

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

In the last "NUMBERS" article published in the Thunder and Lightning, I mentioned there were 2 years of Hurst/Olds production that were not a happy relationship between Hurst Performance and Oldsmobile. I wrote about 1988 in the last issue and here is the story about the 1979 H/O. The information provided in this article is from the H/OCA Research Library. The majority of the information is from inner-office correspondence between offices within Hurst Performance.

By 1979, the Hurst/Olds had previously been built in 6 different production years. You would have thought the two companies would have been quite compatible. However, in 1978 while working on the new H/O, on the Oldsmobile Calais body style, tempers flared!

Oldsmobile agreed to provide Hurst Performance with a 1978 Cutlass Calais, in October of 1977. The purpose of this was to begin to design a Hurst/Olds for the model year 1979. The car provided was a highly optioned Calais with bucket seats and console and a 350cid Olds engine. This engine was not available on the standard production line. Olds did install a 350 engine for the proposal car and all of the necessary accompanying equipment in the Product Delivery Building in Lansing at the Oldsmobile Assembly complex.

A black car was delivered to Hurst Performance in Brighton, Michigan, to prepare a proposal car. The car Hurst built featured different grilles, a front air dam, Dual-Gate shifter, aluminum wheels, extended rear quarter sail panels, a wide gold side-body stripe and H/O emblems. We know of another additional prototype car that was built by Oldsmobile. Club member, Tom Wright, currently owns it.



A lot of time is needed to prepare a car with special features for production. Making special grilles and sail panels for a 1-off proposal car takes time. Figuring the costs for the production version of these items and then based on those figures and the number of cars to be built, deciding what changes might be required. Preparing spec sheets for an engine that will not be installed in another car. Press releases to get the word out to the public are important for sales. These are just a few of the obvious things that happen behind the scenes to make an H/O.

Sometime before September of 1978, Oldsmobile notified Hurst performance they did not want to use the Dual-gate shifter on the cars, they would use the standard Oldsmobile shifter. This must have seemed like a "slap in the face" to Hurst. After all their shifter was what brought them acclaim in the racing industry. An inner-office memo, on Hurst stationary dated 9-21-78, states they (Hurst) would not "quote or sell decals to them (Oldsmobile)" for the H/O program. The decision was made by both companies to scrap the project.

The media was responsible for the making of the 1979 Hurst/Olds. In the October 1978 issue of Motor Trend magazine, Oldsmobile was featured and had a multi-page article of their new line-up. The information included this announcement:

*Another long-familiar option for 1979 is the Hurst/Olds package. It is available only on the Calais coupe. Designated W-30, the option includes a 5.7-liter 4-barrel V8, automatic transmission, gold aluminum sport wheels, gold sport mirrors, console with Hurst shifter, power steering, digital clock, power brakes, reclining bucket seats, tuned suspension, sport steering wheel and full instrumentation, all wrapped up in a choice of black and gold or white and gold color schemes.*

The magazine article introducing the 1979 Hurst/Olds gave both companies the incentive to go ahead with the project.

We do not have any written information as to what happened, but the result was Oldsmobile built the 1979 Hurst/Olds completely on the Lansing assembly line. Hurst Performance provided the shifters, emblems, decals and their name. Hurst is a

registered trademark as is Olds, so to have a Hurst/Olds both need to cooperate.

A letter from Hurst Performance, dated 10-18-78, says it all. See page for the letter. In the space of a few weeks the on-again off-again project was "on".

2499 Hurst/Olds were built in 1979 on the Oldsmobile Cutlass Calais body. There were 1165 white with gold cars and 1334 black with gold cars. The cost for the Hurst/Olds option, known as the W-30, was \$2054.20.



**HURST  
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**Edward A. Toomey**  
President

October 18, 1978

Mr. M. Almquist  
Director of Purchasing  
Oldsmobile Division  
General Motors Corporation  
Lansing, MI 48921

Re: Hurst/Olds

Dear Mr. Almquist:

I am pleased that we were mutually able to resolve the Hurst/Olds dilemma.

The attached article from Motor Trend illustrates what the performance enthusiast expects in a Hurst/Olds package, which is what I attempted to convey to you in our telephone conversation.

It was a difficult way to be introduced, however, this article will verify that my only purpose was to be certain that the interest of both Hurst and Oldsmobile was protected in this unique discerning segment of the market.

I would like the opportunity to meet you personally in the near future.

Sincerely,

E. A. Toomey

cc: R. Boulter, Oldsmobile  
J. Duffy, Hurst

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