

built on the wheelbase of the Aspen and Volare compacts, and together receive a minimal facelift prior to their major transition for 1981 into the world of front-driven domestic cars.

AMERICAN MOTORS—Out of Kenosha comes the Eagle—first domestic four-wheel-drive car. The Eagle will use the Concord platform and appear in not only a station wagon version, but also in a sedan and coupe. Spirit and Concord will receive cosmetic changes. Pacer is due for one more year, resistant as its glassy silhouette is to necessary downsizing. The Pontiac-built 151-cubic-inch "Iron Duke" engine, standard on the GM-X foursome and on the Pontiac Sunbird and Chevy Monza, comes to AMC as its new standard car and Jeep engine this fall, supplanting the VW-derived 121-cubic-inch four.

VOLKSWAGEN—The year-and-a-half old Westmoreland (Pa.) assembly plant will phase in diesel-engine Rabbits and a new Rabbit pickup. A notchback Rabbit with a fold-down rear seat, code-named the Hummel, won't go into production until the '81 model year.

In the area of mechanicals, GM's use of diesel engines will expand as the V-8 gasoline era continues to wind down. The Olds-built 350 V-8 diesel will be marketed for the first time this fall in big Pontiacs and Buicks, plus some Chevy Impala and Caprice wagons. Chevy plans to delete its 250-cubic-inch six and 200-cubic-inch V-6, and opt for a new 229-cubic-inch V-6.

Buick, once the exclusive GM turbocharger division, will gain a diesel, but lose its turbo solo to Pontiac, which is ready with a four-cylinder turbo option; Buick will equip its LeSabre and Electra with a new

V-6. Olds drops its 403 V-8, as the 350 V-8 becomes GM's largest powerplant outside of Cadillac, which has a new 368 V-8 ready to replace the 425 V-8.

Sharing turbocharging with Buick next year will be Chevrolet, Olds and Pontiac. Chevy and Olds will use Buick's V-6 turbo for Cutlass and Monte Carlo, while Pontiac has developed a 301 turbo V-6 for the Firebird Trans Am, replacing the 400 V-8. Pontiac is also grooming a 265 V-8 for its LeMans and Grand Prix.

GM will expand installation of a throttle-body fuel injection system (TBFi), introduced for 1979 on the front-drive Cadillac Eldorado. The system is controlled by a microprocessor unit which constantly senses engine speed and load, and the pollutants in the exhaust.

In tandem with fuel injection, GM and eventually Ford will expand closed-loop catalytic emission systems, employing a nitric oxides (NOx) sensor and now installed on many GM models sold in California. GM plans to make the closed-loop emission system standard on all its '81 cars.

Ford has a new 4.2-liter 255-cubic-inch V-8 ready for 1980 compacts and intermediates. The 4-speed overdrive automatic transmission (FIOD) will be offered on full-size V-8 models, including the sharply-downsized Lincolns.

Ford Thunderbird and Cougar XR-7 get all-new sheet metal in '80, as well as a 15-inch shorter 108-inch wheelbase. The new mid-size cars will shed about 800 pounds and be sized between Fairmont/Zephyr and Granada/Monarch. "Zeph-mont" will share the Mustang/Capri turbocharged four-cylinder engine for 1980.

In addition, as was the case with the new Mustang and Capri in '79, the

1980 T-Bird and Cougar will share many mechanical components with the "Zeph-mont", including the strut-type front suspension and four-link coil-spring rear, plus rack-and-pinion steering. Choice of engines will start with a 200 or 250 six and the 302 V-8.

Lincoln will undergo major surgery to catch up with Cadillac, first downsized in 1977. Continental two-door and four-door models will be lightened by 1,000 pounds and reduced nearly two feet in overall length. Continental's wheelbase will be cut to 117.4 inches, while the Mark VI will be pared to 114.4 inches.

Diesel engines will expand as the gasoline V-8 era continues to wind down.

With many components being shared among Mercury Marquis and Ford LTD, the revamped Lincolns will now have as a base engine the 351 V-8, though the 400 V-8 may be offered as a limited option, if not deleted altogether by midyear.

Among Ford firsts for 1980 will be a keyless entry system, Thunderbird/Cougar plastic bumper system, LED digital instrumentation, Recaro seats and the EEC-III electronic fuel metering system. Ford will offer this fall the first manifestations of its "Ram" light-truck downsizing program, featuring both a downsized Bronco and light-duty series.

Chrysler is applying the same concept to Cordoba/Mirada on the mid-size sector for 1980, as it did to the full-sizers last fall. The corporation will modify existing platforms while stretching new skin over the mechanicals. The St. Regis/Newport/New Yorker for this year used the intermediate base, while Cordoba/Mirada turn to the LeBaron/Diplomat/Volare/Aspen shell. ■

