

# CHRYSLER NEWPORT ROAD TEST



**Full-sized performance and comfort come with a low price tag plus an appetite for regular gas, making Chrysler's Newport a bargain**

by Bob McVay, Assistant Technical Editor

**N**OT LONG AGO, "fully equipped" meant radio, heater, and whitewalls. Not today. Nowadays, you usually order a long list of power accessories and options. Each power accessory adds a bit more weight, uses a few horsepower, and ups the price a few notches. By the time you figure the total, it's a fairly long way from the factory's suggested base price.

But if you don't want your car loaded with extras, you can still order the basic automobile, pay the base price, and get a lot for your money. Take our test car, Chrysler's bread-and-butter Newport four-door sedan. It came with the bare minimum of extras: heater and defroster, white sidewalls, and a crankcase ventilation system. Delivered in Los Angeles, the price came to a low \$3050.30 (plus tax and license).

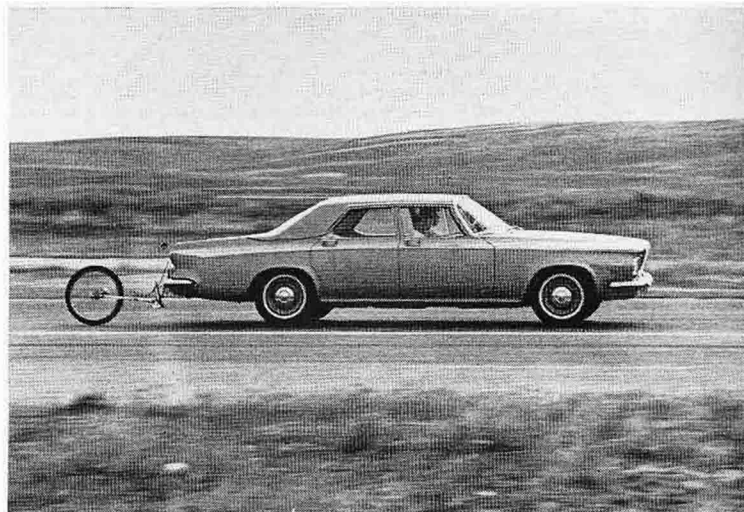
Although it had a three-speed manual transmission and no power equipment, our test car still offered big, roomy, six-passenger Chrysler comfort and performance equal to its more powerful running mates. Foam-rubber cushions, deep pile carpeting, padded instrument panel, courtesy interior lights, directional signals, plus deluxe Newport trim are standard. Two- and four-door hardtops, a convertible, and six- and nine-passenger station wagons round out the line.

A big extra feature is the Newport's appetite for regular gasoline, which should add up to big savings over the years. We put over 1000 miles on the Newport and recorded a low of 14.5 and a high of 17.5 mpg at highway speeds. Our lowest figure was 11.5 in city driving. Overall, our average was just under 14 mpg for the 1000 miles.

Standard on the Newport is a 361-cubic-inch V-8, Chrysler's smallest. It's rated at 265 hp at 4400 rpm and pumps out 380 pounds-feet of torque at a low 2400 rpm. With a two-barrel carburetor and 9-to-1 compression, the Newport's built for economy and long life rather than all-out performance. But the Newport has a good many things in its favor that let it perform with more powerful Chryslers. It weighs only 3920 pounds wet, and ours wasn't loaded with power-robbing accessories. As a result, it had a better power-to-weight ratio than the New Yorker Salon we tested in April, although the Salon had 75 more horses. So though the Newport isn't so powerful, it doesn't have so much weight to carry, either.

Down the pike, both cars would be equally matched up to their higher speeds, when the New Yorker's four-barrel carburetor's better breathing would make it a little faster on the top end. Acceleration times were extremely close, with the Newport only slightly slower. It hit 0-30, -45, and -60 mph in 3.4, 6.6, and 10.3 seconds respectively. Best shift points were around 4300 rpm, although its red line was 5200 rpm. Our best quarter-mile time was a respectable 17.6 seconds, with a trap speed of 78 mph. Top down Riverside's back straight was 106. A few more mph would probably have been available if the car were fully broken in.

We liked the Newport's standard, three-speed floorshift arrangement except for one thing — it sorely needs a synchronized low gear. Otherwise, it was smooth, precise, and easy to use (thanks to its Hurst linkage), and the nicely curved shift lever was right where it should be — close at hand. It didn't take any stretching, and it didn't even get in the way of the center passenger. With its 2.55 ratio in low, 1.49 in



*High speeds didn't bother full-sized Chrysler sedan. Car was always smooth and quiet, even at 106-mph top speed. Crosswinds had little effect on car's course, nor did most bumps.*



*Although not a neck-snapper, Newport got off line smartly, nearly matched more powerful New Yorker's acceleration despite rather tall gearing designed for long-range cruising economy.*



*Newly designed tail lights and revamped rear deck distinguish test car from 1963 models. Even under maximum acceleration, Newport showed little rear-end squat or spinning of wheels.*



second, and 1.00 to 1 in high, the Newport's transmission's well matched to the car's intended use as family transportation. The 3.23 axle seems a good choice for all types of driving. First and second gears give an audible whine, but third's pleasantly quiet and after all, this is the gear you'll be in most of the time anyway.

High gear proved able to cope with all but the steepest roads, and second handled the rest well enough. Second also gave good downhill retardation and plenty of power for holding the proper line through a fast bend. The lack of synchromesh on first was our biggest complaint. Second was a little too high to ask for slowly rolling starts when we came up on a light that had just changed to green. We had to double-clutch to keep from crunching into low.

Since it didn't have power accessories, the Newport took a little more driving effort, but the extra work wasn't objectionable. We hardly missed power steering except on tight, winding roads and when parking or maneuvering in close quarters. With 5.4 turns between locks, steering was too slow for our liking. We'd have preferred Chrysler's excellent power steering, with its 3.5 turns. It adds \$107.60 to the price, but it also means much quicker response—in other words, extra safety. Although short drivers will have to stretch a bit to see over the steering wheel, the relationship of pedals to wheel and controls is fine for most people. All who drove the car agreed it was a pleasant automobile.

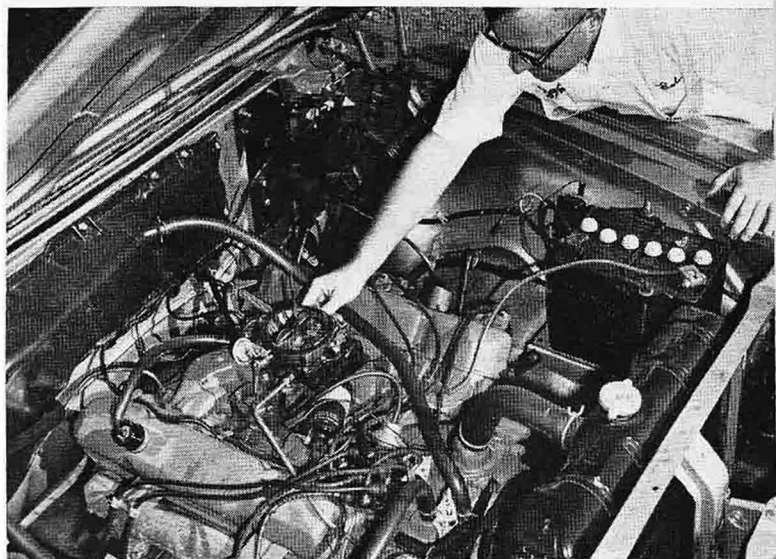
In braking, the Newport ranks only with the best. Because of its huge effective lining area of 263.3 square inches and its relatively light curb weight, we didn't have any problems with brake fade. Hard driving over fast switchbacks, up and down steep winding roads, and on Riverside's track found the brakes perfectly adequate to cope with the car's performance. And the Newport recorded some of our shortest stopping distances, with a 32-foot stop from 30 mph and a short 149 feet from 60.

As in other Chrysler products we've tested, the rear leaf springs weren't up to panic stopping. Rear-wheel hop lets the back tires lock up too quickly. Despite this, the Newport's stopping ability was far above average. Each square inch of brake-lining area has less than 15 pounds of car to stop. The only bad thing about the standard braking system is its high pedal location. It takes fractionally more time to take the right foot off the accelerator and get it onto the brake pedal. A power-brake-equipped car has a lower pedal and lets the driver simply pivot his foot between pedals. Pedal pressures weren't excessive or objectionable—it just took a little more push and a fraction longer to hit the brakes. We found Chrysler's step-on parking brake quick and easy to use. It was especially helpful for uphill starts.

Seats are covered in a cloth-and-vinyl trim combination, while door panels are vinyl-covered. The Newport has a padded dash fitted with nice, big, round instruments that are easy to read, day or night. A red warning light tells of low oil pressure, but the dash has gauges for fuel level, engine temperature, and alternator. A chrome grab handle is provided for the front-seat passenger, but someone must have fallen asleep when the glove compartment was designed—it has a very large door and a very small storage area. Only a few wee items will fit inside, and they usually fall into the passenger's lap when the door's opened.

Chrysler's bench seats are comfortable. They gave us good leg and back support. The upholstery looks durable and easy to keep clean. Front and rear, the Newport has more than adequate leg room and wide doors for easy entrance and exit.

Chrysler's suspension combines torsion bars up front with six-leaf, semi-elliptical springs at the rear. As with other Chrysler products we've tested, the Newport feels at home



*Uncluttered engine compartment is a joy to behold—all routine inspection and servicing should prove simple tasks on Newport.*



*Getting in or out is easy, thanks to wide doors. Car's interior is spacious and comfortable enough for six full-sized passengers.*



*Good cockpit layout puts everything within easy reach, makes even the very longest trips solidly enjoyable and untiring.*



HUSKY 11-INCH-DRUM BRAKES, WITH BONDED, EXTRUDED ASBESTOS LININGS, GAVE POWERFUL STOPS, WITH GOOD CONTROL, LITTLE NOSE DIVE.



Although spare's a long stretch, trunk provides lots of room for luggage, making the Newport a good choice for long trips.

#### CHRYSLER NEWPORT *continued*

on any kind of road. Sharp dips caused only minimum oscillation, and body lean didn't seem excessive, even in fast curves. When pushed very hard on winding roads, the car showed some understeer — but only when pushed hard. Basically it was neutral and gave well balanced control. Its handling was predictable, and the car didn't break loose quickly on wet roads. Handling improved somewhat with higher tire pressures (32 psi front and 30 rear).

Somehow, we got the idea that the lower-priced Newport doesn't get so much attention at the assembly plant as the more expensive models. Our test car had lots of excess glue that had run down the inside door post and out under the doors. Although easy enough for the owner to remove, this sort of thing should be done at the factory. In addition, squeaking doors showed that none of the door hinges had been lubricated before we got the car.

As on any other American automobile, the basic Chrysler Newport sedan can be bought with as many or as few extras as you want and can afford. The basic car handles, rides, and performs just as well as the more expensive models, yet it costs less to buy and operate and won't require nearly so many repairs (since there are fewer components to repair). Just like other Chryslers, it goes 32,000 miles between chassis lubs and 4000 miles between oil changes. It also shares the five-year/50,000-mile warranty of all Chrysler products.

Without all the frills, the Newport requires a little more effort on the driver's part, but there are still people who like to drive an automobile all by themselves without all those power assists. The basic car is well put together, it's comfortable to ride in and to drive, and it's possible to buy one just like the one we tested, although you'll probably have to wait a while for delivery, just as we did. It's a simple case of supply and demand — both fairly low, since most Americans have shown a definite delight with all the accessories Detroit can provide.

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SPIRITED DRIVING ON FAST, WINDING ROADS PRODUCED SOME UNDERSTEER, BUT HANDLING WAS ALWAYS CONTROLLABLE, WELL BALANCED.

PHOTOS BY BOB D'OLIVO

## CHRYSLER NEWPORT

4-door, 6-passenger sedan

**OPTIONS ON CAR TESTED:** Heater, defroster, whitewalls

**BASIC PRICE:** \$2901

**PRICE AS TESTED:** \$3050.30 (plus tax and license)

**ODOMETER READING AT START OF TEST:** 38 miles

**RECOMMENDED ENGINE RED LINE:** 5200 rpm

## PERFORMANCE

### ACCELERATION (2 aboard)

0-30 mph.....	3.4 secs.
0-45 mph.....	6.6
0-60 mph.....	10.3

Standing start 1/4-mile 17.6 secs. and 78 mph

Speeds in gears @ 5200 rpm

1st .....	52 mph	3rd .....	106 (actual top
2nd .....	88 mph		speed) @ 4300 rpm

Speedometer Error on Test Car

Car's speedometer reading.....	29	45	50	61	71	83
Weston electric speedometer.....	30	45	50	60	70	80

Observed miles per hour per 1000 rpm in top gear.....25.5 mph

Stopping Distances — from 30 mph, 32 ft.; from 60 mph, 149 ft.

## SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER

### Engine

Ohv V-8  
Bore: 4.12 ins.  
Stroke: 3.38 ins.  
Displacement: 361 cu. ins.  
Compression ratio: 9.0:1  
Horsepower: 265 @ 4400 rpm  
Torque: 380 lbs.-ft. @ 2400 rpm  
Horsepower per cubic inch: 0.735  
Carburetion: 1 2-bbl.  
Ignition: 12-volt coil

### Gearbox

3-speed manual, top 2 synchro;  
floor-mounted lever

### Steering

Worm and roller  
Turning diameter: 43.1 ft.  
Turns lock to lock: 5.4

### Brakes

Hydraulic, duo-servo; cast-iron,  
composite drums  
Front: 11-in. dia. x 3.0 ins. wide  
Rear: 11-in. dia. x 2.5 ins. wide  
Effective lining area: 263.3  
sq. ins.

### Driveshaft

1-piece, open tube

### Differential

Hypoid, semi-floating  
Standard ratio: 3.23:1

### Suspension

Front: Torsion bars, with control  
arms and double-acting  
tubular shocks  
Rear: Rigid axle, with 6-leaf,  
semi-elliptic springs and double-  
acting tubular shocks

### Wheels and Tires

5-lug, steel disc wheels  
8.00 x 14 2-ply rayon whitewall  
tires

### Body and Frame

Unit construction  
Wheelbase: 122.0 ins.  
Track: front, 61.0 ins.;  
rear, 59.7 ins.  
Overall length: 215.3 ins.  
Overall width: 80.0 ins.  
Curb weight: 3920 lbs.