

Oldsmobile Rallye 350: Why There's No Muscle Car Like It

In 1964, General Motors sent the automotive marketplace into a frenzy with release of the iconic Pontiac Tempest LeMans GTO. Widely regarded as America's first muscle car, GM had decided to do the unthinkable — stuff a large-displacement engine in a midsize, two-door coupe. The car became an instant hit, and soon big-block performance was all the rage. In each passing year leading up to 1970, GM's other divisions followed Pontiac's example and developed muscle cars offerings of their own. Buick released the Skylark GS in 1965, and Chevrolet and Oldsmobile launched the Chevelle SS and Cutlass 442. All four divisions stretched the cubic-inch limit to its very limit and fully believed there was no replacement for displacement.

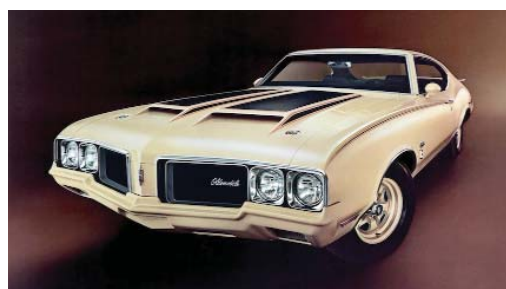
In 1970, it appeared that big block muscle cars could soon lose their luster. The call for increased emissions standards would certainly result in the death of high-compression engines. As fuel costs continued to rise and insurance companies started charging sky-high premiums for big-block muscle cars, the demand for more affordable performance grew.

One company that took notice of this shift in the marketplace was Oldsmobile. Even if the cubic inches were no longer there, buyers still had a strong desire for that classic "muscle car look." Thus, the popularity of "junior" muscle cars with high-performance small-block V8 engines gained traction.

Perhaps the most unique among the "junior" muscle cars was the 1970 Oldsmobile Rallye 350. Available only in Sebring Yellow, its striking appearance was highlighted by color-matched bumpers and wheels that gave the Rallye 350 a look unlike any other muscle car on the street. In an era when chrome was still cool, Oldsmobile's monochromatic color scheme was certainly daring and influential on the future styling of performance cars. Instead of adhering to Oldsmobile's traditional touch of class, the Rallye 350 was bold and muscular.

A unique deck lid spoiler and a fiberglass W-25 cowl induction hood definitely signaled this was no ordinary Olds. But the Rallye 350 was much more than an appearance package: The sole powertrain option was a bulletproof 350 cubic inch V8 engine with an impressive 310 horsepower and 390 pound-feet of torque. Perhaps Oldsmobile was right — no big block

(Continued on page 5)



Ed — These are the photos that came along with the article. I cannot explain the color difference between the photos and I don't know which is really correct.

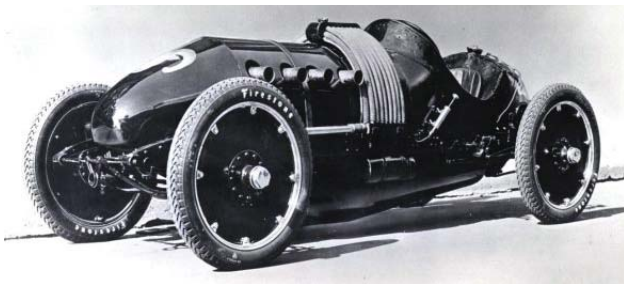


Buick History

Performance has been part of Buick's DNA since its earliest days, when stripped-down chassis and powerful Buick engines pushed the pioneers of motorsports to victory. Racing success helped forge the brand's reputation for durability. Now, more than a century later, that legacy of performance complements the refinement for which Buick has always been known. Here's a look at 10 milestones that helped establish and advance Buick's performance heritage:



1. 1909 Buick racecar won the first race at Indianapolis - two years before the first 500-mile race was run. The 2.5-mile-long oval at Indy was inaugurated with the Prest-O-Lite Trophy. The 250-mile race was won by Bob Burman, driving a Buick and averaging more than 53 mph. Of the nine cars that finished the race, three of them were Buick models.



2. The 1910 60 Special, or "Bug," was built by the Buick racing team and had a unique nosecone - a feature designed more for aesthetics than aerodynamics. A huge, 10.2L (622 cubic inches) four-cylinder engine propelled the Bug to 110 mph. Buick built two 60 Special racecars, one for Prest-O-Lite Trophy winner Bob Burman, and a second for another racer of note: Louis Chevrolet.



3. 1938 Buick Century Buick introduced straight-eight engines in 1931, but it was the 1938 Century model that established a new performance benchmark. Dubbed Dynaflex 8, the 5.2L (320 cubic inches) inline engine featured new, domed pistons that contributed to an 11-hp increase over the 1937 engine. It was enough power to pass the "century mark" at 103 mph, making the Century one of the fastest cars of its day.



4. 1954 Buick Wildcat II concept The Buick V-8 engine - nicknamed Nailhead for its unique valve arrangement - was introduced in 1953 and powered the Wildcat II concept vehicle a year later. Using a quartet of sidedraft carburetors, engineers coaxed 10 percent more horsepower from the engine than regular-production models, giving the Wildcat II the power to back up its sporty styling.



5. 1963 Buick Special In 1961, Buick introduced an innovative, lightweight all-aluminum V-8 to power its new midsize

(Continued on page 4)

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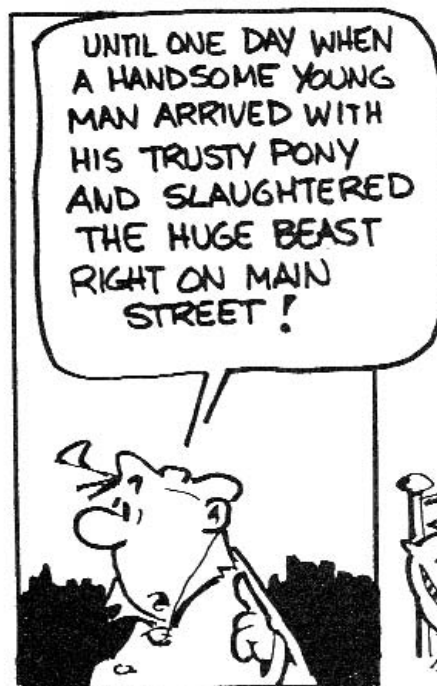
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Buick History (continued from page 2)

Special model line. Displacing only 3.5L (215 cubic inches), it was lauded for its high power density. The engine achieved its peak in the 1963 Special, with its 200-hp output representing a horsepower-to-liter ratio of 0.57:1. Versions of the engine were used in Indy racing cars.



6. 1970 Buick GSX At the height of the muscle car wars, torque was king and no competitor could dethrone the 510 lb.-ft. (678 Nm) of twist generated by the GSX's available 455 Stage I V-8 engine. In a 1970 road test, Motor Trend went from 0 to 60 mph in 5.5 seconds and covered the quarter-mile in 13.4 seconds. The GSX's combination of raw power and Buick's signature luxury prompted many to describe the car as a "velvet hammer."



7. 1976 Buick Century Indianapolis 500 Pace Car Buick's turbocharging legacy was established with this purposeful pace car. Engineers leveraged the recently revived, more-efficient 3.8L (231 cubic inches) V-6 engine that was supplanting larger V-8 engines in many production models. They filled it with 22 psi of turbo-fed boost - resulting in 306 horsepower from the compact powerhouse - and reset expectations for Buick performance.



8. When the 1984 Buick/March Indy Car began its dalliance with turbocharging, few could have predicted it would lead from pacing the Indianapolis 500 to racing in it a few years later. It culminated at the 1984 race, when driver Scott Brayton drove his Buick-powered March racecar to a 204.638-mph one-lap speed and a 203.637-mph four-lap average, setting new records for a racecar using a production-spec engine block. By the mid-1990s, a more powerful version of the Buick turbo V-6 helped Eddie Cheever turn the fastest race lap ever at the Brickyard: 236.103 mph during the 1996 Indy 500.



9. 1987 Buick GNX During the resurgence of high-performance in the 1980s, Buick ditched the conventional V-8 playbook and continued to cultivate its turbo V-6 program, which was manifested in the Grand National. Buick marked the end of the car's production in 1987 with the limited-production GNX. It was a Grand National on steroids, with a larger turbocharger, a higher, 276-horsepower rating and all-black attire. Only 547 were built and they became instant collectibles.



10. 2012 Regal GS The GS returned to Buick's lineup and advanced its turbocharging heritage with one of the most sophisticated and power-dense engines in its segment - a 270-hp 2.0L delivering 135 hp per liter. It also reintroduced a manual transmission to Buick and matched power with sophisticated driver technologies such as the Interactive Drive Control system.

Oldsmobile Rallye 350 (Continued from page 1)

was needed after all. With just the little 350 at the helm, this junior Olds could sprint to 60 in seven seconds flat and complete the quarter mile in 15.27 seconds at just over 94 miles per hour.

If you wanted to go even faster, customers could choose to upgrade the Rallye 350's standard 3.23:1 open differential. A 3.42:1 and 3:91 ratio were also available with Anti-Spin — Oldsmobile's classy name for a posi. Transmission choices were also plentiful, with the option of a floor-mounted three-speed manual, Muncie M-21 close ratio four-speed, or a Turbo Hydra-Matic 350 automatic.

While the Rallye 350 certainly wasn't about to win any road course races, it was still quite agile and fun to toss around corners with Oldsmobile's FE2 "Rallye Sport Suspension," which included stiffer springs and larger front and rear sway bars. Compared to the 442 anchored by its much heavier 455 big-block V8, the Rallye 350 felt like a slot car.

Surprisingly, just a little over 3,500 Rallye 350s were built in 1970, and the model was discontinued after just a single year of production. Reports say that Oldsmobile dealers struggled to sell them and often replaced their painted bumpers with chrome alternatives simply to move them off dealership lots — a costly endeavor. While the Rallye 350 may have helped prove that the muscle car era could survive without big block engines, the market just wasn't ready for its radical monochromatic styling. Like many other incredible cars that didn't sell particularly well, perhaps the Rallye 350 was simply ahead of its time.



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U.S. Postal Service celebrates work trucks with Forever stamps

In 2016, the United States Postal Service is adding four new stamps to its Forever stamp collection. If you love classic pickup trucks, you just might want to check them out.

The stamps, illustrated by Chris Lyons, were created to show how pickups became popular in the 20th century. The work vehicle revolutionized cargo hauling, military life and more with new technology and features that hadn't really been introduced before.

The four models chosen for the collection are:



> The strong, sturdy, 1938 International Harvester D-2 that had a distinct barrel-shaped grille and its elegant styling mirrored the look of luxury automobiles of the era.



> The 1953 Chevrolet, which featured a large windshield and provided drivers with excellent visibility, a distinctive curvy grille that bulged in the middle, and a six-cylinder engine.

USPS has not announced an official release date for the stamps, but it did say they will be available for purchase later this year.



> The 1948 Ford F-1 that included features like the roomy "Million Dollar Cab," a sharp horizontal five-bar grille and a six-cylinder engine.



> The 1965 Ford F-100 that had a new grille featuring 18 small rectangular openings. It also featured what Ford dubbed a "Twin-I-Beam" independent front suspension.

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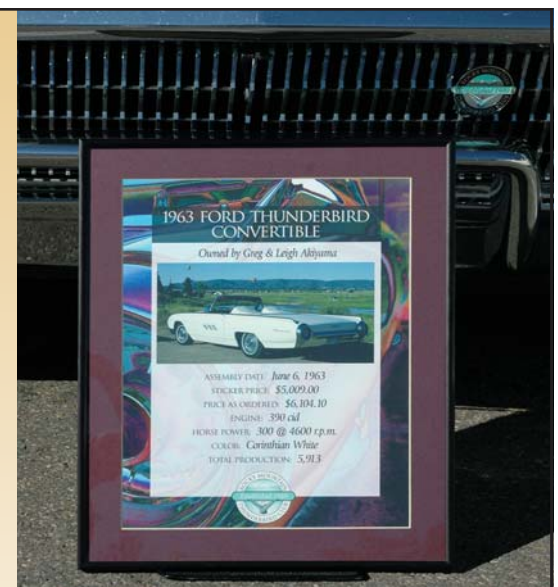
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This is a monthly publication dedicated to the enjoyment of the collector car hobby in Colorado.

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ED: I am looking for other Cars of the Month. These cars do not have to be concours award winners, just cars that have owners who are proud to own them. (Don't we all feel that way?) To nominate a car and owner, please contact me at gakiyama@earthlink.net. Thanks.

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