



CAR LIFE ROAD TEST

CHRYSLER NEWPORT

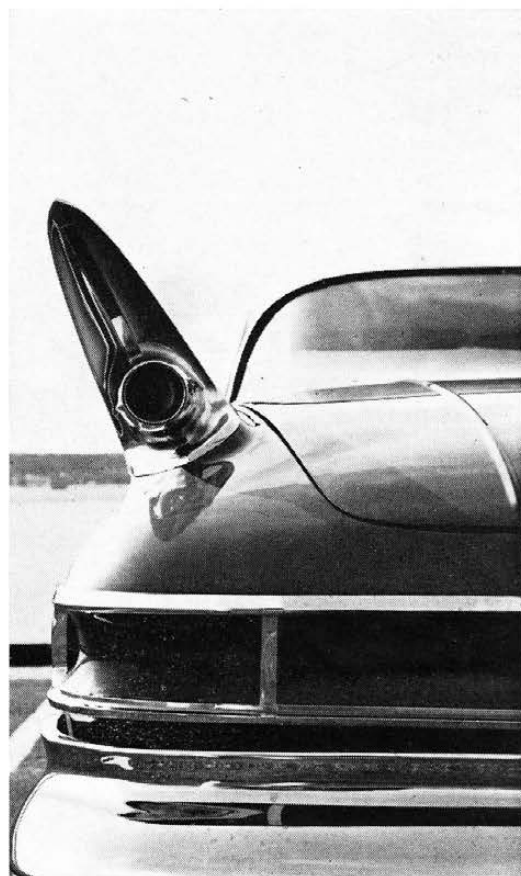
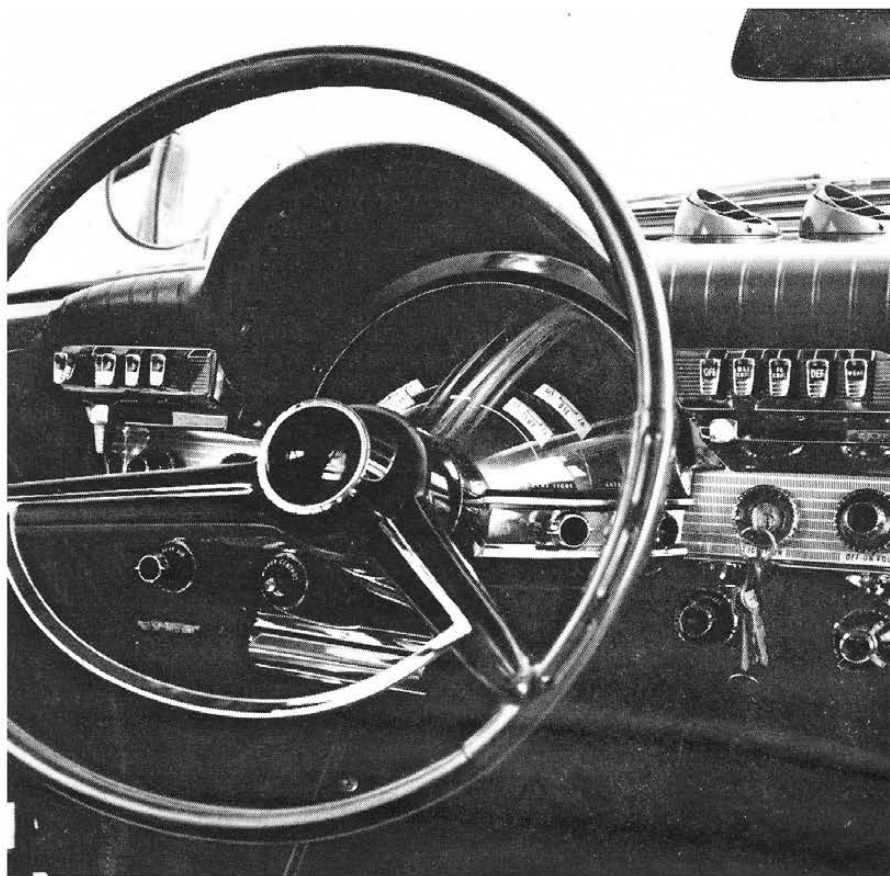
Having tested this car's strongest sales competition, the Dodge Dart, in February *Car Life*, we decided a look through the other end of the telescope was in order.

Chrysler's Newport model carries a list price that places it within \$100 of the equivalent tag on a Dodge Dart. Since these two cars seem to literally get in each other's way, sales-wise, and since we had already tested the Dart in our February issue, we felt a road test of the Newport couldn't possibly be conducted without inevitably comparing the two cars.

Rather than fight down the impulse to measure them against each other, we just let ourselves go. This made the job more interesting and, to us at least, made the results more meaningful.

The first comparison made involved over-all weight, with the Chrysler proving to weigh 355 lb heavier (as tested) than did our Dart. Although partially due to 6 in. greater over-all length and 4 in. more wheelbase, the big reason for the Newport's extra weight was the options it carried. This car did not have a kitchen sink, but everything else was there—enough to run the price up well over the \$4000 mark, even though the car started out with a base price of under \$3000.

Included in the list of optional-at-extra-cost accessories was air conditioning, at the not-inconsiderable figure of \$661.25. Another option was a device called an "Automatic Pilot" (\$80.00) that maintains vehicle speed at the figure of your choice, in spite of changes in road

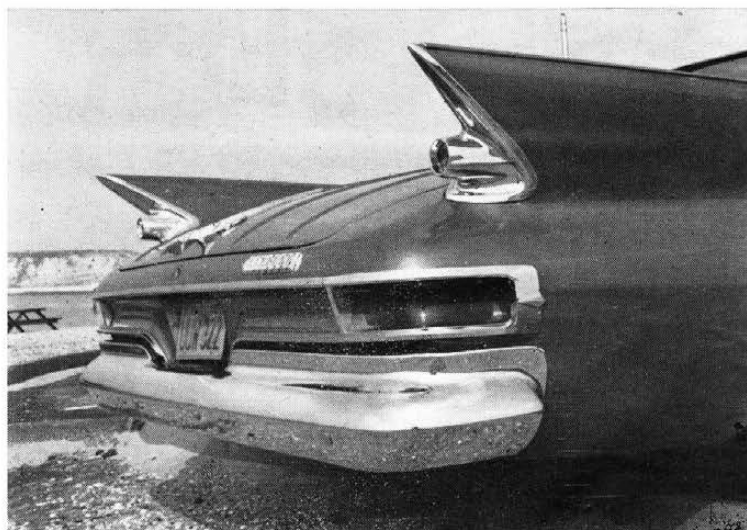
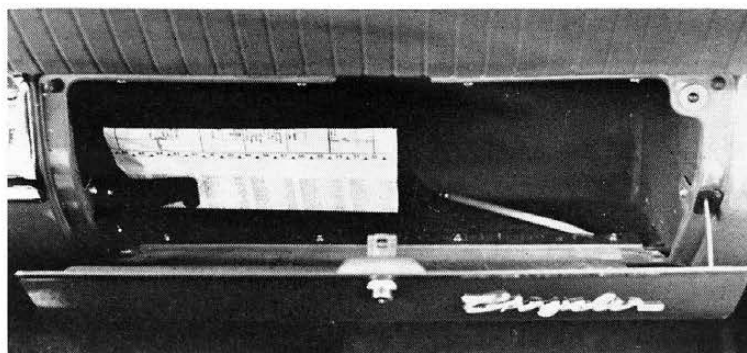


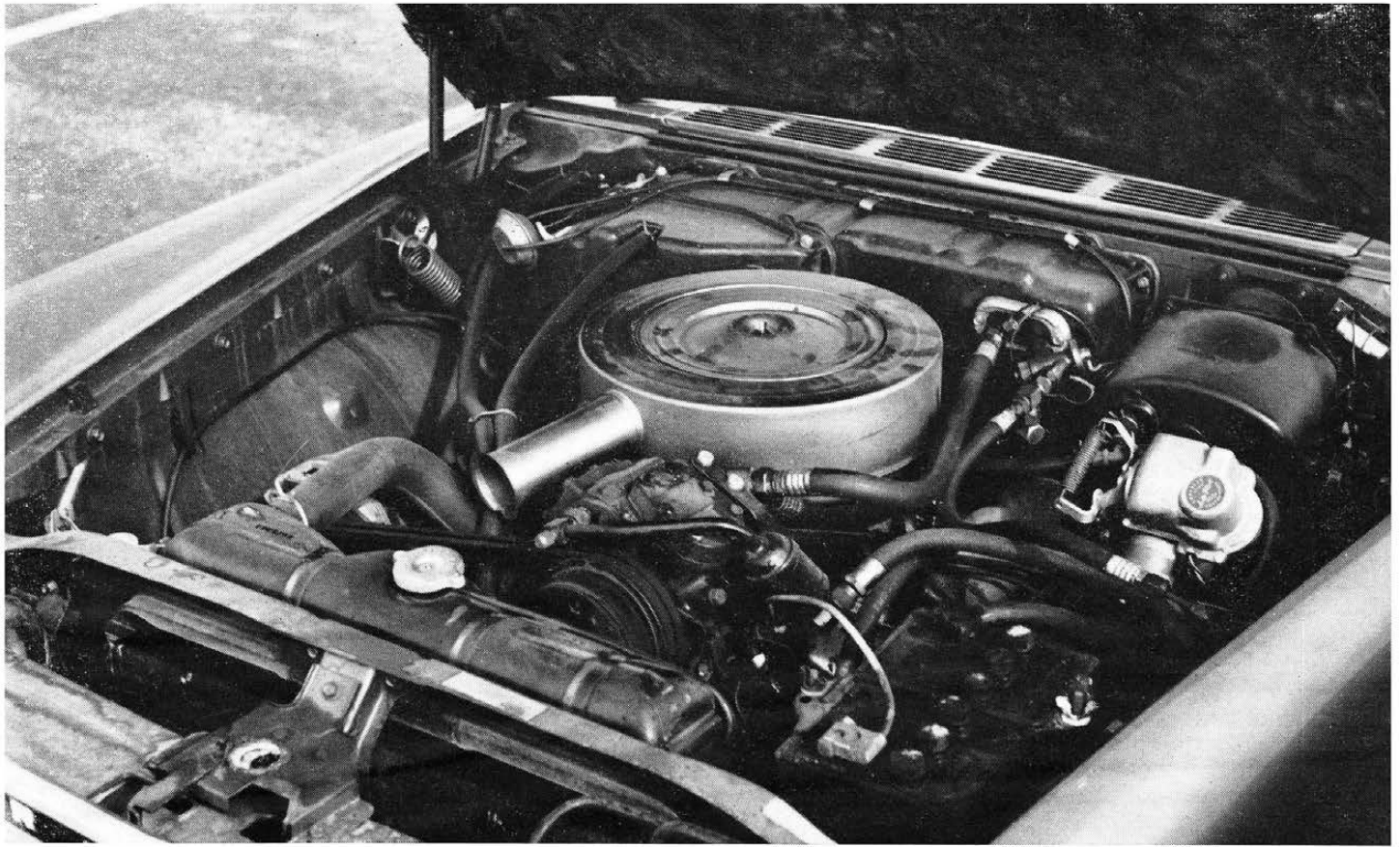
gradient. This is supposed to give you a chance to relax your right leg on long hauls but, although we put a thousand miles on this car in less than a week, we found no occasion that demanded the use of the Automatic Pilot.

At any rate, it should be obvious that whatever you want on a car in the way of an accessory, it's available on the Newport. For those who really feel they're getting their money's worth out of this sort of thing, the Newport would be a better buy at \$4280 in "loaded" form than would a "stripped" version of a higher priced car. However, our own opinion runs contrary to that line of thought. We are inclined to favor the "cheapy" model of a higher-priced line (such as the much-coveted 300-G Chrysler).

Blinding ourselves to the profusion of options, we resorted to the impartiality of scientific testing methods and devices to continue our Dart-Newport comparison. The Newport proved to have an acceleration advantage, albeit an infinitesimal one, up to 40 mph from a standing start, in spite of its greater weight as compared with the Dart. This is primarily due to its larger (and thirstier) engine: 361 cu in., compared with 318. From this point (40 mph) on up, the Dodge was the quicker of the two, arriving at the end of the standing start quarter-mile 0.4 sec earlier than the Chrysler. However, a difference of less than a half-second in elapsed time over the standing quarter could really matter only to an inveterate drag racer, and *he's* not going to buy a Chrysler Newport as long as that firm produces the 300-G!

With the Dart getting the edge on pep, slight as it was, we thought the opposite might prove true of economy, but found that while there's no substitute for cubic inches where performance is concerned, the *lack* is equally decisive when economy is the object. The smaller-engined Dart topped out at 19 miles per gallon, although a more





frequently encountered consumption was down around 15. The Newport ran consistently in the 14 mpg bracket, and on the particular tankful that included our acceleration tests, dropped all the way down to 11 mpg.

Another axiom regarding automobiles that has been around at least as long as the one about cubic inches, concerns the ingredients required for a good-riding car—weight and wheelbase. The Chrysler Newport has an abundance of both, and therefore it was no surprise to us that it did a better job of “road flattening” than did our previously tested Dodge Dart. But we did find one fly in the ointment: the shock absorbers. The Newport we road tested had the saddest set of shocks we have ever encountered on a car with so few miles on its odometer. Although this car was an alumnus of strenuous road testing courses by other publications, there’s no reason why, no matter how severe the abuse, shocks should lose effectiveness with so little mileage on the car.

The effect of these weak-sister shocks on the ride and handling of this Newport was drastic—the car would take three full oscillations to damp out torsion bar wind-up from front end dive after a hard stop. Equally slow returns to normalcy were encountered when crossing dips at anything over an “Aunt Minny” pace. In view of this, we’d have screamed for a fresh set of shocks from the dealer before the warranty period was up, had this been our own car. Since it wasn’t, all we can do is pass this on to you as our report of an actual experience encountered while testing this particular car. Forewarned is forearmed; should you decide to buy a Chrysler (otherwise an excellent car, mechanically speaking), keep a close watch on those shocks for the duration of the warranty period.

With the exception of the Caspar Milquetoast aspects of the shock absorbers, we were impressed by the en-

gineering quality of the Chrysler Newport. The engine was a real powerhouse for torque, as the Tapley meter readings in the accompanying data panel bear out. Note that the pulling power in high gear is at its maximum at only 45 mph, and at only 32 mph in "passing gear." This means plenty of punch when you need it to get out of a sticky traffic situation.

Although many safety authorities and other self-styled "experts" have attempted to make light of the safety factor enjoyed by cars with lots of acceleration over those not so well endowed, it is a matter of our own personal experience that being able to literally leap ahead upon demand can often extricate one from what would certainly have been a serious accident.

The Torque-Flite transmission has been one of our favorite automatics since its introduction, and this one did nothing to alter or diminish our respect, for it is a faultlessly performing unit. Three speeds plus torque converter, when connected to a slow turning, big-inch engine like this, give you ample torque throughout the entire rpm range, even in a car weighing 4225 lb (curb weight).

The full-time power steering took a day or two to become accustomed to, as usual, and even at that we feel the amount of boost is too strong for nearly all drivers. It is our opinion that the steering effort (even when parking) could be doubled without causing even the slightest-built damsel to grunt in protest. As it now stands, trying to get road feel through the power-boostered multiplication of your own corrective efforts is akin to trying to tell the difference between silk and satin while wearing the traditional motorman's glove.

With a rear-axle ratio of 2.93:1, the cruising ability of the Newport is naturally very high. No reasonable semblance of a legal speed can impose a strain on this engine, even if maintained all day long. Unfortunately, the metalwork on this car does not fall into the same league with its mechanical excellence. The average for

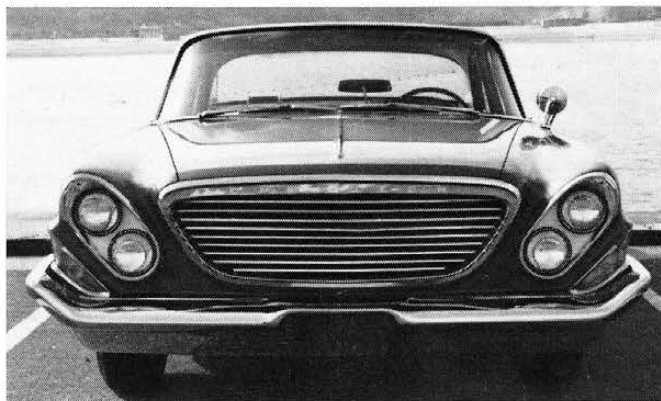
fit and finish, taken together, could only be said to be "up to industry standards for a car in this price class," even by the most charitable. This evaluation would be arrived at by saying the paint job was a little better than average (for cars with a factory list price of under \$3000), and that the panel fit was a little poorer.

As long as we're on the subject of appearance, of which fit and finish are an essential part, we may as well mention (however reluctantly) the esthetic aspects of the car. Personally, we *like* the exterior of the Newport—canted headlights, fins, and all. But upon climbing inside, the first look at the instrument cluster gave us a rude shock—it doesn't even look as though it could have been manufactured in the same factory as that good-looking body, but there it is.

Much as we like to refrain from discussing things that you, the potential car buyer, can find out for yourselves in your neighborhood dealer's showroom, we can't let this dash pass by. If you haven't seen one, get down there right away—it's a riot. Our first reaction was to look for the knob you pull to shoot the marbles but, since no "tilt" sign was in evidence, it apparently wasn't something stolen from a penny arcade.

Aside from the arrangement of the instruments, we found the information-imparting portion of the Newport's dash superior, in that oil pressure and ammeter readings were indicated by quantitative gauges, rather than by the now almost traditional colored lights employed by nearly every other make.

Comfort-wise, we found (as we usually do) that the closer-to-chair-height seats used in the Chrysler products (as compared with those of other major manufacturers) were more comfortable for extended cruising. One of the many options with which our test car was equipped was an item listed as "Accessory Package B," consisting of airfoam cushions for both front and back seats. At \$22.40, we consider this a worthwhile extra. The com-



bination of the more erect posture enforced by the Chrysler seats, along with the softer cushions effected by "Package B," proved to allow one of the lowest fatigue factors of any car we've yet tested.

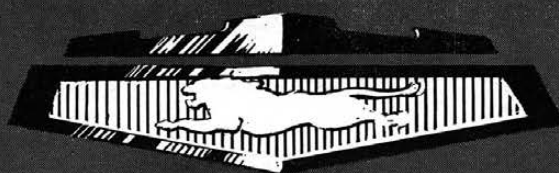
And that last remark gives the clue to what exactly is the forté of the Chrysler Newport. We feel that this is the car for the man who likes the *big* car with the *big*, slow-turning (and therefore quiet) engine that just loafs along at 70 mph up hill and down, all day long. This is particularly true if the man in question is not inclined to go out and hock himself right up to the eyebrows in order to purchase such a vehicle but, instead, is looking for that type of performance in a relatively lower-priced car. The Newport may not have been designed for that type of buyer; we really don't know whom Chrysler had in mind when it designed this particular model. But that's who, in our opinion, will gain the most service, enjoyment, and pride of ownership out of this member of the Chrysler team.

True, the cruising ability and inherent riding qualities of a big-engined, weighty car must be paid for in fuel consumption, but for the man whose vehicular requirements dictate that to him these qualities are of paramount importance, it's a small sacrifice. If you are one of those who scoff at the "National Average" figure of 10,000 miles per year, because you come closer to putting 50,000 on your own car's odometer, then the Chrysler Newport is one of the lowest-priced (sans accessories!) cars that could fill the bill for you. The Newport would be particularly well suited to the Southwest's "wide-open-spaces," with its roads to match.

On the other hand, unless you fall into the above-mentioned category, or perhaps consider that the name "Chrysler" carries more weight in one-upmanship than "Dodge," you might just as well drive a Dart. Either way, Chrysler Corporation has sold you a car—and, aside from the few exceptions noted, a darned good one, at that. ■



CAR LIFE ROAD TEST



CHRYSLER NEWPORT

SPECIFICATIONS

List price	\$2824
Price, as tested	4280
Curb weight, lb.	4225
Test weight	4535
distribution, %	54/46
Tire size	8.00-14
Tire capacity, lb.	4700
Brake lining area	230
Engine type	V-8, ohv
Bore & stroke	4.12 x 3.38
Displacement, cc.	5934
cu in.	361
Compression ratio	9.0
Bhp @ rpm	265 @ 4400
equivalent mph	117
Torque, lb.-ft.	380 @ 2400
equivalent mph	63.7

GEAR RATIOS

3rd (1.00), overall	2.93
2nd (1.45)	4.25
1st (2.45)	7.17
1st (2.45 x 2.2)	15.8

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase, in.	122
Tread, f and r	61.0/59.7
Over-all length, in.	215.6
width	79.4
height	55.0
equivalent vol, cu ft.	545
Frontal area, sq ft.	24.3
Ground clearance, in.	5.2
Steering ratio, o/a	30.16
turns, lock to lock	5.4
turning circle, ft.	44.0
Hip room, front	63.8
Hip room, rear	62.8
Pedal to seat back	39.0
Floor to ground	12.7
Luggage vol, cu ft.	32.8

PERFORMANCE

Top speed (4400), mph	117
best timed run	n.a.
3rd ()	
2nd (4700)	86
1st (4700)	51

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Normal range, mpg	11/14
-------------------------	-------

ACCELERATION

0-30 mph, sec.	3.6
0-40	5.3
0-50	8.0
0-60	10.9
0-70	14.7
0-80	21.2
0-100	
Standing ¼ mile	18.1
speed at end	75.5

PULLING POWER

4th, lb/ton @ mph	
3rd	220 @ 45
2nd	430 @ 32
Total drag at 60 mph, lb.	165

SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph, actual	29.2
60 mph	56.6
90 mph	81.8

CALCULATED DATA

Lb/hp (test wt)	17.1
Cu ft/ton mile	105
Mph/1000 rpm	26.6
Engine revs/mile	2260
Piston travel, ft/mile	1270
C. L. wear index	28.8

ACCELERATION & COASTING

