



Super cars were gone forever, or so it seemed. But lately they've come back again. Last February saw the welcome re-birth of the Z-28 Camaro, and now comes a high-performance newcomer from GMC, the impressive Diablo.

This Z-28 with a pickup bed replaces last year's Sprint GT, and although it shares the familiar El Camino body style, its bolder identification markings are certain to distinguish it from your average El Camino. Diablo, in fact, seems destined to become the ultimate grocery-getter.

### ENGINE

Diablo can be outfitted with either the 200-cubic-inch V6 two-barrel (231-cubic-inch special in California), a 305-cubic-inch V8 two-barrel, or the top-of-the-line 350-inch four-bar-

rel. The 350, called the LM1, also motivates the Z-28 Camaro and is rated at 170 horsepower (160 in California).

It features an 8.5:1 compression ratio, a Rochester Quadrajets carburetor and the poor man's cold air package (a rubber hose extension of the air cleaner snout to just behind the front radiator grille).

As does the Z-28, the Diablo sports a dual exhaust system. Pipes ranging from two to 2¼ inches in diameter are used in conjunction with a large-diameter (260-cubic-inch) catalytic converter. Unlike the Z-28, which has resonators, the Diablo's pipes are separated into dual exhausts after the converter, then run into separate mufflers.

### DRIVELINE

Our test vehicle came equipped with Borg-Warner's M-20 4-speed transmission with a 2.85 low gear. This trans is optional on Z-28s but is the only one available in the Diablo. The clutch is 10¼ inches in diameter and mated to a General Motors shifter. The sinfully smooth unit has a reverse-lockout feature which can only be utilized while pulling up and pushing to the left.

If one opts for the shiftless route, an M-40 Turbo-Hydramatic is optional. Only two gear ratios are available: 2.41 and, outside California, 2.73. Both can be ordered in a positraction carrier.

Brakes are power-assisted discs on front (with 10½x1.03-inch vented cast rotors) and 9½-inch finned cast-iron drums; the V6 comes with finned aluminum.

The P-205-75R-14 white sidewall two-ply steel-belted radial tires are mounted on six-inch-wide rally wheels, the five lugs arranged in a 4¼-inch bolt pattern. Blackwalls and raised white letter models are options.

### STEERING AND SUSPENSION

Some significant changes have been made here. First, the wheelbase was extended from 116 inches to 117.1. Second, by placing the steering gear forward of the front wheel centerline, GMC has reduced the turning radius by a substantial two feet. Steering ratio choices are 24:1 manual, 15:1 and 14:1 (available only with optional F-41 suspension package). As with all GMC trucks, air shocks are standard on the rear. A spare tire is located under the right-hand corner of the pickup box and is removed from the inside. Adjacent to this is a surprisingly roomy storage compartment.

### APPEARANCE

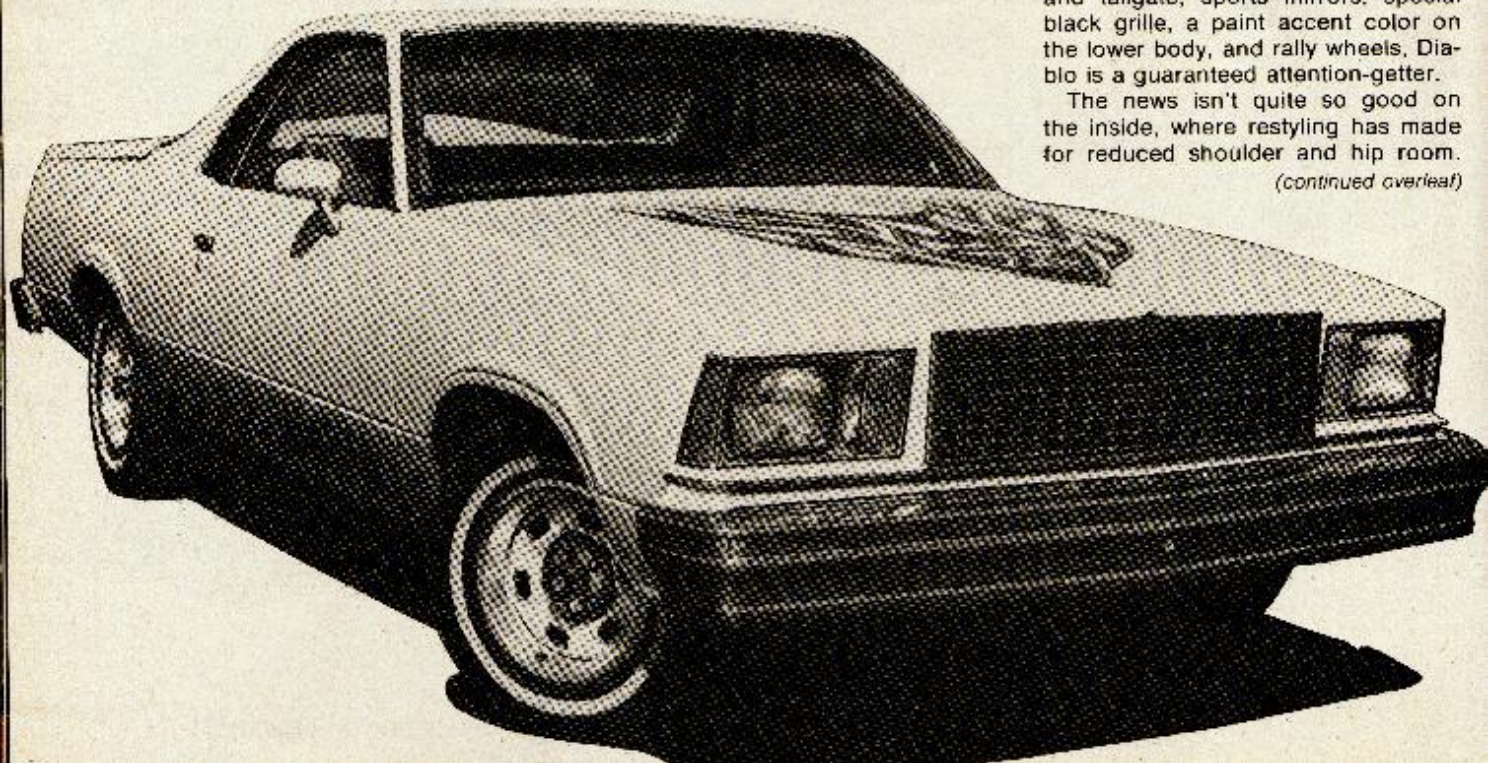
Remember the Sprints and El Caminos of last year? The tailgates slanted toward the front so much that cargo space was limited. By straightening the Diablo's gate and adding 7.1 feet of space, GMC has alleviated the problem somewhat. And rather than being straight, as last year's was, the rear window is deliberately concaved to allow the pickup body to extend farther into the passenger compartment. Body overhang has also been reduced, making the Diablo almost a foot shorter than the Sprint. Further, with a standard package, including a front air dam, special ID on the lower door and tailgate, sports mirrors, special black grille, a paint accent color on the lower body, and rally wheels, Diablo is a guaranteed attention-getter.

The news isn't quite so good on the inside, where restyling has made for reduced shoulder and hip room.

*(continued overleaf)*

# BEAT THE DEVIL

GMC'S IMPRESSIVE "Z-28  
WITH A PICKUP BED" PUTS  
HIGH PERFORMANCE BACK  
INTO DRIVING



Not everything has been shrunk, though leg room has been lengthened by one inch, and head room increased by half an inch. Seating capacity may be listed as three persons, but the Diablo is in fact a two-seater, particularly when equipped with a manual gearbox.

As usual, there are a variety of creature features to choose from. Our favorite was a far-out AM/FM stereo 8-track radio with a digital readout tuner and clock with elapsed timer for determining how long it takes to get from point A to point B. Other options on our test truck included air conditioning, tilt steering wheel, power windows and locks.

A gauge package (D68) was also installed, and it's a must. It includes tachometer, voltmeter, water temp, oil pressure and dashboard clock. The dashboard, incidentally, is one of the best we've seen in an American car—everything can be easily seen and read, particularly the tach. The dimmer switch shares the same lever as the turn signal, and works by either pulling it toward you or pushing it away. It activates the new 7½-inch rectangular headlights,

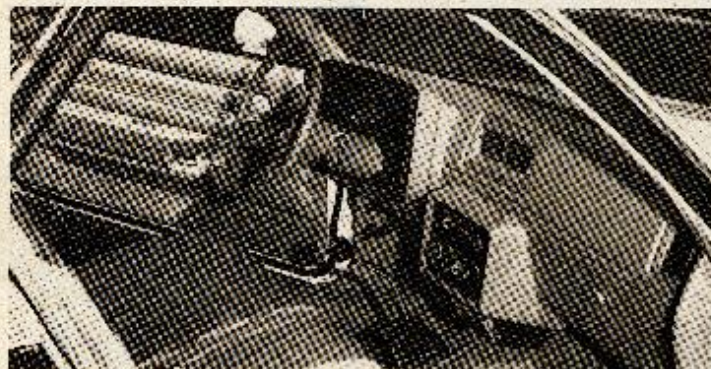
which are standard equipment on many '78 GM cars.

Diablos come in an unusually wide selection of color combinations—from white with black accents through an attractive spectrum of reds, silvers, blues and golds, including a dynamite black with red accents.

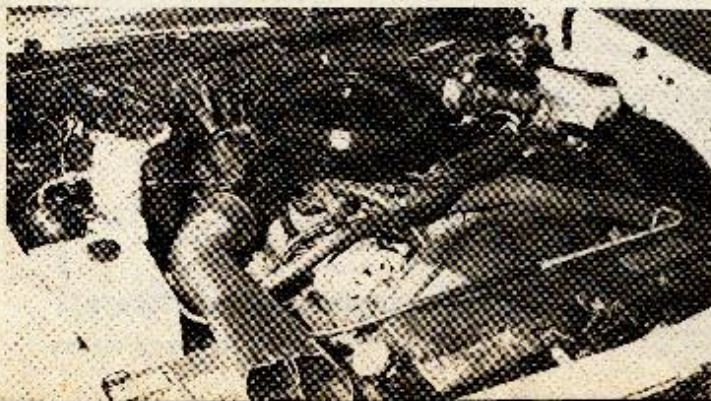
## PERFORMANCE

Diablo is 599 pounds lighter than last year's Sprint, and its improved power-to-weight ratio is quickly evident. With the LM1 engine, the 4-speed trans and 2.73 rearend gears, we hit a best of 15.91 at 88 mph—leaving at 3500 rpm and holding our shift points at a maximum of 5000 revs. Had the truck had a stiffer gear—say a Z-28's 3.73—times would have picked up even more.

Particularly impressive was the engine's forgiving nature. After a series of inadvertent third-gear starts (very close low and third gate), the engine always lugged away without so much as a cough, and despite a barrage of quarter-mile blasts, engine temperature never varied by more than five or ten degrees. **HR**



Cleanly styled GMC Diablo luxury pickup is taken from the new intermediates from GM for 1978. Upright rear gate allows for cargoes that the older, larger truck could not carry. On the inside of the Diablo, two-spoke wheel, with downswept spokes, does a great job of staying out of the way of the full-gauge layout. Center pod carries controls for radios and A/C, leaving plenty of knee room for shotgun side. The top power option is the LM-1 350 (the same engine as powers the Z-28), with the lower-ratio 2.85 first-gear 4-speed optional and gears only low as 2.73. Note free-power fresh-air snorkel.



## HOT ROD MAGAZINE'S ROAD TEST SPECIFICATIONS GMC Sprint Diablo Pickup

### PRICE:

|                 |      |
|-----------------|------|
| Base Price      | N.A. |
| Price as Tested | N.A. |

### GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS:

|                      |               |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Curb Weight          | 3165 lbs.     |
| Wheelbase            | 117.1 in.     |
| Track, Front/Rear    | 58.5/57.8 in. |
| Overall Length       | 201.6 in.     |
| Length of Box        | 78.8 in.      |
| Width (widest point) | 69.6 in.      |
| Height               | 53.8 in.      |
| Cargo Capacity       | 800 lbs.      |

### CHASSIS/BODY:

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Frame                  | Full-perimeter steel frame  |
| Brake System           | 10.5-in. discs front, 9.5-in. drums rear, vacuum assist   |
| Wheels                 | 14x6-in. Rally wheels with 5 attaching studs, 4¼ in. diameter bolt circle   |
| Tires                  | B.F. Goodrich P-205-75R-14 steel-bolted radials   |
| Steering Type          | Saginaw recirculating ball type, constant ratio power steering, 15:1 ratio  |
| Turns, lock to lock    | 3.3   |
| Suspension, Front/Rear | Independent, with wishbone type short upper and longer lower control arms; rubber-isolated coil springs; link-type front stabilizer bar. Rear axles suspended; four-link long lower control arms attached to the axle brackets; short upper control arms hooked up from frame to the differential carrier; coil springs rubber-isolated at top; air shocks standard equipment |

### ENGINE/DRIVETRAIN:

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Type                       | 90° OHV V8  |
| Bore and Stroke            | 4.00x3.48 in.   |
| Displacement               | 350 c.i.  |
| Compression Ratio          | 8.5:1   |
| BHP @ rpm, net             | 170 @ 3600 rpm  |
| Torque @ rpm, lb./ft.      | 260 @ 2400 rpm  |
| Carburetion                | Single Rochester Quadrajet 4-bb   |
| Fuel Requirement           | Unleaded, 91-octane (or higher)   |
| Drivetrain                 | Manual—Muncie M-20 4-speed; Automatic—GBC 350   |
| Gear Ratios                | Manual—1st, 2.85; 2nd, 2.02; 3rd, 1.35; 4th, 1.00; Automatic—1st, 2.52; 2nd, 1.52; Drive, 1.00      |
| Rear Axle, Type/Gear Ratio | GM Salisbury, 2.73:1 with 4-speed, 2.41 with automatic, 2.93 available in California with automatic |

### PERFORMANCE DATA:

|                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Standing Quarter-Mile     | 15.91 @ 88 mph with 4-speed |
| Top Speed (observed)      | 117 mph with 4-speed        |
| Fuel Economy              | N.A.                        |
| Brakes, Stopping Distance | 60-0 mph: 159 ft.           |

### ACCOMMODATION:

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Seating Capacity, persons | 3 with standard bench seat or available split bench seat; 2 with available bucket seat; no rear seat |
| Leg Room                  | 37.3 in.   |
| Head Room                 | 42.9 in.   |
| Shoulder Room             | 56.1 in.   |
| Hip Room                  | 57.1 in.   |

### OVERALL COMMENTS:

(On a scale of 1-10, 5 is average)

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Exterior Finish                     | 8  |
| Interior Finish                     | 9  |
| Interior Noise Level                | 7  |
| Behavior in Traffic                 | 8  |
| Handling                            | 6* |
| Brakes                              | 7  |
| All-around Vision                   | 8  |
| Cargo Space                         | 6  |
| Driver Comfort                      | 9  |
| Dashboard Readability/Accessibility | 10 |

\*Not equipped with F-41 handling package