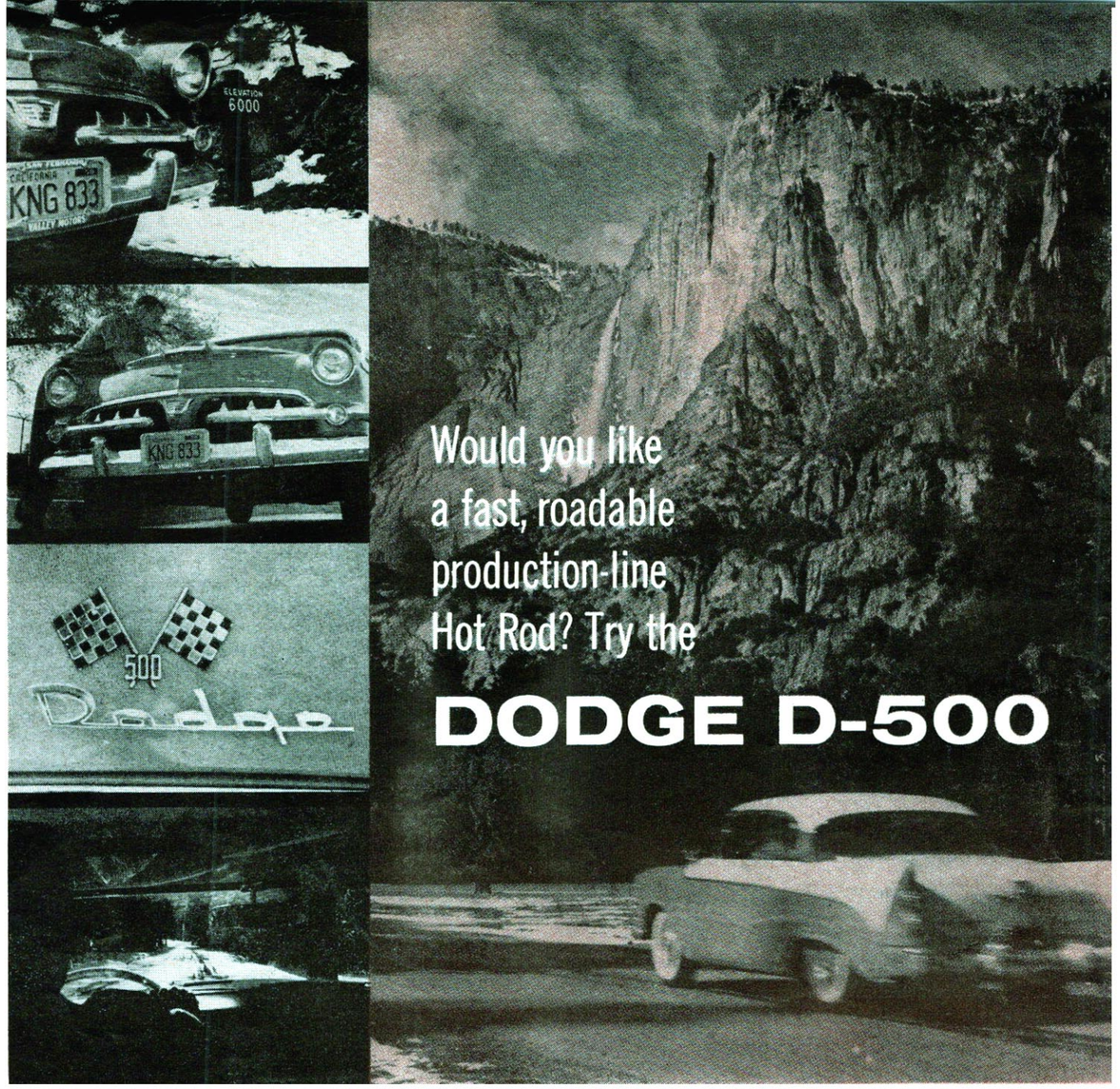


BY RACER BROWN

Now here is an exceptional automobile. If one wants excellent city and highway performance, roadability, ease of handling, vision, good ride, the best of brakes, etc., etc., the 1956 Dodge D-500 should fill the bill. It's got 'em all in abundance and then some.

The D-500 should not be confused with the '53 Dodge "500's," which were replicas of the Indianapolis pace car for that year. The 500 designation of the '56 Dodge signifies the number of cars of this model that must be produced in order to be accepted as a production car for stock car racing under NASCAR sanction, however, the 500's will be produced as the demand requires. Nor should the D-500 be confused with standard '56 Dodges. It isn't, although in exterior appearance it is identical. The only way the car can be outwardly identified is by the small "500" emblems attached to one corner of the hood and trunk lid. This similarity of appearance was the cause of much consternation among the ranks of the so-called "performance cars" as our D-500 test car left them flat-footed at a signal or easily outmaneuvered them on the highway.

Actually there are two cars with the "500" designation; the D-500 is in effect a "street machine," while the D-500-1 is the "full race" version by virtue of different options. The engine of either model is a 3.63 inch bore, 3.8 inch stroke, 315 cubic inch overhead valve V8 embodying the now-familiar hemispherical combustion chamber with a 9¼ to 1 compression ratio. The D-500 is rated at 260 brake horsepower at 4800 rpm and 330 pounds-feet of torque at 3000 rpm. The data for the D-500-1 has not yet been released, but it's a good bet that with its double four-barrel intake manifold and carburetors, plus a "wilder" camshaft, the advertised power will be about 285 at 5000 rpm and 310 pounds-feet of torque at 3200 rpm.

The D-500 and D-500-1 models are available in all Dodge body styles including station wagons. Our test car, graciously loaned to us by the San Fernando Valley Motors Dodge-Plymouth agency, was a D-500 two-door hardtop. It was equipped with power steering, power brakes, deluxe radio and heater-defroster, 7.60-15 Goodyear white wall tubeless tires, and a push-button PowerFlite automatic transmission.

As it happened, Mrs. Racer and I were

Twin to our test car, this stick shift 500 holds class record at San Fernando strip.

able to drive the car to San Francisco for a convention and return to Los Angeles, with a side-trip to Yosemite National Park. This afforded us the opportunity to drive the car over all types of paved and unpaved roads and in all kinds of weather. Rain, snow, sleet, ice; you name it and we ran into it.

By checking the rear wheel power output on the Clayton Chassis dynamometer of the Paxton Products Division of McCulloch Motors Corp., we found that at 4100 rpm, a maximum of 132 rear wheel horsepower was obtained. The mixture ratio was 14 to 1 under full load, full throttle operation. This was a bit lean for maximum power but it allowed sustained full load runs to be made which were accompanied by intermittent detonation.

Our test car weighed 3880 pounds fully loaded but without driver or passengers. A total of 2200 pounds or 56.5 per cent was supported on the front wheels with 1680 pounds or 43.5 per cent on the rear wheels, about par for modern passenger cars.

ROADABILITY

One of the best of many features of the D-500 was the manner in which it clung to the road. We could "dirt track" a turn with the rear end broken loose, or we could set the car in a four-wheel "drift," or we could just drive it through. To the Dodge, it didn't matter which method we chose; it was all child's play thanks to excellent lateral stability. Directional stability was of equal excellence. The amount of "lean" encountered in turns was only nominal and "wallowing" and pitching tendencies were non-existent. At no time did we feel we were "over our heads" because of the ease with which corrections could be made and the immediate response of the engine and chassis. On straightaways, the car stuck to a dead-true line and was almost completely oblivious to variations of cross-wind velocity and direction regardless of road speed. In turns, tire squeal was practically non-existent, due partly to an inflation pressure of 32 psi.

CHASSIS

The fine roadability of the D-500 is due, of course, to the suspension components, which react firmly but without undue harshness. The conventional front suspension is by unequal length wishbones and coil springs that have a rate of 581 pounds per inch, quite stiff for a passenger car. Heavy duty Oriflow shock absorbers are located in the center of each coil spring. A high-rate anti-roll front stabilizer resists "lean" and is aided by a pair of cleverly designed rubber snubbers of increasing resistance mounted on the lower A-arms that contact the frame after either front wheel has risen about 2½ inches above its normal position. The action of the snubbers is unnoticed but prevents sudden "bottoming" of the car, even over the most severe bumps, dips and turns. The rear suspension is also quite conventional in that a pair of fore-and-aft semi-elliptic springs are mounted beneath the frame. These springs have a rate of 110 pounds per inch, again quite stiff and they absorb the driving and braking torque applied to the rear wheels. Heavy duty Oriflow shock absorbers are angularly mounted from the spring retainer plates to a frame crossmember.

As it stands, the D-500 chassis represents one of the best compromises yet in a passenger car between roadability and the quality of the ride. Admittedly, the ride is a bit firm at low speeds, but not jarringly so. And the roadability is indeed first-class. But to make a statement to the effect that it couldn't be improved upon would be fallacious. It can, but not without some sacrifice in the ride. For example, the D-500-1 front coil springs, with their higher rate of 619 pounds per inch, may be used. The rear springs are quite stiff enough for most all purposes. The D-500-1 shocks are extra-heavy duty Oriflows designed for the rigors of dirt track racing. These items plus some non-stock goodies such as a pair of "Traction Masters" and perhaps a set of Air Lifts should satisfy the most brutal road race demands. Incidentally, the installation of a pair of Air Lifts at the front requires that the existing shocks be removed and located elsewhere. Or a pair of adjustable vane-type Houdaille shocks may be mounted on the frame with fabricated brackets. Incidentally, the D-500 and D-500-1 chassis are 1½ inches lower than standard Dodges.

DRIVER COMFORT—HANDLING EASE

Inside the car, the firm but comfortable seats gave good support and long distances had no undue tiring effects. The steering wheel position was a bit too high for personal taste but quite comfortable. Visibility in all directions was excellent and blind spots to left and right were minimized by the inclined windshield posts. The semi-wraparound windshield, typical of all '56 Chrysler products, was distortion free.

The instrument cluster consisted of a round, central speedometer-odometer indicator flanked on the left by an ammeter and fuel level indicator and on the right by an oil pressure gauge and an engine coolant temperature indicator. They were all easy to read day or night, but the view was somewhat obstructed by the full circular horn ring, which at times, introduced some unwanted reflections. Other sources of reflections and glare were practically non-existent, thanks to the dull black finish of the dash panel. The accessory switches were located on either side of the steering column within easy driver reach, but all of them could have been more legibly marked. The multi-speed windshield wipers did a good job under all conditions and, being electrically oper-

PERFORMANCE CHART

Engine RPM	MPH	Road Horsepower
2000	26*	90
2500	56	112
3000	67	122
3500	78	128
4000	89	131
4100	91	132
4500	101	129

*In low range. All others in high.

ACCELERATION

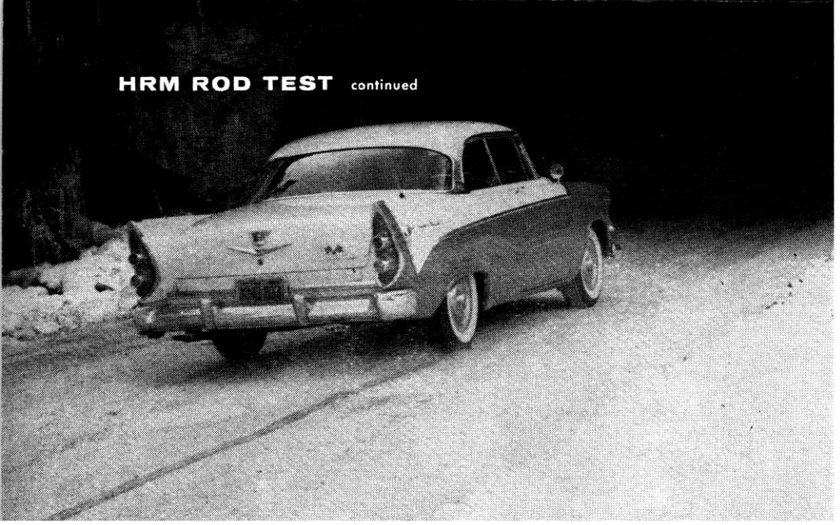
Average 0 to 60 mph	8.8 secs.
Average 0 to 80 mph	15.6 secs.

FUEL AND OIL CONSUMPTION

Acceleration and dyno runs	11.4 mpg
City driving	14.0 mpg
Mountain driving	14.8 mpg
Fast highway driving	17.0 mpg
Normal highway driving (steady speeds)	19.6 mpg
Overall average 1300 mile test	15.3 mpg
Oil consumption 1300 miles	½ pt.

STATISTICS

Weight	3880 lbs.
Weight distribution	56.5% (f) 2200 lbs. 43.5% (r) 1680 lbs.
Braking area	251 sq. in.
Braking effectiveness—front	60%
rear	40%
Ratio of car weight to brake lining area	15.5 lbs. per sq. in.
Transmission type	Chrysler PowerFlite
Rear axle gear ratio	3.73



Rear wheels spinning on icy road, our D-500 enters tunnel at Yosemite National Park.

ated, were not affected by intake manifold vacuum conditions. Unfortunately, there was no tachometer.

Driving the car was made deceptively easy by the convenient PowerFlite push-button panel and the integral "coaxial" power steering. The one complaint in this respect is that the D-500 power steering, as in other Chrysler products, is entirely too easy. Because of this, there is almost a complete lack of road "feel." This also accounted for greatly oversteering the car until we got used to it. The overall steering ratio of 20.1 to 1 made for quick and accurate corrections whenever the need arose and required 3½ turns from lock-to-lock. The value of the power steering unit cannot be denied for effortless city driving and parking, however, it can be more of a hinderance than a help in some cases. In the standard mechanical steering layout, the overall ratio is 27.1 to 1, considerably "slower" and "heavier," nevertheless quite precise and accurate. The mechanical steering requires five turns from lock-to-lock. The merits of the Dodge power steering should be carefully weighed before any rash purchases because of the expense involved in changing over to power steering later on.

Vibrations, wind noise, engine noise and other such bothersome factors that influence driver and passenger fatigue were notably absent, even at speeds well past 100 mph.

BRAKES

The stopping qualities of our D-500 were superior in every respect compared to any other car we have yet tested. One reason for this is due to the very fine two-leading shoe front brakes. Another is due to the fact that Chrysler 12-inch diameter brake assemblies are used front and back on the D-500 and D-500-1. These brakes have a total effective lining area of 251 square inches, while standard Dodges have 173½ square inches. This means a 45 per cent increase of lining area, or 15½ pounds of car weight per square inch of lining area, a figure without equal in American passenger cars and one that approaches some sports and racing types. Even under the most brutal repetitive abuses, not the slightest trace of "fade" was evident. The brakes always pulled the car down to a smooth, straight-line stop. The low pedal position afforded by the bellows-type vacuum booster unit was very convenient and although the pedal stroke was relatively short, it was not hyper-sensitive and had a good "feel" to it. The excellent Chrysler mechanical hand brake is retained. This was one more economy-sized point in favor of the D-500 over its production line brethren.

TRANSMISSION AND DRIVE TRAIN

For the information regarding the PowerFlite torque converter type automatic transmission, check the Plymouth V8 test on page 50 in this issue. The D-500 gear ratios, mechanical pushbutton layout and "kickdown" feature are identical with the Plymouth, except the maximum converter ratio at stall speed, which, for the D-500, is 2.71 at 1850 rpm. Also, the D-500 PowerFlite in our test car had the shift points raised somewhat for better performance. Full throttle shifts from low to high in drive were made at about 70 mph, instead of about 55 mph for standard Dodges. This may be easily done by adjusting the length of the link that extends from the transmission to the carburetor bellcrank. In making this adjustment to suit one's taste in shift points, take it easy—a 1/16 of an inch difference in the length of the link goes a long way. Under all conditions, the PowerFlite delivered smooth but very positive shifts, which suggested a modified Dodge unit or, more likely, a '56 Chrysler unit. The only undesirable feature, which is typical of all PowerFlites so far, is that there is no intermediate speed between low and high. In most cases, on the highway and in the mountains, the normal "kickdown" from drive to low that occurs at full throttle below speeds of about 55 mph, is either inoperative because of road speed or is too much of a reduction. Apparently, this has caused some concern in the Chrysler Corp., because later units this year will incorporate just such an intermediate speed.

The remainder of the D-500 drive train is quite conventional in that a single open driveshaft, with universal joints at each end, transmits engine torque to the final drive hypoid gears. The standard rear axle gear ratio of PowerFlite or synchromesh equipped D-500's is 3.73. But there are a whopping number of optional ratios, the use of which depends upon whether the rear axle is standard or heavy duty. For example, the D-500-1 "package" includes heavy duty 8¼-inch diameter four-pinion ring gears for ratios of 3.54, 3.73, 3.9, 4.1, 4.3 and 4.78. With the 8¾-inch diameter four-pinion ring gears, the available ratios are 3.07, 3.36, 3.54, 3.73, 3.9, 4.1, 4.3, 4.56, 4.78 and 4.89. If one or more of these don't do the job, better give up.

The standard synchromesh sideshift gearbox used on D-500's is a heavy duty unit with the following ratios: Reverse-3.2, low-2.5, second-1.68, high-direct. These ratios have been used on all Chrysler products for many years and one would think that for a high performance car, more compatible intermediate ratios would be used; say about a 2.3 low and a 1.3 second. But alas! Such is not the case. The PowerFlite is the only transmission option. There is no overdrive available. In synchromesh 500's, a heavy duty Borg and Beck 11-inch diameter coil spring pressure plate assembly is used with a total spring pressure of 2016 pounds and an effective area of 123.7 square inches.

In the matter of options, the D-500 beats all comers. For example, a 17 gallon fuel tank is standard with a 20 gallon tank as an option. In the matter of wheels, the standard is a 15 x 5.5 inch "K" rim with a 4½ inch diameter bolt circle held in place by five ½ inch-20 studs. Optional heavy duty 15 inch wheels are available with up to 6½ inch wide "L" rims, a 5½ inch diameter bolt circle using five 9/16 inch-18 studs. So far, we've just touched a fraction of the option list.

ACCELERATION

After becoming acquainted with the car and the manner in which it flatly left stoplight competition, my guess was that our D-500 would run from zero to an honest 60 mph in less than 10 seconds and from zero to 80 mph (also honest) in less than 17 seconds. In the former case, I was pessimistic by about 12 per cent and in the latter by about nine per cent. Starting in our usual manner by holding the brakes and flooring the throttle, our test car hung up a sizzling average of 8.8 seconds for the zero to 60 mph runs, which were made in low. The zero to 80 mph runs averaged out at an equally sensational 15.6 seconds. For these runs, the "D" (drive) button was punched, permitting the normal, full throttle shift into high to occur at about 70 mph. Once, I inadvertently pushed the "L" (low) button and went all the way to 80 mph in low, equivalent to an engine speed of about 6100 rpm. Thanks to some stiff valve springs, no valve "float" actually occurred, but there were some strange and loud noises issuing from the valve train.

Of all the cars we have tested, the D-500 has so far been the quickest passenger car, which is quite a statement, considering our test car was equipped with an automatic transmission. This was forcibly demonstrated to lots of unbelievers over a very wide range of road speeds. For normal passing above the range of the PowerFlite "kickdown," the throttle was merely squeezed until a resistance was felt. For maximum acceleration, forcing the throttle past the resistance caused mechanical actuation of the secondary throttles. The immediate and forceful response at highway speeds was like someone had slipped a 40 per cent slug of nitro to the engine. The choice of carburetors for a single four-throat installation was unquestionably the best from the standpoint of excellent overall performance. Although we normally don't check the top speed of our test cars and we never advocate the use of top speed except in safely conducted speed trials, the D-500 presented an intriguing exception. So we "stopwatched" the car through several runs over a level, mile-long trap. For the sake of your necks and your driver's licenses, take it from me, the D-500 will turn in excess of 125 mph. The D-500-1 will go faster yet. (See NASCAR "Speedweeks" results in this issue.)

Our test car has bagged a few stock car class trophies at the San Fernando drag strip and to date the fastest time in the quarter-mile has been 83.6 mph. A D-500 "Coronet" synchromesh two door, also owned by San Fernando Valley Motors, presently possesses the strip class record of 84.6 mph. It is equipped with a 4.56 rear end gear ratio and an optional camshaft. While the top speeds of the both cars through the quarter-mile are only one mph apart, the elapsed time of the stick-shift car is about 1½ seconds less than that of the PowerFlite-equipped car.

FUEL ECONOMY

When we check fuel economy, we are governed by "tank mileage," which means the tank is carefully "topped off" at each refueling and the gallons of fuel consumed are divided into the miles registered on a corrected odometer. In this phase of our test, the D-500 showed signs of being a real miser, especially on the highway. For the acceleration and dyno runs, the average was a not-so-bad 11.4 mpg. In the city, we averaged 14.0 mpg. In the mountains, the average was 14.8 mpg. For fast highway driving, the average was a very good 17.0 mpg. By maintaining relatively steady speeds and by strict observance of speed limits, we averaged a super-thrifty 19.6 mpg for an overall average of 15.3 mpg. I repeat; the carburetion of the D-500 is hard to beat for overall effectiveness. This should dispel the opinions that a good performing engine is, by necessity, a thirsty one. 'Tain't necessarily so. I frankly believe the 3.73 rear end ratio was more of a help in obtaining good economy than a lower numerical ratio of, say, 3.07 or even down to a 3.54. This arises from the fact that with the 3.73's, the engine was always "free" and never seemed to "lug" or get bogged down, as so often happens when the gear ratio is in the clouds. Perhaps this will inspire some of our manufacturers, who are currently madly charging in the opposite direction.

While our D-500 showed very good penny-pinching characteristics, this was offset somewhat by its thirst for the highest quality fuels. Once, while we were in the woods, we were forced to accept something less than the best in premium gasolines. After a fast run on the highway, the engine was pre-igniting so badly I almost had to beat it with a stick to get it to stop. Such an occurrence is extremely hard on any engine but nevertheless, it served to point out that with a 9¼ to 1 compression ratio and what amounts to about a ¾ camshaft, the "open" hemispherical combustion chamber is nearing its limits with present day gasolines. I might mention that if the engine was pre-igniting at idle speeds, which it was, it's almost a certainty that severe but inaudible detonation had taken place at road speeds; severe enough to cause some combustion chamber surface or component to reach and maintain pre-ignition temperatures at idle. In our case, the spark plugs were obviously the cause of pre-ignition. Also, during this period the fuel economy went right down the drain; it was less than nine mpg when it should have been over 17

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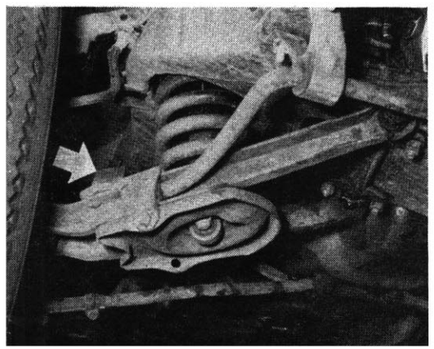
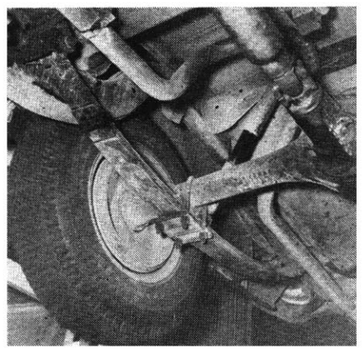
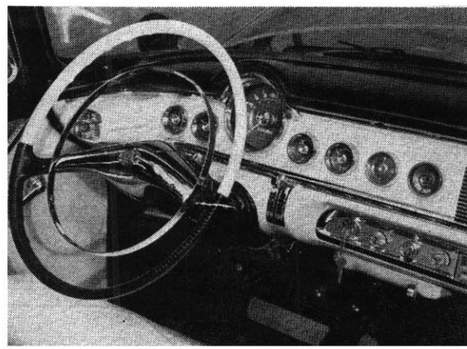


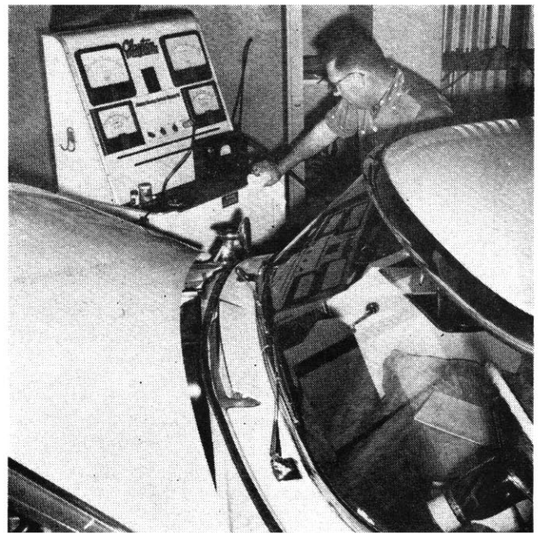
Coil spring front suspension and stiff stabilizer shown. Arrow points to snubber, normally about two inches below frame.



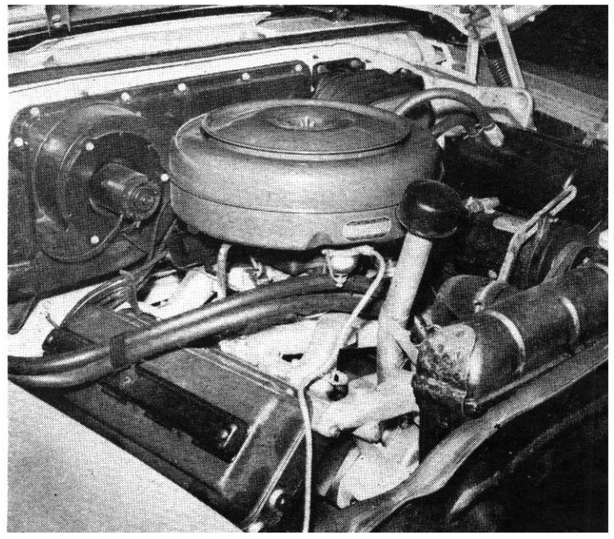
Rear suspension and driveline. Stiff 8-leaf springs and heavy duty Oriflows do the job. Open driveshaft is also heavy duty.



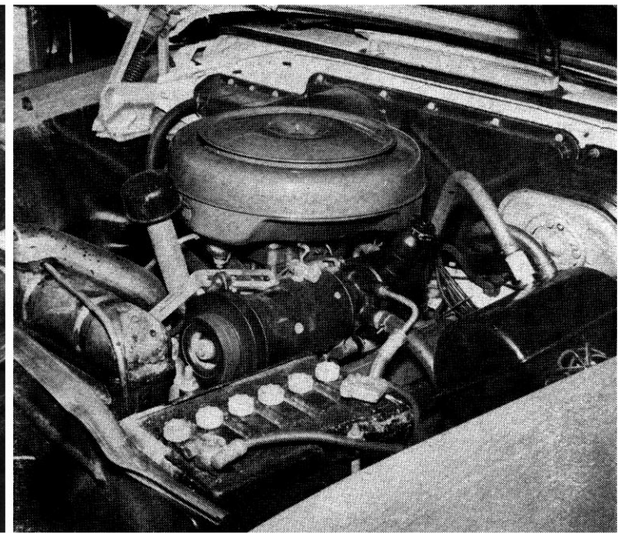
"Office" of the D-500 is comfortable, clean and uncluttered. All controls and accessory switches are within easy driver reach.

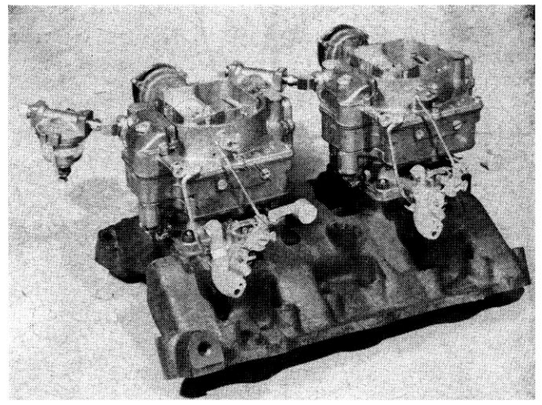


Racer eyeballs mixture analyzer as Dodge is run up on chassis dyno. Performance was better than power output indicated.



Back to the hemisphere for the 315 cu. in. D-500 engines. Old style rocker covers are the clue. Engine is easily accessible.





TOP. Optional D-500 "double log" manifold mounts Carter four-throats. Dodge part number is 1733878 for the manifold.

LEFT. This side of engine compartment contains battery, power steering pump, brake booster accumulator, pedal bellows.

mpg. Except for this one instance, Mobil "Special" premium gasoline was used in our 1300-plus mile test and no other combustion hardships were encountered. Total lubricating oil consumption was less than ½ pint of SAE 30.

ENGINE— OPTIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

For the D-500's, Dodge has once again picked up the fully machined hemispherical chamber in the interests of higher efficiencies and greater power output. All other '56 Dodge V8's use an unmachined "polyspherical" chamber. About all that is used from the standard 315 cubic inch Dodge V8 engine in D-500 engines is the cylinder block, crankshaft, connecting rods, oil pump and pan, water pump, fuel pump, fan and generator. The cylinder head assemblies, camshaft, valve lifters, pushrods, carburetion, ignition system, and pistons are special items made for D-500 engines. The heads contain short but generously-sized intake and exhaust ports. The intake valve diameter is 1⅞ inches and the exhaust valve diameter is 1 17/32 inches. Valve seat angle is 45 degrees in both cases and the valves seat directly on the cast iron heads. The Auto-Lite 4S-250 spark plugs are located on the longitudinal cylinder axes but are offset slightly from the lateral cylinder axes and are joined with the main combustion chamber cavity by a short machined passage. Inner and outer counter-wound valve springs build up a total spring pressure of 225 pounds in the "valve open" position on intakes and exhausts. In line with similar Chrysler Corp. engines, a double rocker arm shaft arrangement is used in conjunction with pearlitic malleable cast iron rockers with a lift ratio of 1.5 to 1 for both valves. The rockers incorporate either adjusting screws and locknuts or self-locking adjusting screws to maintain the correct valve lash. These rockers are a bonanza for owners of earlier Dodge hemisphere V8 engines because they will fit the earlier engines and rocker shafts "as is" and offer an easy way out for valve lash adjustments. The piston crown has been raised to elevate the compression ratio and have clearance notches machined into them for valve clearance.

The D-500 "street" camshaft is timed as follows: Intake opens 12 degrees before top center, closes 60 degrees after bottom center, duration 252 degrees, lift at valve .400 of an inch. Exhaust opens 54 degrees before bottom center, closes 18 degrees after top center, duration 252 degrees, lift at valve .409 of an inch. This cam worked very nicely in our test car and quietly ticked 'em off at idle just like a stocker, in spite of the 30 degree overlap period and what was obviously a relatively fast rate of valve lift. An optional D-500-1 racing cam is listed but the timing figures for it are not yet available. Judging by the way an engine runs with this cam, there is probably an additional 10 degrees or so more timing for both valves with an overlap period of about 40 degrees. The idle with this one is quiet but a bit shaky. If anyone is interested in the "wilder" version, try Dodge part number 1732555. In either case, mechanical hardenable iron valve lifters are stock equipment in 500 engines. Pushrods are three-piece tubular type with hardened ends inserted and spotwelded in place.

There are still more options in the carburetion and manifolding departments. The D-500 single four-throat carburetor is a Carter WCFB-2443-SA and contains an integral automatic choke and primary and secondary venturi diameters of 1 3/16 inches, relatively large for the piston displacement. This is an excellent carburetor due in part to the combination mechanical and venturi velocity actuation of the secondary throttles. It has, however, one fault that is common to most four-throats; it has strong desires to "sign off" in sharp turns, a fault that can be at least partially cured by fabricating and installing a pair of fuel baffles in the bottom of each float chamber. This should be done in such a manner as to avoid interference with the floats, yet minimize surging and sloshing of the fuel during acrobatics.

The optional D-500-1 intake manifold is an exhaust heated cast iron "double log" type that mounts a Carter WCFB-2476-S four-throat at the front and a WCFB-2445-S four-throat at the rear, both of which contain 1 1/16-inch diameter primary and secondary venturii. Why Chrysler Corp. has clung to this type of manifold throughout its modified engine line is a good question. Anyone familiar with the theories and practices of intake manifolding should immediately recognize the inherent limitations of the "double log" manifold at low- and mid-range engine speeds. It would have been just as easy and much more effective in these speed ranges to manufacture a manifold with correctly designed and balanced port routing. At the "top end," it probably doesn't make any measurable difference at all which type is used but with a "double log," one can definitely expect a certain degree of "sponginess" and lack of correct response to throttle settings below engine speeds of about 3000 rpm. But take it or leave it, it's the only other manifold made by Dodge, or anyone else for that matter, that is designed for street operation aside from a couple of competition types that aren't suitable for the purpose. Personally, I'd leave it in favor of the single four-throat manifold-carburetor combination, unless the ultimate goal was track racing, road racing or flat-out top speed where maximum power must be obtained at the sacrifice of low- and medium-speed characteristics. I'm of the opinion that a well designed, exhaust heated triple manifold, mounting three two-throat carburetors, would do much more for engine flexibility and power output in all speed ranges than the best in double four-throat designs. With a triple, three real and definite advantages would be realized: First, the owner would have the option of using all three carburetors or blocking off the center one and using the two on the ends, a layout that has much more in its favor than a single four-throat. Second, the "drop dead" characteristics of most four-throats in violent maneuvers would be eliminated completely. Third, the price of three two-throats is only about half that of a pair of four-throats. I'm all for an "induction system revolution" because, let's not kid ourselves, a practical, everyday-workable and cheap fuel injection system is no closer now than it was three years ago.

The modifications that could be made to the D-500 engines for improved street use are necessarily limited, thanks to the thoroughness of the factory. The compression ratio is high enough as is. The spark advance curve of the D-500 Auto-Lite single coil, dual breaker point ignition is about all the engine can stand. The fuel/air mixture ratio could be checked and corrected in all speed ranges. Additional improvements would involve more time, work and money. For example, the intake and exhaust ports could be cleaned up, polished and carefully matched to their respective manifolds. A pair of correctly designed "scavenge" type exhaust headers would bring about very definite increases. And, of course, there are a multitude of racing camshafts and valve gear components available along with a few excellent battery and magneto ignitions. For the big-bore believers, an increase of cylinder diameter of ⅛ of an inch to 3¾ inches, is just about maximum due to the rather thin cylinder wall of the Dodge engines. A larger bore size would be asking for trouble. It seems that the 3.8 inch stroke would be long enough so the crankshaft is best left alone.

For competition purposes, the hemispherical Dodge V8's have always been favorites and I'm sure everyone is familiar with the impressive list of racing successes. The choice of a Dodge, in preference to larger but similar Chrysler Corp. engines, is very sound because, being smaller in displacement, the Dodge is naturally more efficient and will produce more power per cubic inch of displacement and per pound of engine weight.

Getting back to our test car, the exterior finish (synthetic enamel), trim, fit of doors, hood and trunk panel were all good. Weather protection, freedom from leaks, drafts, etc., was first-class. Interior trim, finish and upholstering was equally good. I have but one gripe and that is that the tailpipes are too close to the ground. Bumper exhaust outlets would eliminate this.

In summarizing, let it be known that the '56 Dodge D-500 is a very satisfying automobile in all respects. Wherever there are stock car races or time trials, these cars will be present in ever-increasing numbers this year. It looks like Dodge is going racing in a big way and for one purpose—to win and show the world a rear view of the "Flight Sweep" design. Lovers of high-performance passenger cars can be assured that they can purchase such a car (for about $200 more than standard Dodges, a ridiculously low price for the quality of the car) and all the necessary equipment to make it equal the race cars in performance, roadability, handling ease, economy of operation and safety.