



1960 DART



ROAD TEST



WHILE THE RUSSIANS WERE BUSY tracking their Lunik III around the moon and the Los Angeles Dodgers were busy winning the World Series, the Dodge Division of the Chrysler Corporation was busy making news of its own—with the announcement of the new "small" Dart. Though it's far from small, it's certainly an exciting package—which we found by driving it cross-country for 2447 miles from Detroit to Los Angeles.

Typical comments we received whenever we stopped were these: "Is this Dodge's new small car?" "What a nice-looking car—the new Dodge?" "Is this the new Dodge economy car?" "What a fantastic-looking engine! Is that the exhaust system?" "Is this the Dodge that competes with Chevy?"

Patiently we explained to them that no, this was not Dodge's new *small* car. That yes, we thought Dodge had improved their styling this year. That no, this particular model was not the

HOW IT'S PUT TOGETHER We hope that our test car is the criterion for all Darts that roll off the assembly lines. If so, the Chrysler Corp. has licked a quality control problem that's hounded them since '57. This Dart was built—and well. Not a single body rattle after over 2500 miles of testing (and with no adjustments in between). Come to think of it, there was one rattle—in the driver's door, probably brought on by the fact that it was slightly out of adjustment and needed extra hard slamming to completely close it. But, it rattled only when you closed the door, not during driving.

One minor "tinkle" was traced down to the "Phoenix" emblem on the glove compartment door. "Dash panels," admits Dodge Chief Engineer George Gibson, "are a problem. We're trying to track down a few rattles. Minor rattles are apt to be intensified because of the solidness of the unit body construction; when you don't hear major ones, you'll hear minor ones."

A 340-hp ram induction V8, torsion bar suspension, unit body construction . . . they all add up to a hot-performing, good-handling, well-built car. With 2500 miles of cross-country testing behind us, we feel safe in predicting a great future for the Dodge Dart!

**MT Test Report
by Walt Woron**

THE CAR AT A GLANCE

THINGS WE LIKE

- Good handling, quick steering
- Comfortable ride
- Lots of performance
- Good driving position
- Solid construction
- Effective brakes
- Legible speedometer
- Large trunk compartment
- Practically distortion-free windshield
- Fast-working heater and defroster

THINGS WE DON'T LIKE

- Poor fuel economy
- Transmission pushbutton controls
- Poor engine to service
- Other instruments not so legible
- Spare tire hard to remove
- Wiper speed too slow and sweep not wide enough

economy version but that the basic Dart with the slant-six was Dodge's economy car. That no, the fantastic appearance of the engine was due to the ram induction system—and that was what made this Dodge Dart a real stormer. That yes, this car was intended to compete not only with Chevrolet model-for-model and series-for-series, but also with Ford and *even* Plymouth.

Using the same basic body as Plymouth on the same 118-in. wheelbase (four ins. shorter than the standard Dodge), the Dodge Dart is offered in three series—Seneca, Pioneer and Phoenix—and offers a choice of 20 different models (not counting four wagons on the longer wheelbase). At the time we arranged for a test, the D-500 ram induction package was to be available only on the top-line Phoenix series; this is what we asked for. (Now the D-500 can be had on *any* Dodge—for from \$332 to \$382 extra; it includes TorqueFlite.)

THE CAR WE TESTED Basic specs on our test Dodge Dart: Phoenix series (compares in appointments and price to Plymouth Fury, Ford Galaxie and Chevy Impala). Body style—4-door sedan. Engine and drive train—383-cu.-in. V8 with twin 4-barrel carburetors and ram induction, TorqueFlite 3-speed push-button transmission (D-500 engine package), limited-slip differential. Accessories—power steering, power brakes, radio, heater. A noteworthy extra—seat belts. Factory list price of car as equipped—approximately \$3150.

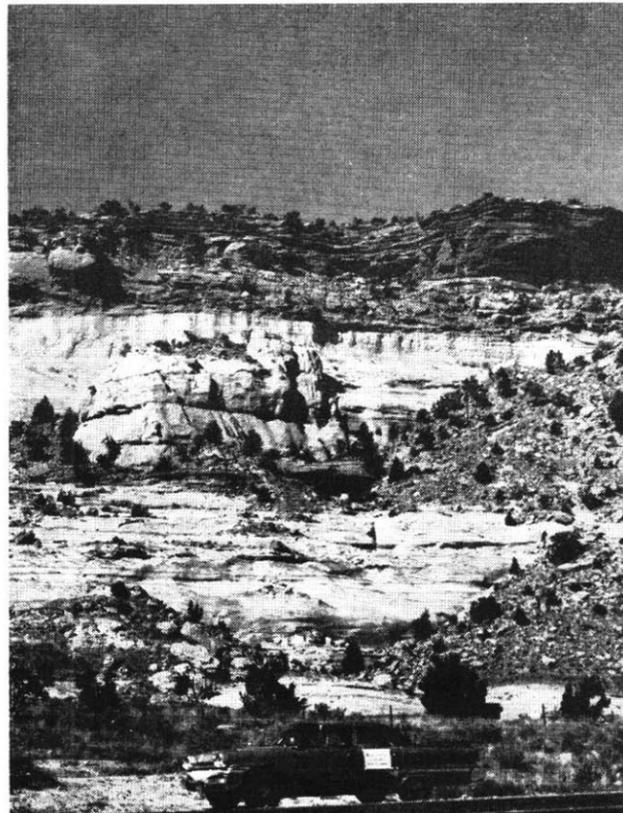
Over the long haul it seems likely that Dodges will be less rattle-prone. Chrysler Proving Ground tests show that prototype models have shattered previous durability records during intensive day-and-night driving by lasting up to four times longer than previous models before showing comparable signs of wear.

GETTING IN AND OUT Four-door sedans are always easier to get in and out of than two-door sedans or hardtops and our test car was no exception. Pull-up door handles on the Dart work freely. The door swings out wide to one of two positions: at a lesser angle in tight parking spots; wider, to almost 80 degrees, for easier entrance and exist. There's more kneeroom getting into the driver's seat because of the less severe wrap to the windshield (though it was never bad on Chrysler products). Even though headroom is down from '59 by almost an inch in front and is the same as it was in the rear, we noticed no discomfort in getting in or out. Headroom, legroom and hip-room are comparable to Chevy, Ford and, naturally, Plymouth. The inside door handles, integral with the armrest and falling right to hand, rate our plaudits.

IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT The seatback on the driver's side is four ins. higher than the passenger's side (24 ins. instead of 20) for the purpose of providing more support to the back. (This it does, as we'll discuss under the heading of "On the

DODGE DART

continued



What About Models Other Than The One We Tested?

All Dodge Darts are basically the same. They vary in appointments, in models available, in price (from \$2076 to \$2736, factory list), in performance and in fuel economy. You can apply what you read in this road test, other than performance and gas mileage, to any Dart you may be considering. Then, keep this in mind:

If you want the same performance, but want a car that's less plush . . .

. . . you can get the D-500 package in the mid-range Pioneer series and in the low-priced Seneca series.

If you don't need all the performance that ram induction will give you . . .

. . . you can get the Red Ram V8 of 230 or 245 hp, getting better fuel economy and save money by buying regular gasoline.

If fuel economy is your aim . . .

. . . order the Slant Six of 145 hp in any one of the three series, including the plush Phoenix we tested. You should get at least 25 mpg on regular gasoline.

Highway.") This is an increase over last year and a definite step in the right direction, as a team of safety experts at U.C.L.A. attests; optional headrests, as provided on some competitive cars like Rambler, are the next step in cutting down on injuries due to whiplash. Increased seat depth for more thigh support also eliminates one of our objections to last year's Dodge. Greater cushion depth is another bonus gained to a large measure because of the lowered floorpans in these unit body cars. The door armrest is usable and never in the way.

The elliptical steering wheel (17½ ins. wide, 16½ ins. deep) is standard with automatic transmissions and provides at least a full inch additional thigh clearance. It's of thin translucent plastic, with thick handgrips at the two sides. The handgrips fall at a comfortable position, but when you have to turn the wheel more than a quarter-turn and take a new hold on the wheel, the thinner section feels quite odd. The translucent section may also bother some drivers from a visual standpoint. This wheel eliminates the horn ring, using a four-pronged horn depressor that fits the contour of the deep-dish wheel. The best way to use this is with either thumb, without removing your hands from the wheel, though it's a new habit we had to learn.

The throttle has a comfortable slant, is located close to the brake for easy foot swiveling and gives only a normal amount of resistance to foot pressure. It is not stiff as are some setups with dual quad or triple carbs.

The new "see-through" speedometer of clear plastic that allows daylight to filter through and show up the numbers, is highly legible. Large numbers, a bright red needle and a high position on the dash all add to legibility (this is the same type speedometer used on '54 Fords and unaccountably dropped the following year). It's just as easy to read at night, and a hood over it prevents reflections from bouncing off the windshield. Speaking of reflections, the only ones noticed during daytime driving were off the top of the steering wheel crossbar when driving into the sun.

The rest of the instruments don't have very high legibility: it's hard to tell if the warning lights for charging rate and oil pressure are off or on, except at night or in the shade; the fuel gauge is quite small, not making for quick reading; and, the temperature gauge is equally small. Though the control knobs each extend out a couple of inches, they are located where they wouldn't do much harm to kneecaps if a sudden stop flew you forward. The dash is padded. The glove compartment, of normal size, is too far away for safe use by the driver while on the road, but the ashtray is large and centrally located. In these days of less attentiveness by drivers to the business of driving, these seemingly insignificant items take on greater importance.

The windshield, even though it has less wrap than previous models, has more glass area and provides better vision. Distortion is even less than in '59 and is by far the best of any of the '60s we've been in. The top section of the test car's windshield had the optional—and very nearly unnoticeable—tint to prevent glare; it worked effectively. Sun visors swing down and to the side quite freely and when up lock into a "stowed" position. Window cranks have a good ratio, wind the windows all the way down both front and rear. Front window vents are now pulled open instead of being pushed open; the control is on the forward side and is more effective.

PASSENGER'S SEATS The four-inch difference between the seatback for the driver and front seat passenger is actually too much; it's nice for draping your arm on the top of the seatback if you're conversing with rear seat passengers, but is not as restful for straight sitting. Rear seatbacks are a couple of inches higher. Headroom, legroom and hiproom are comparable to Plymouth, Ford and Chevy. Good footroom is provided for rear seat passengers, with almost the effect of a footrest under the front seats; if you raise your foot, though, the front seat passenger or driver is going to feel it. Armrests are comfortable. Average height persons will have no trouble seeing over the top of the front seat and dash; nothing obstructs side vision.

CITY DRIVING The key is in a fairly logical position on the dash and has a nice accompanying feature in the rubstrip that prevents a keychain from scratching the dash. Starts, both "cold" and "hot," were always easy except for this: When we got the engine running we had to be careful to have our foot down hard on the brake pedal, otherwise when we pushed the "Drive" button of the TorqueFlite transmission the car would leap forward—once, to our consternation, with grim determination toward the garage door. At other times, the engine would stall and we would have to go through what to us seems to be an unnecessary amount of work to get the engine started again: reach forward with the left hand to punch the "Neutral" button, turn on the key with the right hand, reach forward with the left hand again to punch "Drive" or "Reverse," depending on the direction you want to go. As too often happened, the engine would stall, seemingly a characteristic of too many hot-performing pushbutton-equipped cars we've driven.

As you can gather, transmission pushbutton controls on the dash still don't get our vote, especially when a lever is so much easier to operate. When you can punch the button and forget about it, fine, but when you have to, or want to, downshift and punch the "Neutral" button instead it can be disconcerting. And when you're coming to a halt and want to punch the "Neutral" button to take it out of gear and punch the "Reverse" button instead—because they're all the same size, shape and color—you come to a pretty quick and juddering halt.

After initially starting the engine, and comfortably settling down in the seat, our first impression was that here was a car that had more reserve power on tap than could ever be used. Such a throaty roar as you press down the throttle and release all 340 horses straining at their bits! When all eight barrels of both carburetors cut in—as they do at full throttle—you had better automatically think about stopping because you'll be at the next intersection before you know it. Then, you settle down and realize that you'd better use full throttle only when you absolutely need it. If you're not a considerate driver, this can make for a very uncomfortable drive for your passengers: the sudden lunge forward, the sudden stops (though the Dart does not dip badly on braking).

The size of the Dart, even though it's far from being "compact," allows you to get around through traffic quite easily. Actually, it's only about nine ins. shorter and two ins. narrower than last year's Dodge Custom Royal, putting it in about the size bracket of the Ford and Chevy, so it must be the shorter wheelbase that gives you the feeling of greater maneuverability. You can see all four fenders, unless you're short, in which case the cowl-mounted rear view mirror will block your view. The cut-down rear fins are good for guiding you into tight parking places and they don't ever give you the impression that someone is creeping up into the inside lane—as some high fins do. Side view mirrors, of course, help to make driving more pleasant; the optional driver's mirror, with its inside lever control, helps to prevent those embarrassing moments when you might cut unintentionally in front of another driver in the next lane. The optional side view mirror on the passenger's side is more trouble than it's worth: it's a two-man operation to get it adjusted and this has to be done when you are at a standstill; your passenger cannot reach it from the inside unless he happens to be a gibbon.

No particular side swerve was noted on streetcar tracks, nor did longitudinal strips of any kind throw the car off course. Drainage ditches did not have to be approached with any particular caution, for at normal speeds there was no bottoming or hard rebound. Clearance over the most severe driveway ramps is adequate. Even though rear overhang has been cut down by only three ins., the upsweep of the body from behind the rear fender cutout is what keeps the rear bumper from scraping.

ON THE HIGHWAY Many times on the drive from Detroit to Los Angeles we had cause to remember Chief Engineer Gibson's

remarks about their ram induction engine. "Expect lots," he said, "from 35 mph on up to 90. It's designed for mid-range passing—and that's where it's really got it. The most important thing we've done is to reduce your time in the passing lane."

That they have, making the passing of other cars or trucks almost a pleasure instead of an eye-straining, gambling chore. You're behind a truck on a two-lane road, doing 40 mph. You see your way clear, stomp the throttle and in less than seven seconds you're back in the right lane, doing 70! If you happen to be behind a car doing 60 and punch the throttle for maximum acceleration, you're around him in eight seconds—but watch it, for you're doing close to 90! You want to be particularly careful where this may be foolhardy or illegal. In a state like California, for example, they enforce the letter of the law on the new 65-mph limit, which says in effect, "If the car in front of you is doing 64 mph, you'd better not get caught doing 66 to pass him!"

The response when the high-speed jets of both carburetors cut in is instantaneous. It comes on with a roar, pushing you back in your seat and the car leaps ahead like a ram rushing to butt a challenger to his supremacy over his flock. This, of course, enabled us to make fast cruising speeds across country, keeping up fast average times without actually having to vary speeds greatly. Comfortable cruising speeds can be maintained at just about any increment you wish—from 50 on up to 80 (where allowed). Speedometer error was slight, making for accurate adherence to averages we wanted to maintain over the road.

Normally, the only noticeable engine noise was when we tromped the throttle. Dodge engineers said they had cut down on road noises ("... the cause of drowsiness, headache and fatigue . . .") created by tires, transmitted up through the suspension system and body panels. After driving for such long stretches (up to 1106 miles) and long periods of time (up to 19½ hours on the road) we agree with them. If these road noises are the things that caused our fatigue and sleepiness before, then they've sure engineered them out. Here's how they did it.

All wires and connections between the engine compartment and passenger compartment go through one firewall opening that's sealed off with a polyethylene cap. Fluid deadeners are used over the steel floor, along with felt padding. Sound deadening materials are sprayed under the floor and under wheel wells. Panels were vibrated to determine noise factors, now are fitted with necessary soundproofing. Side cowls and roof panels also get their insulation.

Other things, of course, add to the comfort of driving the Dart. Among them are the high-backed driver's seat which supports the shoulders better than ever before, the fact that the car tracks well down a straight road, that it doesn't fight to go to the low end of a high-cambered road, has a very comfortable ride (even over the most severe roller coaster dips taken at 60-mph speeds), has a comfortable seat-steering wheel-throttle-brake relationship and has little wind noise—except at speeds well over 60.

HOW IT ACCELERATES The how—and why—of the Dodge Dart acceleration story is wrapped up in the ram induction system (Nov. '59 MT). Explaining ram induction in simple terms to the many questioners who marvelled at the imposing setup under the hood was far from easy. This explanation by Dodge puts it in fairly simple terms:

"Ram induction employs mass inertia and sonic resonance effects to obtain intake tuning. Just as a column of moving water in a pipe, through its inertia, can cause a pulsing reaction when the faucet is shut off suddenly, the columns of fuel and air in the long branches of the ram manifold keep moving as the intake valve closes, ramming fuel into the cylinders long after the gas flow would stop in a conventional intake manifold.

continued

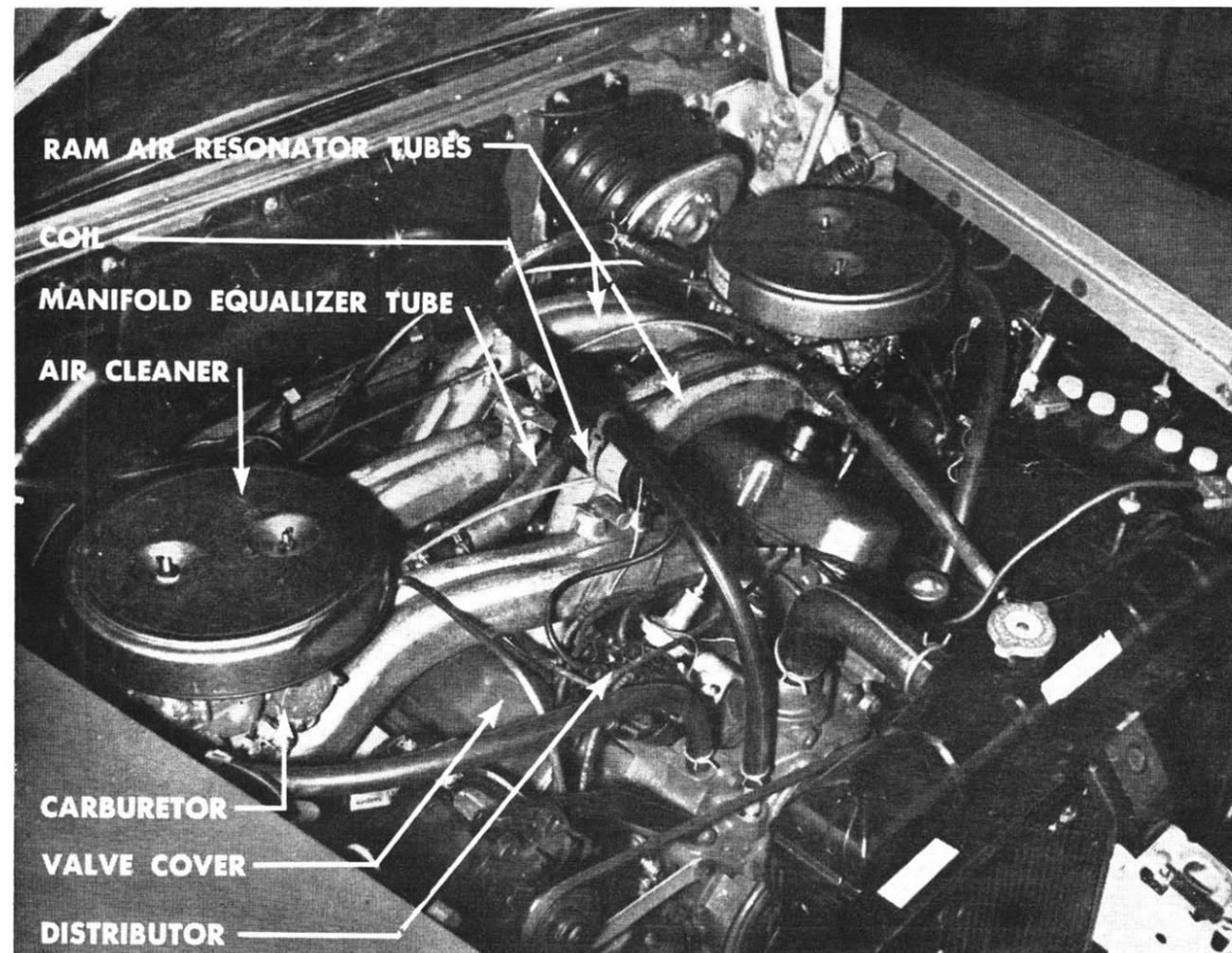
DODGE DART

continued

"The long manifold branches are tuned similar to organ pipes in that a compression wave travels back and forth in the manifold at the speed of sound. By making the lengths of the branches so that at the desired engine speed the compression wave is at the valve when it is open, additional compressed gasoline and air are forced into the cylinder at the end of the intake stroke, with an increase in efficiency and power."

When we questioned Chief Engineer Gibson on whether he

The imposing array of machinery you see beneath the hood of this Dodge Dart with the D-500 ram induction package is enough to floor the uninitiated. This is what has given the 383-cu.-in. V8 its 340 bhp and its 460 lbs.-ft. of torque—up 10 per cent over last year's engine. Serviceability will be a problem for all but the expert mechanic: The plugs are buried, the carburetors will take lots of fiddling to adjust properly and a valve job can be done only by removing the ram manifold. The fuel pump is down under the generator.



thought ram induction would make a dragstrip machine out of the Dart, he shook his head and reiterated the fact that it was designed to put punch into the mid-speed range. He did admit that it *could* be set up for more acceleration at the bottom end or at the very top end, but that was not their purpose. Compared to a '59 Dodge D-500, the new Dart is *not* any faster up to 60 or even to the end of the standing start ¼-mile, but from there on up to its top of over 110 mph it is. Our test car was running a standard 3.31 rear axle, which is a compromise acceleration/top speed gear ratio.

Before you assume that we are belittling the off-the-mark accelerating qualities of the Dart, let's hasten to point out that the car is every bit as fast as *the fastest* of the '59s. From what we've seen of the other '60s the only ones that will be as fast or possibly faster than the Dart are the Plymouth Fury with ram induction or a Chrysler 300-F. And in passing speeds the same thing applies: none but these two will touch it.

To get the best possible performance out of the Dart on the San Gabriel Dragstrip, we tried several different methods. First, we held our foot on the brake, revving the engine with the transmission in neutral, then punched the "Drive" button. Second, we held the brake, revved the engine slightly with the transmission in "Drive," then punched the throttle. Third, we tried the same thing with the transmission in "1," upshifting manually into "2." (It automatically upshifted out of second at 68 mph.) The second method was the best; the third gave no improvement over the automatic system.

When the Dart took off, the driver's side of the car lifted from the torque of the engine, both rear tires left streaks of rubber for about 20 ft., at 36 mph it upshifted into second gear with a "tweek" of rubber and at 68 mph it again "tweaked" as it went into third. Only after crossing the ¼-mile marker and backing off on the throttle, did the driver's side of the car settle down again to a level position. *That's* torque!

IN THE HILLS AND MOUNTAINS The '60 Dart seemed to handle even better than last year's Dodge—no slouch in itself with its torsion bar front suspension that we've praised since its introduction in '57. The better handling feel could be attributed to several things: the Dart is on a four-in.-shorter wheelbase than before; the unit body offers up to 40 per cent gain in beam strength and 100 per cent improvement in rigidity, therefore twisting less and giving a firmer "feel"; and, the high-backed seat in combination with the optional seat belts give you better support—and therefore more confidence—to approach turns faster.

Through gentle curves, or those taken slow, body sway is hardly noticeable to the driver, not uncomfortable to passengers. Faster driving or sharper curves will have your riders reaching for handholds, but not for their seasick pills. If you happen to drift across the white line, gentle correction of the wheel will generally bring you back on your own side. If the rear end slides out from under you, it's again easy to correct with the wheel and a bit more throttle pressure.

Up into the higher altitudes on the trip—over 5000 feet—we noticed some drop-off in power, but still had plenty of reserve on tap. It doesn't have the same surge, but it still goes. And, other cars are equally affected. Though we used Flying A 100+ at these higher altitudes, we could have easily dropped down to lower octane gas.

For downhill driving the three-speed TorqueFlite comes in handy. Punch the "2" button at 70 with no fear and it downshifts automatically at 60. Punch "1" at higher speeds and it won't shift down until it reaches 35; when it does, though, it drops down with a bouncing of the rear wheels and a slight "tweek." It's better to let it get below 30 before you use first gear. This type of driving helps the brakes, of course, but we encountered no brake fade anywhere on the trip—regardless of how hard we pushed it.

DRIVING IN BAD WEATHER Weatherproofing of the Dart (and other Chrysler products) is another debt owed to unit body construction. It's improved in these three ways: seams and joints are designed to keep water out; integral drain troughs are placed to improve water drainage if it does come in; and, potential trouble areas are accessible for inspection and repair.

With the windows buttoned tight not a drop of water came in during our day, night and another day of heavy and intermittent rainfall. There was no leakage around doors or into the trunk. The only place water did come in was through the wind vents—when they were open. The rainwater wraps around the windshield and onto the windwings; if the wings are open, in comes the water. We had these wings open to prevent the window from fogging up without resorting to the defroster. Personally, we wish there were some way manufacturers could design these to be open and still keep the rain out. The two-speed electric wipers are about average in sweep, leaving blind spots in the middle top and on the two sides. The faster speed is not fast enough for heavy downpours and the rain curving around the windshield makes the side view mirror useless.

The '60 Dart should last much longer before rusting out, due to the paint-dip method now used on all Chrysler bodies before final assembly. Each body is first cleaned, rinsed, phosphate-bathed, conditioned with chemicals, then dipped in prime and paint so that every nook and cranny is protected from rust and coated with paint.

POOR ROAD CONDITIONS On extremely rough and wash-board asphalt, we encountered our first slight discomfort. We could feel the road surface transmitted up through our throttle foot and in the seat of our pants. The Dart seemed to swallow up bad chunks of asphalt torn out of the road with a "thump" of the tires, and that was all. Detours, with their accompanying gravel, dips, bumps and dust, did not have to be approached with apprehension. After wading a stream we tapped the brakes to see if water had leaked in, but the car stopped straight and true. In other off-the-road conditions where you might have to go through sand, or where one wheel is in mud or slush, the limited-slip differential will be handy in pulling you through.

GAS MILEAGE Good fuel economy is not the forté of the Dart—as it isn't with any powerful car. Its appetite for fuel is not only for quantity but for quality as well. The Dart with its 10:1 compression thirsts for at least-100 octane fuel, such as the Flying A 100+ we used. So, expect to stop frequently at your favorite station. (Incidentally, your attendant will like the central gas filler.) On the highway, based on our best trip mileage of 14.2 and a 20-gallon tank, you can expect to stop every 284 miles. Our poorest mileage would take us only 238 miles, so a safe cruising range can be considered to be in the 200-250 mile area. (Other engine options *will*, however, give you much better mileage. See chart, page 40.)

HOW IT STOPS In normal stops the Dart dips very slightly, but it's hard to tell at first if you're applying too much pressure or too little because there isn't much feel. You might tend to lock them up in a panic situation, but sudden stops brought on no swerve and a steady pull-down.

We have replaced our abnormal brake-fade tests this year with a test which we feel to be more meaningful to the average driver (see table, page 44). Over the past year our procedure of successive stops from 60 mph has taught us one thing: no normal brakes are going to stand up to it without scorched linings and warped drums—nor do they necessarily *have* to stand up to it. The faster accelerating cars always suffered, and dragging them down to the slowest accelerating cars did not seem to be fair either. Then, we had a good chance to observe if brakes would fade in our acceleration tests alone.

Successive runs up and down a dragstrip, with the necessary quick stops at each end, will soon tell how resistant to fade the car's brakes are. In the case of the Dart, we made about 10 acceleration runs through the ¼-mile before we noticed the telltale signs of fade: harder pedal pressure to stop in the same distance, then no stopping ability at all regardless of pressure. Stopping distances, time required to make those stops and the amount of stopping power are all very good.

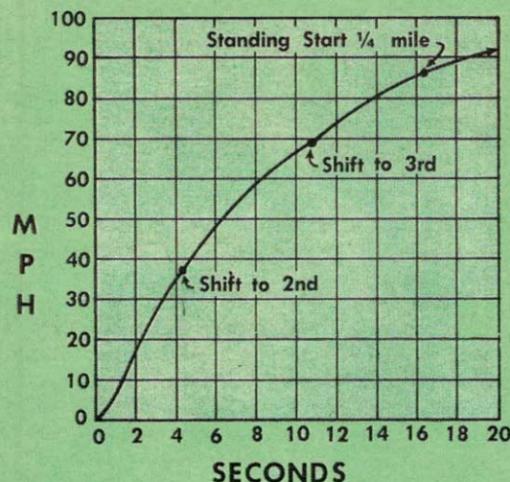
HOW THE ACCESSORIES WORK To make the optional equipment items more desirable, Dodge has reduced the prices of some by as much as \$26. Power steering now costs only \$71 and is worth it to us; we'd hate to have to drive a car without it, which is a reversal from the days when cars were not so front-end heavy. If you have the D-500 package, you get the three-speed TorqueFlite, which we feel is much better than the two-speed PowerFlite. Power brakes are good, if only for the reason that it places the brake pedal closer to the floor, bringing it into a better plane with the foot throttle. The heater-defroster is something that's needed just about everywhere; we like the system on the Dart, for it's easy to operate the pushbuttons, defrosts a foggy windshield almost instantaneously, and gives heat almost the second that you turn it on.

Two other good accessories available on the Dart, but not on our test car, are the automatic swivel seat and vacuum doorlocks. We found little use for the manual swivel seats first offered last year because we would forget to use them, but an automatic system is something else again. **continued**

MT ROAD TEST '60 DODGE DART

Acceleration

0-45 mph 5.4 secs. 0-60 8.5
 Quarter-mile 16.3 secs., 86 mph
 30-50 3.0 45-60 3.1 50-80 7.4



Top Speed

Comfortable cruising From 50 to 80 mph
 Maximum speed 105-115 mph (estimated)

Stopping Distance

From 60 mph to standstill 294 ft.
 (In 4.2 secs. with maximum of .885-G deceleration)
 Stop after maximum acceleration to end of 1/4-mile 437 ft.
 (In 6.3 secs. with maximum of .835-G deceleration)

Gas Mileage

Over-the-road averages	Mpg	Mph
All types of roads, through small towns	11.9	46.3
2-lane, 4-lane, open road	12.7	57.2
2-lane, level, open road, high altitude	13.3	60.4
2-lane, 4-lane, mountain country	12.1	58.7
2-lane, open road, mountain and desert	14.2	53.8
Overall average for 2447-mile trip	12.8	55.6
City driving	10.7	mpg
Constant speed, level road fuel checks	14.6 mpg @ 30 mph	
	15.6 mpg @ 45 mph	
	13.1 mpg @ 60 mph	

The seat automatically swings out because of a cable attached to the door. If the driver wants to keep the seat from swiveling when the door is opened, he pushes the seat and it automatically latches in position. When the door is closed the seat returns to its original position, swiveling again when you open the door from outside.

The vacuum doorlock is actuated by a lever on the left side of the dash and uses engine vacuum. When the lever is flipped on, it locks all doors. It likewise unlocks all doors, though each door can be unlocked manually.

LUGGAGE AND TOOLS Opening the trunk is a one-hand operation: insert and turn the key, a torsion spring raises the lid automatically. There's quite a cavity there and if you were to measure it in cubic feet it would be quite impressive—though this does not tell the true story. The widest spot of the trunk measures six ft., the deepest *usable* depth along that dimension is about 2½ ft. and the average depth of the trunk is about 1½ ft. There's extra space on the shelf beside the flat-mounted spare that's good for small pieces of luggage. The back lip of the trunk is only seven ins. high, so that luggage and shopping bags can be easily lifted out. There's adequate protective material for luggage.

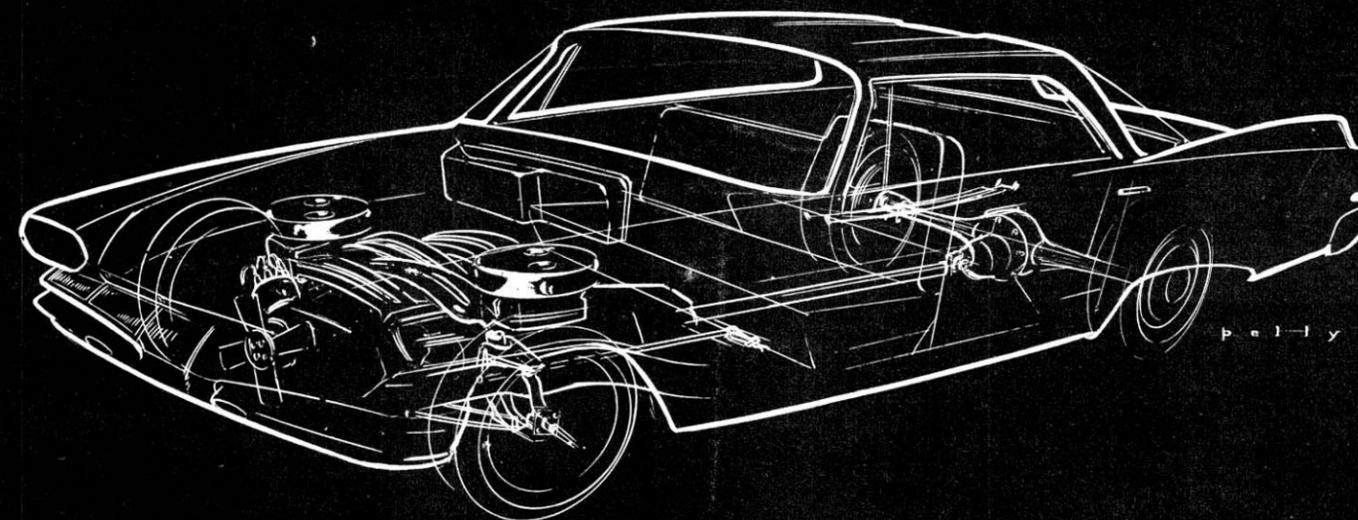
Not so easy is the removal of the spare, unless you crawl inside and lift it out. The bumper jack and combination handle and lug wrench are strapped down and are the only tools provided. Once you get the spare out, assuming that you're going to change a tire, the hardest job will be the removal of the hubcaps—they're on, but solid. So much the better, though, for they're not apt to come off on rough roads or at the hands of some hubcap fancier.

SERVICING Servicing the Dart with ram induction won't be easy. Removal and replacement of the spark plugs will be strictly a job to be done while you've got the car up on a hoist. Valve inspection will become a real problem, for you'll have to remove the manifold to remove the rocker covers. Working on the carburetors themselves—removing air filters, adjusting linkage, etc.—will be easy except that getting the proper balance between them will be a job best left to an expert.

The rest of the ignition and electrical equipment is all above board, with the coil and distributor up high and in front. The generator is to one side and the fuel pump is located beneath it. The oil filter is a hoist rack item, while the oil dipstick is where your station attendant doesn't have to search for it or stand to get burned by hot metal surrounding it. The filler neck is right on top of the valve cover, easy to get to.

IS IT A GOOD BUY? The new Dodge Dart, especially with ram induction as tested, is a real challenger to the supremacy of the triumvirate of Chevy, Ford and Plymouth. It's within dollars of them all across the board, with our test car being in the price class of the Impala, Galaxie and Fury. On the basis of the way this Dart held up on our cross-country run—not developing any rattles, performing outstandingly in all categories, being comfortable to drive for long stretches of time, handling exceedingly well and giving you all the power you'd ever want—we would definitely rate it a good buy. Until we put the Fury, Galaxie and Impala through similar tests, we will venture the guess that it's every bit as good a buy as *any* of them—and maybe even better.

Legibility of Dart's speedometer is quite good with its "see-through" plastic background. Fuel level and water temperature gauges are difficult to read. Foot pedals are comfortable, wheel position pleased all of us, as did the high-backed driver's seat. Getting in and out is helped by the wide-opening doors and the non-wrap-around windshield post. Glass is distortion-free.



COPYRIGHT MOTOR TREND

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE DART: *In the test version, not an "economy" car, but a real hot performer with lots of reserve power on tap. . . . Uses same basic body as Plymouth on 118-in. wheelbase. . . . Test car well put together. . . . Good room for 5 or 6, though middle front passenger has a high transmission hump to straddle. . . . Comfortable to drive over long distances. . . . Good for maneuvering through traffic. . . .*

Fantastic mid-range acceleration. . . . Little road and engine noise, except when you tromp on throttle. . . . Combination of front torsion bars and rear leaf springs gives it better handling and ride than last year's Dodge. . . . Little body sway. . . . Power options—like brakes and steering—are advisable with big engine. . . . Luggage space is good. . . . Serviceability of engine will be difficult. . . . A good buy in Chevy-Ford-Plymouth class.

SPECIFICATIONS OF TEST CAR

ENGINE: Pushrod-operated ohv V8. Bore 4.25 ins. Stroke 3.38 ins. Stroke/bore ratio .79:1. Compression ratio 10:1. Displacement 383 cu. ins. Carburetion by dual quads with ram-tube induction. Advertised bhp 340 @ 4800 rpm. Bhp/cu. in. .89. Max. torque 460 lbs.-ft. @ 2800 rpm.

TRANSMISSION: TorqueFlite automatic planetary type with torque converter, three-speed. Ratios 2.31:1, 1.55:1, 1.00:1.

CHASSIS: Body-frame unit construction. Front suspension—Independent with torsion bars, unequal A-frame

and lower arm, braking-torque rod and tubular shocks. Rear suspension—Conventional live axle with Sure-Grip differential, asymmetrical semi-elliptical outboard-mounted leaf springs. Tubular shocks. Torque taken by springs. Rear end ratio 3.31:1. Steering—Power assisted, overall ratio 19.1:1, 3.5 turns lock-to-lock. Brakes—Total-contact drum hydraulics. Bonded shoes 11.5 ins. x 2.5 ins. Total effective lining area 230 sq. ins. Weight/lining area ratio 125.3 sq. ins./ton.

DIMENSIONS: Wheelbase 118 ins., overall length

208.6, overall width 78; headroom—front 34.6, rear 34.5; legroom—front 46.3, rear 43.5; hiproom—front 63, rear 62.4. Tread—front 61.5, rear 60.2. Weight as tested 4020 lbs. (55% front, 45% rear). Weight/power ratio 11.8 lbs./hp.

PRICE: Factory-suggested base, f.o.b. Detroit \$2482. As tested (approximate list) \$3150.

ACCESSORIES (prices approximate): heater \$69, power steering \$71, radio \$54, TorqueFlite transmission \$195, power brakes \$45, Sure-Grip differential \$46.

