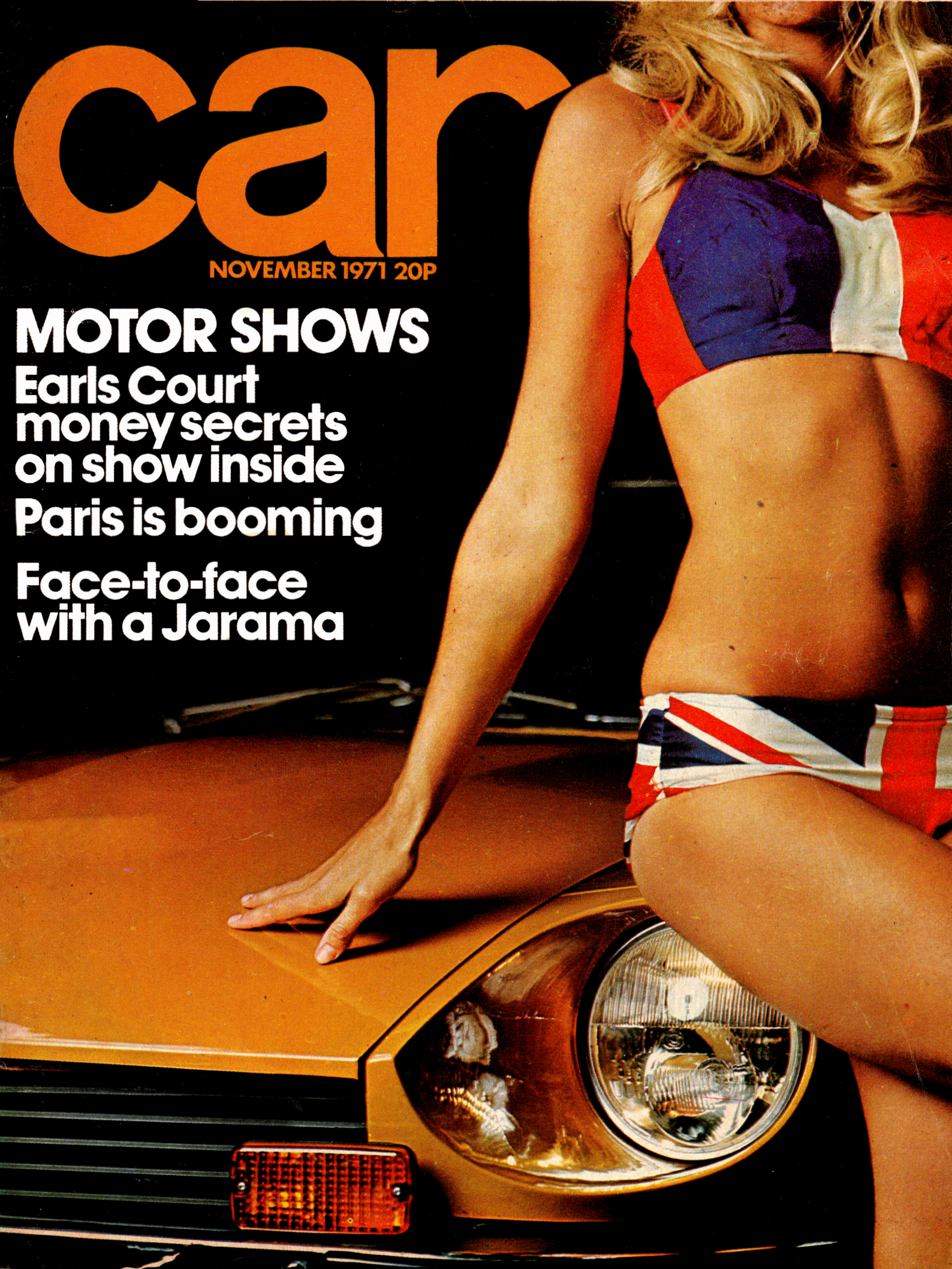


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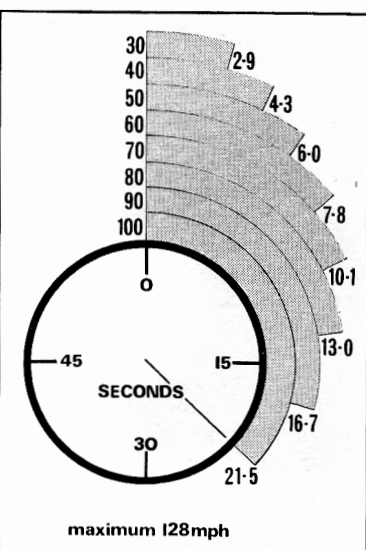
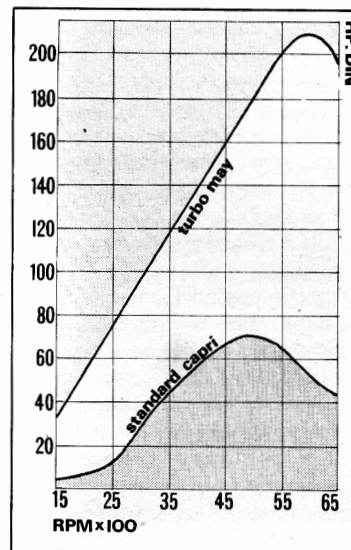


JUST THREE LITTLE FIGURES ARE sufficient to explain why the Turbo May Ford Capri (née Cologne V6) is a very different jug of schnapps indeed when matched against the more mundane cars of that title.

One such digit is a horsepower maximum, which has been lifted from 125 (DIN) to 208. A second is that full-bellied 192lb/ft of torque at 5000rpm after a steady ascent from the normal engine's best boast. But the figure to remember for this medium-capacity 2.6litre car is 12 seconds flat! That's all the time it takes for the turbocharged May Capri to surge from 60 to 100mph, using nothing but top gear. Startling elasticity is the name of Mike May's game and he plays it superlatively.

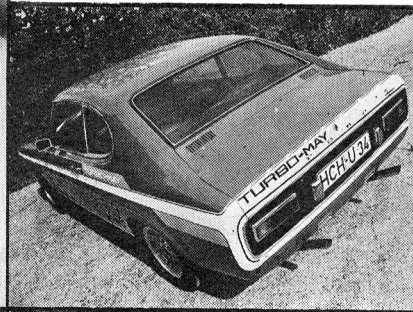
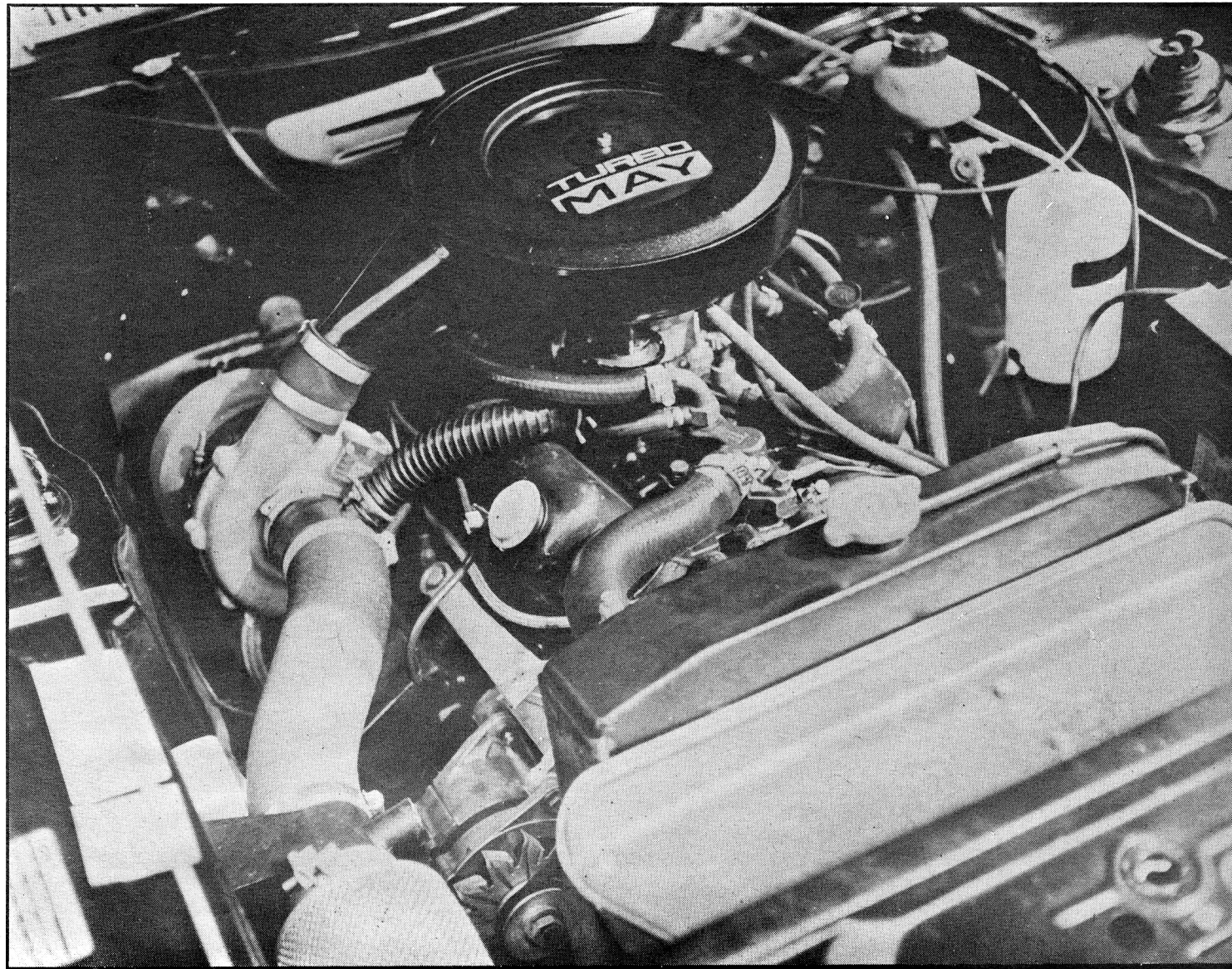
Despite the rather noticeable paint job on his private car, borrowed for our 800-mile jaunt, this can actually be a very lazy Capri indeed. It's rather like driving a typical European compact from standstill to 3000rpm in top and then dropping in a big US-style V8 for the next

Qcar **TURBO MAY** THE ULTIMATE CAPRI



3500 revs. On those dull days we all have in mid-summer, you can just as easily go direct from first gear to top while third is virtually superfluous any old day unless you are out to savour the seemingly endless push of turbo-charging. In point of fact, we ended up using all four cogs most of the time because the Capri was so eager to sweep past the motoring hoi poloi.

Consider the 15.6 second standing start quarter mile: as good or better than the factory-injected Capri RS which carries nearly twice the surcharge in Germany. What's more the May car could do much better yet if it did not have an ignition cut-out, imposed by German licensing authorities in deference to an only slightly modified 2600 GT XLR Capri chassis, not to mention the standard brakes. The normal red line is 5800 and we respected this for most driving in the belief your normal owner would do likewise for decent wear and tear, but the practical limit is 6500. At the nominal red line you get 120 in top gear and 90-



Turbo-charging is already well known to devotees of Indy and the truck industry but still a comparative mystery to many motorists. As can be seen from the May installation (far left) the equipment does not detract from underbonnet workability. The interior of May's Capri remains fairly standard (top left) and only the special paint job (left and above) explains to the innocent why they have been left for dead on the road

plus in third, with a true top speed closer to 128 if you ignore the warnings. While the Cologne RS (injected) can do very nearly as well if you accept a higher price and consumption figure, it can never offer the turbocharged car's willingness to climb through the rev range like some kind of demented monkey.

Normal cars, accelerating to their maximum are prone to do the second half of the trip more slowly than the first. The turbocharged Capri goes up to 100mph in 21.5 seconds and does so by gaining its speed very nearly as rapidly above 70 as it did below it. One example: 60mph in top equals 3000rpm. And that is where the turbocharger makes for gear changeless and quick overtaking.

Consumption, you ask, with all that power? For a given speed, say 70, the thirst of the May Capri runs less than 0.5mpg above that of the carburetted 2.6

Capri V6. Our overall 18.9mpg included several hours of 100 mph-plus motorway work and at least 5500 in all the gears all the time. If you save the boost for emergencies the car is cheap to run. But if you can resist blowing off every other Capri in town, you're Gunga Din.

Another factor of May turbo-charging as a way to stun the big-bore natives is its ease of application. May, the German-domiciled Swiss specialist, is adamant that his V6 2.6 kit won't fit your pre-war Hudson of course, but he does key each unit to a specific engine model on his own dyno. Thereafter it is an after-sales kit sold through selected Ford dealers. A couple of thousand are running around Germany and other places right now. The short, stiff crankshaft of the V6 is ideal for turbo-charging since the aim is to leave the engine basically pristine.

Assuming you remain loyal to

the V6 idea, the turbocharger can be unbolted with home tools without opening up the engine at all, and then fitted to your next car. The old model is sold off with its second buyer being none the wiser.

You need not touch any internal item to use the kit. Bearings, gaskets—even the carburettor—remain stock standard. Only the plugs are changed, for the colder Champion N2G.

The two exhaust manifolds must be swapped, of course, for May units with the turbocharger mounted directly onto the right down-pipes, while a pipe carried under the engine feeds from the left bank. The blower itself, the trunking, air filter and a welded up can atop the carburettor (made from the original air-cleaner box) complete the kit.

All this power notwithstanding, May claims it is even a cleaner engine than the original and easily comes within emissions

standards due in part to the hotter mix of fuel.

The installation is particularly neat under a Capri bonnet. The heart of May's blower success is his patented control unit which takes atmospheric twitches, temperatures, flow and revs into consideration, thereby surmounting problems which turned GM off the blown Corvair and Olds. In practice we never experienced the slightest surge or stutter on acceleration, nor when lifting off at maximum speed. There were no flat spots between 600 and 6000 revs and it refused to load up on overrun or to wet a plug in sluggish city traffic.

Our chief annoyance, but a real one, was engine overheating in 90 degree weather. May uses the standard Capri radiator, there being none other handy. After a couple of German autobahn hours over the ton it would boil out perhaps two cups of water when turned off: heat soak in

short. When it had been running harder and longer, traffic jams could push that needle very near its red segment. An oil cooler might be well worth considering.

For cold starts you simply wait a few beats while the pump fills the carburettor bowl (a la injection) and turn the key. It starts immediately every time. When the engine is well warmed up and then driven in a stop-start pattern you have to crank the starter for some seconds with your right foot clear of the accelerator pedal before it fires. Initial idle is about 1250rpm but once the unit warmed normally this drops to a smooth 600 tick-over, even after long, hard runs.

A curiosity in the car was its failure to pick up the last two or three gallons of fuel when accelerating or cornering hard, so don't run the car into its fuel reserve and then drive briskly.

Apart from its engine, which is the reason for this tale, the car

was about half standard—and that points up the real limit of turbo-charging today. The Capri chassis just can't take much tweaking. Ford lowers its own RS boy-racer model with special front links and single-leaf rear springs. Apart from looking like a dachshund, it also bottoms on pebbles. For his own transport May—Europe's first Formula Junior champion and not a man to drive gently—compromised: He used the single-leaf in back but left the front near standard which gives his Capri a drag-strip launch posture in profile. It also gives wander at higher speeds to make fast driving an adventure. Stopping was even more thrilling since the May machine was so silent at its 120mph pace that obstacles tend to lunge at one.

Those fitting a turbocharger should consider a fairly thorough chassis rehash, vented discs and/or harder pads, Bilstein shocks—and discretion in the use of the

package as a whole.

Inside, the Capri was pretty normal apart from a bucket seat for the driver, which its owner had fitted to taste, and a May-signature thick-rim, leather-covered steering wheel of slightly smaller than normal diameter. Combined with Goodyear GP tyres fitted to Cosmic wheels, this made parking a chore although the specialised rubber was appreciated at speed, where you need all the aid you can lay hands and feet on.

The cost: some £350—a fair deal when it turns your Ford into a car to be feared by the best of the BMW clan who paid somewhat more for their machinery.

If you want to know more than we have told you, the man to contact is:

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