The Turbo-May Ford Capri gets a 70 percent power increase, but remains reliable, tractable, and economical

New Boost for Turbocharged Cars

By JERRY SLONIGER

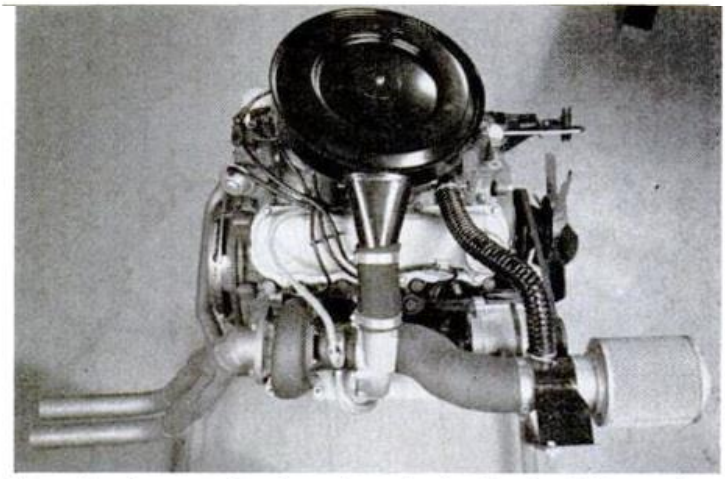
Today, turbocharging is commonplace. It is practically standard for long-haul diesel trucks to carry a turbocharger. Piston-engined aircraft rely on chargers in the reach for altitude. And a V8 with an exhaust-driven blower won at Indianapolis last year.

Yet Detroit has rejected the whole concept of turbocharged cars. Chevrolet and Oldsmobile tried them in '62, but the option disappeared in short order.

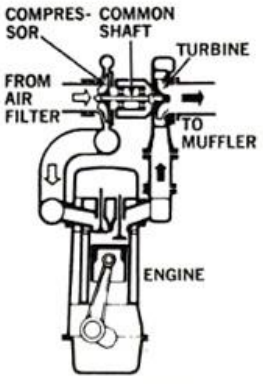
Enter Michael May, a Swiss genius, who contends he knows where GM went wrong. In his own words: "We have a basically new and different regulation system." Today he runs Turbo May Inc., making blowers in a refurbished cloister south of Stuttgart. The Turbo May unit costs around $800, but price could be brought down to $200 with larger production runs. That's pretty reasonable for a turbine that lifts the 108-hp 140-cubic-inch Ford V6 to 180 hp with little increase in fuel consumption, greater tractability, and no internal modifications whatsoever. As an add-on kit, his blower may be fitted in under six hours, including minor chassis tweaks and harder disk brake pads.

May's success story began when he combined with Germany's largest Ford dealer to produce a turbocharged version of the Capri. Hundreds have been sold. But officially, the Ford organization is against the Turbo May.

Seven turbocharged Fords were found good by their own test engineers. Still, Ford brass refused to make the kit optional. They won't even guarantee the paint job once the Turbo May unit is installed! May guarantees his own parts fully. The basic turbine is an Eberspächer diesel loader adapted to the Ford V6. May chose this engine for its sturdy, short crankshaft and compact cylinder heads.



The turbocharger is fitted on the right-hand side of the Ford V6 engine. Fresh air goes through a coarse filter before it is fed under pressure to the air cleaner, then into the carburetor.



How does it work?

Turbocharging is a process that uses an exhaust-gas-driven turbine to drive a compressor (or blower). The kinetic energy of the exhaust gas —which would otherwise be wasted —is harnessed to force more air through the intake system, and into the cylinders. Normally, both turbine and blower are mounted on the same shaft, as shown here.

No long intake tract. Ford's stock two-barrel carburetor is largely untouched, right down to leaving its automatic choke in action, though it *is* fed by a high-pressure fuel pump. May left the inlet manifold alone—"the reason for the GM failure on turbocharged Corvairs and F-85's