

It's All About the NUMBERS.....

1988 was the end of an era. Oldsmobile began building the Cutlass in 1961. This car was their introduction into the small car market. The Cutlass was so popular it led the industry in sales and popularity for many years. Popularity can also have its bad side. The Cutlass was #1 on the list of "most stolen" cars for several years in the 80's.



1961 Cutlass

Trends started changing and the cars being manufactured did too. Front wheel drive cars were easier and cheaper to build (bean counters call it cost effective!). The rear wheel drive Cutlass was to become a *classic*. The 1988 Cutlass was the last year for the rear wheel drive version and it had emblems designating it Cutlass Supreme Classic. Oldsmobile created confusion by introducing a "new" Cutlass front wheel drive car in the 1988 model line. It was designated the Cutlass Supreme.

During the 28 production years of the rear wheel drive Cutlass, the muscle car era peaked. The Hurst/Olds was the ultimate muscle car of the Oldsmobile fleet. The Hurst/Olds was produced in 10 different years between 1968 and 1988.

Oldsmobile and Hurst Performance worked together to produce the highly sought after muscle car. They were popular both at the track and with the public. Two companies working together can be a difficult situation. During the 10 years the H/O was produced, 2 of those years it wasn't a "match made in car heaven"! The first year was 1979. Company tempers flared and the 1979 H/O project was dropped. At the last minute, Oldsmobile decided to build the cars. (I will discuss this in a later issue.) 1988 was the 2nd year of serious disagreements.

1988 was the year Hurst Performance decided to proceed without the Oldsmobile factory. Mr. Gasket

was the current owner of the Hurst Performance Corporation. Doc Watson of Hurst Performance was diligent in trying to convince Oldsmobile to make the 1988 Cutlass Supreme Classic a "last hurrah" car. Oldsmobile was more interested in showing the world the "all new front wheel drive Cutlass". After months of negotiations, Doc realized they weren't going to change their minds. Doc and the President of Mr. Gasket decided to proceed and offer the public a 20th anniversary Aero kit that could be installed on the Cutlass cars Oldsmobile had already built.

Doc is an enthusiastic person and very serious about people being able to have some fun with their cars. He has devoted his life to the people in the car hobby. Doc and Hurst Performance have made countless contributions to improve safety and still have fun with a car.

Oldsmobile built the 1988 Cutlass Supreme Classic from August 1987 through the end of the calendar year. Basically they were built until the parts for that model ran out. The Aero kits that Hurst performance offered were advertised through the dealer network and various publications. If you wanted a 20th Anniversary 1988 Hurst/Olds you had to first buy the Cutlass Supreme Classic from Oldsmobile. Second you had to buy the Aero kit from Hurst performance. And third you had to install the kit and register the car by the VIN with Hurst Performance. All those that registered a car with Hurst received a free year membership in the H/OCA from Doc. Doc reported "I knew there would never be another Hurst/Olds and this was a way for Cutlass owners to have some fun with their cars AND be able to join the finest, most fun car club ever to exist, the H/OCA".



Larry Simpsons 20th Anniversary Hurst/Olds

Production figures of the rear wheel drive Cutlass:

YEAR	HOW MANY CUTLASS'	HOW MANY OLDSMOBILES	OLDSMOBILE'S INDUSTRY POSITION
1961	76,394	317,967	6 th
1962	93,968	447,594	4 th
1963	118,811	476,753	5 th
1964	167,002	546,112	6 th
1965	180,097	591,701	6 th
1966	202,967	586,381	4 th
1967	226,406	548,390	6 th
1968	300,284	562,459	6 th
1969	204,865	677,955	5 th
1970	275,179	633,980	5 th
1971	234,208	558,899	6 th
1972	302,669	758,711	3 rd
1973	381,094	938,970	3 rd
1974	315,499	619,168	3 rd
1975	323,842	628,720	3 rd
1976	495,344	891,499	3 rd
1977	633,910	1,135,909	3 rd
1978	613,340	1,015,805	3 rd
1979	631,027	1,068,155	3 rd
1980	591,984	910,306	3 rd
1981	597,525	940,655	
1982	382,204	789,454	
1983	335,357	939,157	
1984	429,651	1,180,056	
1985	292,633	1,192,549	
1986	305,566	1,157,990	
1987	192,433	853,267	
1988	30,267	764,134	

1988 was the lowest production year for the rear wheel drive Cutlass and the Hurst/Olds. Doc Watson personally did some of the Hurst/Olds conversions. Now to the numbers: **2** were built with DRCE (prostock) engines. Doc still has one, the other was destroyed. There was **1** prototype car, Doc still has that one, too. **16** were converted by Doc and his team. Some of these had 455's and some kept the original 307. A total of 160 kits were made. Most of these were sold as kits, some were kept by H/SVO for parts for when damage occurred to vehicles. Doc estimates just over 100 kits were sold with a membership in the H/OCA included. However, there is no way to establish how many of these were installed on cars and what year car they were installed on.

The Aero kits could be installed on any of the 1981-1988 Cutlass cars. Several of the kits were sold to be used on non-1988 cars. These cars are designated as Hurst/Olds Aero cars. Doc's dedication to having fun with the cars is exemplified with the aero cars. There are no exact records as to how many of these cars there are.

The 1988 Hurst/Olds offered the public something that was never available on any of the other H/O's produced. Variety of COLOR! Each year of production the H/O was offered in select colors: 1968 and 1984, only silver; 1983, only black; 1969 and 1972, only white; and 1973,1974, 1975 and 1979 white or black. If blue was your favorite color (or red, beige, etc.) you were out of luck. You could order a 442 but not a Hurst/olds. The Aero cars are limited in color by only the imagination of the owner.

The Cutlass was the most popular model offered by Oldsmobile in the 107 years the manufacturer was in business. It was the **NUMBER ONE** best selling car in the United States during the years 1976 and 1977. The Cutlass name was continued to be used by Oldsmobile until 1999.

These figures are from the GM Heritage Center. The models included in the figures are rear wheel drive F85, Cutlass, 442 and Hurst built in the USA and Canada. None of the Cutlass body station wagons are included.