

# NUMBER CRUNCHING

## The codes that count on the 1979 Firebird.

BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO

**A**fter a two-year stint with the cat's-eyes front end treatment and three years with the same tail panel design, the Firebird got a much needed facelift for the 1979 season.

The new nose featured a gentler slope from the hood to the bumper tip to improve the aerodynamics. The fascia's most striking feature, however, was the illusion of a grilleless front end; the split grilles were lowered to the bumper area. Besides providing cool air for the radiator, the grilles housed the parking lamp/turn signal units and were shaped much like the contemporary Corvette. The quad headlights were retained, but they were separated and tunneled into the soft plastic nose cone. There was even a Halogen headlight option that came standard on the Anniversary T/A's. Of course, the front air dam and wheel spats had to be redesigned to integrate with the new front end. Changes to the rear spats and spoiler followed. All were made from a new plastic that was more forgiving than previous composites.

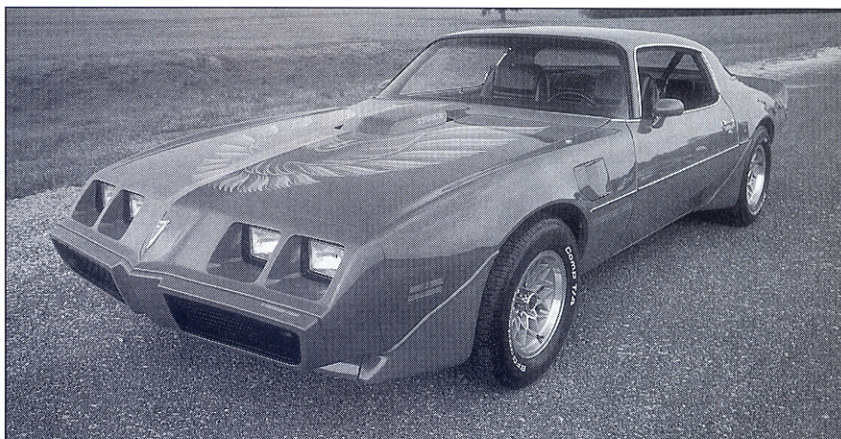
The license plate mounting point was dropped to the bumper and the gas door was styled to look like the taillight lenses, creating a full-width taillight effect in the rear. Trans Ams and Formulas got blackout covers on the lenses. Overall length increased from 196.8 inches to 198.1, and width decreased by four-tenths of an inch to 73 inches.

The T/A production surpassed 100,000 units for the first time and overall Firebird sales soared past 200,000. Nineteen seventy-nine would be the most successful year for the Firebird and Trans Am alike in the first- and second-generation bodies. And all of this with a 10-year-old design.

### TOTAL PRODUCTION

Of the T/A 6.6 engines held over from 1978, 8,326 were installed in Trans Ams and 346 were installed in Formulas. Red Bird production totalled 4,248. Of the 24,851 Formulas produced, 16,831 were equipped with the W50 Appearance Group.

Model	Man. Trans	Auto Trans	Total
Firebird base V6, V8	—	—	38,642
Esprit V6, V8	—	—	30,853
Formula	—	—	24,851
Trans Am 301 (L37)	1,590	7,015	8,605
Trans Am 301 T-Top	1,530	3,301	4,831
Trans Am 400 (W72)	2,485	—	2,485
Trans Am 400 T-Top	2,917	—	2,917
Trans Am 403 (L80)	—	48,488	48,488
Trans Am 403 T-Top	—	30,728	30,728
SE 301 (W87) T-Top	213	360	573



Model	Man. Trans	Auto Trans	Total
SE 400 (W87) T-Top	1,107	—	1,107
SE 403 (W87) T-Top	—	9,874	9,874
10th Anniversary 400	1,817	—	1,817
10th Anniversary 403	—	5,683	5,683
<u>Model Total</u>			<b>117,108</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>211,454</b>

### SERIAL NUMBERS

The VIN is stamped on a plate that is attached to the driver's side of the dashboard and is visible through the windshield. A sample serial number for a Trans Am model appears as follows:

**2W87Z9N100001**

**2**—Pontiac

**W**—Trans Am (U-Formula, S-base Firebird, T-Esprit, X-10th Anniversary)

**87**—Hardtop coupe

**Z**—400 Pontiac (A-231 Buick, Y-301 Pontiac 2-bbl., W-301 Pontiac 4-bbl., G-305 Chevy 2-bbl., L-350 Chevy 4-bbl., K-403 Olds)

**9**—Last digit of model year

**N**—Norwood (L-Van Nuys)

**100001**—Consecutive Sequence Number

### COWL DATA PLATES

A data plate was attached to the top of the cowl, just ahead of the windshield, on the driver's side. An example of a Norwood plate for a 10th Anniversary T/A reads as follows:

**Line 1:** BODY BY FISHER

**Line 2:** 79 04D 2FS87 N 123456

**Line 3:** 152 15L 16U . L

**Line 4:** A51 CC1 A31 Y89

**Line 5:** SIL 7340136

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