

'74 Matador

A new design with only one thing in mind.

Asked if an increase in stock car racing activity with the new Matador can be expected in 1974, AMC Marketing Chief Bill McNealy replied something like "Is the Pope Catholic?"

We can safely assume that Mr. Penske has at least one of the slick new Matadors nearing the final stages of NASCAR race preparation in his shop right now. One of the highlights of the AMC press presentation was a show version of the full race prepared Matador, sporting lots of Sunoco, Die-hard, and Matador identification—but significantly, no mention of Mssrs. Penske, Donohue or Marcis. There was, however, occasionally visible between the hordes of pressmen, a sign which identified the thing as at least a reasonable facsimile of a race car and named Mark and Dave as the drivers.

While both large and small-block AMC race engines have not yet been fully sorted (Donohue's L&M Championship

car broke on the last lap at Road America while running 5th), you can bet that the big NASCAR engine will be considerably improved by the time they stuff it into the aerodynamic new body for the Riverside Winston Cup opener next January. And the new body certainly looks aerodynamic. We asked McNealy if it was wind-tunnel developed, and he asked us if we knew of any 200mph wind tunnels around. (Notice how these corporate guys always answer one question with another.) That means that AMC won't be sure how good the body is until it gets on the track. Unlimited Penske/AMC development time at the newly acquired Michigan International Speedway facility won't hurt a bit, and they'll certainly know how well it works long before the car ever turns a wheel in anger.

The '74 coupes are about 3" lower and have a wheelbase 4" shorter than the other Matadors

(the 4-door and wagon are carried over essentially unchanged from '73—except for front and rear appearance adjustments as a result of stiffer bumper laws). They are very uniquely styled, continuing an AMC trend of "differentness," with long, tapering hoods, hefty rear-quarter windows and sharply-sloping rear deck lines. Surprisingly, the rake of the windshield does not appear as acute as that of some other cars designed with super-ovals in mind.

There are 3 versions of the Matador coupes offered: the standard model, the V8-powered "X", and the plush Brougham. The Matador "X"

comes with the 304cid V8 as standard equipment, while the others get economy 6s. Optional engines on all models include two 360s and a 401cid V8.

Continuing the AMC exclusive interior offerings, 2 are available in the '74 Matador coupes. Gucci and Cardin are out; Oleg Cassini is definitely in. The Cassini design, available only on the Brougham model, includes special jet black upholstery accented by copper floor carpeting and other trim details. Extending the Cassini touch to the exterior the special vinyl roof is also copper-colored, along with hood and body striping, rub rails and copper-

accented wheel covers. The Cassini family crest even appears on the side of the car and as inserts in the front headrests. The other special design is the Levi interior which has been well accepted on AMC's smaller car.

The new Matador completes AMC's 7-year plan to revamp its entire lineup. Watch for it in the showrooms in September and on the racetracks in the spring. You can't miss it.

G.W.



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