

'70^s REUNION!

1975 HURST/OLDS 1975 HURST/OLDS 1975 HURST/OLDS 1975 HURST/OLDS

THE GOLDS

AT A TIME WHEN AMERICAN MUSCLE WAS IN DECLINE, THE 1975 HURST/OLDS STILL CARRIED THE TORCH

BY RICHARD TRUESDELL / PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD TRUESDELL



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WHEN YOU THINK OF CLASSIC MUSCLECARS, OLDSMOBILE IS NOT THE FIRST MAKE THAT USUALLY COMES TO MIND. YET WHEN LOOKING BACK ON THE ERA, WITH FEARSOME 442S AND W-30S, THE CARS FROM LANSING DID CHALK UP A NUMBER OF TRULY MEMORABLE CARS. A LONG COLLABORATION WITH HURST LED TO SOME OF ITS MOST NOTEWORTHY MUSCLECARS, INCLUDING THIS 1975 MODEL.

The Hurst nameplate, when attached to an Oldsmobile, usually added up to magic, a potent combination of style and performance that, even in the musclecar era, had few peers. The partnership had humble beginnings with the installation of Hurst shifters starting with the 1965 model year, as part of a package that was available on all F-85 (\$190.45) and

Cutlass (\$156.02) intermediates with the exception of the station wagon models. The following year (1966) the availability of Hurst shifters was expanded to the newly available M-20 (wide-ratio) and M-21 (close-ratio) heavy-duty 4-speed manual transmissions in addition to the previously available 3-speed.

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partnership resulted in the first Hurst/Olds model, as opposed to just the installation of a Hurst shifter at the factory. It was a limited production model that literally set the template for countless OEM/aftermarket partnerships that followed. In 1968 515 Hurst/Olds were built on a completely restyled body shell; 459 Holiday Coupes along with 56 Sport

STANDARD



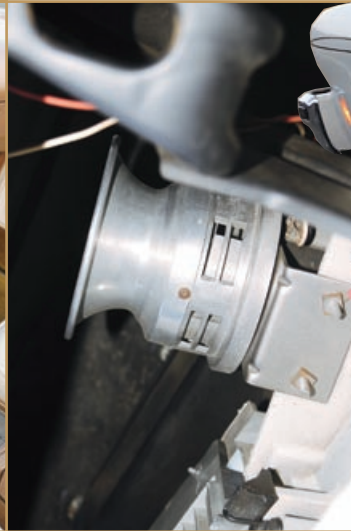
Coupes, that were treated to a Peruvian Silver paint job (a Toronado color) with bold black striping complemented with white pinstripes. Two 455ci powertrains were offered depending if air conditioning was selected as an option. Automatic transmission-equipped cars were treated to the Hurst Dual-Gate shifter installed in a mini-console. For 1969 the H/O was offered with a Regal Gold and White paint scheme, something that became very closely associated with the collaboration.

Like its competitors, 1970 was considered as a high watermark for

Oldsmobile musclecars but a deal to produce a 1970 H/O fell through and it wasn't until 1972 that the next H/O appeared on the scene. It was selected as the pace car for the 1972 running of the Indy 500 and appeared in three official and two unofficial versions. These include the official H/O hardtops, with and without sunroofs, along with the convertible. The unofficial versions include six H/O station wagons along with a single four-door sedan for use at the track. Some of the station wagons "escaped" into private hands after the race, including one that is now owned

by H/O restorer and authority Phil LaChapelle.

By the start of 1974, the musclecar era was officially in decline, a victim of increasing insurance premiums aimed at younger drivers, more stringent safety and emission regulations, and a little thing called the OPEC Oil



INTERIOR DETAILING: The '75 H/Os had filled-in rear quarter windows. The vinyl half top required special interior trim components to get the right look. **STOP, THIEF:** The factory installed alarm system has the siren mounted behind the front grille, with the key above the W-25 emblem on the driver's side. **CHANGE OF**

Embargo that caused long lines and high prices starting in the fall of 1973, and that instantly turned hundreds of thousands of previously desirable musclecars into cheap used cars. With this as context, Hurst and Oldsmobile reignited their collaboration for the 1973 model year with a new H/O based on GM's Colonnade two-door hardtops that featured fixed opera windows. (In 1973, when the GM intermediates were restyled, conventional hardtops and convertibles were eliminated from the lineup, the thinking being that they would ultimately be legislated out of existence, something that turned out not to be the case.)

Next, for 1974, came the Cutlass Coupe Pace Car Edition as Hurst was again selected to pace that year's 500. Two cars with chopped tops and targa-style roll bars were constructed for actual pace car duties with a removable hardtop that could be put in place if inclement weather appeared. The

resulting production '74 H/Os, which included many Oldsmobile options combined with the Hurst graphics, totaled about 1,800 units according to most sources.

For 1975 the Hurst/Oldsmobile collaboration was much more tilted towards luxury than performance at a time that the intermediate Oldsmobile Cutlass lineup was ascending to the top spot in U.S. sales charts, a distinction it reached in 1976 and held most years into the '80s.

The W-25 350 V-8 (1,324 units produced) was the most popular choice among the year's two engine possibilities, the other being the still potent W-30 455ci V-8 (1,193 units produced). It would turn out that despite diminished performance, the 1975 model year would turn out to be the most popular among the Hurst/Oldsmobile collaboration, up to that time.

Unlike previous years, there were more color options available with the

ability to mix or match Cameo White or Ebony Black components with several factory-available interior trims, saddle, white or black. What's notable when first looking at the '75's side profile was the filled-in rear quarter windows of the more formal Colonnade B/C pillar (the 1974 cars employed the more curved roof line). The vinyl half top would require special interior trim components to get the right look.

On the 1975 H/Os, the interior featured swivel bucket seats like other GM intermediates, but with a twist — the front seat inserts were reversible, with the factory vinyl on one side, Hurst Gold cloth (black was also available) on the other side (rear seats were vinyl-only).

Most noteworthy on the '75 edition H/O was the Hurst Hatches, removable T-Tops that were offered as an option. There was one problem with the Hurst Hatches, however, — that they tended to leak. This contributed to rust and structural issues that plagued not only

