

NEW PACKARD PRESENTS A DIFFERENT APPEARANCE THAN STUDEBAKER EVEN THOUGH MOST OF THE COMPONENTS ARE DUPLICATED.

PACKARD ROAD TEST . . .

SINCE the 1957 Packard Clipper was first introduced a few months ago, there has been much comment as to whether or not it was wise to give a Studebaker-based car such a label. Many have wondered also just why it is being produced; "what does it offer that you can't get in a Studebaker?" they ask.

A road test can't answer the first question satisfactorily, but it did supply replies to the second.

But first of all, let's understand that current Clipper is not a high-luxury car priced way up in the upper-medium price class, as were its immediate forbears.

It is meant to compete with the DeSotos, Mercurys and Olds with a base price of just over \$3000.

Now, what do you get that you can't get in a Studebaker for less dough? First, better performance than any Stude but the Golden Hawk offers. And you get the extra Hawk performance at the expense of a comfortable rear seat.

Second, more luxurious interior trim and distinctive exterior styling features. True, the Clipper uses the same basic body shell as Studebaker's President series cars, but this is common practice in the industry. All cars in the medium-priced class share shells with other makes built by the same corporation.

Third is the intangible prestige factor. It can't be measured, but goes like this: When anyone thinks of Studebaker, they inevitably think of cars in the low-priced field. The fact that the new line carries the Packard Clipper name immediately identifies it as something of a bit more value, a car with a higher price tag.

Do these factors warrant purchase of a Clipper in preference to a Stude President? Depends on the individual, but the reasons quoted are exactly the same as those which influence most buyers to go into the medium-priced field rather than the low-priced.

How about the car itself? It definitely is a good one. Its performance and fuel economy are equal to most direct competitors—and better than some. The same is true of roadability and handling. Overall quality is outstanding. Ride and general comfort is good, although it is this department the Clipper might suffer slightly by comparison with its competition.

The necessarily fast re-styling job done by Studebaker-Packard was done well, in spite of the haste. The Clipperized rear fenders and tail lights at rear and the grille at front look good on the basic Stude shell.

On the road, Clippers feel solid and

controllable up to and over the 100 mph mark. They lean on corners and steering is too slow—but that's true of practically all current models. There isn't a great deal of sway and the tendency to wallow through tight turns found in cars with over-soft springing is absent. Ride is comfortable, although a shade on the firm side.

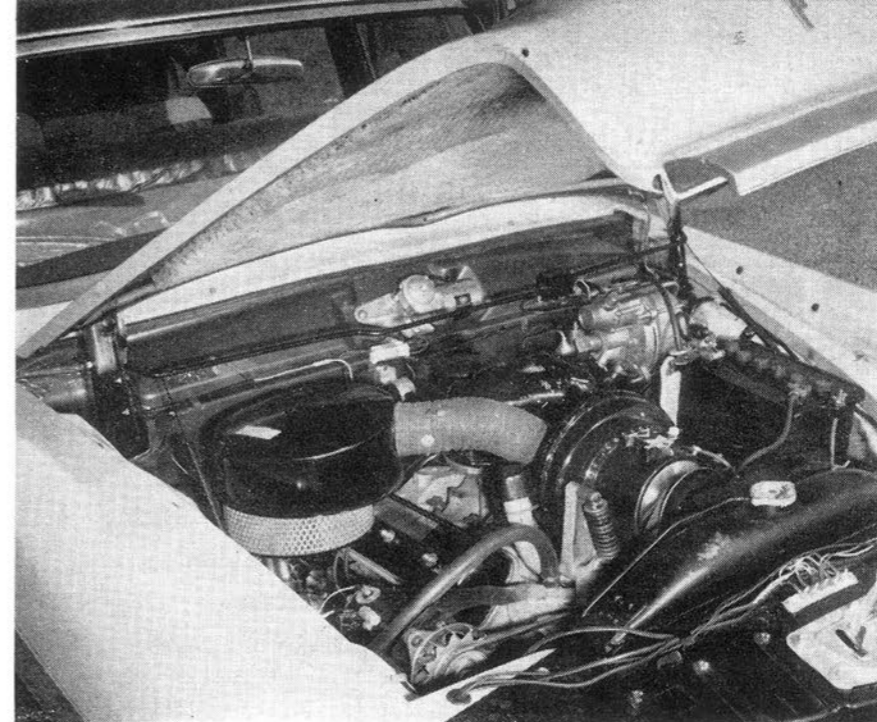
Interior appointments are in keeping with the price tag. Seats are comfortable, well-positioned. One point, however, that may sound minor but will be important to all smokers—except those who are left-handed—concerns ash trays.

There aren't any on the dash. Clipper front seat occupants have to use ash trays located in door-mounted arm rests. As mentioned, this may be no problem for left-handed drivers—but it's rough for right-handers. Could even be a safety hazard under certain conditions, because of the difficulty in locating and reaching the trays while driving.

Acceleration isn't blinding, but it's good. The 10.5 second average quoted for 0-60 mph runs includes those made using drive range only, plus some using low to start and shifting manually to drive range at 45 mph. Best times (around 10.2 seconds) can be obtained by shifting to drive momentarily at about 45 and then back into low. This holds the transmission in intermediate and makes a big difference in 0-75 runs.

Overdrive with the 4.27 axle—3.31 is standard with Flightomatic—would bring 0-60 times well under nine seconds.

Top speed wasn't checked, but 110 was seen on the unusually accurate speedometer and the Clipper was still



MC CULLOCH supercharger on Studebaker V-8 engine gives the Packard 275 horsepower with less total weight than that of last year's Packard engine, which was heaviest on market.

building up when it had to be backed off for a curve.

A word must be said about Studebaker-Packard quality in general for 1957. The company's public comments about new stress in this area isn't just talk. It's really doing a job. All S-P cars checked this year have been unusually good quality-wise. Extra emphasis, of course, is placed on Clippers.

Current Clippers have the tough job of bearing the proud and old Packard name. They definitely aren't cut from the traditional Packard cloth, but they have nothing to be ashamed of. They're sound cars with qualities that should recommend them to discerning buyers who want and appreciate what they offer. •



FIFTH WHEEL is used during road tests to assure accurate results. Factory "customizing" job on Studebaker shell makes Packard stand out from lower priced Studebaker sedans.

PACKARD CLIPPER TEST DATA

Test Car: 1957 Packard Clipper four-door sedan
 Basic Price: \$3212
 Engine: 289-cubic-inch ohv V8 with supercharger
 Compression ratio: 7.5-to-1
 Horsepower: 275 @ 4800 rpm
 Torque: 333 @ 3200
 Dimensions: Length 212 inches, width 77, height 60, tread 57 front and 56 rear, wheelbase 120.5
 Curb Weight: 3825 lbs.
 Transmission: Flightomatic (Borg-Warner) three-speed automatic
 Acceleration: 0-30 mph 4 seconds, 0-45 mph in 6.9, 0-60 mph in 10.5
 Gas Mileage: 14 mpg average
 Speedometer Correction: Indicated 30, 45 and 60 mph are actual 29, 44 and 58

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