

# THE NEW STUFF

## The '92 Cars Arrive With More Power And More Technology

By John Pearley Huffman

**N**O RUST. NO ACCUMULATED ROAD grime. No cigarette burns in the carpet. No faded dash pads, mismatched wheels, splotchy paint, or door dings. Yep, new cars sure are new.

If only they were cheap.

Few of us can walk into a new car showroom and leave with the perfect raw material for our latest Pro Street project. Most of us buy them to drive and those "60 easy monthly payments" represent one of the largest purchases we'll ever make. Contrary to two decades of musclecar myths and pollution control horror stories, today's best cars do almost everything yesterday's cars did, and a lot of things undreamed of during the "glory days."

For '92, Detroit has gone on a refinement frenzy. There aren't a lot of all-new cars this year, but the new ones that are here are impressive, the changes to old favorites are significant, and there have been power gains and no power losses. The big question is: Considering the disappointing '91 sales figures, will that be enough?

## GENERAL MOTORS

**E**arth's biggest car builder has determined that its divisions have unique personalities. The newest cars, even when they're identical structurally and mechanically, have highly individual "expressive" styling and distinct characters.



Pontiac Firebird Trans Am

### Chevrolet Camaro Z/28

Still the performance standard, the Camaro and Firebird enter '92 looking just like last year's models, which is how they've looked for a decade. Looks can be deceiving.

The way F-cars are built has improved dramatically. By using adhesives along body seams instead of just spot welds, the structure of the cars is significantly tighter and less rattle prone. What all this means is that the suspension can do more of its work before the body starts flexing—a big improvement on rougher roads and in deep corners.

Most everything else is just like last year—with the addition of "25th Anniversary" plaques to every Ca-



maro and the availability of a special "Heritage" appearance package. The 305 and 350 TPI motors are still the performance choices, and with the new structure they can perform even better longer. And if you like the current bodies, buy one now. Next year there will be an all new F-car.



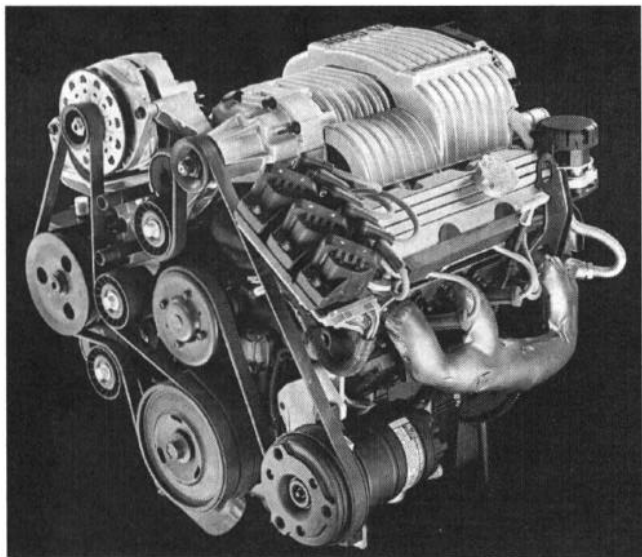
### GMC Typhoon

The natural sequel to the awesome, turbocharged, 280-hp, all-wheel-drive Syclone pickup is the awesome, turbocharged, 280-hp, all-wheel-drive Typhoon sport utility. Though the drivetrain is carried over from the Syclone, the Typhoon

isn't merely a Sycloned Jimmy. The interior is much more luxurious, there's a load leveling suspension, the look is more subdued, and the capability to haul four passengers makes a world of difference.

How fast is it? We'll have a full test next month.

## GENERAL MOTORS



The Bonneville, 88, and LeSabre are GM's newest bread-and-butter sedans and they're far more attractive than might be expected from cars built more for life's easy-goers than go-fasters. All three feature nimble chassis, compliant suspensions, and enough room inside to comfortably accommodate the New York Knicks starting five.

The most exciting of the bunch is the Bonneville SSEi, which backs up its aggressive looks with the 205-hp supercharged version of the 3800 V-6, a tauter suspension and Goodyear Eagle GT+4 tires. The advanced design supercharger takes the uncannily smooth 3800 up to a new performance plateau, but don't

expect nosebleed-inducing acceleration. Bonneville's with less letters after their name make do with the normally aspirated, rich in low-end torque, 165hp version of the 3800—as do all versions of the 88 and LeSabre. Olds and Buick do offer the supercharged engine in their incrementally larger and more lavish 98 and Park Avenue sedans.

It's too bad Olds and Buick don't offer the blown motor in their more affordable big cars which, in many less opulent ways, are more attractive than their more adorned brothers. It's even more unfortunate that the engine isn't offered in one of the smaller cars where it could really shine.

**Pontiac Bonneville SSEi****Oldsmobile 88****Buick LeSabre****GMC Sonoma GT**

For many of us, Sycamore aspirations are outstripped by summer-squall-scale bank balances. To satisfy at least some of that lust though, GMC offers the new Sonoma GT—a two-wheel-drive, 195 hp version of the Sonoma compact pickup that features many of the Sycamore's best

pieces for a lot less dinero.

The 195 hp is courtesy of a new high output and balance shaft-equipped version of the 4.3-liter V-6. It won't rattle vertebrae like the Sycamore turbo, but it moves the Sonoma GT impressively. The GT's exterior features a Sycamore-esque front fascia, chunky BFGoodrich Comp T/A tires, and specific graphics. The interior is almost a direct lift from the Sycamore, with Sycamore-style seats, the much better Sunbird-derived instrument cluster, leather-wrapped four-spoke wheel, and Corvette-sourced shifter.

No, it's not a Sycamore. But it's closer than you might expect.

