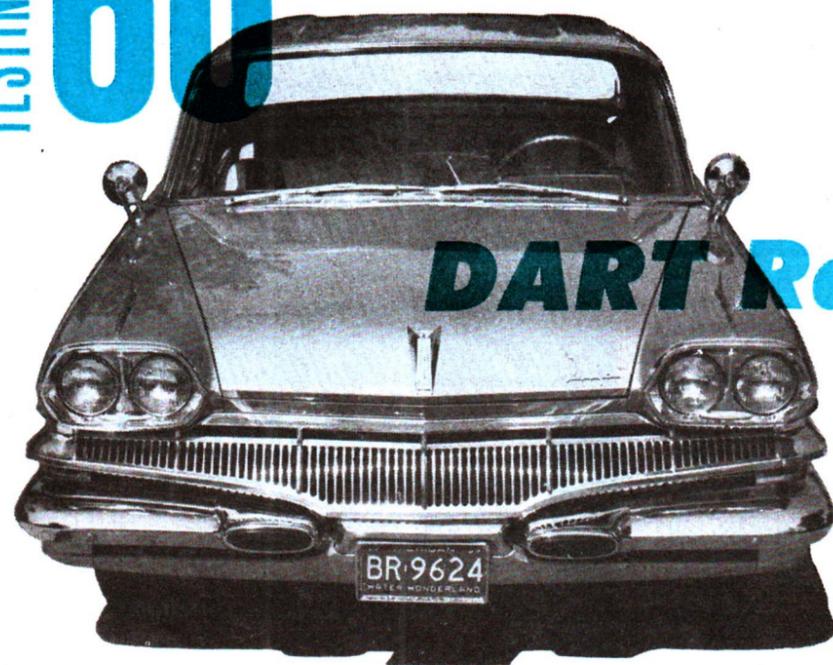


TESTING THE 60'S



DART Ram V-8

**the newest of the
big cars
ranks among
the hottest**

DART is an appropriate name for Dodge's companion line in the low-priced field. Nothing could better describe the car's ultra-responsive reaction. MOTOR LIFE's test car, a Phoenix D-500, will be one of 1960's hottest stock cars.

At first glance it might seem that the Dart would be forced to stay in a state of suspended adolescence to its bigger companion line, but the car has a personality all its own. Both Dodge and Dart share a common body shell and have the same basic lines. There is a four-inch difference in overall length and wheelbase, but the Dart's other dimensions differ only slightly. Front grille, rear silhouette and even fin treatment are more than similar on both cars.

The Dart's interior also bears a striking resemblance to other 1960 Chrysler products. Automatic transmission buttons are on the left and other control buttons on the right. Both are easy

to reach and are arranged for minimum confusion when shifting. Below these buttons are the less used controls, light switches, windshield wipers, etc. These buttons have a long, smooth knob which is so slick that it is hard to get a firm grip on them, especially when hurrying.

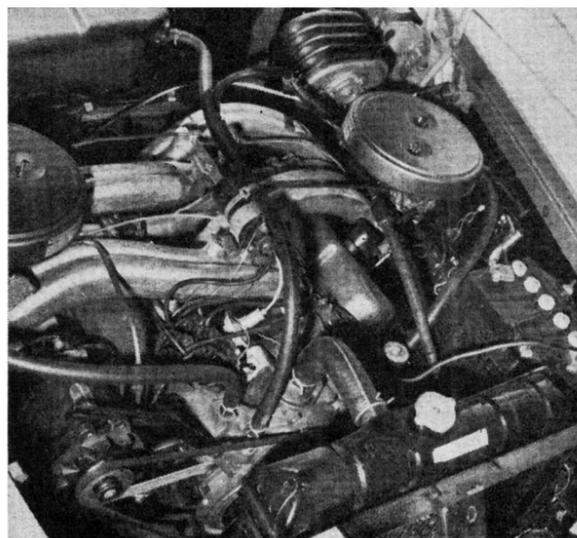
Interior room is well apportioned and the passenger compartment has plenty of space for driver and passengers. The new, higher back rest for the driver's seat provoked more comment from drivers than any other interior feature. Almost without exception the reactions were favorable and most felt it would reduce fatigue. One complaint was that it is extremely awkward to lay the right arm along the back rest for a change of position on long trips. But the consensus of opinion was that the extra support for the driver's back far outweighed this minor distraction. Another popular device was the full swing adjustment on the rear view mirror. The mirror can be swung full right for an excellent view of the traffic behind, or swung to the left to allow the driver a good view when someone is sitting in the center of the front seat.

Unit body construction has virtually eliminated one of the most common complaints about early production models. When driving there were no pronounced rattles or creaks. The car is quiet and sound, in fact, actually deadens much of the road noises and the passenger compartment is much quieter than ordinarily expected.

The version tested was equipped with the D-500 ram induction engine displacing 383 cubic inches. A detailed discussion of this V-8 was published in the November MOTOR LIFE, but basically the effect of ramming imparts a tremendous increase in torque in the low and middle rpm range.

This power was delivered through Chrysler's Torquefite three-speed transmission, a combination of torque-converter and automatic gearbox that multiplies this tremendous twist even

RAM INDUCTION is the big reason why the 1960 Dart Phoenix will be one of the year's hottest stock cars. New, but optional, power-boosting system increases torque in the middle rpm range.



further on its way to the rear wheels.

Although it takes a long time to explain the powerplant, it takes only an instant for the driver to realize the tremendous power potential. Stepping down on the foot feed doesn't give the driver a gentle push in the back—it can actually snap his neck if he isn't watching.

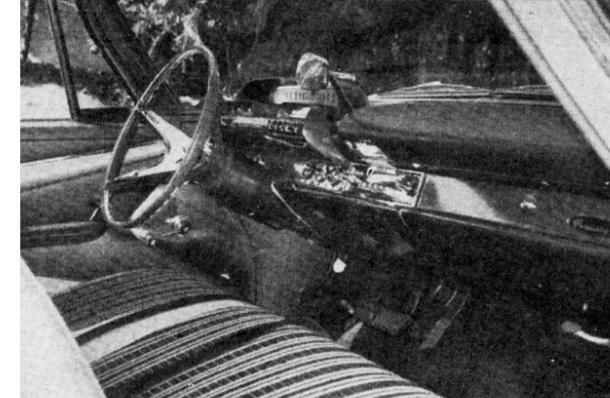
During the acceleration tests the Dart turned in a performance record that equalled the fastest stock car MOTOR LIFE tested last year. The time, zero to 60 mph in 7.8 seconds, leaves little to be desired for a stock car. Performance is not limited to the under-45-mph range although it is more noticeable at lower speeds. Ram induction is effective until the Dart reaches its top speed somewhere around 115 mph. As might be expected, the big engine has a healthy appetite for fuel.

This car was the fastest sedan that most drivers had ever driven, but it handled well in slow traffic. There was no engine roughness, and no excessive creeping during traffic stops.

With a powerplant as powerful as the D-500 it might seem that it would transmit both vibration and noise to the passenger compartment. Nothing could be less true and the car gives a smooth, comfortable ride.

Vibration from the motor is almost entirely absorbed by the well "tuned" mounting blocks made of rubber. In front they are bonded to steel plates and in the rear of the transmission to a heavy coil spring. The smoothness of the ride comes in part from the dampening qualities of unit construction, but also owes much to torsion bar suspension. In town passengers are aware of rough streets. Generally speaking this knowledge is due to hearing the tires bouncing over the bumps. Little, if any, shock is transmitted to the passenger compartment.

This model of the Dart had Chrysler's full-time power steering which gave little feel of the road. The steering has been quickened ($3\frac{1}{2}$ turns lock-to-lock) to the point where the car can literally be hurled around corners without twisting an arm or



POPULAR DEVICES, in roomy and smart interior, include full swing adjusting rear view mirror and higher back rest for driver's seat.

moving the hands on the wheel. The Dart did lean a little on corners but not to the point it could be considered a design deficiency. It was due more to the extremely sensitive steering which caused drivers to turn a little faster, and the responsive reaction to the foot feed which caused them to speed up almost invariably.

There is little a higher priced car can offer that can not be found on the Dart. The car is slightly smaller than so-called prestige models and has a weight edge which should prove advantageous not only in the performance field but in economy when a smaller engine is selected.

The model tested was the hottest, punchiest version available. Ram induction is a great performance gimmick and packs a wallop seldom found in a stock sedan. But it will be difficult to justify the extra cost to anyone but the power performance enthusiast. •



MOTOR LIFE TEST DATA

SEATING CAPACITY: six
FRONT SEAT—
HEADROOM: 34.6 inches
WIDTH: 63 inches
LEGGROOM: 46.3 inches
TRUNK CAPACITY: 29.7 cubic feet

Interior Room

TYPE: ohv V-8
DISPLACEMENT: 383 cubic inches
BORE & STROKE: 4.25 x 3.38
COMPRESSION RATIO: 10-to-1
CARBURETION: Dual four-barrel with ram manifold
HORSEPOWER: 340 @ 4800 rpm
TORQUE: 460 lb.-ft. @ 2800 rpm
TRANSMISSION: three-speed automatic
REAR AXLE RATIO: 3.31-to-1

Engine & Drive Train

Test Car

1960 DART V-8

TEST CAR: Dart Phoenix D-500
BODY TYPE: four-door sedan
BASE PRICE: \$2,719

Maneuverability Factors

OVERALL LENGTH: 208.6 inches
OVERALL WIDTH: 78 inches
OVERALL HEIGHT: 54.8 inches
WHEELBASE: 118 inches
TREAD, FRONT/REAR: 61.5 and 60.2 inches
TEST WEIGHT: 4060 lbs.
WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION: 55 per cent on front wheels
STEERING: 3.5 turns lock-to-lock
TURNING CIRCLE: 45.2 feet curb-to-curb
GROUND CLEARANCE: 5 inches

GAS MILEAGE: 10 to 15 miles per gallon
ACCELERATION: 0-30 mph in 3.1 seconds,
0-45 mph in 5.1 seconds and
0-60 mph in 7.8 seconds
SPEEDOMETER ERROR: indicated 30, 45 and 60
mph are actual 32, 47 and 61 mph
respectively
POWER-WEIGHT RATIO: 11.9 lbs. per horsepower
HORSEPOWER PER CUBIC INCH: .89

Performance