

KEEPING YOUR CAR COOL — TIPS, TRICKS, AND RESTO ADVICE

MUSCLECAR REVIEW

- › SUPER SLEEPER: 427 FORD CUSTOM
- › RARE FIND: 22,000-MILE SUPER BEE
- › CAR ADS: ART FITZPATRICK'S WIDE-TRACK PONTIACS



PONCHOS WITH PUNCH

- RAM AIR JUDGE
- SUPER DUTY CATALINA
- RAM AIR GTO
- TRANS AM TRIO

PONTIAC LIVES ON!

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With a low-mile, original Judge on our cover ("Condition Freak," page 20), we thought it would be interesting to see what Petersen magazines had to say about the outrageous GTO back when it was introduced. *Hot Rod* was first out of the gate, with Steve Kelly putting "de Judge" through its paces in the Dec. '68 issue. He tested a prototype at Ubly Dragway, "a pleasant spot about 100 miles north of Detroit." Probably because the car was a preproduction model, Kelly opted to leave it in "showroom condition" and not perform the usual modifications done in the quest for quicker e.t.'s—tire pressure changes, air cleaner removal, and the like. As such, "performance was a bit less on this GTO-derived car than we've experienced on previous GTO tests," he noted, yet he wrote he was "far from disappointed with the results. Any time a supercar in ultra-stock form even breaks into the 14-second region, we're happy." And happy he was with his best 14.41-second pass at 99.55 mph. "Without reservation, we'd project mid-to-high 12-second clockings on a properly prepared Judge."

Car Craft staffer Bob Swaim followed that test up in the Mar. '69 issue. He visited Detroit in November 1968 during a swing through the Midwest and East Coast "and picked up the one-and-only prototype at Royal Pontiac in Royal Oak, Michigan. At the time the car was in the final development stages and had been sent over to Royal, where Milt Schornack, their noted hi-performance manager, had installed one of their 'Baby Bobcat Kits' to see what gains could be realized." The kit included adjustable rocker arm lock nuts, Mallory points and condenser, and a reworking of the carb jetting and distributor curve.

We're not sure Swaim had "the one and only prototype," as his car was fitted with an automatic transmission, while Kelly's Judge had a four-speed. But there was some data sharing going on, as Schornack told Swaim "the best performance figures for the Judge in pure stock trim (prior to the Bobcatting) had been a 14.41-second e.t. at 99.55 mph."

Swaim took the Judge to Lapeer Dragway (where the burnout shot seen here was taken) but was met with nasty conditions: a 30-mph headwind and subfreezing temperatures. Without test equipment Swaim judged the Judge to be "a high-13-second performer at just over 100 mph. Our estimate was backed up a few weeks later when Milt called to inform us that on a fairer day, he had ... turned a four-run average of 13.80 seconds at 102.5 mph. You can see that with a few more tricks, like headers and tires, the Judge should easily be transformed into a 12-second stormer."

Now, about that photo of Larry Shinoda in the Judge: Swaim wrote up a profile on Shinoda, then the Director of Special Projects for Ford, in the Apr. '69 issue of *Car Craft*. There's no mention of the Judge in the article, but we're guessing Swaim was driving the GTO when he visited Shinoda, and as the former Chief Designer at GM, he had to check out the latest offering from his former employer and now chief competition. What did he think? The look on his face tells all. **MCR**

