

The old grey Buick ain't what she used to be.

There was a time when maybe we didn't build your kind of car.

Times have changed.

There are Buicks coming off our drawing boards these days that would utterly destroy your faith in the established order of sporting machinery.

Tuning is what does it. Not just the engine. The whole car. What we do is take the basic elements of a car—performance, ride, handling, and styling—and tune each to the other so they work together as a balanced unit.

The prime example of our new way of doing things is the 1966 Riviera GS. It's one of our three new Gran Sports (the other two being the Wildcat GS and the Skylark GS.) Designed as a sports coupe—in the fullest sense of the term—it not only had to look the part but it also had to go, ride, and handle in sporting fashion. And, being a Buick, it had to do all this smoothly, quietly, and with a high degree of creature comfort.

Fitted under its long hood is a 425-cubic inch engine with no less than 340 horsepower and 465 lb.-ft. of torque. (Which gets laid down on the road via a

limited-slip differential with a choice of three axle ratios—3.23, 3.42, and 3.58:1.) To give you some small idea of our obsession with how well the engine is put together, we even go so far as to pump hot oil into it under pressure to check for leaks. It all feels rather like you had the world's largest precision watch up front. What it feels like when you open the throttle, however, is something else.

That takes care of moving in a straight line. But since interesting corners are the stuff that serious drivers wouldn't care to live without, we've given the Riviera GS a pretty capable suspension system. It's soft enough to smother any rough stuff you might care to throw under it. Yet, because of the suspension geometry and heavy-duty springs and shocks we've used, it's stiff enough at the same time to give you that sporting handling we were talking about a couple of paragraphs back.

If you're more than normally serious about your driving, something else we've got for the Riviera GS ought to please you: an extra-quick 15:1 power steering gear that you can order. (Now that we mention it, the power steering unit itself is standard; the car doesn't come any other way. As a matter of fact,

the Riviera GS' standard equipment list reads like most other cars' extra-cost options.)

Pikes Peak the wrong way. Now for the final part of a sporting machine: the brakes. The power-assisted system on the Riviera GS is made up of 12-inch finned aluminum drums on the front, 12-inch finned cast iron drums on the rear. We tested them by attacking Pikes Peak from the wrong direction, so to speak. Downhill. In Drive range. Over and over and over again.

The power train. Ride and handling. And styling. All tuned to each other. The tuned car.

Anything else you'd like to know? Instruments? A full complement—needles and numbers and dials and all. Seats? You've a choice. Bench seats and bucket seats are standard. Then there's a special notch-back seat you can order that converts from three-across to semi-buckets.

We've heard it said that the perfect car doesn't exist. Well, then, may we offer you the closest thing?

1966 Buick. The tuned car.

