We have no way of explaining the difference in baseline numbers for Mechtech's '92 compared to the '93 tester featured in the road test. Performance differs from vehicle to vehicle, launch characteristics differ from driver to driver. We have seen instances where worn wastegate springs or a slight wastegate leak can lead to higher boost and better than average performance.) Stage II entailed upgrading the turbo with a Mitsubishi TD05H high-flow unit, a Kenne-Bell billet fuel pressure regulator and the installation of an Art Carr 10-inch, non-lockup converter and valve body reprogramming kit. A trip to the strip netted a 4.98 0-60 clocking. Quarter-mile times were in the 13.50 range. Boost pressure

was set at 15 psi for Stage I and Stage II. For Stage III the crew at Mechtech went for broke. The heads were ported, 1.6 exhaust valves and 1.6 roller rockers were installed and a street-legal Crane cam (PN 18411) was fitted to the V6. The Typhoon was wrung out at the strip, blitzing to a 3.68 0-60 and a 12.19 quarter-mile topping out at 115.2 mph.

For a more in-depth look at modifying the Typhoon see the premier issue of *Truck & Sport Utility Performance* (December 1992) and the January 1992 issue of our sister publication *Turbo & Hi-Tech Performance*. With enough gastrical fortitude and a large bank account you could have a mean sport/utility capable of burying Ferraris and 'Vettes at the drop of the hammer. Here is a tip-of-the-iceberg list of companies producing performance parts for the Typhoon.

Applied Technologies, 500-9 Guiseppe Ct., Roseville, CA 95678, (916) 783-9700.

Art Carr Performance Products 10575 Bechler River Ave., Fountain Valley, CA 92708, (714) 962-6655.

Conley's Performance Plus, 1327



S. Houston Ave., Humble, TX 77338, (713) 540-3278.

Duttweiler Performance, 1565 Los Angeles St., Saticoy, CA 93004, (805) 659-3648.

Dynotech Performance, 29 Livingston Dr., Belle Mead, NJ 08502 (908) 281-9222.

Kenne-Bell Performance, 10743 Bell Ct., Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730, (714) 941-6646.

Mechtech Motorsports, 1277 Simpson Wy., Escondido, CA 92025 (619) 432-0555.

Suspension Techniques, 13546 Vintage Pl., Chino, CA 91710 (714) 465-1020.

Turbonetics, 650 Flinn Ave., Suite 6, Moorpark, CA 93021, (805) 529-8995.

Turbo City, 1137 Katella, Orange, CA 92667, (714) 639-4933.