

**M**  
**T** Road Test

BY  
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# CHRYSLER NEWPORT

THE SURPRISE BEST-SELLER OF  
THE CHRYSLER LINE APPEALS TO  
LOVERS OF THE BIG, SMOOTH RIDE

**O**F ALL THE MANY MODELS of cars produced by the Chrysler Corporation, the Newport is outselling everything but the Valiant. This includes even the traditional Dodge and Plymouth bread-and-butter lines like the Dart and Savoy. To our knowledge, this has never happened before — and if Dodge and Plymouth can help it, it will never happen again. But at any rate, the Newport's sales are up a whopping 70 per cent over last year's, and if it weren't for this, total sales for the whole corporation would be off a lot more than the 2½ per cent they are.

Since Chrysler, Dodge and Plymouth are basically the same in the engine, power train and suspension departments, it would seem that the more conventional styling of the Chrysler is giving it the edge over its smaller brethren. Also, it's the first time that a Chrysler, with its big-car luxury symbol, has been offered for less than \$3000 (in recent years anyway). The quoted \$2964 base price didn't apply to our test car. That price is for the standard four-door sedan, and ours was a four-door hardtop. But even so, the \$3166 suggested list on the test car is still pretty low for such a lot of car.

The addition of a few accessories can boost this basic price quite high. The test car had power steering (\$107.60), power brakes (\$47.80), Torqueflite transmission (\$226.90), and radio and heater (\$92.80 and



## Chrysler Newport *continued*

\$101.90). Additional miscellaneous accessories, such as wheel covers, tinted windshield, whitewalls, and special upholstery with air-foam seats, added another \$206.75, while the destination charge amounted to \$185. Total price on the West Coast added up to \$4074.75, to which one would have to add the license fee and state and local taxes.

The Newport sits on a 122-inch wheelbase, which it shares with everything but the New Yorker and the Imperial. This puts it way up in the big-car class—but not weight-wise. Sitting at the curb with

a full gas tank, it tips the scales at 3961 pounds.

Performance is above average, considering that the test car had the standard 361-cubic-inch, 265-hp (single two-throat carb) engine, automatic transmission and 2.93 rear axle, plus all the power accessories. The 0-to-30, 0-to-45 and 0-to-60-mph markers went down in 3.9, 6.8 and 10.8 seconds. A top speed of 80 mph with an e.t. of 19.0 seconds was recorded for the quarter-mile.

The factory specs don't list any optional performance equipment for the Newport

other than a 3.23 axle. Several top-speed tries on the Riverside back straight resulted in a 104-mph average. The tach was reading 4100 rpm and still climbing when we ran out of room, but we would guess that the top speed would be an easy 112 to 115 mph.

The crash stops from the top end resulted in a slight build-up in pedal pressure and a negligible amount of fade. The big (212.8-square-inch effective area) brakes weren't given any special cooling-off time, other than the time it took to turn around and drive back to the other



DEEP FOAM SEATS WITH COLOR-KEYED UPHOLSTERY MATERIAL ARE AN EXTRA-COST LUXURY, BUT COOL COMFORT MAKES THEM WORTH WHILE.



Trunk lip is high enough to make loading and unloading a chore. Spare tire location cuts down usable area, but there's still enough left for the average family.



Dash-mounted turn indicator is inconvenient and seems to be prone to failure. Instrumentation is complete but layout is poor and daytime visibility is bad.

end of the track, before swinging into the regular brake efficiency tests. But this was enough to allow the brakes to function with maximum effectiveness. The 38- and 160-foot stopping distances from 30 and 60 mph are a shade above average. All stops were made without the brakes locking up suddenly and without any apparent fade.

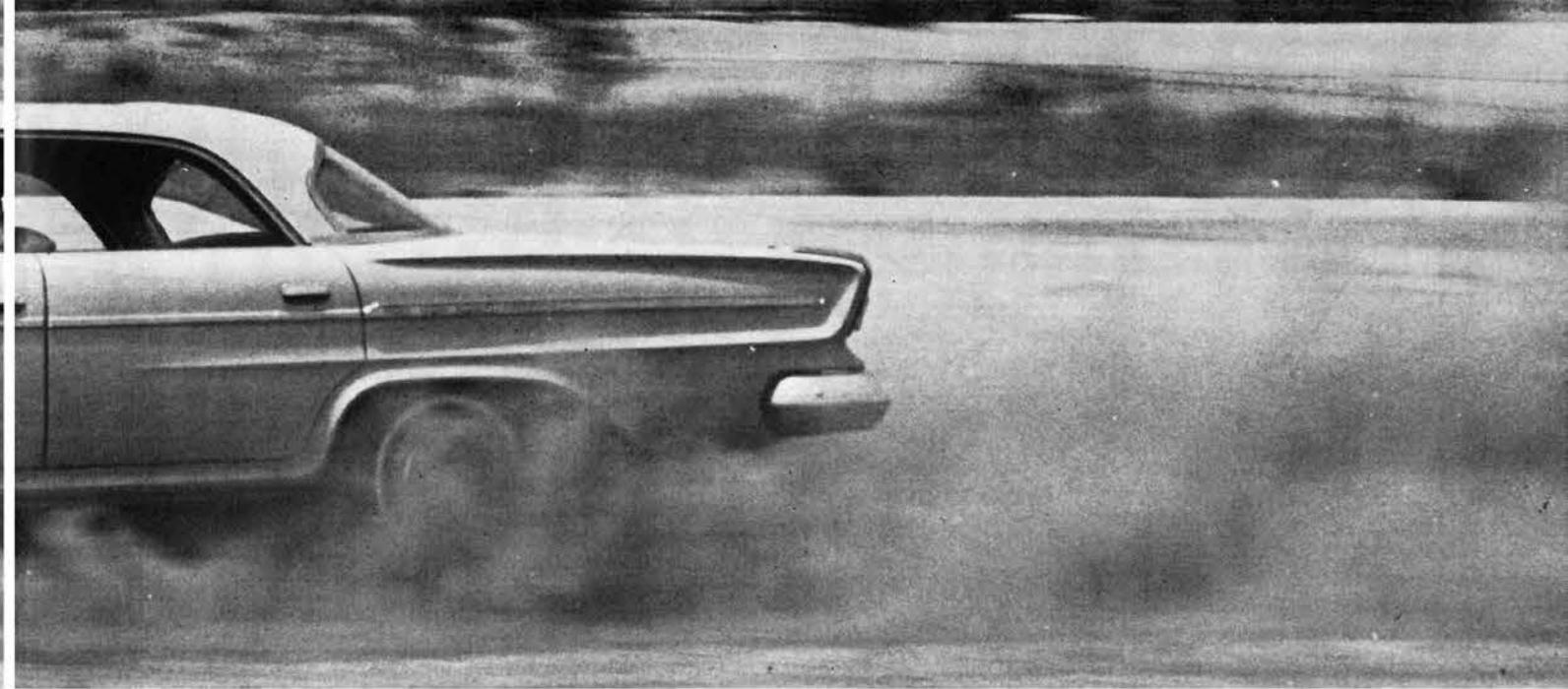
We rolled up over 700 miles on the Newport with an overall gas consumption average of 14.3 mpg. Around town the average was a consistent 13.8. On the highway we recorded a high of 17.8 mpg during a 150-mile trip where the speedometer rarely dropped below 75 mph. The engine's nine-to-one compression ratio is another point in favor of economy, be-



*Suspension layout makes overall handling way above average. The Newport corners flat and is extremely sure-footed on hard or soft surfaces. Nothing can match it in its size or weight class.*







## Chrysler Newport *continued*

cause it allows the use of regular-grade fuel.

The Torqueflite transmission is the only automatic on the market that we would unhesitatingly choose over a three-speed manual. If Chrysler even offered a four-speed, we might still stick to the automatic. The reliability of this quick-shifting beauty has been well proven over the years and none is more dependable. The shifts are smooth but completely positive. Using a tachometer we've noticed some other makes of automatics allowing the engine to rev up as much as 700 to 800 rpm between full-throttle shifts. We have yet to see a Torqueflite allow an engine to climb over 200 to 300 rpm between shifts.

Another feature is that the driver can make good use of the pushbuttons to exercise almost complete control over the transmission. When "1" is punched, first gear only is obtained. The "2" button will give first gear up to 3600 rpm, an automatic shift to second at that point, and will then hold in second gear. The "D" button gives normal operation, with shifts to second and third at 3600 and 3900 rpm (38 and 72 mph).

Chrysler's torsion bar/leaf spring suspension system is still rated at the top of the class for all-around ride and handling characteristics. This setup isn't as firm as it used to be, and while it is on the soft side, it definitely can't be classed as mushy. The big Newport is extremely stable at all speeds. Hard low-speed cornering produces

very little noticeable front-end ploughing or body roll. If the surface is a bit loose, the front end will break away first, but even the 265-hp engine has enough stuff to push the back end out for a quick recovery. On fast turns the steering feels decidedly neutral. Cross-winds have very little effect on the Newport's directional stability.

The quick (3.5 turns between locks) power steering makes the almost 215-inch overall length of the car seem closer to compact dimensions around town. And out on the road its quickness is a welcome asset at high cruising speeds.

One thing we didn't like about the Newport was the degree of quality—or lack of it—that is all too apparent in areas such as door and panel alignment. Not one of the four doors on our test car would open or close with any degree of precision. The window in one of the rear doors overlapped the chrome facing on the body weatherstripping by a full 3/8-inch. With the door closed this wasn't a problem, but

in order to close the door the window had to be forced past this strip. The door handles and their actions are something else—antiquated and clumsy.

These faults, of course, weren't designed into the car but are the result of careless assembly and lead one to believe that there may be a lack of pride of workmanship left on the Chrysler line. We aren't knocking anyone who's doing an honest day's work, but we don't believe the company can be held entirely responsible for the results of a sloppy line worker over whom they have very little authority any more.

The interior is fairly well put together, with plenty of room for six good-sized adults. The driving position is comfortable, and there's an instrument for all important engine functions. The thing they are housed in has been around for several years and has already been called just about everything that a score of good writers could think of, so we'll just let it go by saying that the instruments glow in

THE BIG NEWPORT, WITH QUICK POWER STEERING AND POSITIVE-SHIFTING AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION, HANDLES AS EASY AS ANY COMPACT.

the dark and are easy to see. They should only be as legible in the daytime.

The trunk is big and should be able to accommodate the needs of all but the largest of families for anything from an

overnight hop to a four-week cross-country tour. Servicing the engine can be accomplished without removing any piping, belts or accessories for clearance.

If you belong to the old school (and a

whole lot of people do) and believe that a big, comfortable car is the best—the Newport is one of the biggest and most comfortable around. It also has one of the smallest price tags. /MT

### CHRYSLER NEWPORT

4-door, 6-passenger hardtop

**OPTIONS ON CAR TESTED:** Torqueflite transmission, power steering, radio, heater, tinted windshield, special upholstery, whitewall tires

**BASIC PRICE:** \$3106

**PRICE AS TESTED:** \$4074.75 (plus tax and license)

**ODOMETER READING AT START OF TEST:** 2074 miles

**RECOMMENDED ENGINE RED LINE:** 5500 rpm

### PERFORMANCE

**ACCELERATION** (2 aboard)

0-30 mph.....	3.9 secs.
0-45 mph.....	6.8
0-60 mph.....	10.8

Standing start 1/4-mile 19.0 secs. and 80 mph

Speeds in gears at indicated shift points

1st.....	38 @ 3600	2nd.....	72 @ 3900
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Speedometer Error on Test Car

Car's speedometer reading.....	31	47	52	62	72	83
Weston electric speedometer.....	30	45	50	60	70	80

Observed miles per hour per 1000 rpm in top gear.....25 mph

Stopping Distances — from 30 mph, 38 ft.; from 60 mph, 160 ft.

### SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER

#### Engine

Ohv V-8  
Bore: 4.12 ins.  
Stroke: 3.38 ins.  
Displacement: 361 cubic inches  
Compression ratio: 9.0:1  
Horsepower: 265 @ 4400 rpm  
Torque: 380 lbs.-ft. @ 2400 rpm  
Horsepower per cubic inch: 0.734  
Ignition: 12-volt coil

#### Gearbox

3-speed automatic; pushbutton control

#### Driveshaft

One-piece; open tube

#### Differential

Hypoid — semi-floating  
Standard ratio: 2.93:1

#### Brakes

Hydraulic, drums (cast iron)  
Front and rear: 11-in. dia. x 2.5 in. wide  
Effective lining area: 212.8 sq. ins.

#### Suspension

Front: Independent; lateral, non-parallel control arms with torsion bars and double-acting tube shocks  
Rear: 5.5-leaf semi-elliptic springs with double-acting tube shocks

#### Steering

Rack and sector, with integral power  
Turning diameter: 42.7 ft.  
Turns: 3.5 lock-to-lock

#### Wheels and Tires

Steel disc — 5 lugs  
8.00 x 14 4-ply rayon tires

#### Body and Frame

Unit construction  
Wheelbase: 122 ins.  
Track: front, 60.9 ins.; rear, 59.7 ins.  
Overall length: 214.9 ins.  
Curb weight: 3961 lbs.



*Plenty of effective braking area insures fast, fade-free, straight-line stops time after time. Car was neither equipped with nor needed power brakes*



*Engine performance is above average, considering the 361-cubic-incher is breathing through a two-barrel carburetor and has only a nine-to-one compression ratio.*