

It's all about the NUMBERS.....

Memorial weekend and the Indy 500 race will soon be here. I thought you might like some 1974 Hurst/Olds Pace Car trivia to impress your friends at your "500" party.

There has been a lot of interest the last few months because some of the more unusual 1974 "Festival" cars have appeared and been offered for sale. Prospective buyers looking to document details have filled my email box and overloaded the phone lines. This has caused me to delve into the H/OCA Research Library and look for details.



Tony Hullman leading the 1974 track cars

The list of 1974 Hurst/Olds Official Indy 500 Festival cars has been in the file for years. There is actually an original typed list (not a copy), with some notations written in reflecting misc. changes or additions. There is a copy of the original list with other notations. And finally there is a scratch pad paper from Hurst Performance with additional notations reflecting more additions and changes to the original list. These lists have now been combined into computer program so they can be sorted for various points of information. (Computers can actually make some things easier!)

Historical publications have reported 100 Oldsmobiles were provided for 1974 Indy Festival uses. Some of

these sources were misleading as to the type of cars the 100 cars were. This led many to believe there were 100 Oldsmobile Delta 88 convertibles. Now that the lists have been combined we have an easy way to determine the actual breakdown of Festival cars without constantly handling original documents. Following is the list of track cars:

- 1- Cutlass 4-door
- 2- Cutlass Pace Cars
- 6- Custom Cruisers
- 46- Cutlass'
- 42- Delta 88s
- 3- 1973 Hurst/Olds'
- 100 Festival cars

Further details include:

1-Cutlass 4-door was assigned to Indy 500 President, Tony Hullman and it had a 350 engine.

2-Cutlass Pace Cars with *special* 455 engines.

6- Custom Cruisers all with 455 engines were used by the Official Photographer (Dennis Castelee), Medical Director, Oldsmobile Engineering (Dave Maurer), Oldsmobile Public Relations (Laurie Swartz), and 2) for the Day Nursery.

46- Cutlass Pace Car replicas. Of these 31) had 350 engines (one of these cars was noted to be a black one); and 15) had 455 engines.

42-Delta 88 convertibles with 350 engines AND heavy duty cooling systems for parade uses. I can tell from the photos, some of these had black interiors and some had white.

Now we know that at the track there were a total of 74) cars with 350 engines and 26) cars with 455 engines.

After the race, Oldsmobile sold many replica cars. Pacing the race was a good (but expensive) advertisement to sell more Hurst/Oldsmobiles and Oldsmobiles in general. Oldsmobile reports to have sold:

1420- 350 engine Hurst/Olds. That means an additional 1389 beyond the 31 Festival cars.

380- 455 engine Hurst/Olds. That is 365 more than the 15 festival cars.

These figures do not include the 4-door or the Pace Cars as they were considered *special* cars.

One more little piece of trivia from Oldsmobile records..... No Cutlass replicas with 455 engines were sold originally to California because of emission laws. Now, how about the recent activity with the 1974 Hurst/Olds Festival cars.

Tony Hullman's 4-door car was on Ebay a few months ago. As far as I know the reserve price was not met. The Hullman family sold the car several years ago but it is still in Indianapolis. Actually the car is owned by a Speedway employee and has been seen during our last three H/OCA Indy national meets.



Tony Hullman's 4-door Hurst/Olds



Delta 88 convertibles at the Indy 500



Look in the back to see 2 Custom Cruisers

Three Delta 88 Hurst/Olds convertibles have been advertised in recent months. One was listed on Ebay, one in our newsletter and another as a private sale. To date, I don't believe any of these have changed hands. A note of interest about the one on Ebay- If you looked closely at the photos, you can see another 1974 H/O Delta Festival car parked next to the one listed for sale. Hmmmm, how many of those are still around?!

The most recent activity has centered around one of the Pace Cars going on the auction block. For years the "story" has been that one of the Pace Cars was sold to an Olds dealer, (Rooster Bush) in North Carolina. This car was at our 2nd H/OCA National Meet at Charlotte Motor Speedway. More recently it was part of a display at the R. E. Olds Museum in Lansing, MI. It is still owned by Mr. Bush.

The second Pace Car was reported to have been crushed after the motor was removed and installed in Dick Chrysler's speedboat. I know the crusher does not always do the job it was supposed to do. After all, the 1970 Olds Pace Car #2 reappeared a few years ago after having been sent to the crusher. (NOTE- the reason the Pace Cars in these years are to be only displayed or destroyed is because the manufacturers determined them to be not safe for normal road uses because of the modifications made to them.) However, it seems that someplace along the line someone just couldn't bear to crush a piece of history.



1974 Hurst/Olds Pace Car leading the race

The 1974 Festival car that was just auctioned in Florida may be the one that was reported to be crushed. It may also be a 3rd car with a cutout roof. The Pace Cars were used for a time after the Indy race by USAC at other races. They had USAC lettering added to their bodies. Our list shows a Hurst/Olds Cutlass assigned to USAC. There are no details as to whether this car had the roof modifications the two Pace Cars received. Mr. Bush's car and the car from Florida both have the roof modified and USAC documentation. This brings us to a point of a "definite maybe"!

The Festival cars on the typed list all have their VIN listed. The only ones that don't have the VIN listed are two Delta 88 convertibles that were added per a Hurst Performance request, and the three 1973 H/O's. These cars are on the scratch pad list. My guess would be they ended up with more people wanting cars than were originally requested. This resulted in Hurst Performance people using the '73 H/O's.

Since the VIN's are **all** listed, it should be a "no brainer" to authenticate actual Festival cars.

WRONG! The two open roof cars we know about have both had their VIN removed and were sold with a bill of sale that stipulates they are not road worthy. They have no title. That leaves us with the problem of not easily being able to identify the Pace Cars.

The good news is an H/OCA member bought the Festival Car that went to auction in Florida. It came with all the documentation from GM, including the original bill of sale to an Oldsmobile dealer in Ohio. The Ohio dealer is who sent the car to the auction. I'm sure we will be hearing more about this unique car. Maybe it will even make an appearance at our 2006 National Meet in Joliet.

What about the Custom Cruisers? I haven't heard of any of those appearing. I wonder what happened to them.

Now that you have committed all of these facts and figures to your memory, you will be able to "amaze" your friends with your knowledge as you watch the 2006 Indy 500.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE WHO ARE ALWAYS WILLING TO HELP WITH DOCUMENTING OUR SPECIAL CARS:

- Doc Watson**-creator of the Hurst/Olds
- Dick Chrysler**-a former owner of Hurst Performance/ Cars & Concepts
- Donald Davidson**-Indy 500 historian
- Dale Smith**-retired Olds engineering
- Dave Maurer**- retired Olds Engineering