ALL THE WAY WITH VK!

Commodore scores in the sales race, thunders home at Bathurst.

To be frank, the inevitable happened a little later than everyone expected ... but happen it certainly did.

In August, Commodore became Australia's No. 1 selling nameplate.
With registrations of 51,300 units, Commodore led the field by 245 units from Falcon, with Telstar a further 2,713 units behind.

From day one, the road to the top was littered with obstacles. Problems associated with accelerated production rates restricted launch availability. Material shortages were aggravated by the drawn-out West German strike which held up vital components, and Commodore faced significant competitive bonus activity in the mid-year period.

A closer inspection of the August result reveals that Commodore sedan led Falcon sedan sales by 674 units. All up, this gives Commodore sedan a 454 unit advantage in the April through August post-launch period. Encouraging indeed.

Market Picks Up

Also encouraging are indications that the market is regaining momentum. Following a buoyant mid-year period, August and early September sales were relatively quiet. However, we're predicting a very strong market in the final three months, strong enough to push 1984 industry sales to a record 636,000 units, which is some 20,000 units above the 1982 level.

Bathurst Hat Trick

What's a hat trick? It's rubbing their noses in it, three years in a row!

The Last of the Big Bangers took out the 1984 James Hardie 1000 in great style ... 1-2 across the line.

The Brock / Perkins, Harvey / Parsons combination wrote Commodore into the record books with yet another demonstration of all-round superiority.

In seemingly effortless fashion, the Marlboro / HDT Commodores kept on keeping on, aided by pit crew back-up that was nothing short of sensational.

It was Peter Brock's eighth Bathurst victory and the latest of a remarkable chain for Commodore. Since its 1980 debut, Commodore has won Bathurst four out of five times and filled 18 of the 25 top-five placings. (Since 1977, no Ford has completed the entire race distance).

To everyone involved ... congratulations on a ripper effort!

(See centre pages for more on Bathurst).
MEDIAROUND

Wheels, August 1984: (Camira Wagon)

"In terms of pure cornering and handling capability the Camira is clearly the group leader, as one might expect since it has the lowest build, widest tyres and best developed chassis. In most conditions it handles with moderate understeering attitudes, in the usual front-drive way, but more than most such models it points nicely, has some of the desirable chuckability usually reserved for good rear-drive models, and is as forgiving as it is predictable.

"The Camira has about as good a pedal as you'll find anywhere, its travel is reasonably short and firm, and finely progressive. The brakes are powerful enough to suit the Camira's speed and load without being too sensitive.

"So far as cargo capacity is concerned, the Camira is excellent by wagon standards. It has exceptional width between the wheel arches and the long, low floor is easily loaded, thanks to the floor being very accessible since the rear bumper is part of the tailgate."

Modern Motor, October 1984: (SS Commodore)

"... what was the new car like to drive? In a word, great. The car has such a 'together' feel about it. It's engineered, obviously, by people who know what they're doing. The torque of the V8 engine is tremendous. The car can be started from rest in second gear without clutch slip or shudder and can be changed from second to fourth gear any time once you're on the move. It will trickle down to walking pace in top and then pull away again smoothly. On gravel roads, wheelspin is available at will — in any gear.

"The handling is reassuring ... and the ride is far better than one would normally expect from suspension aimed at ultimate handing."

Motor Manual, October 1984: (SS Commodore)

"The regular VK SS looks spunky enough ... but the Group 3 looks positively wild ... the most eye-catching Commodore yet. It looks like it's don't a million miles an hour just standing still."

Motor Manual, October 1984: (Jackaroo Turbo Diesel)

"Introduced to us on the wide beach roads of (Fraser Island) ... the Jackaroo turbo-diesel proved to be a well sorted, fuss-free way to traverse that spectacular countryside. Back in dreamy, wet Melbourne it proved equally adept.

"The cabin of the turbo-diesel Jackaroo, indeed any Jackaroo, is a nice place to be. It's well equipped, reasonably well laid out ... and comfortable. The seats are good front and rear, with the added bonus of a well organised height adjuster on the driver's seat ... you cannot fault the finish ... inside and out it's excellent.

"Certainly the turbo-diesel is a civilised machine offering plenty of comfort and reasonable go-anywhere ability...."

Mirror on Wheels, September 21: (Astra)

"How good is the Astra, in the fiercely competitive small car market? It's not only the civilised hatch, as the advertisements proclaim, but the specifications level relative to the prices ... is quite generous. The Astra is among the most spacious of the front-wheel drive small car crop — and also offers above-average front and rear seating comfort. The front seats especially are surprisingly good with their side bolsters, plus a lumbar support for the driver.

"Nippiness, nimbleness, secure roadholding, ease of driving, a light, positive gearshift, good forward, side and rear vision and excellent economy are commendable virtues in this nicely balanced car ... the steering transmits very little road feel and the heating and ventilating systems are first rate. Summing up, the Astra is more than a match for the Laser...."

Australian Business, September 26: (Calais)

"The Calais represents one of the bargain luxury buys of the year. For around $20,000, you get a lot of car. The old 3.2 litre six has been given new life, with fuel injection making the Calais a hot performer. Handling is excellent. The digital instruments provide a spacy feel to the cabin ... There's a trip computer, good sound system and well-designed comfortable interior.

"It's streets ahead of comparable Japanese saloons and puts the Ford LTD in the shade.

"The West Australian", September 20: (Modified Calais)

"To look at, the test car was all luxury Calais with just a 50 badge at the rear ... a real Q car in the guise of an executive saloon ... it could be so docile about town ... but call for extra performance and it bounds away like a big cat ... whoosh.

"It is no wonder that the police have such a Commodore for their pursuit work, a machine that is the equal of all but the most expensive exotics from the Continent.

"It was very easy to get comfortable at the wheel and the electronic touch control dashboard allowed easy and instant..."
VACATIONER VALUE

It's here again ... the car that makes competitive models look under-specified and over-priced.

The 1994 Limited Edition Commodore Vacationer, packaged and posed to repeat sales successes of recent years, is a prime example of the "When you're on a good thing, stick to it" maxim.

Current television and press advertising gives 1994 buyers good reason to "stick to" Vacationer, highlighting as it does the indisputable fact that there is no other Australian-built family car or wagon that offers so many standard features or so much value for money.

Creative strategy has Vacationer substantiating the whole VK "World Class" product proposition. It centres on high feature levels (they include air conditioning, power steering and aerial, cord upholstery, centre console and storage compartment, distinctive decals and stripes) and an $800 savings benefit.

The release of Australia's best value family sedan and wagon is timed to take advantage of the holiday market and aggressively counter Falcon run-out and XF introduction.

Rodeo Ute Strategy

A "re-launch" of the Holden Rodeo Ute signals another phase of the GM-H assault on the light commercial market. Recent sound sales results (a monthly average of around 437 units since June), have shown that Rodeo Ute is a real contender in the competitive cab chassis market, and a concerted new merchandising and advertising campaign should go a long way towards increasing consumer awareness and recognition of this fact.

Extensive research has led to new positioning and marketing strategy for Rodeo under the umbrella theme: "Holden Rodeo Ute. The Best Investment on the Land."

Rodeo's practical, durable qualities as a no-nonsense, low-cost workhorse are stressed, and the campaign is focused on rural/regional growth markets.

The "ute" is traditional Holden territory ... it's ours. The Rodeo opportunities created by this ongoing campaign will help to ensure that it remains so.

Holden X-ATAL Coupe

This exciting and unique vehicle was the star attraction of the GM-H stand at the 1994 Sydney Truck Show. As newcomers caught sight of it, they'd exclaim: "What's that?"

After a minute's further inspection came the cry: "It's a Holden Ute!"

Available through GM-H Dealers, the good-looking practical, X-ATAL Coupe. Canopy for Holden Utilities is produced by Vickers Xatal in lightweight fibreglass reinforced plastic. It bolts on without complex modifications and features curved, laminated, tinted safety glass windows and lockable counterbalanced hatch.

Fitted and colour-matched to a used Holden Utility, it provides ample room for a double mattress and comes with a tent option for simple camper conversion. Great stuff!

Truck Sales Up

Things are looking good on the Isuzu Truck scene. Dick Pugsley, Manager, Commercial Operations, reports that August 1993 to August 1994 sales of 2466 units were well up on the previous year's figure of 1788. He said that sales were spread right across the Isuzu range, with top performances put in by the Isuzu S8R and JCR.

The June/July "Isuzu Experience" incentive program supported by national press advertising, saw most dealers come in well ahead of sales objectives. Isuzu Experience winners (16 dealers and partners) will soon wing their way to Hawaii for a rewarding 10-day holiday.
MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Excerpts from a September 25 speech by Mr. Ivan Deesone, Director of Materials Management, GM-H.

GM-H has had to face the most traumatic changes in the automobile industry because of its position as pioneer of vehicle manufacturing in Australia.

Our rationalisation plan, when fully implemented will see Holden's as a company with seven distinct businesses. We will be vehicle assemblers, foundry operators, manufacturers of automobile engines (the largest in Australia, and we will continue to be so), press metal manufacturers, hardware fabricators, plastic component manufacturers and manufacturers of soft trim for automobiles.

Our restructing program is right on schedule and we will achieve our objective of becoming a leaner, hunger and more efficient organisation, well equipped to survive and prosper in the decades ahead. This will be the greatest turnaround in Australian industrial history. Future challenges are clear, and they apply not only to GM-H but to the other four Australian manufacturers as well. By 1992, we must be able to produce vehicles at no more than a $7/1% cost penalty over a Japanese vehicle. The challenge is in every facet of design, testing, production, processing and any task that contributes to the company's overhead.

The increased range of CBU units that will come onto the Australian market means we must be able to respond in a timely fashion with domestic models to meet this competition. Along with this, production runs of domestic vehicles must be increased, with two key methods being product sharing and export.

I believe the Australian vehicle manufacturers can and will meet these challenges. Holden's $300 million Family II engine plant is a classic example. The half-millimetre engine has been produced, of which 400,000 will have been exported to Europe.

The Manufacturers' Group of the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries is also making significant progress in component commonisation, rationalisation of steel purchases and an industry approach to effective management and quality control. There is recognition that, in today's environment, no one company is an island: nor does one company have a patent on all the good ideas. There was a day when innovation could be gradually phased in. Those days are gone. Today, we are required by competition to bring new technology to our customers much faster. That means looking deeper and moving new ideas faster from the laboratory to the shop floor and the showroom.

As far as the sales race is concerned, I can confidently predict that the Holden record of 29 successive years as sales leader will never be broken. I can also predict that the sales leadership will not be static but will change frequently, rather as it has done in Europe over many years. GM-H is at the moment not leading in the car sales race in Australia, but in the export race. This is a race of increasing importance to the future viability of our industry. Holden's exports now amount to almost one million dollars every working day. After all, we are Australia's driving future.

How do we define reliability? It's a measure of ability to perform an intended function for a given period of time under specified environmental conditions, in a manner which meets customer expectations. In other words, it's a measure of how well our products perform to customer expectations at a given distance or time.

The measurement of reliability is currently handled by our Warranty Feedback System and by direct feedback through our National Service Network, both in terms of physical faults and customer satisfaction. Reliability project engineers are responsible for investigating field problems to identify the cause. These investigations are followed through to resolution with the department responsible, be it Design, Manufacturing Assembly or Quality Assurance.

Reliability's other functions include approval of components, preparation of national press release vehicles, direct investigation of safety-related product problems and auditing production vehicles in plant assembly for problems and identifying the cause, be it operator or process.

Reliability Department's future objectives include:

- Improving the flow of field problem information to aid diagnosis and resolution of problems.
- Establishment of a product problem data base on computer for ease of manipulation and interpretation.
- Speeding up the product problem resolution response time with the aid of the above.
- Establishment of reliability goals for future models and quantitative objectives for all aspects of the vehicle that will be measurable via the warranty feedback system for comparison of actual performance versus objectives.
- Getting Reliability into the design phase. We must be more involved in the design process to ensure that future models do not suffer carry-over problems.

Finally, our main objective is to have GM-H products the undisputed market leaders in terms of quality, reliability, performance and value for money. Reliability will certainly be ensuring that their part of this objective is met.

PRODUCT RELIABILITY:
A NEW APPROACH

Reliability Engineering Manager
Ray Borrett explains his department's function and objectives.

The GM-H Reliability Department, traditionally part of Quality Control, is now part of Experimental Engineering. This change is intended to improve Product Reliability by giving the Department closer contact with design engineers and the entire design process. It also enables Reliability to make valuable input to the design of future models at initial stages.
MOVERS

Ray Borrett has recently been appointed Reliability Engineering Manager. Originally a motor mechanic with Harry Firth, he qualified as a Mechanical Engineer and joined GM-H in 1975. Previously Proving Ground Manager, Ray also represents GM-H on the Manufacturers' Advisory Body to CAMS and represents CAMS to the M.A.B.

Doug Haste is appointed Zone Manager, New South Wales, replacing Graeme Coxon who is now Managing Director of Warrington Motors, Dubbo.
Ross Esnes replaces Doug Haste as Zone Manager, South Australia.
Berne Duke, formerly Manager, Marketing-Planning is now appointed Manager, Product Planning and Development.

New MD for New Zealand

Mr. R. (Ray) C. Halliday has been appointed Managing Director of General Motors New Zealand Limited. He replaces Mr. Dick Kirkman, now MD of GM Egypt S.A.E., a joint GM/Isuzu Egyptian venture.

FLEET TALK

HNL Performs Well

In just seven months of operation, Holden National Leasing Ltd. has proved itself a fleet force to be reckoned with. Operated by GM-H and its 200 major dealers, HNL caters on a direct basis for the leasing requirements of major fleet clients.

To date, 41 companies with significant combined fleet numbers have signed with HNL and a further 300 quotations are currently under consideration.

HNL General Manager Brian Smyth reports that the company is right on target in terms of volume and budget. Business to date has been equally divided between residual and non residual leases, with a strong call on the options of full service maintenance on fleet management. Companies appreciate being able to deal, in effect, directly with GM-H in sourcing vehicles. HNL provides a “one stop shop” for all their requirements, eliminating the problem of co-ordinating purchases Australia-wide.

HNL’s streamlined accounting procedure is yet another benefit. VK Commodore and HNL represent a winning GM-H double.

Both had their first start in March, and on the form shown so far, both look set for a sustained, successful run in the high-stakes fleet sales race.

HDT SHIFTS GEAR

It’s great to be turning out some of the most admired and sought-after vehicles in the country ... not so great when that demand effectively shrinks your previously adequate premises to sardine can proportions.

Faced with playing an increasingly desperate game of musical cars in the street outside, then shoe-horning them all inside so tight, at the close of day that drivers were forced to exit via windows, HDT Special Vehicles took the decision to shift gear.

After several months of searching, HDT General Manager John Stevenson was rewarded with the prospect of a modern facility in Port Melbourne that answered his brief in every way. Large, attractive, close to the city centre, easily accessible and with potential for future development.

353 Barte Street provides a modern workshop of 30,000 square feet. With a large office and modern showroom building, it’s almost double the size of the old North Melbourne HQ.

This new building (HDT’s third site in four years), will also house the Race Team, allowing much closer co-ordination of activities. The official opening on August 28 also took the form of a christening. As those assembled saw the covers whipped off two more good reasons for the move ... VK Commodore S5 and SS Group 3.

Both represent a unique approach to motoring. They’re personalised, high performance, high excitement machinery with the unmistakable Peter Brock signature of quality, and a whole lot of style.

With vehicle production expected to exceed 1200 over the next 12 months (representing a turnover in excess of $3 million) HDT are adopting an assembly line approach wherever possible, with related operations grouped in individual work stations to enable effective use of man power.

Peter Brock now adds the distinction of being Australia’s sixth largest vehicle manufacturer to his impressive list of achievements. We wanted to ask him how he felt about all this, but the man was too busy winning Bathurst again to ask. However, he has been heard to remark that it’s handy being able to indulge a lifelong passion (messing about in cars) and rake in the odd dollar at the same time.
BATHURST BOOMER!

Having set the scene with hard-won first and third placings at Sandown's new international circuit in early September, the Marlboro Holden Dealer Team set their sights on a third consecutive victory at Bathurst.

It was an opportunity to immortalise Commodore as the most successful car that has raced on the mountain, in this the year that farewells the "Last of the Big Bangers" before Australian Touring Car Racing's imminent change of class for 1985.

Peter Brock, despite meeting his toughest opposition, showed his superiority throughout the 163-lap, 1000 km endurance classic.

He had so much on his rivals that he finished the $107,000 race at walking speed. But Brock's leisurely finish had nothing to do with engine problems or giving the opposition a break. It was to allow his Marlboro Holden Dealer Team cars to show the crowd their domination of this premier event.

Brock crawled around his final lap of the 6.1 km circuit to give young Tasmanian driver David Parsons, sharing the second MHD Commodore with John Harvey, the chance to catch up and prove once and for all that when it comes to Bathurst and the James Hardie 1000, there is no other outfit which can match the Brock team. Parsons caught Brock with a few hundred metres to go and placed his Commodore on the tail of the boss' car to give him a 1-2 formation finish.

Such a display has not been seen at Bathurst since Allan Moffat's day of glory when he and Colin Bond made a similar formation finish in their Falcons in 1977.

The ever-present Moffat used two cars to get home in third place.

Moffat clashed with Falcon driver Steve Masterton before the first corner, damaging the cooling system, which forced the Mazda RX-7 out of the event on lap 17. Moffat had the second team car of Gregg Hansford to fall back on, although even at that stage of the event he looked beaten.
Holden fans held their breath as the Harvey/Parsons car circulated with a broken door latch at Sandown, but were relieved when a swift pit stop solved the problem.

“Our main effort was on my car, and when it went our chances went,” he said after the race. Fourth place went to Warren Cullen and former world champion, Alan Jones. The Cullen/Jones K-Mart Commodore looked to have second place at its mercy until a last minute fuel stop. This allowed Parsons through. He had driven splendidly to narrow Jones’ gap from 68 to only 5 seconds. Jones’ car would not re-start and the frustrated team spent vital seconds trying to get the machine mobile, also giving the Moffat car an opportunity to get in front.

Fifth place went to another Commodore, the Bayside Spares entry of Barry Lawrence and Alan Browne.

The cracking pace took its toll on many of the fancied contenders, through a spate of minor accidents.

George Fury, who drew pole position, saw his race go down the drain when his Nissan Bluebird blew its differential on lap 100, while Brock’s arch-rival Alan Grice crashed out of contention on lap 45.

Grice’s co-driver Steve Harrington was at the wheel of the Roadways Commodore when he collided with Gregg Hansford in his Mazda RX-7.

Harrington spun wildly and slammed into the tyre barriers on Hell’s Corner, ending Grice’s chance of matching it with Brock.

Many people said before the race that Brock’s luck would have to run out sooner or later. But Brock proved for the eighth time that luck has nothing to do with it.
World Class Reward

In recognition and appreciation of the efforts of its Dealership team, GM-H announces the inception of a special award for Dealer Market Leaders. To be presented each February, these high-polished cast aluminium plaques, mounted on matt black timber, will be inscribed with the names of Dealerships achieving leadership in their prime market areas for the previous year. Instructions read: “To be displayed with pride.”

SDS Achievers

Bairnsdale’s Big Garage is the first rural GM-H dealership to gain SDS Master Level Service Centre status.

The first Victorian metro dealership accredited as a Master Level Service Centre is Garry & Warren Smith, Oakleigh.

Gympie’s third annual "Country Music Muster", a huge success, had the added attraction of a Gemini SL as "gate prize".

The Western Australian Division of the Service Managers Club held a 26th anniversary celebration in August. A President’s Honour Board containing names of past presidents who have all made valuable contributions to the GM-H dealer network was presented.
Got Your Gear On!

Wear it with style... display it with pride; the 1984 Goodwill Range Spring Collection is very good gear indeed.

Dealers displaying the new range, which includes Lacoste track suits, cooler bags, sweatshirts and children's Ausie T-shirts, report great success... and no wonder. It's all top-quality merchandise - and our large purchasing power gives you significant savings on regular retail prices.

Clothing aside, there's something for everybody in the superlative Holden Collection. Fancy a set of "lionised" golf balls and matching golf umbrella... discreet sterling silver jewellery... a desk tidy... sports bag...?

From matchbooks up, they all serve a common purpose - to promote goodwill by promoting the Lion and, of course, your Dealership.

Further brochures on request from Marg Mouser on (03) 647 2509.

Dealers supporting the Holden Dealer Team can also order up big from the HDT Apparel and Accessories catalogue.

The summer wear includes casual shirts, T-shirts, beach umbrellas and spray jackets - plus plenty of Peter Brock-signed goodies for the kids.

Catalogues are being sent to dealerships now, or write to Lewis Brock at HDT, P.O. Box 321, Port Melbourne, 3207, if you need more.

Sandown Success

Attendance at Sandown for the Castrol 500 on September 9 was 50,000. Hugo Gen of Boyanton Motors (Bentleigh, Victoria) can vouch for that because during the day at least half the crowd trooped through his marquee! They swarmed over display cars, which included five SS Commodores, Astra and Camira. Beleaguered staff soon ran out of HDT posters, stickers, badges... even Boyanton back window stickers.

Hugo reports that, at one stage, the view from the grandstand showed more frenzied activity at the Boyanton display than at the nearby pits!

Although it represents a lot of time, effort and money, Hugo feels that this kind of promotional exercise (his third at Sandown) is worthwhile.

He plans to return next year to help celebrate yet another HDT victory.

Mouse Bites Lion

As if competing in the sales race wasn't tough enough, two Wimmera dealers have been up to their hubcaps in mice for the past nine months.

Brian Lowry of Nulawill, population 300, and partners Peter and Corrie Verbeek of Wycheproof, population 138 (hot contenders for the "Smallest Holden Dealer in Australia" title), report that the first wave of rodents rolled into their wheat country area to chomp the harvest in January. Since then, things have been only muddling.

Townspople and farmers had swarms to contend with until cooler weather and a subsequent reduction in ready tucker thinned ranks and forced the mice to develop more exotic tastes. Electrical wiring proved particularly popular, according to Peter Verbeek, who was kept busy with "nibbling" repairs and actually had to extinguish a fire caused by haywire electrics in a customer's vehicle.

Brian Lowry, once one of Australia's youngest Holden Dealers and established in Nulawill for almost 30 years, said that the mice, more than usually unwelcome so soon after the area's worst drought in living memory, are equally partial to door trims and upholstery. They're also known to cannibalise each other! All this just goes to show that if the only rodents plaguing you are of the "metal mice" variety, you're fortunate indeed.

Grey Power

Forget chocks... raffle prizes offered by the Narrandera and District Senior Citizens Club include a shiny new 300 kW Mack Superliner prime mover and no less than five Brock VK Group 3 Commodores.

Go get 'em, grandpa!

New from P&A

Smart rear side window louvres designed for Commodore and Calais reduce glare for rear seat passengers and would prove a good-looking extra on showroom display models.
GM WORLD NEWS

Popular Pulsar

In Europe, Alfa Romeo have also had the good taste to select Nissan Pulsar as their hatchback source. Receiving Alfasud mechanics and an Alfa grille, Pulsar becomes the Arna—Alfa Romeo Nissan Automobile—and sells for less than the Alfasud.

VIP Transport

Two heavy duty pickup trucks provided by GM Canada were customised as bubble top “popemobiles” for the September visit of Pope John Paul II. Sixteen GM vehicles, including four Cadillacs, were also provided for Queen Elizabeth’s tour.

Future Stars

GM Chairman Roger B. Smith has stated that the high-tech Saturn project car will definitely be followed by further “clean sheet” designs aimed at more efficient production, projects Jupiter and Venus.

“Were entering a new industrial revolution, an age when many of the technical problems we’re wrestling with will be solved, and opportunities will abound for those companies sharp enough to recognise them for what they are,” Smith declared.

A recently published US book, “The Future of the Automobile,” suggests that the trend over the next 20 years will be towards many new concepts and a proliferation of models.

Continued innovations, including the growing use of electronics, new materials and sleeker designs, will enhance fuel economy, safety and overall performance.

It challenges the conventional wisdom that energy conservation and environmental protection will dictate that the small car will become the world standard.

Manx to Manta

GM Dealer Sport scored a stunning 1-2 victory in the tough Rothmans Manx International Rally on September 13th.

Flying Scotsman Jimmy McRae brought his Opel Manta 400 in first to clinch the driver’s crown in the RAC British Open Championship, with Irshman Berte Fisher’s Opel Manta hot on his heels.

This was the climax of the six-event British Open Rally Championship, three days and 250 miles of fast and fierce action over tarmac roads on the Isle of Man.

With the 1984 motor racing season almost over, Vauxhall-Opel cars (Astra and Monza) also lead both of the top British production saloon car championships, the Monroe and Unirey series.

Roller Dollar

Wednesday September 12 was a reasonable day for west German Rolls-Royce dealer Gunther Lehmann. Just after 8 a.m. a local building contractor ordered five “winged ladies” of various models. Hot on his heels were a fitness centre operator who snapped up two Silver Spur s, and an Irish gentleman who ordered just one.

Not long after lunch, and two Bentley turbos later, Gunther had notched sales of over $1 million. Contemplating his 20% commission, he acknowledged that the day had been the highlight of his career as a car salesman.

Hatchback Style

1985 versions of GM’s European hatchbacks, Opel Kadett and Vauxhall Astra, are so progressively styled that the main competition (VW Golf 2, Ford Escort) appears positively conservative.

Streamlined products of extensive wind tunnel testing and highly mechanised assembly lines, these lighter, quieter, more luxurious and aerodynamically efficient models look set for even greater sales success.

GMNZ Assembles Suzuki

General Motors New Zealand and Suzuki New Zealand Ltd. announced in early September that they would be jointly producing a new small-engined front-wheel drive car. Both companies will market this car, which is based on original Suzuki designs, early next year.

GM Canada are also holding preliminary discussions with Suzuki with a similar objective in mind.

New Zealand Prices

Spare a thought for Holden Calais and Commodore S$ owners living in The Land of The Long White Cloud. They need $NZ14,000 to get behind the wheel of a Calais, and the S$ will set them back $NZ25,000.

Cheers for Reagan

When President Reagan gave a dedication address at GM’s new Orion Township (Michigan) assembly plant, his speech was constantly interrupted by enthusiastic applause and capped by a 45-second standing ovation. Two thousand employees at the luxury car plant heard President Reagan praise “the entire American labor movement” and the work GM has done in developing new technologies and innovative systems for integration into its products.

The Good Oil

For the first time, GM Parts is marketing its own engine oil. Over 1,000 GM Dealers now sell GM Goodwrench Motor Oil, which comes in four grades for cars and light-duty trucks.

World Production

General Motors production has now topped 238 million vehicles. That’s a quarter of all those made throughout the world. If you think that’s far out, GM also has 100% of the market in moon vehicles!
Super Truck

Biggest crowd-puller at the 1984 New Zealand Truck Show was this $250,000 Isuzu Aero 810. An aerodynamic design study, with features including full over-cab spoiler, side skirts, flush wheel covers and luxury cabin, it provides a glimpse into trucking's future.

Snow Joke

A Victorian Government photographer (non-mechanically-minded), was allocated what he assumed to be a Commodore for a snowfields assignment.

As required by regulations, he fitted chains, only to discover a little later that the car was losing traction.

Although revving enthusiastically, it remained stationary.

Opening his door and observing no movement at all from the back wheels, he assumed that something calamitous had affected the clutch... or maybe the axle...?

Light slowly dawned when he realised that the front wheels were spinning.

His labouredly fitted snow chains were on the wrong end of a Camira!

GENERAL NEWS

End of the Line

The finalisation of assembly at GM-H's Acacia Ridge (Queensland) plant took place at the end of October.


Financial considerations have forced GM-H to consolidate assembly operations closer to fabrication plants.

Shuttle Safari

A man was planning a bone-crunching 10,000km motoring holiday to the Top End and back; he would choose something tough and gutsy like a Jackaroo or Rodeo, right?

Wrong.

Rod Kidd, Prices and Budgets Manager with GM-H's Dandenong P&A Division, selected a Shuttle LT.

Now the Shuttle, although indeed a worthy, reliable vehicle, is hardly conserved Burke & Wills material; so what transpired?

Ron and four fellow Rotarians set off on June 29 and cruised effortlessly (over a route including 420km of unmade road) to Bourke on the first day.

Six trouble-free motoring days later, they hit Darwin, side-tracking for a fishing trip to the Mary River Billabongs.

Narrow bush tracks, crocs, rocky creek beds, buffalo, bumpy mudflats, 13 lb. baramundi... their Shuttle took everything in its modest stride.

After a grease and oil change, courtesy of Sutton's Darwin, the southbound Shuttle zipped through The Alice, past The Rock and into Coober Pedy before traversing Sturt's Stoney Desert perimeter to bustling William Creek (population two).

This trusty conveyance blithely forged wet and dry creek beds, emerged out of the bulldust at Marree and swept back home to Melbourne on July 14.

For the statistically minded, the Shuttle covered 9513 kms in 16 days (7759 km on unsealed roads), at an average speed of 76kms (47 mph) at 23.8 mpg.

It earned 260 kg of gear, needed no oil, water or replacements and suffered just one puncture.

Needless to say, membership of the Shuttle Fan Club has now been boosted by five.

Precision Drive

The world class Holden Precision Driving Team now numbers five with the addition of a Commodore specially set up for spectacular two-wheel driving stunts.

Sponsored by Bridgestone, the popular team puts on over 200 performances a year at metropolitan and provincial Shows and motor race meetings.

Highlights of the Commodores' precision routine include high-speed formation driving with the vehicles only centimetres apart, figure of eight circuits in which the vehicles drive between each other, and ramp-to-ramp jumps.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Keep that information coming!

Up Front encourages all dealer personnel, GM-H staff and interested readers to submit relevant news items, etc., to the address below. Include black and white photographs where possible, with subjects identified. They'll be returned on request.

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THE PORTRAIT OF A GIANT

"If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him."  
JOHN F. KENNEDY

For artist Elizabeth Monteree-Zaleski, following her vision led to an environment that most would consider an unlikely source of inspiration... the GM-H Family II assembly line at Fisherman's Bend, Port Melbourne. Her vividly realised paintings are not those of a detached observer.

Elizabeth is an assembly line employee; in her words, part of "the soul of the giant." Her fascination with the factory floor, which she finds "rich in meaning, mood and symbolism," began in 1967.

On arriving here from Poland (where she had undertaken formal art training), her first impressions were of a bank on every corner and Holdens on every street.

Not long afterwards, she began a production line job with GM-H, leaving after two years to continue her career as an artist.

She continued to paint during the 1970s, holding exhibitions and working as an art valuer.

One of her works was purchased by Gough Whitlam and now hangs in the National Gallery.

Her memories of GM-H remained strong, however, and she returned two years ago with a major project in mind... a series of production-line canvases on the romance of technology, using the Company and its employees as subjects.

"When I came here to work and started talking to people I found that Holdens was a great part of these people's lives; not only because it gave them work there and it gave them money... it gave them everything. It gave them imagination and it gave them dreams."

"Art," she says, "is one of the ways we can keep pace with technology.

"If we are to keep up with technology, it must be through the mind. We must explore it or else it will fly away from us and become mysterious and frightening."

"To make industry the subject of a series of paintings may seem unusual."

"Most paintings tend to be associated with life away from what, to most of us, is a routine and mechanical operation; they tend to focus on what we consider more beautiful; I see beauty in the workplace."

"It is a matter of how we come to perceive our working environment."

She says that she could not have painted the series by merely observing work on the factory floor.

"You have to become part of it yourself, so you know what it is to become hungry or tired; to share dreams."

The results of her labours, a series of 20 paintings entitled "The Portrait of a Giant (GM-H)" were recently exhibited in Melbourne.

Five of the paintings represent Dreams and the other 15 cover Life and Work.

At the opening of her exhibition, Elizabeth presented two paintings, "The Director" and "Dreams" to GM-H Managing Director Mr. Chuck Chapman.

For Elizabeth Monteree-Zaleski, who neither applied for nor received any sort of grant, the project is not over; nor is the job.

"The two have become independent of each other. I love the job. I love the money. Whether painting or not, I'll stay here as long as I can."