

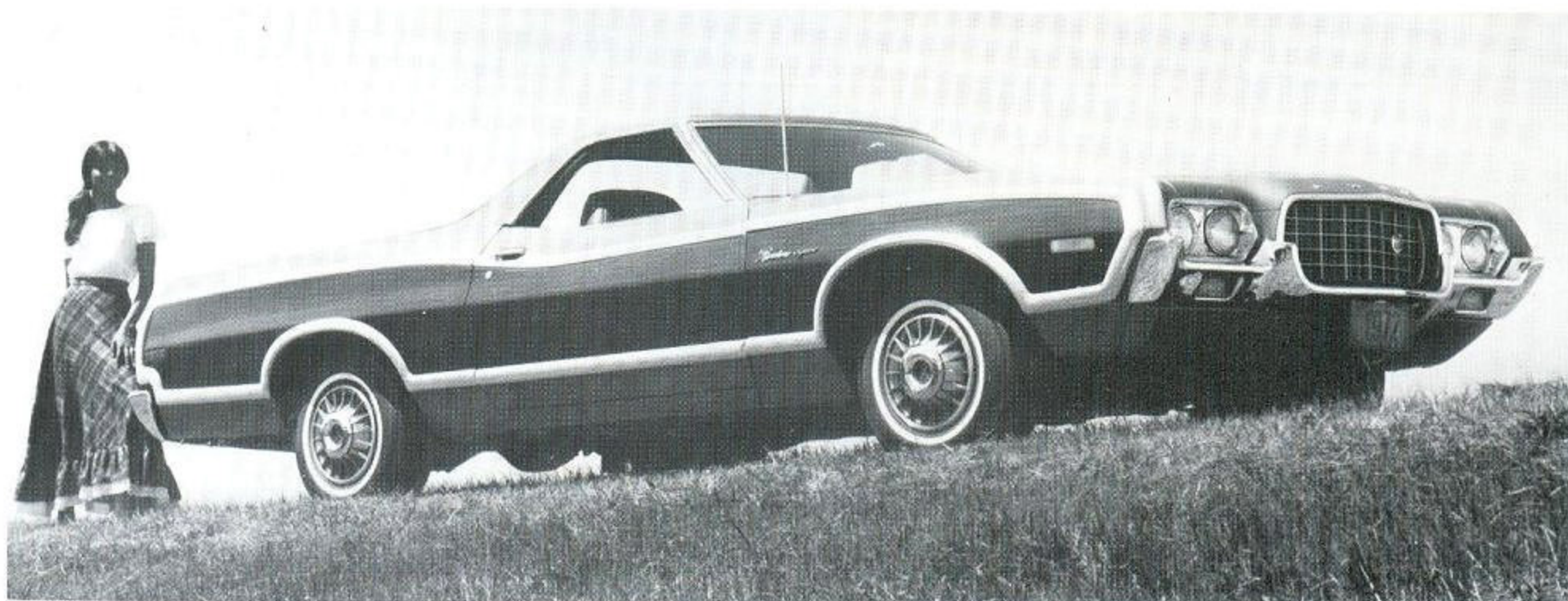
1972

In 1972, the Ranchero, like the Torino on which it was based, was completely restyled. Its overall shape was from the "Coke bottle" school of design. The very pronounced grille reminded you somewhat of the Ford-powered Shelby Cobra. The quad headlights were housed in separate chrome bezels that had essentially the same shape as the grille, only smaller. The front bumper was integrated with the grille. There was a contoured scallop on the side of the rear fender that ended just in front of the door handle. The cab had a very thin roofline. Again the door glass was like that found in a hardtop and there was no separate vent window. The rocker panels were deeply rolled under and were thus very prone to dings and scratches from rocks being thrown up by the wheels.

Tom McCahill, the famous automotive journalist, aptly described the car's overall appearance, saying it looked like "landlocked tunas sucking air." However, all in all, it was not that bad a design—many worse ones have come from the designers in Detroit!



The 1972 Ranchero GT had body striping on the sides and tailgate. (*Bill Holder*)



Factory photo of a 1972 Ranchero Squire. (*Ford Photographic*)

The '72 Ranchero is a very sought after model because of its "high performance" styling.

In 1972, Ford abandoned the unibody and sub-frame design that had been used since 1960. In its place was a more trucklike full-perimeter frame. The wheelbase was 118 inches, as on the four-door Torino models. The rest of the Torino models used a 114-inch wheelbase. The pickup box was still 6½ feet long. The tailgate, rear bumper and taillights were again borrowed from the mid-size Ford wagons. These taillights and bumper would be used on the Ranchero through 1979.

There were only three Ranchero series in 1972: The Ranchero 500 was now the base model; a GT (Gran Torino) and Squire were also offered. In advertising the pickup car this year, Ford often referred to it as a Gran Torino rather than a Ranchero. Even the base model was quite luxurious. A high-back, full-width seat was standard and the black, blue, ginger, green or white vinyl upholstery was quite plush. Color-coordinated vinyl door trim, instrument panel and deep-pile wall-to-wall carpeting were also standard.

Safety features included an impact-absorbing steering wheel, padded steering-wheel hub, armrests with recessed door handles, sturdy steel guard rails built into the doors and seat belts with shoulder harnesses for the driver and passenger. The center passenger had a regular seat belt. On the Ranchero 500 you also got a day/night inside mirror, a remote-control outside mirror for the driver, cigarette lighter, locking steering column, locking glovebox, hidden windshield wipers and flow-through ventilation.

On the exterior, there was chrome trim on the windshield, rear window, drip rail and top of the pickup box. Front disc brakes were standard and in the pickup box there were four built-in cargo tie-down bars.

The Ranchero GT was still aimed at the performance market. Ford called it "a long, lean driving machine." There was a racy, twin air scoop built into the hood. The bold side striping accentuated the GT's sporty appearance. It came in blue, silver, red, yellow or orange. The twin racing mirrors were painted to match the body color. A special perform-



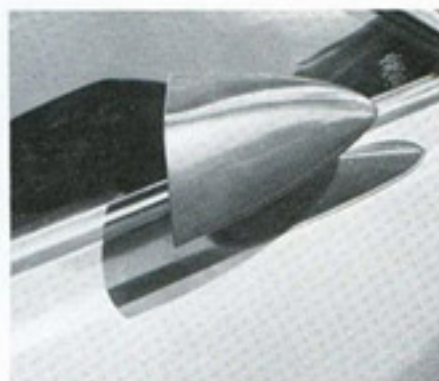
Taillight on 1972 Ranchero. The "blue dot" was not standard. (Bill Holder)



The 1972-74 dashes were very similar. This steering wheel was used through 1974. (Bill Holder)



1972 hubcap with beauty ring. (Bill Holder)



Color-coordinated racing-type mirror was standard on the GT and optional on other Rancheros. (Bill Holder)

ance/handling package was available that included high-rate rear springs, heavy-duty shocks in both front and rear, rear stabilizer bar and heavy-duty front stabilizer bar. The four-on-the-floor transmission with a Hurst shifter was offered only with the four-barrel version of the 351-cubic-inch engine. Fifteen-inch wheels, and an instrumentation group consisting of a tachometer, ammeter, oil-pressure gauge, water-temperature gauge and trip odometer were also popular options on the GT. A black decal around the power bulge on the hood could be ordered.

The luxury-oriented Squire was distinguished by its Color Match woodtone paneling on the sides and tailgate. The paneling had a new translucent effect that allowed a hint of the body color to come through. The paneling on the tailgate was also reflective to increase safety. The words Ranchero Squire were printed in script letters on the front fenders and there was a Squire crest on the grille. Inside, the instruments were surrounded by a woodtone panel

and there was a Squire plaque on the dash. An electric clock was standard.

Nineteen seventy-two saw a substantial decrease in performance, mainly because of the energy crunch and the resultant search for economy as well as new government requirements to control emissions. All Ford engines were designed to operate on regular fuel with octane ratings as low as ninety-one. In fact, Ford even omitted horsepower ratings for the engine available in the 1972 Ranchero catalog.

The 250-cubic-inch six-cylinder engine was still standard on the 500 and Squire. The 302-cubic-inch V-8 was standard on the GT. Up-rated powerplants included two- and four-barrel versions of the 351-cubic-inch V-8; a new, 400-cubic-inch V-8 with a two-barrel carburetor; and the 429-cubic-inch, four-barrel V-8 powerplant which now put out a mere 205 horsepower.

The list of options and accessories available on the Ranchero continued to grow. Most of the options listed above for the GT and Squire were also avail-



1972 Ranchero GT hood with twin-scoop design. The GT also used a two-tone argent grille. Bumper guards were options. (Bill Holder)



This 1972 Ranchero was fitted with a cargo-box cover. (Bill Holder)



1972 Ranchero GT. (Bill Siuru)

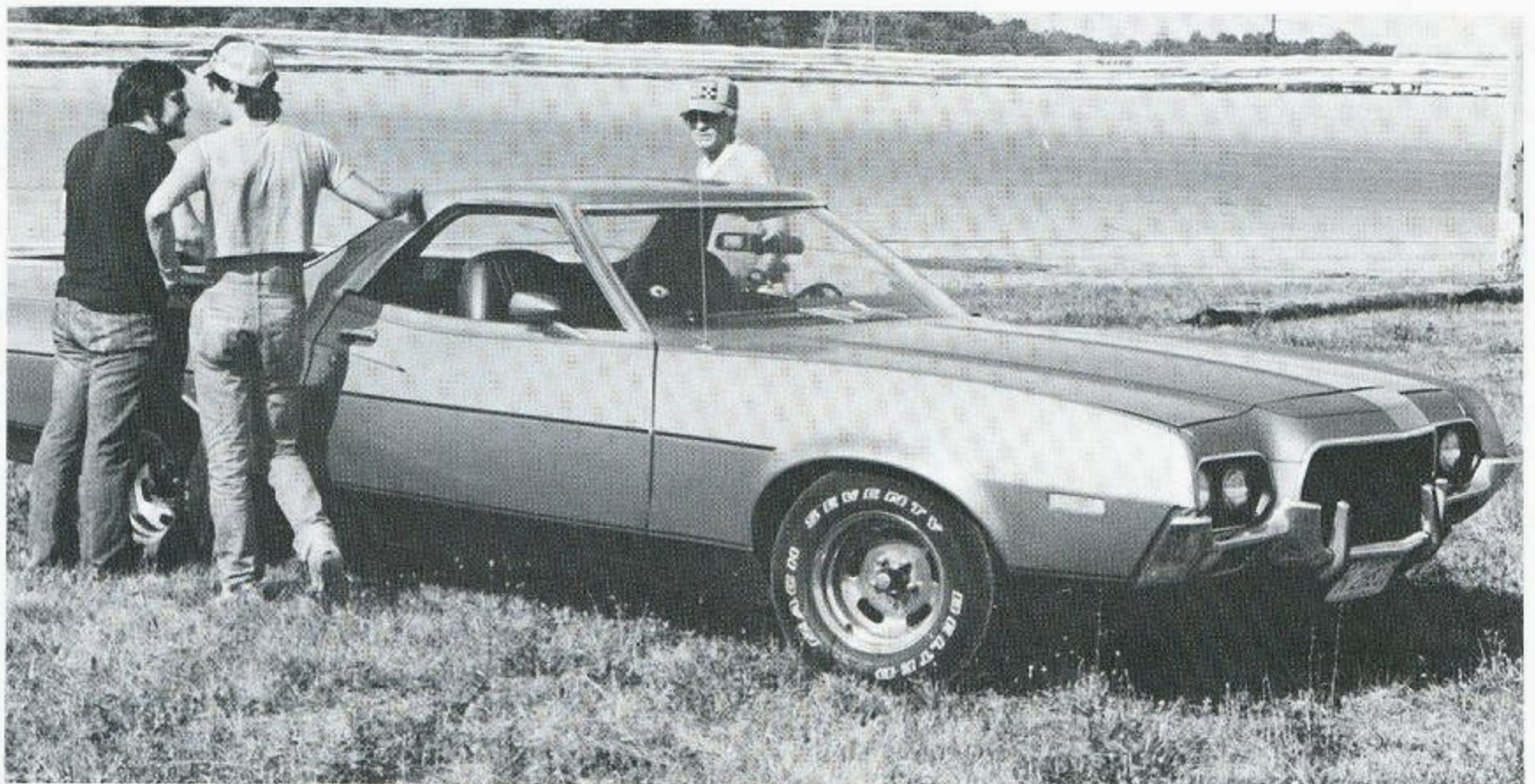
able on the other models. Naturally, power steering, SelectAire Conditioner and AM-FM stereo radios were offered. You could order a protection group for the Ranchero 500 that consisted of chrome bumper guards, door-edge guards and side moldings with a vinyl insert. Power front disc brakes were also offered. The Flight Bench Seat with fold-down center armrest and deluxe door-trim panels was available on the Ranchero 500 and Squire. You could substitute cloth upholstery for the standard vinyl in the 500 and Squire, and an optional sport cloth seat in either ginger or black was available on all models. High-back bucket seats in knitted vinyl were available on all series.

The Rim-Blow sport steering wheel was again offered. An optional vinyl roof came in black or white. SelectShift Cruise-O-Matic was required on the 351-cubic-inch two-barrel V-8 and the 400- and 429-cubic-inch V-8's, and was an option for the other engines. Fifteen-inch wheels were available to increase ground clearance. Full wheel covers were available for both fourteen- and fifteen-inch wheels, as were the hubcaps and trim rings that were standard on the GT. Mag-style wheels were offered for the fourteen-inch wheels. There were two trailer-towing packages: Class II for 2,000-3,500-pound loads and Class III for 3,500-6,000-pound capability.

Colors for 1972 included White, Bright Red, Maroon, Dark Blue Metallic, Medium Blue Metallic, Light Blue, Light Pewter Metallic, Dark Green Metallic, Medium Green Metallic, Bright Green Gold Metallic, Ginger Metallic, Medium Goldenrod, Medium Bright Yellow and Gray Gold Metallic. Also available as an option were Color Glow paints in either ivy or gold.

Nineteen seventy-two was a very good year for the Ranchero; in fact, it was the second best in Ranchero history. Sales of 1972's surpassed the previous year, a very good one, by well over 15,000 units. This was surprising, since the energy crunch was in full swing and people were starting to think seriously about economy cars. However, there were still those who wanted the performance, prestige and load-carrying capability offered in the pickup car from Ford.

PRODUCTION		
<i>Model</i>	<i>Designation</i>	<i>No. Produced</i>
97D	Gran Torino 500	23,431
97K	Gran Torino Squire	4,283
97R	Gran Torino Sport GT	12,620
		<hr/>
		40,334



1972 Ranchero 500. (Harry Dunn)