

CAR and DRIVER

MAY 1970/75 CENTS

**SPECIAL SECTION: THE 13 BEST CARS IN
THE WORLD AS YOU PICKED THEM**

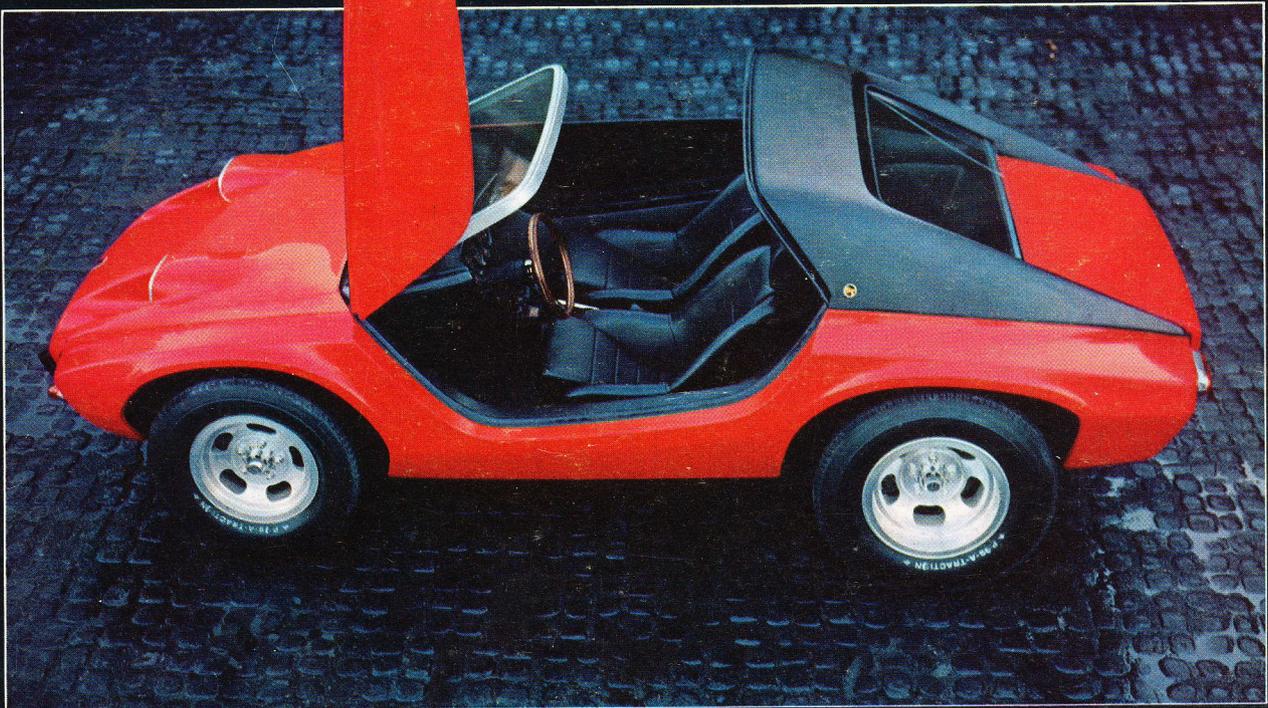


**TESTED: AUDI 100LS
CHEVROLET Z/28 CAMARO
FUEL INJECTED VOLVO·CAPRI 1600**



PREVIEW: MID-ENGINE FORD GT CAR

Auto Show Issue



THE ULTIMATE KIT CAR: MEYERS MANX SR





CAR AND DRIVER ROAD TEST

CAPRI 1600

In a nation that is sinfully proud to build box carts, sidewinders and mobile wooden battle cruisers, Ford of England is an anomaly: It builds cars. It has not always been so and it is not absolutely true today; after all there is still the Corsair. But in recent years we have seen spewing out of Dagenham in huge numbers the likes of the Cortina (May, 1968) and the Escort. And now we have the Capri.

Of course, the Capri is not solely English. It is built, and in larger numbers, by Ford of Germany; and with the exception of the engine it is the German car which will come into this country as the Lincoln-Mercury Capri. But that is not to rule the English out; in good measure it is they who make the decisions—right down to asking that it be called the *Cap-ri*.

Having said that the Capri is the newest in a line of good cars let the bad part be recorded forthwith: The car is coming into the States with the wrong engine. The Capri is the first of the European cars to be built with a kind of American willingness to accept options, and options have been provided without end. There are two trim packages and 11 engines, six in the English version, five in the German. What is good for Europe should be good for the world; after all, the Capri is exported to 100 countries or more. But it is not the case. After carefully federalizing two engines, the 1600 will just have to do for American buyers.

It is a mistake. Although quoted at 71 hp, the so-called federal car is no better than the Beetle in performance, and all

this from a \$2295 car which looks like it would suck the doors off any of its competition.

What may be happening is that L-M has decided that the Capri is a sedan instead of the 2 plus 2 it very obviously seems to be. If so, they have company. Originally a two-seater, the car was lengthened to provide a 2+2 configuration in Europe, and at both Ford of England and Ford of Germany people are very careful to say it's neither a sedan nor a sports car.

All of this has obviously misled Lincoln-Mercury into thinking that what they had on their hands was just another kind of Maverick. Especially since the 200,000 sold in Europe have been sold in large numbers to the young, affluent, educated, often female—much the same words used in the market research on Ford's small cars.

What the Capri really is, or can be, at least, is a European sporty car, with looks and available performance to match. But not with the 1600, and that is something L-M will have to learn the hard way.

Moreover, the role suggested by the appearance is strongly reinforced by the way the Capri drives. The suspension is very stiff so that the car seems to follow precisely the road's undulations, deviating only in crossing a sharp bump, whereupon it seems to ski jump over the crest.

Of course the handling, or rather the handling you feel in street driving, benefits from this stiffness and the Capri feels very much like a racer. And the controls give the tactile sensations that will instantly elicit the racer in every driver—even the young, affluent and educated.

The steering is extremely light. Lighter than any front engine car we can think of, and it has excellent road feel. The same can be said for the shifter: very precise, good detent action so that the lever snaps into position and yet requiring very low effort. The driving position suffers from minimal thigh clearance between the steering wheel and the seat cushion. And there is little support for your throttle leg while all the time the shift lever seems unnecessarily far away.

Having modestly accepted the envious glances of the fickle public and noted how pleasant the car is on the street, the inevitable measurements have to be taken. And it is here that the Capri with the 1600 just doesn't stand up. The immoral, uncivilized and anti-social, standing quarter-mile takes 20.3 seconds to complete with a terminal speed of 66 mph—roughly equivalent, as we have said, to a stick-shift Beetle.

What is really objectionable is that the



THE EUROPEAN MARKETING MEN HAVE
CONNED THEIR AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS
INTO BELIEVING THAT THE
FORD CAPRI IS JUST ANOTHER KIND OF
MAVERICK. WHAT IT REALLY IS,
OR AT LEAST, WHAT IT CAN
BE, IS A EUROPEAN SPORTY CAR

handling pales on the track, too. At moderate cornering rates, the car is very comfortable, but as you approach the limit it understeers vigorously and no amount of standing on the gas will swing the tail out.

The interior is neat and acceptably finished with two trim versions offered. The high line car includes such indispensables as a parking brake warning light and leather-covered steering wheel, but the standard version will do nicely—even without the vinyl roof. What both lack is acceptable instrumentation. In a car like the Capri a tach is indispensable and of course none is to be found. Both cars have back seats with fold-down armrests and two adults can fit back there quite comfortably if those in front aren't too greedy about legroom.

A final criticism concerns noise. The car we tested had a truck-like noise/vibration period at certain engine speeds that is unacceptable. With any luck it's not typical.

If Lincoln-Mercury is serious about selling the car as just another entry in the "... growing small car market" it will never realize the real potential of the car. There *is* a growing market out there for cars that are different and, more importantly, cars with genuine all round performance. This the Capri is prepared to offer—given the higher output engine. With relatively light weight, 2080 lbs, a turning circle of 34 feet (steering ratio 17-1), a lovely gearbox and things like 185 x 13 radial tires (optional) and front discs standard, the car is essentially what the new wave of "performance" cars should be:

lithe, lively, susceptible to driver inputs.

Right now, the car falls short, although there are elliptical remarks about higher output engines in time. It is a fine automobile for single ladies, probably better than the Mustang or its brothers, and those who would normally buy a VW but want something more contemporary will find the Capri just right. But for genuine enthusiasts the federalized Capri is not quite there. That it can be is certain. Even as you read this, Jochen Neerspach is sitting in the competition department in Cologne directing an effort to win the European Touring Car Championship for Ford with the 2.3 liter car.

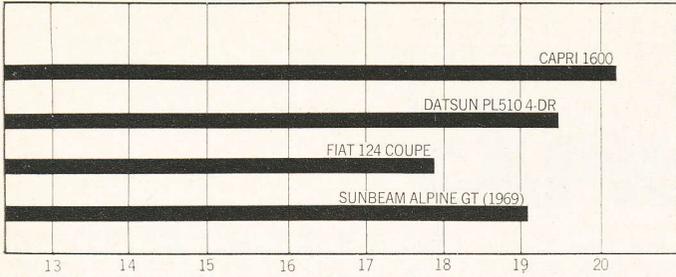
Now all L-M has to do is to bring *that* one in.

(Specifications overleaf)

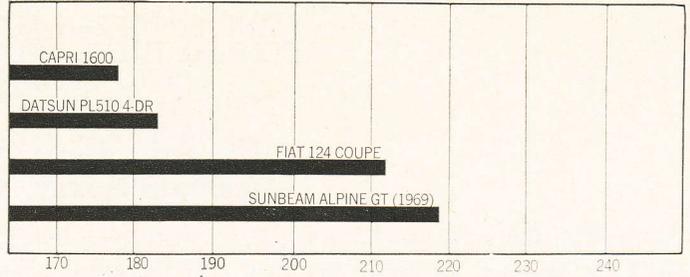


PHOTOGRAPHY: HUMPHREY SUTTON

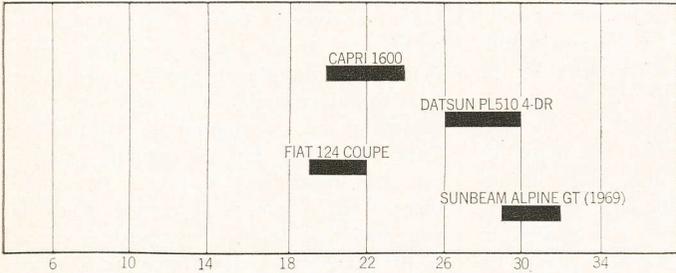
ACCELERATION standing 1/4 mile, seconds



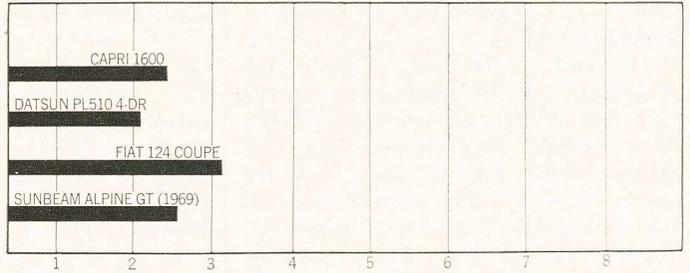
BRAKING 70-0 mph panic stop, feet



FUEL ECONOMY RANGE mpg



PRICE AS TESTED dollars x 1000



Ford Capri 1600

Importer: Lincoln-Mercury Division
Ford Motor Company
3000 Schaefer Road
Dearborn, Mich. 48121

Vehicle type: Front engine, rear-wheel drive,
4 passenger

Price as tested: \$2465.00*
(Manufacturer's suggested retail price, including all options listed below, Federal excise tax, dealer preparation and delivery charges, does not include state and local taxes, license or freight charges)

Options on test car: base Capri, \$2295.00; vinyl roof, \$70.00*; 185/70-13 tires, \$N.A.; decor group; \$100.00*
*Estimated

ENGINE

Type: 4-in-line, water-cooled, cast iron block and head, 5 main bearings
Bore x stroke: 3.19 x 3.06 in., 81.0 x 77.7 mm
Displacement: 98.0 cu in., 1600 cc
Compression ratio: 8.0 to one
Carburetion: 1 x 1-bbl-Ford
Valve gear: Pushrod operated overhead valves, mechanical lifters
Power (SAE): 71 bhp @ 5000 rpm
Torque (SAE): 91 lb-ft @ 2800 rpm
Specific power output: 0.73 bhp/cu in., 44.4 bhp/liter

DRIVE TRAIN

Transmission: 4-speed, all-synchro
Final drive ratio: 3.89 to one
Gear Ratio Mph/1000 rpm Max. test speed
I 3.54 4.9 28 mph (5700 rpm)
II 2.40 7.3 42 mph (5700 rpm)
III 1.41 12.4 71 mph (5700 rpm)
IV 1.00 17.5 82 mph (4700 rpm)

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Wheelbase: 100.8 in
Track, F/R: 52.0/53.0 in
Length: 167.8 in
Width: 64.8 in
Height: 50.9 in
Ground clearance: 5.5 in
Curb weight: 2170 lbs
Weight distribution, F/R: 52.9/47.1%
Battery capacity: 12 volts, 55 amp/hr
Alternator capacity: 420 watts
Fuel capacity: 12.0 gal
Oil capacity: 4.3 qts
Water capacity: 6.4 qts

SUSPENSION

F. Ind., MacPherson strut, coil spring, anti-sway bar
R. Rigid axle, semi-elliptic leaf springs, trailing arms

STEERING

Type: Rack and pinion
Turns lock-to-lock: 3.4
Turning circle curb-to-curb: 35.4 ft

BRAKES

F: 9.63-in disc, power assist
R: 9.0 x 1.69 drum

WHEELS AND TIRES

Wheel size: 13 x 5.0-in
Wheel type: Stamped, styled steel, 4-bolt
Tire make and size: Uniroyal Rallye T5 185/70 HR13
Tire type: Radial ply, tubeless
Test inflation pressures, F/R: 28/28 psi
Tire load rating: 1140 lbs per tire @ 36 psi

PERFORMANCE

Zero to	Seconds
30 mph	4.2
40 mph	6.7
50 mph	10.7
60 mph	16.0
70 mph	23.2
Standing 1/4-mile	20.2 sec @ 66.2 mph
Top speed (estimated)	88 mph
70-0 mph	178 ft (0.92 G)
Fuel mileage	20-24 mpg on regular fuel
Cruising range	240-288 mi

