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## STREET CLONE

Made to match Cale's '68 NASCAR Mercury, Bud Bulger's Cale Yarborough Special Cyclone is a rare pre-production street model with the 428 Super Cobra Jet.

by John Smith

**F**ord products had totally dominated NASCAR racing since the mid sixties, setting a record for total wins in one year that still stands today. As a result, any car even remotely resembling a Grand National racer was a popular item on the showroom floor. By far the winningest combination on the super speedways during 1968 was Cale Yarborough and his '68 Mercury Cyclone. The Timmonsville, SC tobacco farmer piloted his famous red and white Cyclone to victories in the Daytona 500, Atlanta 500, Southern 500, and the Firecracker 400. Cale's victories that year helped to make his Cyclone the most recognizable car in the country. Lincoln-Mercury was quick to recognize the sales potential of street replicas of Cale's Cyclone, and a nearly identical blue and white Cyclone raced by west coast driver Dan Gurney. Due to regional recognition, the blue and white Dan Gurney Specials were to be sold west of the Mississippi, and the red and white Cale Yarborough Specials were marketed east of the big stream.

Both of the "replicar" versions were to be equipped with the 351 Windsor four-barrel engine, rated at 290 horsepower, and all were to be backed

by C-6 automatic transmissions and 3.25:1 rear axles. The cars were also to have either red, white or black interiors, featuring either bench or bucket seats.

Before the Yarborough and Gurney models were introduced, Lincoln-Mercury pre-produced 50 of each for promoting the options available in the Montego lineup. The finest examples

promote options and to whet the appetite of motorsports enthusiasts for the production versions of each car.

Bud Bulger, from Louisville, Ohio, is the fortunate owner of one of the pre-production "Cale" cars. Bud bought the car from its original owner in 1976, thinking it would make a neat "driver" for the life-long Mercury enthusiast to drive back and forth to

*Cale Yarborough*  
**SPECIAL**

of Montego Cyclone CJ fastbacks were removed from the Lorain, Ohio, assembly line; loaded with options like power steering, power disc brakes, power windows, AM/FM stereo radios, etc.; and then sent back to the paint shop for the special red and white or blue and white finishes. These pre-production specials were sent to dealerships all over the country to

work. It wasn't until he started tracing the serial number that Bud realized he had something special. The DSO (District Special Order) code reads "84," indicating the home office in Dearborn reserved that particular car for their own use. Further analysis of the codes indicated that the car was originally Calypso Coral (orange) prior to the factory repaint. This was

verified when Bud found traces of orange in the trunk.

Knowing that the years of road use in Northeastern Ohio had taken their toll on the body and finish, Bud removed any door dings and had the entire car refinished in Imron polyurethane enamel, following the original "Cale" configuration, with one exception. The original versions



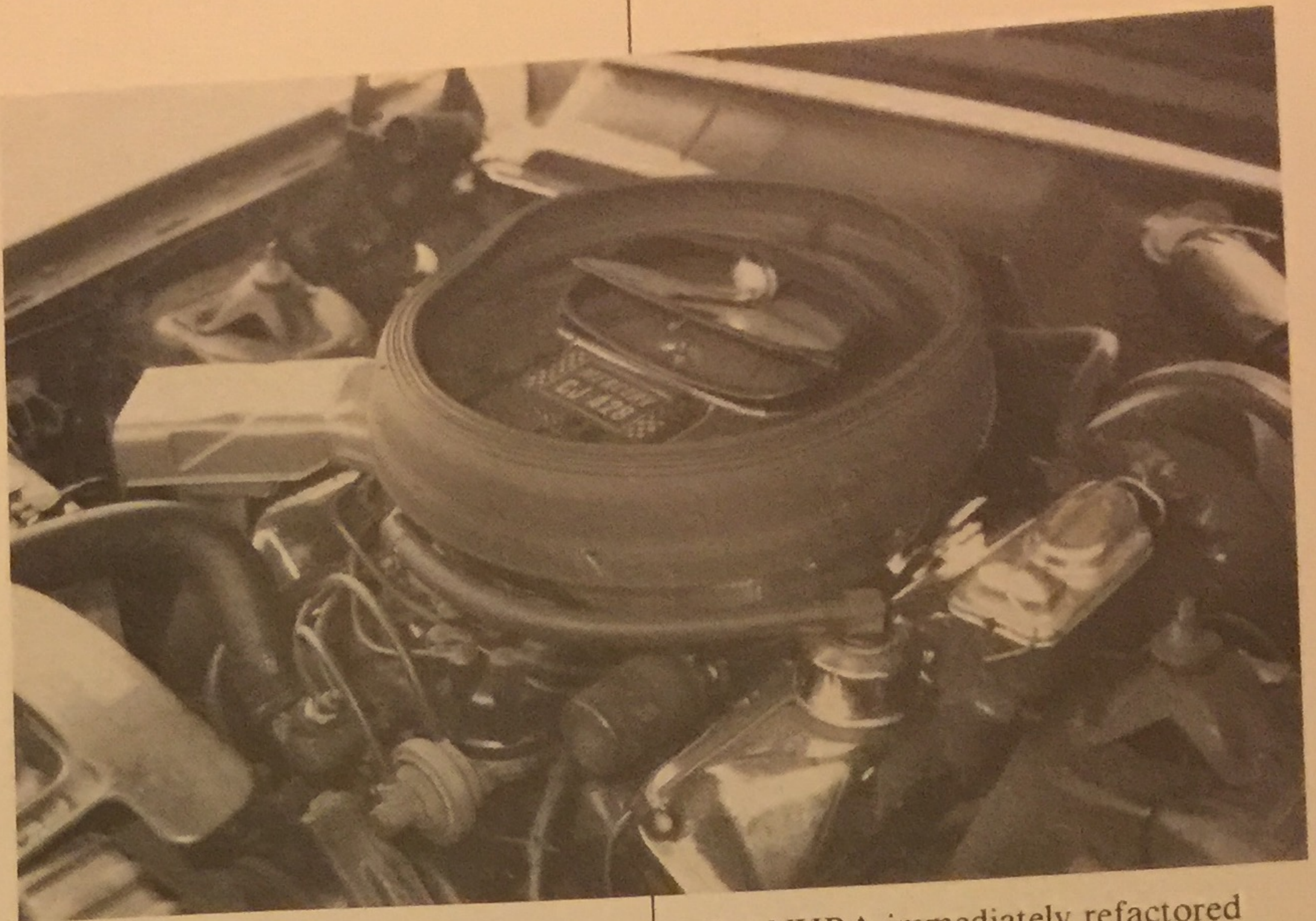
The key words to verify the authenticity of Bud Bulger's Cyclone would be "pre-production," as indicated by the "R" engine code and the July 4, 1968 production date. The car was assembled to serve as an option demonstrator, and was built many months before the regular Yarborough and Gurney cars went into production.

Bud recently showed the car at the Lorain plant where it was built in 1968, and an older worker remembered when they pulled the cars off the assembly line, painted them, and installed the options.

carried "Cyclone Spoiler" on the quarter panels, but since Cale's race car had "Mercury" in that location, that's the way Bud wanted his.

Twenty-five of the "Cale" cars had red interiors and twenty-five had white. Bud's Cyclone carries the original white vinyl, still in beautiful condition. Naturally, it features all the aforementioned options.

Separation of the production versions and pre-production versions comes when the hoods are opened. While the production Cyclone Specials were all equipped with the 351 engines, all the pre-production versions featured the awesome 428 Super Cobra Jet



engines backed by top-loader four-speed transmissions and 3.50:1 Traction-Loc rear ends. Although Ford officially rated these engines at 335 horsepower, they were so underrated

that NHRA immediately refactored them at 400 HP. With that much power under the hood, Bud's 22,000 mile example is a very quick car. Very quick. **CR**



photos by John Smith

