

# COASTLINE

**Volume 33 Issue: 3 June/July 2014 North Coast Pontiac Chapter - POCI** 



NCPC Official Website: www.ncpontiacs.com



On the Cover: 1965 2+2 of Kevin Haines



Meetings are held the third Wednesday of every month 7:00pm at Jay Buick GMC 18800 Rockside Rd. Bedford Ohio 44146 SPRING DUST OFF ISSUE!

## 2014 Coastline North Coast Pontiac Chapter News

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Charter 37

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## **Meetings:**

## 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7pm

Jay Buick GMC 18800 Rockside Rd. Bedford OH 44146

### **List of Events:**

Next Meeting at Jay: 6-18-2014

All Pontiac Show: 7-27-2014 at the Solon Commons

**Drag Day: 8-27-2014** 

(see flyers in this newsletter)

Club Picnic: September 28th — Sunnybrook Park: 9am-2pm

Fall Social: October 11th Vittorios in Wickliffe 6:30pm

Christmas Party: Simon's — December 13th 7pm

More details will be in later issues as these events come up.

## MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

### **WELCOME BACK COASTLINE !!!!!**

After a 4 month vacation the Coastline is back in print bigger and better than ever . A BIG thank you goes out to Tony Webster for volunteering to make this a reality again. Upon reading this, I would like each and every member to pause for a moment then yell out a BIG THANK YOU to Joyce & Tim Sabula for all the years they spent making sure we had an award winning newsletter. On behalf of the club I would like to wish Joyce & Tim good health and happiness and truly appreciate all they have done for the club.

Just in the matter of the last 2 months, Tony Webster has cheerfully taken on redesigning our club website as well as our monthly newsletter. It is truly refreshing to see a new member step up like this for the betterment of the club. If you have not seen the new website yet please check it out and surpise, you may see a photo of your classic!

Cruising is in full swing and by god mother nature has been overly cooperative. Lets just hope she spreads some of her sunshine on us for our all pontiac show and drag days... If all goes well this years show could turn out to be a big winner. Please get your registrations in early and as always we are still in need of sponsorships and door prizes. Any help is great appreciated.

I will not be able to attend June's monthly meeting as i will be attending the National POCI show in Wichita, Kansas accepting my new position as a member of the board Great Lakes region. I will report on the show during our July meeting. I am sure Vic, Ralph & Tony will put on a great meeting! Hope to see you all out soon cruisin the car shows.

Mark Tilson
" The Pontiyacker "

til59@aol.com

# MEETING NOTES

Hey Everyone,

Well it's been four months and I have been thinking about how to condense all of our meeting notes to one or two pages. So here is a timeline of events in a nutshell:

We have many members who haven't paid their dues as of yet, if you have not paid for the year then this will be the last issue of Coastline you will receive until your dues are paid.

Joyce and Tim Sabula have handed the reigns of the newsletter over to me. To be honest their newsletter was the best I had ever seen for any car club. Since I now have become the editor of our newsletter I know I have some big shoes to fill as Joyce did a great job with this. I'd like to thank Tim and Joyce for their advice and of course Microsoft Publisher and it's ease of use.

We are in the black as far as the club finances go

The club website is in full swing! Check it out at www.ncpontiacs.com I do have a gallery and some really great pictures of some cars on there. Did I mention I do photography work? I do a lot of great photo shoots with hot supermodels. Some famous names of my favorite supermodels include such greats such as 2+2s, Pontiac Firebird, Pontiac Grand Prix, Pontiac GTO and many other great looking classics out there. I also take pictures of classic cars with classic cameras. Some of my pictures are on our website. However if any club member wants to get together and do a killer photoshoot of their car email me and I'll be glad to volunteer my services! tony@ncpontiacs.com or you can call me 440-263-5821

We also decided to do something different with our All Pontiac Show this year. We invited other orphan cars to the show such as AMC, Mercury, Plymouth and Olds. We will traditionally have all of our Pontiacs together but we will also have a separate part of the show for all of the orphan cars. This is something new to us so we will see how it actually goes this year.

We also need people to volunteer at our All Pontiac Show: We need judges, people to help with parking, people to help with the 50/50 raffle and people to help setup. We also need help in getting sponsors for our show. Get in touch with myself or Mark if you can help.

(continued on the next page)

# MEETING NOTES—(CONTINUED)

I found an awesome website that sells kits to repair bad scratches or paint chips on cars. It is a website called www.paintscratch.com and it has worked great for me. Basically they make a paint pen with your car's paint code and a clearcoat pen and even a primer pen. I have fixed 3 paint chips and a scratch on my car. They also matched the paint in the paint pen perfectly. For those of you that know what my Pontiac looks like, it's a very rare and very difficult to match chameleon paint that changes colors from green to blue depending on the light. The fact they matched my paint is what made me recommend them.

A couple meetings back I talked about making a memorial wall on the website for Chuck Graham. Chuck was a big reason why I joined the club and taught me quite a bit. He also had a big impact on many people. I would like for the members of the club to write down or email me some thoughts and good words about Chuck and how he impacted them as a tribute to Chuck and what he brought to our club. I would like to put this on the website along with a picture of him standing next to his Trans Am.

We are still going to print this news in hardcopy format but if anyone would like an emailed copy I would be willing to do that.

We are looking for updated contact information for all of our members.

Also, if you would like to receive an email only version of the newsletter or an emailed version on top of your printed version email me at tony@ncpontiacs.com

That's about it for now. I welcome my new spot as editor of our newsletter. If you have any comments, concerns, questions or if there is something you would like to see let me know.

-Tony

# **ARE YOU FEELING ABANDONED?**



PONTIAC

Plymouth

American

Motors

WELL CHEER UP! The North Coast Pontiac Club invites "ORPHAN MAKES" From Mercury, Olds, Plymouth and AMC ONLY to be a part of our "All Pontiac Show"

# Sunday, July 27, 2014 9am-3pm



Solon Commons-Enterprise Parkway Solon OH 44139
Raffles, Prizes, Food, Dash Plaques and Trophies
\$10 Pre-Register no later than July 21st
\$15 Registration Day of Show

Name:	
Address:	
City State Zip:	
Telephone:	
Make/Model/Year:	2
For Pontiac Only Indicate the fo	ollowing (check one):

MERCURY

Oldsmobile

For Pontiac Only Indicate the following (check one):

Stock Modified Survivor

Make Checks Payable to: NCPC

Mail to: Vic Lerz - 220 Alpha Park Highland Hts, OH 44143
For questions call Mark Tilson - 216-299-2716

This year's show will not only feature a wide array of classic Pontiacs but we will be adding another section of the show for orphan car makes: AMC, Mercury, Plymouth and Oldsmobile. We also need sponsors, try parts stores, any business including your own, and tell your sponsors we will give them some exposure in our newsletter and not just at the car show itself!

We are also looking for volunteers such as judges, help with parking and people to help with the 50/50 raffle.

## If you can help feel free to call or get a hold of us!

**Classifieds:** If you have anything you are looking to sell, trade or buy please email tony@twebster.org to have it put into this newsletter!

Car Show Awards: If you win any awards at any car shows let us know, we would love to post about them!





Name:

purposes of the club.

Signature:

ARRIVAL TIME IS 11:00 AM TO NOON TRACK IS RESERVED NOON TO 4:00 PM

TRACK CONCESSIONS WILL BE CLOSED

OPEN TO THE FIRST 60 REGISTERED "RACE" CARS

OPEN TO ALL MAKES AND MODELS RACE CARS, CLASSICS, AND DAILY DRIVERS WELCOME

Racing(\$20)\_\_\_\_Spectating(\$10)\_\_\_\_

Date:

REFUNDS AVAILABLE UPON RAIN CANCELLATION

ALL ATTENDEES MUST BE **PRE-REGISTERED** AND **PRE-PAID** BY **8-20-14**\*\*\*ONE FORM PER PERSON\*\*\*

	Children 12 Years And Under Are FREE With An Adult Admission	
Vehicle: Year:Make:_	Model:	
= mail:	City of Residence:	
May we e-mail you about futu	re Drag Day events?Y N Club events?Y_N_	
Cell Phone:	(in case we need to get a hold of you that day)	
Emergency Contact: Name	Number:	
(in c	case we need to get a hold of somebody for you)	
(***		
Registration forms to:	All questions to:	
Josh Kucia (checks pay	vable to NCPC) Josh Kucia	
	1,000	
Chagrin Falls, Ohio 440	23 e-mail. Inpowered421@aoi.com	
RELEASE FROM LIABILITY		
The undersigned does hereby unconditionally release and discharge the North Coast Pontiac Chapter of P.O.C.I., their respective officers, directors, and all others connected or associated with the 2014 NCPC Drag Day from any and all known and unknown damages, injuries, losses, judgements and/or claims from any cause whatsoever the undersigned may suffer to his/her person or property. The undersigned certifies that he/she has carefully read this release and fully		
8620 Beacon Hill Drive cell: 440-382-2225 (after 5:00) Chagrin Falls, Ohio 44023 e-mail: tripowered421@aol.com  RELEASE FROM LIABILITY  The undersigned does hereby unconditionally release and discharge the North Coast Pontiac Chapter of P.O.C.I., their respective officers, directors, and all others		

understands same. Signing below also allows any photography and video taken at the event to be used by the North Coast Pontiac Chapter for promotional

# Performance Car Chronicles: 1964 – The muscle car blueprint is made! (submitted by Mark Tilson) from www.wildaboutcarsonline.com

The world of performance cars had been getting hotter and hotter from the '50s through the early '60's. But when we hit 1964, we can see that it's the seminal year of the decade, because that's when virtually every major player pushed in all their chips.

Stock car racing was soaring to new heights with the development of "super speedways" in the decade. At the end of the '50s and starting with Darlington, and then Daytona in 1959, big and bigger tracks were being constructed. At the start of the '60s new tracks in Charlotte, Atlanta and California were put in place. These new high banked super speedways responded well to serious doses of horsepower. That pushed the Big 3 manufacturers to begin all-out efforts to develop and build special motors that could take 500 miles of flat out running and survive.

Likewise, the NHRA in response to fan pressure (read attendance), rescinded its ban on nitro fuel in late 1963. That meant that the 1964 season would be the first to feature the nitro burning top fuel dragsters that had been huge draws on the AHRA circuit and in match races around the country.

In 1964, Big Daddy Don Garlits won the first of his record 8 Top Fuel Eliminator titles at the NHRA Nationals with a run of 202.24 MPH and an ET of 7.67 sec. To put that into perspective, the 1963 Nationals, when the fuel ban was still in effect, was won by a gasoline powered rail with an ET of 8.50 sec and a top speed of 182.18 MPH. Big Daddy – on nitro – ran almost a full second quicker and 20 mph faster. The fans loved it!!

In the "stocker ranks" there had been a whirlwind of development activity by the factories since 1957. Every one of the "Big 3" manufacturers had developed and refined a "big block" engine. These powerplants, originally developed to power the heavier car introduced in 1958, were recognized as the way to go for drag and super speedway racing - not to mention the impact on the street..

By 1963 Chevy had the Z-11 427 cube engine for drag racing – the final iteration of the 348 cu. In. "W" engine introduced in 1958. Their "Mystery Engine" (the precursor to the famous 396-454 "rat" motor) had shattered the speed record at Daytona.

Ford had built up their 332 cu. in. V8 (called the "FE" for Ford/Edsel use) introduced in 1958 first to 390, then 406, and finally by 1963 to 427 Cubes.

Pontiac had stretched their famous 389 "Trophy" V8 to 421 cubes - and in so doing offered what would amount to race engines to those in the know. As a result, Pontiac was the car to beat at the drags and in NASCAR.

By 1963, Chrysler's "B" wedge had moved from 413 to 426 cubes and the ram effect had been refined to a point where they dominated S/S in 1963.

The "Super Stockers" in NHRA/IHRA competition had become immensely popular and the frantic pace of development by the factories, with, by 1963, Chevrolet and Pontiac going head to head alongside Ford Dodge and Plymouth for bragging rights.

But in the midst of this crescendo, suddenly at the beginning of the 1963 season, General Motors – by executive order of its Chairman – immediately ceased all forms of racing activity. This was more than just the "wink-wink" given to the phony 1957 AMA ban; this was a firm corporate order. Well that might have been a racing ban, but it had the unintended – or perhaps intended – consequence of all the GM divisions (save for Chevrolet which could carry on under the Corvette label) trying to figure out how to put "Win on Sunday, sell on Monday" into useful effect.

What this really did was give Ford and Chrysler the "field" to go head to head in NASCAR and NHRA in the coveted S/S ranks. But it left GM scratching their heads. Lightweight big-car super stockers were stuck with whatever the factory had supplied prior to Jan 1, 1963, and no new development was allowed of race pieces – what to do?

(continued on next page)

#### The Muscle Car blueprint is made (continued)

#### So what would happen in 1964?

When many back in the day were saying that GM's racing ban would seriously curtail performance cars, the exact opposite happened. Product planners in each company were driven by different demands, but the results made 1964 an outrageous year for performance. Let's take a look:

#### **Chrysler Corporation -**

The Dodge & Plymouth divisions were riding high in drag racing with their 426 Max Wedge drag engines at the end of 1963. Led by the Ramchargers, Dodge swept both Top Stock Eliminator at the NHRA Winter Nationals and US Nationals. Max wedge cars were virtually unbeatable in drag racing's top stock classes.

But the story on the NASCAR/USAC circuit was not as bright. The max wedge engines did not have the sustainable horsepower to run with the big Fords and Pontiacs on the super speedways. Something had to be done, and the "B" Wedge was just not up to it.

Looking to their past, Chrysler approached Tom Hoover, of the Ramchargers, and asked what he would do. He told the top brass that the 426 could be modified with the addition of Hemispherical heads with little development time. After all, who else had so much experience with this kind of engine but Chrysler.

The heads and a beefed up block, were developed in rapid time – about 5 months and released in time for the Daytona 500 in February 1964. 426 cid Hemi powered cars went 1-2-3 at the 500, to the delight of Mopar fans and the dismay of the Ford camp. The 426 Hemi would also be fitted to the drag race Mopars. While the 426 Max Wedge cars, fitted with the indestructible 727 Torqueflite automatic transmissions, "owned" the S/SA class, the 426 cid Hemi would prove to be a legendary engine everywhere; on the street, strip or track.

#### Ford Motor Company -

The 427 cid "hi-riser" or "side-oiler" engine that was so successful in the 1963 NASCAR circuit would be initially fitted to the same "lightweight" big car chassis, and was quite competitive in what would be called SS/B. But ford recognized that they were losing "press" because they did not have a car capable of going head to head with the Mopars in S/S.

For 1964, Ford continued the 427 in its full sized Galaxie and Mercury line. But, through a contract with outside vendor, Dearborn Steel and Tube, made 100 427-equipped, mid-size Fairlanes called "Thunderbolts". These cars fit into NHRA's S/S and S/SA for the automatics. Ford was hunting the Max Wedge Mopars!!

And a funny thing happened over at Ford. Some guys (including Lee Iacocca) were working on a "small sporty car" called the Mustang that was released at mid-year 1964, and was immediately available powered by a 289 "Hi Pro" V8 developing 271 HP. In this 2600 lb. car it offered terrific performance. We all know where this went.

#### General Motors -

GM divisions were in a bind in 1964. The edict in 1963 forbade them from actively or overtly participating in any form of racing. For some – such as the Pontiac division – this was a near mortal blow to their marketing efforts. Pontiacs had been competitive and dominant in the NASCAR/USAC circuits with their 389 and 421 Super Duty programs. Now they and the other GM divisions had to resort to a "Plan B", which could only be to find a way to "take it to the street" and capitalize on the youth market – the "baby boomers" as we now know them, who were reaching driving, and more importantly, buying age.

But where would they go? Certainly, their "lightweights" were not compatible to street driving so the only answer was to continue the cars offered to the public like the 409 Chevy, the 421 Pontiacs, the Buick 425 cube GS models and the Olds Starfire 394s.

The problem was that these cars were very expensive, way far away from the youth market. Sure, the top of the line models would be tested and lauded by the car magazines, but that wasn't going to get these kids in the showroom.

Luckily, GM had decided to up-size their small cars: the Cutlass, Skylark and Tempest to what we now call midsize cars, and to give Chevy one too. All were designed to accept a big car factory V8, unlike the earlier versions that were too small for that.

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#### The Muscle Car blueprint is made (continued)

John DeLorean, Pontiac Chief Engineer, and two of his assistant engineers: Bill Collins and Russ Gee, realized in mid-1963 that the 389 V8 was the same size as the 326 slated for the Tempest line. Eureka! They fitted a 389 cid. Tripowered 348 HP engine, upgraded the suspension, and applied some special identification to the upscale LeMans and called it the "GTO".

The car was a smash hit, and soon Oldsmobile responded with the 442. Olds and Chevrolet were caught a bit flatfooted as their new big block V8s - the 400 and 396 were a year away. But like the 310 HP 330 for Olds, Chevy made do with the 327 but called their Malibu the "SS" and packed it with buckets, HD suspension and all the performance cues. Buick was really caught flatfooted in 1964, initially only offering a 300 cube V8, but they would remedy that bit of shortsightedness next year.

#### So what was happening at NASCAR?

While the 426 Hemi dominated the super speedways, Ford's 427 Galaxies were competitive on shorter tracks. In fact, Ford driver Ned Jarrett had 15 wins in 1964 – 13 on short tracks. So in roundy-round the Plymouths, Dodges, Fords and Mercurys battled it out and certainly got lots of publicity. Stunningly, the two manufacturers learned that NASCAR victories weren't resulting in increased big car sales. In fact, the Mustang and Barracuda were generating far more excitement in the coveted youth market.

#### Who were the big guns in NHRA?

At NHRA and AHRA strips, things rapidly got out of hand. In 1964, the NHRA totally took the cuffs off the Factory Experimental class. Dodge put 426 Hemis in Coronets that had their wheelbase altered by 2%; Ford Motor Company dropped 427 side oilers into their compact Mercury Comets for several top drag race stars. Ford even built some 427 side oiler Mustangs in late in 1964.

Arnie "The Farmer" Beswick dropped a Pontiac 421 Super Duty engine in his 1964 GTO and qualified as an A/FX car. The Chevrolet boys were installing the Z-11 427 into Chevelles and Chevy II's. It was as close to "run what you brung" match racing as could be seen in a sanctioned meet.

A special note should be made of the 4 cars that made up an even newer S/FX classification at mid-year. These were the two 1964 Dodge Hemi cars that had been supercharged and fuel injected; The 427 supercharged and fuel injected Comet of Art Chrisman and the supercharged and fuel injected 421 cu. in GTO – the Mystery Tornado" of Arnie Beswick. There was mayhem in the FX ranks for all to enjoy.

#### The Payoff for John Q. Public -

If you were into racing in 1964, you could go to a NASCAR/ USAC stock car race and see the new 426 Hemi Mopars battling with the 427 Fords/Mercurys. Or you could head over to your local drag strip and see the awesome Super Stockers and those wild FX cars scream down the asphalt. Hang around for Top Eliminator and see, smell and feel those nitro burning Hemi fuelers shake the ground and run 200+ MPH!

But that wasn't the real deal - a young person with bucks in their pocket could go to any one of the "Big 3" dealerships and purchase a car that provided more sheer performance than any car in any previous year.

Here is just a short list of the "hot street" cars available:

Chrysler - Dodge and Plymouth 426 engines with up 375 HP were available were available in the less expensive midsize Dodges and Plymouths.

Ford and Mercury - the 427 "hi-riser" 475hp was available and could be had in the full sized Galaxie and Mercury line along with a 335 HP Interceptor 390. The new Mustang had plenty of go, with the 225 and 271 HP V8s in such a light car.

Pontiac had the 389 cid, Tri-power, 348 HP GTO as well as Tri-power, HO 421 Catalinas.with up to 370 HP. Oldsmobile had their new 330 cid, 310 HP 442 with the 345 HP 394 in their full sized line.

Chevy still had lots of 409's in their full size line plus the 327 cid, 320 HP Chevelle SS.

Of course, the "muscle car" kept expanding over the years until the mountain was peaked in 1970 with 454 Chevelles, 400 Ram Air IV Pontiacs, 429 Super Cobra Jet Torinos, and even AMC's Rebel "The Machine" to name a few. So while the world of performance cars got better every year, not worse as had been predicted – 1964 was a crucial year with the "blueprint" for the muscle car inked and the emphasis on super high performance V8s being set.

#### THE SLP FIREHAWK

# How Street Legal Performance Helped America Get It's Muscle Car Groove Back Submitted by Tony Webster from Isxtv.com

Let's face it; from the early portion of the 1970's until the early 1980's, the Muscle Car Era was, for all intents and purposes, done. High insurance rates, emission controls, plus fuel shortages and higher prices cooked the goose of the muscle car. No more 'Cudas, Boss 429 Mustangs, or high-horsepower Camaros or Firebirds were to be found on the road.

Sure, some muscle car nameplates lived on – the Camaro Z/28, the Pontiac Firebird Trans Am, even the Mustang II Mach 1 – but they were mostly trim packages (especially the widely-despised Mustang II, with a 108 horsepower V6 in 1974). Most could argue with a great deal of validity that they were gaudily-styled cars made to look the part of a muscle car, but in reality had no engine performance to match the styling or the nameplates of the cars.

However, this sad state of affairs gradually began to change for the better in the early-to-mid 1980's as modern engine technology improved and automakers were figuring out how to revitalize muscle cars, which in due time ushered in an all -new muscle car era that continues today. Helping to lead the cause were performance car companies like Callaway, Saleen, and SLP (Street Legal Performance).

#### The SLP Firehawk, 1991-1992: The Beginning

In 1991, SLP joined forces with Pontiac to create a performance option (RPO code B4U) on production Firebird Formulas – the SLP Firehawk. The Firehawk made its debut during the final model year of the 3rd generation Firebird. The Firehawk received the 350 cubic inch L98 V8, with porting done to the cylinder heads and other modifications to help make it a 360 horsepower, 390 pound-foot beast of an engine (especially for that time). Production totaled just 25 cars, but firebirdfever.com (a great resource for information about SLP Firehawks) mentions a 26th car that reportedly made over 400 horsepower, though that car is not counted in the official production numbers.

he SLP Firehawk also had other performance upgrades (some optional): a Corvette 6-speed ZF manual transmission mated to an aluminum driveshaft, four-piston Brembo brakes (the 1LE brake system was standard for the Firehawk – buyers had to move up to the Competition package to get the Brembo brakes), a Dana 44 rear end, 275/40-17 tires, Recaro seats, a roll bar, five-point harnesses, and stiffer bushings in the rear control arms. Several Firehawks were even sold with an optional fuel cell. Some of the options were a part of the \$9,995 Competition "R" package (the previously mentioned Brembo brakes were a part of that package, for example).

The Firehawk was a performance tour de force for the time, although it was more track-worthy than street-friendly, with a *Car and Driver* test drive review describing it as "unrefined." It was not cheap, either; the SLP Formula Firehawk tested for the Car and Driver test was \$51,989 – not inexpensive, even in the early 1990's. According to Firehawk.org, out of the 25 produced in this initial run, the first eight Firehawks were late 1991 model year cars while the remaining 17 cars built were 1992 models, although 27 had originally been ordered.

#### The 1993-2002 SLP Firebird Firehawks

The fourth generation Firebird debuted for the 1993 model year, and with it came an all-new SLP Firebird Firehawk as well. A sleeker, more aerodynamic and handsome body graced the Firebirds, and of course, the Firehawks benefited from the same. 201 Firehawks were built for the 1993 model year, far more than for the 1991/1992 model years. The second generation Firebird Firehawks would continue until the Pontiac ended the Firebird's production run for good in 2002. Firehawks could be had with more basic performance upgrades than the previous cars, which made the SLP package more accessible and affordable to muscle car enthusiasts and also allowed SLP to sell more cars profitably; the first-year 1992 Firehawks were very expensive and costly for SLP to produce.

The 1993-1996 SLP Firebird Firehawks came equipped with the 5.7 liter, 300 horsepower, 330 pound-foot LT1 V8 engine. 1993-1996 model year Firehawks were all Firebird Formulas only, as the previous cars had been as well, and had to be ordered from Pontiac with the R6V RPO code. Here are a partial list of options for the 1993-96 SLP Firebird Formula Firehawks, which came with GM's standard 3-year, 36,000 mile warranty.

(Continued on Next Page)

#### THE SLP FIREHAWK (continued)

#### How Street Legal Performance Helped America Get It's Muscle Car Groove Back

#### 1993 (201 produced):

- Lightweight Composite Hood with Functional Cold Air Induction Package utilizing modified Corvette Air Cleaner
- Stainless Steel Exhaust Tips
- 17" x 8.5" Aluminum Alloy Wheels (Ronal R-15)
- P275/40ZR17 Firestone Firehawk tires
- Firehawk graphics

#### 1994 (500 produced):

In addition to the 1993 options, a Performance Exhaust Package increased engine horsepower by 15 to 315 and torque was increased by 5 to 330 pound-feet. The \$1,199 Performance Exhaust Package included all stainless steel components, a 3-inch diameter intermediate pipe, a less restrictive muffler, and two left-mounted 2.5-inch tail pipes. Also available was a \$1,599 Level II Bilstein Sport Suspension Package.

#### 1995 (671 produced):

Firehawk convertibles made their debut, with 102 of them built out of the total production run. Other than some minor additional options, not much else was new and notable for the 1995 SLP Firehawks, as most of the options and the horsepower ratings remained the same. The \$1,599 Level II Bilstein Sport Suspension Package was not available for the convertible model, however.

#### 1996 (41 produced):

SLP shifted production concentration to the Firebird WS6 Ram-Air and the Camaro Z28 SS. The Performance Exhaust Package became standard on the Firehawk, and other changed options were again minor, though the total cost of the major option package was less than in the previous model year.

Here are some of the other available options for the 1996 SLP Firehawk:

- Engine Oil Cooler Package
- Performance Lubricants Package with synthetic rear axle lube, semi-synthetic power steering fluid and premium quality, synthetic media engine oil filter
- Level II Bilstein Sport Suspension Package
- SLP Hurst short throw shifter with H shift knob
- Torsen Limited Slip Differential (includes Performance Lubricants Package)

American Racing Equipment chrome-plated aluminum wheels

Motor Trend also added this about the Firehawk LT4; "The quick-revving LT4, with its increased-flow-rate injectors, reworked ports, bigger valves, high-lift cam, and higher-compression pistons, was created as a special optional variation on the standard LT1 small-block V-8... This engine combines with the Borg-Warner six-speed and the hottest version of the Firebird chassis to produce a barn's worth of hoot. Every quick-shifting trip is a basso symphony of V-8 vocalizations that blasts grins onto faces. A Hurst shifter clips the six-speed's long throws into precise snicks with no apparent gain in effort, enhancing the driving experience."

Other than minor performance and appearance upgrades that were made available (and the addition of the hotter LT4 Firehawk), the standard SLP Firehawk remained status quo for 1997 model year.

#### 1998 (none produced):

No SLP Firebird Firehawks were built, but 1999 would see quite a change for the SLP Firebird Firehawk.

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#### THE SLP FIREHAWK (Continued)

#### How Street Legal Performance Helped America Get It's Muscle Car Groove Back

#### 1999-2002:

The SLP Firehawk received a new engine (the LS1) and a freshened body style common to all Firebirds for the 1999 model year. The new Firehawk boasted a 5.7 liter, 327 horsepower, 345 pound-foot LS1 V8 engine. Also, the Firehawk was finally available on the Trans Am, not only the Formula Firebird, and sales reflected the popularity of that change.

Of the 719 SLP Firehawks sold for the 1999 model year, 613 of them ordered from Pontiac were Trans Ams. That was a wise move on the part of SLP and Pontiac. The new option code to order the Firehawk through Pontiac Dealers was WU6. 1999-2002 would prove to be the final run of SLP Firehawks based on the Pontiac Firebird, as production of the storied nameplate would end in 2002. Pontiac as a GM brand would only last eight more model years, as the Pontiac brand was eliminated and would not exist after the 2010 model year.

In the April 1999 Issue of Motor Trend the SLP Firehawk Trans Am was praised for its performance, and for the most important performance components of the car: "...the Firehawk's 5.7-liter/327-horsepower OHV V-8 speaks up with a deep, dual-pipe bass rumble that sounds as sweetly familiar as the first stanza of the Star Spangled Banner. Blip the pedal and the chassis rocks with race-car authority... The real beauty of this car is its simplicity. Simplicity? Yes, relatively so with its gutsy V-8, six-speed manual, and live rear axle. But all three work with a remarkable level of polish... Thank the LS1's 345 honking pound-feet of tread-blistering torque. Any car that'll jump to 60 in 5.3 seconds is way good with me. Helping to secure the hot numbers is a stout Borg-Warner T-56 six-speed manual transmission..." That statement couldn't be made for most of the 1970's and 1980's – the muscle car era was retuning with a vengeance, and would continue into the new millennium.

Some other standout features of the 1999 SLP Trans Am Firehawk include an under-hood forced-air induction system, a cat-back, stainless steel exhaust, composite hood with functional air scoops, and Firestone Firehawk 275/40ZR17 SZ50 tires (with 17-inch aluminum wheels), just to name a few. The 2000 SLP Firehawks gained three additional horsepower, increasing total horsepower to 330 (torque remained the same at 345 pound-feet), but no other major changes were made. 741 Firehawks were produced for the 2000 model year.

The 2001 SLP Firehawks gained an anniversary edition, but more importantly, the LS1 V8 engine received an LS6 intake, which boosted engine horsepower to 335, with still no change in torque. Trim and performance options didn't vary much from the previous two model years, although the anniversary model did have special trim, badging, wheels and other appearance extras.

540 Firehawks were built for the 2001 model year. The SLP Firebird Firehawk's final run came for the 2002 model year. 2002 Firehawks built in August 2001 and before came equipped with the same 335 horsepower engine as the 2001 model; Firehawks built after August 2001 gained a High Flow Induction System, which increased horsepower up to 345, and torque to 350 pound-feet. Again, there were several suspension packages to choose from, allowing owners to determine the performance and handling abilities of their Firehawks.

The SLP Firehawk went out with a bang in 2002, with 1,505 of them created, the most Firehawks produced in a model year. America may have lost its muscle car groove in the 1970's, but with the help of determined engineers, the development of better technology, and the desire performance enthusiasts had to go fast, America got its muscle car groove back, and Pontiac, along with SLP, Inc., was a big part of helping it do just that.

#### From Isxtv.com

## 1965 Pontiac 2+2—Baddest Big Car Ever!

Submitted by Mark Tilson from www.wildaboutcars.com

There is a test of the 1965 Pontiac 2+2 versus the Ferrari 2+2 in *Car and Driver Magazine* – and the 2+2 posts a 13.8 quarter mile time. "WOW, you say, that is one big, bad Poncho" – and it was. But like many tests of the era, we now know that car was heavily "doctored". Regardless, a 4,400 pound car that could crack into the 13's on street tires and through the mufflers – that is WOW.

Looking behind the curtain, we know that the 1965 2+2 421 HO could make the mid 14s in truie street trim, but an over two ton car making even that kind of time means some serious HP. More important – the car "felt" powerful. Every tester was impressed with the way the HO equipped car could pull and pull, with the 421 willing to head for some serious top end rpms.

Here are some quotes from the road tests in some of the period magazines:

"In conclusion, I will say that this is the finest road machine I have ever driven – foreign cars included." *Car Life Magazine*, April 1965.

"A real he-man's car, the 2+2 combines muscle and grace, in huge proportions." *Motor Trend Magazine*, February 1965.

". . . it is the muscular beauty of the 2+2 which is the great attraction, and the honesty with which it backs up its self-announced claim." *Car Life Magazine*, December 1964.

All the testers were impressed with the looks of the car, which, in 1965 was state of the art Pontiac muscle – and even more overstated than the GTO. What always impressed was the way Pontiac could make a family sedan and a high performance car have the proper "look" with just a few trim and badge changes.

Pontiacs always had very sporting interiors, and the 2+2 was no exception, with all the performance cues and necessary pieces both set the look and to give the driver control of the car.

Unlike some of the other GM large car performance packages, only Pontiac provided a proper shifter for the four speed trans; with both the Buick Wildcat and the Olds Jetstar I and Starfire opting for a factory pudding stirrer, with ultra-long throws. The dash may have been a little glitzy, but all the necessary instruments were in place and at least readable.

And the suspension delivered. The 2+2 was equipped with a pure HD system designed to give the 2+2 a secure feeling when driven hard. By today's standards, the car handles ponderously, but back then, it was tossable, when compared to the other big cars of the period. (So tossable, in fact that it lapped within a second of a Ferrari 2+2 on the Bridgehampton road course in the *Car and Driver* contest, and of course, that car was stock, hah, hah). But to make a big car like that handle like that and appear to be stock means that factory pieces could get the job done, if properly tweaked.

(Continued on Next Page)

## 1965 Pontiac 2+2—Baddest Big Car Ever! (Continued)

#### Submitted by Mark Tilson from www.wildaboutcars.com

The point is that when the dust settles, and we look back in time, what we really see is the last great hurrah for the large high performance car. In 1964 it was a Catalina option; then in 1965 it became a stand alone model - still counted in Catalina production, but the name "Catalina" was no longer found on the car. It officially became its own series in 1966, on the same platform, but reverted again to an option in 1967. It was discontinued in the United States that same year due to poor sales, but it continued as a series in Canada until 1970.

Starting in 1965, and even with the expert marketing of John DeLorean and Jim Wangers, The 2+2 was not only overshadowed by the GTO, but by the public, who determined that US performance cars would have wheelbase of 116" or less. (For example, in 1966, over 96,000 GTOs were sold, compared to a bit less than 6,400 2+2s).

And those same buyers determined that big cars would be luxury sport cars with just enough oomph to satisfy their niche, but not the overwhelming, take no prisoners get up and go of the 1964-1966 Pontiac 2+2. By 1967 the 2+2, and its cousins the Buick Wildcat and the Olds Starfire, were all much more subdued. They might still handle, but the emphasis on raw power was gone.

No matter, the Pontiac 2+2 proved that big cars could go like stink, handle like sports cars, and deliver luxurious motoring as well. They were the end of an era where it was the big car that was the performance image-maker.

Not until our current age would the combination of performance and luxury features be found in the large cars on the road. And while a 2+2 was not cheap, pound for pound, it delivered more performance per dollar (even adjusted by inflation) than our contemporary long wheelbase luxury performance cars.

The 2+2 was the 1960s pinnacle of big car performance – long may we praise it for what it accomplished.

If you have any articles you would like to submit please email them to tony@ncpontiacs.com

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