

CAR LIFE ROAD TEST

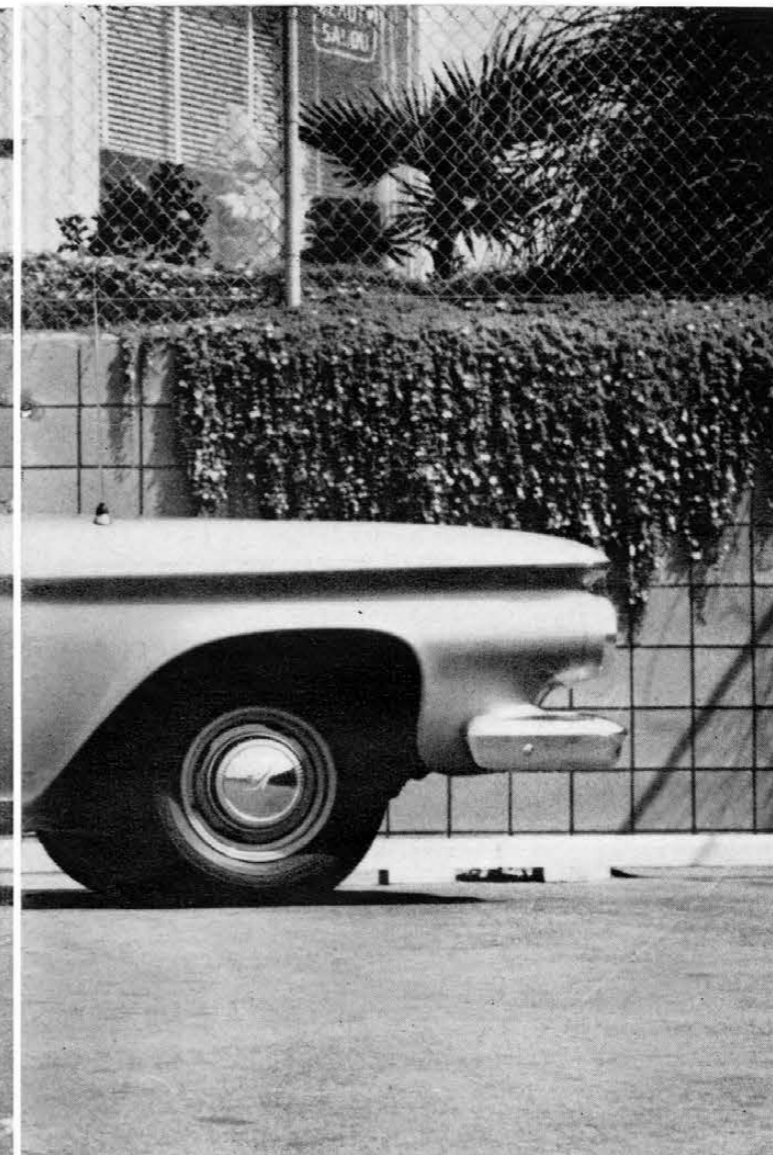
PLYMOUTH SAVOY 6

With a list price directly competitive with all but the cheapest compacts, Plymouth has a strong contender for the car-buyer's dollar in the Savoy Six sedan.

Before the advent of the compacts, the Big Three's 6-cyl models were the front echelon on the price war battlefield; stripped of surplus frills and gimcracks, they could be offered at prices which made them bargains for the buyer who required transportation and little else. Now the compacts bear the brunt of the competitive market (of which they capture an increasingly larger share each month) and the Big Three's Big Sixes are all but overlooked. The most surprising part about it is the fact that these Sixes are still bargains, directly competitive in price with the compacts. Take, for instance, the Plymouth Savoy Six, Chrysler Corporation's least expensive "full-sized" car.

At Detroit (and before accessories) the Savoy 4-door sedan lists for \$2310. The cheapest 4-door compact is the Rambler American at \$1894; and the Falcon, Corvair, Lark, Valiant, Lancer and Tempest prices fill the gap between the Rambler and the Savoy. Buick Special and Oldsmobile F-85 4-doors list for more. Clearly then, if you're considering the inexpensive car market, you must include the Savoy in the picture (as well as Ford's Fairlane Six and Chevrolet's Biscayne Six), unless sheer size of the vehicle is a prerequisite.

Make no mistake, the Plymouth Savoy is a big car.



One of the reasons for Plymouth's large size is the basic body, which also sees service on Dodges and Chryslers. (The "Body and Panel Interchangeability" story in June *Car Life* explained this phenomenon.) This gives you Chrysler elbow-room at Plymouth price. The interior is done in serviceable fabric and the colors harmonize with the exterior color, something for which Plymouth hasn't always been noted. Hip, shoulder and head room, front and back, is adequate for six big adults, providing one of them resembles Toulouse-Lautrec. The huge transmission tunnel makes the middle front seat all right for children but uninhabitable for adults. The seats are comfortably padded and angled, making long-distance traveling easy, as long as you're not driving. If you were stuck with the pilot's chores, then you'd find the driver's seat a bit too low to look over that long hood; minimum forward road vision is about 75 feet.

The shrouded speedometer lurks betwixt the two bug eyes.



It is only 3 in. shorter, yet wider and higher than the Lincoln Continental we tested in March *Car Life*. In equivalent volume, it is 10 cu ft larger than the Lincoln. The Savoy has Plymouth's standard 118-in. wheelbase, yet an over-all length of 209.5 in., leaving a total overhang (front and rear) of 91.5 in. Powering all this is Chrysler Corporation's reliable 6 cyl workhorse engine which was all new in 1960 with overhead valves, ram induction manifold, and the whole thing tipped over 30° to the right so that the hood line could be lowered.

Either manual or automatic transmission is available with this engine and our test car had the 3-speed "TorqueFlite," which we discovered to be admirably suited to the Six's modest horsepower and torque characteristics. The TorqueFlite combines torque converter with 3 forward speeds which may be selected, and held, by push-button controls on the dash. About the only other "extras" on the car were an outside rear-view mirror, a heater, an antenna (without a radio) and one of Plymouth's "square" steering wheels (actually round with flats on top and bottom allowing more room between wheel and seat). This brought the total "as tested" price to \$2694.40, which included dealer servicing and freight, but not taxes or licenses. Since these charges apply to compacts, too, our Plymouth still is within the compact price range.





The driver's duties are further complicated by the fact that the speedometer is deep within a Buck Rogers-styled housing atop the dash. The speedo is of the thermometer type and, while probably an engineering triumph, is difficult to read either day or night, requiring that attention and focus be taken from the road and concentrated upon the instrument to discern velocity. As if that weren't enough, reflections from the inside of the compound-curved windshield turn the glass virtually opaque. Then, too, the 30.16:1 steering ratio (without power assist) requires a ridiculous 5.5 turns from lock to lock. Needless to say, this "soft" steering contributes little to directional stability on undulating, high-crown roads.

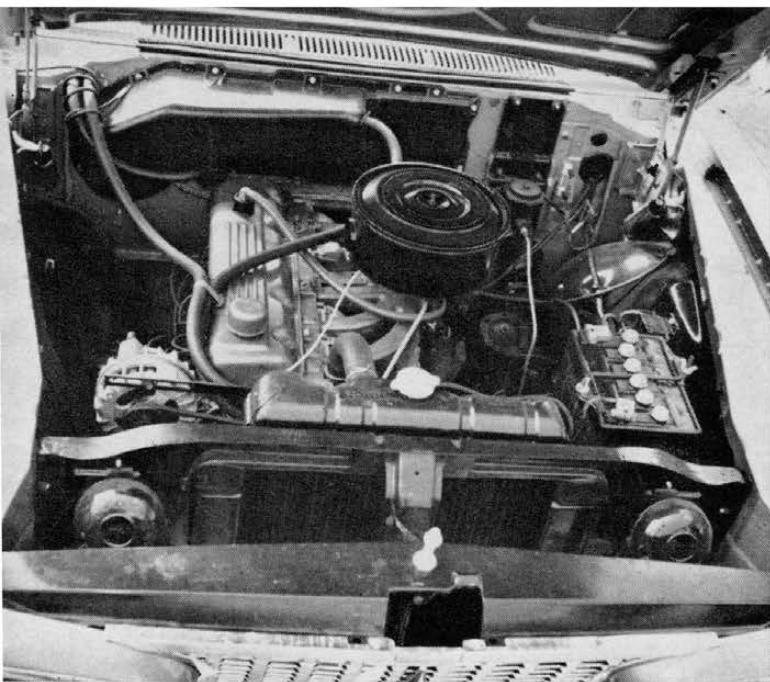
However, despite equally soft shock dampers and springs, the Plymouth somehow manages to handle fairly well at normal highway speeds; although it tends toward the "marshmallow" feel, it does stick well. This probably is a function of Plymouth's well-engineered torsion bar (front) and leaf spring (rear) arrangement which seems to be one of the more stable systems being mass produced in the U.S. today.

Open road performance of the Savoy Six is adequate, but not exciting. After all, pushing a 3505-lb car around with only 145 bhp is quite a task. Without the torque multiplication of the converter, the Savoy would be com-

pletely dead. As it is, it does the standing quarter-mile in 20 sec, will reach a surprising 93.5 (actual) mph and will return an average of 16-19 mpg in fuel consumption. Our average, for nearly 1000 miles of driving, was 16.83 mpg, which we consider pretty fair, in view of the mass of vehicle being forced through the air. The TorqueFlite transmission and rear-end gearing (3.31:1) proved well-chosen for this task: With maximum horsepower coming at 4000 rpm, the automatic shifts were made at a point just slightly over that when full-throttle starts were made and the car's top speed coincided almost exactly with 4000 rpm engine speed. With this gearing, the maximum torque is at 65 mph, just right for highway cruising. The husky 6-cyl engine is turning only 2500 rpm at that point, so obviously it can withstand hours of such treatment with no ill effect. This also reduces noise level and only a slight bit of wind whistle reaches passengers as they rush along almost silently. Adding to this is the unit construction of the chassis/body, which virtually eliminates squeaks, rattles and groans.

Plymouth, which helped make the tailfin popular in 1956, now has dropped the shark-like protrusions completely. Well, almost completely. Some models of Plymouth have a slight, vestigial "tail-bone" down the middle

Alternator and ram manifold form the engine sandwich.



Spare tire cringes helplessly in the cavernous trunk.



of the rear deck cover. Replacing the Moby Dick look, however, is the sculptured look and, while Plymouth has gone to some extremes in sculpting, on the whole it isn't displeasing. The concave rear quarter-panels do have taillights added on like after-thoughts and the grille resembles a fugitive cabbage grater. Accent trim doesn't help at all. Viewed from the side or rear, the car is reasonably attractive; from the front, well . . . it's unmistakable.

Exterior finish was, like the interior, better than we've come to expect from the Chrysler Corp.

Panel fit was, if anything, a shade better than usual and the backyard washing test produced no puddles on the floor mats. Our only legitimate complaint was that there were numerous splotches of glue, grease and gunk left all over the car when it was assembled and serviced. These were on the mirror, the dash, the doors (inside and out) and the upholstery. Perhaps Plymouth should furnish new owners with a spot removal kit—or just paint all its cars a greasy thumb color.

Trunk space follows the pattern of the rest of the car and is really cavernous. One could load the kitchen sink into this compartment and have space enough left over for a family's 2-week vacation luggage requirements. Even the spare tire, mounted on the floor in one corner, doesn't appreciably diminish this vastness. Here, then, is why the Plymouth Savoy Six ranks as a bargain: It has voluminous, completely usable interior space.

The Plymouth is roughly one-third larger over-all than the average compact and has almost double the trunk space of the compact. If you're a big-family man with, say, 5 youngsters to haul around, then you'll appreciate this space. And you can take along enough luggage to last a month. A word of caution about such loads: the springs and shocks probably will need assistance from "helper" devices to adequately cope with the extra weight. Then, too, normal highway speeds (50–65 mph) are easily maintained at a reasonable fuel consumption rate, only a few mpg less than you'd get with the slower, less roomy compact. The Plymouth Savoy Six, then, is an adequate car—in handling, performance and appearance—but outstanding in cheap, comfortable transportation. ■

Spring-loaded license plate hides some wrinkles, gas cap.



CAR LIFE ROAD TEST



PLYMOUTH SAVOY 6

SPECIFICATIONS

List price	\$2310
Price, as tested	2694
Curb weight, lb.	3505
Test weight	3835
distribution, %	54/46
Tire size	7.00-14
Tire capacity, lb.	4280
Brake lining area	184
Engine type	6 cyl, ohv
Bore & stroke	3.4 x 4.125
Displacement, cc.	3688
cu in.	225
Compression ratio	8.2
Bhp @ rpm	145 @ 4000
equivalent mph	93.5
Torque, lb.-ft.	215 @ 2800
equivalent mph	65.4

GEAR RATIOS

3rd (1.00), overall	3.31
2nd (1.45)	4.80
1st (2.45)	8.10
1st (2.45 x 2.2)	17.85

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase, in.	118
Tread, f and r	60.9/59.6
Over-all length, in.	209.5
width	80.0
height	54.4
equivalent vol, cu ft.	527
Frontal area, sq ft.	24.2
Ground clearance, in.	4.7
Steering ratio, o/a	30.16
turns, lock to lock	5.5
turning circle, ft.	42.2
Hip room, front	56.7
Hip room, rear	62.8
Pedal to seat back, max.	39.0
Floor to ground	13.7
Luggage vol, cu ft.	31.0

PERFORMANCE

Top speed (4000), mph	93.5
best timed run	
3rd ()	
2nd (4150)	67
1st (4200)	40

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Normal range, mpg	16/19
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ACCELERATION

0-30 mph, sec.	4.4
0-40	7.4
0-50	10.7
0-60	15.3
0-70	22.5
0-80	33.0
0-100	
Standing ¼ mile	20.0
speed at end	66.6

PULLING POWER

3rd, lb/ton @ mph	235 @ 45
2nd	330 @ 34
1st	460 @ 25
Total drag at 60 mph, lb.	174

SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph, actual	29.7
60 mph	56.1
90 mph	85.6

CALCULATED DATA

Lb/hp (test wt)	26.4
Cu ft/ton mile	91.3
Mph/1000 rpm	23.4
Engine revs/mile	2570
Piston travel, ft/mile	1770
Car Life wear index	45.5

ACCELERATION & COASTING

