

unstoppable

THE (G)OLD BUS

Monocoque construction, inline six-cylinder engines and automatic transmission are all very impressive features for a bus that was developed almost 70 years ago.



Edition 14 of a special CV series by

APOLLO TYRES




The GM 'old-look' transit bus was introduced in 1940 by Yellow Coach beginning with the production of the model TG-3201 bus. Yellow Coach was an early bus builder that was partially owned by General Motors (GM) before being purchased outright in 1943 and folded into the GM Truck Division to form the GM Truck & Coach Division. The Yellow Coach name was retired in 1943 as GM divisions were revised during the wartime hiatus in bus production. When production of buses resumed in February 1944, the buses were identified with GM nameplates.

Production of most 'old-look' models was stopped upon the release of the GM New-Look bus in 1959; however some smaller 'old-look' models continued to be built until 1969. Approximately 35,000 'old-look' buses were built during the 29-year production run. The 'old-look' name is an unofficial term that was applied to this series of GM buses after the release of the GM New-Look, with 'New-Look' being an official term used by GM to describe their new line of buses that superseded the 'old-look'. This is an example of a retronym.

DESIGN

The GM 'old-look' bus was somewhat streamlined in appearance, similar in shape to a loaf of bread, and had windows that were generally smaller than those found on more modern bus designs produced after the 1950s. Unlike most earlier buses, the GM 'old-look' bus was built using a monocoque design, rather than a body-on-frame design, and it helped shepherd the change from gasoline to diesel-powered buses. Most 'old-look' buses were powered with the Detroit Diesel 6-71 inline six-cylinder diesel engine, the exceptions being the shorter models that were powered by the four-cylinder version of the same diesel engine, and buses that were equipped with gasoline engines. Manual and automatic transmissions were available, with the Spicer angle-drive 2-speed transmission being used on automatic-



APOLLO TYRES LTD.

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Never wary of progress, never skeptical about success,
Never scared of challenges, never tired of trying,
Every step of the way we travel with our customers,
On the "unstoppable" journey to success.

SPECIFICATIONS

Length : 35, 40 feet
 Width : 95, 102
 Height : 113 inches
 Wheelbase : 239, 282 inches
 Typical engine : DDA 6-71
 Seating : 45 or 51
 Luggage : None
 Aisle Width : 20 inches
 Front door width : 26 inches

equipped buses built prior to 1948. After 1948, the 2-speed Allison V-drive transmission was used on automatic-equipped buses. In 1940 and 1942, a small number of buses were built with electric propulsion systems instead of a transmission. The 'old-look' was available in several lengths ranging from 25 to 41½ feet, though the most common models were 35 and 40 feet long. Most 'old-look' buses were 96 inches

wide, but 102-inch wide models were available beginning in 1948. In 1946 GM began offering its Thermo-matic heating and ventilation system, and in 1952 started making suburban models (buses with larger passenger windows, high-backed forward-facing seats, and optional luggage racks). Beginning in 1953, air-ride suspension became standard on all but the smallest model buses, and in 1958, air conditioning was added as an available option.

In 1959, GM introduced its New-Look bus with the 'fish-bowl' style front window, and production stopped on all 'old-look' buses other than the 28-foot models which were built until 1963 and the 30-foot models which were built until 1969.

MODEL DESIGNATIONS

The model designations used for GM "old-look" buses consisted of a series of two or three letters followed by a series of four numbers (for example, TDH-4512). The letters and numbers gave a basic description of the type of bus as follows:

(T) denoting a transit bus (GM also built (P) parlour coaches and, beginning in the 1960s, suburban model buses were designated with an (S), however neither suffix was used for any 'old-look' models). The 'D' denoted a diesel engine, while the 'G' stood for a gasoline engine. On the other hand, 'H', 'M' and 'E' construed hydraulic (automatic) transmission, manual transmission and denoting electric propulsion respectively. The 'E' was omitted for buses built prior to 1947, except for those with electric propulsion. Two numbers gave out the nominal seating capacity and length of the bus - (27) for 25-foot buses, (31) or (32) for 28-foot buses, (35) or (36) for 30-foot buses, (40) for 33-foot buses, (45) for 35-foot buses, (48) for 37½-foot buses, (51) for 40-foot buses, and (54) or (55) for 41½-foot buses.

Almost 39,000 'Old-Look' buses were made between 1940 and 1968.