



BY BOB McVAY, TECHNICAL EDITOR

Dodge's Coronet 500, equipped with the famous 426-inch V-8, could easily support the title of "Super/Sleeper of the Year"—there's no exterior indication that it's anything special. Only when you put your foot in it does the truth come out. It's one of the hottest, most exciting machines we've tested this season.

Besides that, the Coronet line is the most versatile under the Dodge banner.

Body styles include two- and four-door sedans, convertibles, wagons, and hardtops. And their prices make things even more interesting. But more about that later—let's get down to specifics.

Our top-of-the-line Coronet 500 hardtop had Dodge's big "426" street engine, a 365-hp. wedge-head V-8, stuffed under the hood. In back of this was a four-speed Chrysler transmission with Hurst shift linkage and floor-mounted lever topped with a fist-filling white plastic knob. Further back stood the optional 3.55 rear axle, coupled with Dodge's Sure-Grip differential and optional 8.25 x 14 whitewall tires.

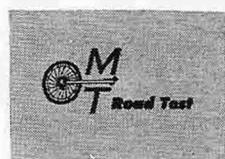
Taking it from the top, this car started life with a base price of \$2674. The performance package was the biggest single option at \$513.60, but this

included more than just the powerful "426." This price covered a heavy-duty suspension package (springs, shocks, anti-roll bar), the four-speed transmission, and Dodge's stronger police brakes for added stopping.

A second option package included the pushbutton radio, heater, variable-speed wipers and washers for \$75.80. The console-mounted tachometer added \$49.70 to the price. Our only other options were tinted glass (\$40.30), the mentioned Sure-Grip differential (\$38.35), undercoating and underhood pad (\$15.70), and the optional tires at \$55.95. Adding destination charges, the total package came to \$3598.40, and it's a whale of a lot of automobile for the price—one of the best performance buys on today's market.

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UNCORK- ING THE CORONET '426'



BEING UNHAMPERED BY ACCESSORIES, DODGE'S 365-HP V-8 PUT FULL FORCE BEHIND CAR, GAVE STARTLING ACCELERATION, DIDN'T WORK HARD.





CORONET '426'

continued

Perform it does, with a capital P. In any gear and at any speed, in any traffic situation, the "426" Coronet fairly leaped whenever we gave it the nudge. Our performance figures, under the controlled procedure of our normal per-

formance-testing program, only hint at its responsiveness.

From a traffic light or when passing on the freeway, a heavy foot, well applied, would open all four throats on the AFB-3859S Carter carb. Then things really began to happen. Simultaneously we were smashed back into Dodge's comfortable front buckets, the tach needle headed for 5500 rpm, and the speedometer needle dove toward the far

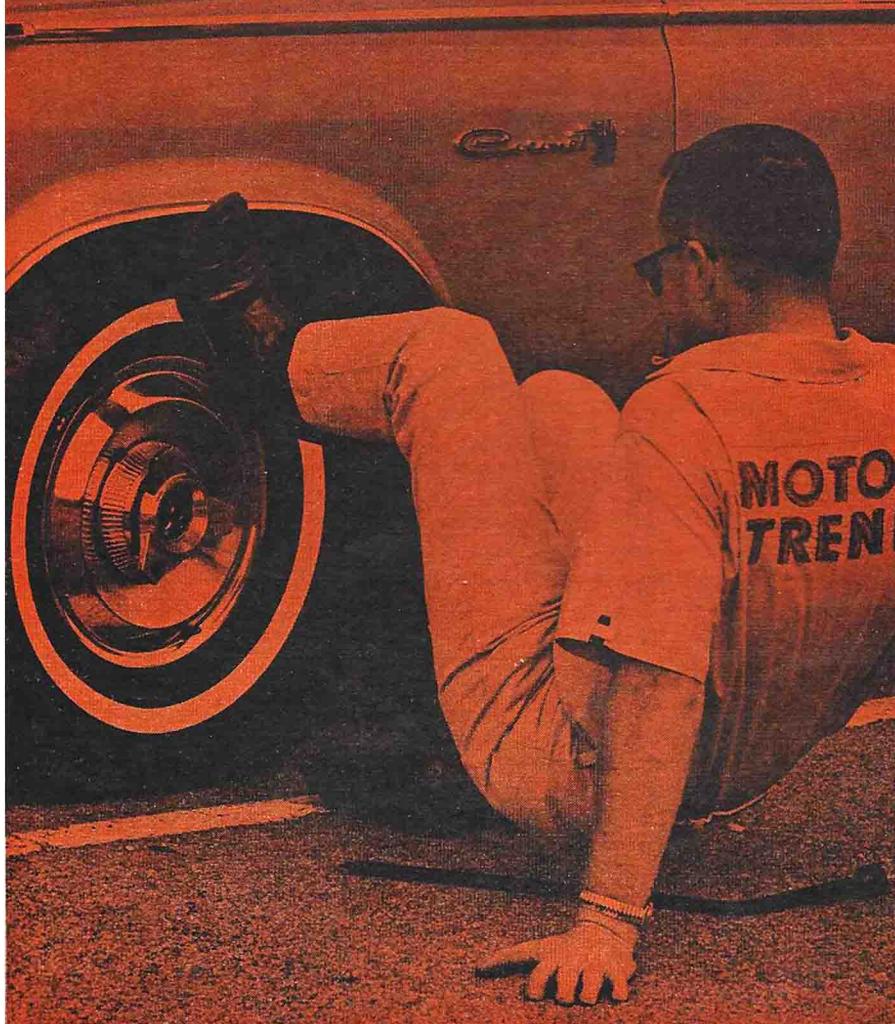
Heavy-duty suspension, thicker anti-roll bar, and police brakes made hot Dodge a potent performer.

end of its scale. To speak modestly, acceleration was most impressive and certainly all anyone who drives on the public roadways can handle.

Added to its blazing performance, the Coronet's heavy-duty suspension option gave the car a special dimension in its own right. Handling in fast corners was exemplary, with only slight body lean and no carb flooding at maximum lean angles. At low speeds, the heavier engine made understeer noticeable, but 365 willing horses made steering with the throttle easy enough to break the rear end loose and hang it out whenever we wanted to in fast bends. Naturally, no one's going to drive it this way very often, but it's nice to know that an automobile is controllable in a fast corner.



A sizzling performer on the track or on the highway, Coronet could top 120 mph and scald through the quarter in less than eight seconds. High-speed stability proved very good; wind noise was nil.



About the only way to get the special spinner wheel covers on is this method (or a rubber hammer, which isn't in the tool kit).

when it becomes necessary to power through in an emergency. In this case, the "426's" special suspension and generous horsepower work very well together, making the car very safe to drive fast. The Dodge did what we wanted it to when we wanted to do it. That's about all you can ask of any automobile.

Another plus factor was that, although the ride was quite firm, not one passenger complained about it being too harsh. Big bumps and dips taken at speed failed to bottom the suspension. Neither did the car react like a sailboat on rough swells after crossing them. It settled right down after one jounce—just the way we like a car to behave.

The most we can say about the car's husky police brakes is that they're about the best drum units available. They gave stopping power without fading and with a minimum of swerving, even when hot. With 287 square inches of effective lining area and 414.7 square inches of total swept area, these 11-inch drums did a fine job of stopping our 3720-pound test car under all conditions.

Since the brakes weren't power assisted, our right leg had a lot of work to do. But we'll have to admit that you get much more stopping *feel* without

power assist. With power brakes, the pedal's nearer the accelerator, and at 100-pound pedal load, the power assist produces 930 pounds of line pressure (as opposed to 830 without power assist). The driver with manual brakes also has to move his foot farther to get to the pedal.

By the same token, our test car's manual steering gave a more precise road feel than any power-assisted unit could. But it was all too slow for good control when storming dirt roads or slicing through a series of switchbacks on winding roads. Dodge's power steering gives a nice, quick, 3.5 turns between locks, while manual steerers have to bend their elbows through 5.8 spins of the wheel. We noticed the extra effort only when parking and under the above circumstances, but a car like this just asks to be driven fast and hard. For this kind of driving, power steering would be advisable, even if it doesn't give much road feel.

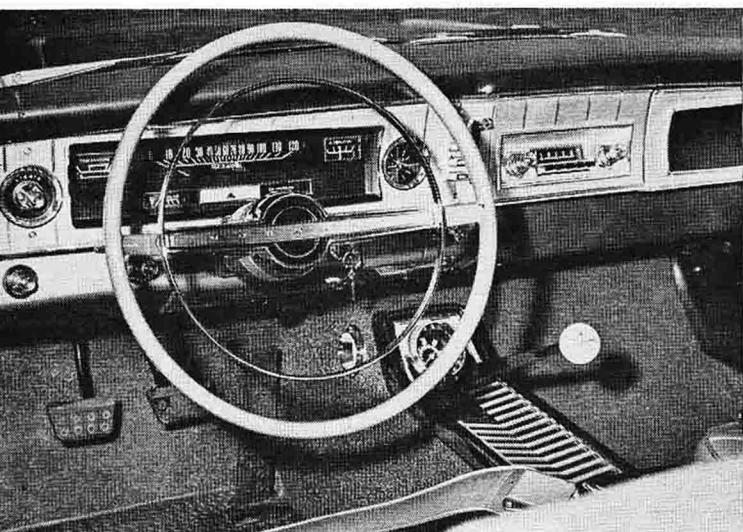
People aren't likely to buy the "426"/3.55 axle combination for economy. Dodge offers other engines and other axles for that purpose. Regardless of how we drove the car, our mileage averaged 11.2 mpg of high-test gas except for one very careful stretch where we

really tried economy-run methods and garnered an economical (?) 13.8 mpg for our trouble.

Coronet 500 models feature an all-vinyl interior with air-foam front buckets, full carpeting, padded dash, center console with lockable storage compartment, seat belts, heater-defroster, back-up lights, deluxe wheel covers, acrylic enamel finishes, long-life major chassis lubrication (good for 32,000 miles) and have a 273-cubic-inch V-8 as standard equipment. With volumes of options to pick from, the sky's the limit on custom tailoring.

Other series include the 440, a middle model between the 500 and the plain Coronet. Seven engine choices include V-8s of 273, 318, 361 cubic inches (all with two-barrel carburetion), and 383- and 426-inch V-8s mounting four-throat carbs. In addition to this, there's a hemi-head "426 Hemi-Charger" V-8 for racers only that pumps out 425 horses and has two big four-throat carbs on a special manifold.

Transmission choices include three-speed manual (standard on most models), with a four-speed manual and three-speed automatic available as extra-cost options. Both 426-inch engines are available only with the four-speed trans-



(TOP) Uninspired dash does use gauges. Coronet offers comfortable driving position, but only passenger can benefit from the tachometer's location.

(TOP RIGHT) Plenty of room here, but you have to go in after spare—or have very long arms.

(ABOVE) Swerving, skidding, uneven wheel lock-up and loss of control just weren't car's problems.

CORONET '426'

continued

mission as standard and the TorqueFlite automatic optional.

At the other end of the scale, the basic Coronet comes with a 225-inch Slant Six rated at 145 hp. Rear axle ratios range from 2.93 to 4.89, offering choices for economy, power, or a com-

promise between both with most engine choices.

Back in the early 1950s, we saw the Coronet as a three-passenger coupe and convertible aimed at the economy buyer. The name disappeared a few years later and was redusted for 1965. The present-day Coronet can be a nice, economical family sedan or a thoroughbred high-performance charger like our test car. No matter what form it comes in, it still offers one of the biggest bargains ever to stand on a 117-inch wheelbase. It's well put together and backed up by a strong five-year, 50,000-mile warranty.

It's refreshing to live with an automobile unencumbered with power accessories. Naturally, the ladies of the family won't be begging the man of the house to drive it very often, because most women just don't like heavy steering, hard brake pedal, or manual shifts. Personally, that's the way we'd want it. It takes a man to wake up Dodge's Super/Sleeper.

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DODGE CORONET 500

2-door, 5-passenger hardtop coupe

OPTIONS ON TEST CAR: "426" V-8 performance package (with heavy-duty suspension, 4-speed transmission, and police brakes), Sure-Grip differential, radio, heater, tinted glass, tachometer

BASE PRICE: \$2674

PRICE AS TESTED: \$3598.40 (plus tax and license)

ODOMETER READING AT START OF TEST: 1150 miles

RECOMMENDED ENGINE RED LINE: 5500 rpm

PERFORMANCE

ACCELERATION (2 aboard)

0-30 mph.....	2.9 secs.
0-45 mph.....	5.0
0-60 mph.....	7.7

PASSING TIMES AND DISTANCES

40-60 mph.....	3.3 secs., 241 ft.
50-70 mph.....	5.2 secs., 456 ft.

Standing start 1/4-mile 15.7 secs. and 89 mph

Speeds in gears @ 5500 rpm	1st	47 mph	3rd	92 mph
	2nd	66 mph	4th	118 mph @ 5200 rpm (observed)

Speedometer on Test Car

Car's speedometer reading ..	30	46	51	62	72	83
Weston electric speedometer ..	30	45	50	60	70	80

Observed mph per 1000 rpm in top gear

Stopping Distances — from 30 mph, 31.5 ft.; from 60 mph, 153 ft.

SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER

Engine

Ohv V-8
Bore: 4.25 ins.
Stroke: 3.75 ins.
Displacement: 426 cu. ins.
Compression ratio: 10.3:1
Horsepower: 365 @ 4800 rpm
Horsepower per cubic
inch: 0.85
Torque: 470 lbs.-ft. @ 3200
rpm
Carburetion: 1 4-bbl.
Ignition: 12-volt coil

Gearbox

4-speed manual, all synchro;
floorshift

Driveshaft

1-piece, open tube

Differential

Hypoid, semi-floating
Fitted ratio: 3.55:1
Standard ratio: 3.23:1

Brakes

Hydraulic, duo-servo, self-
adjusting; cast-iron drums
Front: 11-in. dia. x 3 ins. wide
Rear: 11-in. dia. x 3 ins. wide
Effective lining area: 287 sq.
ins.
Swept drum area: 414.7 sq.
ins.

Steering

Worm and ball nut
Turning diameter: 43.4 ft.
Turns lock to lock: 5.8

Wheels and Tires

5-lug, steel disc wheels with
6-inch rims
8.25 x 14 2-ply tubeless white-
wall tires

Body and Frame

Unit construction
Wheelbase: 117.0 ins.
Track: front, 59.5 ins.;
rear, 58.5 ins.
Overall length: 204.3 ins.
Overall width: 75.6 ins.
Overall height: 55.8 ins.
Curb weight: 3720 lbs.

Suspension

Front: Independent, lateral,
non-parallel control arms with
torsion bars, double-acting
tubular shocks, and anti-roll
bar (all components heavy-
duty)
Rear: Solid axle, with semi-
elliptical 6.5-leaf, rubber-
mounted springs and double-
acting tubular shocks