



Wheelin' around



When I first heard that Oldsmobile would build a small car for 1973, I was admittedly quite enthused. Olds' has traditionally been ahead of all the other GM divisions in engineering, and at first report the proposed new car seemed quite exciting in specification.

The car was slated to use the GM "X" body already shared by the Chevrolet Nova and the Pontiac Ventura, but was planned to be distinctively appointed and equipped in the European genre. Styling on the original prototype was extremely attractive with strong

Olds' family resemblance featuring high mounted deck lid tail-lights from the Toronado and a grille reminiscent of the 1967 Cutlass. Also planned was a richer and more luxurious interior than used in the Nova/Ventura, and a reworked suspension for better handling.

The baby olds was the brainchild of John Beltz, Oldsmobile Division General Manager. Beltz was a self-admitted car enthusiast as well as a competent engineer. He visited Europe in 1970 and fell in love with the big (For Europe) German GM-built Opel Commodores and Diplomats. He was intrigued by their understated luxury in a compact package and also by their ability to cruise all day at 130 miles per hour on the speed limit-less German Autobahns. What Beltz really wanted to build was his own version of the Opel, no mean task with only the mundane Chevy Nova to use as a base.

probably partially due to the untimely death of John Beltz, which occurred last spring. With his death, his idea of a European style automobile built by Oldsmobile. What they did build is just another dull, stupid Detroit sedan.

I feel that Olds missed the boat in a big way with the Omega, as there is surely a big market opening up for the type of car that it could have been. Chevrolet and Pontiac are both starting to see the light with the 1973 Chev Monte Carlo, which incorporates a suspension system copied from Mercedes-Benz, and the fantastic Pontiac Grand-Am, a true Grand Touring car (maybe Detroit's first).

Both these cars show strong European influence, which is where its at today. Unfortunately, Olds chose mediocrity with the Omega. Too bad. It might have been a nice car the way John wanted it.

Well, the small Oldsmobile has arrived on the 1973 new car scene, and to my mind it is a disappointment.

The new car, christened Omega, is nothing more than a thinly disguised Nova. This is

WISE WORDS

Adieu a Trudeau

To the GAZETTE:

It is sad that one of the founding members of the Montreal Civil Liberties Union should become so concerned with personal power as to suspend the civil liberties of all Canadians. It is sadder that this move allowed another powerful local Montrealer to use internment to guarantee reelection. But it is tragic that his move, which outlawed negotiations, virtually insured the death of a dear friend and schoolmate.

The municipal politician: Montreal Mayor Jean Drapeau. The former civil libertarian: Pierre Elliot Trudeau. His late friend and schoolmate: Pierre Laporte.

In light of these facts, the only honourable thing for Mr. Trudeau to do is step down immediately from the Liberal Party leadership. If he refuses,

all other concerned Liberal candidates ought to declare their intention to run as Independents in the forthcoming Federal election.

Walter Plaut



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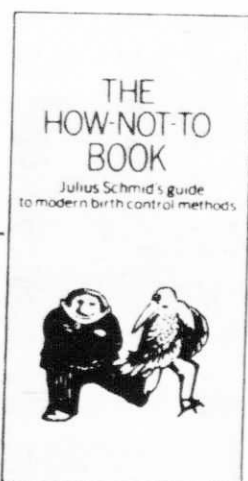
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