

EXTERIOR-MOUNTED SPARE TIRE DROPPED, STILL MORE POWER FOR THE '57

Thunderbird

What's New?

In spite of there being much that's new on the '57 Bird, no one can mistake the car's heritage. Styling changes are evident: grille is completely new, and being deeper, should provide better cooling; the drop-center bumper incorporates parking lights in the tips of the front while in the rear the exhaust ports are integral but without the former bulky bumper bombs. The rear deck is longer with lots more room for luggage.

Now nearly four inches shorter overall, the elongated rear deck and other improvements increase rear brake effectiveness from last year's 38 to an immediately noticed 45 per cent. The effective brake lining area is now 176 square inches and the car is much less vulnerable to fade. New 14-inch wheels drop road clearance of the frame to a scant 5.3 inches.

Special Equipment

In this category is the convertible top, since the standard lid is a plastic hardtop with or without the portholes. The latter may look weird but they increase the driver's rear quarter visibility when buttoned up. A new transistor radio has a

brainy volume device that automatically adjusts to the correct level "in synch" with your speed, and there are special antennas for the rear deck. The adjustable steering wheel is standard but power steering is extra as are power brakes and window lifts. There's also an available thinker for the optional powered seat—dial the position and the seat will return to place after it has dropped back for your entry or exit.

T-Bird Power

Engines are numerous, beginning with the 292-cubic-inch block with a two-throat carburetor and 9.1 to 1 compression ratio, developing 212 bhp and 297 pounds-feet torque (at 4500 and 2700 rpm, respectively) to a power-packed dual four-barrel carburetor job that scrounges out 285 horses from its now moderate 312 inches. Most common Bird power will be the 270-horse or 245-horse single four-throat job with camshaft grinds between the aforementioned extremes of go power. The 312-inch engines all have 9.7 to 1 compression ratio. Dual exhaust systems are standard through '57 T-Birdland. Three-speed stick shift gearboxes come with or without overdrive. Fordomatic is optional.

T-Bird on the Road

Much improved would be a mild statement. This husky fledgeling can be taken through corners that would find the tail feathers of Cousin '56 curling around toward the nose. MT's check Bird had the 245-horsepower plant, automatic transmission, power brakes and steering. Using a stop watch and allowing for a 10 per cent speedometer error, we got readings ranging from 10.4 to 11.6 from dead stop to an indicated 66 mph.

To 30 and 45 mph (indicated 33 and 49) best times were 3.9 and 7.4 seconds, good enough to outdrag most cars but just enough to whet our appetite for our full-scale test which we'll bring you later.

The new large-hooded instrument group is well shielded; should not reflect in windshield. This panel is much like big Fords' but has tachometer. The wheel falls nicely to hand and the steering lock (3.5 turns power or not) coupled with better footing makes new Bird handle very well, with but a trace of understeer.

Why Buy?

For fun, naturally; also, it's much improved.



NET RESULT of the styling changes detailed above is the much smarter, spare-tire-less Bird at right. The new front end, outward-canted fins and slotted discs combine to make a symphonic whole, new but recognizable.



SPECIAL 1957 SHOW ISSUE!

BASED ON STUDEBAKER BODY AND CHASSIS, HERE'S PREVIEW OF THE '57

Packard

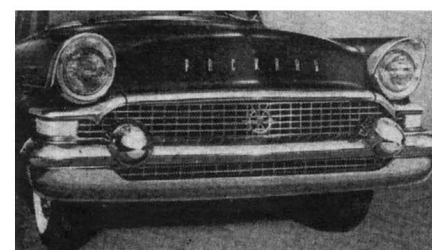
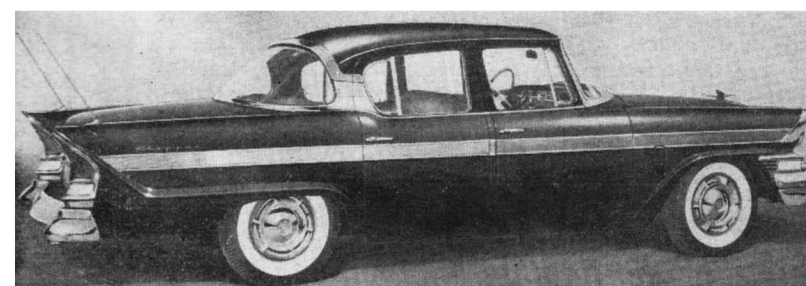
NEW YORK AUTO SHOW VISITORS were treated to a surprise preview of the 1957 Packard-Clipper. Due to production problems, the roped off car was not slated to be announced until the Chicago show, a month later. However, Studebaker-Packard directors at a recent meeting decreed that the car be exhibited

to convince a doubting public that the marque still exists.

The new car is obviously based on Studebaker body and chassis. Since the Packard engine plant at Utica, Mich., has been retooled for defense work, it is equally obvious that the car will be Studebaker-powered, most likely with

supercharger to distinguish it from the company's other sedans, which of course bear the Studebaker name.

Chief Stylist Bill Schmidt is to be commended for grafting much of the Packard tradition and flavor onto a reluctant and foreign body shell. The result is pleasing.



MOST LUXURIOUS sedan in the Studebaker-Packard lineup is this Packard-Clipper. If you like the idea of luxury in a compact shell, the combination will appeal to you, and you can bet it will be a top performer.

