

PLYMOUTH

By **JIM WHIPPLE**

PLYMOUTH, a top-notch riding and handling car in 1957 and 1958, has come up with another hot one in 1959.

It's not as completely new a car as its competitors in the low-priced field, but it offers the comforting dependability of a thoroughly tested and seasoned car.

Plymouth has changed the names of its three lines for '59, which will confuse you until you know that the lowest-priced models are now called Savoy (the name Plaza has been dropped).

The medium-priced '59 Plymouths are Belvederes and the top-of-the-line, most luxuriously finished and trimmed, are known as Furys. The luxuriously-finished, high-powered, sport-touring convertible and hardtop (last year's Fury) are called Sports Furys.

Although the basic dimensions of length, width and height remain as last year, Plymouth engineers pointed out several improvements in passenger compartment design. First of all, the driveshaft tunnel has been reduced in

height where it passes under the rear seat to give more room for seat springs, and secondly the seat springs themselves have been improved to give better support and cushion action at this point.

As a result, the center-of-the-seat passenger has a much more comfortable ride, more in keeping with the extremely comfortable side-passenger seating areas.

Headroom, legroom and seating width are very good in all models except the two-door hardtops, where the roof line sweeps down over the back seat, which in turn is lower than the rear cushions of sedans and four-door hardtop.

However, for the front seat passengers, Plymouth has dreamed up a real treat—swivel seats. These marvels of common sense are available on the Sport Fury Hardtop and Convertible only. However, I think that public clamor fed back to the factory by the dealers will force Plymouth to make them available on more models. These seats are optional at extra cost but I'm

sold on them and would rather have them than any other extra-cost item except the heater.

These seats represent a clean-cut design home-run for Chrysler Corporation and are another reason for keeping your eye on what the Forward Look boys are cooking up.

The swivel seats are mounted on a strong frame which slides up and forward or down and back on tracks, just like an ordinary seat. The seat backs tilt forward to permit rear seat passengers to exit just as in conventional two-door cars.

However, when you reach down to the outside of the cushion frame and touch the latch and move your outside foot over the door sill the seat "follows" you out of the car and you just put your feet down and stand up naturally.

This swivel seat is not a gimmick but a real step forward in motor car design, and I recommend that you stop in at a Plymouth showroom and complete your education. Now, the industry's engineers have still got the

PLYMOUTH
is the car
for you

if... You appreciate outstanding riding comfort, plus top-notch roadability at high speeds.

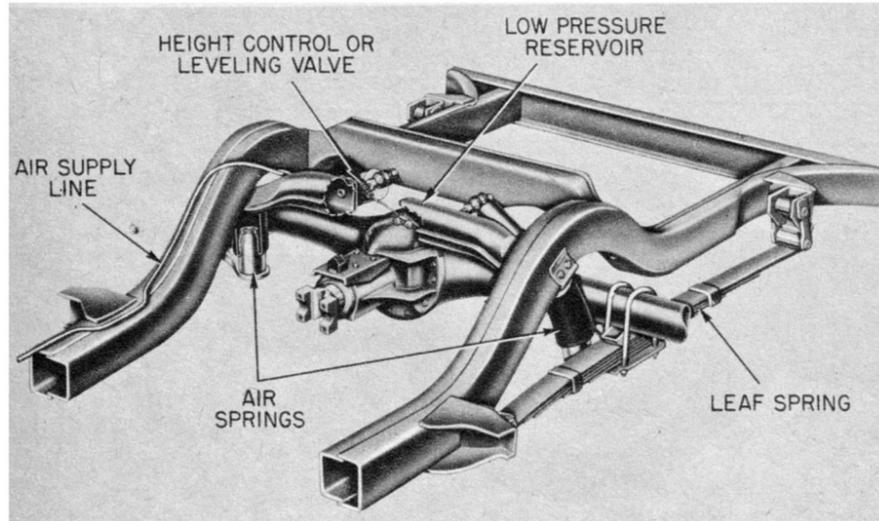
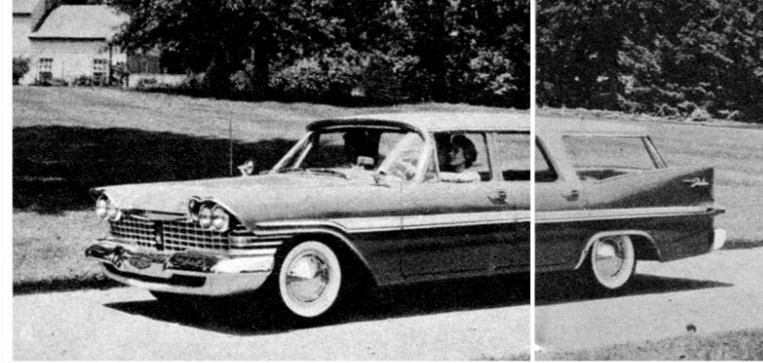
if... The advantages in ease of control and maneuverability of quicker steering are important to your driving.

if... Good performance is more important than economy in a V-8 engine.

if... You are willing to forego automatic transmission in favor of overdrive to get real economy with the six-cylinder engine.

PLYMOUTH SPECIFICATIONS

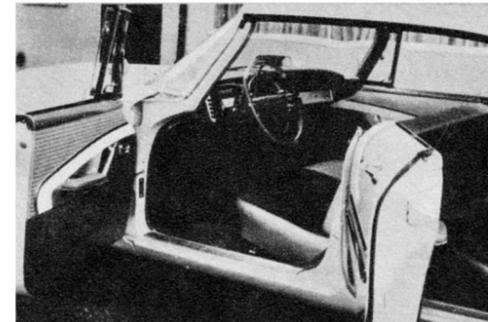
ENGINES	6	V-800	V-800 (Super-Pac)
Bore and Stroke	3.25 in. x 4.63 in.	3.91 in. x 3.31 in.	3.91 in. x 3.31 in.
Displacement	230 cu. in.	318 cu. in.	318 cu. in.
Compression Ratio	8.0:1	9.0:1	9.0:1
Max. Brake Horsepower	132 @ 3600 rpm	230 @ 4400 rpm	260 @ 4400 rpm
Max. Torque	205 @ 1200 rpm	340 @ 2400 rpm	345 @ 2800 rpm
DIMENSIONS			
Wheelbase	118.0 in.		
Overall Length	208.2 in.		
Overall Width	78.0 in.		
Overall Height	56.6 in.		
TRANSMISSIONS	Synchromesh, Overdrive, Powerflite, Torqueflite		



Styling changes for '59 Plymouth include Sport Deck (left), which is standard on Sport Fury Models and optional on every line except the station wagons. Sport Suburban (right), heads a line of ten station wagon models in 1959.

Plymouth's Torsion-Aire ride now includes optional air springs, used in conjunction with the regular rear leaf springs, to provide "self-leveling action". When car is empty, air springs support about 200 lbs. of axle load. Air springs carry added passenger weight.

Entrance and exit room in '59 Plymouth is good. Tunnel "hump" on floor has been reduced. Passenger area is uncrowded.



This swivel seat is not a gimmick but a rear step forward in motor car design, and I recommend that you stop in at a Plymouth showroom and complete your education. Now, the industry's engineers have still got the massive problem of getting people out of the rear seats easily... I think they're going to have a long struggle with that one!

I found once again that Plymouth's ride, roadability and handling ease are tops in its class. The car corners crisply at low speeds with a minimum of body lean or tire squeal, and at high speeds tracks around curves with the least possible plowing or drifting.

Over big bumps I found that it's hard to get a Plymouth to bounce or toss; on the smaller ones most of the vibration is soaked up.

The '59 Plymouth is one car that I would order with power steering regardless of whether I intended to use the car in city streets or on super highways. Not that manual steering isn't safe and practical, particularly on six-cylinder models with manual transmissions, but power steering brings with it a reduction in steering wheel turns of from 5.2 (full right to full left) down to 3.5. Coupled with a precise recirculating ball gear in a power-assist unit that still retains sufficient "road feel", this "quick" steering ratio gives effortless control. I can snake the '59 Plymouth through a lot full of

parked cars or a crowded back alley with a deft speed that's simply out of the question with most other cars.

Brakes are smooth and positive in action and, as always, operate in direct proportion to the effort you put on the pedal.

Under the hood the '59 Plymouths can be had with the lowest powered six in the field or the highest rated "standard" V-8. The 132 horsepower six is available in Savoy and Belvedere models and on some of the station wagons.

The standard V-8 is the 318-cu. in. model with a two-barrel carburetor. It's rated at 230 horsepower and provides brisk, powerful performance. For Plymouth buyers who want outstanding acceleration there's a whopping big, 360-cu. in. displacement engine called the Golden Commando that turns out 305 horsepower with a single four-barrel carburetor and dual exhausts. There's also a "Super-Pak" version of the 318-cu. in. engine that has a four-barrel carburetor and a dual exhaust system. It develops 260 horsepower.

The very good Torqueflite automatic transmission is available on all V-8 engines as a premium transmission costing more than the standard Powerflite automatic transmission.

Powerflite is the only automatic available on the six and for my money you'd be better off with overdrive or

even the three speed manual.

The reason is that the Plymouth six develops its best pulling power (i.e. torque) at relatively low rpm, while Powerflite's two-speed gearing and torque converter combination requires a rather high engine speed in low gear.

Plymouth's low body sides and low, flat hood make for unusually large glass areas and good vision in all directions. The wraparound windshield is sensibly designed without any "dog legs" that cut into the front door opening space and threaten the driver and passengers' kneecaps when they're getting into or out of the car. One design feature which will appeal to those who admired last year's Imperial is the new rear Sport Deck, with a continental-style wheel cover.

The instrument panel has been redesigned to locate the speedometer, fuel and temperature gauges in a wedge-shaped cluster directly in front of the wheel. The glass covering the black dial surface is protected from side and top dazzle and also hooded to prevent instrument light feedback into the windshield at night.

Transmission control buttons have been placed on the left-hand edge of this instrument grouping. Frankly, I didn't find the new location as convenient as the previous button cluster in the lower left corner of the windshield. There, they were out of the way but easy to reach directly off the

wheel rim rather than behind it.

Although I wasn't able to try out Plymouth's new air suspension, it sounds like an ideal supplement to the standard torsion bar and leaf spring suspension system. Plymouth air suspension takes the form of air-filled "helper spring" bags that are connected to the frame side members and the rear leaf springs. There are no front units.

A small, engine-driven air compressor supplies air under pressure to these bags when the car frame sinks too close to the rear axle and opens a valve. This occurs when the passenger and luggage (or cargo) load becomes too great for the soft leaf springs to support at proper (i.e. design) level.

When the load is removed the valve bleeds pressure from the air bags and the car (or wagon) returns to proper level. This system is as simple as possible and retains all the shock absorbing abilities of the conventional leaf springs, yet enables the engineers to install springs that are as soft as possible, providing maximum comfort when the car is lightly loaded.

SUMMING UP: Plymouth is a top-notch riding and handling car with ease of control, excellent vision and some smooth and powerful V-8 engine-and-automatic transmission teams. It's just about the ideal car for high-speed cross-country touring for either a single businessman or a fair-sized family. ●

PLYMOUTH CHECK LIST		5 CHECKS MEAN TOP RATING IN ITS PRICE CLASS
PERFORMANCE	Plymouth's premium Golden Commando engine with its 361 cubic inches gives it the power leadership of its class. The standard 318 cu. in. engine leads others in its class.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
STYLING	Plymouth's sleek "Forward Look" styling has been given some fresh new twists front and rear, making it one of the best looking cars on the road.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
RIDING COMFORT	Here, once again, the superb engineering of Plymouth's chassis and suspension gives it the outstanding ride of its field. A certain amount of body shake on very rough roads detracts from the car's overall comfort.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
INTERIOR DESIGN	Plymouth's width, driver and passenger vision, headroom and legroom are excellent. Driveshaft tunnel hump has been reduced and more "spring" added to center of seats.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
ROADABILITY	Plymouth cannot be challenged in roadholding or solid behavior in taking curves at high speeds. Its roadability is a strong reason for recommending Plymouth as a high-speed distance car.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
EASE OF CONTROL	Plymouth's new power steering is more precise, and needs fewer turns from left to right. Combined with excellent brakes (without power) it provides excellent control without strain or tension.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
ECONOMY	Plymouth Six must be teamed with overdrive for adequate economy. The eights need Torqueflite automatic or overdrive for economy, even so they will use somewhat more gasoline than average.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
SERVICEABILITY	Plymouth Six and Golden Commando are easily accessible engines. The chassis is easy to service and suspension adjustment has been improved.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
WORKMANSHIP	Plymouth has an excellent reputation for reliability of all mechanical components. Finish and fit of trim have been brought up to satisfactory levels.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
VALUE PER DOLLAR	With its pleasing styling, superb ride, handling and ease of control, plus mechanical reliability, Plymouth is an excellent buy, especially for the distance driver.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

PLYMOUTH OVERALL RATING... 4.4 CHECKS