



104.9 MPH

KELMARK GT

Manufacturer: Kelmark Engineering, Inc.
2209 Jolly Road
Okemos, Michigan 48864

Vehicle type: rear-engine, rear-wheel-drive, 2-passenger coupe

Price as tested: \$5739.80 (plus VW chassis) (Manufacturer's suggested retail price, including all options listed below, dealer preparation and delivery charges, does not include state and local taxes, license or freight charges)

Options on test car: base VW chassis, deluxe factory-assembled kit, \$3995; exterior trim package, \$249.95; wiring package, \$199.95; Goodrich Radial T/A tires and American Racing Jet wheels, \$499.95; gauge package, \$199.95; turbocharger kit, \$595

ENGINE
Type: flat 4, air-cooled, magnesium block, aluminum heads, and cast-iron cylinders, 3 main bearings
Bore x stroke 3.37 x 2.72 in, 85.5 x 69.0mm
Displacement 96.7 cu in, 1584cc
Compression ratio 7.3 to one
Carburetion 1x1-bbl Bendix
Valve gear pushrods, overhead valves, solid lifters
Power (estimated) 110 bhp @ 5300 rpm
Max. recommended engine speed 5300 rpm

DRIVETRAIN
Transmission 4-speed, all-synchro
Final drive ratio 3.88 to one
Gear Ratio Mph/1000 rpm Max. test speed
I 3.78 5.0 26 mph (5300 rpm)
II 2.06 9.2 49 mph (5300 rpm)
III 1.26 15.0 80 mph (5300 rpm)
IV 0.93 20.3 105 mph (5150 rpm)

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES
Wheelbase 95.0 in
Track, F/R 58.0/60.0 in
Length 174.0 in
Width 73.0 in
Height 45.0 in
Ground clearance 7.0 in
Curb weight 1805 lbs
Weight distribution, F/R 40.4/59.6%
Battery capacity 12 volts, 45 amp-hr
Alternator capacity 630 watts
Fuel capacity 11.1 gal
Oil capacity 2.7 qts

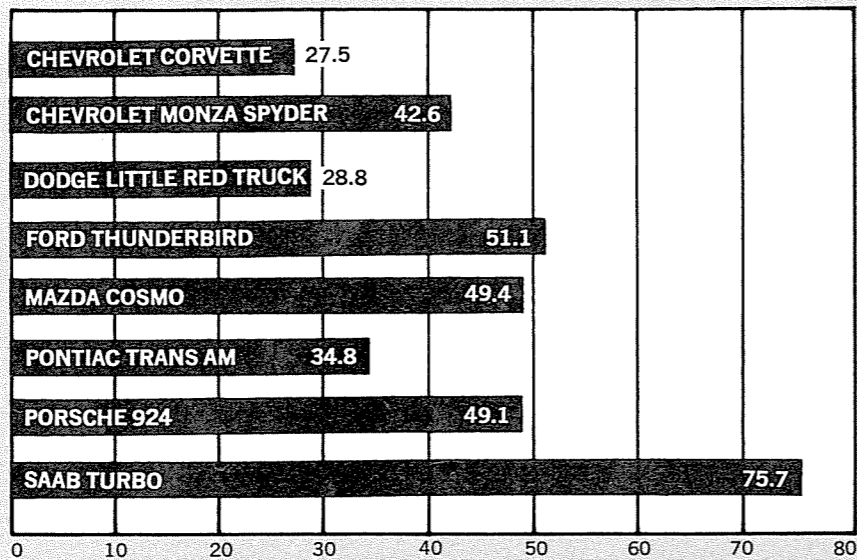
SUSPENSION
F: ind. trailing arm, torsion bars, anti-sway bar
R: ind. semi-trailing arm, torsion bars

STEERING
Type recirculating ball
Turns lock-to-lock 2.6
Turning circle curb-to-curb 31.5 ft

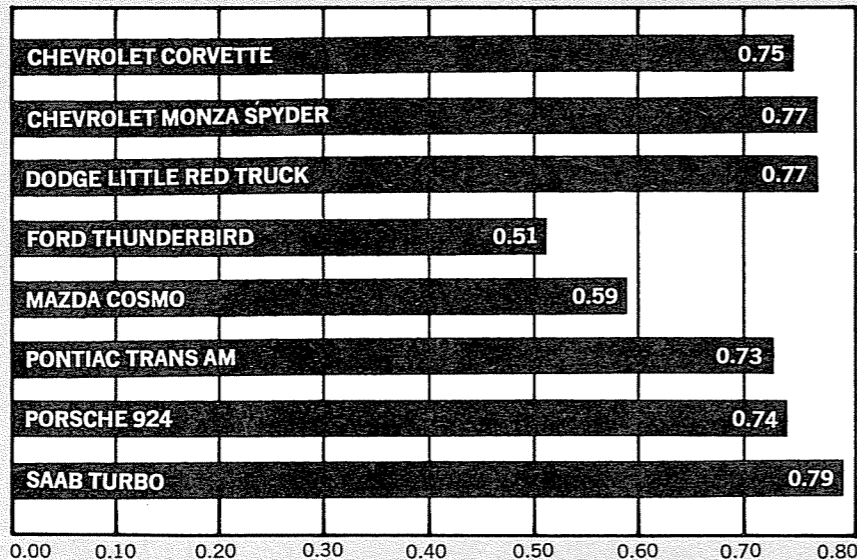
BRAKES
F: 9.8 x 1.8-in cast-iron drum
R: 9.1 x 1.6-in cast-iron drum

WHEELS AND TIRES
Wheel size F/R 7.0 x 14-in/8.5 x 15-in
Wheel type cast-aluminum, 5-bolt
Tire make and size B.F. Goodrich Radial T/A, F: ER60-14, R: GR50-15
Tire type fabric cord, radial ply, tubeless

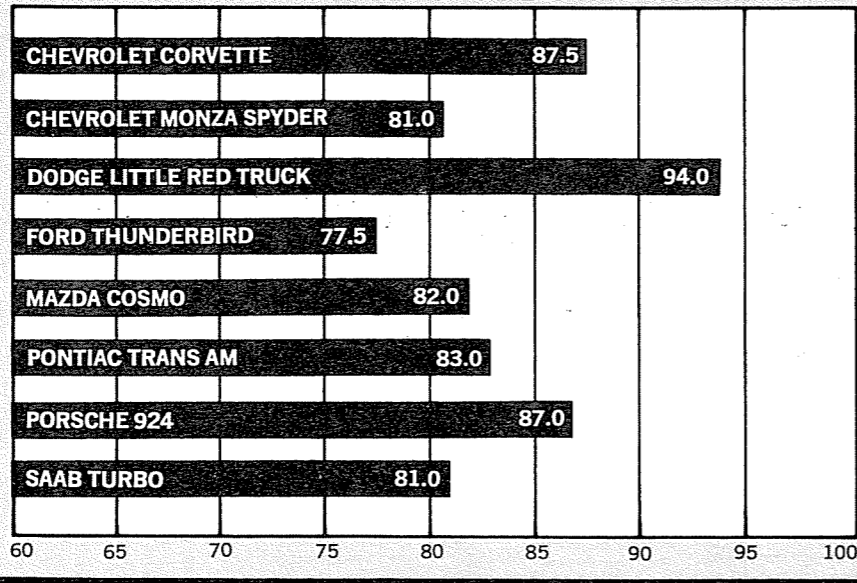
ACCELERATION, 0-110 mph, seconds



BRAKING, 110-55 mph, g



INTERIOR SOUND LEVEL AT 110 mph, dBA



to 100 mph. The Corvette was also strong off the line, but couldn't pass the truck until both were over 100 mph. The Trans Am was a stone with its 2.56 gear, automatic transmission and 3890-pound curb weight. (Even the truck was lighter at 3750 pounds.) Every car beat the Trans Am to 60 mph except the Thunderbird. The Monza Spyder was only a little quicker than the Firebird and failed to squeeze a single chirp from a back tire off the line.

The Thunderbird was calm and quiet whether it was accelerating or cruising at 110 mph. It's the perfect soundproofed room to partake of Carly Simon's quadrasonic sounds. The Mazda's quietness was of no surprise, but the Saab's relative tranquility was unexpected until we remembered how much exhaust racket the turbo-charger absorbs. The Corvette's two-piece top is usually noisy at speed, and it turned in a second loudest 87.5-dBA interior sound level. (This was measured in a 1978 fastback body, while the Corvette in the rest of the tests was a 1977 with a prototype 1978 powertrain.)

The king of the noise generators was the Dodge truck. Exhaust boom was just part of its 94.0-dBA din. Most of the ear-drum beating you get here comes from wind

curving around the cab and fighting with the upright exhaust stacks and their expanded-metal heat shields. The auditory pain is enough to make the Dodge tactical fit for quick, high-speed bursts but not so suitable for long, ultra-legal cruises.

Just before we returned to the speed traps for the day's main event, the pair from Chevrolet was spotted in a huddle. Our intelligence reports said that the conversation started with, "Got any tricks left?" and then suddenly hushed.

An earlier impromptu tire-pressure check had revealed 42 psi (hot) in the Trans Am. Rather than dole out any penalty for this minor deviation from specification, we simply revealed the discovery to all. Since the Corvette guys had been running at factory recommendations (28F/32R, cold), they immediately rushed off to the air compressor.

As the Corvette's tire pressure went up (to 50 psi, hot), the Trans Am's chances for an upset went down. The Pontiac engineer's plan was to apply all he'd learned about driving his long-legged beast in two final runs. He harbored a faint hope of blowing off the Corvette.

The photocell traps were set, and at 6:00 p.m. of a long, fast day, the Corvette set a

two-way average of 133.7 mph. More tire pressure had boosted terminal velocity a solid 1.5 mph.

The biggest motor on the scene huffed its way around the track for the day's last pass. The Pontiac engineer picked his finest line and applied every driving trick he knew. Into the wind, the Trans Am was looking good with 2.1-mph more speed than morning runs had delivered. There was a glimmer of hope.

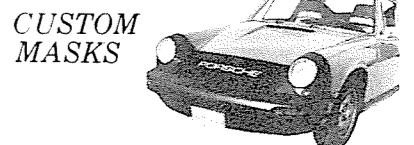
The last pass had every car in the proving grounds parked, and every soul staring at the timer print-out. Only the Pontiac man moved, and when he passed the traps, his face was as red as the bird on the hood. He had 100-octane adrenaline in his veins.

But not quite enough power in his engine. The last run was 1.4-mph slower than the morning, and the Corvette was secure at 133.7 mph, compared to the Trans Am's 131.3 mph. We could almost hear a symbolic sigh of relief from Chevrolet headquarters due north in Warren, Michigan.

All contests were called, the day was over and we turned the proving grounds back to TRC. Even the Pontiac guy had a good time. And everyone learned an important lesson: Speed thrills.

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