

By Jim Lodge

AN MT RESEARCH ROAD TEST REPORT

**T**HE NEXT BEST THING to driving a new Cadillac is to ride in one—which is what we did when we first received the test car from the division's Los Angeles zone office. You're impressed immediately by the car's extreme silence; the next characteristic may not even occur to you, because of the inborn smoothness of the car—it's the unusual lack of body movement, be it sideway or up-and-down motion, as you roll along.

The almost hi-fi output of the rear seat speaker might have you completely relaxed with soothing music, slouched down in the seat with your feet stretched out in front of you (there's unlimited legroom in the rear compartment); but you really don't have to slump unless you *are* relaxing, for headroom is outstandingly plentiful. The seats are wonderfully comfortable, and their five-and-a-half-foot width gives your passengers plenty of room to move about.

That's the passenger's point of view; the driver's boils down to this: Driving-ease accessories make it physically easy to drive, but they don't make it any shorter or narrower when you want to park it.

Maybe you'll say, "If that's road testing, someone's got it pretty easy!" That *is* road testing (and it *is* pretty easy), but it's only

#### REAR WHEEL HORSEPOWER

(Determined on Clayton chassis dynamometer; all tests are made under full load, which is similar to climbing a hill at full throttle. Observed hp figures not corrected to standard atmospheric conditions)

48 road hp @ 1200 rpm and 32 mph  
83 road hp @ 2000 rpm and 54 mph  
97 road hp @ 2500 rpm and 68 mph  
122 road hp (max) at 2850 rpm and 77 mph

#### SPEEDOMETER ERROR

Car speedometer read 30 @ true 30 mph, 45 @ true 45 mph, 60 @ true 60 mph

#### TEST CAR AT A GLANCE

(In acceleration and fuel economy, the car is rated against the average of '53 cars in its own class. All other items are rated against the average of all '53 cars)

#### ACCELERATION

(In seconds; checked with fifth wheel and electric speedometer)  
Standing start 1/4-mile (reached 77 mph) 18.4, 0-30, 3.7; 0-60, 11.3; 10-30 (D4), 3.4; 30-50 (D4), 5.7; 50-80 (D4), 12.7

RATING: EXCELLENT

#### TOP SPEED

(In miles per hour; clocked over surveyed 1/2-mile)  
Fastest run 116.2, Slowest 110.2, Average 113.0

#### FUEL CONSUMPTION

(In miles per gallon; checked with fuel flowmeter, fifth wheel, and electric speedometer. Mobilgas Special used)  
22.3 @ steady 30 mph, 22.0 @ steady 45, 18.9 @ steady 60, 16.2 @ steady 75, 13.9 in simulated traffic over measured course, 16.9 overall tank average for 2058 miles

RATING: EXCELLENT

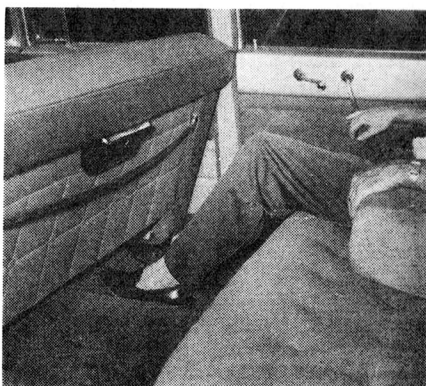
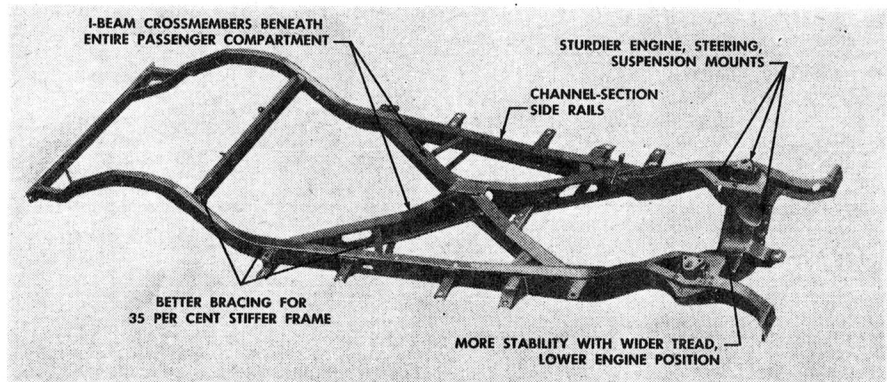
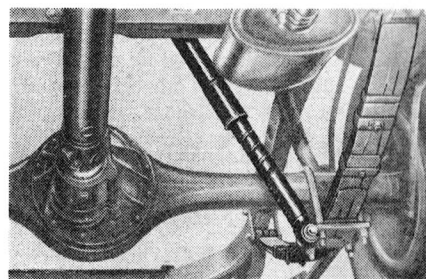
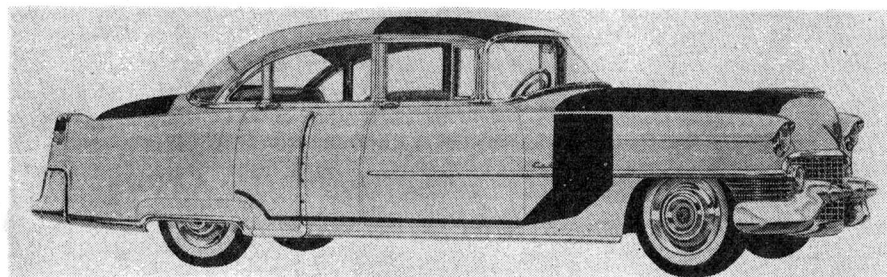
#### STOPPING DISTANCE

(To the nearest foot; checked with electrically actuated detonator)  
46 @ 30 mph, 98 @ 45 mph, 171 @ 60 mph

RATING: EXCELLENT

Advertising copywriters extoll the virtues of a comfortable, smooth ride so often that we hesitate to add our bit. But one car that has these qualities in full measure is . . .

# '54 Cadillac



A quiet, comfortable, and controlled ride, keynote of '54 Cadillac design, is the result of blending together a redesigned frame and new shock absorbers with strategically

placed soundproofing (shown in phantom photo at top left). "Living room" legroom combines with generous headroom and comfortable seats to provide a restful ride for passengers

part of it. We just wanted to start off with the things that make a Cadillac a much-desired car—roominess, a quiet, smooth ride, and comfort.

The following day, however, in 100° desert heat, the aloof machine brought its tail fins down out of the blue, dropped all formality, and became "the Caddy," or more familiarly, the "Cad"; these are the terms that pop up when conversation shifts (automatically, of course) to performance.

The '54 Cadillac has even more horsepower (upped from 210 to 230) this year; the increase comes largely from a general cleanup in intake manifold, and slightly increased valve lift, with a resulting change in valve timing. The '54 test car delivered 122 horsepower (at 2850 rpm) at the rear wheels; the '53 test car (210 bhp) produced 120 at 2800 rpm.

But the overhead-valve V8 carries no increase in displacement, torque, or compression ratio, some of the determining factors in acceleration. You may have noticed our typo in the April '54 Buyers Guide, where Cadillac's power/weight ratio should have read 19.0 instead of 14.0; the '53 Cadillac's ratio was only slightly higher at 20.2. The '54 test car, 160 pounds heavier than the '53, had the same rear axle ratio (3.07 to 1—one of the highest-g geared differentials in the industry); the cars had similar power-robbing equipment. Adding up all these factors, a pre-test estimate indicated a stalemate between the two cars.

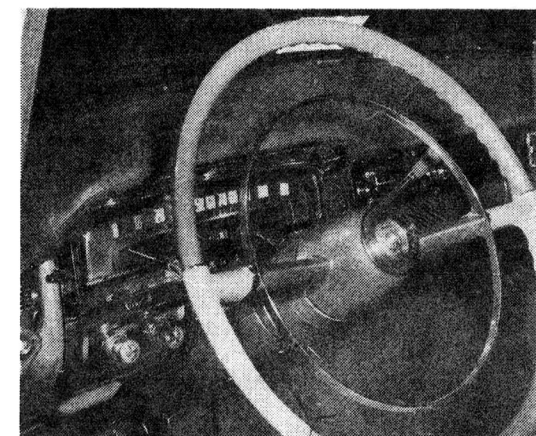
And it wasn't too far off. Compare results in these standings, with the '54 faster in all acceleration runs: Quarter-mile times, one-tenth of a second average difference; 0-60, 1.5 seconds difference; the two cars were separated by only four-tenths of a second at 50-80 mph. Top speed runs show the '53 test car out in front by a slight margin. The '54 Cadillac is the first test car to turn less than 12 seconds in *all* 0-60 runs; one run, timed at 10.9 seconds, is another "first" among all stock cars MT has tested.

Given "proving ground" treatment, the "62" sedan set a tough pace for others in its class. Being noted for a soft ride, the heavy (MT's test car weighed 4820 pounds) Cadillac is expected by many to act not unlike a tugboat in a Gold Cup regatta. Its roadability rates good, although it doesn't instill utmost confidence in the driver (largely because of the uncertain sensation of power steering, partly because of general bulkiness); but for all its gentlemanly behavior under normal conditions, it takes dips, bumps, sand traps, or what-have-you with little discomfort to its passengers and with little loss of its own dignity. In severe dips, the test car came close to scraping its jutting bumpers, but recovery was rapid. The '54 Cadillac's redesigned frame includes a wider front track, giving less mushiness to the front end and an edge over the '53 model in stability. There's no wind-wander, even at maximum speeds. It's not easy to break loose the rear wheels, even considering the '54's lower center of gravity (which does away with much of the heel-over common to past Cadillacs without making the car hard-riding or too prone to broadsliding); large, and very quiet, 8.20 x 15 tires (standard black tires are 8.00 x 15) bite into the road for added traction, and offer surprisingly little resistance to streetcar tracks—power steering takes all the fight out of the low-pressure tires' desire to stick in the grooves.

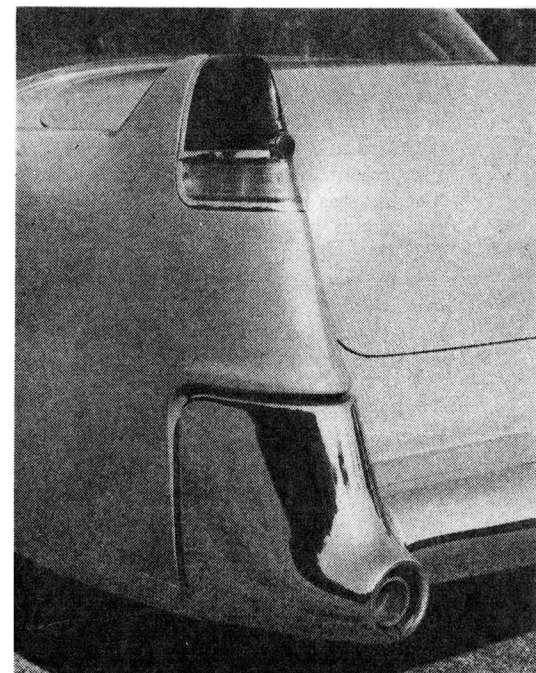
Choppy road surfaces were soaked up efficiently in the Cadillac's suspension, although some road noise broke through the car's "sound barrier." At speeds above 50, wind noise was quite high. There was some wheel bounce, but no steering wheel shock, the latter due largely to the Cadillac's unusually well-braced steering wheel column.

How is handling under these conditions? With its improved power steering system, the Cadillac is hard to criticize on a basis of actual handling ease. The easy-turning steering system continues

(Continued on page 48)



MT Research feels the neat-appearing but hard-to-read instrument panel deserves the attention paid to other details



Tail fins are a little higher, longer this year, but unmistakably Cadillac. Exhaust ports have jet-like appearance



**NOW!** *an Auto*  
*compass-*

WITH THE SUPERIOR, SUPER-POWER  
**ALNICO 5 MAGNET**



The  
NEW

*Airguide*  
**AUTO COMPASS**

... leads the field with Alnico 5, the mighty magnet that has 10 times the coercive force and 3 times the residual induction of a steel magnet ... far outlasts and outperforms steel ... gives faster, steadier readings.

... uses an 8 magnet system of aircraft type compensators which has proven most effective in offsetting surrounding metal and electrical current. Adjusts easily and quickly to finest accuracy.

... offers greatest visibility from all angles with the distinct VISI-DOME dial. Clean white details on jet black dome, calibrated to 5°.

... makes driving more care-free and more fun.



... mounts on windshield molding with a double ball and socket bracket which permits complete flexibility of adjustment for convenient reading while driving. Easily installed. Fits all cars.

... harmonizes perfectly with today's modern car interiors. Choice of two beautiful colors, soft gray or tan.

... available with or without light. Lighted model has a warm green indirect glow. With light (suitable for either 6 or 12 volt systems), \$6.95. Without light, \$5.95.

**NOW AT LEADING STORES**

Made and guaranteed by  
**AIRGUIDE INSTRUMENT CO.,**  
T-4, CHICAGO 47

*Performs accurately under all driving conditions*

## '54 Cadillac Road Test

(Continued from page 19)

its eerie lack of the "feel" that's so important to control at high speeds, but the '54 model has been given a new steering ratio of 21.5 to 1; our test car required only 3¾ turns lock to lock at the steering wheel. (The '53 had an overall ratio of 25.4 to 1 and called for five turns lock to lock.) This quick-turn-and-power-steering combination *can* get the unwary driver into trouble in an emergency maneuver at high speed, but it's a real boon to driving ease under normal conditions.

In keeping with the trend that started with the very first '54 test car, braking ability is improved over the Cadillac's '53 counterpart. Off by a foot from the 30-mph mark set by the '53, the new car came back to provide a 16-foot margin of safety over the '53 at 45 mph, and a 25-foot improvement at 60. Cadillac's new brake lining, grooved to dissipate heat more quickly, is said to provide greater lining life as well as give surer stopping power; although we experienced severe fade under extreme usage, in normal driving the brakes felt good and never approached fade conditions, indicating that when properly conditioned, or broken-in, the new brakes will probably give good service.

An interesting sidelight is the Cadillac's gas pedal-brake pedal setup: The brake pedal is fairly high, higher than most booster systems; this allows good leverage for positive application, even with the engine shut off. The accelerator pedal, too, is high off the floorboard; this gives an overall effect of having a low-set brake pedal requiring only a simple pivot on the heel from the gas pedal to the brake.

Economy remains at the high par set by last year's test Cadillac. Turning in slightly lower averages at 30 and 45 mph, the '54 test car bettered the '53's record at higher speeds by an equally slight margin. The '54 sedan turned in a remarkable "tank" average of 16.9 mpg. (A large part of this high average is the result of many miles of driving at steady highway speeds; traffic conditions normally comprise the bulk of the mileage put on our test cars.)

Instrumentation is not up to Cadillac's reputation. The speedometer position is good, and the unit is readable in the daytime; at night, however, it's impossible to make out the graduations on the bright metal dial. (In its favor is the fact that it was the most accurate speedometer checked to date.) Fuel and temperature gauges are in an unhandy position, low and toward the outer edges of the panel, where they're usually hidden by the steering wheel crossbar; their dials are small and somewhat hard to read. Warning lights substitute for oil pressure and ammeter gauges.

The Cadillac's Hydra-Matic quadrant is on the face of the instrument panel, where it's operated through mechanical

linkage from the shift lever. Highlights prance about the face of the panel during the day, but there are no reflections in the windshield either day or night because of a hood over the instruments and a plastic covering across the top of the dashboard (it's not a "crash pad," simply an anti-glare measure).

Everywhere we took our test car, people scrutinized the interior and body; many of the onlookers were quick to point out flaws common to any mass-produced automobile—an uneven gap at a body panel, or a thread out of place in the upholstery—things that would normally go unnoticed in a less-expensive car. Our own inspection disclosed few other faults. Our displeasures? The quality of the plastic dashboard covering was below the standard of other appointments; ditto the glove compartment, in both size and finish; door checks were unable to hold the doors open when the car was on a slight grade. Hard-to-reach glove compartment and ash tray, hard-to-read gauges (including the clock), and hard-to-keep-clean upholstery detract from the car's "livability."

Brightwork is of good quality, the interior appears to be assembled with care, the upholstery and floor-covering befit the car's price, and quality of workmanship throughout the interior rates high in MT's books.

Throughout the test, drivers and passengers were annoyed by gasoline fumes filling the car when the driver's windshield was opened. (A Cadillac representative tells us this is common only to some early '54s.) It's explained this way: An improperly sealed gas filler neck allows fumes to escape; with a front wing open, the vacuum created within the car draws the fumes forward from the gas tank area. The result? An unbearable, dangerous condition—but fortunately one that will be rectified immediately and without cost by your dealer. (Later model Cadillac filler necks have been resealed to prevent fume seepage.)

Bodywork is good; uneven gaps around doors and average-sized (for its class) trunk were few. File marks, a bugaboo to many of the cars tested this year, were not overly rough; metal trim was secure, and chromed brightwork seemed well above the quality common to post-Korea materials seen on some '53 and early '54 cars. There were no ripples in side panels or the top of the car, and paint was smooth and free of orange peel.

The big V8 rates about average in accessibility for its size. Valves, of course, are readily serviceable; getting at the plugs, distributor, generator, fuel pump, and other components offers problems that are typical of modern ohv V8s. Removing the huge oil-bath air cleaner is a must for easy engine servicing.

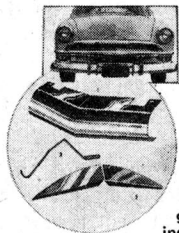
The engine ran smoothly throughout the test; it refused to heat up even under load in desert heat. We half-expected the high-compression (8.25 to 1) V8 to be

**ORDER BY MAIL FROM EASTERN & SAVE**



**1954 Ford Grille Bar**  
**\$19<sup>95</sup>**

Solid, one-piece, fits parking lights without drilling. Heavy steel, beautiful chrome.



**Grille Conversion Kit**

1949-50 FORD  
**\$7<sup>95</sup>**

Converts hood and grille without removing present molding.

Kit with standard model solid grille bar (Has center dress up molding)..... \$24.95  
Kit with deluxe model solid grille bar (No center dress-up moldings)..... \$27.95

**"CADDY" HEADLIGHT RIMS**



Beautifully chromed, replaces old rims.

**\$6<sup>95</sup> pr.**

Fits Chev. '42-53; Plymouth '49-54; Buick, '49-52; Dodge, '49-54; Nash, '49-52; Kaiser, '47-52; Olds, '48-50; Pontiac, '49-52; Ford, '49-53; Merc, '49-53; Cad., '50-53.

**Full length BULL NOSE MOLDING**

Chevrolet ..... 1949-54  
Chevrolet ..... 1940-41  
Plymouth ..... 1946-48  
Ford ..... 1949-51  
Dodge ..... 1949  
Plymouth ..... 1941  
ONE PIECE, FULL HOOD LENGTH, installs in place of original unit. Stainless steel, polished to a chrome-like luster.



Specify make and year..... **\$3<sup>95</sup>**

**PUSH-BUTTON Window Lifts**



**\$3<sup>95</sup> set**

At the touch of a button . . . windows up or down . . . instantly. Effortless big car luxury. A genuine Trico product complete for two windows. Incl. window lifts, switches and all parts. '35-54 Ford, '39-54 Mercs.

**FLARE SKIRTS**



**\$6<sup>90</sup> pr.**

All steel, prime coat. Ford '36-54; Merc '39-54; Chev '36-54; Stude '35-52; Plym, Chrysler, DeSoto '35-54.



**HIDE-AWAY REAR AERIAL KIT**

3 section beautifully chromed hide-away aerial and long lead wire for custom rear mounting.

AERIAL with 180" wire **\$8<sup>95</sup>**

Dual kit (2 aerials) 180" **\$12<sup>50</sup>**

**GENUINE CONTINENTAL KIT**



**\$42.85** Ford '49-54 Chev '49-54

Kit includes bumper extensions, full splash pan, metal tire cover, chrome hub cap, all necessary parts.

25% deposit on all orders. Prices FOB Los Angeles. Postage COD. Add 3% Sales Tax in Calif.

Send 25c for Catalog of latest Custom Accessories

**Eastern Auto**  
"CUSTOM ACCESSORIES"

3319 MT-7 So. Grand Ave.  
Los Angeles 7, Calif.

octane-critical, but it didn't "ping" under any test condition. Accessories are easy to get at, but some, like the windshield washer, are becoming more and more complicated. On most cars nothing more than a solvent bottle and a vacuum line, the unit as installed on the Cadillac approached Rube Goldberg proportions with its solenoid, wires, and hoses. (It all starts with the featherlight touch of a button on the dashboard; you have cleaner on the windshield and the wipers automatically hard at work for about a dozen sweeps—then everything stops. But it's almost too much fun to complain about.)

MT can't rate the '54 Cadillac test sedan a true all-purpose family car; children with dusty shoes would feel as ill-at-ease in the hushed interior of a Series 62 sedan as they would in the hyper-spaciousness of a Cadillac limousine—in short, you just don't wipe the family pet's pawmarks off the seat-backs of the Cadillac 62.

But for sheer comfort, and high-quality surroundings with acceleration and cruising speeds you'll never fully utilize, the Cadillac earns its reputation as our top-selling high-price-class car.

—Jim Lodge

**PRICES**

(Including retail price at main factory, federal tax, and delivery and handling charges, but not freight) SERIES 62, hardtop \$3838, four-door sedan \$3933, coupe de ville \$4261, convertible \$4404, Eldorado \$5738. SERIES 60, four-door sedan \$4683.

ACCESSORIES, automatic transmission standard, power steering standard, power brakes \$48, radio \$120, heater \$129, air-conditioning \$620, power-operated windows and seat \$124, chrome wire wheels \$325, whitewalls (exchange) \$49.

**GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS**

ENGINE: Ohv V8. Bore 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. Stroke 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. Stroke/bore ratio 0.951. Compression ratio 8.25 to 1. Displacement 331 cu. in. Advertised bhp 230 @ 4400 rpm. Bhp per cu. in. 0.69. Piston travel @ max. bhp 2653 ft. per min. Max bmep 150.3 psi. DRIVE SYSTEM: STANDARD transmission is Dual-Range Hydra-Matic, four-speed planetary gearbox with fluid coupling. Ratios: 1st 3.82, 2nd 2.63, 3rd 1.45, 4th 1.0, reverse 4.03. REAR AXLE RATIOS: 3.07 standard, 3.36 optional (standard with air-conditioning). DIMENSIONS: Wheelbase 129 in. Tread 60 in. front, 63 in. rear. Wheelbase/tread ratio 2.09. Overall width 80 in. Overall length 216<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in. Overall height 62 in. Turning diameter 45 ft. Turns lock to lock 4. Test car weight 4820 lbs. Test car weight/bhp ratio 20.9 to 1. Weight distribution 51% front, 49% rear. Tire size 8.00 x 15.

**ESTIMATED COST PER MILE**

(A complete explanation of our method for figuring estimated cost per mile is given in this issue on page 26)

**OPERATING COSTS:**

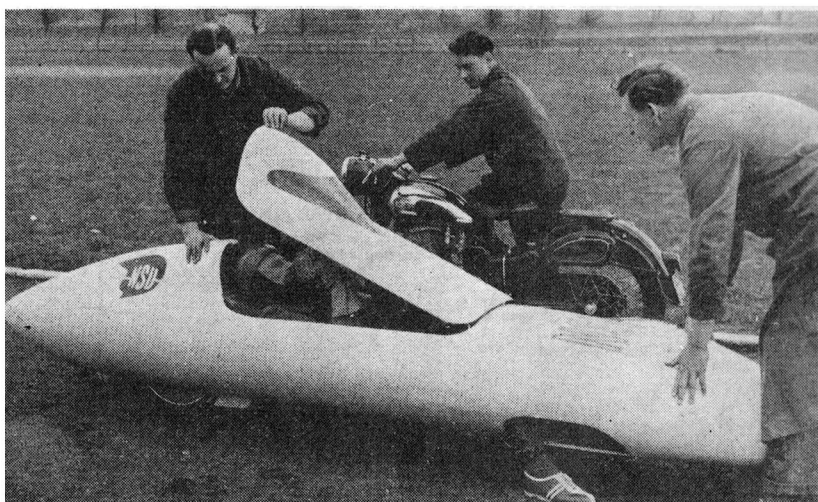
Gasoline	\$178.00
Oil	13.95
Lubrication	8.25
Oil filter	1.80
Wheel alignment and balancing	12.00
Brake relining and adjustment	20.60
Major tune-up	8.80
<b>WHAT IT COSTS PER MILE TO RUN</b>	<b>2.4¢</b>

**OWNERSHIP COSTS:**

Sales tax and license fees	\$107.20
Insurance	172.40
Estimated depreciation	1.00
<b>WHAT IT COSTS PER MILE TO OWN</b>	<b>2.8¢</b>
<b>TOTAL PER MILE COSTS IF YOU PAY CASH</b>	<b>5.2¢</b>
Finance charges	159.00
<b>TOTAL PER MILE COSTS IF YOU FINANCE</b>	<b>6.8¢</b>

**PARTS AND LABOR COST**

(These are prices for parts and labor required in various repairs and replacements. Your car may require all of them in a short time, or it may require none. However, a comparison of prices for these sample operations in various makes is often of interest to prospective owners. First price is for parts, second for labor.) Distributor \$27.85, \$2.40; battery \$29.95; fuel pump \$17.50, \$2.20; valve grind \$2.16, \$38.00; one front fender \$73.50, \$24.40; bumper \$65.50, \$2.40; two tires \$82.68. Total parts \$299.14, labor \$69.40.



**L**YING DOWN ON THE JOB above is Gustav Adolf Baum, of Germany. He was supine even while he drove this curious car (or is it a motorcycle?) to a roaring 179 kilometers per hour—that's 111.2 mph—for the flying mile along the Munich-Ingolstadt autobahn.

When Herr Baum pulled in his feet through the apertures on either side of the front wheel and his helpers shut the can-

opy over his head, the bizarre vehicle attained aerodynamic qualities so nearly perfect that, in all, 11 world speed records were demolished. A 1000 cc (61-cubic-inch) Fox engine gets credit for the 111-mph mark; with an NSU engine of just half that size, top speed for the flying kilometer was 79.7 mph.

The cigar-shaped racer is a product of the NSU motorcycle factory.