

we're talking about nearly *twice* the energy involved in our usual 70-zero test. It's far more than the government—and most manufacturers, as well—ever ask of a brake system.

We quickly learned that hauling a car down to legal realms from double-the-double-nickel is more than a brake test. It's just as much a tire test. If a car lacks good brakes or good tires, not much happens when you kick the left pedal at 110 mph.

The Saab Turbo was great—plenty of braking power with a disc at each wheel, plenty of grip with Pirelli CN-36 tires and a solid feel between the pedal and the road. If you use all this car has to offer in stopping, your head goes dizzy.

At the other end of the spectrum lay the Thunderbird. Over 100 mph you can mash the brake pedal to the pavement and never slide a tire. Instead of deceleration, you get heat. The smell of burned cookies is enough to drive you out of the kitchen. We measured a maximum 0.51 G deceleration in the Thunderbird.

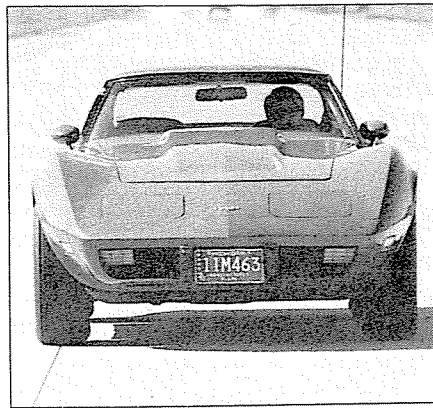
Each car cooked up both its own specific smell and individual braking characteristics. The Saab odor was like burning paper. The Porsche's hot brakes reeked of rotten cheese; this particular system locked up unpredictably with discs at the front and drums in the rear. The Corvette was a bit of a disappointment with its fourth-place 0.75 G. There was plenty of brake, but not enough tire adhesion.

The Mazda Cosmo also had a terrific braking feel and plenty of stopping power through its four-wheel discs, but the grip from Japanese-made Goodrich radials was worth no more than 0.59 G.

We expected all manner of histrionics from the light-tail Dodge truck, but came away amazed by its second-place tie with the Monza. The brakes couldn't have been more compatible with the tires. Both are powerful at stopping, and the braking effort is well distributed so neither end slides early, even with no load in the bed. However, the 6100-pound GVW springs do act up when you try to stop as short as possible from 70. Below twenty mph, the rear springs go into a resonant jitterbug, and the truck invariably slews sideways.

Once acceleration and sound-level readings were logged, we planned to open the track for free-style running, but the Pontiac engineer was not satisfied. He formally requested one last face-off between his Trans Am and the top-seeded Corvette.

In the meantime, we found more bests and worsts in performance trials. The Little Red Truck smoked its tires to become quickest in acceleration at every mark up



133.7 MPH

**CHEVROLET CORVETTE**

**Manufacturer:** Chevrolet Motor Division  
General Motors Corporation  
Warren, Michigan 48090

**Vehicle type:** front-engine, rear-wheel-drive, 2-passenger coupe/convertible

**Price as tested:** \$11,233.89  
(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:** \$1882.00

**ENGINE**  
Type: V-8, water-cooled, cast-iron block and heads, 5 main bearings  
Bore x stroke . . . . . 4.00 x 3.48 in, 101.6 x 88.4mm  
Displacement . . . . . 350 cu in, 5730cc  
Compression ratio . . . . . 9.0 to one  
Carburetion . . . . . 1x4-bbl Rochester Quadrajet  
Valve gear . . . . . pushrods, overhead valves, hydraulic lifters  
Power (SAE net) . . . . . 225 bhp @ 5200 rpm  
Torque (SAE net) . . . . . 260 lbs-ft @ 3600 rpm  
Specific power output . . . . . 0.64 bhp/cu in, 39.3 bhp/liter  
Max. recommended engine speed . . . . . 6000 rpm

**DRIVETRAIN**  
Transmission . . . . . 4-speed, all/synchro  
Final drive ratio . . . . . 3.36 to one  
Gear Ratio Mph/1000 rpm Max. test speed  
I 2.64 8.9 49 mph (5500 rpm)  
II 1.75 13.4 74 mph (5500 rpm)  
III 1.34 17.5 96 mph (5500 rpm)  
IV 1.00 23.5 134 mph (5700 rpm)

**DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES**  
Wheelbase . . . . . 98.0 in  
Track, F/R . . . . . 58.7/59.5 in  
Length . . . . . 182.2 in  
Width . . . . . 69.0 in  
Height . . . . . 47.9 in  
Ground clearance . . . . . 4.3 in  
Curb weight . . . . . 3500 lbs  
Weight distribution, F/R . . . . . 48.3/51.7%  
Fuel capacity . . . . . 24.0 gal  
Oil capacity . . . . . 5.0 qts  
Water capacity . . . . . 20.7 qts

**SUSPENSION**  
F: . . . . . ind, unequal-length control arms, coil springs, anti-sway bar  
R: . . . . . ind, trailing arm, 1 half shaft and 1 lateral link per side, coil springs, anti-sway bar

**STEERING**  
Type . . . . . recirculating ball, linkage booster power assist  
Turns lock-to-lock . . . . . 3.2  
Turning circle curb-to-curb . . . . . 37.0 ft

**BRAKES**  
F: . . . . . 11.8-in dia vented disc, power-assisted  
R: . . . . . 11.8-in dia vented disc, power-assisted

**WHEELS AND TIRES**  
Wheel size . . . . . 8.0 x 15-in  
Wheel type . . . . . cast-aluminum, 5-bolt  
Tire make and size . . . . . Goodyear GT Radial, P225/70R-15  
Tire type . . . . . steel-belted, radial ply, tubeless  
Test inflation pressures, F/R . . . . . 50/50 psi  
Tire load rating . . . . . 1770 lbs per tire @ 32 psi



131.3 MPH

**PONTIAC TRANS AM**

**Manufacturer:** Pontiac Motor Division  
General Motors Corporation  
Pontiac, Michigan

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

**Price as tested:** NA  
(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:** Price not available

**ENGINE**  
Type: V-8, water-cooled, cast-iron block and heads, 5 main bearings  
Bore x stroke . . . . . 4.12 x 3.75 in, 104.7 x 95.2mm  
Displacement . . . . . 400 cu in, 6550cc  
Compression ratio . . . . . 8.1 to one  
Carburetion . . . . . 1x4-bbl Rochester Quadrajet  
Valve gear . . . . . pushrods, overhead valves, hydraulic lifters  
Power (SAE net) . . . . . 220 bhp @ 4000 rpm  
Torque (SAE net) . . . . . 320 lbs-ft @ 2800 rpm  
Specific power output . . . . . 0.55 bhp/cu in, 33.6 bhp/liter  
Max. recommended engine speed . . . . . 5000 rpm

**DRIVETRAIN**  
Transmission . . . . . 3-speed, automatic  
Max. torque converter . . . . . 2.50 to one  
Final drive ratio . . . . . 2.56 to one  
Gear Ratio Mph/1000 rpm Max. test speed  
I 2.52 12.2 55 mph (4500 rpm)  
II 1.52 20.2 91 mph (4500 rpm)  
III 1.00 30.7 131 mph (4300 rpm)

**DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES**  
Wheelbase . . . . . 108.1 in  
Track, F/R . . . . . 61.2/60.3 in  
Length . . . . . 196.8 in  
Width . . . . . 73.0 in  
Height . . . . . 49.6 in  
Ground clearance . . . . . 5.3 in  
Curb weight . . . . . 3890 lbs  
Weight distribution, F/R . . . . . 58.1/41.9%  
Alternator capacity . . . . . 700 watts  
Fuel capacity . . . . . 21.0 gal  
Oil capacity . . . . . 6.0 qts  
Water capacity . . . . . 18.4 qts

**SUSPENSION**  
F: . . . . . ind, unequal-length control arms, coil springs, anti-sway bar  
R: . . . . . rigid axle, semi-elliptic leaf springs, anti-sway bar

**STEERING**  
Type . . . . . recirculating ball, power-assisted  
Turns lock-to-lock . . . . . 3.3  
Turning circle curb-to-curb . . . . . 38.9 ft

**BRAKES**  
F: . . . . . 11.0-in dia vented disc, power-assisted  
R: . . . . . 9.5 x 2.0-in dia cast-iron drum, power-assisted

**WHEELS AND TIRES**  
Wheel size . . . . . 7.0 x 15-in  
Wheel type . . . . . cast-aluminum, 5-bolt  
Tire make and size . . . . . Firestone Super 125 Radial, GR70-15  
Tire type . . . . . fabric cord, radial ply, tubeless  
Test inflation pressures, F/R . . . . . 35/35 psi  
Tire load rating . . . . . 1620 lbs per tire @ 32 psi

*Test continued on page 61*

*Specifications continued on page 56*  
CAR and DRIVER