EDSEL



The Fabulous Failure

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Part 1

Behind the Curtain

High Expectations

That name. That grille. Ford had high expectations, but when the Edsel debuted in 1957, it became America's most-hyped failure.

***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**

RE: introduction to an article written by *Peter Carlson,* Washington Post Staff Writer, entitled: "The Flop Heard 'round the World"

It Was 50 Years Ago Today

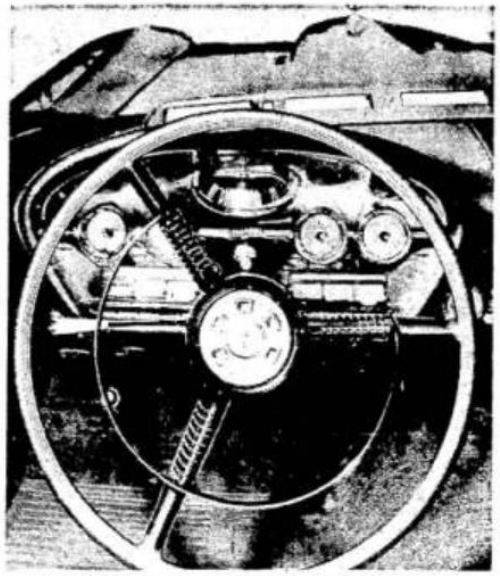


"FIFTY years ago today, Don Mazzella skipped-out of school to see the hot new car that everybody was talking about; the hot new car that almost nobody had actually seen…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**



TWO EDSELS—a Citation two-door hardtop and a Citation convertible — illustrate the new styling concepts of the newest medium price cars. The vertical grille, dual headlights and wrap-around turn indicators are visible from the front. A single chrome side spear stops short of the concave sculptured side scallop, which, in turn, blends into the horizontal tail lights. All 18 models of the Edsel in four series will be available for public inspection in dealers showrooms beginning Wednesday.



DRIVER'S-EYE VIEW of the 1958 Edsel reveals the "teletouch" push button transmission in the steering wheel hub, drum-type speedometer and a single-dial heater-defroster-ventilator located in right instrument pod.

INTRODUCING EDSEL: New Styles, New Mechanics, New Car

DEARBORN, Mich.—New vertical front styling and several outstanding engineering innovations, including "Teletouch" push button transmission controls in the steering wheel hub, are features of America's newest automobile—the Edsel.

Under actual development since July, 1954, mechanical and engineering prototypes of the Edsel have been driven more than a million and a half miles in one of the most thorough and comprehensive test programs ever undertaken by a manufacturer.

The car, a product of the Edsel Division of the Ford Motor Co., will be publicly introduced in dealer showrooms Wednesday.

Available in 18 models and four series—Ranger, Pacer, Corsair and Citation — the Edsel medium price car line offers two convertibles, sedans, two-door and four-door hardtops and five station wagons. One convertible is available in the Pacer series and the other in the Citation.

Dual headlights, self-adjusting brakes which automatically compensate for brake lining wear, safety rim wheels and four barrel carburetion are standard equipment with all Edsels. Also standard, with purchase of a heater, is a unique single-dial heater-defroster-ventilator control, which eliminates the standard, but complex, system of levers, knobs and air vent doors.

The Edsel vertical grille, combined with an inner chrome impact ring and crisp horizontal sections on either side, gives an easily identifiable look of quiet elegance. The concave sculptured sides have an ever-widening teardrop effect and carry through to the taillights, giving a look of fluid motion and power.

EDSEL CAR AND STATION WAGON SPECIFICATIONS

SERIES		Wheels	Length, with Bumper Guards	Height	Width
Ranger	Two Door Sedan	116"	213.1"	56.4"	78.8"
	Two Door Hardtop				
	Four Door Sedan				
	Four Door Hardtop				
Pacer	Two Door Hardtop	118"	213.1"	56.4"	78.8"
	Four Door Sedan				
	Four Door Hardtop				
	Convertible				
Corsair	Two Door Hardtop	124"	218.8"	56.8"	79.8"
	Four Door Hardtop				
Citation	Two Door Hardtop	124"	218.8"	56.8"	79.8"
	Four Door Hardtop				
	Convertible				
Wagons	Two Door 6-Pass.	116"	203.4"	58.8"	77.1"
	Four Door 6-Pass.				
	Four Door 9-Pass.				
	Four Door 9-Pass.				
	Four Door 9-Pass.*				

ENGINE	Ranger-Pacer-Wagons	Corsair-Citation
Type		
Displacement		
Horsepower		
Torque		
Bore and Stroke		
Compression Ratio		
Firing Order		
Carburetion Chambers		
Battery Coils and Plugs		
Distributor Drive		
Spark Advance		
Timing Mark Location		
Spark Plugs		
BRAKES	Ranger-Pacer	Corsair-Citation
Type		
Disc—Front		
Size, Rear		
Brake Lining Area (Sq. In.)		
Parking Brake Type		

The horizontal taillights blend smoothly into the flight deck luggage compartment lid to provide a solid bar of illumination on each side. Each bar is in two segments, divided at the luggage compartment lid. Outer segments contain turn indicators and brake warning lights in addition to normal night lights.

Adding to the long, low look of the Edsels is a slightly raised center section of the hood which recalls the elegance of motoring three decades ago.

New fabrics and patterns are featured in Edsel harmonizing interiors, colorkeyed to the 19 solid and 31 two-tone exterior combinations. Its new contour seats reduce long trip fatigue, and front seats have been divided in a unique one-third, two-thirds arrangement with the one-third segment for the driver.

The entire instrument cluster has been designed to locate all controls and dials in easy view and reach of the driver. Mounted high in the cluster, beneath the raised padded safety cowling, which eliminates panel glare, is the new floating drum type speedometer which rotates evenly as the car accelerates or slows.

The new E-400 Edsel engine is available in Ranger and Pacer series and the five station wagons. It develops 400 foot pounds of torque and 303 horsepower and comes a choice of standard, overdrive or automatic transmissions.

The E-475 engine, for the Corsair and Citation series, is rated at 475 foot pounds of torque and 345 horsepower. Only automatic transmission is available on these series.

Built-in safety factors include a dual inhibitor which prevents engagement of reverse or park gears at a speed of over three miles an hour. The engine may be started with Teletouch in either park or neutral gears, but once in park with the ignition turned off, the transmission cannot be moved to another gear.

Also operated by a servo motor is the new single-dial control for heater, defroster and ventilator. Each dial segment runs the full range from minimum to maximum, and for summer driving the control permits air to enter from the right or left side, or both. When equipped with optional air conditioner, the single dial operates both heater and air conditioner.

Safety rim wheels are standard equipment on all Edsels. The new 14-inch tires hold 20 per cent more air by volume at lower pressure for improved riding comfort. The wider tread and new tread pattern also provides 24 per cent greater tire traction to shorten stopping distances.

Self-adjusting brakes also are standard equipment on all Edsels and eliminate the need for brake adjustments during the entire life of brake linings.

E-Day



"…Ford Motor Co. had proclaimed it 'E-Day,' and Mazzella and two buddies sneaked out of East Side High School in Newark, N.J., and hiked 13 blocks to Foley Ford so they could cast their gaze upon the much-ballyhooed new car that had been kept secret from the American public until its release that day. It was called the Edsel. 'The line was around the block,' recalls Mazzella, now 66 and an Executive in a New Jersey consulting firm. 'People were coming from all over to see this car. You couldn't see it from the street. The only way you could see it was to walk into the showroom and look behind a curtain'…"

washingtonpost.com,
Sept. 4, 2007

EDSEL DIVISION
Ford Motor Company
OAKWOOD BOULEVARD AT THE EDSEL FORD EXPRESSWAY, P. O. BOX 637, DEARBORN, MICHIGAN

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT
AND GENERAL MANAGER

Dear Mr. Trygar:

E-Day, the public introduction day for the Edsel line, will soon be here and we would like you to share with us the pride we are experiencing in bringing this fine new Edsel car before the public. Many people from all activities of the Company contributed to the development of this car. We believe that all the men and women of the Ford Motor Company will benefit from this latest addition to the Ford Family of Fine Cars.

As you know, you are eligible to purchase two new cars each year and we would be proud to have one or more of them Edsels. To help you place your order, a booklet describing the car is attached so that you may review some of its more important features. In addition, color and trim selectors and accessory and equipment lists are available at your Industrial Relations activity.

If you wish to purchase a new Edsel under a delayed payment plan, special finance company arrangements are available.

We hope you will decide to become one of the first Edsel owners and that you will encourage your friends and neighbors to see and drive these fine new cars.

Very truly yours,

Richard E. Krafve

D(Disappointment)-Day



DRAMATIC EDSEL STYLING leads the way
–worth more now and in the years ahead

This is the fresh new beauty that broke away from the humdrum, look-alike crowd to offer real styling distinction. A distinction that's worth more when you buy it, worth more when you finally trade it in. That's why you've been seeing a steady increase in new Edsels on the road lately! This magnificent new car stands out for its advanced new features, too—exclusive Teletouch Drive that puts the shift buttons on the steering-wheel hub—*right in front of you;* high-economy new V-8 engines (up to 345 hp); *self-adjusting* brakes; and contour seats that give you luxurious driving comfort. Why settle for less? Especially when there isn't even fifty dollars difference between Edsel and the Low-Priced Three*! See your Edsel Dealer this week.

EDSEL DIVISION • FORD MOTOR COMPANY

Less than fifty dollars difference between Edsel and V-8's in the Low-Priced Three

*Based on comparison of manufacturers' suggested retail delivered prices.

"…Mazzella and his truant friends waited their turn, thrilled to be there. 'Back then for teenagers, cars were the be-all and end-all,' he explains. They'd read countless articles about the Edsel and seen countless ads that touted it as the car of the future. But they hadn't seen the car. Ford kept it secret, building excitement by coyly withholding it from sight, like a strip-tease dancer…"

washingtonpost.com,

September 4, 2007

Caption: "This is the fresh new beauty that broke away from the humdrum, look-alike crowd to offer real styling distinction. A distinction that's worth more when you buy it, worth more when you finally trade it in . . ."

"…Finally, Mazzella and his friends reached the showroom. Finally, they were permitted to peek behind the curtain. They saw a cream-colored car with a strange oval grille that looked like a big chrome O. 'We looked at it and said, 'What?' Mazzella recalls. 'It was just a blah car. I remember my friend Joe Grandi, who later became a Newark cop - he had a gruff voice and he said, 'This is what we waited all this time for?' We all felt betrayed'…"

***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**

RE: E-Day morning was probably the last time that Edsel's future looked optimistic. Most dealers were swamped with people looking at their cars. Each U.S. dealer telegrammed Ford's HQ at Dearborn estimating how many people visited their showrooms; this added-up to 2.8 million. However, by the end of the day only 6,649 of those potential customers bought an Edsel.



1958 Edsels on display at the Ford Rotunda

CLASS OF SERVICE
This is a fast message unless its deferred character is indicated by the proper symbol.

WESTERN UNION

TELEGRAM

1957 SEP 5 PM 6

1201

SYMBOLS
DL = Day Letter
NL = Night Letter
LT = International Letter Telegram

W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT

The filing time shown on the date line on domestic telegrams is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at destination

(391)

DEB843 LA383 L

IWA244 PD=INGLEWOOD CALIF 5 237PMP=

1957 SEP 5 PM 6

R E KRAFVE AND J C DOYLE, EDSEL DIVN OF THE FORD MOTOR CO=

:OAKWOOD BLVD EDSEL FORD EXPRESSWAY DEARBORN MICH=

=RECEPTION TO CAR FANTASTIC HAVE WRITTEN SEVEN ORDERS DELIVERED FIVE CARS. HAD APPROXIMATELY 2000 PEOPLE THROUGH OUR SHOW ROOM. WENT THROUGH 45 GALLONS OF COFFEE 26 DOZEN DOUGHNUTS. DARNDEST COFFEE AND DOUGHNUT TOWN I'VE EVER BEEN IN=

C PICKRELL BEACON EDSEL SALES 214 NORTH LA BREA INGLEWOOD CALIF=

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE



EDSEL

This signifies that the holder of this card is an initial owner of an Edsel — new member of the Ford Family of Fine Cars.

SIGNATURE OF OWNER

EDSEL OWNER IDENTIFICATION CARD

OWNER'S NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

ENGINE NO._____ CODE NO._____

AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION NO._____

IGNITION KEY NO._____

LUGGAGE COMPARTMENT KEY NO._____

THIS WILL CERTIFY THAT THE OWNER WHOSE NAME APPEARS ABOVE TOOK DELIVERY OF THE CAR DESCRIBED HEREIN AND IS PRIVILEGED TO RECEIVE COURTEOUS GREEN LIGHT SERVICE FROM ANY AUTHORIZED EDSEL DEALER AS SPECIFIED IN THE EDSEL DEALER SERVICE POLICY.

DEALER_____

CITY_____ STATE_____

SIGNED BY_____ DATE_____

SALES MANAGER

FORM 5712 JULY 57 LITHO IN U.S.A.

A $250-million Flop

"…They weren't alone. The rest of America was equally disappointed. The Edsel fizzled. It flopped. It tanked. It became a national joke, the car that launched a million punch lines. By November 1959, when Ford finally mercy-killed the Edsel, it had lost an estimated $250-million - nearly $2-billion in today's dollars…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**

Detroit had expected it for months; last week Ford Motor Co. finally had to make it official

***TIME,* November 30, 1959**

RE: introduction to an article entitled: "AUTOS: The $250-million Flop"

"THE company dropped its medium-priced Edsel, introduced only two years ago. Said Ford, in a pained announcement: 'Retail sales have been particularly disappointing and continued production of the Edsel is not justified, especially in view of the shortage of steel'…"

***TIME,* November 30, 1959**

RE: the 1959 steel shortage was caused by a 116-day nationwide strike by over 500K members of the *United Steelworkers of America* (USWA) union; running from July 15 to November 7, 1959. The strike halted 90% of U.S. steel production, causing massive supply shortages, widespread lay-offs in the automotive industry and increased reliance on foreign steel imports

"…Ford's hand was forced by a stock prospectus issued by the Ford Foundation, which plans to sell another 2,000,000 shares of Ford stock (worth some $155-million) in order to diversify its holdings. Included in a list of company products was a footnote on Edsel: 'Introduced in September 1957 and discontinued in November 1959.' Once that got out, Ford had to speak-out, though it had planned to hold-off until all Edsels in dealers' inventories were sold. It really did not make much difference…"

***TIME,* November 30, 1959**

Ford Will Stop Making Edsel Autos at Once – Sales Have Lagged, Consumers Prefer New Compact Cars

DETROIT (AP) — The Edsel today became the first casualty of the new automotive battle of the compact cars. Ford announced it will abandon the medium-priced car immediately.

Introduced only two years ago, the Edsel never captured a market. Slightly more than 100,000 were sold. Fewer than 100 have been built in the last two weeks as Ford diverted scarce steel to its other lines.

SALES LAG

In an official statement, Ford said sales of the 1960 Edsel model, which looks strikingly like the 1959 Pontiac, “have been particularly disappointing,” while response to all other company lines has been good.

“In view of this high consumer preference for the other company lines and the severe decline in the demand for Edsel cars, the continued production of the Edsel is not justified, especially in view of the shortage of steel,” Ford said in its formal announcement.

Lancaster New Era **(Lancaster, Pa.) - November 19, 1959**

STATEMENT FORCED

The Edsel statement obviously was forced by today's official decision by the Ford Foundation to sell another two-million shares of Ford Motor Co. stock to the public. In the preliminary stock prospectus, the company is described as building only three lines of cars - Fords, including Falcons and Thunderbirds; Mercury and Lincoln, including Continental - with no reference to the Edsel.

On another page in the prospectus giving company production figures, a footnote to Edsel states "introduced in September 1957 and discontinued in November 1959."

Total 1960 model production of the Edsel has been approximately 2,800 cars. In all of 1959, only about 30,000 of the cars have been built.
***Lancaster New Era* (Lancaster, Pa.) - November 19, 1959**



First Edsel (1958)



Last Edsel off the Line (1960)

Ford claimed sales of its other car lines during the first 10 days of November jumped 40 percent above sales of the same cars during the similar period last year.

The Edsel has been assembled at Ford's Louisville, Ky. plant. This plant will continue to build Ford trucks. The Mercury-Edsel-Lincoln division will become the Lincoln-Mercury Division of the company.

Only last week Ford shifted all M-E-L assembly plants and purchasing into its Big Ford division, a move which industry observers suggested herald-
ed a complete merger of Ford operations.

Lancaster New Era **(Lancaster, Pa.) November 19, 1959**

MUST SELL!

OUR ENTIRE STOCK OF '59 EDSELS TO MAKE ROOM FOR THE 1960 MODELS TO BE SHOWN APPROXIMATELY OCT. 15th

NEW EDSELS
GOING AT
OUR COST
PLUS ONLY **$50**



EDSEL RANGERS

2 & 4 DOOR MODELS—6 & 8 CYLINDER

YOU CAN OWN A NEW EDSEL FOR AS LOW AS $2286

CARR'S MOTOR SALES

501 W. 6th — LINCOLN - MERCURY - CONTINENTAL - EDSEL - ENGLISH FORD — GR 8-9846

"…As of last week, only about 2,800 of the 'all-new' 1960 Edsels had been made. To mollify those few customers whose cars are now orphans with low trade-in value, Ford offered a $300 certificate to be applied against the purchase of any other Ford product…"

***TIME,* November 30, 1959**

RE: after scrapping the Edsel, Ford sent a certificate to all owners of 1960 model Edsels purchased before November 19, 1959 (the day that Ford announced that the Edsel Division would be discontinued). The certificate allowed the Edsel owner a $300 discount on any domestically produced FMC passenger car. The offer was good indefinitely. The Lincoln-Mercury Division sent a letter to all FMC dealers outlining the certificate plan.

FORD DIVISION

Ford Motor Company,

SITEMAN BLDG., P. O. BOX 44
CLAYTON 5, MISSOURI

ST. LOUIS DISTRICT SALES OFFICE

January 27, 1960

All Ford Dealers in the St. Louis District - -

The Lincoln Mercury Division of Ford Motor Company is sending to all owners of 1960 model Edsels purchased prior to November 19, 1959, a certificate worth $300 on the purchase of any new domestically produced Ford Motor Company passenger car from an authorized dealer. The certificates are made out to the original purchaser and are non-transferable.

At the option of the customer, the procedure for the redemption of the certificate provides for:

1. Redemption through the dealer from whom the new car purchase is being transacted, if agreeable to the dealer.

2. Redemption through Ford Motor Company upon completion of the "New Purchase Information" section on the certificate and the forwarding of a notarized copy of the bill of sale for the new purchase.

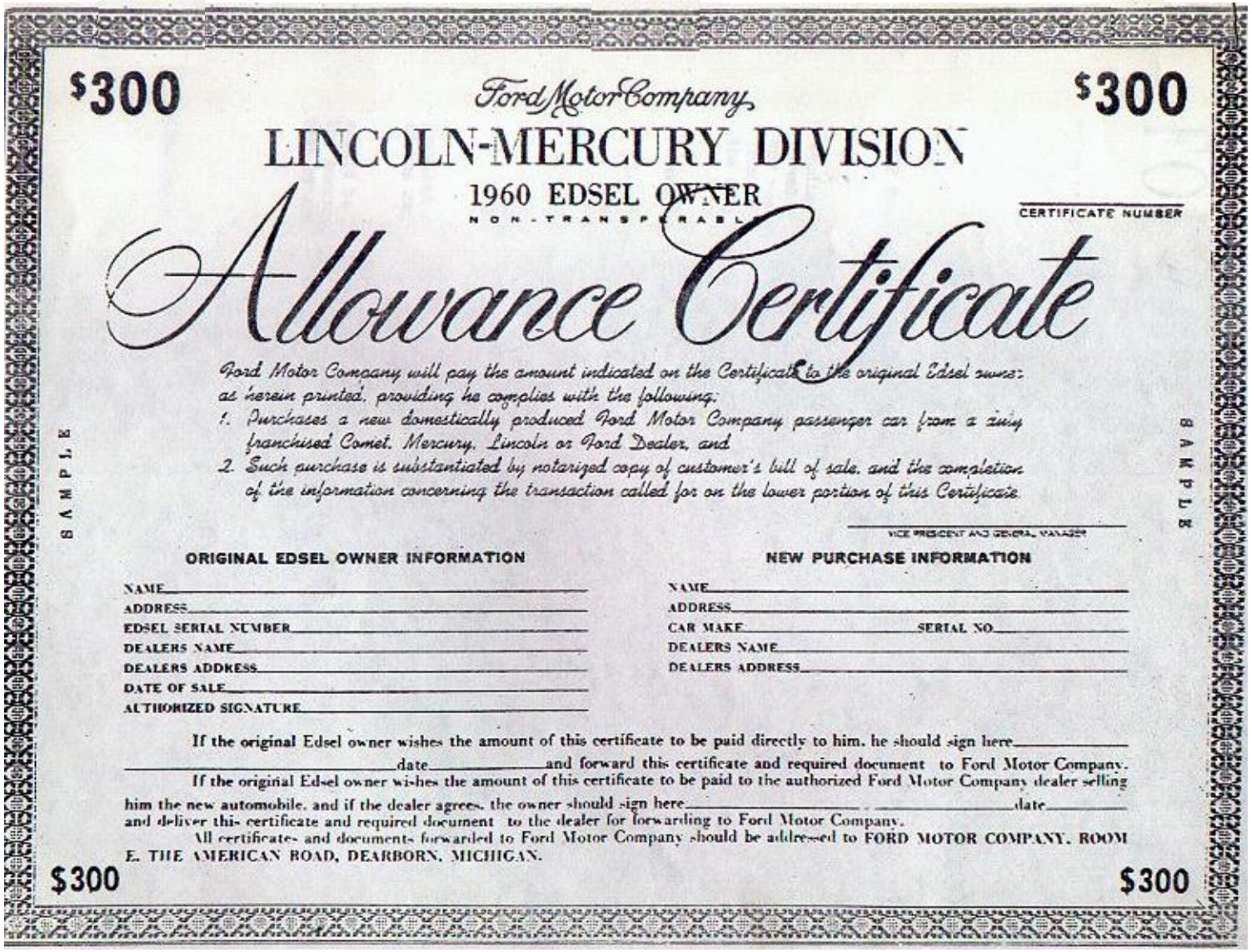
The attached facsimile of the Allowance Certificate is provided for your information. There is no termination date shown on the certificate as the offer is good indefinitely.

Any certificate accepted by you as provided in No. 1 should be forwarded for redemption to Ford Motor Company, Room E, The American Road, Dearborn, Michigan. Prompt payment will be made by check direct to you.

Very truly yours,

for R. E. Nilson

District Sales Manager



$300 $300

Ford Motor Company

LINCOLN-MERCURY DIVISION

1960 EDSEL OWNER

NON-TRANSFERABLE

CERTIFICATE NUMBER

Allowance Certificate

Ford Motor Company will pay the amount indicated on the Certificate to the original Edsel owner as herein printed, providing he complies with the following:

1. Purchases a new domestically produced Ford Motor Company passenger car from a duly franchised Comet, Mercury, Lincoln or Ford Dealer, and
2. Such purchase is substantiated by notarized copy of customer's bill of sale, and the completion of the information concerning the transaction called for on the lower portion of this Certificate.

SAMPLE

SAMPLE

VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER

ORIGINAL EDSEL OWNER INFORMATION

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

EDSEL SERIAL NUMBER_____

DEALERS NAME_____

DEALERS ADDRESS_____

DATE OF SALE_____

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE_____

NEW PURCHASE INFORMATION

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CAR MAKE_____ SERIAL NO._____

DEALERS NAME_____

DEALERS ADDRESS_____

If the original Edsel owner wishes the amount of this certificate to be paid directly to him, he should sign here_____ _____ date_____ and forward this certificate and required document to Ford Motor Company.

If the original Edsel owner wishes the amount of this certificate to be paid to the authorized Ford Motor Company dealer selling him the new automobile, and if the dealer agrees, the owner should sign here_____ _____ date_____ and deliver this certificate and required document to the dealer for forwarding to Ford Motor Company.

All certificates and documents forwarded to Ford Motor Company should be addressed to FORD MOTOR COMPANY, ROOM E, THE AMERICAN ROAD, DEARBORN, MICHIGAN.

$300 $300

What Happened?

"…What happened? As it turned-out, the Edsel was a classic case of the wrong car for the wrong market at the wrong time. It was also a prime example of the limitations of market research, with its 'depth interviews' and 'motivational' mumbo-jumbo…"

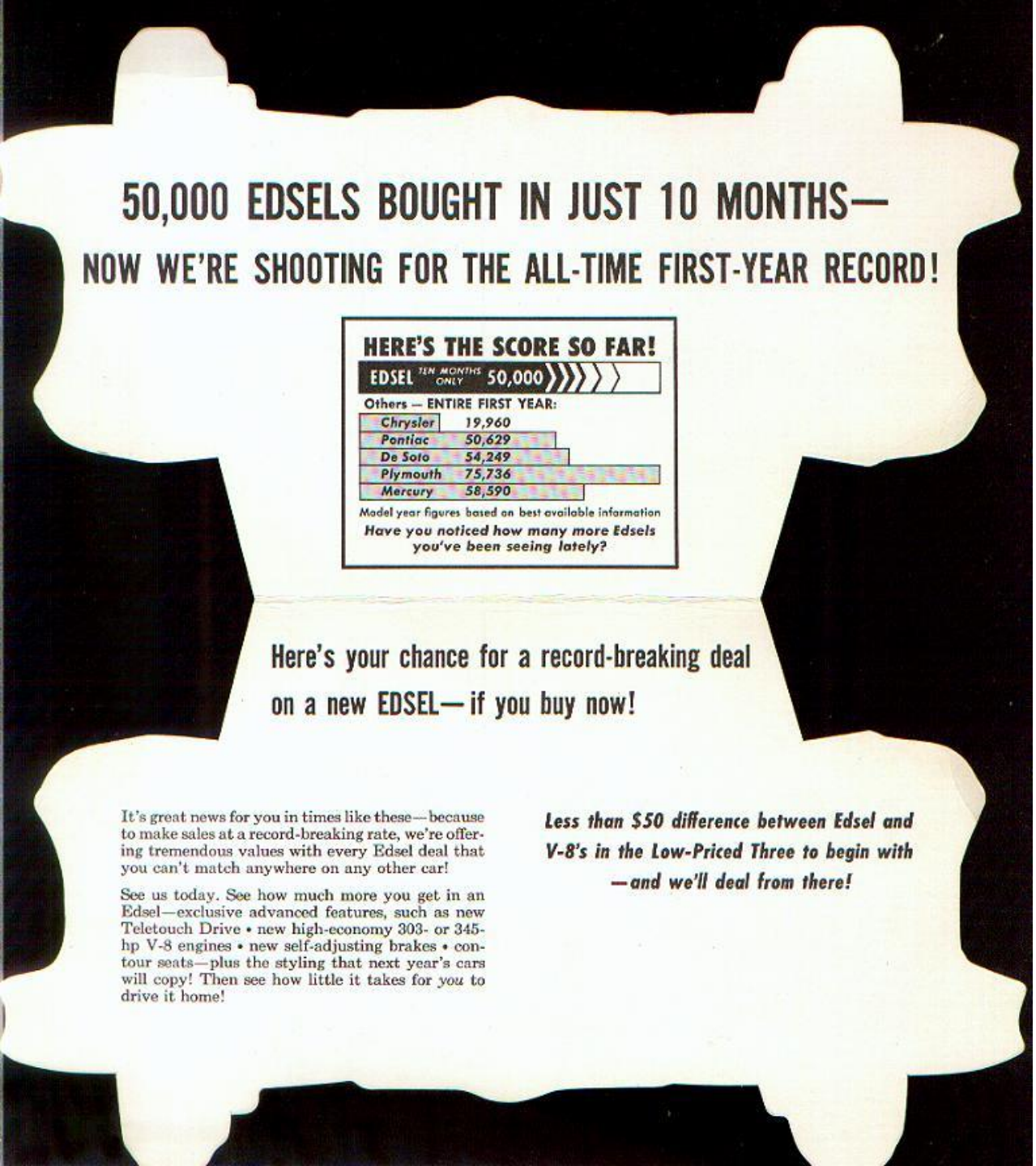
***TIME,* November 30, 1959**

An Airtight Case

"…On the research, Ford had an airtight case for a new medium-priced car to compete with Chrysler's Dodge and De Soto, General Motors' Pontiac, Oldsmobile and Buick. Studies showed that by 1965 half of all U.S. families would be in the $5,000-and-up bracket; would be buying more cars in the medium-priced field, which already had 60% of the market. Edsel could sell up to 400,000 cars-a-year…"

***TIME,* November 30, 1959**

RE: in April 1955, FMC established a "Special Products Division" to create a new mid-priced car line to compete with the likes of Oldsmobile and Buick; these cars were to be made available in under three years. What followed was a $250-million investment and an expectation of 200K annual sales (to recover the investment). Given customers' growing affluence and optimism, it all seemed reasonable.



Left: this advertisement is remarkable due to the fact that it brags about Edsel sales being +50K in the first 10 months. It completely ignores the fact that the Edsel Division had hoped to sell 200K cars in the first year.

Making the Case

New Cure for an Old Habit

When it comes to purchasing an automobile, there's no question that habit plays a great part in the selection of make.

So much so, that "repeat" buyers are among the most eagerly sought-after, most avidly wooed market in the automobile business.

TAKE CADILLAC, FOR INSTANCE

It is obvious that Cadillac advertising has courted not only new buyers — but it has traditionally gone out of its way to get "repeat" business with a pat on the back for Cadillac owners.

Both buyer and owner were told, in effect, of Cadillac's "carriage trade" appeal, of its exclusive and unique appearance. And for many years, this approach worked. "Once an owner, always an owner" might easily have been the motto.

THEN LOOK WHAT HAPPENED!

But as living standards rose, so did Cadillac ownership. And, as more Cadillacs appeared on the streets, some of the Cadillac glamour began to wear off.

Then used Cadillacs — both "sharp" ones and "rough" ones began to hit the market place.

The net result? Cadillac's "exclusiveness" became less and less a fact, more and more a memory of a faded era. And to make matters worse, Cadillac adopted highly conservative styling policies, changing only slightly from one year to the next.

This is the case with Cadillac for 1958! For just as it was hard to tell the '57 from the '56, many observers will have to take a "second look" to establish the year of the latest Cadillac — a fact well demonstrated by the pictures on this and the following pages.

THE CURE FOR THE HABIT

Traditional Cadillac owners have little to persuade them to keep up their "habit" in 1958. Those buyers who desire fresh and exclusive form, and a unique kind of driving pleasure can look to the Edsel Citation — a "fine car" in its own right — at a substantially lower price!



1958 Edsel



1958 Cadillac



1957 Cadillac

WHAT'S MORE . . .

This Green Line Extra shows you facts and figures of the Edsel Citation's advantages over Cadillac for 1958. It shows how the Edsel Citation provides more for the money — even when compared with the self-styled "Standard of the World"!

Let's Talk Horse-Sense About . . .

WHAT MAKES A MEDIUM-PRICED CAR

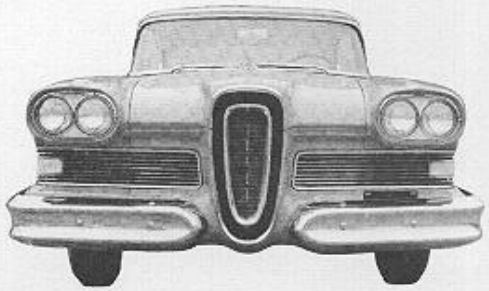
From the looks of things, almost everyone aspires to medium-priced prestige! Take the low-priced cars, Chevrolet for instance. Recent years have seen this make introduce model after model to compete in the "prestige" market.

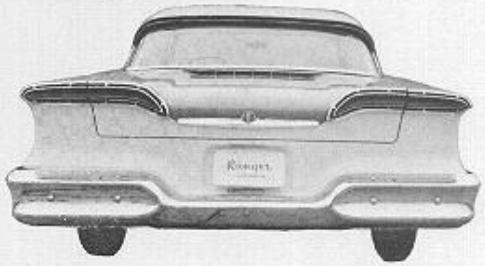
But tacked-on glamour, "juiced-up" engines and bigger price tags do little to change the basic character of this low-priced car. And the sad proof of that fact is when its owner consults the hard-bitten used car appraiser when trade-in time rolls around again.

The old saying never rang truer: You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear!

Contrast this with the genuine article — the 1958 Edsel. Here you find built-in bigness and luxury, as well as performance designed for its size. And you find lasting value. This is a medium-priced car for keeps!

This Green Line Extra gives you proof of that fact. It compares the 1958 Edsel with the Chevrolet Bel Air — and analyzes each of the features that provide the Edsel buyer lasting value and true prestige. They'll know you've arrived when you drive up in an Edsel!





1958 RANGER





1958 BEL AIR

More for the Money... or "Small Change"?

As each 1958 medium-price car makes its bow, you can see Edsel superiority in every buyer criterion ... style, comfort and performance ... overwhelmingly affirmed.

This is especially so in the case of the 1958 DeSoto. In contrast to the Edsel's newness, its "more-for-the-money" features, DeSoto offers "small change" for 1958.

WHAT'S UP IN STYLING?

Just a glance confirms the Edsel's fresh, new design ... its unprecedented styling. In fact, Edsel for 1958 is the only car you can call new ... and make it stick!

DeSoto, however, presents the same general styling theme as in 1957, with major differences in trim only. Moreover, despite these changes, Edsel still proves out "tops" in a side-by-side comparison with the 1958 DeSoto!

FOR EXAMPLE . . .

Edsel's rubber-faced bumper guards, concave bumper surfaces, and sturdy vertical impact ring all offer extra frontal protection — and a fresh, new appearance destined to become a classic. DeSoto, however continues to offer the "mouth-open" grille, rounded bumper surfaces which invite override ... and generally follows a well-rutted path of automotive styling.

Edsel's Dual Headlamps, integrated with the power-styled fenders, appear "made" for the car. DeSoto's dual headlamps ... now standard, as on Edsel ... present a less integrated impression.

Truly original and unshared style is found in the Edsel's flight-deck design, its broad and high gull wing tail lighting. DeSoto, however, with its tailfins and general body silhouette, gives more than a hint of its strong relationship with other cars in the Chrysler line.



1958 EDSEL



1958 DE SOTO



1957 DE SOTO

A LOOK AT THE LINEUP

Although offering 18 models, (including 6 FireSweeps ... the "Dodge" DeSotos ... and 2 high-priced Adventurers) DeSoto is "heavy" on the "price" cars. Its lineup offers no 2-door sedan, no 2-door station wagon. In addition, DeSoto offers a total of only four station wagons ... against Edsel's five ... with nothing to compare to the outstanding luxury of the simulated wood-panelled Bermudas! DeSoto equals the Edsel lineup in numbers only! The following pages tell that story — and more!

Dodge's Flight Sweep..."Here to Stay"?

For 1958, Edsel is the only car you can call "new" — and make it stick!

From its original and exclusive styling to its new brand of performance — Edsel is truly the car of totally new and pleasant surprises for the buyer.

Among the "lifted" automotive faces for 1958, Dodge highlights Edsel's bold newness in comparison. Far from daring, Dodge has adhered rather conservatively to last year's styling. For it seems a fact that Dodge Flight-Sweep styling is here to stay — at least for another model year!



1958 EDSEL

THE STYLING "RUNDOWN"

Dodge has "tightened" up its front end with a textured grille surface in place of last year's "mouth-open" design. However, Dodge retains the rounded bumper which affords little or no grille and radiator protection. Except for slightly redesigned bright metal ornaments in slightly different arrangements, Dodge is basically last year's car from a styling viewpoint.

By comparison, note Edsel's crisp front end treatment — the ruggedly protective grille — and husky concave bumpers that prevent override in "tight" parking situations.

Next, contrast Dodge's "opened" headlamp placement with the trim, smooth Edsel Dual Headlamp design.

Dodge also retains rearward slanting windshield posts, the controversial "tacked-on" fin treatment and "pop-out" taillights. In the Edsel, however, the buyer sees action-styled, forward-angle windshield posts — a smooth, flat, exclusive flight deck, trimly outlined by high level gull wing taillights.



1958 DODGE



1957 DODGE

HOW MANY MODELS?

Always a strong contender in mere numbers, Dodge again presents a long model line-up — 22 models for 1958. However, consider that five of these are 6-cylinder models — essentially "de-powered" versions of the 8-cylinder models. Excluding these, Dodge actually competes with Edsel with only 6 hardtops against Edsel's 8. And no matter how you cut it, Dodge offers nothing like the distinctive luxury of the simulated wood-panelled Edsel Bermudas!

How Does Olds Compare with the 1958 Edsel?

HOW "ORIGINAL" IS OLDS?

Historically an "experimental" car, Oldsmobile, in the past, has made a small name for its originality and newness. However, when you examine the 1958 Olds, you'll find little that's new and much that's borrowed — from the past or from other cars in the GM family. This is especially true when you compare Olds with the 1958 Edsel — the only 1958 car you can call new and make it stick!



1958 Edsel

SPECIFICALLY . . .

Although much praised by Oldsmobile people in the past, Oldsmobile's integral grille and bumper combination is not in the picture for '58. Instead, Olds follows general industry practice with an exposed grille and separate bumper. However, the new Olds grille (which looks like a cross between Chrysler and Buick styles) appears to be highly vulnerable to impact. Parking lights on Olds are in the bulky bumper, where they are exposed to minor parking damage. The bumper itself has no built-in safeguards against override, such as you find in the Edsel's "maximum security" front view.

From the side, the Olds silhouette shows striking similarities to last year's model, as well as to other GM cars. Even more obvious is Oldsmobile's excessive use of bright metal — for example, the "pipe organ" effect on the rear quarter panel. Contrast this with the Edsel, where eye-interest is achieved by the basic body design itself — not by "tacked on" ornaments.

From the rear, Oldsmobile retains the impression found at both side and front views. The fender crown is decorated with a "clip-on" fin, while the deck lid — compared with Edsel's contoured deck lid — is relatively uninteresting. While taillights on Olds are mounted high, directional signals are relatively low and could be overlooked in "close-in" city driving. Back-up lights are "fish-eyes" mounted in rear bumper projections, where they are vulnerable to minor parking mishaps — unlike Edsel's lights which are placed above the bumper.



1958 Oldsmobile



1957 Oldsmobile

THE SUMMING UP

Every view of Oldsmobile provides revealing contrasts with the 1958 Edsel's crisply new and original design. What is more, the 1958 Edsel backs up its favorable "first impression" with solid value. This story is told on the following pages.

What Makes a "Step-Up" Buy?





What does it mean in terms of value when the buyer "steps up" from the low-priced field? What does the buyer gain that makes his move worth the few dollars extra cost? And finally, what should the buyer look for when making the big step up?

To provide an answer, this Green Line

Extra compares the 1958 Edsel Ranger and Pacer with the 1958 Plymouth Belvedere. Although priced as little as $22 apart, when it comes to PRESTIGE, quality and dependability, you find that Edsel — which is priced below 32 of the low-priced three — is 1958's value buy. And just as important — the Edsel is all new — not a re-do!





Pontiac . . . No. ② Car in 1958?

Widely advertised as America's No. 1 road car during 1957, Pontiac rates a poor second when you compare it with the all-new 1958 Edsel!

For, although Pontiac sports a new body shell and sheet metal, the average buyer will easily detect a lack of real freshness in basic concept such as he sees in the 1958 Edsel.

HERE ARE EXAMPLES:

Pontiac continues its flat, relatively uninteresting hood line, its "mouth-open" grille and low, under-slung bumper bars at front — designs used by all competitive manufacturers. In the Edsel, however, the buyer sees true distinction in the exclusive contoured hood, the vertical grille theme that features a rugged Impact Ring and concave bumpers to protect the front of the car. Pontiac's low-placed parking lights actually project ahead of the bumper, while Edsel's lights are blended into the grillework, above the bumper, where they are out of harm's way and can be seen easily from the front or side.

A sidelong glance again betrays Pontiac's reliance on the past. For example, the "spear" side molding is remarkably like that of last year's model, and the "rounded" silhouette and wheel cutouts hardly seem changed. Many observers will prefer Edsel's more graceful handling of the rear quarter scallop, its action-styled wheel cutouts and flat, crisply modern roof line.

At the rear, Pontiac seems to have picked up Chevrolet's 1957 taillight design with slight revisions — while its general contours are not as eye-catching as Edsel's unique flight deck design and gull-wing taillights.



1958 Edsel



1958 Pontiac



1957 Pontiac

NEW IN THE PONTIAC TRIBE

Pontiac has traditionally used the basic "A" body for Chieftain models as well as the more expensive Star Chief. To overcome this deficiency, Pontiac for 1958 has added a new series to the top of the line — the Bonneville. This new series, however, is actually smaller in size than the Star Chief, and appears to be the same "A" body with a new roof panel. What is more, it is offered in only two body styles (compared with three in the Citation) — neither of which are as long, wide, or roomy as the Edsel Citation!

For the buyer who expects greater size with more generous interior dimensions, Pontiac for 1958 is simply a case of "too little, too late." The following pages tell you this story in no uncertain terms!

Here's Why More and More Ford Owners Are . . .
"STEPPING UP" WITH THE 1958 EDSEL!





It's no surprise that the 1958 Edsel is proving itself an attractive "step-up" buy for former Ford owners.

For the Edsel is backed up by years of Ford Motor research and manufacturing experience. And, as a result, the buyer finds the same outstanding engineering and workmanship that have put Ford in the forefront of the low-priced field.

But the Edsel buyer finds more, too. He sees the results of Edsel's own years of experience and its millions of miles of testing. He finds even greater comfort — more distinctive styling — increased performance — and the greater all-around value and prestige of a medium-priced car.

This Green Line Extra — comparing the 1958 Edsel with the 1958 Ford Fairlane 500 — provides the buyer specific information on the Edsel's greater value. As such, it offers proof that, in the medium-priced field, Edsel is the "step-up" buy.

Right “Personality”

"…After the decision was made in 1955, Ford ran more studies to make sure the new car had precisely the right 'personality.' Research showed that Mercury buyers were generally young and hot-rod-inclined, while Pontiac, Dodge and Buick appealed to middle-aged people. Edsel was to strike a happy medium. As one researcher said, it would be 'the smart car for the younger Executive or professional family on its way up'…"

***TIME,* November 30, 1959**



"…To get this image across, Ford even went to the trouble of putting out a 60-page memo on the procedural steps in the selection of an advertising agency, turned down 19 applicants before choosing Manhattan's Foote, Cone & Belding. Total cost of research, design, tooling, expansion of production facilities: $250-million…"

***TIME,* November 30, 1959**

Caption: "Fairfax Cone, Principal of Foote, Cone & Belding and head of the Edsel account"

A Taste of Lemon

"…The flaw in all the research was that by 1957, when Edsel appeared, the boom was gone from the medium-priced field, and a new boom was starting in the compact field; an area the Edsel research had overlooked completely…"

***TIME,* November 30, 1959**

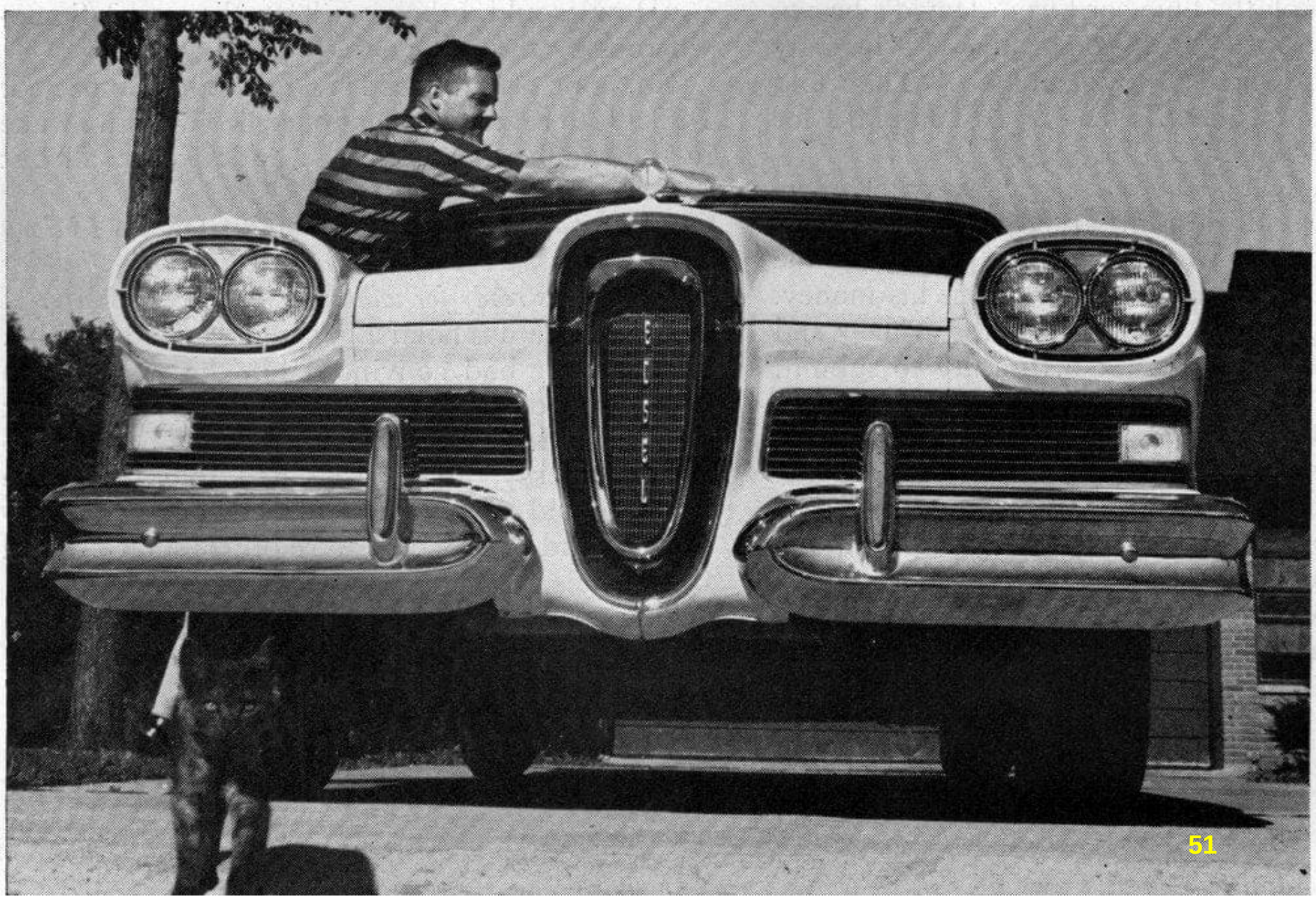




The EDSEL LOOK is here to stay
—it has the new ideas next year's cars are copying!

"…Edsel's styling, in particular the grille, which resembled an Oldsmobile sucking a lemon, was not much help, even after the lemon was removed…"
***TIME,* November 30, 1959**

From the standpoint of style, the Edsel's most striking feature is the vertical treatment of its front-end design, balanced by the horizontal lines of the air-duct grilles and a massive "interrupted" bumper.







"…In its first six months Edsel made 54,600 cars and then went steadily downward: 26,500 cars in 1958, fewer than 30,000 cars so far in boom-time 1959…"

***TIME,* November 30, 1959**

RE: FMC's goal of 200K annual sales never came close to being realized, with only 68,045 Edsels produced for 1958. It was all downhill from there. Sales fell 30% for 1959, with only 47,396 leaving the factories. Production did dribble into the 1960 model year, when Edsels were redesigned as a slightly modified Ford Fairlane. On Nov. 19, 1959 – just 806 days after Edsel was introduced with great fanfare – Ford announced the brand would be discontinued. A Villager wagon (ad above) would be the last Edsel ever produced



<u>Caption</u>: "The last Edsel – a 1960 Villager wagon, produced November 19, 1959"



"…Actually, Ford will not lose its entire investment. Of the total, $100 million went for production facilities, which will be used to produce Ford's second entry into the compact-car field next spring…"

***TIME,* November 30, 1959**

<u>Above</u>: 1960 Ford Falcon (compact car) advertisement

Edsel for 1960

Edsel Takes on a New Personality

DROPPING ITS trademark, the vertical grille, Edsel has adopted a low, wide design in front that is very similar to that of a highly successful 1959 car (see page 83).

From the rear, the Edsel is new also with a massive rear window that has 63 percent more glass area. Vertical taillights and backup lights stand side by side, jutting above the rear-deck line. Crisp side-panel sculpturing ends in subdued, flattened fins.

Like Ford (whose shell it shares), Edsel has increased its body length by more than five inches and lowered its roofline by one inch. It's a lot easier to get into the front seat, thanks to the absence of the dogleg caused by the former wraparound windshield. This year, front entrance room has been increased almost 10 inches.

Two different roofs are available. Two-door hardtops have a fast-back design that slants smoothly from roof to rear deck. Four-door models and two-door sedans have a wider rear pillar and a more vertical rear window.

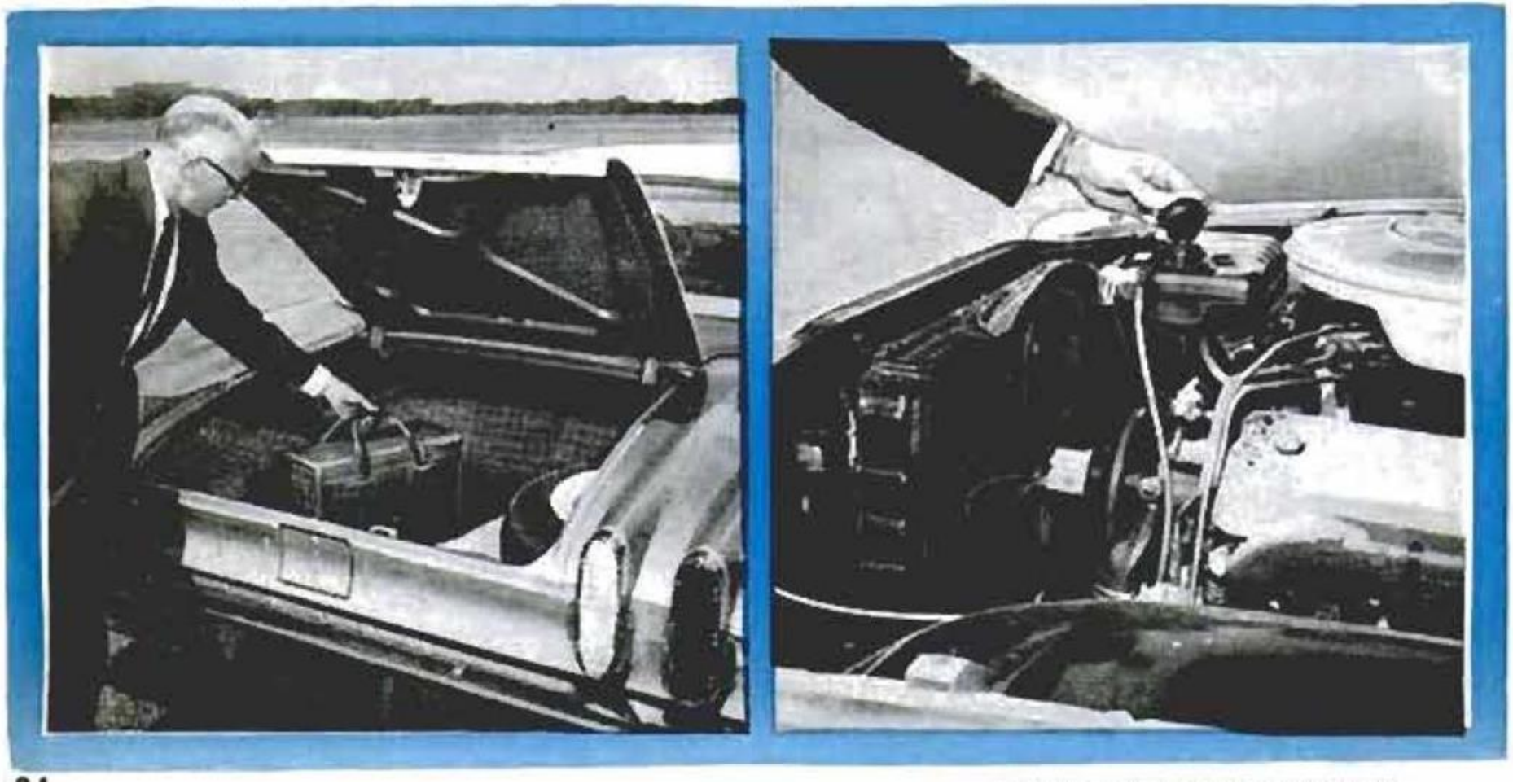
The second seat of the six-passenger station wagon can be folded to form a flat load bed quickly with one motion. The nine-passenger wagon has three forward-facing seats and its third seat is cushioned only by a foam-rubber pad that slips off when the seat back is folded down into the floor.

Standard V8 is the 292-cubic-inch model. An optional 352-cubic-inch V8 with four-barrel carburetor comes with a three-speed automatic transmission if desired. The 223-cubic-inch six is retained.

(*Popular Mechanics*, November 1959)

Edsel's longer and wider frame permits the trunk to be 6.5 inches deeper and 6 inches wider than in 1959

To enable the stylists to lower the hoodline, engineers separated the radiator tank from the cross-flow core



(*Popular Mechanics*, November 1959)

Edsel

Gone is Edsel's controversial grille, but that's not the only change. It is 5.5 inches longer, 2.7 inches wider, an inch lower. Interior room is improved, especially width. Getting in and out is easier as no windshield post intrudes into entryway. Engines have cross-flow radiators for lower hoodlines. Only two series are offered: Villager, the wagons; and Ranger, all others.



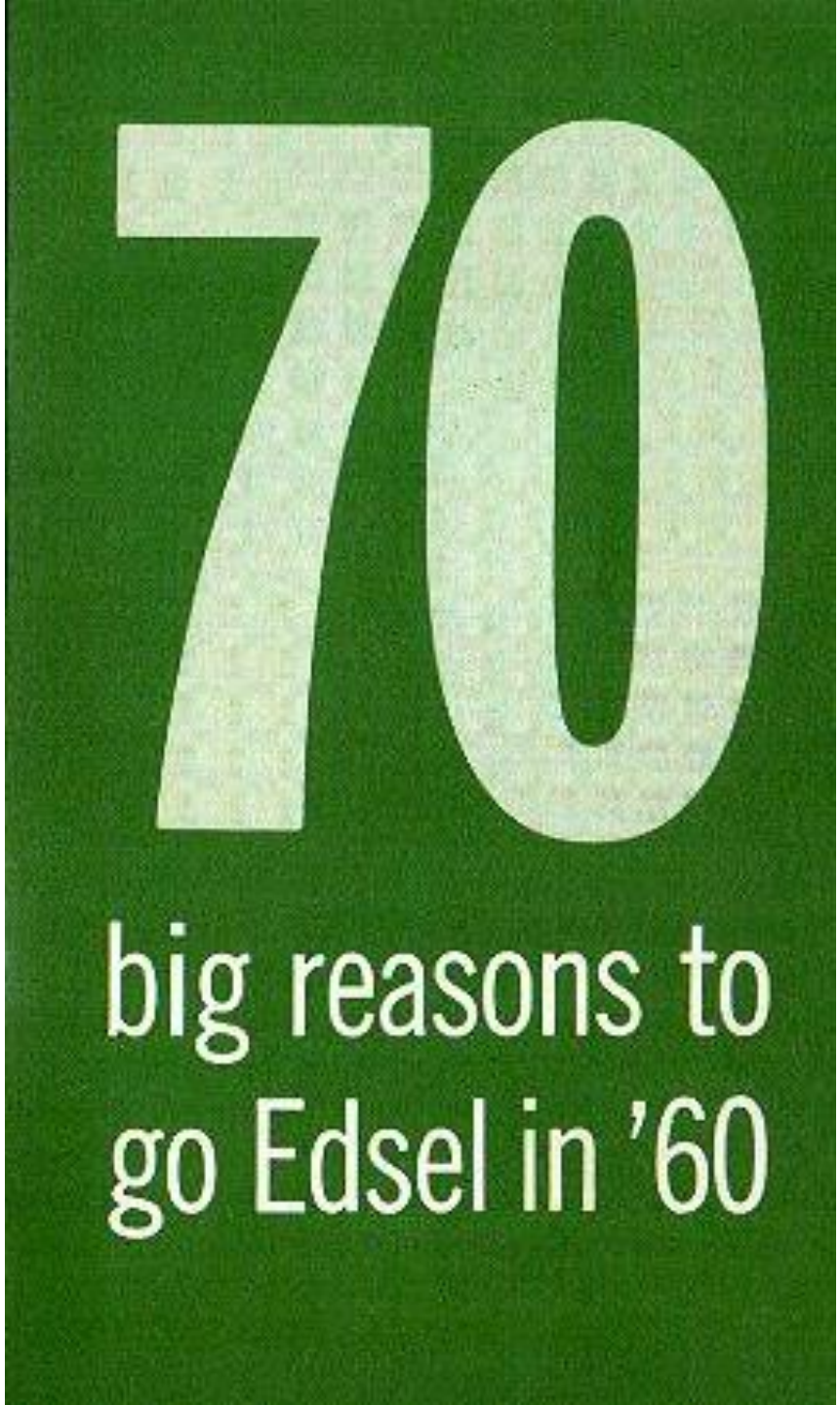
(*Popular Mechanics,* November 1959)



1960 EDSEL: NEW, NIFTY, THRIFTY

Style . . . performance . . . economy . . . quality . . . all of these are yours in the most exciting new car of the year . . . the 1960 Edsel. Seven beautiful, luxurious models to choose from, all loaded with extras at no extra cost. There's performance and economy perfectly blended to suit your every driving need in three precision-built engines and transmissions. And quality, as only the Ford Motor Company can provide it, is evident in every line—in every component of the all-new 1960 Edsel.

So, here are the reasons why you should consider a 1960 Edsel as your best buy . . . the newest, most modern automobile on the road today . . . and it's priced down with many models of Chevrolet, Ford and Plymouth!


70
big reasons to
go Edsel in '60



EDSEL FEATURES CRISP, NEW STYLING IN EVERY LINE . . . IN EVERY COMPONENT

1. Edsel is long and lively in profile—reflects the overall, careful attention given to crisply integrated styling.

2. Edsel's graceful, swept-back windshield . . . wide, smooth hood . . . and thin-line fender design give it sculpture-like beauty.

3. Smooth, flowing lines and new twin-jet taillights lend a note of dramatic simplicity to the new Edsel design.

4. Edsel's distinctive hardtop styling—low, flat and full-flowing—gives a light, streamlined appearance to the Ranger 2-door Hardtop.

5. Edsel's completely new grille is a real winner—a perfect complement to handsome, low, wide looks.

6. Edsel offers you a choice of five beautiful Moroccan vinyl and Pebblecloth trim selections in sedan and hardtop models.

7. You have a choice of three optional trim packages in sedan and hardtop models in the form of durable Moroccan vinyl coupled with luxurious Champagne cloth. A high-comfort contour front seat is also a part of this exceptional trio.

8. There are four fully washable, all-vinyl upholstery combinations to select from when your choice is a Ranger Convertible. And, for even greater style and comfort, a contour front seat is standard equipment.

9. Edsel Villager Station Wagons offer you four fashion-designed interiors that are in the height of style, yet ready to take the roughest treatment.

10. All Edsel Ranger models give you wall-to-wall, color-harmonized carpeting at no extra cost.

11. Steering wheel . . . instrument panel . . . all exposed metal parts are color-harmonized with the basic upholstery to reflect high-style interior design you expect and find in every 1960 Edsel.

12. Edsel's Diamond-Lustre finish is far superior to ordinary lacquers. Its deep, baked-in gloss remains sparkling bright for years—and you don't have to wax it either. Choose from fifteen solid colors and forty two-tone combinations.



EDSEL GIVES YOU GREATER SAFETY . . . GREATER SECURITY

13. You can drive with peace of mind in an Edsel—interlocking-type door locks are designed to reduce the possibility of doors springing open upon impact—resist pull-apart force better.

14. Safety glass all the way around means full protection—clear, undistorted visibility.

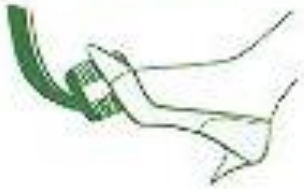
15. There's extra strength, rigidity and passenger safety as a result of Edsel's safety-curve frame with box-girder side rails.



16. Ranger Convertible frame receives extra attention in the form of a special X-member. For extra strength, special I-beam girders form the X-member located in the center portion of the frame.

17. There's never a moment of doubt with Edsel's big, powerful brakes. A large (225 sq. in.) lining area gives you maximum braking ability—finest braking action.

18. Brand-new brake drums feature cooling rib design. Heat is effectively, and efficiently removed so you can make stop after stop with complete confidence and safety.



19. Edsel has a toe-set parking brake conveniently located next to your left foot for quick, full-brake application.

20. There's a handy parking-brake release knob on the instrument panel—just a light pull and you're ready to "go."

21. Big, four-wheel self-adjusting brakes automatically compensate themselves for normal lining wear—eliminate the need for periodic mechanical adjustments. Brake pedal height is constantly maintained—an important safety factor.

22. There's full command of every driving situation when you're behind the wheel of the 1960 Edsel. Edsel's brand-new, wide-stance, 61-inch front tread gives you safer,

more positive steering control.

23. Edsel's new ignition switch defies tampering—reduces the chance of car theft.

24. Edsel's inside hood release prevents opening the engine compartment without your consent. When the car is locked—the engine compartment is locked!

25. Edsel features Balanced-Vision headlights, mounted in the outer portion of the grille for the widest, and therefore safest, lighting of the road.

26. Edsel's Twin-Jet taillights not only add styling beauty, but also flash attention-commanding signals for greater safety.

27. Edsel's three-spoke, deep-dish-design steering wheel offers greater protection. In the event of an accident, the wheel cushions the driver's forward motion—reduces the incident of injury.

28. Edsel's low-friction steering makes driving a pleasure again. Instant-response action at all speeds—over all types of roads. And there's less driver fatigue which is an important contribution to driving safety.

29. Edsel bumpers are more than just ornamentation . . . one-piece solid steel, with increased height and wrap-around, they provide greater protection against impact and sheetmetal damage.

30. All Edsel 4-door models are equipped with safety rear door locks. When the plunger-type locks are depressed, the door handles will not operate—an important safety feature when there are small children riding in the back seat.



EDSEL SETS THE PACE IN COMFORT . . . CONVENIENCE

31. Edsel's low floor tunnel gives you greater leg room—more passenger comfort.

32. It's easier to get in and out of an Edsel because of a new windshield post design that eliminates the "dog leg" in the windshield—there's a wide front door opening.

33. Need lots of trunk space? The 1960 Edsel has over 32 cubic feet of luggage area (and it's easy to get at, too).

34. For the finest in ventilation, Edsel offers you cowl-located fresh air intakes. You get cleaner, fresher air since the intakes are located well above the level of exhaust fumes and heat of other cars.

35. There's nothing like an Edsel for a low sound-level ride and full weather protection —each Edsel body is insulated against sound and sealed against the weather in ten areas to provide you with this comfort.

36. Edsel's new exhaust system results in extra comfort . . . extra savings. Exhaust sounds and heat are transferred away from the passenger compartment because of the new rear mounting location. An aluminized coating adds to muffler life . . . reduces need for maintenance.

37. Edsel's noise- and vibration-free ride is due, in part, to new silent, rubber body mounts. Irritating vibrations and discon-certing road noises are quickly soaked-up for a quiet, distraction-free ride.

38. New twin front body mounts provide positive installation of the body to frame— give the 1960 Edsel that solid, luxury-car feel.

39. Edsel's inboard and outboard body mount brackets give you added protection against road shock—further improve the famous Edsel ride.

40. Edsel's Road-Poise ride provides added smoothness and stability through large, front shock absorbers mounted in the center of the coil springs.

41. Sea-leg-mounted rear shock absorbers provide you greater ride control, less side-sway, more stability.

Stop in today and see for yourself why the 1960 Edsel is the best buy of the year. Drive it and enjoy Edsel's velvet-smooth, Road-Poise ride . . . the immediate response of a perfectly balanced power team . . . and experience the luxury and comfort of Edsel's full-fashioned interiors. All of these features, and many more, can be yours in the 1960 Edsel . . . a car that's priced down with many models of Chevrolet, Ford and Plymouth.



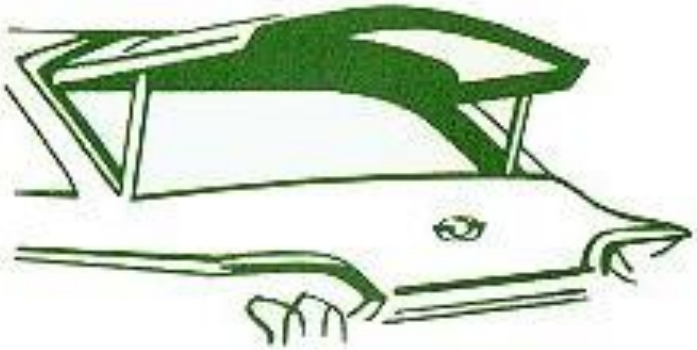
42. New extra-long rear springs contribute to the luxury ride of every 1960 Edsel. The short, stiff front portion of the spring holds the car level during acceleration, while a longer, more supple rear section gives you softer spring action for a smoother, level ride.

43. Edsel's 9-passenger Villagers have a forward-facing third seat for more comfortable, normal ride. Enter the third seat in the normal manner—through the doors—not by hurdling the tailgate.

44. Edsel's 6-passenger Villagers feature a second seat that converts to 100 cubic feet of cargo area in seconds—and by easy one-hand operation.

45. Villager liftgate has a new ventilation control feature for added passenger comfort. Hot, humid air can be quickly removed from the interior of the wagon by locking the liftgate in one of three open positions.

46. There's perfect blending of style and function in every Villager Wagon. A wide 61-inch tailgate opening makes cargo loading or unloading a simple operation.



47. There's nothing easier to operate than a Villager tailgate and liftgate. All that's required is one hand to press the gate release button—and as the tailgate is pulled down, the liftgate automatically pops open.

48. Most everyone would like a clock in his car, but often hesitates because of additional cost. In the 1960 Edsel, an electric, self-regulating clock is standard equipment in every model.

49. Edsel offers you a choice of over forty-five options and accessories to further increase your driving comfort and pleasure.

50. Edsel gives you fourteen or more features as standard equipment—many of which are considered optional, extra-cost items in other cars.

51. Bright metal window mouldings are an extra styling touch you're often charged extra for on other cars. Not so on Edsel—for these mouldings come as standard equipment . . . no extra cost to you.



52. There is no need to wrestle the deck lid if you own a new Edsel. The counter-balanced deck lid opens and closes with the touch of a hand.

53. Passengers in Edsel's rear seat can stretch out with real comfort. A deeply recessed floor pan allows better seating angle—gives you more leg room.

54. There are no confusing instrument arrangements or awkwardly-located gauges to contend with when driving a new Edsel. Everything is properly arranged—easily read—well illuminated on Edsel's new instrument panel.



EDSEL'S POWER TEAM IS ECONOMY-MINDED . . . PERFORMANCE-PROVED

55. There's a 185-horsepower V-8 engine that's standard equipment in every 1960 Edsel model.

56. For the tops in fuel-saving economy, you may select the Economy Six engine—a lower-cost option.

57. If you prefer an engine with highest performance characteristics coupled with good fuel economy, choose the brand-new, sparkling 300-horsepower Super Express V-8.



58. Smooth-operating, low-cost automatic shifting can be yours with the new Mile-O-Matic automatic transmission.*

59. Edsel also offers you Dual-Power drive which acts as two transmissions in one—this is the ultimate in automatic transmissions.*

60. The standard manual-shift transmission completely fulfills all shifting requirements plus featuring lower cost and highest quality.

61. **Every 1960 Edsel engine** has deep-block construction that means extra strength and rigidity—greater engine life.

62. **Every 1960 Edsel engine** has aluminum alloy pistons that last longer, are superior in their oil control ability—further the life of the engine.

63. **Every 1960 Edsel engine** features 18-mm spark plugs that run cooler, last longer.

64. **Every 1960 Edsel engine** has a disposable oil filter that traps even the smallest particles of dirt—is easy to service, too.

65. **Every 1960 Edsel engine** has a precision-moulded, alloy iron crankshaft—your Edsel engine runs smoother, lasts longer because of it.

66. **Every 1960 Edsel engine** has a vacuum booster fuel pump that doubly insures smooth, steady windshield wiper action.

67. **Every 1960 Edsel engine** is equipped with a dry-type air cleaner that's easy to service—does a superior filtering job.

68. **Every 1960 Edsel engine** features a new, highly efficient cross-flow radiator that's superior in its cooling action.

69. **Every 1960 Edsel engine** has a high-output water pump which provides positive circulation of the coolant—is extremely quiet in operation.

70. All Edsel automatic transmissions are water-cooled—this means long, dependable operation.

*Optional at extra cost.



Specifications herein were in effect at the time this material was approved for printing. Edsel Division of Ford Motor Company reserves the right to discontinue models at any time, or change specifications or design, without notice and without incurring obligation.


EDSEL FOR 1960
NEW! NIFTY! THRIFTY!

Forgotten Future

"…As a running mate for the Falcon, Ford plans a slightly larger, more luxurious compact model that it originally thought of calling the 'Edsel Comet.' Now the new car will just be called the 'Comet'…"

***TIME,* November 30, 1959**

Most of us know the story of the 1960 Ford Falcon and its sibling the 1960 Not-a-Mercury Comet, but did you know that the Comet was originally intended to be an Edsel and not a Mercury?

***curbsideclassic.com,* April 6, 2023**

RE: introduction to an article written by *Tom Halter* entitled: "Forgotten Future: 1960 Edsel Comet"



"AS is often the case, Ford was well along with the design of the Edsel Comet before it got nixed, but thanks to the power of Internet we can see what it would have looked like…"
***curbsideclassic.com*, April 6, 2023**



"…As you can see, the Edsel horse collar grill was narrowed to just a sliver for the comet. Indeed, it is very similar to an alternate design considered for the full-sized 1960 Edsel line, which I'll address in a future FF installment. I personally find the treatment quite attractive and very similar to the then-forthcoming Pontiac Tempest. If the success of the Tempest is anything to go by, the Edsel Comet could have been a hit…"

***curbsideclassic.com,* April 6, 2023**



1961 Pontiac Tempest



"…You can clearly see the large EDSEL letters along the side of this wagon prototype from July 7, 1959. Given that this would have been just months, if not weeks before the start of 1960 model production, Ford obviously waited until the last minute to kill the Edsel Comet…"

***curbsideclassic.com,* April 6, 2023**



"…From the rear, you can see the diagonal tail-lamps that made it over to the Comet virtually unmodified…"
***curbsideclassic.com,* April 6, 2023**



"…Here's a clay model of the wagon back-side. It looks pretty much just like the Falcon wagon, with an Edsel taillight stuck on…"
***curbsideclassic.com,* April 6, 2023**



"…Here's an alternate front-end treatment with dual headlights, as opposed to the quad headlights above. The end result looks much more 'Falconish' as a result. Maybe it would have been a lower line model…"
***curbsideclassic.com,* April 6, 2023**



"…Here's another interpretation of the horse-collar grille. Not as successful as the ones above…"
***curbsideclassic.com,* April 6, 2023**



"…Lastly, one more clay model with a unique take on the split grille. This one is interesting, with lines from grille extending down into the bumper and all the way up into the hood almost to the base of the windshield. For people looking for something different, this would have been much more appealing than the original Edsel horse-collar. (ED: this was the oldest of these clays and clearly based heavily on the Falcon body)."

***curbsideclassic.com,* April 6, 2023**

+300 Horses



"…As the Edsel died, Ford got ready to put more pep into the Ford line. Next month Ford will begin deliveries of a 360-hp engine that is topped among U.S. stock cars only by the 380-hp in the Chrysler 300-E. Ford's aim is to outdo both Plymouth (330-hp top) and Chevrolet (335-hp top) with its new engine."

***TIME,* November 30, 1959**

Caption: ". . . You can guess a lot from the Edsel's clean, road-ready look – and the 345-hp rating of the most advanced V-8s on the road . . . "

New Edsel Packs 300-Plus Horses

Goes on Display Sept. 4, Priced from $2,500 to $4,200

BY FRED OLMSTED
Free Press Automotive Editor

A handsome and hard-punching newcomer will officially join the Ford family of automobiles Tuesday.

The Edsel, packing 300-plus horsepower in either of two engines, is expected to deliver some telling blows in Ford's fight to capture an even larger share of the market in 1958.

It will be in the showrooms across the nation Wednesday, Sept. 4. Prices will be announced about that time. They are expected to range from about $2,500 to $4,200, plus state and local taxes and optional equipment.

Details of the Edsel, named in memory of Henry Ford's son who died in 1943, were revealed by the Ford Motor Co. Monday.

The Edsel, which stemmed from an idea to bolster Ford in the medium-price field and grew into a quarter-billion-dollar effort, became No. 20 in the current list of American-made cars.

The car's debut will take place Tuesday in Dearborn before a critical audience of 250 news, magazine, radio and

Turn to Page 2, Column 1

The Detroit Free Press – August 27, 1957

Synonymous With Failure

"…Forget New Coke or the Susan B. Anthony dollar or the over-hyped Segway scooter or those pathetic dot-coms that went belly-up in the late '90s. The Edsel was the most colossal, stupendous and legendary blunder in the history of American marketing. 'The word 'Edsel' became synonymous with failure,' says Marshall Brain, the founder of howstuff-works.com, who has written extensively about the Edsel…"

***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**

RE: the "Edsel" name became synonymous with failure and the car itself became the butt of many jokes. Even what should have been good press turned bad. In May 1958, U.S. VP Richard Nixon toured South America and was provided with an Edsel convertible in Peru. While motorcading through Lima in the open-top Edsel, Nixon was pelted with eggs and rocks from protestors. Later on, Nixon quipped that "They were throwing eggs at the car, not me."


CINZANO
Kodak
Alexander

"…He's not kidding. Look-up Edsel in Webster's dictionary. The first definition is specific: 'automobile produced (1957-1959) by the Ford Motor Company.' The second is broader: 'a product, project, etc. that fails to gain public acceptance despite high expectations, costly promotional efforts, etc.'…"
***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**

NO AUTOMOBILE HAS BEEN SO WIDELY ANTICIPATED AND SO QUICKLY rejected as the Ford Edsel. Within two months of its highly publicized launch on September 4, 1957 the Edsel became a rolling joke. By the time the last car, a beige six-passenger Villager station wagon, rolled off the line on November 20, 1959 the word "Edsel" had become convenient shorthand for any massive and embarrassingly public failure. In the nearly two generations since that day millions who have never seen the car have recognized the name and image as a synonym for failure. In actuality, however, the Edsel, while undeniably unpopular, was, at most, an ambiguous failure.

RE: article for *The Journal of Popular Culture,* Vol. 43, No. 3, 2010, entitled: "The Edsel: Forty Years as a Symbol of Failure," by *Tom Dicke*

Accounts of the Edsel give a variety of reasons why it failed but essentially they all come down to consumer apathy: The Edsel failed because consumers did not buy it. While true as far as it goes, this version of events is misleading because it assumes that Ford wanted the Edsel to succeed (Bonsall; Daines). In reality, however, Ford terminated the Edsel largely because shortly before Ford introduced the car a change in leadership brought a change in corporate strategy that made the Edsel irrelevant to Ford Motor Company's (FMCs) long-range plans. As a result, when it floundered on launch Ford's top management made no serious effort to salvage the Edsel program. Given that Ford's Executive Committee shifted their strategy before they introduced the Edsel and they did so because they considered the program unnecessary, not because they believed the car would be unpopular, then Edsel's status as an icon for failure is undeserved. In actuality, the Edsel is most accurately remembered not as a product failure but as a powerful example of the potential hazards of strategic waffling.

RE: article for *The Journal of Popular Culture,* Vol. 43, No. 3, 2010, entitled: "The Edsel: Forty Years as a Symbol of Failure," by *Tom Dicke*

Part 2

The Story of the Edsel

Of Human Folly

"…The story of the Edsel is a farce that might make a good Mel Brooks movie; a tale of human folly, corporate arrogance and vast piles of horse excrement, much of it metaphorical but some of it, alas, all too pungently real…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**

The YOU idea



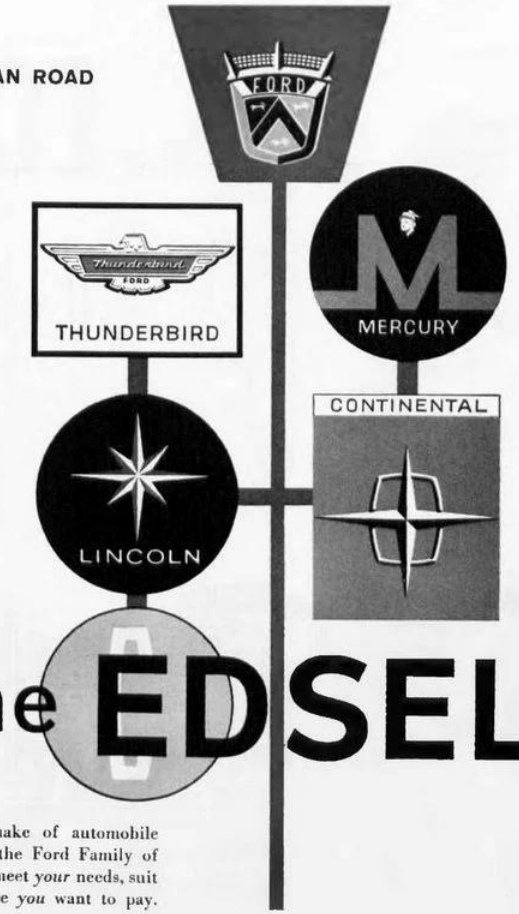


"…The idea for the Edsel came from Ford Executives who were thinking about market niches when they should have been thinking about cars. They were worried that Ford owners who prospered in the postwar boom were trading in their cheap Fords for pricier Pontiacs and Buicks…"

***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**

<u>Caption</u>: "The story behind the news – told by Ernest R. Breech, Chairman of the Board and Henry Ford II, President FMC

SETTING THE PACE ON THE AMERICAN ROAD



and now the EDSEL



A remarkable new make of automobile widens the choice in the Ford Family of Fine Cars—to help us meet *your* needs, suit *your* taste, at any price *you* want to pay.

Matching cars to people is our business.

That is why we automobile men are so intensely interested in YOU. We have to be. To us, YOU—as an individual—are the big difference between failure and success.

And no one knows better than we how individualistic you can be! When you buy a car, you don't follow precedence, you don't follow trends. You ask your neighbor's advice and often forget all about it. You ask your wife's opinion, nod your head, and maybe forget that, too. You read the ads, look at the cars, and finally, you make up your mind. Every purchase of a car is a wonderful adventure. An adventure for you, and for us.

The continuing challenge of trying to keep up with you is what keeps men young in this business. Just remember that every hour of every day, we are called upon to make decisions based on OUR opinion of YOUR opinion. A new line to the rear deck, for instance. How will it look to *You*? A new kind of transmission control? How will it appeal to *You*?

Not long ago, we made one of the most momentous business decisions of our careers. We decided to bring out a new make of car. An automobile more distinctive than anything on the American Road. This is the Edsel.

Why did we decide to bring out the Edsel? Again, there is a one-word answer. YOU.

We believed *You* would be pleased to pick your next new car from a larger choice than you had when you bought your last one. We believed that *You* would enjoy sharing, with us, some of the adventure of a totally new automobile. We believed *You* would be pleasantly startled at the distinctive styling and the advanced engineering of the Edsel. And, speaking quite frankly as businessmen, we believed that the addition of this remarkable new make would give us an added opportunity to bring you into (or keep you in) the Ford Family of Fine Cars.

Happily, our judgment has been confirmed. Not in a great many years has an automobile caused so much excitement. Everyone who has seen it knows—with us—that the Edsel is a success.

Ernest R. Breech Chairman Jerry Lud Jr. President

FORD MOTOR COMPANY THE AMERICAN ROAD, DEARBORN, MICHIGAN

TURN PAGE

Matching cars to people is our business.

That is why we automobile men are so intensely interested in YOU. We have to be. To us, YOU—as an individual—are the big difference between failure and success.

And no one knows better than we how individualistic you can be! When you buy a car, you don't follow precedence, you don't follow trends. You ask your neighbor's advice and often forget all about it. You ask your wife's opinion, nod your head, and maybe forget that, too. You read the ads, look at the cars, and finally, you make up your mind. Every purchase of a car is a wonderful adventure. An adventure for you, and for us.

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Ernest R. Breech Chairman Jerry Lud Jr. President

More than a new make of car...

THE EDSEL

is a ¼ billion dollar measure of a company's faith in the American Economy

The Edsel is the first new make of car among major automakers in 19 years. In our time, the introduction of a new line of automobiles has become incredibly expensive. The new Edsel represents an investment of $250,000,000.

The decision to make this extraordinary investment was a momentous one. It was based on a boundless faith in the strength of the American economy . . . and something more. It was based on what we knew, guessed, felt, believed, suspected—about you. *YOU* are the reason behind the Edsel.

We believe *You* will be pleased to pick your next new car from a larger choice than you had when you bought your last one. We believe that *You* will enjoy sharing, with us, some of the adventure of a totally new automobile. We believe *You* will be pleasantly startled at the distinctive styling, advanced engineering and the tailored elegance of the Edsel . . . which you will see on the next pages.

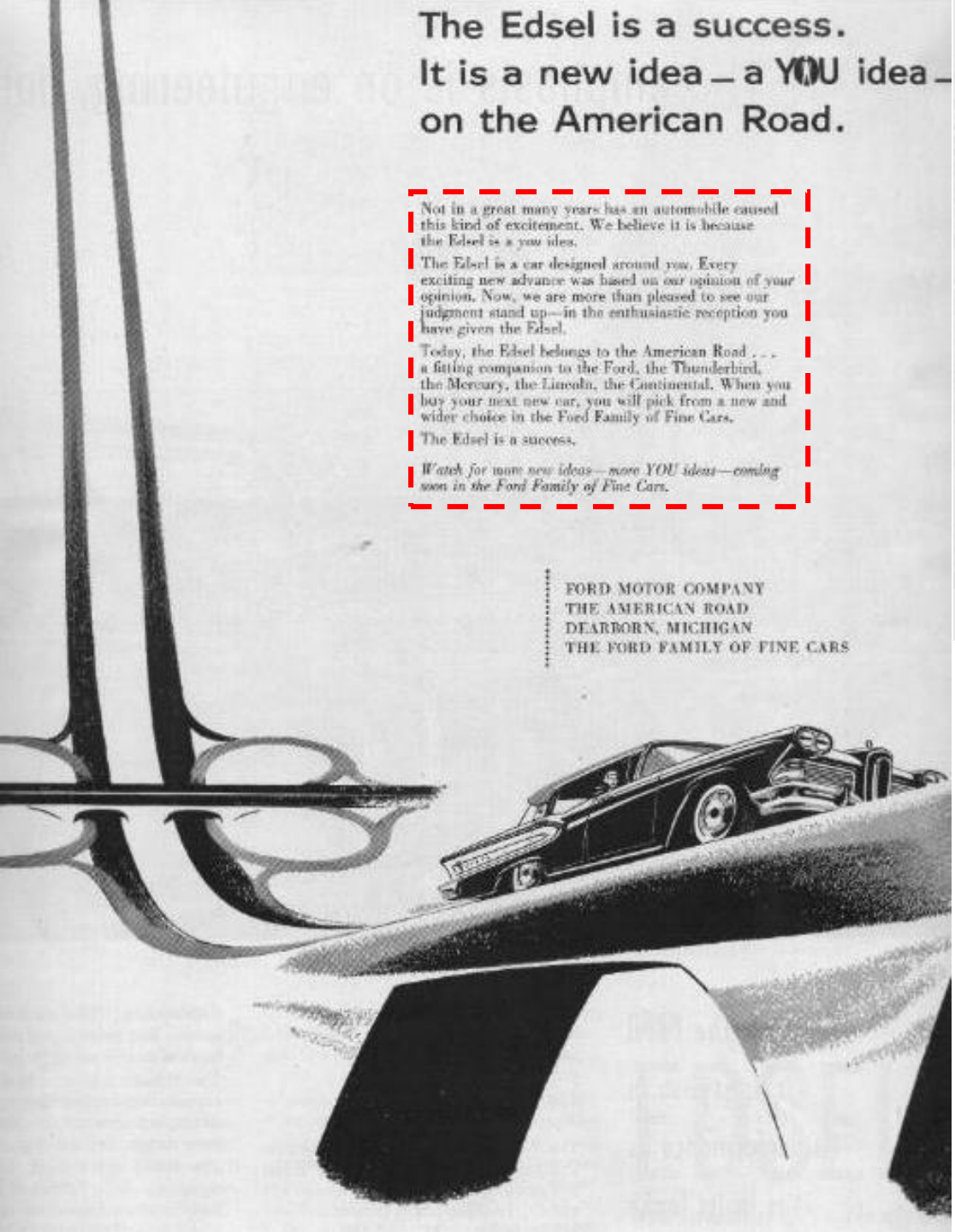
And, speaking quite frankly as businessmen, we believe that the addition of this remarkable new make will give us an added opportunity to bring you into (or keep you in) the Ford Family of Fine Cars.

Ernest R. Breech *Chairman* Henry Ford II *President*

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FORD MOTOR COMPANY

THE AMERICAN ROAD • DEARBORN, MICHIGAN



Not in a great many years has an automobile caused this kind of excitement. We believe it is because the Edsel is a you idea.
The Edsel is a car designed around you. Every exciting new advance was based on our opinion of your opinion. Now, we are more than pleased to see our judgment stand up—in the enthusiastic reception you have given the Edsel.
Today, the Edsel belongs to the American Road . . . a fitting companion to the Ford, the Thunderbird, the Mercury, the Lincoln, the Continental. When you buy your next new car, you will pick from a new and wider choice in the Ford Family of Fine Cars.
The Edsel is a success.
Watch for more new ideas—more YOU ideas—coming soon in the Ford Family of Fine Cars.

"…They figured Ford needed a new line of medium-price cars and they hired a bunch of motivational researchers to probe the psyche of the American car buyer…"

washingtonpost.com, **September 4, 2007**

Gazillions in Research

"…The '50s were the glory days of motivational research and Columbia University's Bureau of Applied Social Research was the mecca of the trade. David Wallace, Ford's Director of Planning and a man with a PhD in sociology from Columbia, hired the Bureau to find out why people bought the cars they bought…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**

"…The Bureau's researchers interviewed 800 people, inquiring about their preferences in everything from cars to cocktails, then produced a report revealing the hidden meaning of cars. Ford symbolized 'rugged masculinity.' Buick symbolized 'upper-class solidarity.' Plymouth had a 'weak image of plain respectability.' And so on…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**

"…Wallace read the report and concluded that the new Ford should be touted as 'the smart car for the younger Executive or professional family on its way up.' That sounded reasonable. It was certainly better than touting it as a dumb car for families on the way down…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**

The car you're driving now tells us a lot about you

Because you now drive one of the Ford Family of Fine Cars, we feel sure that you appreciate smart styling and quality performance. And we know, too, that you bought wisely in yesterday's car market.

But today there's a completely *new* standard for the very qualities you want most in your automobile—the 1958 Edsel. In performance, in style and in driving ease, Edsel outvalues any car on the road today. More than 36,000 people, including a particularly large number of Ford and Mercury owners, are already driving Edsels—and we're sure a demonstration drive will convince you, too.

If you're planning to buy a new car this year—we suggest you see the Edsel, drive the Edsel, and price the Edsel now. You can save hundreds of extra dollars by doing this right away—and you'll own the Ford family's newest and biggest car value in the bargain!



EDSEL

outperforms anything else in the medium-priced field—yet Edsel prices start lower than 32 models of the low-priced three!*

Exclusive New Teletouch Drive
puts the buttons where they belong, in the center of the steering wheel.

303-, 345-hp. high-torque V-8 engines
Out-ahead jet-grille styling
Big, safer self-adjusting brakes
Dial-temp single-touch heating and ventilation
Big, roomy contour-seat interiors
Deep-travel spring cushion ride

*Based on manufacturers' suggested list prices.

Name Game

"…Next, Wallace dispatched his researchers to find the perfect name for the nonexistent vehicle that Ford had dubbed the 'E-car,' short for 'experimental car.' The researchers buttonholed random Americans and asked then to blurt-out their reactions to scores of possible names: Mars, Jupiter, Rover, Arrow, Dart, Ovation. The responses were tabulated and analyzed and the results were . . . inconclusive. So Wallace gathered a group of Ford Executives in a room, turned-out the lights and flashed scores of names at them. The results were . . . inconclusive…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**

"…After that, Wallace did what any sensible American auto Executive would do in such a situation: He wrote to Marianne Moore, America's most famous female poet, and asked her to suggest names. She did. She suggested lots of names – 'Intelligent Whale,' 'Intelligent Bullet,' 'Bullet Cloisonne,' 'Ford Faberge,' 'Mongoose Civique' and, the piece de resistance, 'Utopian Turtletop'…"

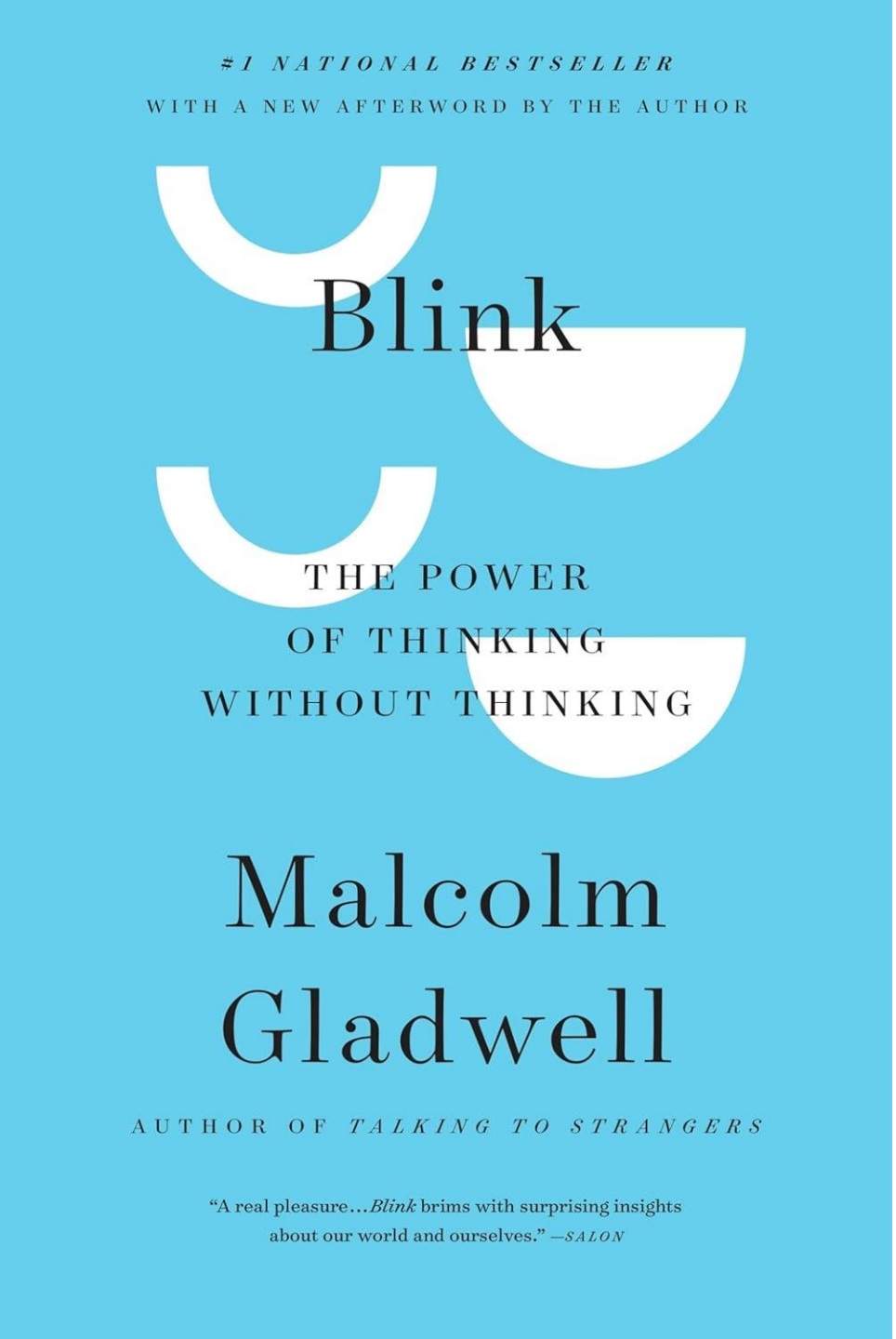
***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**

"…Wallace sent Moore a bouquet of roses and a card reading, 'to our favorite turtletopper,' but he did not choose any of her suggestions. Instead, Ford and its advertising agency, Foote, Cone & Belding, asked their employees to suggest names, promising a free 'E-car' to the winner. The employees responded with 18,000 names. Among them was Edsel - a tribute to Edsel Ford, who was the deceased son of Henry Ford, the company's legendary founder and the father of Henry Ford II, the company's President…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**

"…The folks at Foote, Cone & Belding whittled the 18,000-name list down to a mere 6,000 names and presented them to a committee headed by Richard Krafve, the man running the E-car project. 'We don't want 6,000 names,' Krafve grumbled. 'We only want one'…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**



"…The Foote, Cone & Belding folks slunk back to their lair and whittled some more. On Nov. 8, 1956, they presented a list of 10 names to a meeting of Ford's Executive Committee. The names included Corsair, Pacer, Ranger and Citation. The Executive Committee hated all of them. They grumbled for a while and finally Ernest Breech, Ford's Chairman of the Board, made the kind of instantaneous, intuitive decision touted in Malcolm Gladwell's best-selling 2005 book, 'Blink.' 'Why don't we just call it Edsel?' Breech said…"

***washingtonpost.com*, Sept. 4, 2007**

Caption: "In his breakthrough bestseller *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell redefined how we understand the world around us. Now, in *Blink*, he transforms the way we understand the world within…"

"…It sounded like a question, but it was a command. Instantly, a gazillion hours of expensive and absurd motivational research went up in smoke…"
***washingtonpost.com*, Sept. 4, 2007**

Ford Motor Company

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION BULLETIN

November 19, 1956

Henry Ford II announced today that the Company's new line of cars will be named "Edsel."

"I am proud and pleased to confirm that the name will be Edsel, in honor of my father who served the last 24 years of his life as President of Ford Motor Company," Ford said.

At the same time, the Company's Special Products Division was renamed the Edsel Division and now is in the process of taking over offices of the Continental Building in Dearborn. The move does not affect the plant area of the building which is devoted to the assembly of the Continental Mark II. The Edsel Division will continue to be headed by Richard E. Krafve, Vice President and General Manager.

"Edsel" was the first suggestion and the final choice for the name of the new medium-priced car line. It was picked from 18,000 other names tested and reviewed.

According to Ernest R. Breech, ". . . it seemed entirely fitting that the car should be named 'Edsel' in honor of Mr. Edsel Ford . . . . His name was synonymous with advancement and progress in the automobile industry, and he was widely known for his influence on car styling."



"…Why did Breech want to name the car Edsel? 'He was brown-nosing Mr. Ford,' says C. Gayle Warnock, now 91, who was the Edsel's Public Relations Director. Warnock is also the author of the 1980 book 'The Edsel Affair' and a forthcoming sequel, 'The Rest of the Edsel Affair'…"

***washingtonpost.com,* Sept. 4, 2007**

Caption: "*The Rest of The Edsel Affair* is the second of two books that tells the story, from a highly publicized beginning to a barely noticed ending, of the Edsel automobile, introduced by Ford Motor Co. in 1957 . . . C. Gayle Warnock, the Division's Public Relations Director and responsible for the car's public introduction, told the first part of this interesting story in *The Edsel Affair* published in 1980. Now, he returns with the rest of the Story…"

An Unfortunate Misstep

"…When Warnock heard about Breech's decision, he banged out a one-sentence memo to Krafve: 'We have just lost 200,-000 sales.' I knew nobody would like that name,' he explains on the phone from his home in Sweetser, Ind. 'When they did interviews [about names] and asked about Edsel, people always said, 'Did you say pretzel?'…"

***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**

RE: FMC and its advertising team had been studying what to name the car for months and the company discarded a multitude of names in favor of "Edsel." The Ford family initially opposed naming a car after then-President Henry Ford II's father and few others advocated for it but, ultimately, a handful of FMC Executives and Directors, who favored the name, gained the advantage. While meaningful to the company's inner circle, the frumpy and self-adulatory "Edsel" didn't exactly spark excitement among most people. It was an unfortunate misstep, but one that was not, by itself, impossible to overcome.

Psychoanalysis of a Name

Naming a product is more difficult than it may appear
***psychologytoday.com*, November 10, 2013**
RE: introduction to an article written by *Lawrence R. Samuel,* PhD entitled: "How the Edsel Got Its Name"

"IN 1956, having trouble coming up with a good name on its own, Ford Motor Company asked its ad agency, Foote, Cone & Belding (FC&B), to come up with some possibilities for its new, very special project. Codenamed 'E-Car' ('E' for 'Experimental'), this project wasn't just another automobile for Ford…"

***psychologytoday.com*, November 10, 2013**



"…It was in fact the first car to be introduced by the company since 1938 when the Mercury made its debut, this twenty-year stretch more than enough time to give Engineers and Designers plenty to think about how to build the perfect automobile for the American consumer of the 19-50s…"

***psychologytoday.com*, November 10, 2013**

Caption: "November 4, 1938: FMC introduces the Mercury Brand"

The history of the Ford Motor Company is written in ever-increasing motoring values. The Mercury 8, an entirely new car, is a new chapter in that history. Priced between the Ford V-8 and the Lincoln-Zephyr V-12, the Mercury brings to its price field many advantages of both these Ford-built cars . . . advantages best expressed in the phrase "top value."

THE NEW

MERCURY 8

A PRODUCT OF THE FORD MOTOR COMPANY



The impressive size of the Mercury 8 is not an illusion. This is a big, wide car and exceptionally roomy — with large luggage compartment. Note these unusually generous dimensions — wheelbase 116 inches; over-all length 16 feet, 2 inches. The front compartment in sedan body types is 54 inches wide, and the rear compartment measures 56 inches from side to side. A new 95-horsepower V-type 8-cylinder engine provides very favorable power-to-weight ratio, and assures brilliant, economical performance. • Mercury upholstery and appointments combine luxury with comfort and convenience. Seat cushions are soft and deep. Brakes are hydraulic; body and chassis all-steel. • Our dealers invite you to see and drive the new Mercury 8.

A REMARKABLY QUIET CAR

The Mercury 8 offers you remarkable freedom from noise and vibration—thanks to thorough soundproofing. All the resources of modern technology have been used by Ford research engineers to track down and eliminate engine, body and chassis noises. New materials and many rubber mountings also contribute to making the Mercury "silent as the night" . . . a restful and relaxing car in which to ride.

FORD-BUILT MEANS TOP VALUE



FORD MOTOR COMPANY, MAKERS OF FORD, MERCURY, LINCOLN-ZEPHYR AND LINCOLN MOTOR CARS

The impressive size of the Mercury 8 is not an illusion. This is a big, wide car and exceptionally roomy — with large luggage compartment. Note these unusually generous dimensions — wheelbase 116 inches; over-all length 16 feet, 2 inches. The front compartment in sedan body types is 54 inches wide, and the rear compartment measures 56 inches from side to side. A new 95-horsepower V-type 8-cylinder engine provides very favorable power-to-weight ratio, and assures brilliant, economical performance. • Mercury upholstery and appointments combine luxury with comfort and convenience. Seat cushions are soft and deep. Brakes are hydraulic; body and chassis all-steel. • Our dealers invite you to see and drive the new Mercury 8.



"…As well, the E-Car would be not just a single model but four different series comprising a total of eighteen cars - essentially a new, entire automobile company. For many Americans, the Edsel would be the first really new car they had a chance to buy after the war, its introduction an important event in the history of automobiles…"

***psychologytoday.com*, November 10, 2013**

"…FC&B, which had just been awarded the large account, not surprisingly went all out for its new assignment, including asking employees in its Chicago, New York and London offices to come up with possible names for the automobile. The employee who came up with the winning name would win an E-Car, such a prize no doubt explaining the volume of entries the agency received..."

***psychologytoday.com*, November 10, 2013**

"…No less than 18,000 names poured in, six thousand of which were presented to Ford for consideration in alphabetical order in beautifully bound books, complete with each name's word associations. Not knowing what to do with such a large list, Ford's Market Research Director, David Wallace, asked a research company in Ann Arbor to find out which ones the public liked best and add any others that seemed to resonate with consumers…"

***psychologytoday.com*, November 10, 2013**

"…Four names - Corsair, Citation, Pacer and Ranger - topped the list, but Wallace and a colleague working on the project, Bob Young, were unsatisfied. Nothing less than a special name for the special car would be acceptable…"

***psychologytoday.com*, November 10, 2013**

"…The logical path not having worked out, Wallace and Young decided to ask someone who was skilled with words but not familiar with the auto industry to come up with something better…"

***psychologytoday.com*, November 10, 2013**



"…As it turned out, Young's wife happened to know a very good poet who she felt would be happy to help out. Marianne Moore, whose 'Collected Poems of 1951' had won the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award and the Bollingen Prize, was indeed delighted to apply her imagination to the project, coming up with such unquestionably imaginative names as 'Utopian Turtletop,' 'Andante Con Moto,' 'Mongoose Civique,' 'Pastelogram,' 'Intelligent Bullet' and 'Bullet Cloisonne'…"

***psychologytoday.com*, Nov. 10, 2013**

<u>Caption</u>: "Marianne Moore (1887-1972) was an American poet whose work distilled moral and intellectual insights from the close and accurate observation of objective detail"

"…'Name after name was submitted from the florid pen of Miss Moore, each reaching undreamed of heights of poetic fancy,' wrote Thomas E. Bonsall in his definitive autopsy of the Edsel, 'none of them even remotely suitable for the E-Car'…"

***psychologytoday.com*, November 10, 2013**

"…With the product launch rapidly approaching and names like 'Utopian Turtletop' clearly not going to fly, Wallace and Young presented the four top research-tested names to an Executive Committee meeting headed-up by Ernest Breech, a Vice President at the company. 'I don't like any of them,' Breech growled, 'Let's take another look at some of the others'…"

***psychologytoday.com*, November 10, 2013**



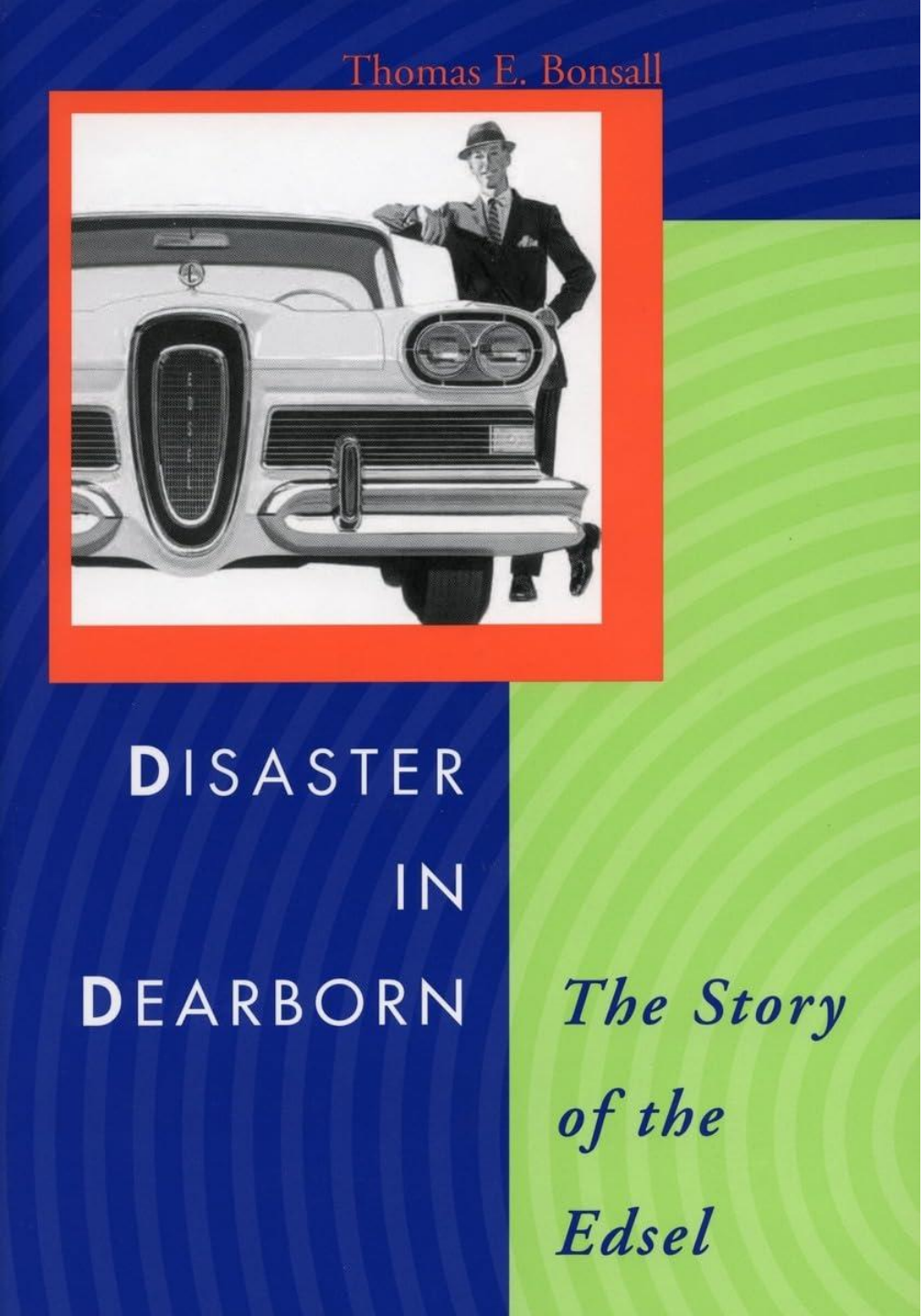
"…Among the rejects considered by Breech and the other top dogs at Ford were Drof ('Ford' spelled backwards), Benson (one of Henry Ford II's sons) and Edsel (the name of Henry Ford's son who had died at age 49 in 1943). 'Let's call it that,' said Breech of the Edsel, the name reluctantly accepted by Henry Ford and Edsel Ford's widow…"

***psychologytoday.com*, November 10, 2013**

<u>Caption</u>: "Henry and Edsel Ford introduce the all-new 1928 Model A"



<u>Above</u>: the only child of Henry Ford and Clara Bryant, Edsel Bryant Ford (left)) married Eleanor Lowthian Clay (right) in 1916. A Designer and Executive, he was the first Secretary of the Ford Motor Co., becoming its President in 1921 and serving until his death on May 26, 1943, at the age of 49.



"…The ill-fated decision, just one of many surrounding the new car, would have poor Edsel rolling in his grave for eternity, his name forever linked to what Bonsall called, as the title of his book, 'Disaster in Dearborn.'"

***psychologytoday.com*,**
November 10, 2013

Caption: "Few cars in history have grabbed the public's fancy as much as the ill-fated Edsel - the Titanic of automobiles . . . Remarkably, there has never before been a book that tells the whole story - how the Edsel was planned, created, produced, and marketed..."

Paradoxical

***Disaster in Dearborn: The Story of the Edsel* is paradoxical. On the one hand, this is a serious history book - unlike so many of the coffee-table decorations that populate the big-box bookstores**

***indieauto.org,* September 27, 2021**

RE: introduction to an article entitled: "Thomas Bonsall's Edsel Book is Nuanced But Suffers From Groupthink"

Groupthink

"ON the other hand, Thomas E. Bonsall's conclusions about the Edsel were grounded in 1950s-style auto industry 'group-think.' Fortunately, he held back his most problematic opinions until near the end of this 230-page book…"
***indieauto.org,* September 27, 2021**

What if . . .?





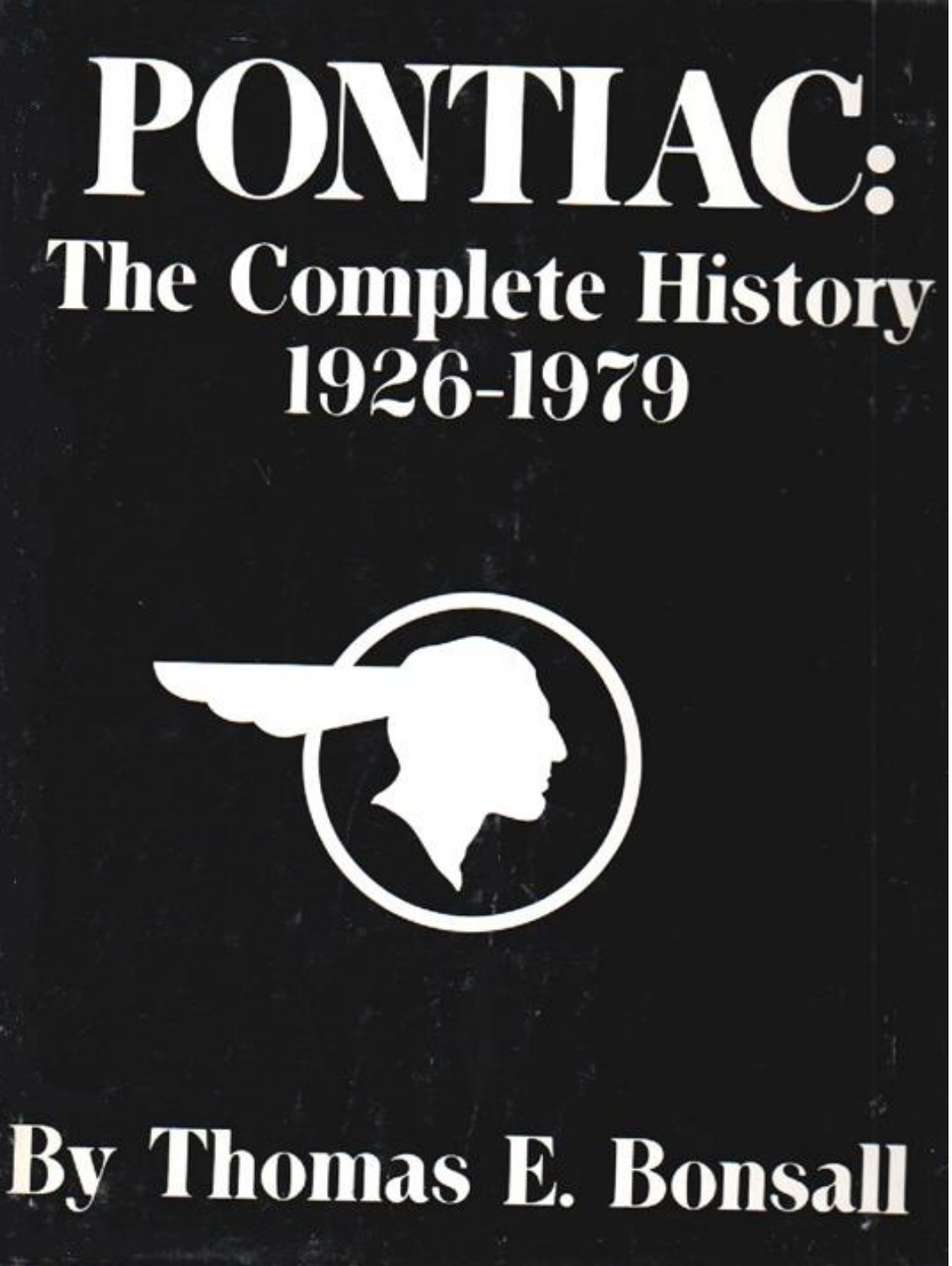
"…The best quality of 'Disaster in Dearborn' is that it balances research rigor with accessibility. Fellow Automotive Historians will appreciate Bonsall's inclusion of endnotes, while lay readers may enjoy his engaging writing style and a fair number of black-and-white photographs. Some of the most interesting images are of proposed designs, some of which could lead you to think, 'If only . . .'"

***indieauto.org*, September 27, 2021**

<u>Above L&R</u>: one "what if. . .?" about the 1958 Edsel was whether it would have gained more stature in the premium-priced class if it had been given a "halo" model with a retractable roofline instead of the Ford brand. This was doable because entry-level Edsels shared the same body as the Ford Fairlane.


OREGON
8M-3331

Pracademic



"…The book's 'pracademic' format is presumably a reflection of its publisher, the Stanford University Press. Before Bonsall died in 2008 at the age of 61, he published a number of automotive books through this university, including about Studebaker and Lincoln. These books offer considerably more robust analysis than earlier works by Bonsall, such as the rather buffy 'Pontiac: The Complete History 1926-1979' …"

***indieauto.org,* Sept. 27, 2021**

***Caption: "Pontiac, the Complete History, 1926-1979* (1979) by Thomas E. Bonsall details the history of the Pontiac Motor Division, from its origins to 1979, covering show cars, production models and more, with numerous B&W and color illustrations.…"**

Approved by Edsel

In March of 1935, Edsel Ford established the Ford Design Dept. During the 1930s, most of the design work and/or proposals were first approved by Edsel. In 1932, Edsel noticed that Lincoln was in trouble due to the Depression. A prototype was developed and shown at the 1934 Chicago *Century of Progress*. The prototype evolved and, in 1936, the Lincoln Zephyr was introduced. The luxury automobile was a hit with the public and sales soared. Edsel Ford died in 1943 thus, Henry Ford resumed control of the company he had founded.


ZEPHYRUS
9905

Grilled to Imperfection

"…Of course, a company launching a new car needs more than just an image and a name. It also needs, you know, a car…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**

4 SERIES–18 MODELS–INCLUDING 5 STATION WAGONS

The Edsel is priced from just above the lowest to just below the highest



You can choose from any of the 18 Edsel models and be sure of styling that is clean, crisp and distinctive—from the bold vertical grille and the long hood to the sweep of Edsel's wide, low flight deck. Any one of the Edsel's outstanding advances—the exclusive Edsel engines or "one and only" Teletouch Drive—would make it one of America's most capable cars. And the sum-total of dozens of others make it the most convenient, most comfortable car you have ever driven.

With all its great advances you may well ask, how much does the Edsel cost? While the Edsel looks expensive, it actually isn't. In any one of its four series —Citation, Corsair, Pacer or Ranger—or among the station wagons—there's an Edsel for you.

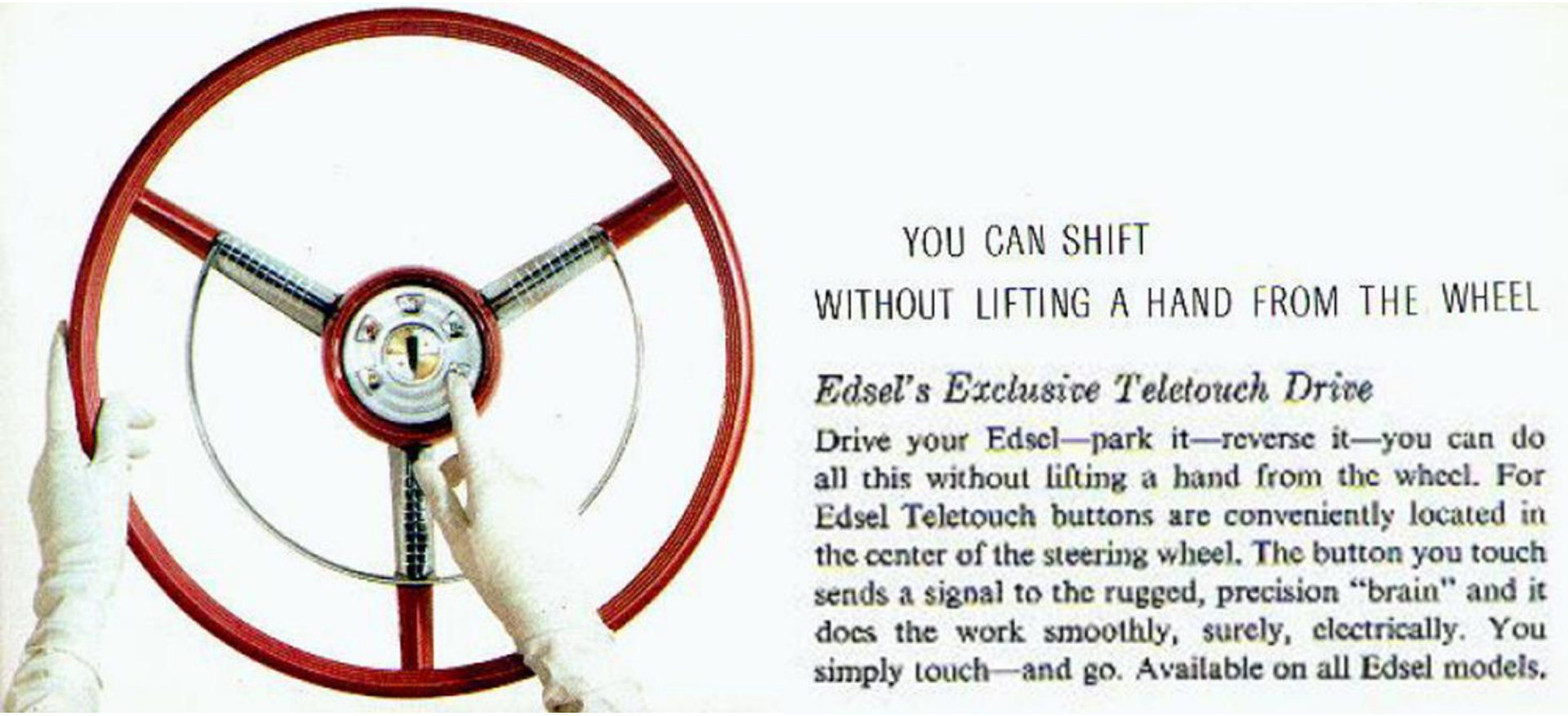


You can choose from any of the 18 Edsel models and be sure of styling that is clean, crisp and distinctive—from the bold vertical grille and the long hood to the sweep of Edsel's wide, low flight deck. Any one of the Edsel's outstanding advances—the exclusive Edsel engines or "one and only" Teletouch Drive—would make it one of America's most capable cars. And the sum-total of dozens of others make it the most convenient, most comfortable car you have ever driven.

With all its great advances you may well ask, how much does the Edsel cost? While the Edsel looks expensive, it actually isn't. In any one of its four series —Citation, Corsair, Pacer or Ranger—or among the station wagons—there's an Edsel for you.

"…The Ford folks were working on that. In fact, they were building not one, not two, but 18 varieties of Edsel, including a convertible and a station wagon. Prices would range from $2,500 to $3,800 – several hundred dollars more than comparable Fords…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**



"…The designers came up with some interesting ideas. They created a push-button transmission and put it in the middle of the steering wheel, where most cars have a horn..."

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**



DRAMATIC EDSEL STYLING is here to stay
—bringing new distinction to American motoring

In one short year, the fresh and original individuality of Edsel styling has become a familiar part of everyday American life. Today, everyone recognizes the distinctive Edsel. And everyone who's driven an Edsel knows that Edsel *features* are out in front, too. Exclusive Teletouch Drive that lets you shift by a touch at the steering-wheel hub, Edsel's high-economy engines, new self-adjusting brakes and comfort-shaped contour seats are the biggest advances in years. Why not enjoy all these wonderful features—and drive the car with the advanced design—right now? Especially since there's less than fifty dollars difference between the magnificent new Edsel and V-8's in the Low-Priced Three!* See your Edsel Dealer about it this week.

EDSEL DIVISION • FORD MOTOR COMPANY

Less than fifty dollars difference between Edsel and V-8's in the Low-Priced Three

*Based on comparison of manufacturers' suggested retail delivered prices.

"…And they fiddled with the front end: Where other cars had horizontal chrome grilles, the Edsel would have a vertical chrome oval in its grille. It was new! It was different!.."

washingtonpost.com,

September 4, 2007

Caption: "In one short year, the fresh and original individuality of Edsel styling has become a familiar part of everyday American life. Today, everyone recognizes the distinctive Edsel…"


EDSEL

"…Unfortunately, it didn't work. It couldn't suck in enough air to cool the engine. So they had to make it bigger. And bigger. 'They had to keep opening-up that oval to get more air in there,' says Jim Arnold, who was a trainee in Edsel's design shop. 'And it didn't look as good'…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**



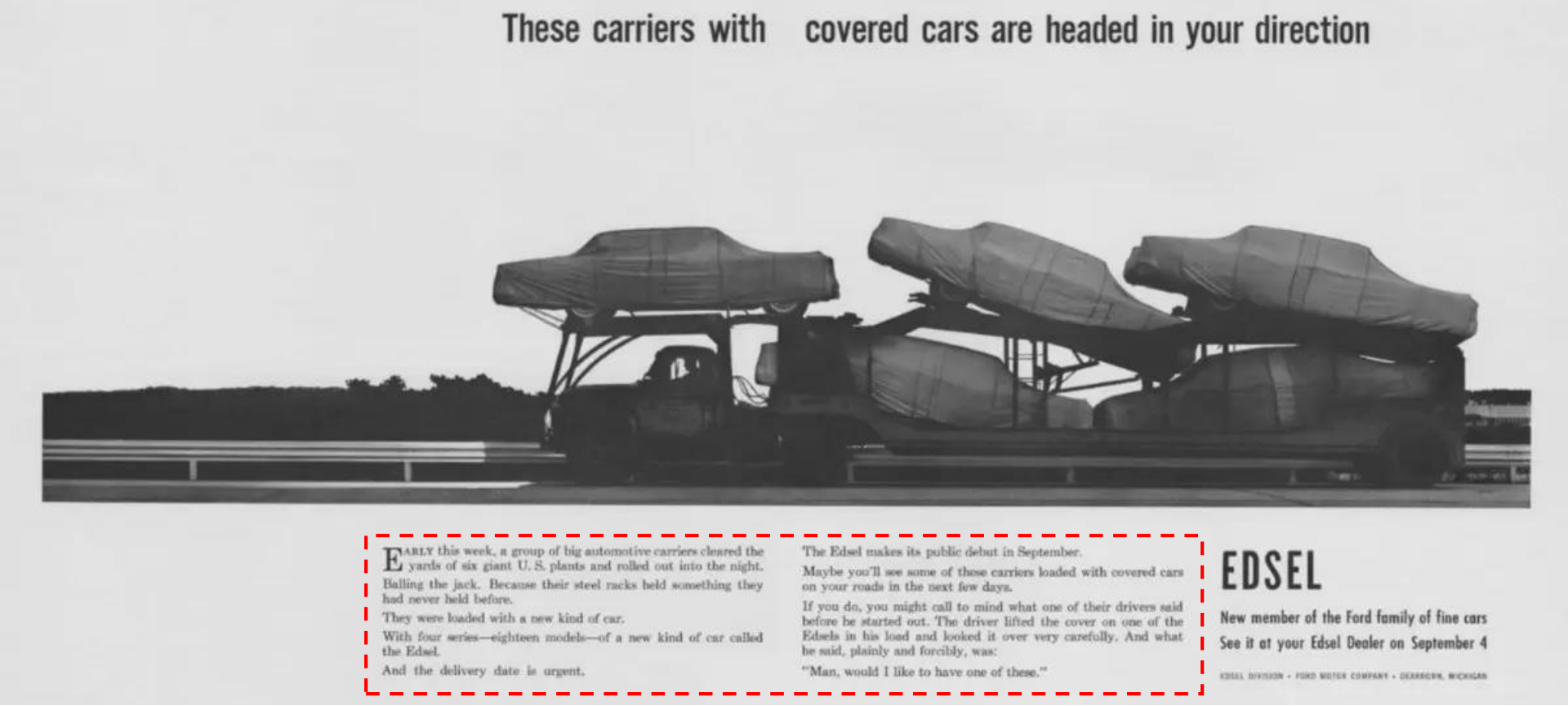
Movin’ on Down-the-Line



"…Edsel didn't have its own assembly lines, so the cars were produced in Ford and Mercury plants, which caused problems. Every once in a while, an Edsel would roll past workers who were used to Mercurys or other Fords. Confused, they sometimes failed to install all the parts before the Edsel moved on down-the-line…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**

The Edsel Juggernaut



"…Cars without parts can be a problem, of course, but other aspects of the Edsel juggernaut worked perfectly - the hype, for instance. Warnock and his PR team touted the glories of the cars, but wouldn't let anybody see them. They wouldn't even show pictures…"

***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**

<u>Caption</u>: "Early this week, a group of big automotive carriers cleared the yards of six giant U.S. plants and rolled-out into the night . . . The Edsel makes its public debut in September. Maybe you'll see some of these carriers loaded with covered cars on your roads in the next few days…"


SALES
COMING SOON
THE NEW EDSEL







"…When they finally released a photo, it turned-out to be a picture of . . . the Edsel's hood ornament. And hundreds of publications actually printed it!..."

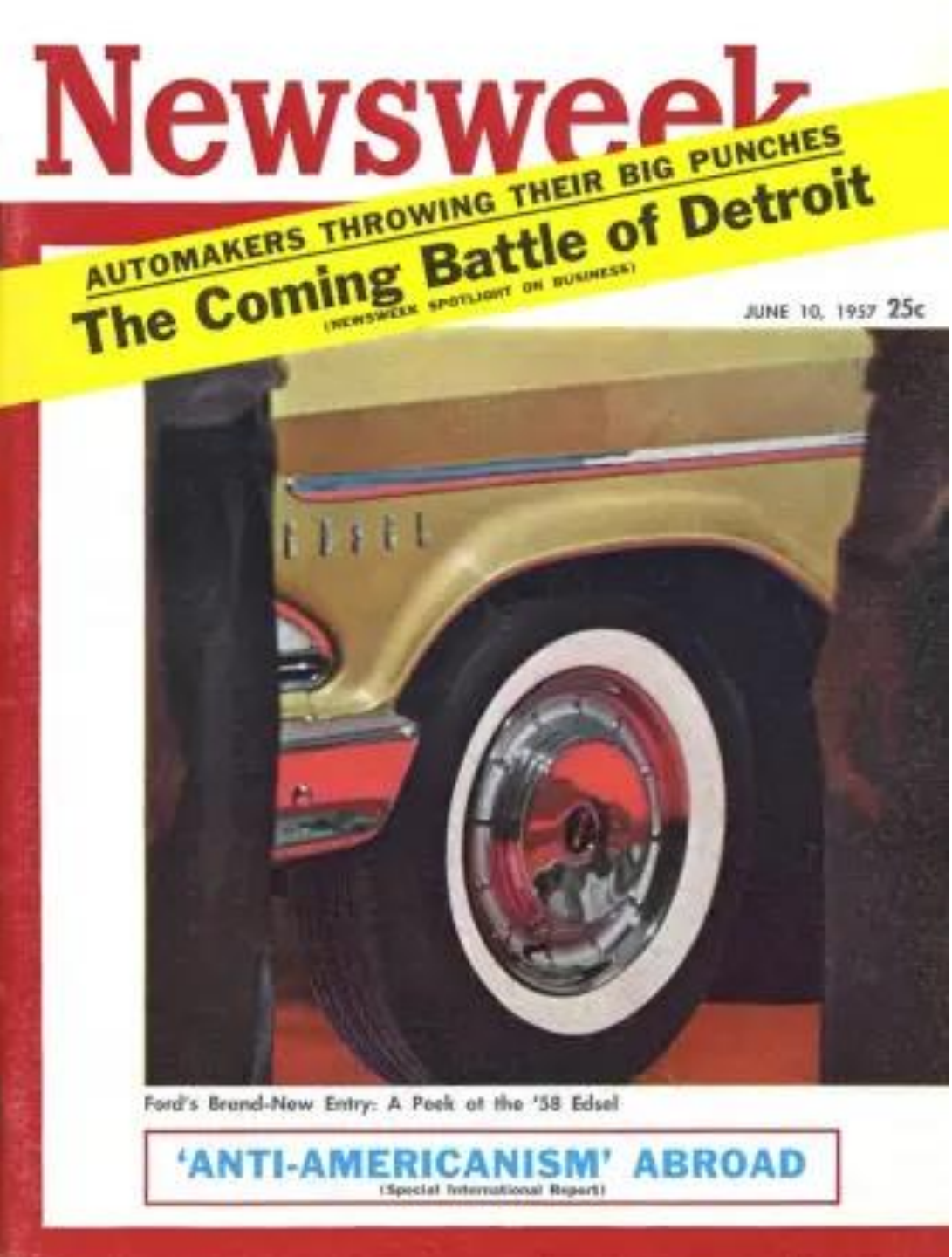
***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**

<u>Above</u>: Edsel hood ornament in-place

<u>Upper</u>: caption: "Distinctive and dramatic – Edsel's hood ornament is the letter 'E', elegantly inscribed in the inner disc"

<u>Lower</u>: "Henry Ford II and Edsel General Manager Richard Krafve showing-off some Edsel 'E' paraphernalia"

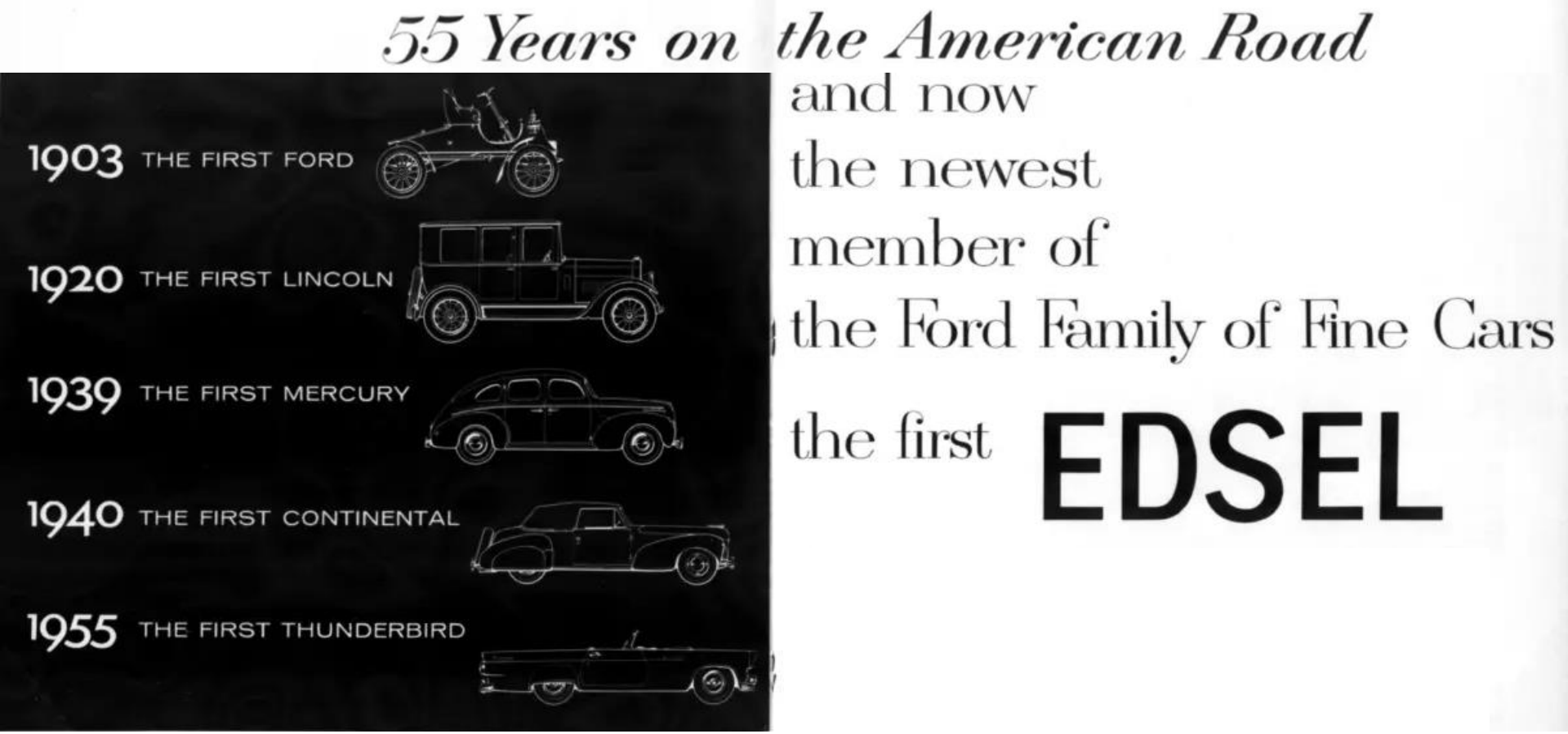




"…In June 1957, three months before 'E-Day,' NEWSWEEK published a story on the Edsel with a cover photo that showed just the left front wheel and a few inches of bumper…"

washingtonpost.com,
September 4, 2007

Left: carefully framed publicity shots like this concealed the Edsel's unique details



"…Edsel ads were everywhere, but before E-Day, they never showed the car. One ad pictured a stork holding a birth announcement for the Edsel. Another showed two ancient Fords, one saying, 'Everybody's asking – what's our grandchild going to look like?' and the other replying, 'I'm not saying - but there's never been a car like Edsel'…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**

"…Meanwhile, Warnock was giving friendly Reporters sneak peeks at the car. 'I let guys I trusted see the cars,' he says. 'I'd unlock a couple of doors and take them down dark hallways. It was showmanship, and it worked. They loved the cars and they said so. And the public could hardly wait to see it because I was getting so much publicity'…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**

Looking, Not Buying

"…On E-Day, nearly 3-million Americans flocked to Ford showrooms to see the Edsel. Unfortunately, very few of them bought the Edsel. 'They'd go in and look at it and leave,' says Arnold. 'We couldn't even get people to drive it,' says Warnock. 'They just didn't like the car. They just didn't like the front-end'…"

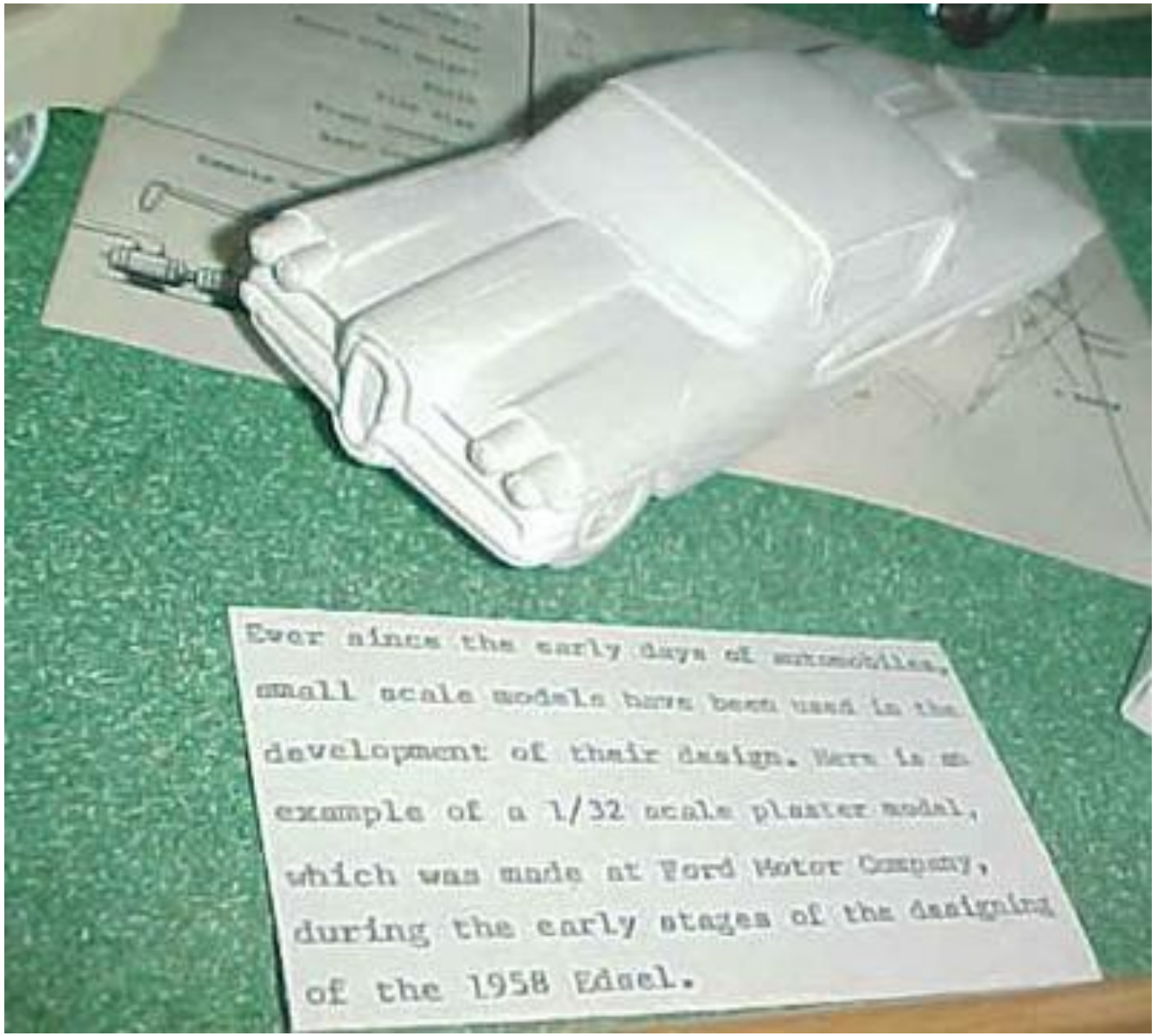
***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**

RE: the new car couldn't be too different since it needed to maintain parts interchangeability with other FMC products. Merging these demands necessitated designing distinguishing features on the front, sides and rear on a relatively conventional vehicle.





<u>Above L&R</u>: Designers unveiled their preliminary clay model to Henry Ford II and his select *Forward Product Planning Committee* in August 1955. A few awkward moments of silence greeted the unveiling as the small crowd got their first glances of an unusually-shaped grille and other design features - applause followed. That polite applause signified that the Designers were on the right track. What that select group of Ford VIPs previewed in 1955 was largely the same design that would appear in showrooms two years later.


Ever since the early days of automobiles,
small scale models have been used in the
development of their design. Here is an
example of a 1/32 scale plaster model,
which was made at Ford Motor Company,
during the early stages of the designing
of the 1958 Edsel.

As the Edsel's details coalesced, FMC Sales and Advertising Manager Larry Doyle's crew firmed-up their plan to recruit 1,200 dealers by the fall of 1957; when the cars were expected to go on sale. To do this, Doyle hired dozens of employees who worked mostly in the field - many of these employees had held regional-sales positions with GM, Chrysler or the Independents (though Henry Ford II eventually forbade Edsel from poaching any more employees from the Independents). This experience helped in talking with and understanding the needs of prospective dealers.

THE CAR AHEAD IS EDSEL

new member of the Ford Family of Fine Cars

Right from the start, Edsel dealers will be backed by—



CENTRAL REGION:

Cleveland District Mgr., George F. Wallace
N.B.C. Building, Cleveland 14, Ohio
TOwer 1-0800

Detroit District Mgr., Harley F. Wiltz
6200 West Warren Avenue, Detroit, Michigan
TYler 8-9822

Columbus District Mgr., John H. Schierbaum
Bourse Building, 50 W. Gay St., Columbus 15, Ohio, CApitol 8-5231

Indianapolis District Mgr., Hiller A. Price
414 Guaranty Bldg., 20 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, Indiana, MEIrose 5-5421

EASTERN REGION:

Boston District Mgr., Malcolm H. Fuller
New England Industrial Center, P.O. Box 27, Needham Heights 94, Massachusetts
HIllcrest 3-5705

New York District Mgr., Patrick A. Bruzzo
159 Linwood Plaza, Fort Lee, New Jersey
Windsor 4-5300

Philadelphia District Mgr., William J. Magarity
Parkside Building, 319 Federal St., Camden 3, New Jersey, EMerson 5-5258

Syracuse District Mgr., C. F. Sylvester
The Roness Bldg., 731 James St., Syracuse, New York, GRanite 4-7351

Washington District Mgr., Emerson Planck
Insurance Bldg., 2116 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Virginia, JAckson 4-2400

MIDWEST REGION:

Chicago District Mgr., D. Edward Manning
1900 Esquire Bldg., 65 East South Water St., Chicago 1, Illinois, ANdover 3-7788

Des Moines District Mgr., Louis A. Wehde
800 Fleming Bldg., Sixth and Walnut, Des Moines, Iowa, ATlantic 8-2165

Kansas City District Mgr., Elwood S. Green
4141 Broadwair, Kansas City, Missouri VAlentine 1-6051

St. Louis District Mgr., A. E. Jacobson
Mercantile Bldg., 111 S. Meramec Ave., Clayton 5, Missouri, FAirview 7-4777

Twin Cities District Mgr., Chet W. Johnson
8031 Eyanstyer Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota WAlnut 7-8421

SOUTHERN REGION:

Atlanta District Mgr., Roy A. Stewart
1330 West Peachtree St., N.W., Atlanta 9, Georgia, TRinity 5-8721

Dallas District Mgr., Robert J. Sanford
1120 Mercantile Securities Building, Dallas, Texas, Riverside 1-3171

Houston District Mgr., George O. Simmons
215 Melrose Building, Houston, Texas CApitol 8-7571

Jacksonville District Mgr., J. D. Flynn
913 Prudential Building, Jacksonville, Florida EXbrook 8-4381

Memphis District Mgr., William W. Gregg
1200 Edway Building, 147 Jefferson Ave., Memphis, Tennessee, JAckson 5-5651

New Orleans District Mgr., Claiborne H. Wright
130 I.B.M. Building, 3640 Canal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana, RAymond 9041

WESTERN REGION:

Denver District Mgr., Harry W. Pritchard
Denver Building, 2727 E. Second Ave., Denver 6, Colorado, DUdley 8-4171

Los Angeles District Mgr., Paul W. Pursley
261 So. La Cienega Blvd., Beverly Hills, California, OLympia 2-3444

San Francisco District Mgr., Wallace E. Boyer
209 World Trade Center, San Francisco 11, California, YUkon 6-5403

Seattle District Mgr., Richard J. Sievers
101 Second Ave., West, Seattle 99, Washington WIndsock 7920

6 ASSEMBLY PLANTS, 25 PARTS DEPOTS, 29 REGIONAL AND DISTRICT OFFICES

No other dealers will be better served – faster or more effectively than Edsel dealers. And this is only one of the important facts that make selling the Edsel an historic opportunity. The Edsel is the first car ever created specifically for the most profitable section of the car market. The Edsel is backed by the experience and facilities of the Ford Motor Company and represents an investment of over a quarter-billion dollars. Clearly the Edsel is slated to become one of America's most important cars.

How Accredited Edsel Dealers will be selected

While our initial dealerships will only number around 1,500, we now have over 4,100 inquiries on file. However, we are well aware that except for the car itself, nothing will affect the Edsel's future more than the caliber of the men who become Accredited Edsel Dealers. We are determined therefore to secure the strongest group of dealers a new car has ever had.

The purpose of these advertisements is to make certain that we reach all qualified men:

Men who have the capacity to do things better than they've ever been done before – because this is the whole philosophy behind the Edsel automobile.

Men who have the character that secures friendly cooperation from employees and trust and goodwill from customers.

Men who have or can obtain the capital it takes to do this job right.

If you are such a man, or if you know of such a man, we urge you, in your own interest, to get in touch with our nearest Edsel District Office as soon as possible.

EDSEL DIVISION

FORD MOTOR COMPANY

DEARBORN, MICHIGAN

THE CAR AHEAD IS EDSEL

new member of the Ford Family of Fine Cars

We are looking for the kind of men who want to do things better than they've ever been done before

These are the managers of the Edsel sales districts throughout America. Their offices are open and staffed with experienced automobile men. They are now looking for men whose potential as Edsel dealers is big enough to match what is actually an historic opportunity in the automobile business.

The Edsel is the first car ever created specifically for the most profitable section of the car market. The Edsel is backed by a Ford Motor Company investment of over a quarter billion dollars.

Actually the Edsel represents the kind of opportunity most automobile dealers thought had vanished long ago—an opportunity to get in on the ground floor of a giant new business. If this is your kind of opportunity one of these men wants to talk with you.

How Accredited Edsel Dealers will be selected

While our initial dealerships will only number around 1,500, we now have over 3,000 inquiries on file. However, we are well aware that except for the car itself, nothing will affect the Edsel's future more than the caliber of its dealers.

We are determined to secure the strongest group of dealers a new car has ever had.

The purpose of these advertisements is to make certain that we reach all qualified men:

Men who have the capacity to do things better than they've ever been done before.

Men who have the character that secures friendly cooperation from employees and trust and goodwill from customers.

Men who have or can obtain the capital it takes to do this job right.

If you are such a man, or if you know of such a man, we urge you, in your own interest, to get in touch with our nearest Edsel District Office as soon as possible.

EDSEL DIVISION

Ford Motor Company, Dearborn, Michigan





Running Gag

"…That weird oval grille soon became a running gag. Wags joked that it looked like a horse-collar or a toilet seat. TIME magazine said it made the car look like 'an Olds sucking a lemon'…"

***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**

RE: some critics compared the oval grille to a part of the female anatomy

Every Day Something Else Leaks

"…But styling was hardly the worst problem. Oil pans fell off, trunks stuck, paint peeled, doors failed to close and the much-hyped 'Teletouch' push-button transmission had a distressing tendency to freeze-up. People joked that Edsel stood for 'Every day something else leaks'…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**



<u>Above</u>: the Edsel developed a reputation for poor workmanship. Cars were delivered to dealers with improperly fitted panels, malfunctioning electrical accessories and even disassembled pieces for the dealer to finish-the-job. The acronym: "<u>E</u>very <u>D</u>ay <u>S</u>omething <u>E</u>lse <u>L</u>eaks" (EDSEL) became its moniker.

Hard Times

"…Another major problem was caused by bad luck: the Edsel was an upscale car launched only a couple of months after a stock market plunge caused a recession. Sales of all premium cars plummeted…"

***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**

RE: in the summer of 1957, worrisome economic signs appeared. Inflation increased, interest rates rose and Americans began to curtail their enthusiastic consumer spending that characterized the preceding five years. Eventually, this would be known as the "1958 Recession" - its timing couldn't have been worse for Edsel. The recession hit quickly and new car sales suffered, particularly the middle of the market since the recession hit the middle-class hardest. When asked about the disquieting economic trend, Edsel GM Richard Krafve was hardly reassuring, saying: "I don't think that anyone is smart enough to evaluate what is happening this year in the medium-priced field." In fact, new car demand quickly slumped, causing excess inventory at many dealers who responded by discounting their prices. This was awful timing for Edsel dealers who had assumed they'd sell cars at, or above, the asking price. Furthermore, every Edsel sale must, by nature, have been a "conquest sale" whereby the customer was won-over from a competitor. That's the toughest type of sale, particularly in recessionary times.

Ponying-up

"…But the Edsel folks did not give up. No way. After months of sluggish sales, the crack PR team gathered to brainstorm ideas for selling Edsels. They were battered and weary and devoid of ideas until an ad-man named Walter 'Tommy' Thomas blurted-out a suggestion. 'Let's give away a [bleeping] pony,' he said…"

***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**

RE: realizing the desperate situation of many of its dealers, FMC itself (the Edsel Division ceased being a separate entity in January 1958) tried a few unusual promotions to get customers to visit Edsel showrooms





For example, Edsel dealerships were supplied with 8-inch scale models to give to families who came in for a test drive. The models, however, wound-up being more popular than the cars themselves and did little for sales.

<u>Above</u>: 1958 Ford Edsel Dealership promotional car model with original box. This appears to be a two-door *Ranger*.

It's Edsel Showtime on the Road

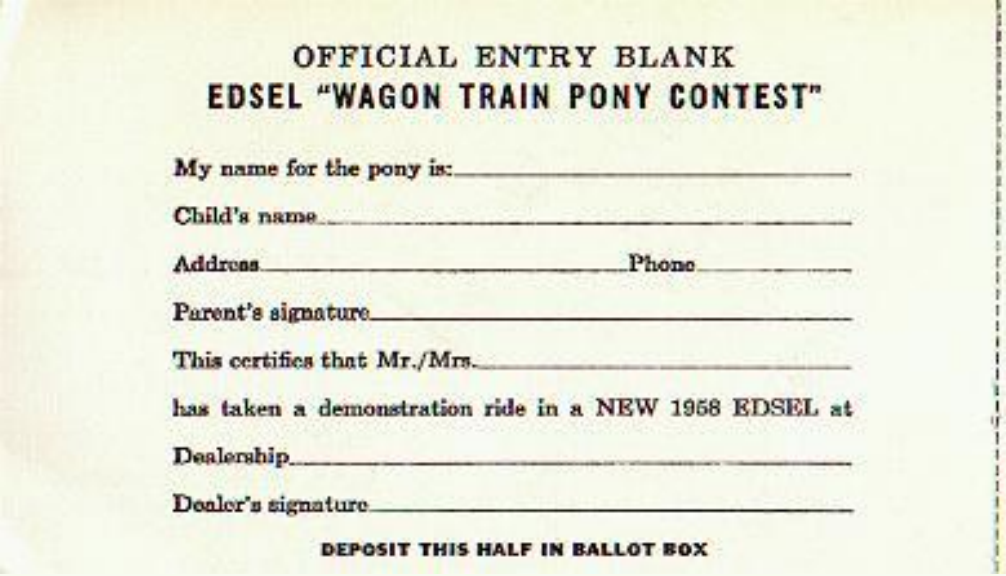
ROAD-CHECK THE BIG ONE—
GET A LITTLE ONE FREE

$2 precision scale model Edsel yours as a gift when you take the test drive of a lifetime!

(Offer limited to adults only)



In the medium-priced field
THE ONE THAT'S REALLY NEW
IS THE LOWEST PRICED, TOO!



OFFICIAL ENTRY BLANK
EDSEL "WAGON TRAIN PONY CONTEST"

My name for the pony is:_____

Child's name_____

Address_____ Phone_____

Parent's signature_____

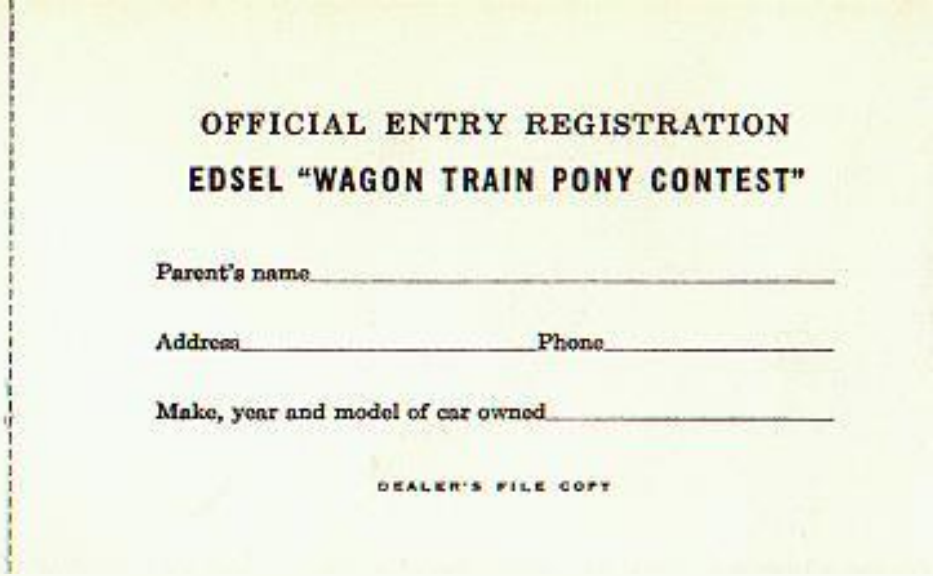
This certifies that Mr./Mrs._____

has taken a demonstration ride in a NEW 1958 EDSEL at

Dealership_____

Dealer's signature_____

DEPOSIT THIS HALF IN BALLOT BOX



OFFICIAL ENTRY REGISTRATION
EDSEL "WAGON TRAIN PONY CONTEST"

Parent's name_____

Address_____ Phone_____

Make, year and model of car owned_____

DEALER'S FILE COPY

"…Much to Thomas' amazement, his idea was not only accepted, it was expanded. The geniuses at Edsel decided to advertise a promotion in which every Edsel dealer would give away a pony. It worked like this: If you agreed to test-drive an Edsel, your name would be entered into a lottery at the dealership, with the winner getting a pony…"

***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**

RE: odder though was a 1958 promotion where FMC purchased 1K ponies to give away as kids' prizes. The logistics of a car manufacturer purchasing 1K ponies and shipping them to dealers nationwide rivaled the logistics of anything in the whole saga of the Edsel. Edsel dealers husbanded their new livestock, creating pony "stalls" in showrooms and service bays for a few weeks until the lucky winners were selected. The contest officially closed on April 30, 1958.

<u>Above L&R</u>: official entry blank/registration - Edsel "Wagon Train Pony Contest"



Hey BOYS! GIRLS! Win a Real Live PONY FREE

Anyone Can Win--LOCAL WINNER--Local Contest

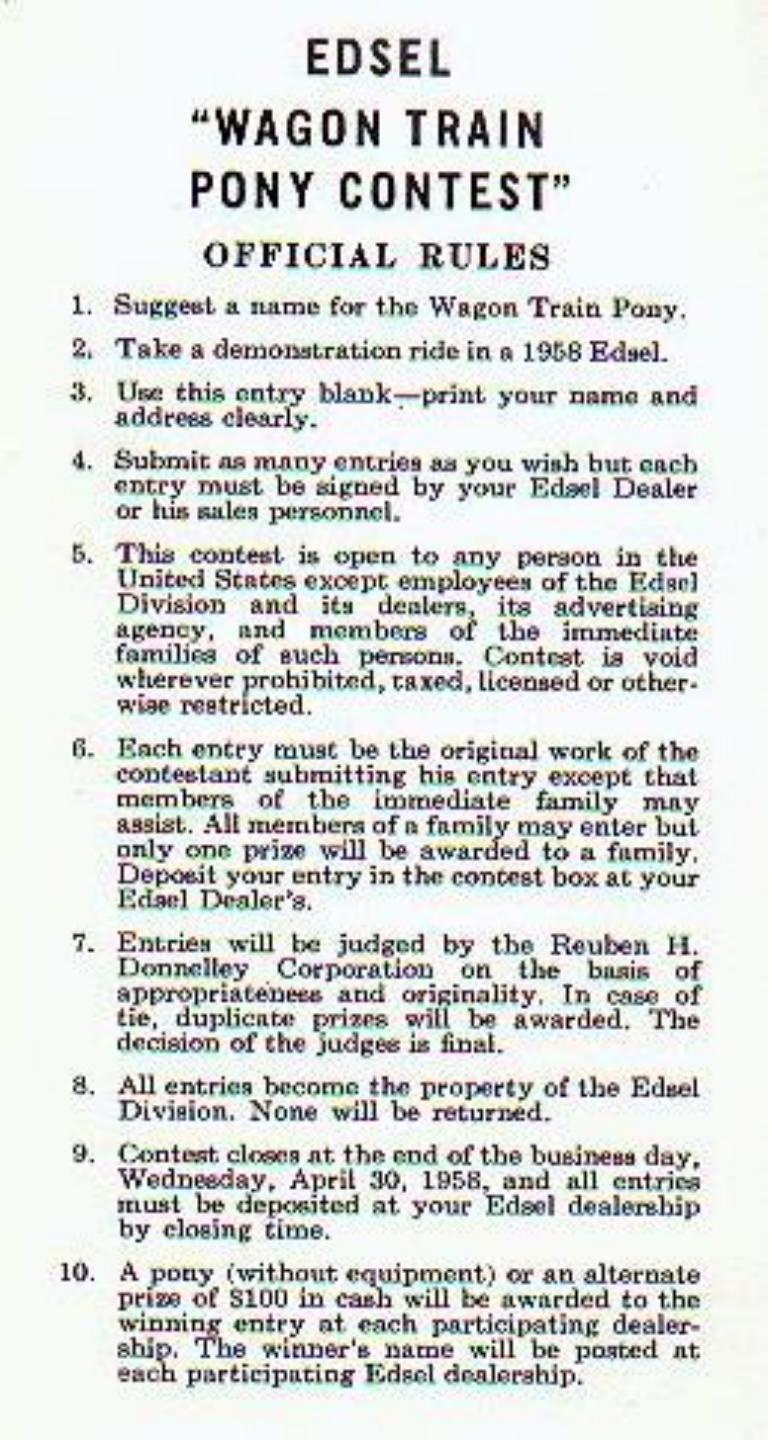
Ask Mom and Dad to bring you to your local Edsel Showrooms so you can enter Edsel's Name-the-Pony Contest while your folks take a demonstration drive in the 1958 Edsel. That's all you do and your parents are under absolutely no obligation. Complete contest rules are on the entry blank. Nothing to buy.

ENTER NOW! BRING MOM AND DAD TO OUR EDSEL SHOWROOM

"…Ford bought 1,000 ponies and shipped them to Edsel dealers, who displayed them outside their showrooms. Many parents, egged-on by their pony-loving children, traipsed in to take a test drive. Unfortunately, many of the lucky winners declined the ponies, opting instead for the alternative - $200 in cash - and soon dealers were shipping the beasts back to Detroit…"

***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**

RE: winning families could opt to take the pony or a $200 cash equivalent, in which case FMC took back the animal and presumably found a home for it. In the annals of automobile promotions, this one deserves honorable mention but, unfortunately, not for the amount of new sales it generated.



EDSEL

"WAGON TRAIN PONY CONTEST"

OFFICIAL RULES

1. Suggest a name for the Wagon Train Pony.
2. Take a demonstration ride in a 1958 Edsel.
3. Use this entry blank—print your name and address clearly.
4. Submit as many entries as you wish but each entry must be signed by your Edsel Dealer or his sales personnel.
5. This contest is open to any person in the United States except employees of the Edsel Division and its dealers, its advertising agency, and members of the immediate families of such persons. Contest is void wherever prohibited, taxed, licensed or otherwise restricted.
6. Each entry must be the original work of the contestant submitting his entry except that members of the immediate family may assist. All members of a family may enter but only one prize will be awarded to a family. Deposit your entry in the contest box at your Edsel Dealer's.
7. Entries will be judged by the Reuben H. Donnelley Corporation on the basis of appropriateness and originality. In case of tie, duplicate prizes will be awarded. The decision of the judges is final.
8. All entries become the property of the Edsel Division. None will be returned.
9. Contest closes at the end of the business day, Wednesday, April 30, 1958, and all entries must be deposited at your Edsel dealership by closing time.
10. A pony (without equipment) or an alternate prize of $100 in cash will be awarded to the winning entry at each participating dealership. The winner's name will be posted at each participating Edsel dealership.

"…Now the Edsel folks were not only stuck with a lot of cars they couldn't sell, they were also stuck with a lot of ponies they couldn't give away. The cars were easy enough to store, but the ponies required food. And after they ate the food, they digested the food. And then . . . another fine mess for Edsel…"

***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**

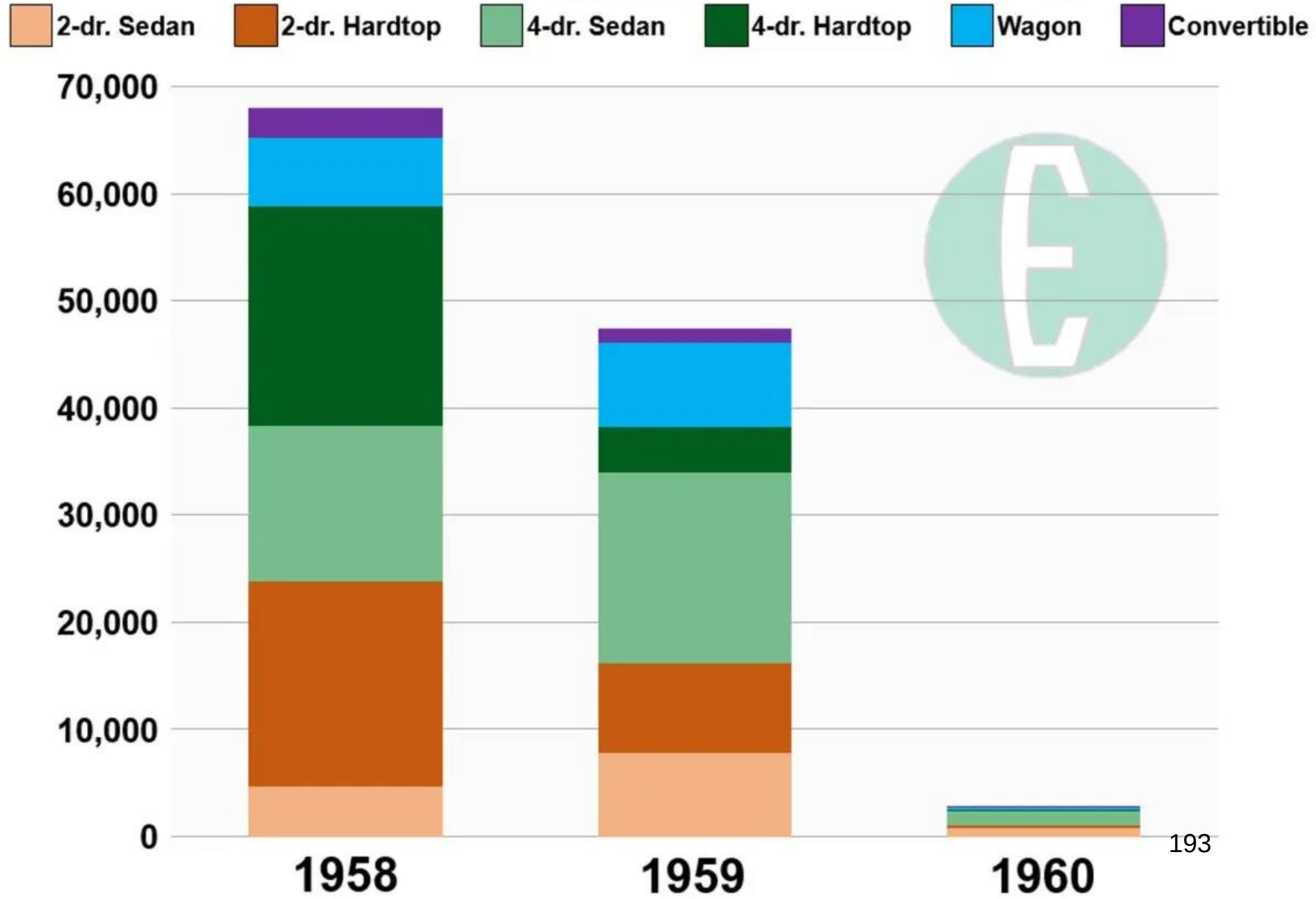
RE: fortunate dealers had someone on-staff who was raised on a farm; unlucky dealers had to rely on a two-page guide to pony care that someone at Edsel HQ had written for this purpose

<u>Left</u>: official rules - Edsel "Wagon Train Pony Contest"

Great Expectations

"…Before E-Day, Edsel's hypemeisters promised to sell 200,-000 cars the first year. Actually, they sold 63,110. And it got worse. Sales dropped below 45,000 the second year. And only 2,846 of the 1960 models sold before Ford pulled the plug…"
***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**

Edsel Production by Model Year and Body Style



The Edsel Debacle

"…'The advertising talked about a remarkable new automobile, but it wasn't so remarkable or so new,' says Angus MacKenzie, Editor-in-Chief of MOTOR TREND magazine. 'The Edsel was just another chrome-laden land-yacht of the era. There was nothing new other than the funny-looking grille and the name'…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**

"…To MacKenzie, there's a lesson in the Edsel debacle: 'Market research has never created a great car,' he says. 'Great cars are the product of passion'…"
***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**

The Collector

"…Passion? Jim Popp pulses with passion for Edsels. He loves them, restores them, collects them. Popp has so many Edsels he can't count them. 'I don't know the exact number,' he says. 'I've got half-a-car here, half-a-car there. Call it 40-ish'…"

***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**

RE: Popp found and purchased a 1960 Edsel; Serial No. 1 - a four-door hardtop coincidentally painted the same *Sahara Beige* as his first four-door sedan.



"…Popp is 66, retired from a Defense Department job he says he can't talk about, living in Davidsonville. Today, he's wearing a green T-shirt advertising Edsel's 50th anniversary. He points to the sign mounted on his huge multi-car garage. It shows the Edsel's famous oval grille beneath the words, 'Shrine of the Holy Grill'…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**


SHRINE OF THE HOLY GRILL INC

"…Popp bought his first Edsel on Dec. 14, 1959, about a month after Ford announced the car's demise. He paid $2,300 for it - the desperate dealer took $1,000 off the list price - and he drove it for 17 years. 'It was a great car,' he says. 'Very few problems with it'…"

***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**

RE: Popp's first car was an Edsel, bought a month after production ceased and the dealership wanted it off-the-lot so badly that they knocked one-third off the price. It lasted 17 years and 120K miles and then he restored it, won trophies with it and started collecting more Edsels. In 1994, Popp's 1960 Ranger sedan – the first Edsel he ever purchased, 34 years earlier – earned a Grand National First Prize from the *Antique Automobile Club of America.* It was the first Edsel ever to be so honored.


SENIOR
NATIONAL FIRST PRIZE
ANTIQUE AUTOMOBILE CLUB
DURYEA
FOUNDED OF AMERICA NOV. 1935
1997
WINNER



"…He opens the door, steps inside the 'Shrine of the Holy Grill,' flips on the lights. The huge room is packed with vintage cars, most of them Edsels. His first Edsel is there - a tan 1960 sedan, lovingly restored to its original glory. There's also a red 1960 Edsel convertible; and a turquoise 1958 Edsel convertible; and a brown 1959 Edsel sedan with a white top…"
***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**
RE: a lot of the Popp's cars are low-mileage originals, including a black 1958 Citation four-door hardtop and a 1959 Corsair two-door hardtop – red, with cream-yellow inserts and a white roof



"…They're all spotless and shiny and Popp is eager to show them off. But he's not about to take them out for a drive. No way. 'They've crossed a philosophical line from mode of transportation to work-of-art,' he says. 'You wouldn't take the Mona Lisa and write your shopping list on it'…"

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**

"…Popp has a point. By strange quirk of financial fate, a restored Edsel is now far too valuable to use as an actual automobile. The car famous for its ugliness is now a rare and valued collector's item, like a Faberge egg. 'First came the jokes, then the oblivion,' Popp says, 'and now it's resurrected with the collectors. It's one of the most popular cars for collectors'…"

***washingtonpost.com,* September 4, 2007**



"…These days, a fully restored, spiffed-up, mint-condition Edsel can sell for $100,000 and some of the rarest models, like the 1960 convertible, can sell for $200,000, Popp says…"

***washingtonpost.com*, Sept. 4, 2007**

Not Just Another Ford

"…Ironically, being the most famous flop in history is exactly what makes old Edsels so valuable. 'People say, 'Isn't it a shame the Edsel didn't survive?' Popp says, smiling. 'I say, 'If it survived, it would just be another Ford.'

***washingtonpost.com*, September 4, 2007**

Part 3

Introducing the Edsel

What to Do?



If someone said to you, "Here's $250,000,000 - go out and build a car that will sell in the medium-price field," what kind of a car would you build?

Popular Mechanics,
September 1957
RE: introduction to an article written by *Arthur C. Railton* entitled: *"Here it is* – The EDSEL"

Filling-the-Gap

"JUST such a problem faced the Ford Motor Company back in 1948 when it decided it needed another line of cars to help Mercury fill-the-gap between Ford and Lincoln…"
***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**

Go to it!

"…Years of planning followed. There were the usual setbacks and delays (some were unusual, such as a two-year slackening of effort during the Korean conflict). Then, in 1954, stylists were ordered to go to it. 'Let's see what it would look like,' the top brass said…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**

Rolling-for-Keeps

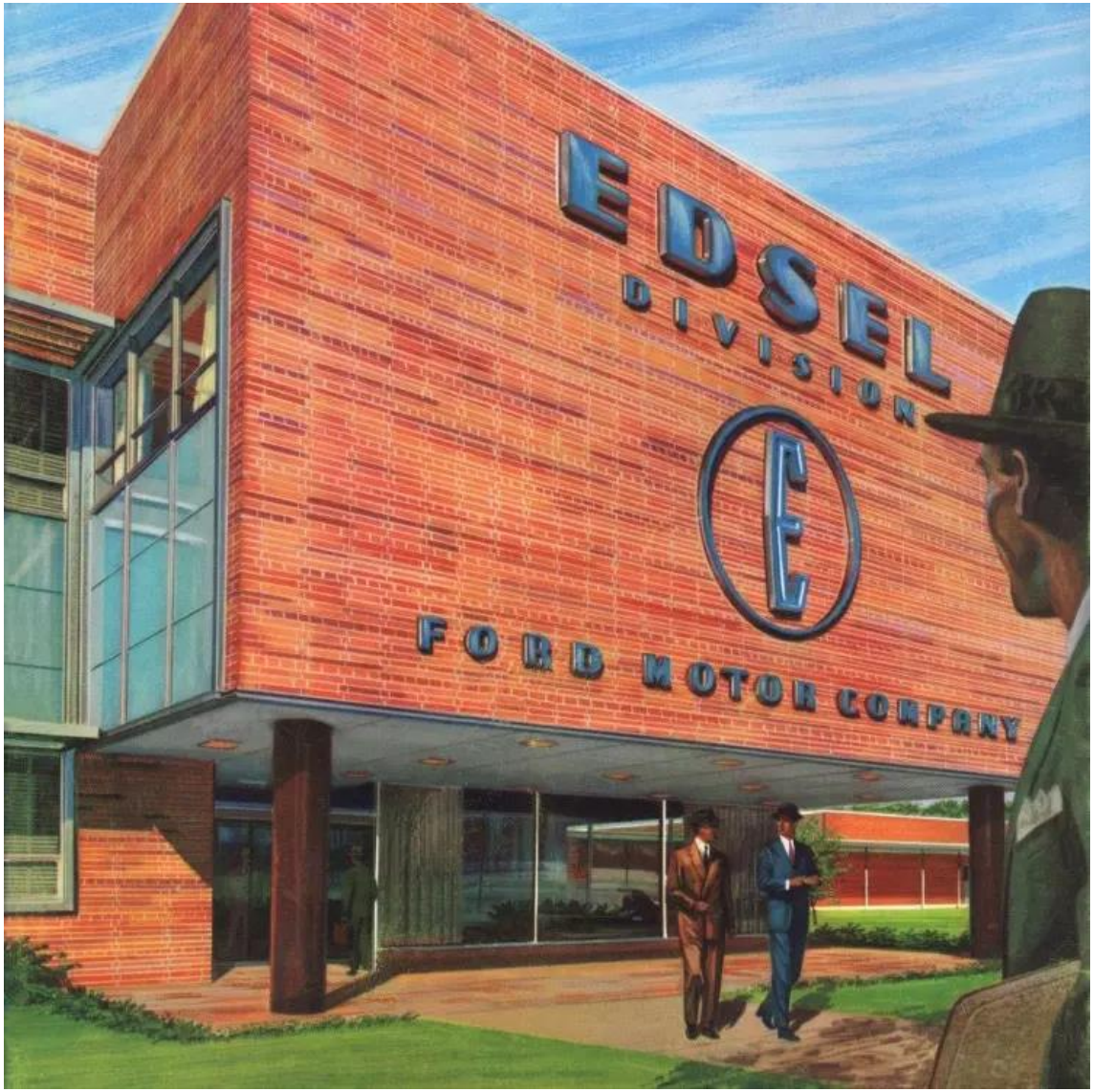
"…What they saw, they must have liked because a year later the project was given the final okay. What up to then had been planning and speculation, now became rolling-for-keeps, chips-are-down reality…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**

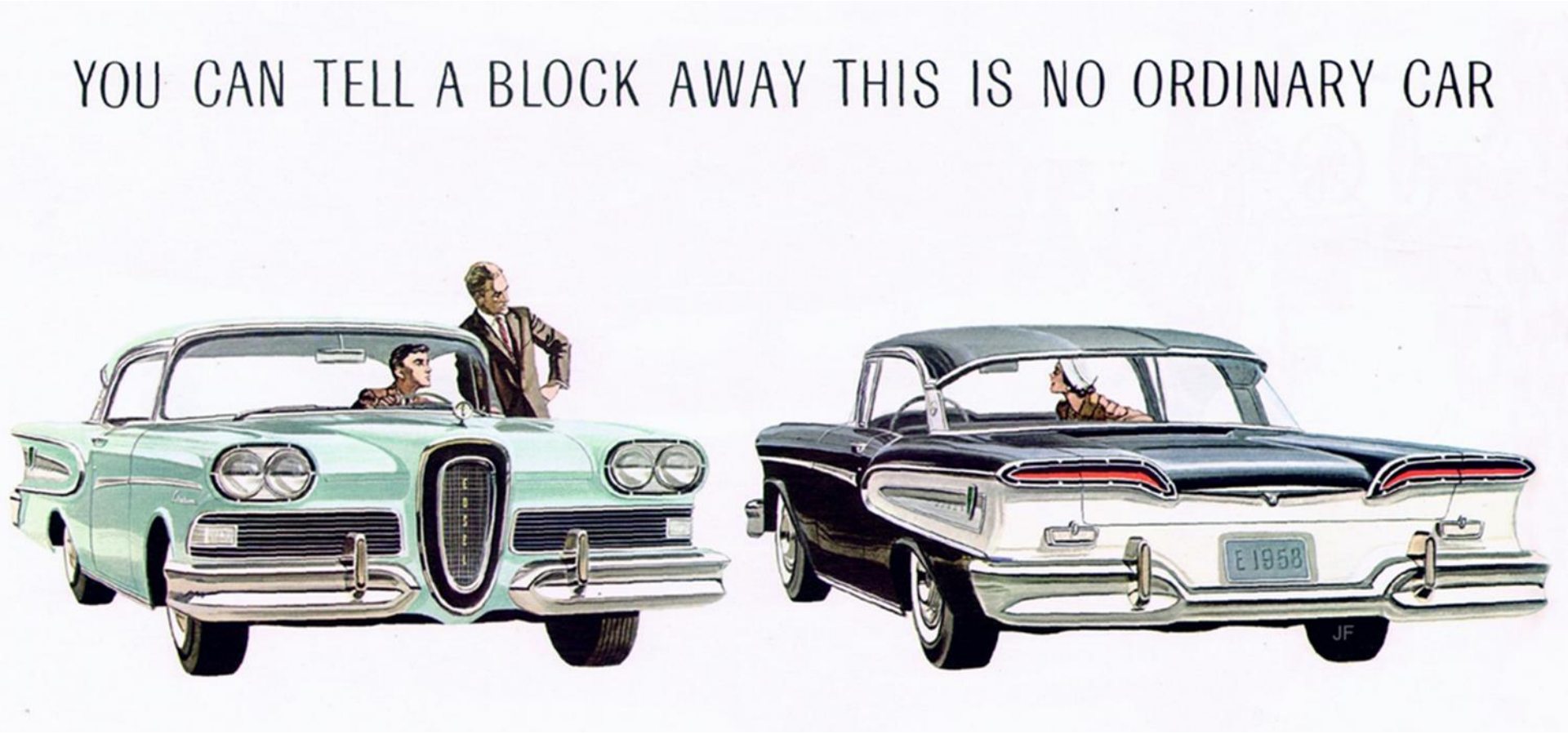
Up to His Ears

"…Since that April day in 1955, Richard E. Krafve, General Manager of the new division, has been up to his ears (and at times he may have felt over his head) in a car which turned out to be the Edsel…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**


EDSEL
DIVISION
E
FORD MOTOR COMPANY

Easily Identifiable



"…The Edsel planners started out by insisting that the styling be distinctive (but not bizarre, they cautioned). The car must be easily identified. They wanted folks to say every time one went by – 'There's the new Edsel'…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**

Similar, But Different

"…In a business like this, they reasoned, there's no time for slow starters, especially in a race against veterans like Pontiac, Dodge and Oldsmobile. Nor could there be any confusion with other makes in the Ford family of cars. Family resemblances were fine - even essential, but no more than that. There's no market for cars that look alike…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**

Coming or Going



"…The Edsel looks different. Grilles on most American cars are low and horizontal, Edsel's is high and vertical. Other cars tend toward the vertical in the rear, Edsel is horizontal. Front or rear, coming or going, it is distinctive…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1957**

<u>Caption</u>: "Distinctive without being ostentatious, the grille has an inner ring designed to withstand minor bumps"

They Planned it That Way



"…You will have to decide for yourself if it is attractive. That's a personal judgment. But all will agree that it's quickly recognizable. And it was planned that way…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**

<u>Caption</u>: "Horizontal tail-lights and concave rear fenders quickly identify the Edsel. This is the Citation hardtop."

Curb Appeal

"…The long-range planners demanded that the E-car (as it was called then) provide comfortable, relaxed performance at highway speeds. There was no intention of building the 'dragginest' or the fastest. Good performance, yes, but no spinning tires, no roaring exhausts. Their aim was to appeal to the up-and-coming, young Executive, not to the flashy sport nor the ultraconservative old fossil..."

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**

Performance Minded



"…The Edsel does perform well at highway speeds. It runs quietly and comfortably. It handles easily and responds agilely in traffic. If necessary, it will 'seat,' but it's not a car for the wheel spinner…"
***Popular Mechanics,* September 1957**

2 + 2 + 1

Ranger is low-price series. It shares the Ford body shell and is nine inches shorter than the big Edsel



"…Edsel comes in four series plus a station wagon line: Ranger and Pacer on the low-price-end using the A-shell (shared with Ford); Corsair and Citation on the top-end using the B-shell (shared with Mercury). You can spot the B-shell by its flat, sharply cut-off roof with the indented center trough. The curved, thicker roof without indentation is the A-shell…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1957**



The Edsel Ranger 4-Door Hardtop



The Edsel Ranger 4-Door Sedan



The Edsel Ranger 2-Door Sedan



The Edsel Ranger 2-Door Hardtop

RANGER



The Edsel Pacer 4-Door Hardtop



The Edsel Pacer Convertible



The Edsel Pacer 4-Door Sedan



The Edsel Pacer 2-Door Hardtop

PACER



The Edsel Corsair 2-Door Hardtop

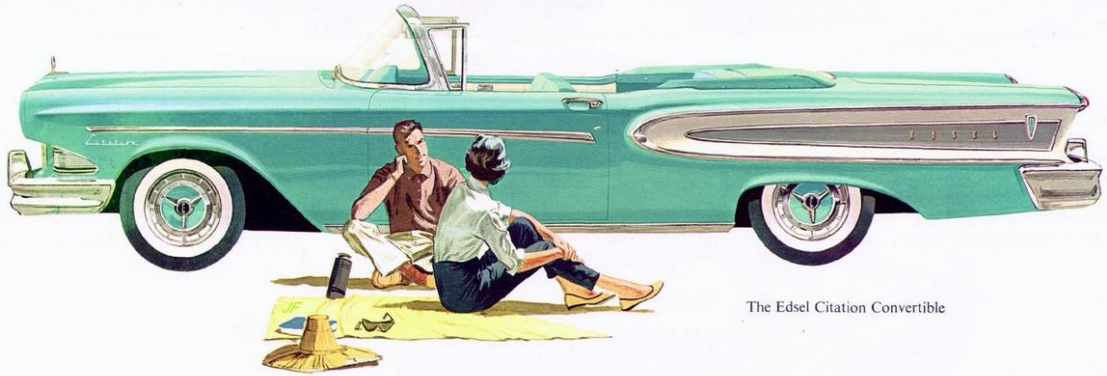


The Edsel Corsair 4-Door Hardtop

CORSAIR



The Edsel Citation 2-Door Hardtop



The Edsel Citation Convertible



The Edsel Citation 4-Door Hardtop

CITATION

EDSEL SPECIFICATIONS

	Ranger-Pacer	Corsair-Citation
Wheelbase	118.0	124.0
Over-all length	209.0	218.8
Over-all height	56.4	56.8
Over-all width	78.8	79.8
Displacement	361.0	410.0
Horsepower	300	345
Bore and stroke	4.05x3.50	4.20x3.70
Compression ratio	10.5 to 1	10.5 to 1



Edsel's station wagons share the Ford shell. This is the Bermuda, the top line of wagons

"…Wheelbases are different: from axle-to-axle, the A-shell is 118-inches-long; the B-shell is 124-inches. Station wagons are built on a 116-inch wheelbase shared with Ford wagons. Its exterior styling is very similar to the Ford, except for its front-end, which is typically Edsel…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**



The Edsel 4-Door 9-Passenger Bermuda
Also available in a 4-door 6-passenger model



The Edsel 2-Door 6-Passenger Roundup



The Edsel 4-Door 6-Passenger Villager
Also available in a 4-door 9-passenger model

STATION WAGONS

Safe and Convenient

"…First thing you notice when you slip behind the wheel is the control panel for the push-button transmission. It is where the horn button used to be, right in the hub of the steering wheel…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**

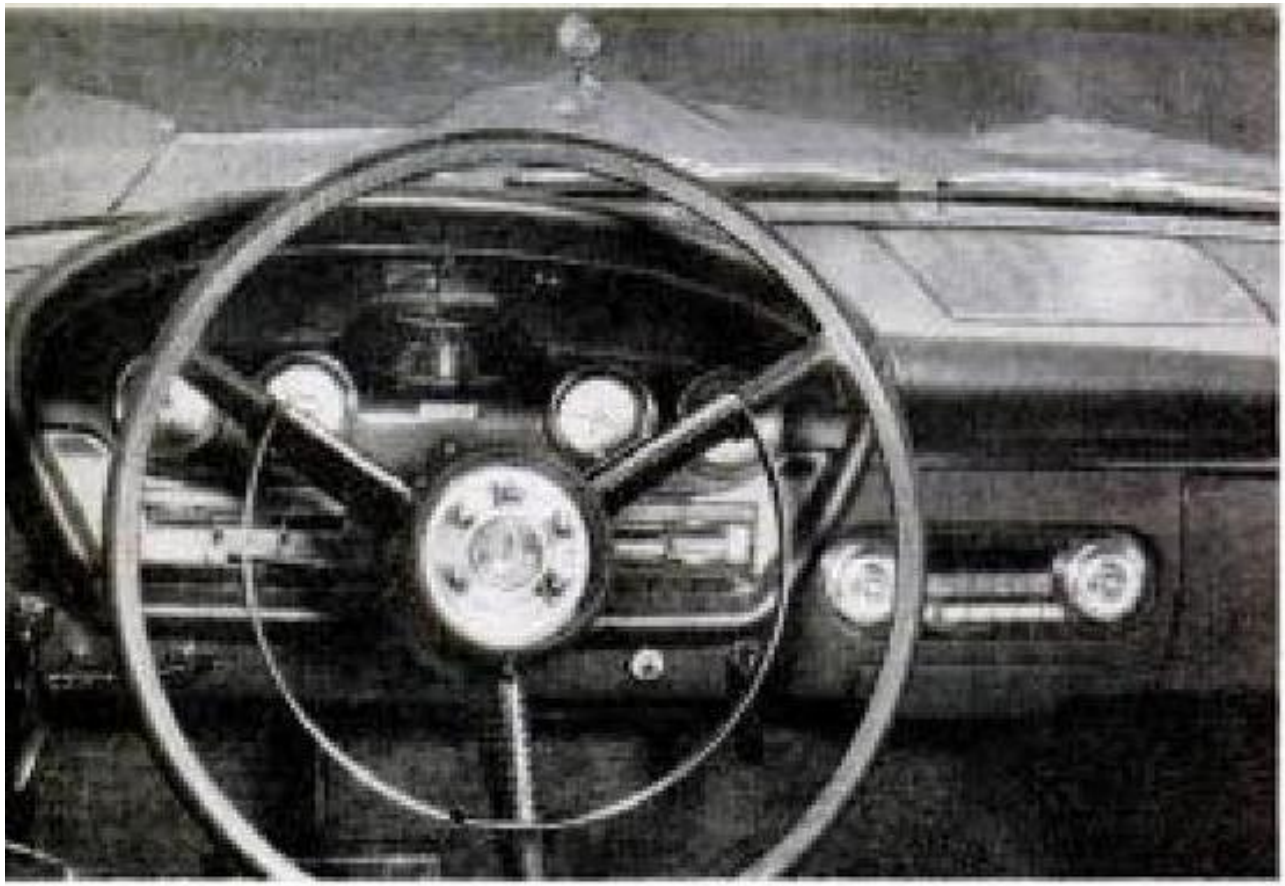


<u>Above</u>: all Canadian-market Edsel models were delivered from the factory with a white-painted steering wheel and column, chrome horn ring and hub-mounted “Teletouch” transmission controls


FORD MOTOR COMPANY OF CANADA LIMITED
OAKVILLE ONTARIO
SERIAL NUMBER
MODEL
TRIM
PAINT
D2
6 CYL. ENGINE NUMBER IS STAMPED ON RIGHT REAR SIDE OF BLOCK
8 CYL. ENGINE NUMBER IS STAMPED ON LEFT FRONT FACE OF BLOCK

"…The push buttons are electric, not mechanical as on Mercury and Chrysler cars. Incidentally, in case you're concerned, the panel doesn't rotate with the wheel. The hub remains stationary as the wheel spins around it. A safety device makes the control virtually childproof. You can now leave the car parked on a hill and not worry that the kids might set it rolling. The ignition key locks the Park button so it can't be disengaged until the key is turned…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**



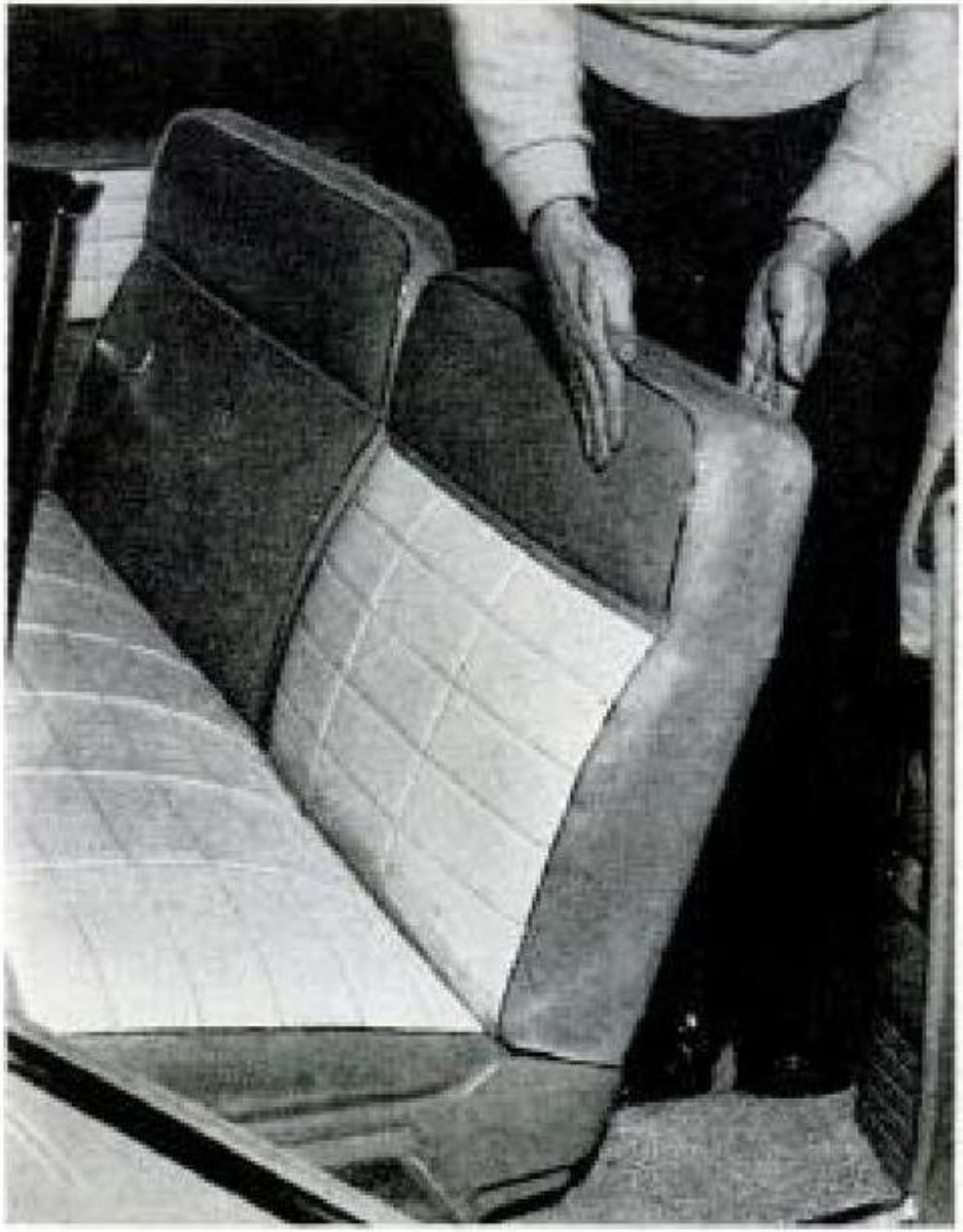
Tapering bulge atop hood makes it seem a block long. Transmission buttons are in steering wheel

Ergonomics v1.0



"…The Edsel is a comfortable car and one reason is its seat design The seat is shaped to feel like an easy chair at your rich uncle's club. Instead of fading-off at the tap, the back cushion angles forward slightly against the shoulders. Edsel Engineers have a term for the new seat shape. It is designed to conform to the 'modern slump,' they say…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1957**



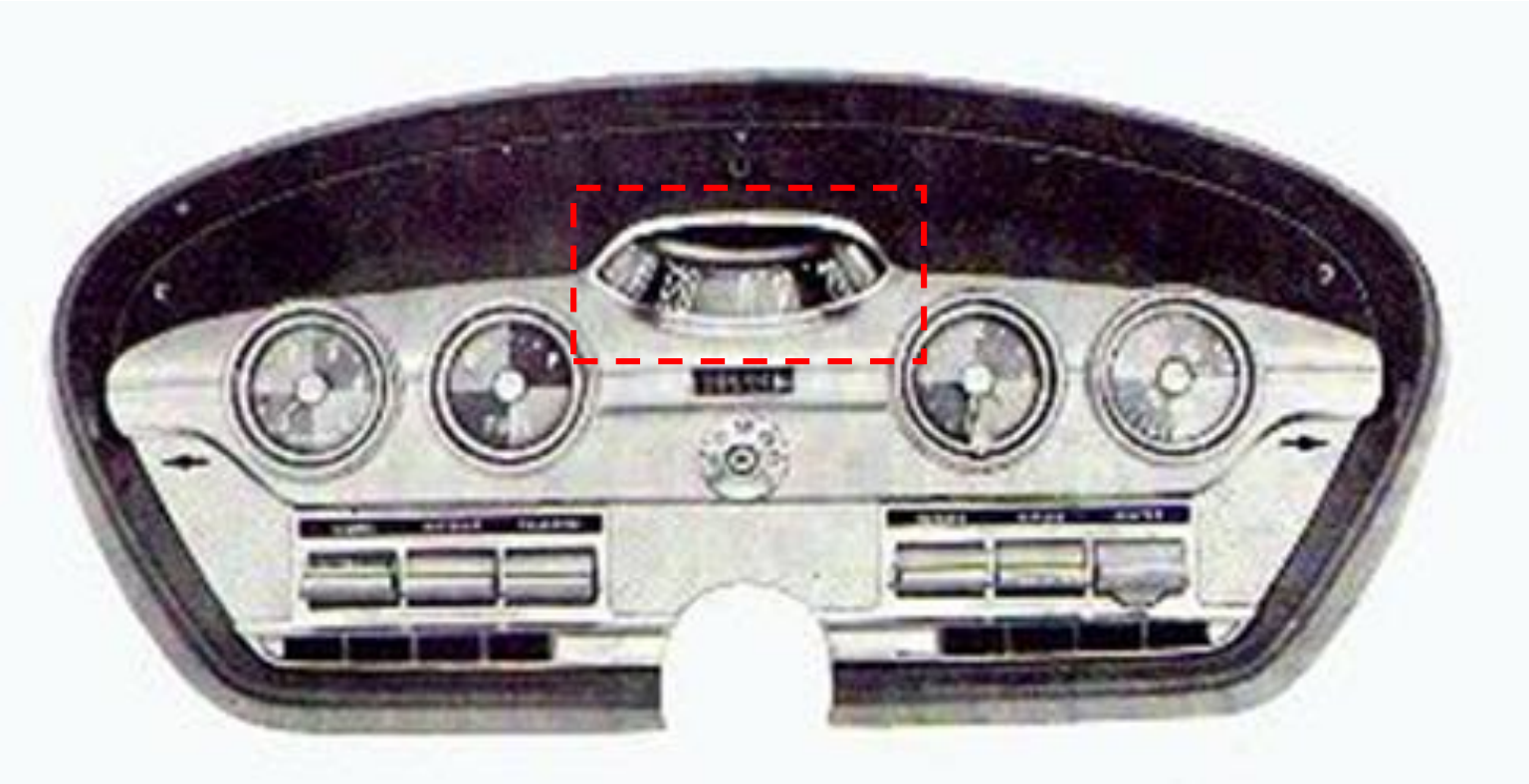
Top portion of seat back slants forward to provide shoulder support—secret of the comfortable seats



CUSHIONS ARE SPLIT, one-third for driver, two-thirds for passengers in two-door hardtops.


252

Dashboard Delights



"…The instrument panel is different, too. Its speedometer looks more like the boxed compass on a ship than a miles-per-hour meter on a car. A horizontal drum about six-inches in diameter rotates on a vertical pivot like the compass on a ship. The weight of the big drum dampens-out annoying surges often present in needle-type instruments. It gave the Engineers some headaches before they designed-out the inertia lag on acceleration and deceleration…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1957**

<u>Above</u>: the dashboard featured a 120-mph floating barrel-type speedometer as well as a compass, a clock and a fuel-level gauge


110 120 0 10 20
24890

A FINGER TOUCH UNLOCKS THE TRUNK FROM THE DRIVER'S SEAT

Edsel Automatic Trunk Opener

You may open your Edsel luggage compartment automatically from inside the car. Located on your instrument panel, a locking push-button switch complete with separate key will control this accessory. All Edsels (except station wagons) may be equipped with this convenient automatic lid opener.





"…Any dashboard is a temptation to the accessory lover. Edsel's especially. The factory will install any of the following in a special opening in the dashboard if you so desire: A tachometer, a compass or an inside-outside thermometer. There is also a speedometer light that changes colors as speed increases to warn you of danger. Another effort-saving accessory is a remote trunk latch that unlocks the trunk at a touch of a button…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**

V-8 Powered

"…Edsel has horsepower, too, although the industry is not supposed to talk about it above a whisper this year. One engine is the 361-cubic-inch V-8 of 303-horsepower. The other is the 410-cubic-inch V-8 of 345-horsepower. Compression ratio on both is 10.5 to 1…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**

For the Citation and Corsair Series, the E-475 V-8—Torque: 475; Horsepower: 345



The powerful 410 cubic inch engine, specially designed and built for the Edsel Citation and Corsair Series, sets new standards for performance. Its advanced air induction system, for example, follows an entirely new engineering concept. The E-475 V-8 *breathes* outside air at the most ideal temperature possible. In the winter, for example, it supplies prewarmed air to minimize cold-weather stalling. This makes the E-475 V-8 engine more efficient—more satisfactory to drive under all weather conditions.

A unique 3-stage cooling system also provides fast, efficient engine warm-up. In cold weather, the flow of coolant is restricted first to the cylinder heads, then to the cylinder block and cylinder heads. And finally, when the engine reaches normal operating temperature, the coolant flows through the entire cooling system. You get peak operating performance with greater economy at all times.

The combustion chamber incorporates the modern wedge-shaped design and, with a high compression ratio (10.5:1), the E-475 engine literally squeezes every ounce of power from every drop of fuel.

For the Pacer and Ranger Series and Station Wagon Models, the E-400 V-8—Torque: 400; Horsepower: 303



The E-400 V-8 engine has the same short-stroke, low-friction characteristics as the E-475—a deep-skirt cylinder block which gives Edsel engines their inherent smooth, powerful performance and long operating life.

The wedge-shaped combustion chamber and the high 10.5:1 compression ratio, as well as the four-barrel carburetor and the direct-flow intake manifold, are all Edsel engine features which provide exceptionally useful reserve performance in every driving range.

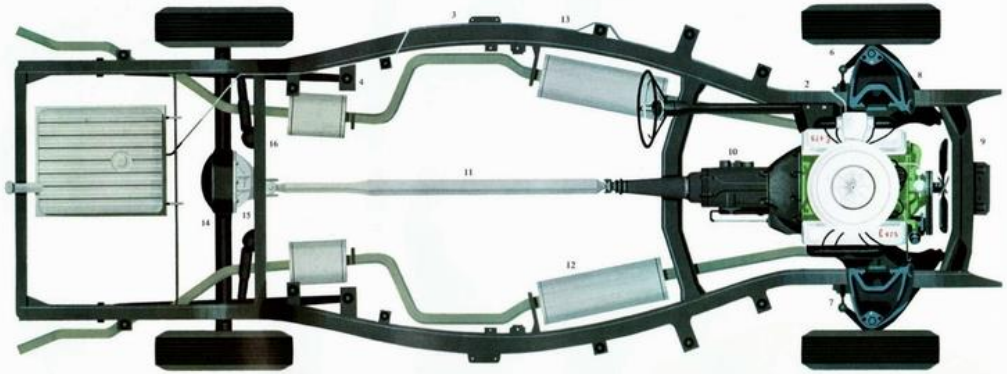
You get the same quick engine warm-up in the E-400 V-8 because it is equipped with a temperature-sensitive heat control valve. This directs the gases in the right-hand exhaust manifold around the intake manifold for proper heating of the fuel-air mixture before it enters the combustion chamber.

Whichever Edsel model you choose, you may be sure that its engine is precisely powered to your choice—Citation, Corsair, Pacer, Ranger or Station Wagon.

The Foundation



THIS IS THE FOUNDATION OF EDSEL PERFORMANCE



The chassis is the least seen, yet one of the hardest working elements in the Edsel. Whether it is the foundation for the Citation and Corsair, the Pacer and Ranger, or the Station Wagons, each serves as a bridge between the four wheels—carries all the load. The chassis is literally the foundation upon which almost all of the Edsel's capabilities are built—its ride, its handling, its performance, its safety and ruggedness. All Edsel chassis are designed for great strength and balanced, luxurious ride. In the Edsel, the modern automobile chassis takes its finest form. The features listed below tell how and where and why.

"…As far as the chassis is concerned, the Edsel is conventional - no radical innovations here. Sharing frames with Ford and Mercury as it does, the Edsel must share underpinning, too…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**

1. EDSEL V-8 POWER—Edsel's new V-8 engines nest deep within the rugged chassis to give a road-holding low center of gravity. This also serves to keep the drive line low for greater foot- and legroom inside Edsel's spacious bodies.

2. RECIRCULATING BALL AND NUT TYPE STEERING GEAR—Far less steering effort, reduces operating friction to minimum. Easiest steering short of power assist.

3. BASIC BOX SECTION FRAME—Ladder type with welded box section reinforced side rails and 5 rugged crossmembers to resist twisting; helps keep the Edsel body soundly rigid. Sturdy foundation for long-lived, quieter, more restful ride.

4. LONG REAR SPRING WITH RUBBER BUSHINGS—Self-cushioning on starts, easy riding on the go. Spring action of both front and rear springs is carefully balanced for even flow over bumps.

5. 14-INCH SAFETY WHEELS—Special wide-rim design for better sealing of tubeless tires, easier, truer steering, greater stability on curves and turns.

6. SELF-ENERGIZING, SELF-ADJUSTING BRAKES—For easier, surer stopping. Brakes adjust automatically to allow for normal lining wear when brake pedal is touched while car is operating in reverse.

7. POWER STEERING*—Integral torsion bar type available on all cars equipped with Teletouch Drive automatic transmission. Link type available as option on all models with other transmissions including Overdrive*. Both feature safety "road feel" action, reduce effort on slow turns or in parking.

8. SWEPT-BACK, ANGLE-POISE BALL JOINT FRONT SUSPENSION—Provides trailing arm type of suspension to help pull front wheels over bumps, smooth out road irregularities. Ball joint design provides better handling, especially on turns, by combining both up-and-down movement and steering action in one.

9. TORSION BAR TYPE STABILIZER—Helps keep car level on turns, provides resisting force which helps check sway.

10. CHOICE OF TRANSMISSIONS—Teletouch Drive* (standard on Citation and Corsair Series), automatic drive with lever control*, conventional, and conventional with Overdrive*.

11. DYNAMICALLY BALANCED DRIVE SHAFT—Smooth, quiet operation extends universal joint bearing life.

12. DUAL EXHAUST SYSTEM AVAILABLE—Standard on Citation Convertible, optional at extra cost on all other models. Peak performance.

13. "GUARD RAIL" FRAME DESIGN—Surrounds base of body with husky "guard rail" for greater safety, permits depressed floor pan for more legroom, greater comfort.

14. HOTCHKISS DRIVE—Eliminates radius rods, lets rear springs cushion starts and stops.

15. NEW BOTTOM ORBIT HYPOID GEAR DESIGN—Lowers drive shaft tunnel in rear compartment.

16. DIRECT-ACTING TELESCOPIC SHOCK ABSORBERS—Automatically adjust to the flex of the springs. Provide smooth, positive ride control.



Riding on Air

"…There will be air-suspension, but not on 'Job One' (as Detroit calls the first production models to come off the line). It will be offered as an extra-cost item available sometime around mid-October…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**

"…But it's not ready now and you won't find it on the Edsels you peek under on announcement day. You'll have to wait a couple of months for it to materialize…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**

Ford-Aire

In 1958, Ford jumped on the Motor City's air-suspension bandwagon, but then quickly jumped back-off

***macsmotorcitygarage.com,* September 10, 2025**

RE: introduction to an article entitled: "A Fortunately Forgotten Ford Failure: 1958 Ford-Aire Suspension"



EXCITEMENT RIDES WITH YOU *every mile you roll in your new* **CHEVROLET.** *At rest or on the road, this sleek style-setter promises action, gaiety, glamor—and it keeps its promises beautifully. Come aboard and take the key to the happiest traveling on the highway!*

One look at those saucy lines and you know this new Chevy's ready to shove off for wherever you say.

Just name your course—a bustling highway, a tumbling mountain road or a side street to the corner grocery. Here's the car with the kind of eager gait that turns any route you travel into a pleasure cruise.

You'll see what we mean the first time you feel the quick-springing torque of Chevrolet's new Turbo-Thrust V8* whisk you up a steep hill. Or learn how this engine loves to shrink the miles out where they're long and lonesome.

And you'll find still more to be proud of in the way Chevy takes the wrinkles out of aging roads. There's a choice of two completely new rides—Full Coil suspension as standard and a real air ride* besides. Each is engineered to achieve a gentleness you'd expect only in the costliest cars.

The plain truth is that you're missing one of the most rewarding experiences on the road if you haven't yet taken the wheel of this new Chevrolet. It's an overnight your dealer will gladly remedy.... Chevrolet Division of General Motors, Detroit 2, Mich. *Optional at extra cost.

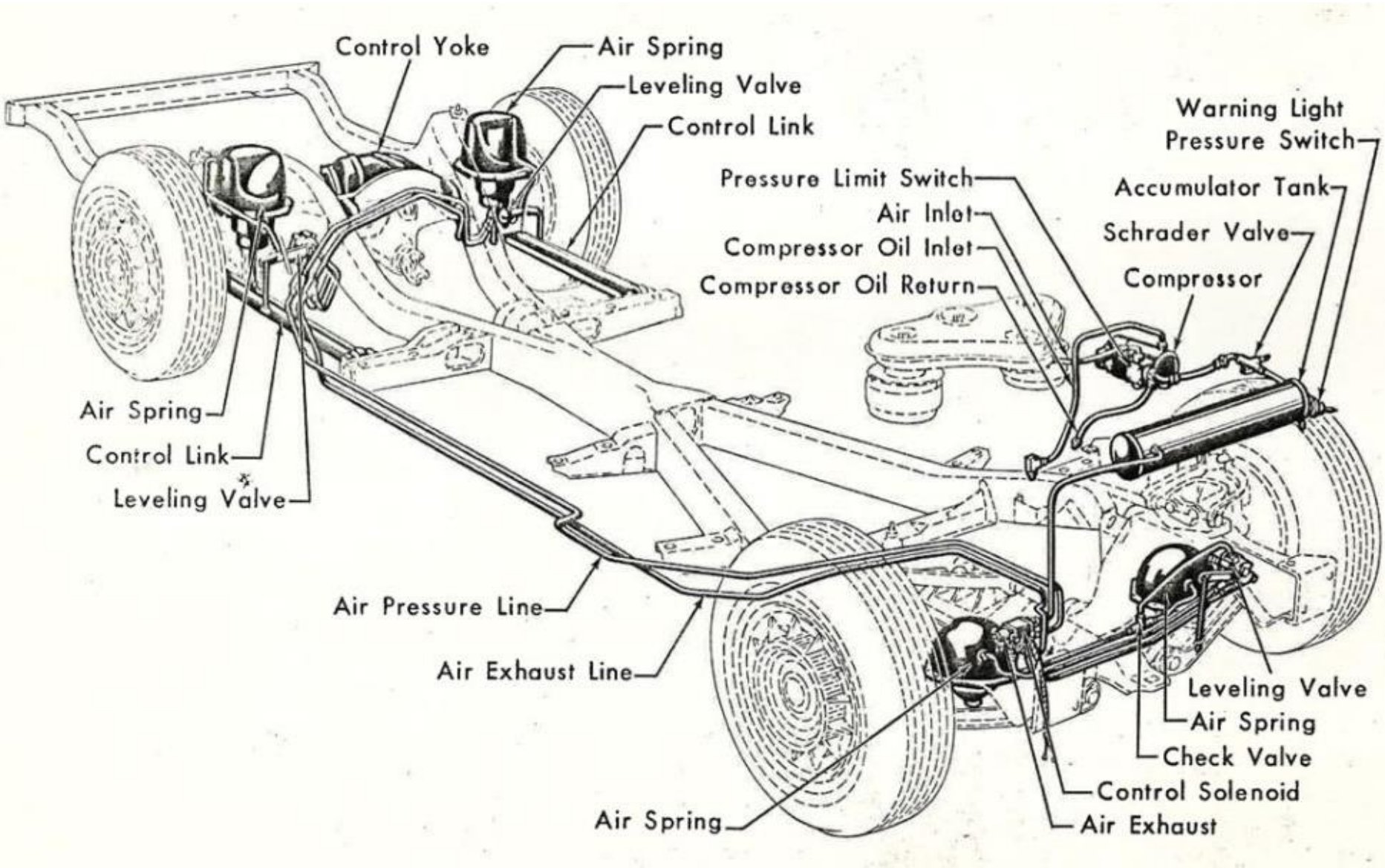


CHEVROLET

"FOUR-WHEEL, self-leveling air-suspension is commonplace today, mostly in the premium makes such as Audi, BMW and Mercedes-Benz. But in the late 1950s, the Detroit automakers were giving it their first serious try, especially at General Motors, where it was adopted by Cadillac in 1957 and the other four GM car brands in 1958…"

***macsmotorcitygarage.com,* Sept. 10, 2025**

Left: the 1958 *Impala* was one of the first sedans offered with air-suspension



Schematic view of the air-suspension system for the 1957 Cadillac Eldorado Brougham

"…For GM, the experiment was not a success. Chevrolet and Oldsmobile dropped it after a single year, Pontiac and Buick after two years, though Cadillac hung onto air-suspension th-rough 1960. In fact, GM's original air-suspension is a well-documented flop…"

***macsmotorcitygarage.com,* September 10, 2025**

"…Though it's far less known today - it's almost completely forgotten, which is probably fortunate - Ford also tried air-suspension in 1958, but met with a similar lack of success. The system, marketed as 'Ford-Aire,' was discontinued almost immediately after it was introduced…"

***macsmotorcitygarage.com*, September 10, 2025**

For 1958, Ford Motor Company offers air springs in place of steel springs—bringing you Air Suspension Ride.



They pulled a new kind of ride out of the air

Almost three years ago, on a cold February morning, three Ford Motor Company executives were driven through the closely guarded gate of the Dearborn test track. They had come to sample a new kind of suspension system developed for the Ford Family of Fine Cars.

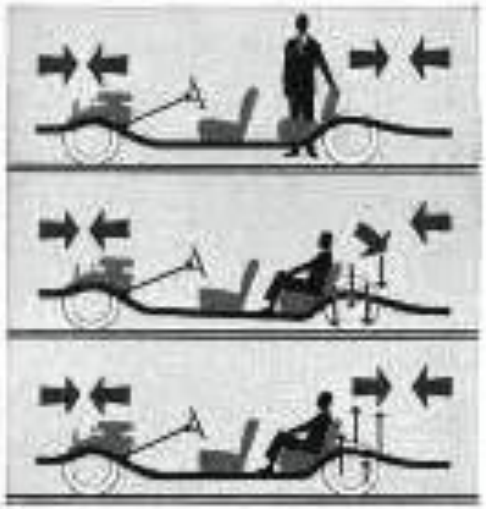
For years, the "perfect ride" had been in the minds and on the drawing boards of Ford engineers. The breakthrough came when the decision was made to absorb shock with air instead of metal. A new type air suspension was developed and installed in a test model. It was this model in which the VIP's were about to be introduced to Ford's new ride.



"…Ford-Aire was similar to the GM system in general layout, with an engine-driven air compressor, a vinyl-rubber air bladder at each wheel and a system of pneumatic valves and electric switches to adjust and maintain the ride height…"
macsmotorcitygarage.com,
Sept. 10, 2025

First tip-off to something new and different came after they settled themselves in the rear seat. Despite the weight of three good-sized men, the car automatically returned to its level position. This was the work of the self-leveling feature of the new system.

The driver gave the car the business. He stopped the car on a dime; there was no dip. He started up with a squeal of tires; there was no squat. At the Belgian Block Road, each passenger was handed a full glass of water. After a stretch of the bumpiest road in America—and at speeds up to 35 mph—no one had spilled a drop of water. Though the decision to go ahead with air suspension was officially made in the board room of Ford's Central Staff Building in Dearborn, it seems safe to say the choice was really made, unofficially, in the back seat of the first prototype.



The car stays level regardless of weight placement



Air springs absorb the bumps the way this Indian rolls over a rock.

FORD MOTOR COMPANY
THE AMERICAN ROAD, DEARBORN, MICHIGAN

MORE NEW IDEAS, MORE YOU IDEAS
—IN THE FORD FAMILY OF FINE CARS



MERCURY • LINCOLN • CONTINENTAL MARK III

"…In Ford's set-up, a single-cylinder, 2.7 cubic-inch compressor capable of 300 psi (though the operating pressure was 170-180 psi) supplied a 400 cubic-inch air reservoir mounted nearby under the hood…"

***macsmotorcitygarage.com*, September 10, 2025**



A TRUE AIR RIDE with new Ford-Aire Suspension!

Air cylinders at each rear wheel replace conventional steel springs. Your ride is softer, quieter, more comfortable.

Leveling valve at rear axle operates automatically to maintain constant height at rear of car. Now, a trunk full of luggage no longer leaves you riding front-end high, rear-end low.

Air compressor, driven by engine, supplies air at a pressure of 300 pounds per square inch to operate new Ford-Aire Suspension.

Air reserve tank provides a reservoir of high pressure air to keep the system operative whether engine is running or not.

Door switches at all doors operate leveling valves whenever a door is opened. Car returns to level instantly when passengers get in or out.

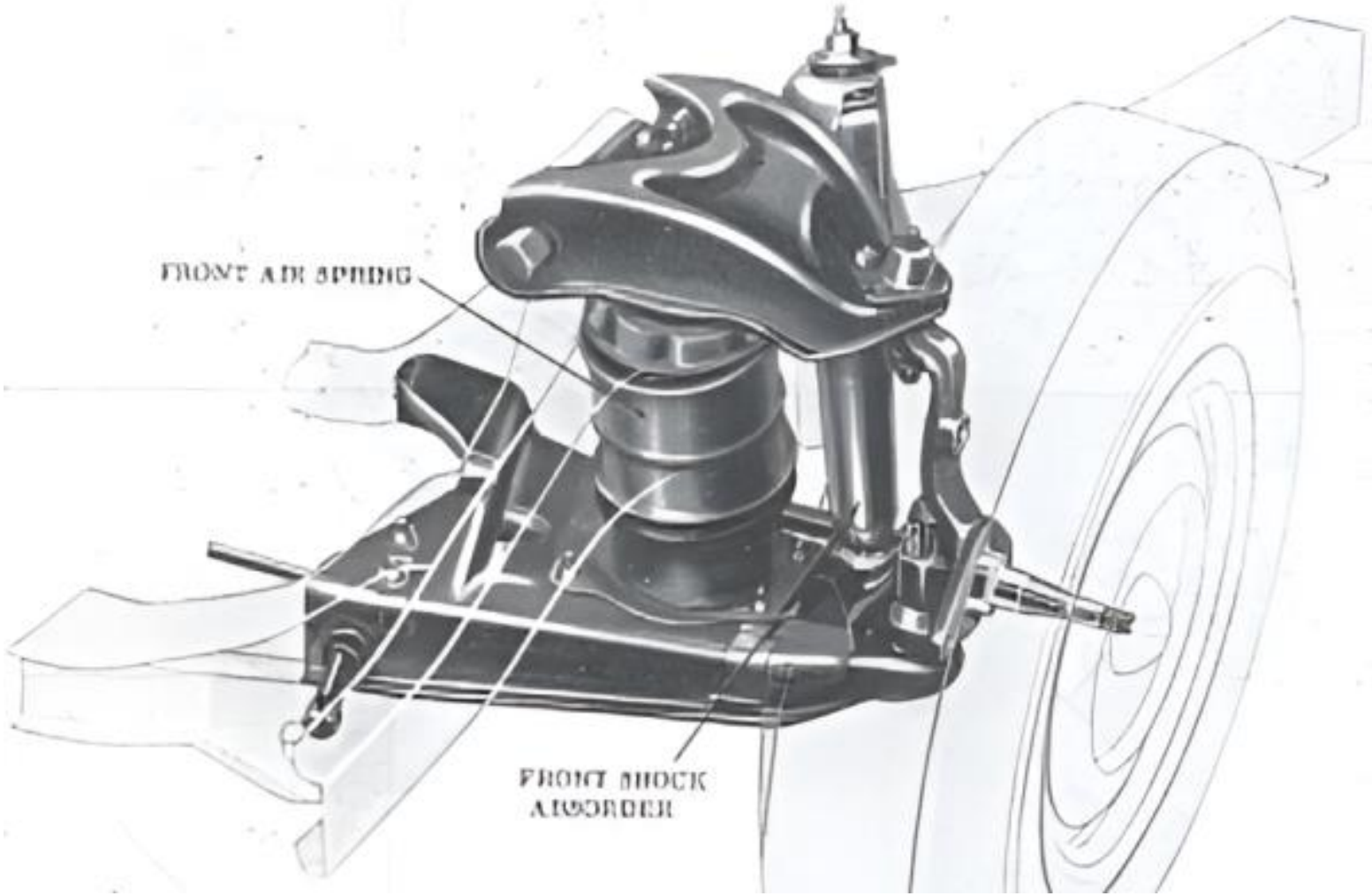
Leveling valves, one at each front wheel, operate automatically to keep car's front-end height constant regardless of amount or location of load.

Air cylinders at each front wheel replace coil springs. You literally ride on air—and what a difference it makes. It's like riding on a cloud!

"…Why air-suspension, anyway? In the late '50s, automakers were adopting ever-lower spring rates to obtain the soft, luxurious ride then in fashion. But that, in turn, required greater wheel travel to prevent bottoming and soon the Engineers were running out of vertical room…"

***macsmotorcitygarage.com,* September 10, 2025**

"…On the other hand, an air chamber can have a highly progressive spring rate; that is, the more the bladder is compressed, the greater the air pressure (Boyle's law). The spring rate is comfortably soft at normal road height, then rises in stiffness as the wheel approaches bottoming. On the '58 Ford's independent front suspension, the air bag neatly slipped into the same space usually occupied by the coil spring…"
***macsmotorcitygarage.com,* September 10, 2025**

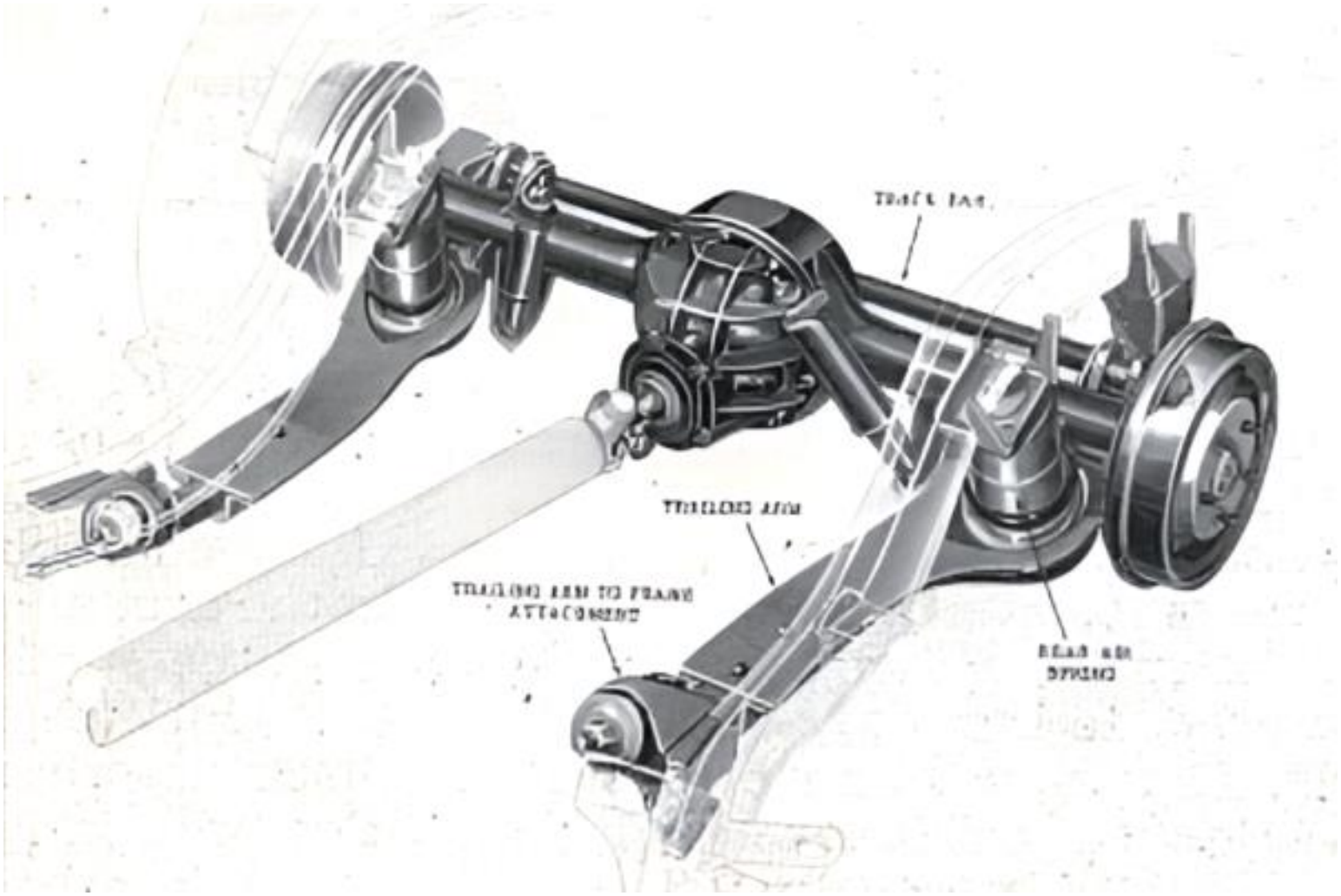

FRONT AIR SPRING
FRONT SHOCK
ABSORBER

"…Edsel's air-bag system will be based on a trailing-arm rear suspension. Air bags on all four wheels (complete with automatic leveling valves) provide the ultimate solution to the problem of compromising for light and heavy loads, rough and smooth pavements…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**

"…But at the rear of the '58 Ford, adapting air-suspension was more complicated. The standard set-up used a pair of semi-elliptic leaf springs for suspension and lateral location, with no practical way to accommodate air chambers. So here the leaf springs were replaced by a pair of rigid steel trailing arms with a Panhard bar for lateral control. Interesting to note: Instead of pivots at the front of the arms, Ford used a set of strut bushings to allow some axial displacement but limit radial deflection, reducing ride harshness…"

***macsmotorcitygarage.com,* September 10, 2025**



"…Ford-Aire was offered as a $158 option on the Fairlane, Fairlane 500 and station wagons, with a small badge below the right rear tail lamp to trumpet the feature, but then the feature was discontinued almost immediately…"
***macsmotorcitygarage.com,* September 10, 2025**

"…How Ford-Aire failed so quickly and conclusively is a topic for speculation, since automakers are not in the habit of publicly documenting their failures and this was years before product recalls and consumer advocacy. However, along with the few sketchy reports, we can safely guess that Ford-Aire suffered problems similar to those encountered in the GM system…"

***macsmotorcitygarage.com,* September 10, 2025**

"…The Ford system's air chambers and copper air lines were prone to leaks, it was known, while the pneumatic ride-height control valves (two in the front, one in the rear) were delicate and less than reliable. The compressor was required to process large quantities of air, which means large quantities of moisture, spelling trouble for all the components in the system. Reportedly, Ford stopped marketing Ford-Aire in regions where the ambient air temperature fell below 10-degrees F, as the control valves would freeze-up…"

***macsmotorcitygarage.com*, September 10, 2025**

"…How many '58 Fords were actually equipped with air-suspension is another open question, evidently. Estimates range from 20 to 100 or more, but only a handful are still around today. Personally, we've never seen one, though we have seen cars with the Ford-Aire emblem still in-place, but retrofitted to conventional suspension, probably by the selling dealer as most were…"

***macsmotorcitygarage.com,* September 10, 2025**

"…Mercury marketed the system as 'Air Cushion Ride,' including it in its 1958 sales brochures, but again, how many cars were produced with the feature is unknown. To us, anyway. In Canada, Ford's Meteor brand advertised the system as 'Air-Suspension'…"

***macsmotorcitygarage.com*, September 10, 2025**

"…When Lincoln was redesigned for 1958, coil spring rear suspension was adopted in preparation for the pneumatic system, but ultimately, the Lincoln Engineers decided not to pursue it and the division reverted to rear leaf springs in 1960…"

***macsmotorcitygarage.com,* September 10, 2025**

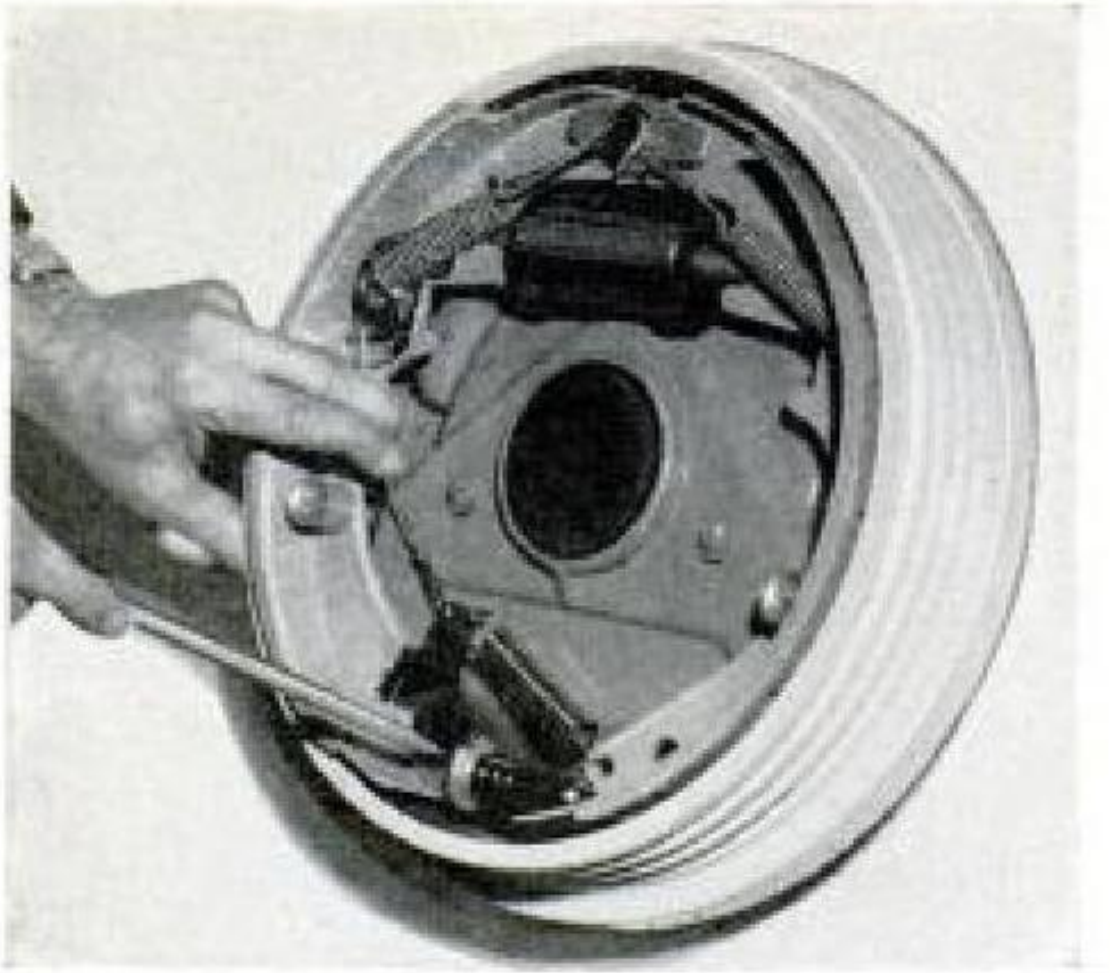
"…Reportedly, the Edsel Division ordered 40 pilot-production cars with air-suspension early in the '58 model year, but only five were built before it was given up as a bad idea. This may be the only recorded instance where the star-crossed Edsel managed to dodge a bullet."

***macsmotorcitygarage.com*, September 10, 2025**

Self-Adjusting

"…Self-adjusting brakes come with every Edsel Every time you back the car up and apply the brakes a cogwheel inside the brake drum 'senses' whether the brake needs adjustment. If it does, an adjusting lever nudges the cogs, taking up the brake. It operates only when backing-up to prevent over-adjusting that might result after successive panic stops during which overheated drums would have expanded to give a false 'reading' to the sensing mechanism about lining clearances…"

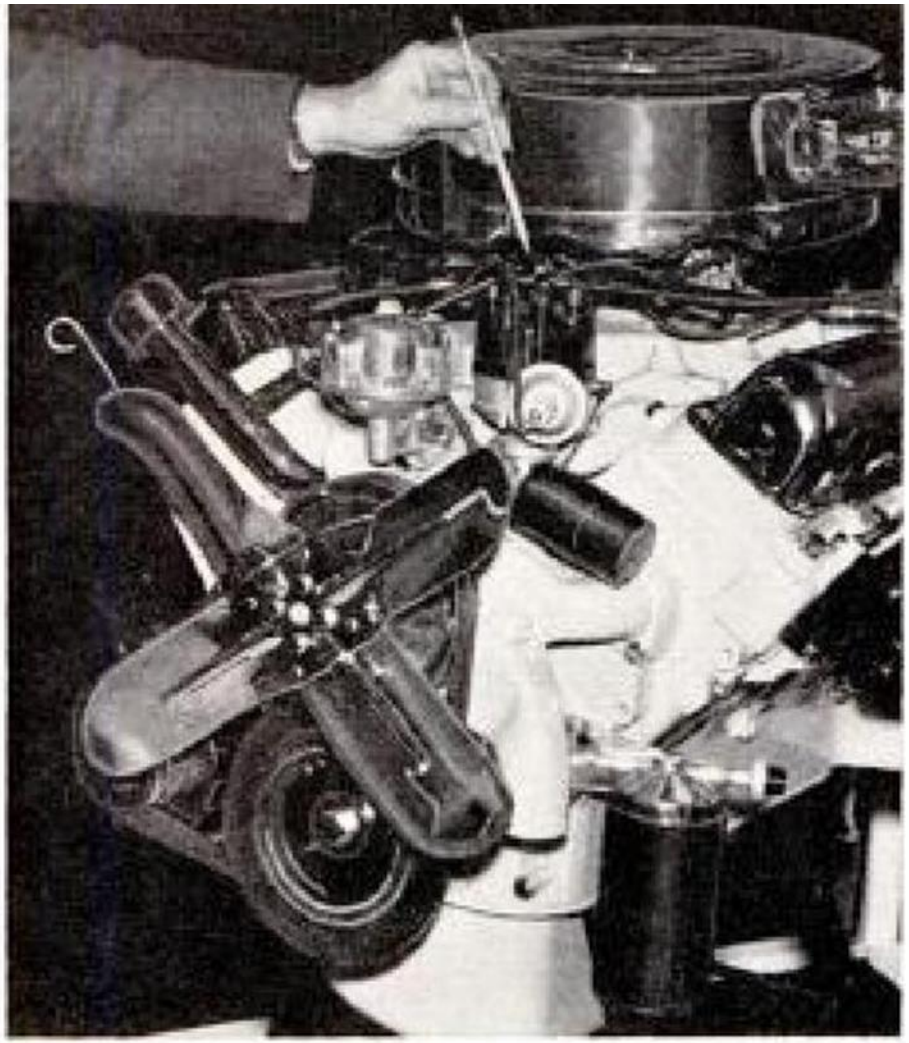
***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**



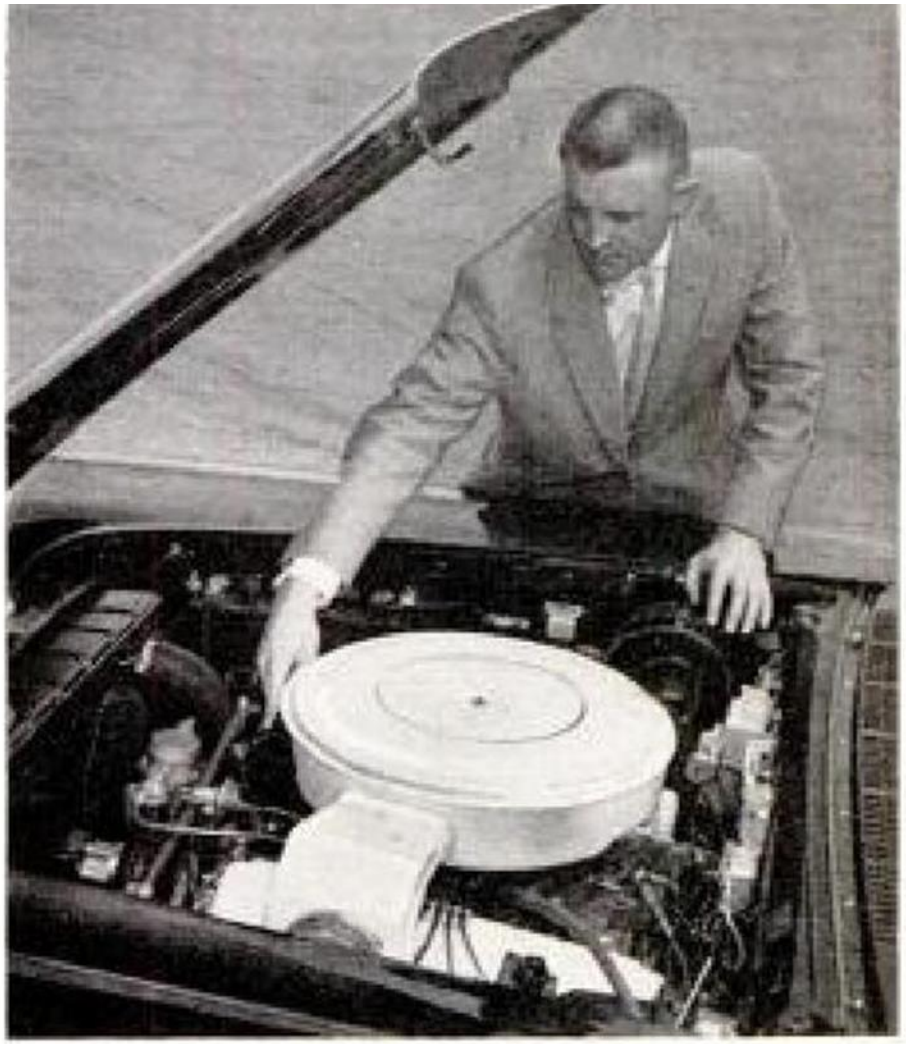
Cable (under fingers) pulls lever which turns cog-wheel (end of pencil) to adjust brake automatically

"…Engine accessibility has been improved in the new Edsel engines, Distributor, fuel-pump, coil, oil filter and dipstick are moved forward to be more easily reached (of course, the fact that the hood now hinges at the front offsets much of the gain…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1957**



Distributor (pencil points to it) is mounted forward on the engine, designed for service accessibility



Front-hinged hood is a safety factor, but it does limit accessibility of forward-mounted distributor

"…Edsel explains this by saying that the new engine design was under-way before the comparatively new front-hinged hood was decided upon)…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1957**


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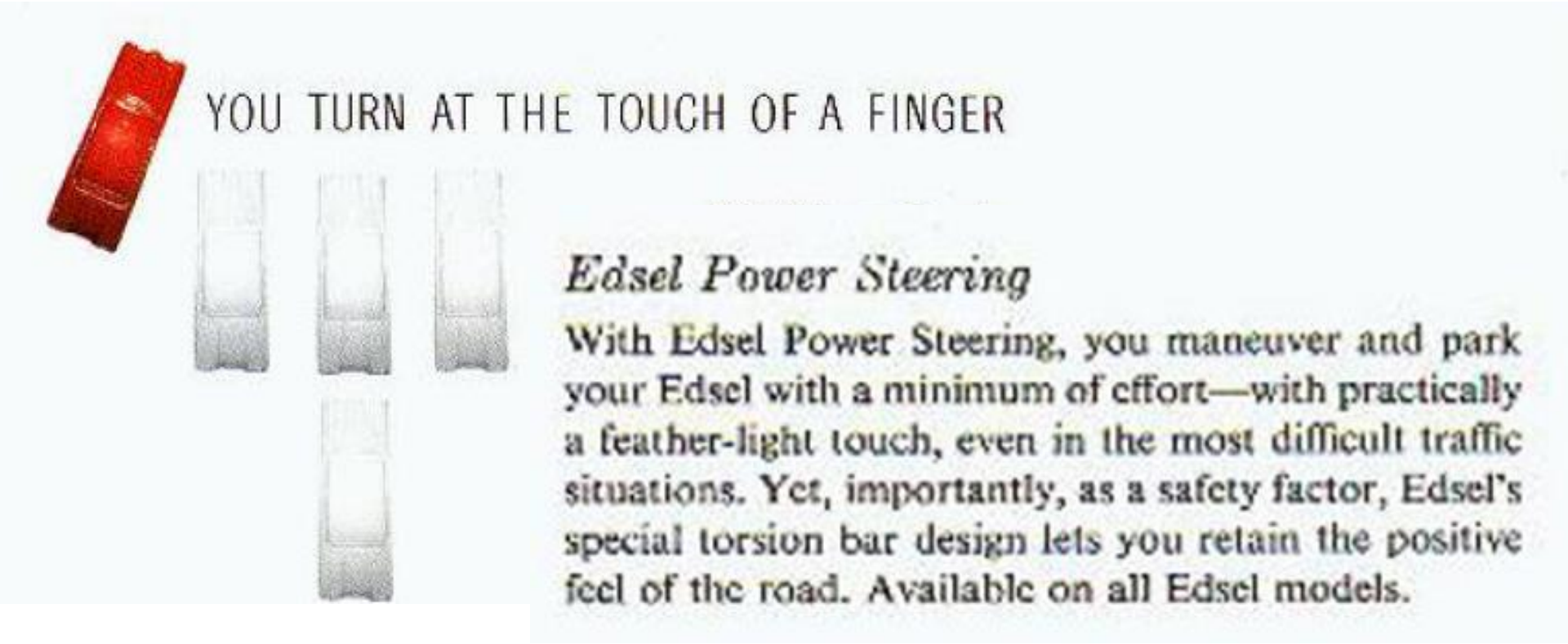


Triple Thermostat Cooling

"…Other novel features of the Edsel include a triple-thermo-stat cooling system which successively opens-up the heads, the block and finally the radiator during engine warm-up. This system is designed to reduce choke time and increase gas-oline economy and heater performance…"

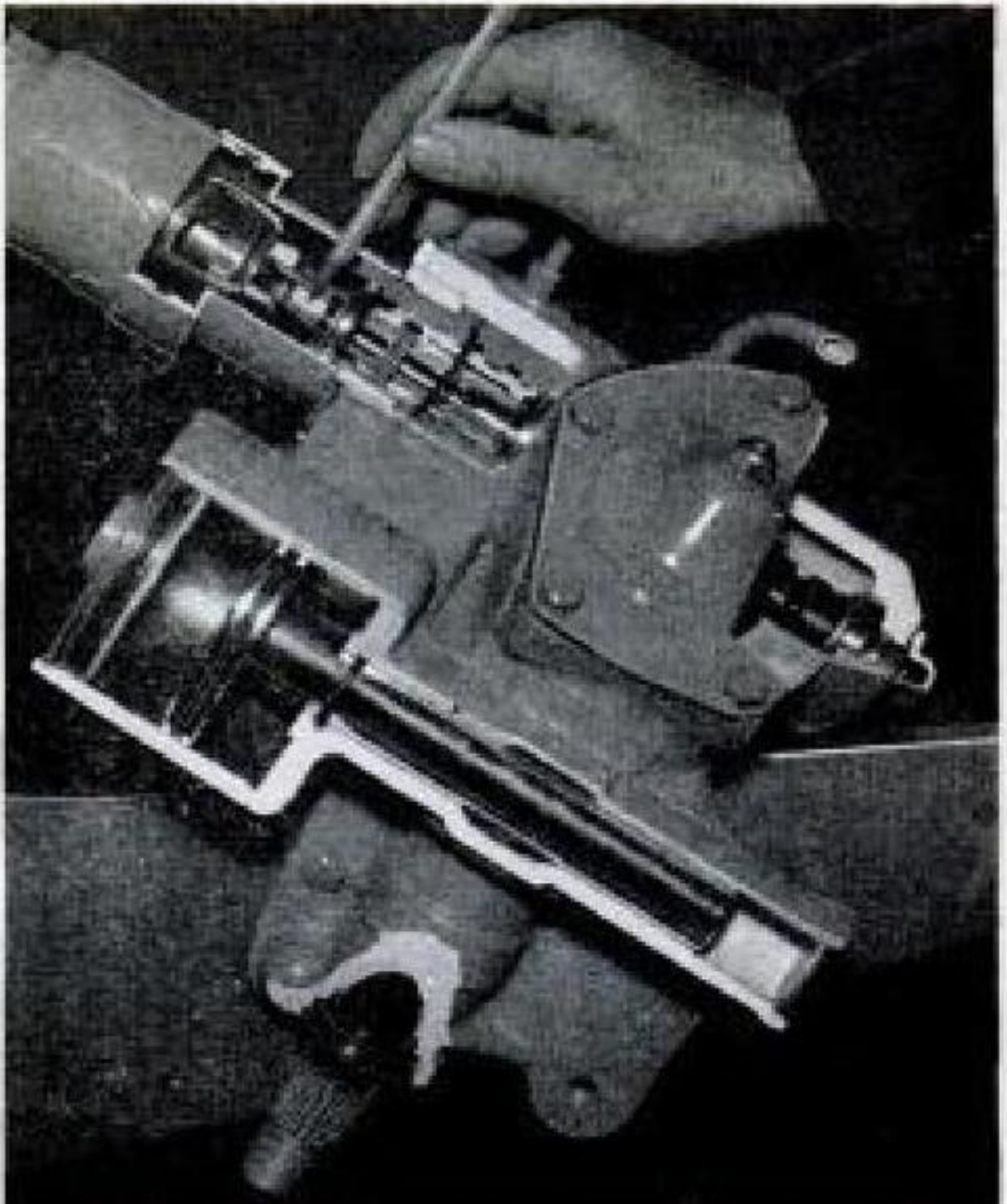
***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**

At the Touch of a Finger



"…Power steering on the Edsel is an integral design that has a torsion-bar control for a valve regulating the amount of assist. The more you turn, the more the assist…"
***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**

Integral power-steering unit has torsion-bar control (pencil points to it) to regulate amount of assist



"…The pump for the unit, incidentally, will be built into the front of the engine, mounted at the end of the crankshaft. There will be no extra fan belt required to drive the pump. The first Edsels off – the-line will have the conventional belt-driven pumps, but the integral pump will be available soon after introduction date, Edsel says…"

Popular Mechanics,
Sept. 1957

Color Conscious

INSIDE AND OUT, EDSEL COLORS GO TOGETHER ELEGANTLY

In the sparkle, tone and textures of Edsel's colors and upholsteries you sense the new trends in automotive styling: brightness, individuality, and color harmony, outside and in.

In Edsel models of every series, you'll like the way that stylists have keyed each interior to contrast or blend harmoniously with the wide range of Edsel single, two-tone, or tri-tone colors.

For this new car, Edsel craftsmen have developed a special flare with upholsteries. Whatever interior-exterior scheme you select, your Edsel will speak wonderfully well of you.



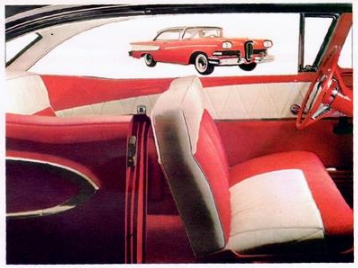
In the foreground, the rich interior of the Edsel Citation; in the background, the Citation 2-door Hardtop itself, in Royal Blue Metallic and Powder Blue. The foam rubber cushioned seats feature light blue hand-crush vinyl contrasting with the texture of Random Square cloth in medium blue.



Ice Green and Snow White are the colors that set off the elegance of this Ranger 4-Door Hardtop. Inside, these colors are matched by Surf pattern nylon-faced fabric with white boxcalf vinyl trim. The cushion edge panels and ceiling headlining are also vinyl.



Turquoise and Frost White dramatically stress the long, low lines of the Citation Convertible with interior handsomely keyed to the same colors. The deep cushions feature a white box pattern insert.



Ember Red with Snow White scallop keys the entire color range of this Pacer 2-Door Hardtop. Inside, the restful elegance of the contour front and rear foam rubber cushioned seats is set off by contrasting white boxcalf vinyl in triangular pattern and red Chain body cloth.



Edsel Jet Black and Ember Red set off the exterior beauty, and red and gray the tailored trim of this Corsair 4-Door Hardtop. The Mesh pattern seat fabric features narrow pleating set off by inserts and bolsters of metallic gray hand-crush vinyl.



Bermuda's exterior is Driftwood with chrome accents and Charcoal Brown Metallic finish with Snow White scallop. Interior features Driftwood boxcalf vinyl with brown Andes pattern saran.

INTERIORS

INSIDE AND OUT, EDSEL COLORS GO TOGETHER ELEGANTLY

In the sparkle, tone and textures of Edsel's colors and upholsteries you sense the new trends in automotive styling: brightness, individuality, and color harmony, outside and in.

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For this new car, Edsel craftsmen have developed a special flare with upholsteries. Whatever interior-exterior scheme you select, your Edsel will speak wonderfully well of you.

"…Color-conscious motorists who shudder at some combinations of hues on today's cars will appreciate Edsel's decision to use only matching or harmonizing colors…"

***Popular Mechanics*, Sept. 1957**

Psychological Warfare

"…An important part of the Edsel sales effort (as with all makes) is psychological. The luxurious feeling of the front seat is part of this…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**


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"…Also part of the psychological warfare is the hood configuration. As you sit behind the wheel of the Edsel, tapering creases make the hood seem to extend miles out in front. There is a lot of the Mark II Continental in this sensation. It's not a big car, but to the driver it seems to be. And that is expected to help sales…"

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**


FUEL

Hat-in-the-Ring

"…Will it succeed? It's no easy task, Edsel admits, No all-new car has been successful since the Mercury was introduced in 1938. Ford's reputation and its millions of devoted customers will help, of course, but it must get sales from other makes if it is to succeed. Edsel is jumping into the ring at a rough moment. The medium-price field is sagging and the veterans in it are in no mood to share customers with any upstart…"

***Popular Mechanics,* September 1957**

Plugging the Gap

"…Edsels aim is to provide Ford owners who want to move up with another car in the Ford family. With only Mercury between Ford and Lincoln, the Ford Motor Company has be-en losing customers to competition. Edsel is here to plug that gap. It will be an interesting battle."

***Popular Mechanics*, September 1957**

Announcement

AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY HENRY FORD II

TO ALL FORD MOTOR COMPANY DEALERS

ABOUT A NEW MEMBER OF THE

FORD FAMILY OF FINE CARS

THE

EDSEL



It has now been ten years since we first examined the possibility of broadening our product coverage of the medium-priced market.

During these years, we have studied the actual purchases of thousands of car buyers—not only our customers, but our competitors' customers as well.

Those studies conclusively proved that when a company has two or more entries in the medium-priced field, the result is to strengthen the sales of all its car lines.

In April, 1955 we informed you of the establishment of the new Special Products Division.

Last Spring, when we met with you to discuss our recent progress and future plans, Lewis Crusoe told you that the Special Products Division was developing a new line of cars and the project was well under way.

Today we are proud to announce that a full line of cars, bearing the name of my father, Edsel Ford, will be on The American Road next Fall.

As of today, the Special Products Division becomes the Edsel Division. It is a full-fledged, fully-staffed operating division of Ford Motor Company. Richard E. Krafve, who headed the Special Products Division from its inception, is Vice President of Ford Motor Company and General Manager of the Division.

Styling and engineering for the Edsel are now complete, and tools for its production are being made.

Between now and the time when the first car rolls off the line, the Edsel

Division is charged with the job of establishing a new dealer organization of its own.

As in the past, full consideration will be given, individually, to the qualifications of any Ford, Mercury or Lincoln dealer who, in addition to his present franchise, might also be interested in an Edsel franchise.

Three months from now, on February 4, 1957, we intend to meet with you again via closed-circuit television to tell you more about what we are doing to increase *your* business by improving ours.

At that time we will be able to tell you more about the Edsel and its place in the market. We will also be in a position then to discuss more fully our forward product and distribution plans.

Meanwhile, I'd like you to keep this in mind. We in the automobile business —dealer and company alike—have ahead of us so vast an opportunity that it is almost impossible to believe the statistics.

But all you have to do is look at the way your own home town has outgrown its schools, its housing, its stores and its roads. These are the signs which give meaning and proof to the forecasts which say the market for new cars will be at least 40% greater within the next ten years—and cars on the road will increase from 47 million this year to 67 million in 1965.

There is no room for weakness in a market of such explosive vitality.

That's why, for the past ten years, every activity of the *new* Ford Motor Company has centered around the single purpose of strengthening your business by strengthening ours.

This year you have seen a change in the Ford car you wouldn't have dreamed possible a year or two ago. You have seen the Ford become a completely new car—easily the biggest and finest in the low-priced field, led by the brilliant new Fairlane 500 series.

You have seen the same thing happen to Mercury. The Mercury name has been attached to a big, new line of cars. You have seen Mercury get its own large body shell and become fully competitive with the largest cars in its price field.

You have seen the emergence of Lincolns so beautifully styled that their sales became the talk of the industry this year. And we believe the 1957 Lincolns will do even better.

All these forward moves mean a great deal to your future security, your prosperity and your growth.

The next forward step of the new Ford Motor Company—the Edsel—is also important to you.

No matter which Ford Motor Company products you handle—Fords, Mercurys, Lincolns, Continentals—you will be selling more cars, because the entry of the Edsel will strengthen the market position of all Ford Motor Company car lines and Ford Motor Company dealers.

You will have the backing of a stronger, larger company because of the Edsel.

You will also be selling better cars, because of the greater product developments, the bigger research and engineering programs the Edsel will help make possible.

That's why the success of the Edsel is as important to you as it is to Ford Motor Company.

November 19, 1956

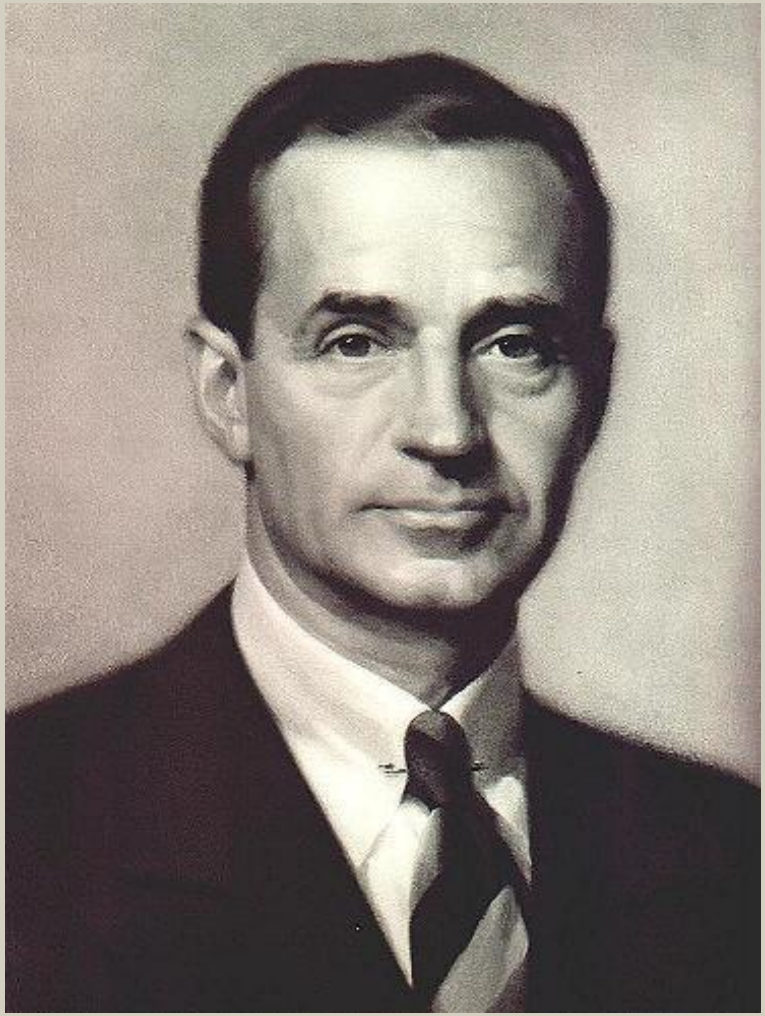
Henry Ford II



Left-to-right:

L.D. Crusoe, Executive Vice President, Car and Truck Divisions
R.E. Krafve, Vice President and General Manager, Edsel Division
J.C. Doyle, General Sales and Marketing Manager, Edsel Division

Edsel Regional Sales Managers:
J.F. Connors, Eastern Region
O.L. Wigton, Central Region
C.H. O'Donohue, Midwest Region
G.P. Montagnet, Southern Region
L.T. Kouns, Western Region

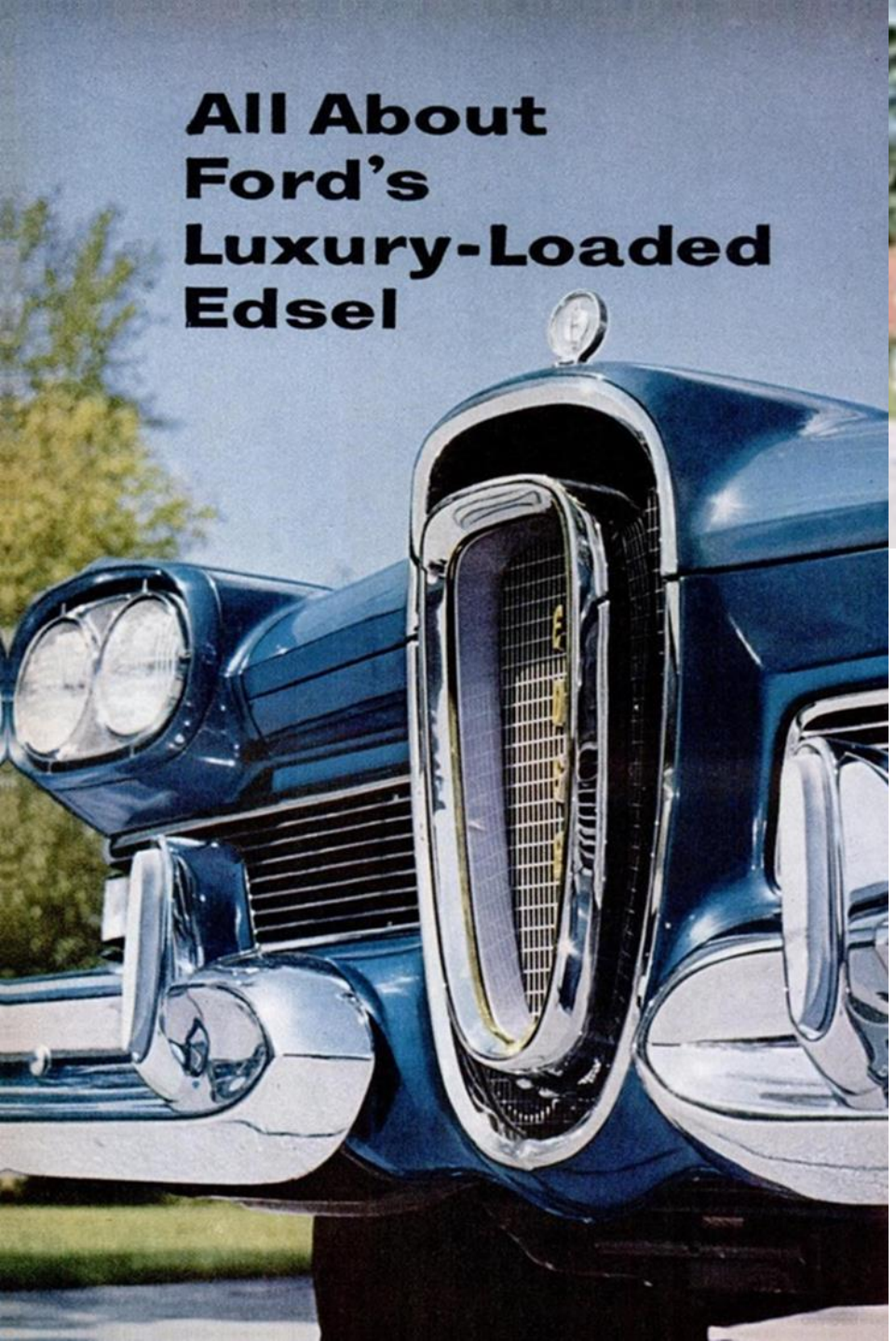


Edsel Bryant Ford
(1893-1943)

Part 4

All About Edsel

Luxury-Loaded





Whopping-big engines power four lines of cars with gadgets galor, styling that reverses a trend to horizontal grilles

***Popular Science,* September 1957**

RE: introduction to an article entitled: "All About Ford's Luxury-Loaded Edsel"

<u>Above</u>: caption: "Width of 79.8 in. for Corsair and Citation models exceeds that of most competitive cars"

Wraps-off

"AFTER six years of mulling things over and three years of active work, the Ford Motor Co. last month finally took the wraps off its new medium-priced automobile, the Edsel Then everybody concerned, from President Henry Ford II on down, sat back hopefully and, apprehensively, to see how much of a stir their glittering piece of hardware would create…"
***Popular Science,* September 1957**


AUDITORIUM
BEEZY BEAR
"IN THE BAG"

Worst-kept Secret





THE EDSEL DIVISION of Ford Motor Co. will neither confirm nor deny that this photograph (above, left), taken by a 17-year-old boy who sneaked over the proving ground fence, is of the actual Edsel car. Their only comment: "There were major styling changes made as late as March" (several months after the photo was snapped). If it is the actual car, MT will probably invest in many more crystal balls such as the one that enabled us to predict in the sketches which appeared in our February issue the styling theme that the 1958 Edsel would follow.

8 MOTOR TREND/AUGUST 1957

"…They needn't have worried. Millions of people wanted a look. A well-calculated series of 'leaks' on features of the Edsel for months prior to the introduction paid-off in public interest. The car had been, thanks to this, Detroit's worst-kept secret…"

***Popular Science*, September 1957**

Eye Candy

"…Still, what people saw when they looked was a shocker. The car has all this:

- **More engine power than the average motorist will know what to do with**
- **Gadgets beyond a gadgeteer's dreams of glory**
- **Styling that reverses the year's-long trend to horizontal-pattern front-ends and chrome enough to tax the output of the world's mines…"**

***Popular Science,* September 1957**

Horse-breeding

"…The first complete line of cars under a new name in a decade, the Edsel – to use a horse-breeding term – is by Jaguar out of Alfa Romeo…"

***Popular Science,* September 1957**

Bigger is Better

"…Of the two engines available, the smaller has practically the same cubic-inch displacement as the current Buick, Cadillac, Chrysler Saratoga, Lincoln or Packard Clipper. The bigger is bigger than the biggest of all other passenger-car engines now on the market. The respective horsepower: 303 and 345…"

***Popular Science,* September 1957**


MAX

Why So Much?

"…Why so much power? One Edsel Executive, surprised at the question, replied, 'I haven't heard the reasons discussed.' They're obvious in the performance though. The car takes-off like a gazelle one jump ahead of a drooling lion…"
***Popular Science,* September 1957**

The Need for Speed

"…There are four 'lines' or series. The lower two lines, the Ranger and the Pacer, fitted with the smaller engine, accelerate from zero to 60 miles-an-hour in 9.5 seconds. That's 2.1 seconds better than the Buick Special; a second better than the Chrysler Windsor; 1.1 better than the Olds Super 88. It matches the Pontiac Super Chief. The top lines; the Corsair and the Citation, with the bigger engine, reach 60 from taw in 8.8 seconds…"

***Popular Science*, September 1957**

Very Hush-Hush

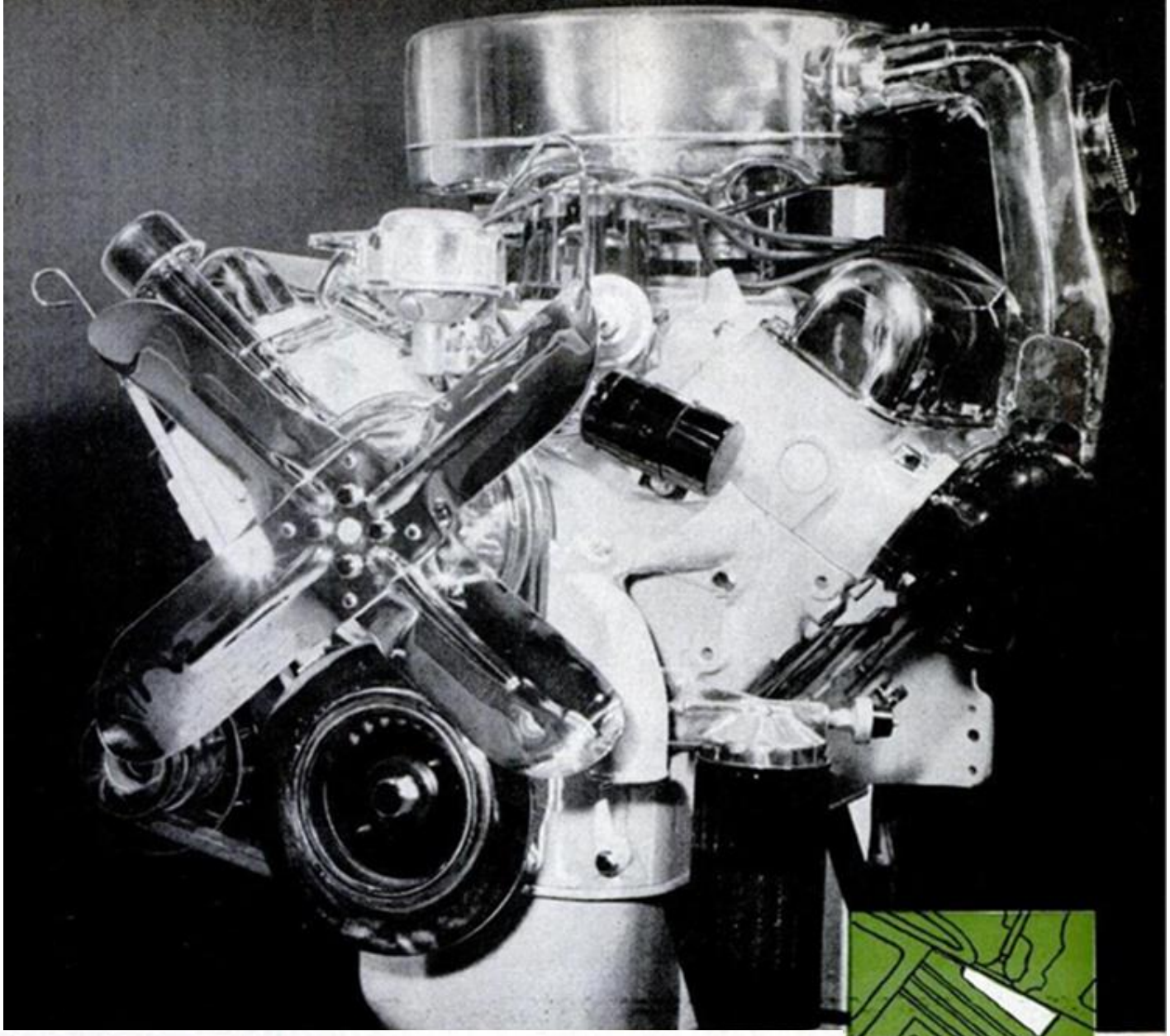
"…In deference to various State Legislators – who are brooding about limiting horsepower by law – the Edsel's top speed must remain hush-hush…"

***Popular Science*, September 1957**

Things to Come



"…As shades of things to come, the smaller engine has 'an inter-changeability of block' with the plushier 1958 Fords…"
***Popular Science*, September 1957**



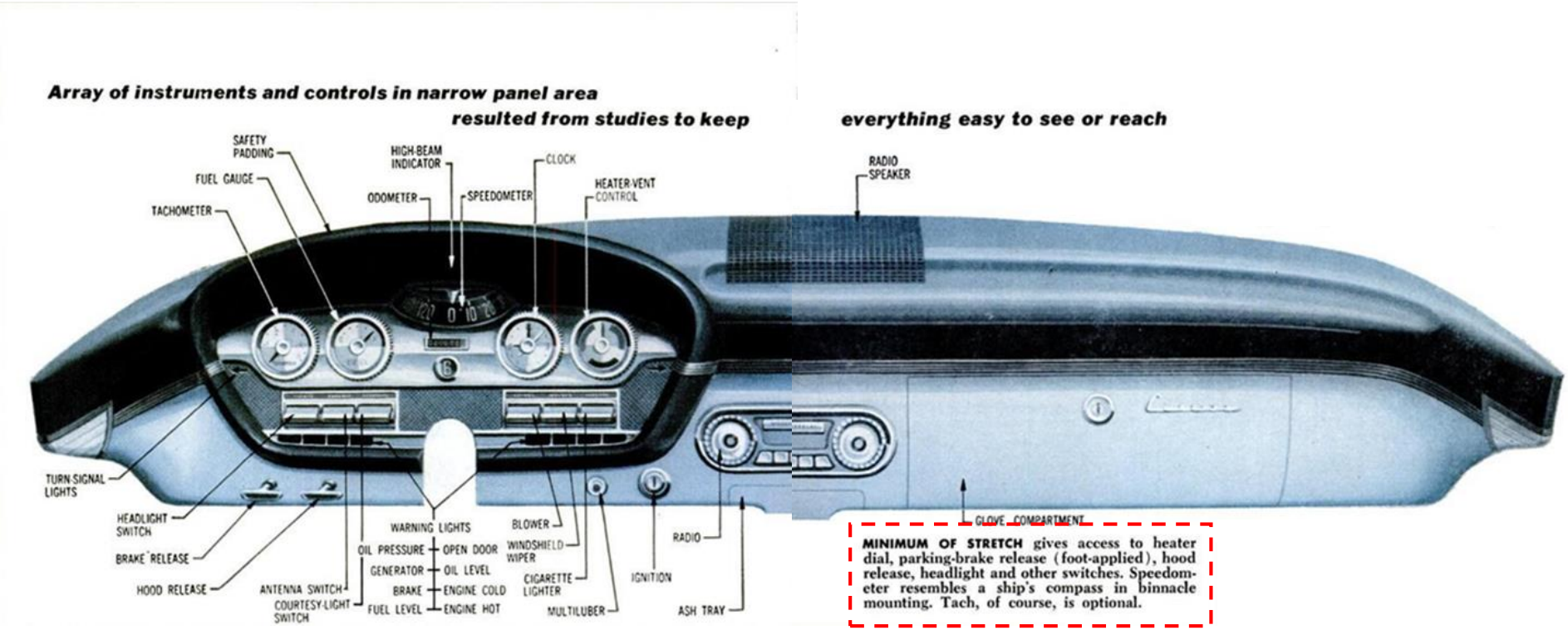


IN FORD TRADITION, Edsel engine has a deep-skirt block. Thermostatic heat control supplies fresh air when the carburetor air reaches 105 degrees. On the big engine (inset), combustion chamber is machined into block instead of head. Its intake valves have 2.09-in. diameter. The current Ford's measure is 1.78; the Mercury's is 1.92.

Cat-footed

"…The car's ride matches its acceleration. The Edsel is cat-footed; solid on the straightaway and as upright as an arch-bishop on the sharp turns. The ride of the top two lines is a triffle softer than that of the Ranger and Pacer…"
***Popular Science,* September 1957**

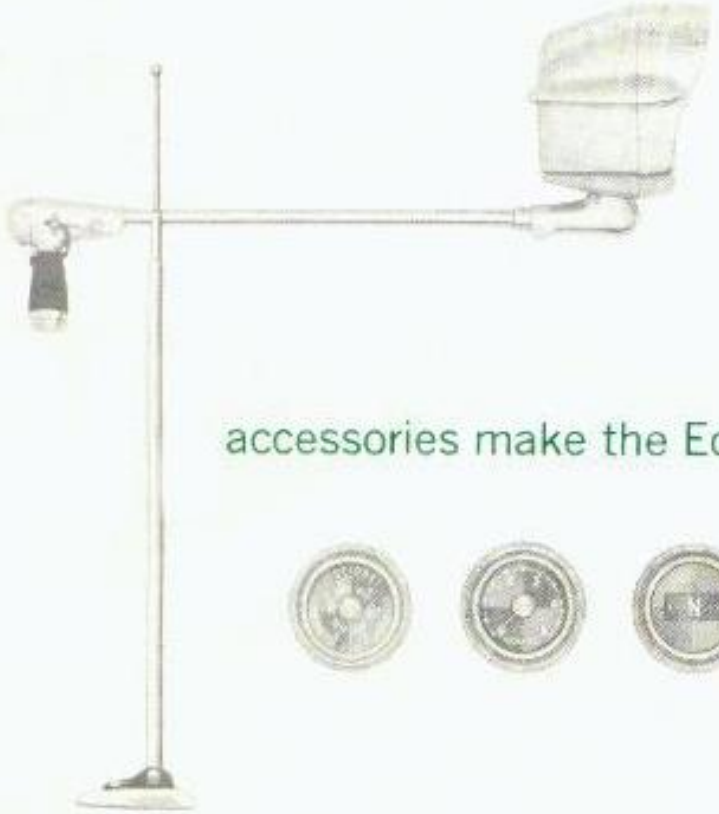
Gadgetry

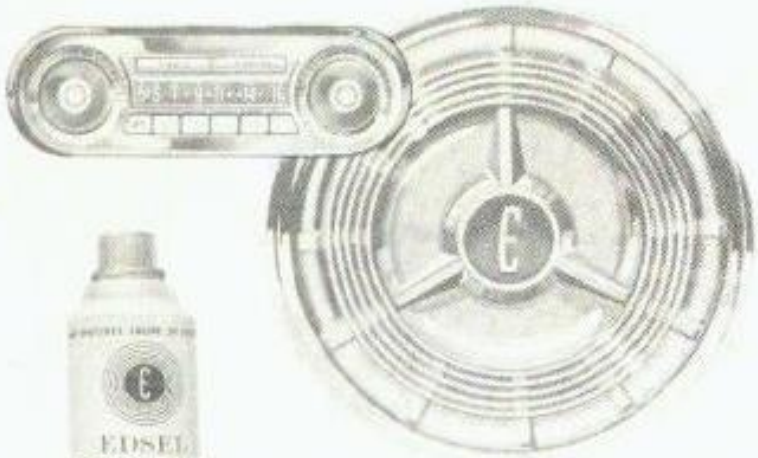


"…The Edsel's gadgetry – mostly optional at extra cost – starts under the hood, where a warning is flashed to the instrument panel when the engine needs oil and winds-up the deck lid, where a solenoid releases the lock at the turn-of-a-key from the driver's seat…"

***Popular Science,* September 1957**

<u>Caption (highlighted)</u>: "MINIMUM OF STRETCH gives access to heater dial, parking-brake release (foot-applied), hood release, headlight and other switches. Speedometer resembles a ship's compass in binnacle mounting. Tach, of course, is optional."





accessories make the Edsel your own personal car



These handsome Edsel accessories are styled to add to the luxurious interior appointments, accent the longer, lower Edsel silhouette, blend smoothly with every elegant Edsel line.

And, these accessories are designed to be functional, too. They are all planned to enable you to custom-fit your new Edsel to your very own driving needs. Some enable you to add appearance touches to make your Edsel more personally distinctive. Others make driving more comfortable and relaxing. You will even find accessories that make servicing or maintaining your car easier and more convenient, either for yourself or for those to whom you entrust its care. But all of them are designed to meet Edsel's standards of automotive quality—the newest and most advanced in the industry today.

Look through the whole array of Edsel exterior and interior accessories and choose the ones that suit you best. They'll give your first Edsel even more individuality, making this car truly your personal car. All are elegantly designed, finely engineered and simply arranged for convenience and safety. Your Edsel dealer will be glad to show them to you.



special instrument panel accessories

To the long list of known and wanted accessories, Edsel brings not only many new ones, but also a new idea. In the Edsel, you can design these accessories into the model you choose to give it a truly personal touch and make it yours alone.

The Edsel instrument panel is designed for a whole group of helpful, useful new accessories. You can select a tachometer, a compass, oil *low* and fuel *low* warning lights, or a precision clock—and the instrument panel already provides a handsome setting for their installation.

AUTOMOBILE COMPASS

An important convenience accessory, this drum type magnetic compass may be installed in the extreme left pod of the instrument group in place of the tachometer. It is illuminated at night for easy reading.



TACHOMETER

Actual engine speed in r.p.m.'s may be checked accurately with this Edsel tachometer. This accessory is handsomely mounted in the extreme left pod of the instrument group.



ELECTRIC CLOCK

A dependable timekeeper, this precision-built electric clock automatically adjusts time gain or lag whenever hands are reset. Styled to be integrated into the instrument panel.





EDSEL RADIOS

9-tube Station-Seeking radio

This transistor-powered Station-Seeking radio provides outstanding reception when driving in town—brings in distant stations when driving in the country. Two bars are located immediately above the dial face—one marked "town" and the other "country". The station-selecting control automatically provides separate circuits for local or distant reception. A touch of the "town" bar automatically causes the set to pick up the next local station. When touring, the "country" bar is used to pick up the next audible station. The set may also be tuned with the five pre-set station buttons or with the manual station selector dial.

8-tube radio

This model is a high-quality transistor-powered hi-fi radio. There are five pre-set station buttons and an "off" button. The pre-set station buttons, when individually pressed, turn the radio on and select the station. Additional stations may be tuned in manually by turning the knob at the right side of the set. Volume and tone control may be regulated by two integral knobs at the left side of the radio dial face. The set is turned off by pressing the "off" button.



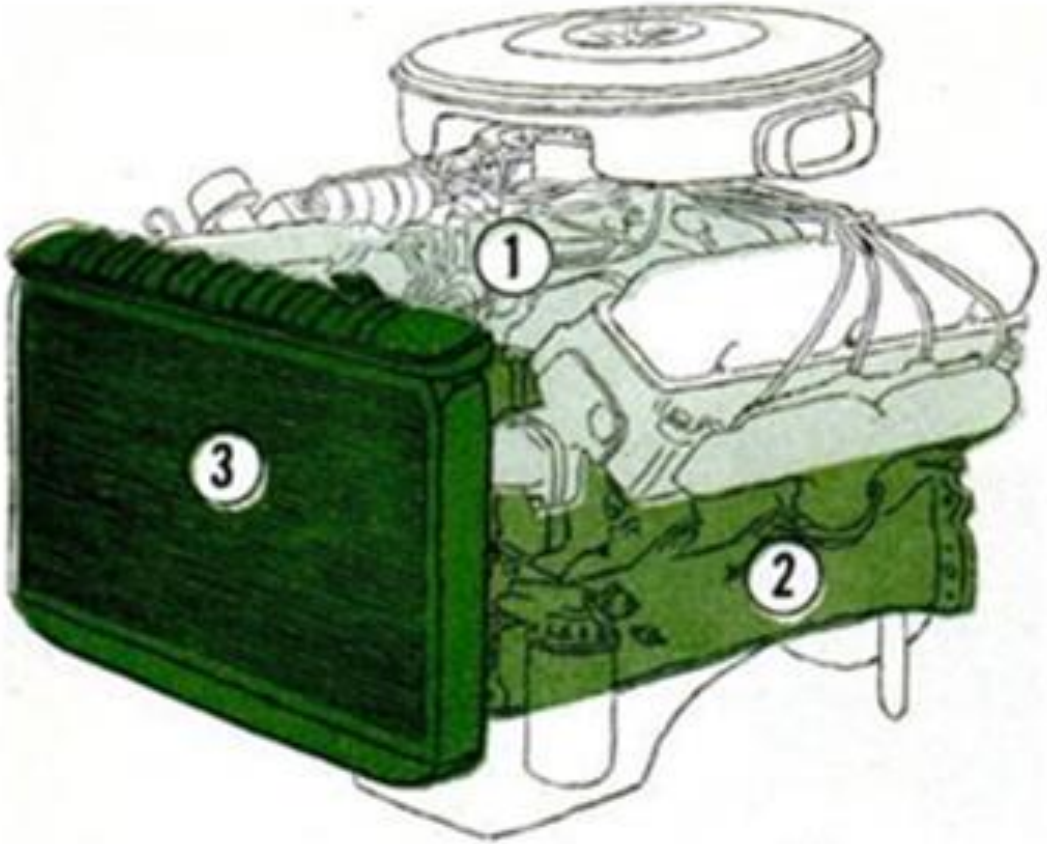


PUSHBUTTONS for transmission, centered on steering wheel, actuate electrical relays.

"…The most prominent of the gadgets is the circle of pushbuttons in the center of the steering wheel to operate the automatic transmission. The transmission can't be shifted out of P-for-Park if the ignition is off and it won't go into R-for-Reverse at a speed beyond that required for rocking the car in snow or mud…"

***Popular Science,* September 1957**

Troika

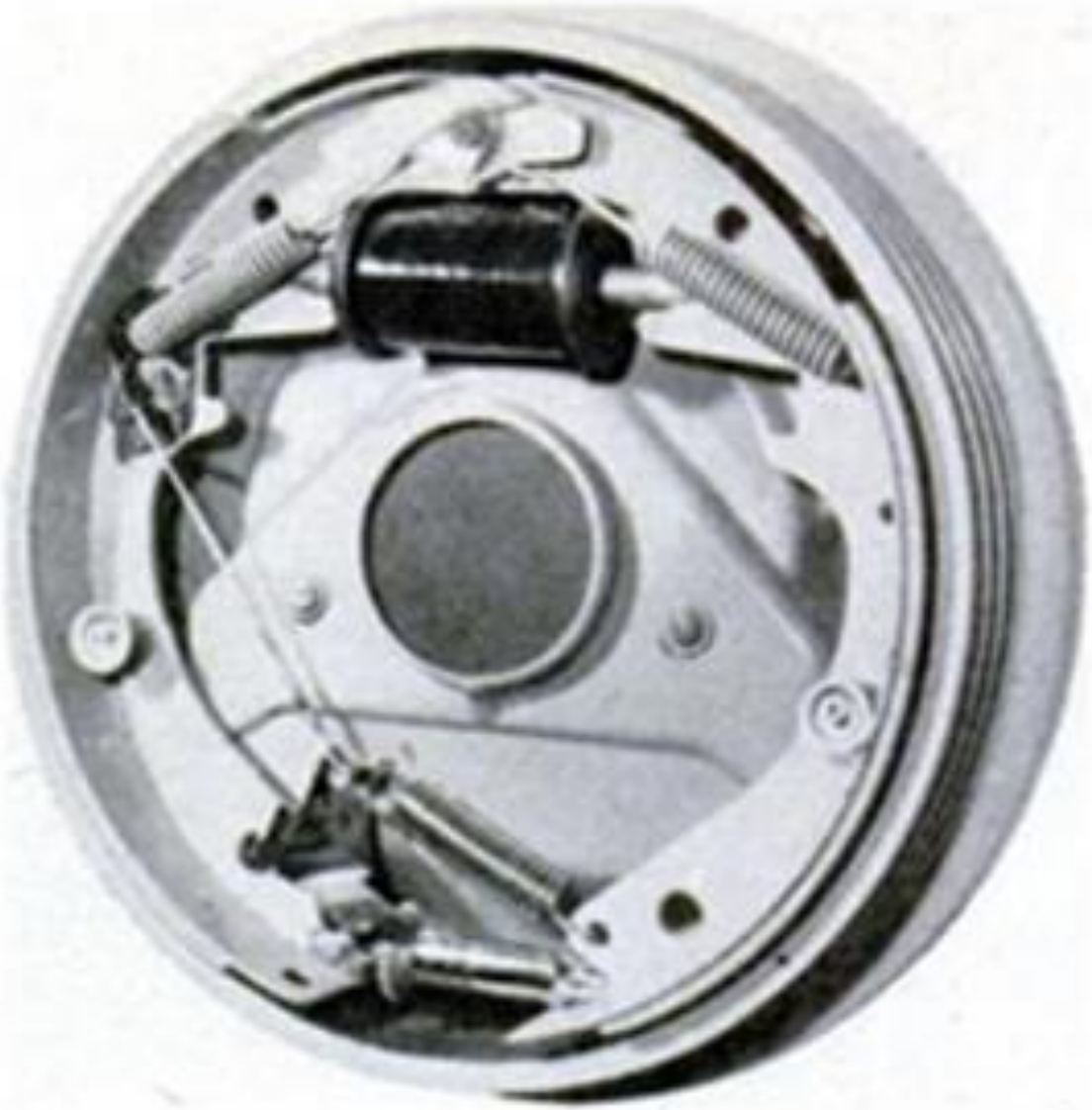


FOR QUICK WARMUPS, coolant in 345-hp. engine circulates in stages—first in cylinder heads and around intake manifold, then in block, finally in radiator. Thermostats are set for 140 degrees F.

"…There's lots more! For fast warm-ups in cold weather, the circulation of water in the cooling system of the big engine is in three stages. It starts in the cylinder heads and through thermostatic valves spreads pro-gressive-ly to the block radiator it warms…"

***Popular Science,* September 1957**

Automatically Adjusted

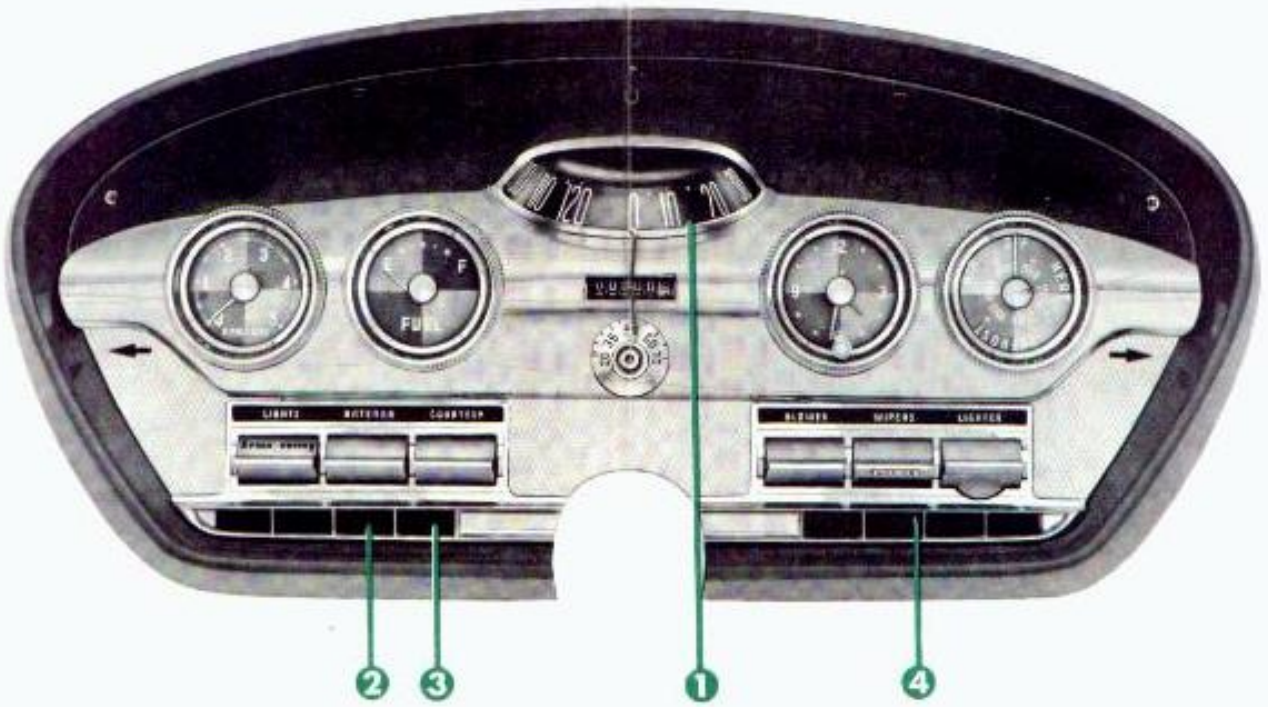


BRAKE SHOES automatically compensate for wear when pedal is depressed in backing up. Lever, triggered by cable and spring, rotates ratcheted adjusting screw.

"…The brakes automatically adjust themselves for wear…"
Popular Science,
Sept. 1957

No Worries

"…Doors can be locked by remote control to keep moppets from falling overboard…"
***Popular Science*, September 1957**



special warning light accessories

SPEED WARNING LIGHT

❶ This speed warning light is a valuable safety accessory. It casts a red glow over the speedometer if you exceed your pre-set miles-per-hour limit. Installed at a nominal price on any Edsel, the speed warning light may be set by turning a simple calibrated dial just below the speedometer.

PARKING BRAKE WARNING LIGHT

❷ This parking brake signal saves wear on the rear brakes. As soon as the ignition is turned on, a red light warns the driver that the parking brake has not been released.

FUEL WARNING LIGHT

❸ This fuel level signal lights up automatically to warn you of low fuel level when the tank is down to four gallons of gasoline or less.

OIL LEVEL WARNING LIGHT

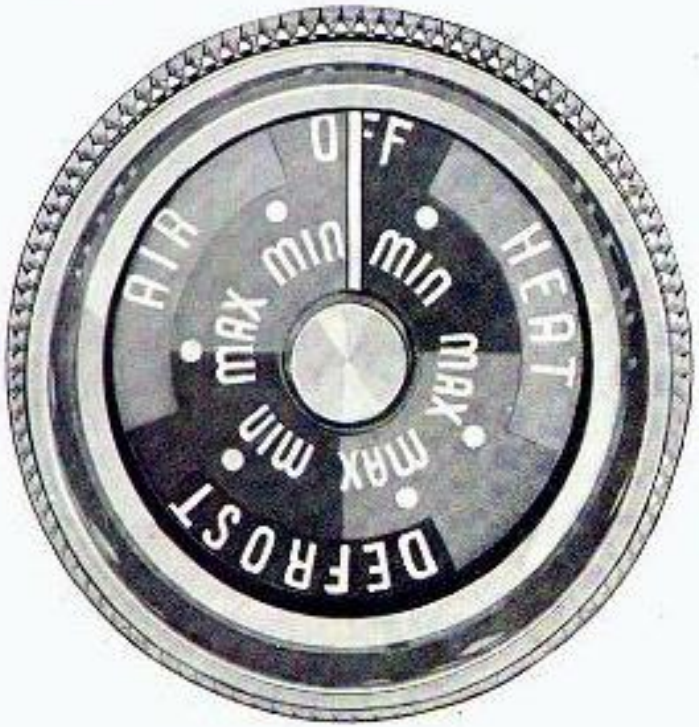
❹ No need to check oil level in an Edsel equipped with this unusual accessory. The oil level signal lights up red if oil level is one quart low.

"…A flasher light warns the driver when he is exceeding any speed that he presets on the speedometer…"

***Popular Science*, September 1957**

Comfort Controls

Dial-temp air system



Dial-temp is the most convenient, easiest-to-operate fresh air heating and ventilating system ever put in any automobile. One simple control makes all the adjustments, eliminates a confusing array of knobs and levers. High-level air intake at base of windshield supplies interior with air above road dust and most exhaust fumes. Thus, Dial-temp gives greater all-season comfort. You enjoy plenty of ventilation for hot summer driving, and quick comfortable warmth during cold weather. For more detailed information about Edsel Dial-temp, please refer to the Owner's Manual, "Your First Edsel".



HEATER-DEFROSTER CONTROLS (air-conditioning is optional) are combined except for blower.

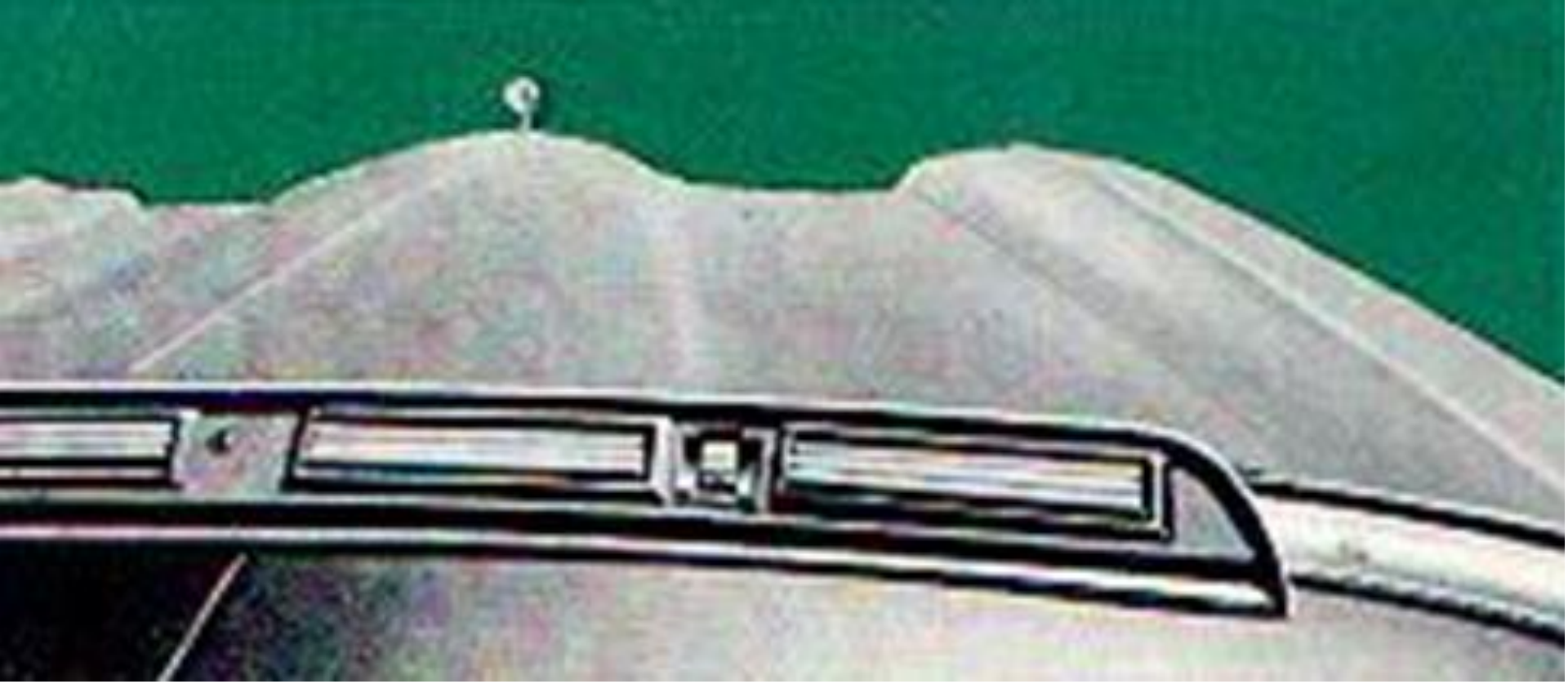
"…Heating, cooling and defrosting controls are combined on the knurled rim of a single panel dial. Just turn it…"

***Popular Science*, September 1957**

air conditioning system

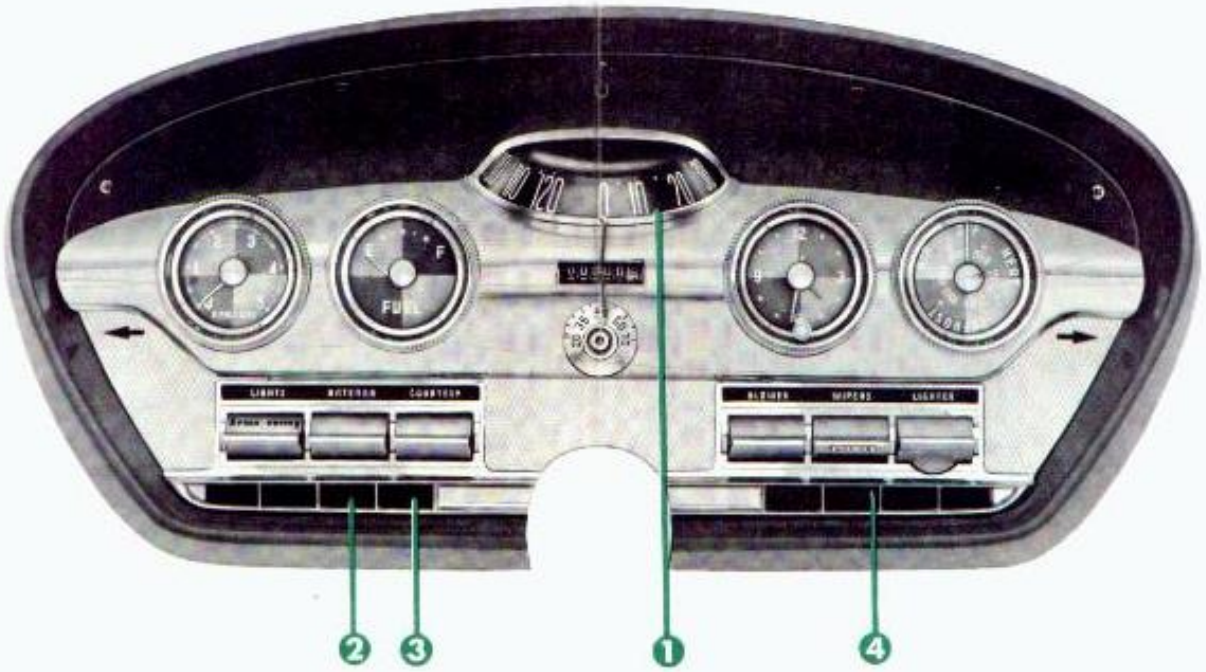
Edsel's Dial-temp air conditioning is designed for quick, efficient operation and easy control. It will cool your Edsel interior amazingly fast. This outstanding air conditioning system is installed with part of the unit in the engine compartment and the remainder behind the instrument panel. Result: no sacrifice of luggage or passenger comfort space. To operate, you simply close windows and turn the Dial-temp control to the "Cool" range and locate dial at temperature point desired. Dust, smoke, excess moisture, and irritating pollen are eliminated—you ride in the comfort of cool, clean air. The compressor for the air conditioning unit is automatically disconnected to conserve engine horsepower and save unnecessary wear on the compressor when the air conditioner is turned off. For detailed information on operation, please refer to your Owner's Manual.

Edsel also offers a separate air conditioner at lower cost. This unit, which mounts under the instrument panel, is also ideal for owners who already have a heater unit installed, or who simply wish air conditioning at a more economical cost.



"…There are louvered vents at the base of the windshield to direct incoming air up or down…"
***Popular Science,* September 1957**

Warning Lights



special warning light accessories

SPEED WARNING LIGHT

1 This speed warning light is a valuable safety accessory. It casts a red glow over the speedometer if you exceed your pre-set miles-per-hour limit. Installed at a nominal price on any Edsel, the speed warning light may be set by turning a simple calibrated dial just below the speedometer.

PARKING BRAKE WARNING LIGHT

2 This parking brake signal saves wear on the rear brakes. As soon as the ignition is turned on, a red light warns the driver that the parking brake has not been released.

FUEL WARNING LIGHT

3 This fuel level signal lights up automatically to warn you of low fuel level when the tank is down to four gallons of gasoline or less.

OIL LEVEL WARNING LIGHT

4 No need to check oil level in an Edsel equipped with this unusual accessory. The oil level signal lights up red if oil level is one quart low.

"…On the panel there's a tachometer, an oil-pressure-is-low (in addition to a you-need-oil light), a you-need-fuel light, a brake-is-on light, a door-is-open light, an engine-is-cold light and an engine-is-too-hot light…"

***Popular Science,* September 1957**

Old-hat Stuff (Optional)

"…Naturally, all the old-hat stuff like power antenna and on-shot lubers are added to power brakes, power steering, power seats, power windows and automatic transmissions as additional options…"

***Popular Science,* September 1957**

Specifications of the 1958 Edsel

All four lines of cars—the Ranger, Pacer, Corsair and Citation—have the following attributes in common:

Engines: OHV V-8's developing maximum horsepower at 4,600 r. p. m. and torque at 2,800 r. p. m. Compression ratio, 10.5:1.

Rear-axle ratios: With standard transmission (available on Ranger and Pacer only) 3.7:1; with overdrive, 3.89; with automatic transmission, 2.91 or 3.22; station wagons, 3.89 or 3.7.

Steering ratios: 31.8:1; power, with standard transmission or overdrive, 29.7; power, with automatic transmission, 23:1.

Springs: front coil, rear semi-elliptic.

Tread: front 59.4 in., rear 59 in.

RANGER and PACER

(Model: four-door sedan)

Engine: 303 hp.; torque 400 lb./ft.; bore and stroke, 4.05 in. by 3.5 in.; displacement, 361 cu. in.; engine piston travel in feet per minute at 40 m.p.h., 1,310.5.

Transmission: standard, overdrive or torque converter.

Brake-lining area: 191.5 sq. in.

Outside dimensions in inches: height 56.3; overall length with bumpers and guards, 209.9; width 78.7; wheelbase 118.

Inside dimensions in inches: seat-cushion width front and rear 60; leg room front 43.1, rear 40.7; headroom front 33.8, rear 33.5; seat height front 10.7, rear 13.9; vertical distance, steering wheel to seat cushion with seat in mid-position, 5.6.

Tire size: 8.00 by 14.

CORSAIR and CITATION

(Model: four-door hardtop)

Engine: 345 hp.; torque 475 lb./ft.; bore and stroke, 4.2 in. by 3.7 in.; displacement, 410 cu. in.; engine piston travel in feet per minute at 40 m.p.h., 1,342.3.

Transmission: torque converter.

Brake-lining area: 212.8 sq. in.

Outside dimensions in inches: height, 56.8; overall length with bumpers and guards, 218.7; width, 79.8; wheelbase, 124.

Inside dimensions in inches: seat-cushion width, front 63.2, rear 63.6; leg room, front 44.2, rear 43.4; headroom, front 33.8, rear 32.7; seat height, front 10.5, rear 14.4; vertical distance, steering wheel to seat cushion with seat in mid-position, 5.2.

Tire size: 8.50 by 14.

Restless Nights





"…All this is the new Edsel – named for the late father of the three Ford boys; Henry, Benson and Billy – but it was on the styling that the company spent restless nights…"

***Popular Science,* Sept. 1957**

<u>Above</u>: the three sons of Edsel Ford; Benson, Billy and Henry II pose in a new Edsel convertible

<u>Left</u>: Henry Ford II (standing) with brothers Benson and William (Billy). Portraits of Edsel (left) and Henry Ford (right) on wall.

By Decree

"…It was decreed at the start that tail fins were out. 'We reached that decision fast.' Dick Kravfe, Edsel's General Manager, told POPULAR SCIENCE…"

***Popular Science,* September 1957**



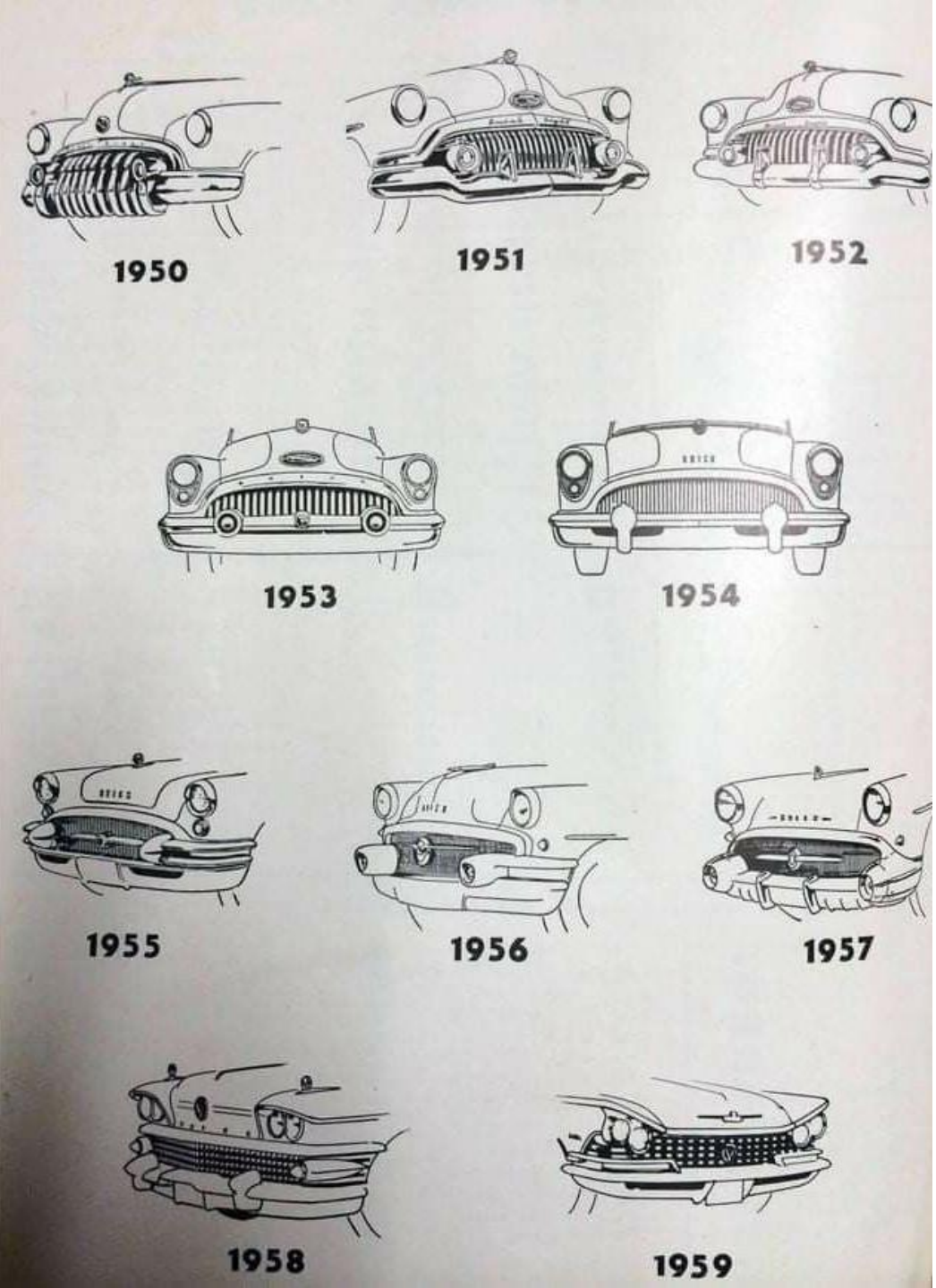
Rear running lights form gull wing, with turn signals outboard. Backup lights are below lid.

"…'We knew that by the time we got cars into showrooms, everybody in the industry would have fins. We had to be different.' So the rear fenders were lapped over and the tail-light pattern took-on a gull-wing ap-pearance…"

***Popular Science,* September 1957**


KM 521

Distinctly Different



"…A second major decision was that the car had to have an individuality of appearance that would keep it safe from confusion with any other car. At a block-and-a-half, other cars looked alike. All the grille lines were horizontal…"

***Popular Science,* Sept. 1957**

RE: Edsel's stylists sought a car with distinguishing features when viewed from any angle. Most notable would be the grille; the car's most distinguishing feature and intended to be a counterpoint to the prevailing design ethos.

<u>Left</u>: caption: "Buick front-ends – 1950 thru 1959"

Vertical Motif



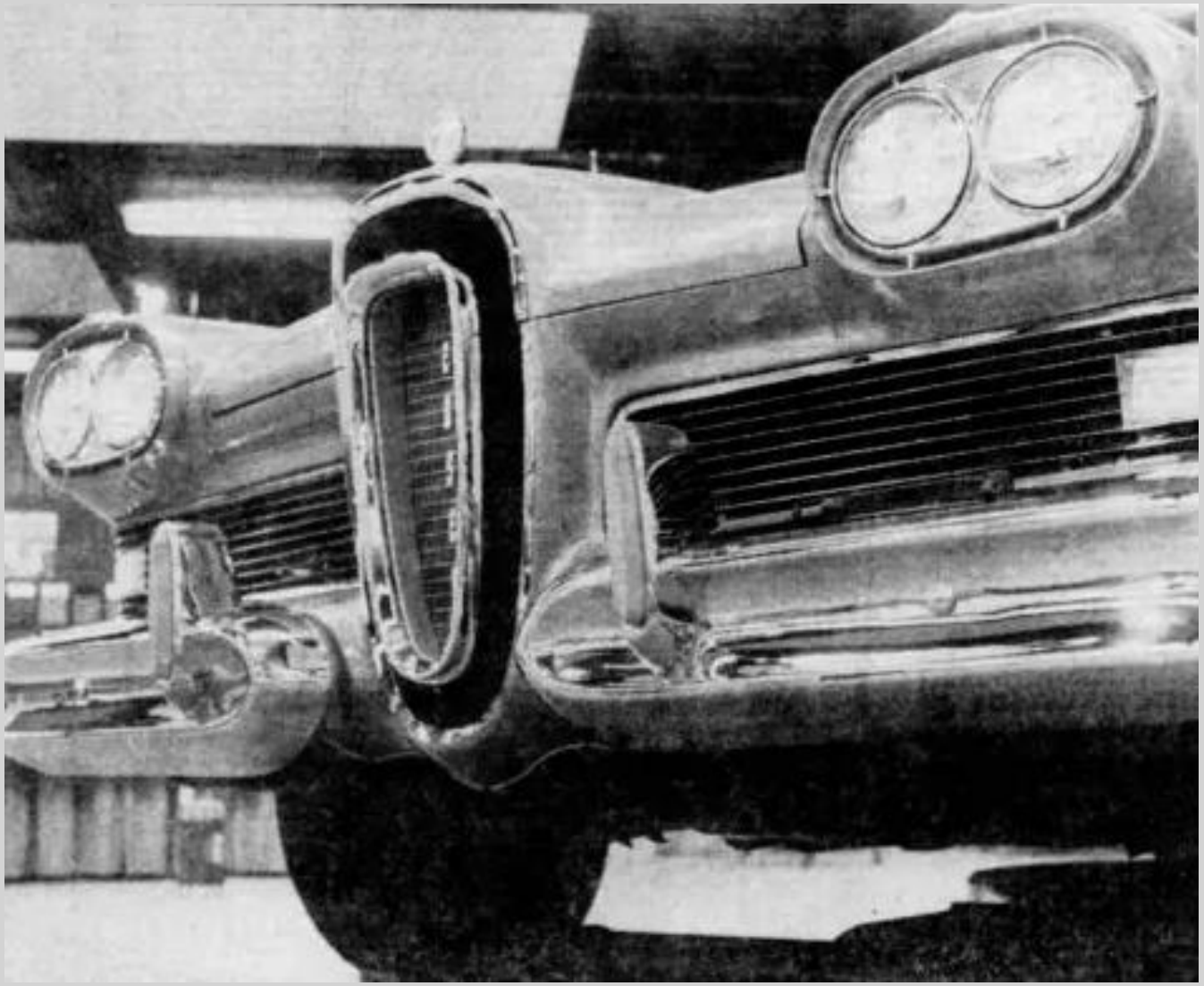


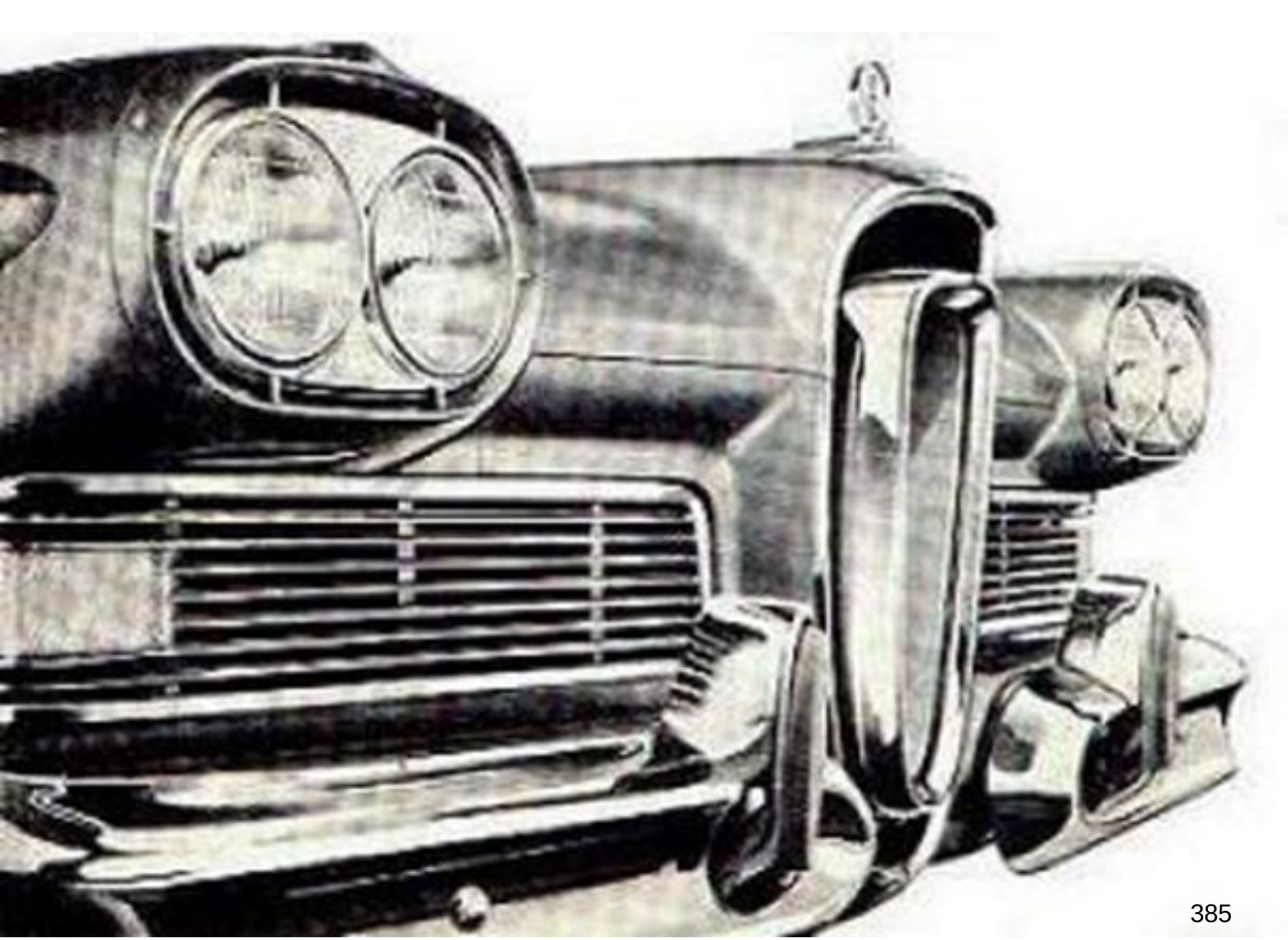
"…The stylists doodled and doodled to get something different. In the end there was only one answer – a vertical motif. That accounts for the egg-on-end ellipse on the front of the car with an 'impact ring' – irreverently referred to by some Edsel personnel as the 'horse-collar' – in the center. It smacks of the old La Salle or Packard. 'We wanted something familiar,' explained a Ford stylist, 'so the customers could identify with it'…"

***Popular Science,* September 1957**

<u>Above (L-to-R):</u> 1936 La Salle Grille / 1940 Packard Grille

RE: lead designer Roy Brown, Jr. incorporated a vertical grille to stand-out from the crowd, which some complained all looked alike. Brown stated: "It's crisp and fresh-looking; that grille could become a classic."





The “horse-collar” grille attracted quite a lot of ridicule, despite designer Doyle’s ambition for it Within a month of Edsel’s introduction, Comedian Danny Thomas quipped that it looked like: “an Oldsmobile Sucking a Lemon.” That observation, and many others, branded the Edsel as ugly, dooming it forever.

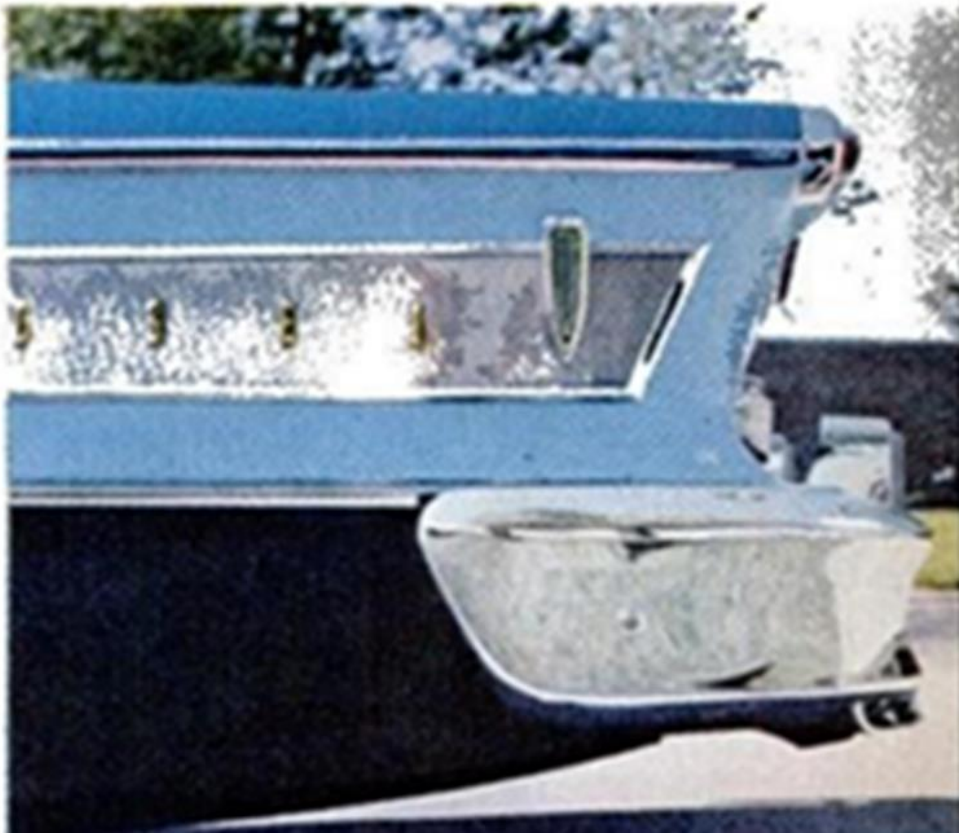


"The Edsel will be a distinctive car. It will be a low, wide, roomy car. But it won't be a sensational departure in style. And we're not trying to out-fin anybody."

***Larrty Doyle,* FMC Sales and Advertising Manager**

RE: the Edsel had a long, low look corresponding to the era's prevailing trends. Distinctive styling features, including Doyles' assertion that Edsel wasn't "out-finning anyone," meant that the Edsel's fins would be horizontal, gull-wing style. On the car's sides concave scallops, intended to convey a sense of motion, extended for nearly half the car's length, accentuated by a two-tone paint scheme.

REAR FENDERS are sculptured, finless. Trim combinations are designed to prevent possible color "clashes."






E D S E L


KM 521



A Sense of Direction



"…The Vertical grille design led inevitably to a hump in the hood - a 'strong definition instead of a slope-off.' Edsel men insist that the hood design provides the motorist with a sense of direction…"

***Popular Science,* September 1957**

<u>Caption</u>: "BULGE IN HOOD is intended to better the driver's 'sense of direction'"


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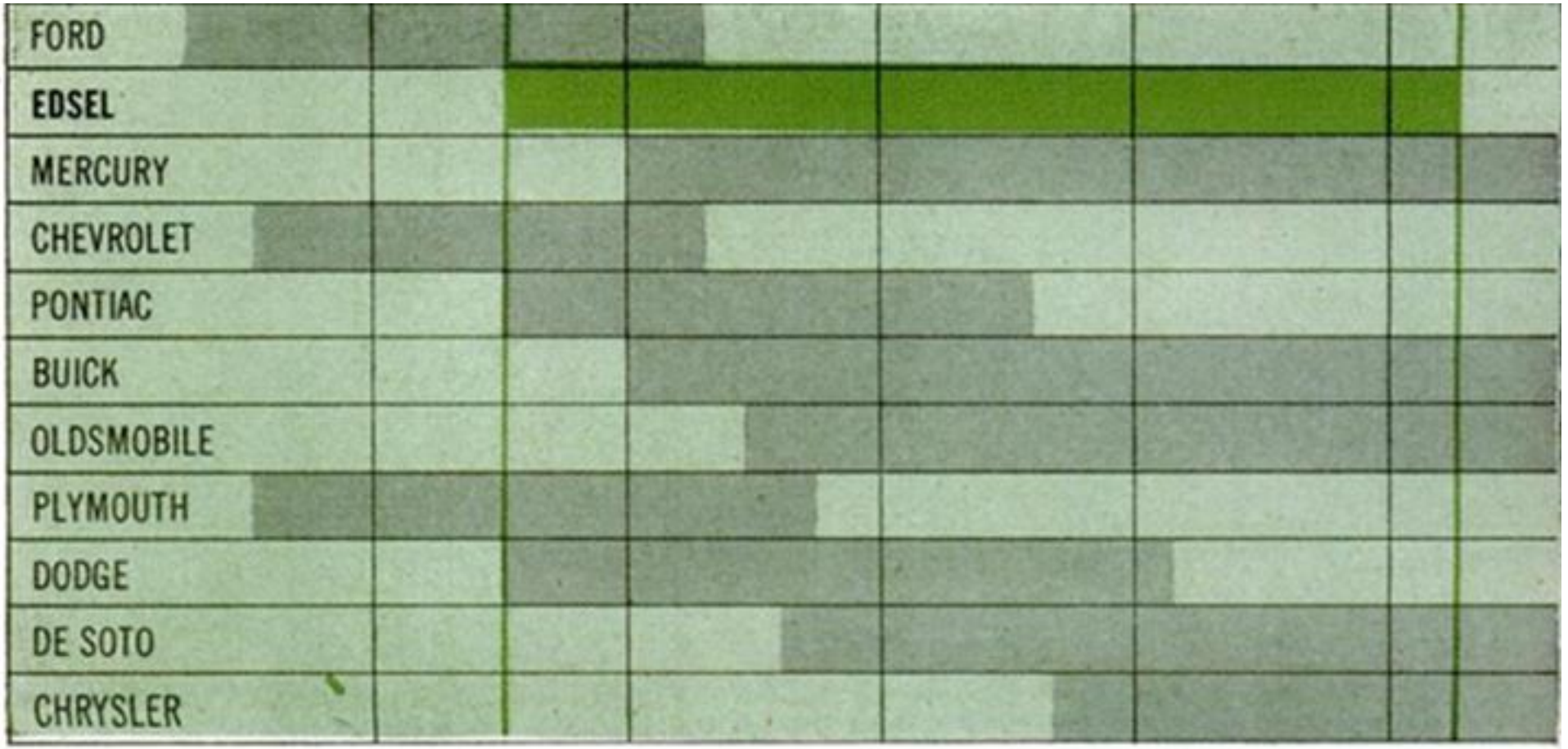

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SS 9884

All in the Family

"…The decision to add the Edsel to the Ford Motor Co. stable of cars, at a cost of a quarter-of-a billion dollars, was strictly self-protective. The company figured it was losing 100,000 customers-a-year to competitive manufacturers as Ford car owners 'upgraded' to costlier vehicles. Chevrolet owners could upgrade to Pontiac, Buick or Olds and Plymouth owners to Dodge, De Soto or the Chrysler Windsor. Ford owners could upgrade only to Mercury and still stay in the family…"
***Popular Science,* September 1957**

Truant Cash



EDSEL'S FOUR LINES of cars are priced to overlap costliest Chevrolets, Fords and Plymouths, blanket Pontiac and Dodge, and cover most of Mercury, Buick, Olds and De Soto models.

"…Medium-priced cars, including the top grades of Chevy, Ford and Plymouth account for 60 percent of all U.S. sales. Ford Motor Co. hopes now to keep a lot of that truant cash in its own till…"

***Popular Science*, September 1957**

An Unusual Position

"…Because plans for any model year are locked-up a full year ahead of a car's appearance, Edsel is in an unusual position. 'Here we are,' remarked one member of the styling staff just before the car's unveiling, 'finishing-up plans for the 1959 lines of cars and we're not even on the market yet with the first Edsel.' Now he's busy working on plans for the 1960 Edsel."

***Popular Science,* September 1957**

RE: 1959, the second of Edsel's three model years, was a year notable for its de-emphasis of what had been Edsel's signature design features. Most significant was the front-end, which still featured the vertical "jet grille," but was now flanked by horizontal grille elements connecting the center piece to the headlights and also a new bumper and lower hood line. These features more smoothly integrated the grille into the overall front-end design. The large side scallop was reworked into more of a side spear. Around back, the 1958's horizontal tail-lights were replaced by more conservative "dual-cluster" round light sets.


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Edsel lost its unique dashboard for 1959, replaced by a unit shared with other Ford models. Also gone was the *Teletouch* transmission, a unique Edsel feature by which the driver selected gears via pushbuttons in the steering wheel hub.


409



Just as important as the styling changes was the shuffling of Edsel's line-up; an arrangement that redefined the brand's place in the market and also downplayed the Edsel lineup among FMC's total offerings. The two costliest of Edsel's four 1958 models were dropped, leaving a base model Ranger and a slightly higher trimmed Corsair (preceding pics). Early customers thought Edsel to be overpriced for what it offered – now the car was firmly positioned further down-market than what was originally planned.

New wide selection in economy-minded Edsel power

Now you can custom-blend your Edsel's performance from three advanced-design V-8's and an Economy Six. Pick the exact balance of power and economy you want for the kind of driving you do!



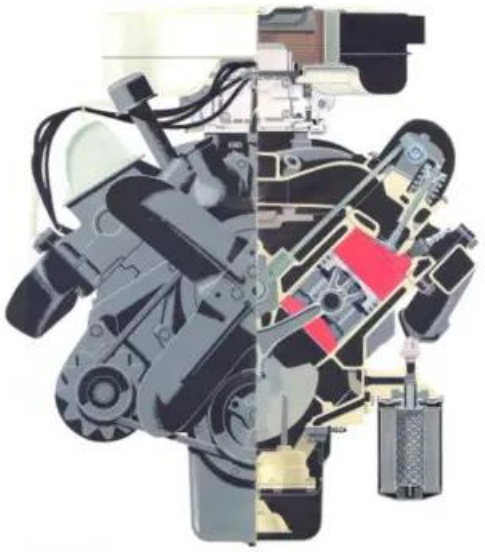
Edsel Economy Six—A special new engine is now available in Rangers and Villagers that saves you money when you buy and every mile you drive. Modern deep-block, "short-stroke" design is outstanding in the low price range—combines new efficiency with basic six-cylinder simplicity and economy. 145 hp, 206 ft.-lbs. torque, 223 cu. in. displacement. Single-venturi carburetor, 8.4:1 compression.



Edsel Ranger V-8—V-8 response with outstanding economy on regular fuel makes this a fine choice for budget-minded buyers. The same advanced engineering offered in Edsel's larger V-8's gives more power for less fuel; extra quality features make it exceptionally rugged and reliable. 200 hp, 285 ft.-lbs. torque, 292 cu. in. displacement. Two-barrel carburetor, 8.8:1 compression.



Edsel Express V-8 — New standard V-8 in Corsairs and Villagers offers an excellent balance of premium performance and high fuel economy. Low-speed piston travel is one of many advanced features that improve dependability and reduce friction. Hydraulic valve lifters are one of many extra-quality features that are built in, too. 225 hp, 325 ft.-lbs. torque, 332 cu. in. displacement. Two-barrel carburetor, 8.9:1 compression.



Edsel Super Express V-8— Special premium-performance option for all Edsel models. Designed and engineered with high-lift camshaft, high-turbulence combustion design for greater efficiency and economy — hydraulic valve lifters for smoother, quieter operation. You get the most usable power you've ever known from the biggest engine in the low price range. Offered with Dual-Power Drive or Mile-O-Matic Drive. 303 hp, 390 ft.-lbs. torque, 361 cu. in. displacement. Four-barrel carburetion, 9.6:1 compression.

Under-the-hood, the 1959 Edsels saw some changes. The 1958 top-line Edsels came with a powerful 410-cu. in. "E-475" V-8, but like the top-line models in which it was installed, this engine didn't survive to the second model year. While even lesser '58 Edsels came with a V-8 (Edsel's 361-ci. E-400), by '59 that became optional – an "economy six" was standard on the Ranger and Villager wagon, while two smaller V-8s were also available.


1959 EDSEL
The Horse and Hound

Part 5

Engineering the Edsel

Engineering the Edsel

SAE Transactions, Vol. 66 (1958)

by N.L. Blume, Ford Motor Co.

Presented at a meeting of the SAE Milwaukee Section,
October 4, 1958

THIS is the engineering story of the newest car introduced to the American public by a major automotive manufacturer in 19 years. The Edsel is new but actually it's the germination of an idea conceived by Edsel Ford who thought years ago that the company should have greater representation in the medium-price range. This idea was furthered by his son, Henry Ford II, in 1948 when another car was proposed to keep abreast of things in the automotive market.

With the decision to enter a new car in the medium-price field, attention was directed to the engineering and styling phases. Basic objectives were for the car to be entirely new but not to the extent of being radical; to be individually distinctive and yet maintain the traditional reliability and ruggedness characterized by the company's vehicles. The style was to be crisp and clean enough to warrant consideration of the more discriminate buyers who were looking for the extras in a medium-price car.

Body Structure

At this point, the engineering staff began advanced package studies and established design objectives. The first consideration in package development was room to provide the maximum seating comfort, adequate entrance room, and convenience and safety for passengers. Edsel package studies resulted in establishing basic dimensional limitations required to fulfill adequately engineering and styling needs and desires. Working from the ground up, it was ascertained that 6–7 in. should be provided for ground clearances; 5–7 in. for mechanical components such as driveshaft and frame members; 4–6 in. for seat deflection to provide seat comfort; 38–40 in. effective head room to accommodate passengers; and ½–1 in. roof thickness providing for headlining and sound-deadening material.

Layouts were prepared to investigate wheelhouse clearances for wheel jounce, rebound, and tire chains, and to finalize placement of the exhaust system, spare tire, and fuel tank.

Studies resulted in two basic concepts: the 118-in. wheelbase Ranger-Pacer series and the 124-in. wheelbase Corsair-Citation series. A comparison of these packages reveals an overall length of 213.17 compared to 218.86 in., an overall height of 56.42 as compared to 56.83 in. and a greenhouse length of 100.24 on the Ranger-Pacer series as compared to 107.22 in. on the Corsair-Citation series (Fig. 1).

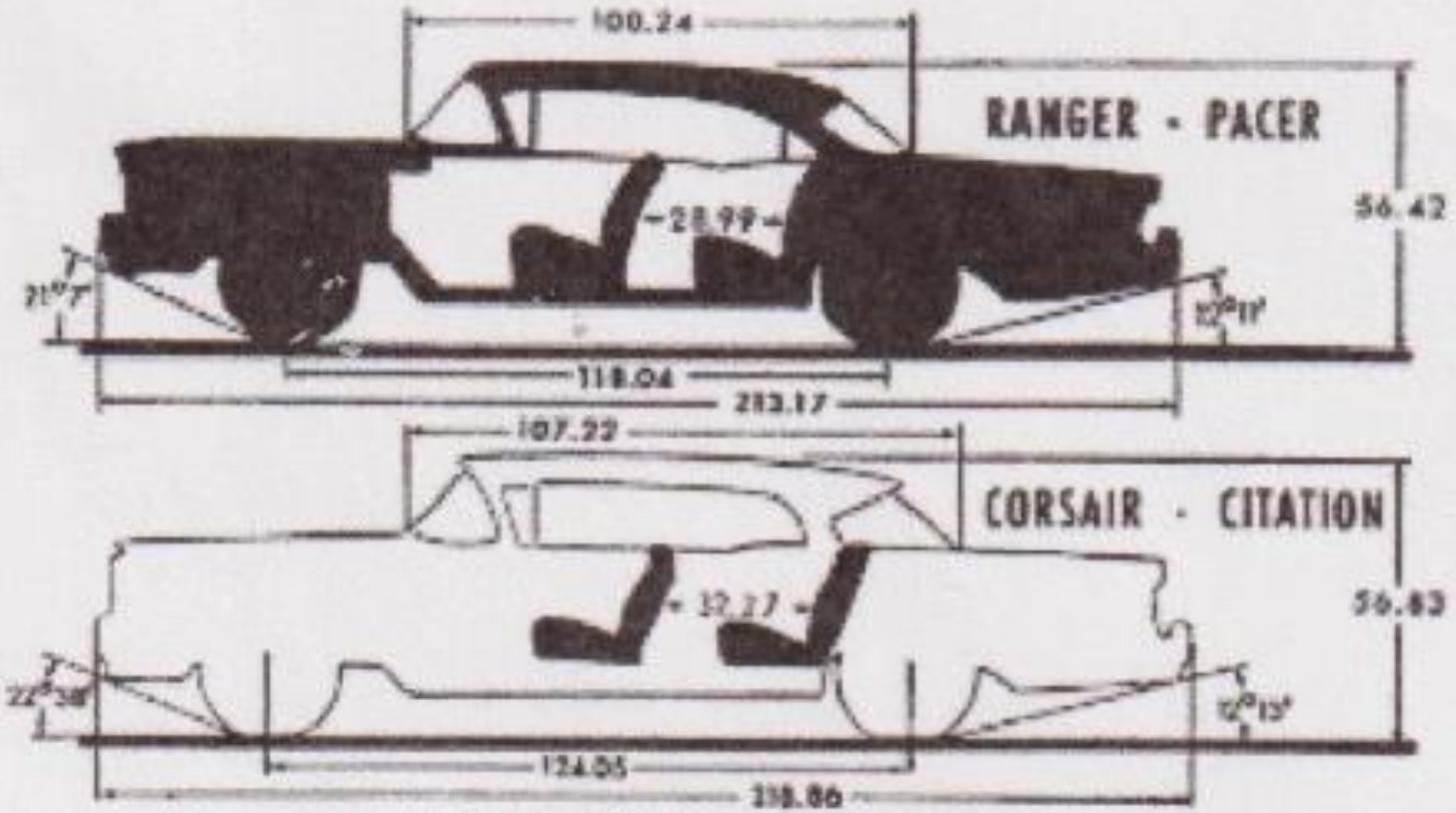


Fig. 1—Package comparison

Proposed styles were under consideration simultaneously with advanced package development. With the dimensions set, the styling section proceeded to cut clay. The vertical grille theme evolved from comparison studies of horizontal and vertical arrangements. The vertical grille was a styling feature but not a styling problem alone. Adequate engine cooling, allowance for an air conditioning condenser, as well as structure to support the center impact ring were paramount considerations.

As styling designs progressed, the engineering staff worked hand-in-hand on the engineering implications. Consideration was given to clearance for tire removal, particularly on the rear wheels, and turning clearances on the front wheels. Formed areas and sections were designed to please the eye and facilitate manufacturing. You can imagine the consternation when the styling section proposed beautiful varieties of rear-quarter treatment only to be told "it's too deep a draw to be practical." Other problems as the Edsel exterior took shape were bumper heights, angles of approach and departure, and the legal requirements for such items as head lamps, tail lamps, and license plate location.

Lower, longer, and wider bodies, featuring increased glass areas with longer and thinner framework, provide less opportunity to induce loading in the roof. The "dog-leg" characteristic of the roof supports, which is part of the price of the wrap-around theme, adds to this problem. Thus, the tendency is for the roof to carry, as the upper chord member, less than its potential share of the loads imposed on the body truss. These loads, incidentally, are steadily increasing along with car size and weight. All this would seem to imply a tendency toward either much heavier construction or less rigidity.

Actually, and fortunately, neither of these trends has prevailed to any alarming extent. True, the weight of frames and other load-carrying structures has increased, but not out of proportion to the concurrent increase in useable space for passengers and luggage. Nor has there been any disposition to accept low standards of safety or comfort. After all, the acid test of a car's construction is its ability to filter out disturbances such as shake and harshness and to stand up in crash and rollover tests. It is fairly evident that as a result of increasing emphasis and concentrated effort over the past few years, today's cars are safer than ever. In the matter of shake, a vast amount of data has been obtained in our organization by the well-known ESTA[1] (Electronic Selected Threshold Analyzer) technique. Shake readings of recent car models show a definite tendency to decrease.

As each new styling feature makes its appearance, means must be found to minimize any adverse structural effects. Stiffness of the underbody has been one of the most productive countermeasures; the use of heavy box sections in the sills (often aided by increased chassis frame sections) has helped to make up for the loss or partial loss of center pillar structure. Heavier stock in front and rear pillars, a liberal use of gussets and bulkheads, plus boxing of the roof rails has largely offset the effect of dog-legs and thinner framing accompanying wrap-around windshields and rear windows. At the same time, manufacturers have developed means of dealing with increasingly intricate parts and assembly, thus promoting structural efficiency.

As a matter of interest, our laboratory results show that in overall car torsional stiffness, today's Edsel 4-door hardtop is practically equal to the standard 4-door and is only slightly less rigid in bending.

The front seats are somewhat different. (We attempted to have something different—but with increased utility and improved comfort.) We divided the seat into 1/3—2/3 proportions to more individualize the driver's area and to eliminate the split in the area of the third passenger.

The cushion back was constructed as follows: two formed-wire springs were used to provide pressure variance; a heavier, firmer spring in the lower section where pressures were greater and a lighter, softer spring in the upper section where less resiliency was required. This sectional pressure development resulted after extensive studies to determine the best pressure distribution from the comfort and health standpoints.

Instrument Panel

The interior presented a challenge of a different nature to both the styling and engineering staffs. For example, safety considerations dictated replacement of sharp corners with rounded styled sections, and a great deal of effort went into analyzing motion studies to be sure that controls and instruments were as conveniently located as possible. From these studies, every effort was made to locate major controls in the most accessible area and major instruments in the most visible area. The key engineering problems, in styling any instrument panel, are finding a place for each desired item on the panel surface and providing sufficient space for the mechanisms, motors, bowden cables, and electric wires behind the panel (Fig. 2).

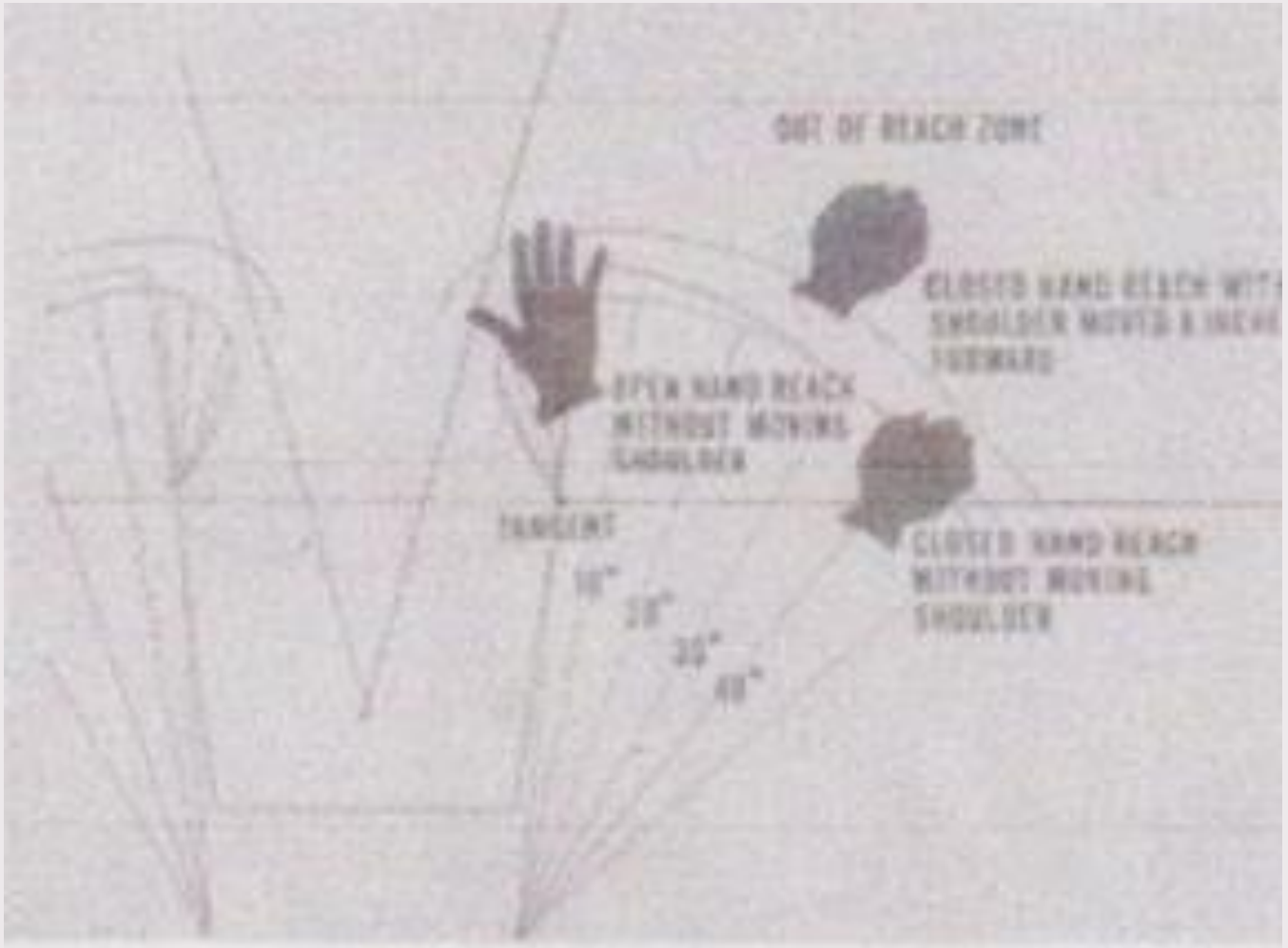


Fig. 2—Instrument panel motion study

The most often referred to instruments are arranged in the upper portion of the instrument cluster. A speed-warning device has been incorporated in the floating drum-type speedometer as a visual driver aid and a definite safety feature. A selected maximum operating speed is preset by a dial just below the odometer; when the maximum operating speed is exceeded, a switch turns on a lamp and the speedometer face glows red. To accomplish this, a flyball-type governor is connected to the speedometer drive cable. The calibrated control knob on the instrument panel sets the spring tension on the flyball system, determining the speed at which the switch can be actuated. At low speeds, the flyball governor is held from operating the switch by the spring. As the speed increases, the force on the governor equals the spring tension, the contacts close, and the circuit is completed to light the lamps in the speedometer dome. This glow is readily visible and can be seen without diverting the eyes from the road. (See Fig. 3).

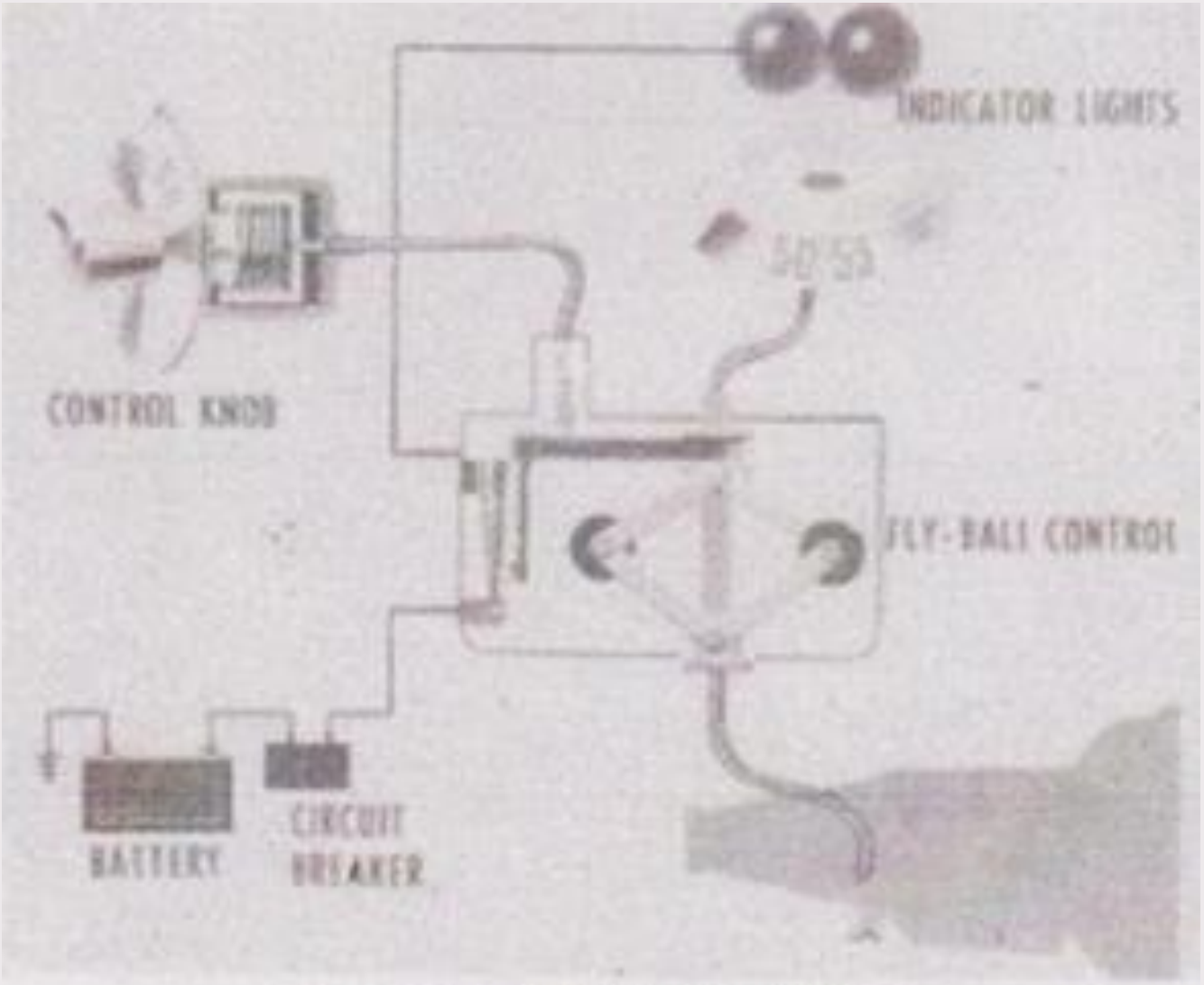


Fig. 3—Speed warning light operation

Ventilating System

Included in the instrument cluster is the Dial-Temp control for the heating and ventilating systems. The once-complicated, difficult-to-operate multiple lever controls have been eliminated. Heat or fresh air is brought into the car by simply turning a single control. The knurled bezel of the dial is the actual control and when rotated for a de- unit that actuates the valves for heating, defrosting, or ventilating. This servo mechanism is mounted behind the instrument cluster.

The heart of this system is the gear-driven control plate with preprogrammed cam grooves on one side and electrical contact surfaces on the reverse side. Rollers, connected to actuating arms and bowden wires, ride in the cam grooves and provide the necessary effort to operate the appropriate controls for the dialed function. These rollers are positioned in their proper location in the grooves, by the clockwise or counterclockwise rotation of the control plate. The direction of rotation is determined by a pressure arm which rides on the electrical contact surfaces of the plate. Fig. 4 shows how the servo operates the control for vent air.

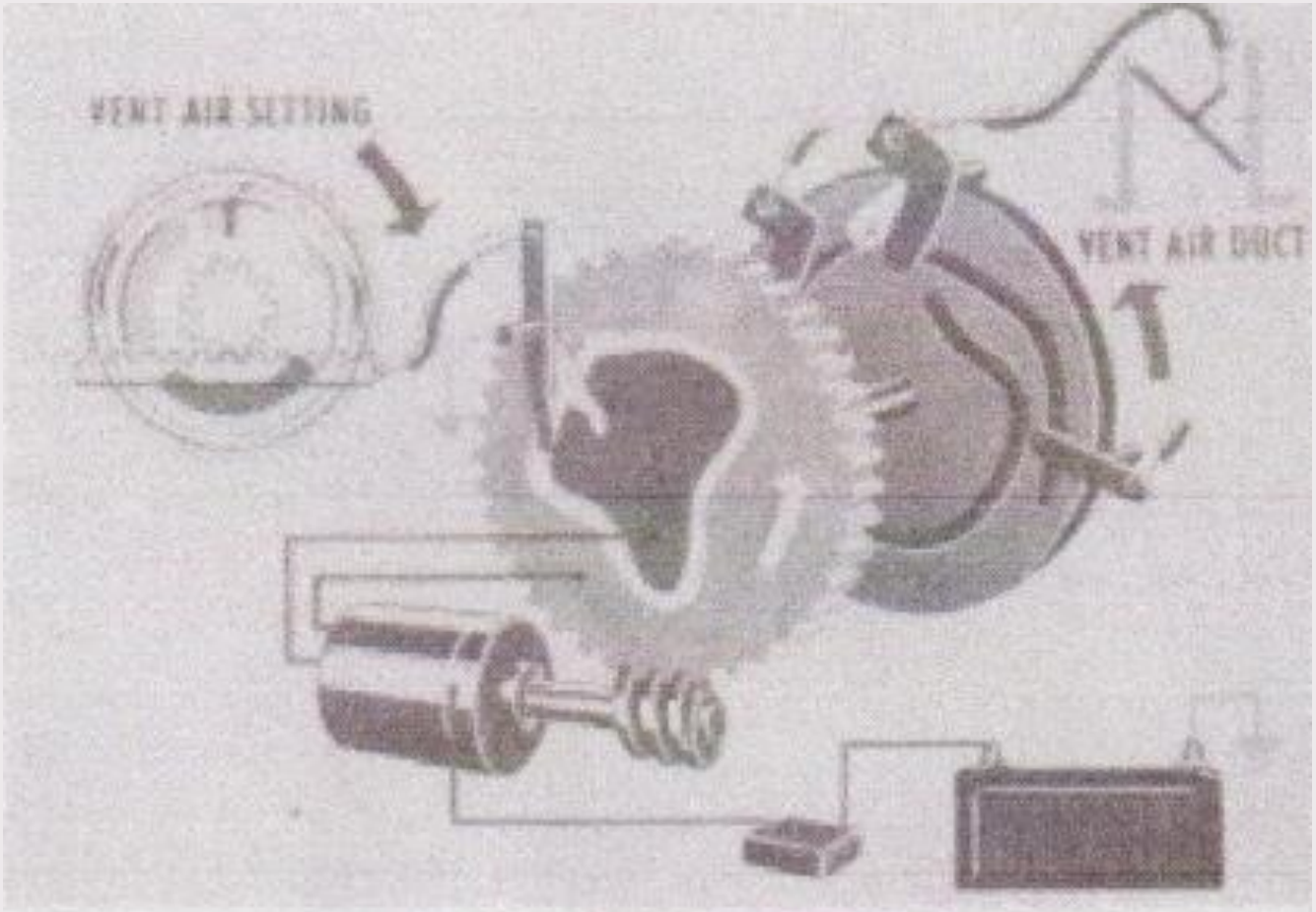


Fig. 4—Dial-Temp operation

When the knurled knob is manually rotated to the selected point of operation, the pressure arm is moved by means of a rack and pinion and a bowden cable. The pressure arm makes contact on one side of the contact plate causing current to flow through one field of the servo motor, thus rotating the motor in one direction and operating the control plate. When the knurled bezel is rotated to another selected point, the pressure arm makes contact on the other side of the contact plate causing current to flow through the other field coil of the motor, rotating the motor in the other direction and operating the control plate in the opposite direction.

The rotation of the motor is always such that the pressure arm seeks and finally comes to rest on the dead band of the contact plate.

Drive Controls

Drive controls for the Edsel "Teletouch" push-button shift are located in the center of the steering wheel. This location provides optimum accessibility for either the right or left hand. The various ranges—park, reverse, neutral, drive, and low—are selected by depressing the appropriate button. This closes the respective circuit that is continued through slip rings and brushes mounted in the steering column. These control circuits operate relays that actuate the motor mounted on the converter housing (Fig. 5).

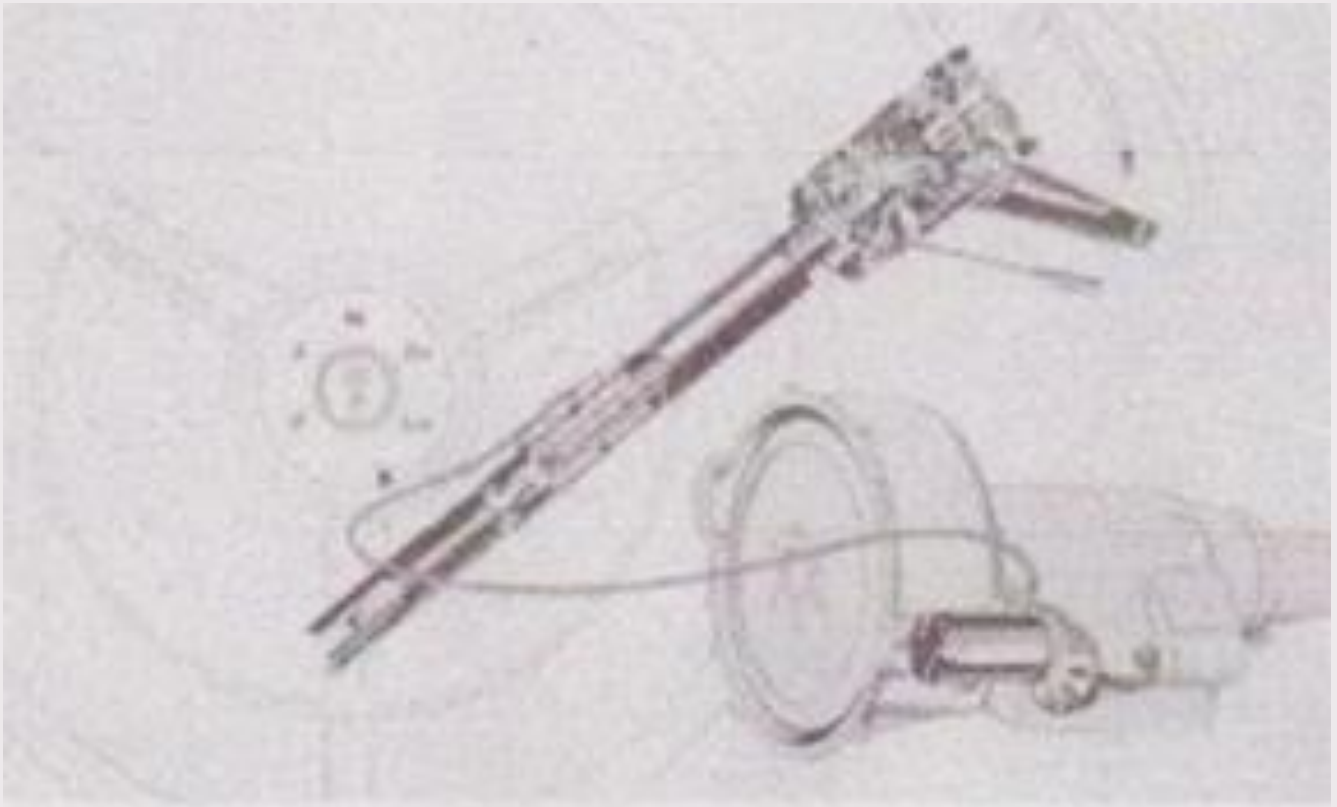


Fig. 5—Teletouch transmission selector

A powerful motor is used to provide the same ease of operation of disengaging the "park" position as the other functions. The control system has been carefully studied and fail-safe features incorporated throughout. A positive feed is used in contrast to a grounding system as customarily incorporated in horn circuits. This positive feed causes the system to remain in whatever position selected, even in the case of accidental grounds.

Thus, there is no fear of a failure in the system causing the transmission to go into an unwanted gear accidentally. A dual switch, operated by transmission hydraulic pressure, inhibits the selection of "reverse" above 15 mph and inhibits the selection of "park" above 3 mph. This allows for sufficient "reverse" speeds to permit rocking the car out of mud holes and snow banks, but effectively prevents the transmission from being engaged in "reverse" at high forward speeds. The 3-mph inhibition in "park" prevents damage to the transmission by accidentally pressing the "park" button at high forward speeds. As an added safety feature, the "park" position can be actuated after the ignition is turned off, but it is impossible to actuate any other position until the ignition switch is again turned on.

The "Teletouch" buttons are depressed below accidental strike distances in the center of the wheel. In case of major accident, an additional feature is the rubber rim around the controls to absorb any abnormal impact.

To maintain the push-button assembly in a stationary position, a unique planetary gear system is used. One sun gear is fixed to the stationary part of the steering column and another sun gear is fixed to the push-button assembly. A pair of planet gears revolve about these two sun gears with the rotation of the steering wheel. This assembly permits a direct drive from the steering wheel down through the steering column.

Power Steering

Throughout the automotive industry, the tendency is toward the integral-type power steering gear. The reasons for this trend are quite apparent: this type of unit permits neatness of installation, reduced vulnerability to damage from road obstructions, and improved returnability. The new integral-type steering gear in the Edsel cars features a torsion-bar type of hydraulic valve actuation to provide road feel.

The steering gear consists primarily of a gear reduction unit (the recirculating ball and nut type embodied in the standard steering gear), a power cylinder, and a hydraulic servo-control valve. The hydraulic valve, valve sleeve, and torsion-bar assembly are mounted on the end of the worm shaft and operated by the twisting action of the steering shaft on the torsion bar.

The torsion bar is restrained from twisting more than 9 deg either side of normal position to prevent overstressing the bar and permit manual steering. The valve spool moves 0.004 in. for each deg of twist of the torsion bar and approximately 0.036 in. for maximum 9-deg twist. The valve must move 0.008 in. resulting in a 2-deg twist of the torsion bar for intitial power assist. In normal straight driving, approximately ½–1 lb of pull is required on the steering wheel to control the car. Cornering effort is approximately 2–3 lb and maximum parking effort is 4–5 lb. Particularly noteworthy is the smooth transition from no power to full power with the torsion-bar action as compared to other systems.

On a right turn, for example, the valve spool moves up, allowing oil from the pump to enter the right side of the power piston. The oil on the left side of the piston is returned through the valve to the pump. Consequently, the power assist is to the right side of the piston, pushing it to the left and providing assistance in turning of the sector shaft. Restricting the oil flow to one side of the piston increases the oil pressure proportionally to the reaction of turning the front wheels. The action is reversed on a left turn. (See Fig. 6.)

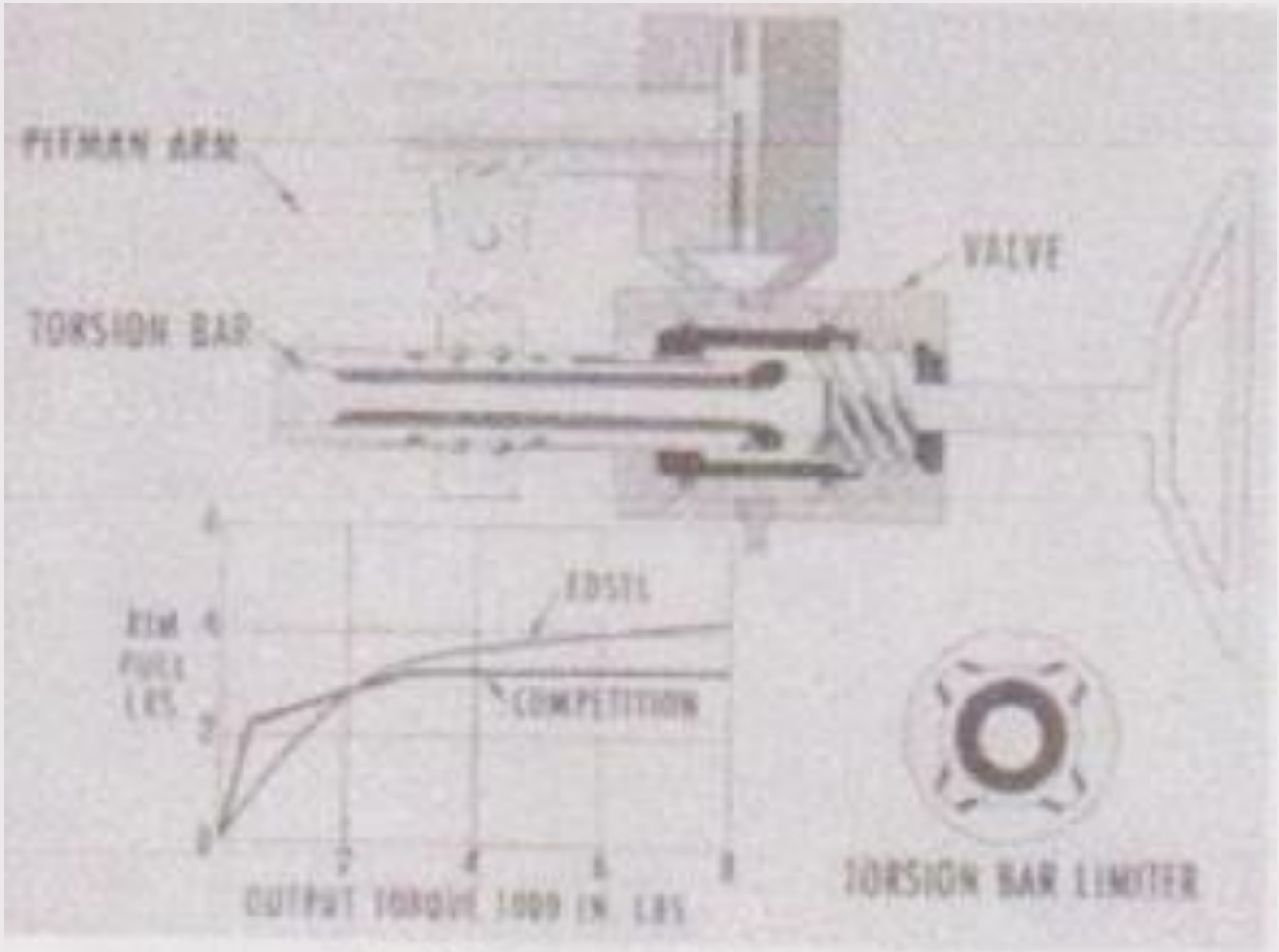


Fig. 6—Power steering operation

A new concept in pump mounting and drive is introduced on the E-475 engine for power steering. The pump is integrally mounted on the engine front cover and driven directly by the crankshaft. The arrangement eliminates the conventional drive pulleys, belt, and pump mounting bracket. The use of a large diameter rotor in the pump makes possible adequate pressures even though the pump operates only at crankshaft speed. This results in increased durability of the pump. A large-capacity reservoir is used in conjunction with the integral pump; the reservoir is mounted higher than the pump which precludes aeration of the oil and improves accessibility.

Engine

Each of the two series of Edsel cars is powered by an engine designed specifically for it. The E-400 engine is in the Ranger-Pacer series and the E-475 engine in the Corsair-Citation series; both of these are 90-deg V-8 overhead valve engines with 10.5/1 compression ratios. The displacement on the E-400 is 361 cu in.; bore diameter is 4.05 in. with a stroke of 3.50 in., giving a bore-stroke ratio of 1.16. The maximum brake horsepower is 303 at 4600 rpm and the maximum torque is 400 lb-ft at 2800 rpm. The E-475 is a larger engine with a displacement of 410 cu in. The bore diameter is 4.20 in. and stroke is 3.70 in., giving a bore-stroke ratio of 1.135. Maximum brake horsepower of this engine is 345 at 4600 rpm and the maximum torque is 475 lb-ft at 2900 rpm.

The E-400 engine has cylinder heads with machined combustion chambers of the wedge design which provides accurate compression control. The combustion chambers in the E-475 engine are in the cylinder block and are machined at the same time as the cylinder bores. This was accomplished by designing the cylinder deck at a 10-deg angle to the top of the piston. The resulting wedge-shaped cavities form combustion chambers virtually free from pockets in which harmful deposits might accumulate.

A new innovation on the E-475 engine is the water-warmed intake manifold replacing the conventional exhaust-heated manifold. This results in better control of the fuel-air mixture temperature and, thus, improved distribution. It is accomplished by running the engine water from the rear of both heads under and along the intake manifold passages. These intake passages are large and smooth to allow unrestricted flow of the fuel-air mixtures. The manifold is so designed as to eliminate sharp turns or obstructions. Quick warmup is accomplished by the circulating system.

The water-warmed intake manifold is the first stage of the three-stage, parallel-flow cooling system in the E-475 engine. In this system, the water is circulated only through the cylinder heads and intake manifold during the first stage. Circulation is confined until the water temperature reaches approximately 140 F and thermostats in each bank of the cylinder block open. Cooling is now in the second stage; coolant is circulated through the manifold, cylinder heads, and block. The third or final stage comes into play when the water temperature rises to 180 F and the thermostat in the water outlet connection opens. Water is now circulated through the whole cooling system, the intake manifold, the cylinder heals, the cylinder block, and the radiator. In all three stages, the major portion of the coolant is circulated through the cylinder heads for greatest scrubbing action at the point of highest heat generation. (See Fig. 7.)

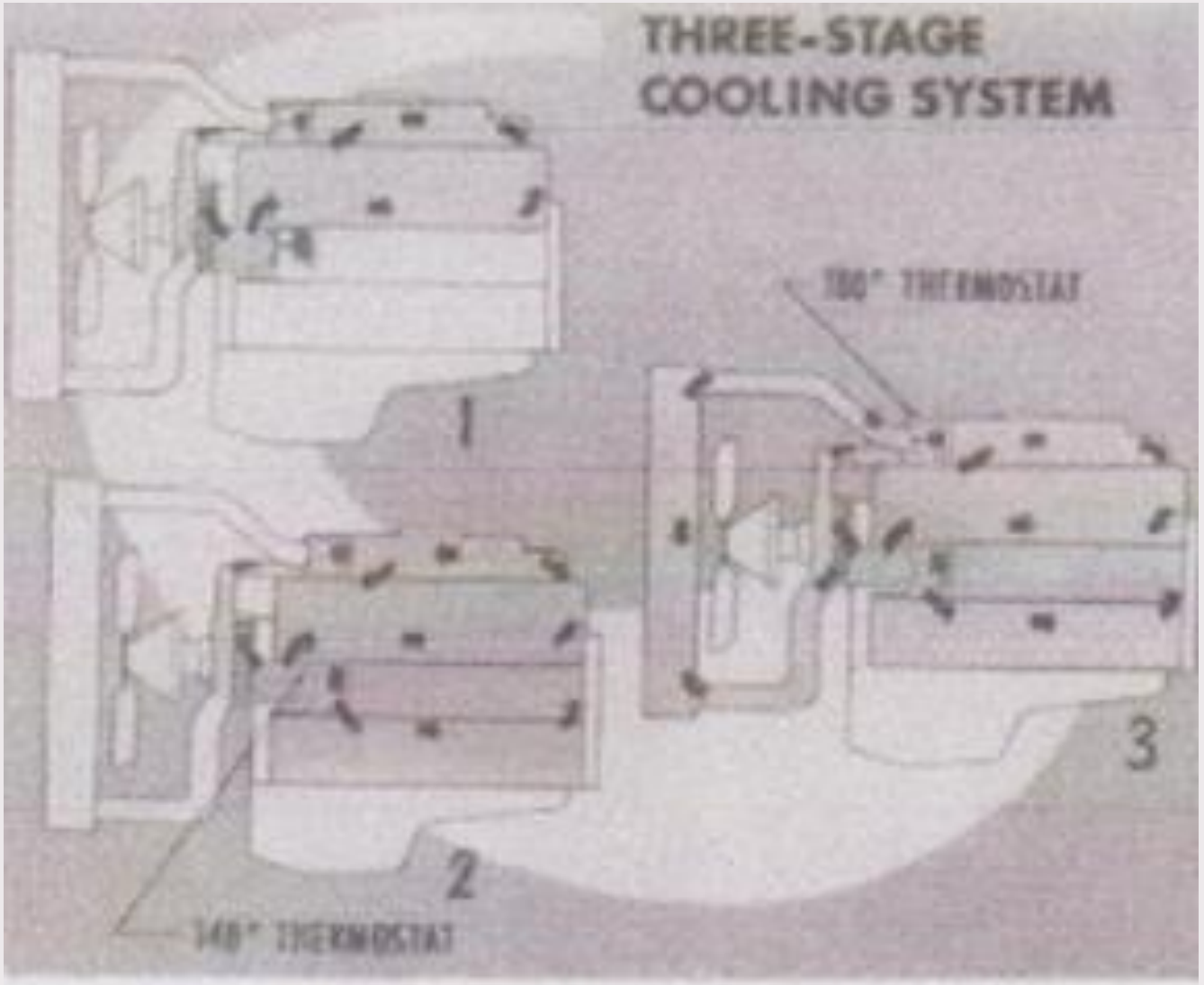


Fig. 7—Three-stage cooling system

Transmission

With the introduction of the dual-range transmission, the Edsel driver will enjoy greater flexibility of control along with the advantages of greater performance, better fuel economy, and smoother shifting.

The new transmission allows the option of starting in first or second gear and provides for smoother shifts into high gear automatically at speeds which are dictated by throttle opening. The forced downshift feature, the hill-braking ability in low range, and the usual neutral, reverse, and park ranges are retained.

The advantages of first-gear starting are evident. The transmission is automatically in first gear and performance at wide-open throttle is thus better than in previous model transmissions where the throttle had to be depressed past the detent for a downshift to first gear. In city driving, the same acceleration is achieved at a lower throttle opening, providing better fuel economy and the comforting feeling of power in reserve in the form of unused accelerator pedal travel. Also, the high break-away torque, available in first gear through the transmission, allows the use of lower ratio axle and, consequently, improved fuel economy at cruising speeds.

The transmission is basically a 3-element torque converter in combination with a Ravegnaux (compound) planetary gear set that will provide three speeds forward and one speed reverse. The major innovation is the substitution of a sprag-type one-way clutch to be the reaction member of the planetary gear set in the first gear. The shift from first to second gear can be made smoothly, since a shift off a one-way clutch is basically smoother than one in which two bands are involved. With the one-way clutch, the timing problem of two bands disappears. A further aid to smooth 1-2 shifting is the addition of a hydraulic accumulator to the front servo that assists in smooth application of the front band. (See Fig. 8.)

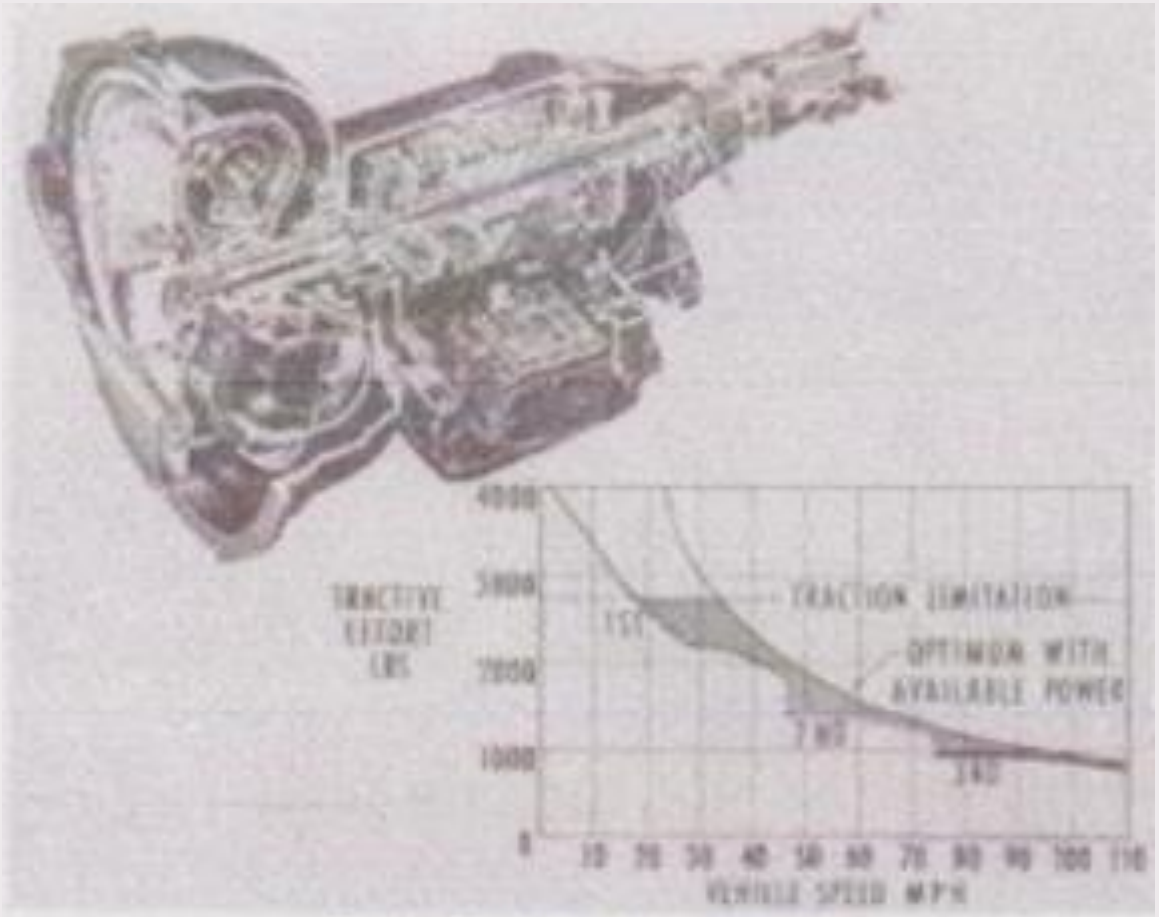


Fig. 8—Dual-range transmission

Air-Suspension

Why an air suspension? It is more complex and costly than conventional types. It requires a staggering expenditure of time, talent, and money for development. Is there, apart from competitive pressure, a compulsive reason for offering it to Edsel customers? Briefly, yes: it offers, for the first time, a practical means of attaining the full ride benefit of very soft springing.

To design or manufacture conventional springs with very low rates, is not at all difficult. To apply them to a car, however, is quite another matter. In leaf springs, for example, torque windup becomes a prohibitive consideration. Leaf springs lost out in front suspensions for this reason many years ago. In coil springs and torsion bars, the problem is space—with lower rates, they become larger; more significantly their operating space (wheel travel) requirements increase. More and more wheel travel is wasted in providing for load changes. Unloaded cars begin to look ridiculously high while heavily loaded cars practically ride on the compression bumpers; net jounce travel approaches zero. Moreover, mechanical springs are essentially constant-rate devices and adequate cushioning at the jounce and rebound stops becomes increasingly difficult with softer springing.

It is in these respects that the use of air as a spring medium has three important advantages: (1) a very low-rate air spring can be fitted in the space vacated by a normal-rate coil spring; (2) air systems necessarily incorporate automatic leveling and a car can have a pleasingly low curbside appearance yet at maximum load, full-jounce travel remains available; (3) the rate pattern of an air spring can be precisely tailored to make the best possible use of available wheel travel.

Three principal air level ride features are: the air springs, leveling valves, and trailing arm rear suspension. Briefly, the system works as follows (Fig. 9): Compressed air, used both as the spring medium and as the means of height control, is supplied by a specially developed compressor. This is a single-cylinder unit belt driven at approximately engine speed and lubricated by engine oil. Its piston displacement is 2.71 cu in. Balance pressure is approximately 300 psi, maximum power requirement approximately 1 bhp. It is a quiet and smooth running device with adequate capacity. The compressor delivers air through a flexible hose and a check valve to a 400 cu in. reserve tank mounted in the right fender just aft of the headlamp. A manual drain valve, for removal of any accumulated moisture, is installed at the low point of the tank and a filter is placed in the outlet line.

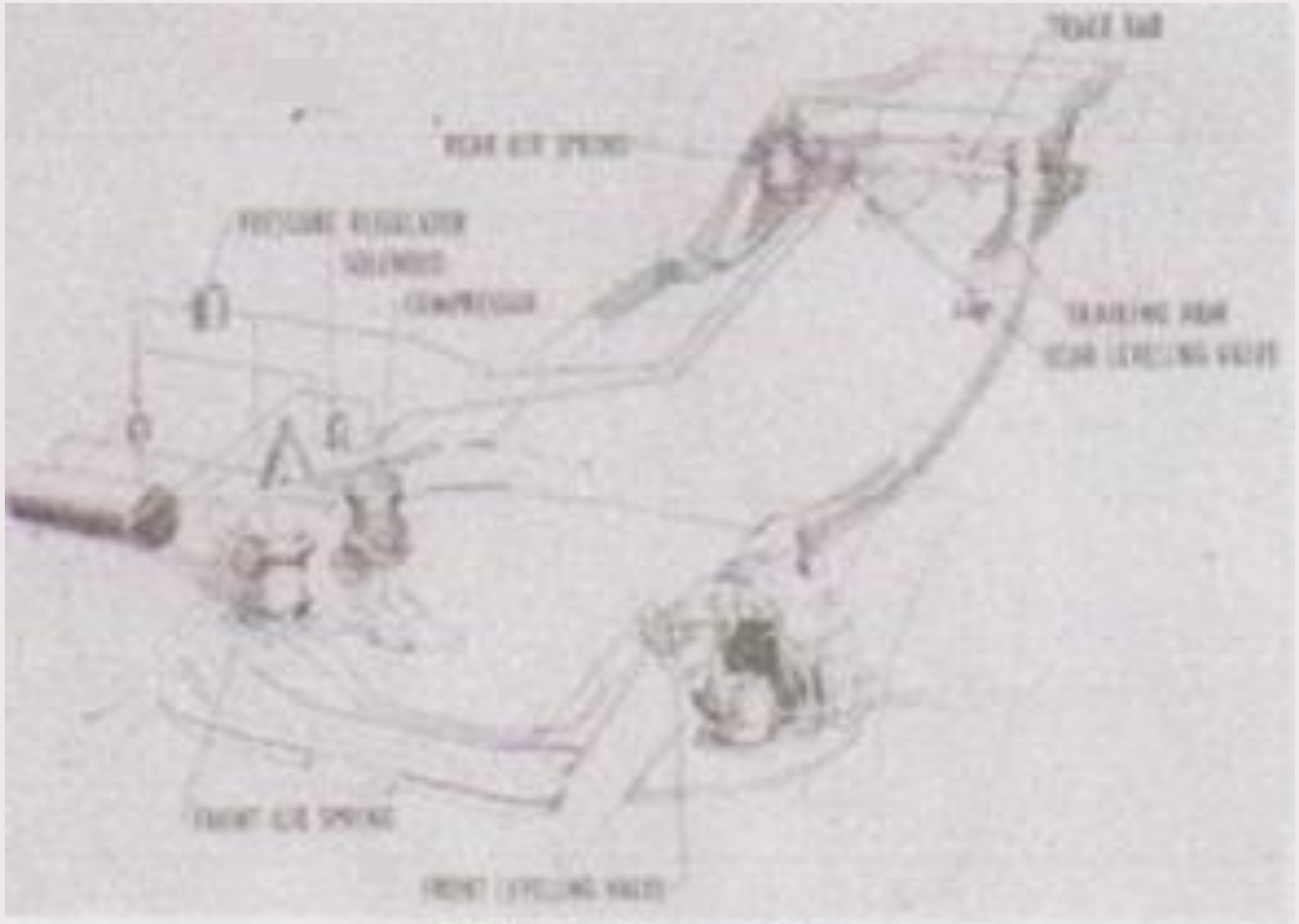


Fig. 9—Air suspension

From the reservoir, which is normally at 300 psi (balance pressure of the compressor), air is used for two distinct purposes. Most of it is consumed in supplying the springs; air for this function proceeds through a copper line to a regulator valve, thence at reduced pressure (150-160 psi), to the three leveling valves (two front, one rear), and from these to the springs. Air at reservoir pressure is also supplied for a control, or "triggering" function; in this case, it is fed to a door-controlled solenoid valve and from there by nylon lines to fast-action mechanisms in the three leveling valves.

This arrangement brings about a dual, or "slow-fast" continuous height control. When the car is being driven (or is standing still with the doors closed) and a height adjustment is required, air is directed to or from the springs through highly restricted passages in the leveling valves so that height changes take place slowly. But as passengers enter or leave the car and a door is opened, the solenoid valve is actuated; this pneumatically opens a relatively unrestricted bypass in each leveling valve, through which springs are filled or exhausted. Thus, the leveling process is quite rapid as long as any door remains open. (See Fig. 10.)

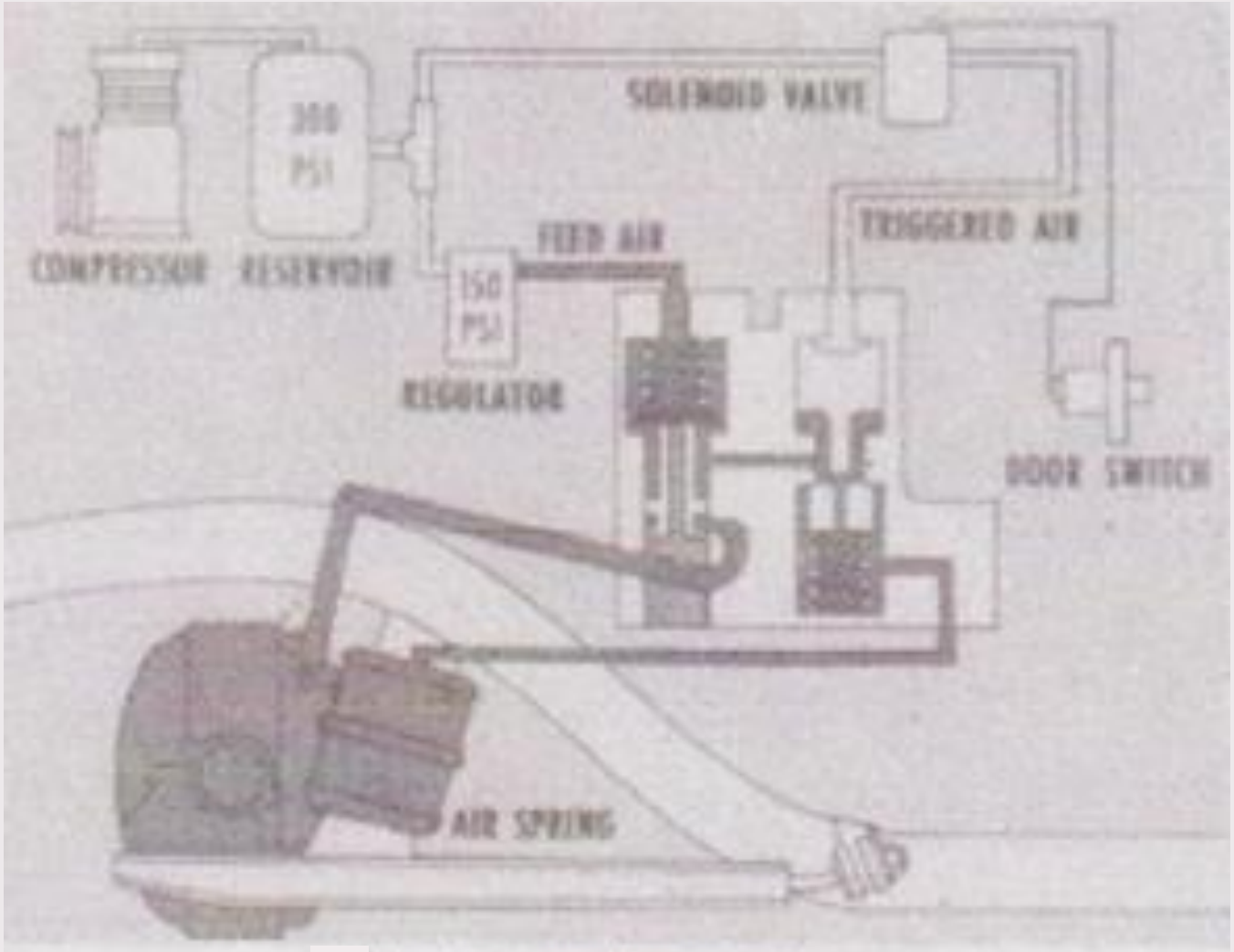


Fig. 10—Leveling operation

The system includes several minor components which require a few words of explanation. The T-check valves between the springs and the leveling valves are low-limit devices which prevent the springs from exhausting below a set minimum pressure. They inhibit extreme leveling action, which could cause difficulties in jacking.

The pressure regulator or reducer valve maintains an approximate balance between the system-to-spring (fill) differential pressure and the spring-to-atmosphere (exhaust) differential pressure. This balance is required in rough road operation where the leveling valve is working continually. If the system were operated at the 300 psi reservoir pressure, for example, there would be perhaps a 220 psi differential to fill the rear springs and an 80 psi differential to exhaust them. On a long stretch of rough road, especially washboard, far more air would be admitted during jounce motions than could be exhausted during rebound motions. Even though the slow leveling passages were in use, the car would soon be riding high against the rebound stops. Pressure regulation at 150–160 psi keeps the car in trim regardless of road conditions.

A restrictor valve is used in the Ranger and Pacer models and is located between the right rear spring and the rear leveling valve. This valve contains a very small orifice, together with a bypass triggered by the solenoid valve in the same manner as the bypasses in the leveling valves. Thus, the orifice is effective only in the slow leveling mode. The reasons for using this restrictor will be made apparent in the discussion dealing with the rear suspension.

The leveling valve might be called the "brain" of the system. Its operation is fairly straightforward. Flow of air to and from the air springs is governed by a small rubber-covered seal disc. Each of the three valves in the system is mounted on the chassis frame; its actuating lever is linked to the unsprung mass, so that when the car riding height at that point deviates from normal, the lever shaft is rotated, and a cam on the shaft causes the plunger to move—up if the car is too low, down if it is too high. An upward movement of the plunger lifts the seal disc off its peripheral seat, admitting air at 150 psi to the passage. If at this time the car doors remain closed (slow leveling cycle), the air passes through the restricted orifice to the appropriate air spring or springs. Similarly, if the car is too high, the plunger moves downward away from the seal disc and exhausts air from the spring via the orifice and passage and then through the vertical hole in the middle of the plunger to the atmosphere.

The fast leveling fill and exhaust cycles differ from the slow cycles only in that air flows around the circumference of the nylon piston instead of through the orifice. This is accomplished by high-pressure (triggering) air from the solenoid valve which opens whenever a door is opened. The triggering air depresses the plunger and unseats the nylon piston, thus opening the comparatively unrestricted circumferential bypass around the latter.

An interesting feature of the valve is that the orifice, although severely restricted, is not actually very small in diameter. A fine wire passing through the orifice greatly reduces its effective area, and at the same time acts as a cleansing means. Another feature is the small amount of lever movement required to bring about leveling—the valve has a very narrow "null" band. The entire mechanism is compact, simple, and durable.

The heart of any suspension system is its springs; they are probably the most important of all the factors which influence a vehicle's ride and, to a lesser degree, its handling. The Edsel air springs were chosen and developed in line with a major design objective: to take advantage of the ride potential of ultra-soft springing without sacrificing good handling qualities.

The air-spring design, which can be described as a girdled rubber cell with a variable area piston, was selected for two reasons. It requires minimum air volume and installation space to provide exceedingly low rates in the normal ride range, and it permits maximum flexibility in attaining any desired rate pattern.

The production front and rear air spring units consist of four basic parts: the rubber air cell, the retainer band or girdle, the piston or pedestal, and the upper seat. In addition, the rear units include clamps at both upper and lower seals to prevent unseating if the shock absorbers are removed or disconnected while the car is on a hoist.

It is evident that as the piston travels up and down within the cell, its effective area varies considerably. The character of this area variation depends primarily upon the shape of the piston. Since area is a factor in the rate equation, the shape of load-deflection and rate curves can be controlled by piston design. This can be seen on a typical static load-deflection curve having the characteristic pattern which was sought and achieved; also, a corresponding dynamic load-deflection curve for the same spring, obtained electronically at approximately sprung mass resonant frequency. A comparison shows that static and dynamic curves bear a strong general resemblance to each other, but dynamic rates in the neutral ride range are very much higher than static rates. In a vehicle, the dynamic wheel rate may be 4 or 5 times the static wheel rate.

This points out one of the major pitfalls to be avoided in the development of low-volume air springs. In an effort to minimize dynamic rates, it is all too easy to arrive at a suspension with a strong negative rate at normal ride height. A very mild negative rate for the spring itself may be permissible (provided the effect of suspension bushings or other spring elements cumulates in a positive overall suspension rate) but a negative wheel rate is not tolerable. Among other antics which it performs, a vehicle with a negative wheel rate is likely to cycle slowly between full-jounce and full-rebound while standing at the curb.

In the Edsel cars, dynamic rates in normal ride are sufficiently low to provide bounce and pitch frequencies in the neighborhood of 50 and 55 cpm, respectively. This, of course, is a major factor in the attainment of luxurious riding qualities. Static wheel rates are sufficiently positive to provide good stability at the curb, in approaching and emerging from curves, in braking, in accelerating, and other maneuvers. The smooth but strong rate buildup characteristics in both jounce and rebound, combined with automatic leveling, allow maximum utilization of the space available for suspension travel and result in excellent rough-road behavior. In addition, the rate buildup contributes toward good cornering and general handling.

Over and above the springing, first-class suspension geometry is requisite to good handling. In adapting air springs to the Edsel cars, it was possible to retain the standard coil spring front suspension geometrically intact. It was only necessary to move the shock absorbers aft of the control arms. But, of course, a different rear suspension was required and finally adopted. It is a trailing arm type with several rather unusual features. One is the forward attachment of the trailing arm to the frame; instead of the usual transversely mounted rubber journal bushing, it uses a large spike-end rubber mount similar to those often found in shock absorber ends. This particular design serves several purposes. It almost eliminates torsional loading in the trailing arm. It permits rather large axial, but only small radial deflections; this contributes very greatly to harshness reduction without adversely affecting rear end steering.

The trailing arm rear mounting is also interesting; each arm is attached to the axle by means of a pair of transverse rubber bushings whose axes are spaced some 5 in. apart. This arrangement gives effective isolation yet it ties the axle and trailing arms together in such a way that they constitute a roll stabilizing unit, with the axle housing acting as the torsion member. A considerable amount of rear end roll resistance is obtained in this manner.

Because of frame differences, the Corsair and Citation rear end geometry varies slightly from that of Ranger and Pacer models; in the former, the trailing arms run almost straight fore-and-aft; in the latter, the forward pivots of the trailing arms are somewhat further inboard. This reduces the twisting effect on the rear axle housing during roll; consequently, the Ranger and Pacer cars require rear roll resistance, which is provided by the restrictor valve mentioned previously. Normally, with a single rear leveling valve, the two rear springs are interconnected by a common air supply line; during roll, unrestricted air transfer takes place between them and they contribute no roll resistance. However, since Ranger and Pacer cars incorporate restriction in the supply line to the right rear spring, airflow between the two springs is severely inhibited in normal running with the doors closed, so that the individual springs act to increase roll resistance.

Combined with the geometrically conventional front end, the Edsel rear air suspension provides very satisfactory cornering and general handling qualities. There is, of course, a transient "feel" which differs slightly but not objectionably from that of Hotchkiss drive vehicles; driver consciousness of it quickly disappears.

Braking

Full braking reserve is very important, especially with today's high-speed vehicles. The automatic brake adjuster, designed for this Duo-Servo brake assembly, maintains approximately 0.010-in. clearance at all times by adjusting the brakes whenever lining wear exceeds 0.005 in. All adjustments are made on reverse braking to eliminate the possibility of overadjustment that could be caused by drum distortion on panic stops in forward braking.

The installation consists, mainly, of a control cable fastened to the anchor pin at one end, and to the adjusting lever at the other end. This cable is routed over a guide, which is attached to the shoe web, so that any shoe movement, beyond the predetermined brake adjustment, will lift the adjusting lever. When lining wear exceeds 0.005 in. the shoe movement will raise the adjusting lever until the next tooth is engaged on the adjusting sprocket. After releasing the brakes, the adjusting spring will rotate the screw resulting in the brake adjustment. (See Fig. 11).

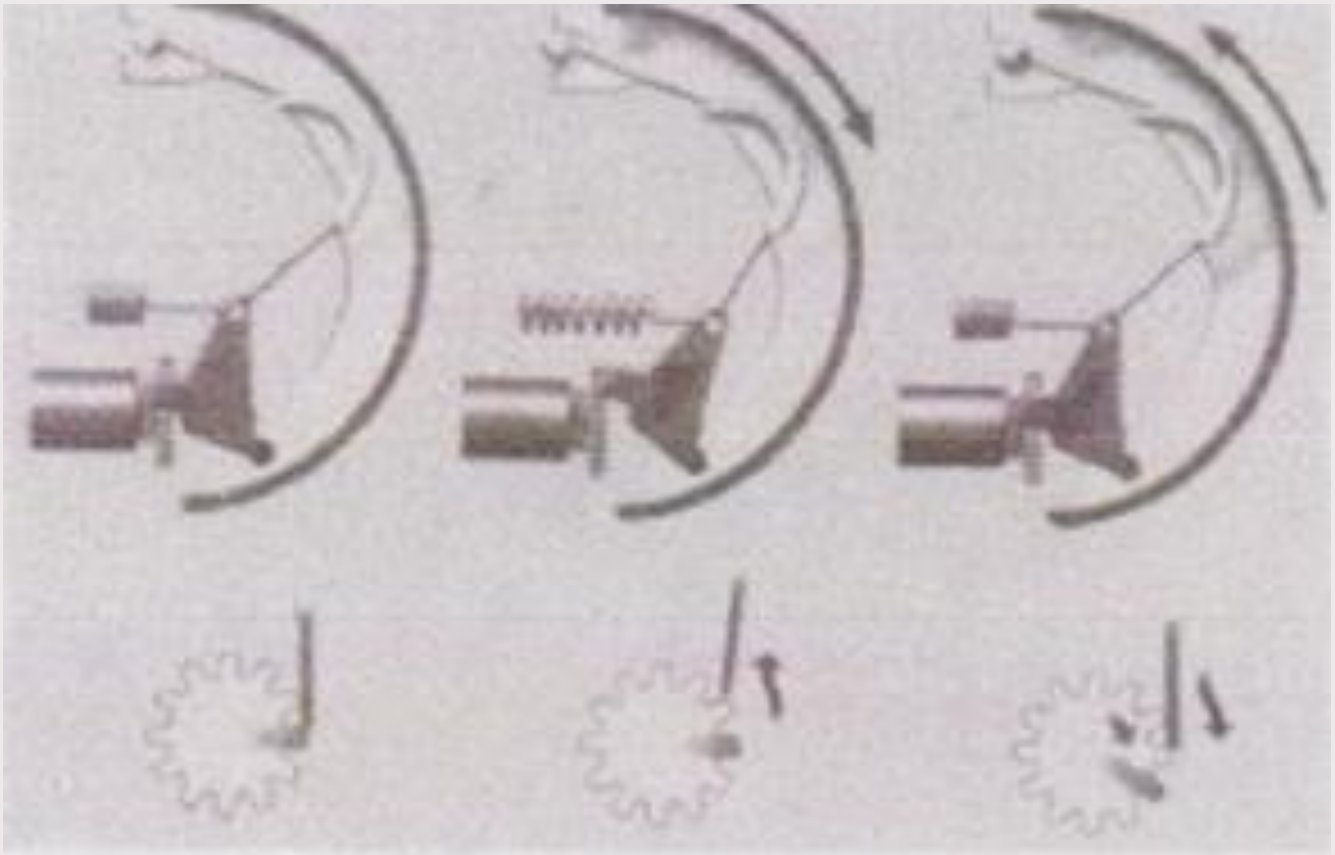


Fig. 11—Automatic brake adjuster operation

An additional advantage of the automatic brake adjuster, aside from eliminating conventional periodic brake adjustments, is to allow the lowering of the brake pedal to a closer relation with the accelerator pedal.

Test Program

In the initial stages of planning, it was decided that as much time as possible would be allowed for testing. The actual test program had its start in the early part of 1955 when several Mercury and Lincoln automobiles were modified to incorporate contemplated Edsel components. These first test cars enabled us to answer preliminary questions regarding package, suspension geometry, and brakes.

Cars were assigned for specific test purposes and the engineers equipped them with latest design components for severe and extensive road tests throughout the country. The test trips were so numerous and the locales so widespread that our test progress boards began to resemble arrival and departure schedules of a busy bus terminal.

Test engineers assigned to brake development piled up miles on the hills and mountains in the vicinity of Jennerstown, Pa., where we have garage and test facilities. Tests were conducted on brakes and related components; master cylinders, wheel cylinders, hydraulic lines, and brake drums were checked and rechecked. Brake lining wear was measured and carefully recorded to cover thousands of durability miles.

Chassis engineers had taken their cars and were headed south on ride, handling, and evaluation trips through Kentucky, Tennessee, and Georgia. Testing procedures and techniques were combined and modified to provide data such as highway fuel and oil economy.

Air conditioning engineers headed into Florida and Texas for their phase of testing. Vero Beach may be a prominent playground but to the test engineers, it was a proving ground. Condensers, evaporators, and compressors were installed and compared.

Other crews were at work testing in various areas from Dearborn to San Francisco: carburetion, vapor lock, fuel handling, and percolation tests were conducted at Pikes Peak, our proving ground in Arizona, Death Valley, and even on San Francisco's Telegraph Hill. The induction engineers tested until they were certain the carburetor that functioned so beautifully on the plains of Kansas served equally as well on Pikes Peak. In many areas, main highways were bypassed and the rough, deep-rutted, cross-country trails were used to get frame durability data.

Inclement weather was no deterrent to our program; in fact, it was made a part of the program. Test cars were driven up into the severe cold of northern Michigan and Minnesota where cold starting, automatic choke, and heater evaluation tests were conducted in sub-zero weather. Heaters were called upon to thaw out semifrozen engineers in -30 F weather.

The Edsel test program was one of the most extensive conducted; well over a million and a half test miles have been driven. Tests at the Dearborn Test Area alone accounted for 779,000 of those miles. The Dearborn test area is our 360-acre backyard with 14 miles of road, including multisurface roads, high-speed track, and a test hill with 17 and 30% grades. Having these facilities so close at hand was a tremendous asset in our development tests. Many times preliminary test data was made available in a day or two. The conference room—where the decision to try a component was made; the machine shop—where the component was fabricated; the garage—where the component was installed; and the test track—where the preliminary tests were conducted—were conveniently located in one compact area. 480,200 test miles were driven at our 3880-acre Michigan proving ground, where we have 30 miles of test roads, hills with grades varying from 7 to 60%, and one of the finest high-speed tracks in the country.

The first Edsel frames were tested at our Arizona proving ground, where the test vehicles were driven over the rough terrain, through dried out river beds, over desert trails, and across arroyos testing frame welds and body mounts. The continuous +90 F temperatures also made this an ideal place to conduct engine cooling and other tests requiring high ambient air temperatures. Tests conducted at this proving ground accounted for an additional 265,800 test miles.

Part 6

Road Trip

Cross-country Jaunt

A Post Editor tells of a cross-country jaunt in one of Motor-dom's best-kept automotive secrets – Ford's long-awaited new Edsel – on view this week

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

RE: introduction to an article written by *Arthur W. Baum* entitled: "I Rode Detroit's Mystery Car"

The Newcomer

"THE event of this week is the introduction of the first entirely new American motorcar of Big Three parentage in approximately a generation. The newcomer is the Edsel, a well-known if not particularly euphonious family name from the Ford tree. Commercially, the Edsel is a competitor for General Motors' Buick and it raises the Ford volume lines of cars to four, thus closing a long-standing medium-to-upper medium price gap in the Ford Motor Company's market position…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**



Caption: “If this car looks like nothing you’ve ever seen before, you’re right. It’s the Ford Motor Company’s new baby – the Edsel – until this week a carefully guarded secret.”

The Debutante Car

"I FIRST met the Edsel in early May a few steps off Oakwood Boulevard in Dearborn, Michigan, behind a protective wall of masonry and security guards. The debutante car was disreputably dressed, for a purpose…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Officially Unborn

"…As far as was practical, its newness had been concealed or somewhat altered. The car was then officially unborn, although actually three secret years old…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Out for a Spin

"…We were to go for a spin, furtively and by the worst routes, deep into the Western States. There were three automobiles - a green Edsel, a black Edsel and a workhorse Ford station wagon carrying engineering equipment, extra Edsel parts, suitcases, coveralls and potato chips…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

We’ve Got Us a Convoy



"…We made a convoy, two of us in a disguised or blacked-out condition and we were hooked together by radio-teleph-one and a comradeship of semi-secrecy…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Caption: "Near Mexican Hat, Utah, the Edsel swept by a horse and buggy on a barren road. To maintain secrecy drivers followed Seldom traveled routes in the camouflaged cars."

Behavior Analysis

"…Our function was to evaluate the behavior of the young Edsel under conditions that might apply to a careless and not-too-bright tourist suffering from bad advice on routes…"
***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Road Testing

"…Although the basic engineering of the new car had been thoroughly honed on guarded proving grounds, it was still necessary to subject the nearly finished product to the experience of assorted public highways on the plains, over the mountains and through the deserts…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Hiding in Plain Site

"…The trip had to be somewhat sneaky. We had to avoid too-close and too-frequent public inspection. We dared not offer anyone a chance to take pictures which might be published prematurely or delivered to competitive manufacturers, thus making an anticlimax of this week's debut…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Heard About But Not Seen

"…Such concealment is normal in road trials of annual models by every member of Detroit's cloak-and-dagger auto industry. For a brand-new line of automobiles it is twice as important. And yet there is a delicate limit to the camouflage. A blackout complete enough to breed no talk, rumors or anticipation would be painful. A new car, ideally, should be heard about but not seen. It was quite all right for us to pique curiosity, wrong to satisfy it…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…We were well enough equipped for the narrow path. Edsels had been on the road before in a cobbled state – that is, wearing a known body from another make. Also there had been road trips in disguised Edsel bodies. But we were the closest to the final car that the roads had yet seen…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…Our Edsels were part handmade and part production models. They wore black adhesive tape over chrome trim or had the trim removed. Each bore a pair of meaningless metal plates concealing part of the rear contours. Rear tail-lights were 1951 Ford lights tacked into place…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…Interiors were only accidentally hidden by coats and gear thrown around. Test gauges for manifold vacuum and fuel-line pressure and radio equipment cluttered the front seat and dash area…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Shirt-Sleeve Work

"…The trip was strictly shirt-sleeve work. Even our names sounded like John Doe protective coloration. They were Bill and Bert, Executive Engineers; John, Jim and Harry, Engineering Specialists and Art, Reporter. Later, we picked-up a Photographer. His name was Pat. Not an Alistair, Beauford or Cornelius in the team…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Manifesting Interest

"…We risked the road on a Monday morning. In a hazy way, we felt like a bank guard carrying a billion dollars, hoping our position of special privilege might be noticed, but somewhat fearful that it would…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…Manifestations of interest and curiosity were almost immediate - and uncomplimentary. A passenger beside the driver of a passing car stood-up on the seat to gaze at us. He was a boy of about 4. He would have shown more interest in a delivery truck. A dog charged out of a front yard and yelped us along for 50 yards. It was the first Edsel he had ever barked at and I had the definite feeling he would have barked harder at a 1912 Maxwell…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Degrees of Interest

"…From then on, the degree of interest in automobiles shown by American citizens began to crystallize. Approximately two-in-five motorists appeared to recognize our peculiarities and their behavior fell into patterns. The pictures were without sound…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…A driver and his wife would pass us. She would stare as they went by, look back, turn to her husband and talk rapidly. Apparently, he would ask her a question; she would turn again, check us and once more turn back to him for inaudible conversation, repeating these move until distance discouraged them…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…It seemed clear they discussed our appearance and guessed at our make. But it is possible that she was merely exercising her neck and complaining about the high cost of pot roast. We never knew…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…The behavior of two men riding together would closely duplicate that of man and woman. A car pool of men going home from work would vary the performance. All but the driver would stare at these mysterious, ill-clad but ultra-modern specimens. Then a general discussion would obviously spring-up and continue into the distance…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…The five Engineers in our convoy were always aware of these scrutinies, but concerned only for signs of a camera in any car that tended to examine us…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…Single drivers were the most persistent inquirers. Most commonly they would pick us up in a town, follow out on the highway, shoot ahead for a front look and finally give us up, turning back to town…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…These mobile viewers had a sharp edge on pedestrians in towns. The latter had time only to grasp the fact that here was something they hadn't seen before, perhaps nudge a companion and point, and they were gone…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…A traffic cop at a small-town intersection casually waving our lane through caught site of the first Edsel as it was abreast of him, then glimpsed the second. His arm stopped in mid-air and remained there as long as we could see him in the rear-view mirror. What that motionless raised arm did to succeeding traffic we never knew…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…In Wichita, Kansas, a driver with a knowing grin pulled alongside the green Edsel and started rolling down his window. We pulled back. He pulled back. We jumped ahead. He followed for 20 blocks and through three turns. We put him on our radio: 'Fellow in a light green Ford looking us over.' The lead car asked, 'Has he got a camera?'…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…He did not have a camera. But he caught us at a stoplight and called across. 'What are you doing with those things on the street?' He, with a laugh, flipped-up the lapel of his coat and displayed a green-and-white 'E' button, indicating that he was a fellow member of the Edsel Division. The light chang-ed. We turned left. Whoever he was, he went straight ahead, still laughing…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…We stopped for gas, for meals, for motels. And then the patterns of interest changed entirely. Now we became familiar with 'Hey, Mac ——;' 'Hey, you ——;' 'Say ——;' 'Hey, mister, what kind of car is that?' We were allowed only one stock answer. 'Experimental car.' Sometimes it was enough, but not often. 'Yeah, but what kind of experimental car?'…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…There was a definite age pattern at our stops. Elderly people could walk or drive past us without a second glance. A fair proportion of middle-aged people could do the same. But teenagers, boy or girl, not yet turned introspective by taxes, sacroiliac, or in-laws were acutely sensitive to automotive novelties. They displayed a swift homing instinct at service stations…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…At fuel stops, always at fairly inconspicuous locations, we sometimes escaped questioning by anyone but attendants, who were too polite to push customers too far. But frequently the teenagers appeared within minutes and by the time we pulled-out they had started to cluster, attracting one another like magnets…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**



High-school students in Kingman, Arizona, surrounded the Edsel on its cross-country test run and identified it immediately despite its disguised features.

"…They were surprisingly well-informed. It is also true that the Edsels of the convoy were not entirely free of clues. After receiving our stock answer of 'experimental car' and realizing that no further information was to be had, they started their own examinations and analyses, too often in inaudible whispers…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…They observed a suggestion of the Ford family of cars in our roof line. They found the tiny Ford Company mark on some of the window glass. At one overnight stop it was discovered in the morning that a pen knife had been used to lift the tape from a hubcap to reveal the Edsel 'E'…."

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**


STEELBELTED
546

"…Presumably the inquisitors had come from a school group which had caught sight of the cars the previous night. They identified our tail-lights. More than once a rebuffed teenager would turn to a companion and say, 'Those are '51 Ford tail-lights. Could be the new Edsel'…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…In a residence district of Springfield, Illinois, a fuel stop drew two hot rods and a bicycle into the service station, where our convoy was temporarily revealed by bright lights. A half-dozen teenagers ringed us like wolves around a hurt caribou. 'Say, Mac ——' it started again. Then, in the face of our noncommittal answers, the eager beavers began on their own. They spotted the cluster of shift buttons in the center of the steering column, an Edsel innovation. 'Hey, look at th-is!'…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**



Gear-shift push buttons set into the hub of the steering wheel intrigued a group of young observers.

"…They correctly tabbed our tail-lights for a product of Ford. They studied the un-chromed, undecorated concentric rings on the radiator, part of the new vertical-front treatment which marks the 1958 Edsel. What they whispered we could not catch, but it was obvious that they were fairly sure of what breed they had here…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…Nevertheless it wasn't enough for them and we were preparing to pull-out. In a final moment of frustration one corn-fed young blond addressed the driver of the green Edsel. 'Well, anyway,' he said, 'let's see you spread a patch.' (I was informed that this was teenage language for starting-up with such a rush that you leave rubber marks on the pavement. It is popular with young people who like to buy new tires)…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Millions-to-One

"…At any given moment there are doubtless tens of millions of American cars on the nation's roads. In this vast circulatory system the odds are millions-to-one that any fraction of the tiny total of trial cars on the road will meet any other in significant fraction…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…And yet, on a residence street in a plains town the radio said, 'Lead car to middleman and tailgate. Get the two Chryslers in the right-hand lane!' Sure enough, like two small families of rare whooping cranes meeting in the middle of a crow caucus on Cloud Seven, we had fellow sneaks alongside. Pedestrians and other drivers in the block undoubtedly were unaware of the meeting or its improbability. But our Engineers knew. The Chryslers had concealed but strange protuberances and one of them was making an unorthodox engine noise. They spotted us too. They grinned. 'How far west you guys going?' We grinned back. We never saw them again…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Front, Back and Sides

"…A young man in a Mercedes Benz set-out to examine us, from the front, from the back and alongside. The impish driver of the black Edsel, beating the stranger to the punch, called across, 'Hey, what kind of car is that?' Disgusted, our examiner left us…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Infraction Aversity

"…Without exception, the Engineers in our convoy were expert and experienced drivers. This was old road work to them. They drove with proper care not only as a matter of habit but also because we had a special reason for respecting the law on both town streets and open highways…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…For police to stop us anywhere would draw the curious while we were parked ducks. We could expect no tolerance from any officers. They possess a natural curiosity and if an infraction gave them a chance to discharge their duties and, at the same time, get a leisurely look at us, they would certainly be tempted. Hence, our sputtering radio frequently issued strange remarks about 'clouds' in certain compass directions. 'Clouds' was the code-word for 'troopers'…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…But there was no pattern to the law. At a small-town filling station a State Trooper pilled-up and without a word to anyone circled and examine both Edsels. A second patrol car came up the street and was hailed and halted by our examiner. 'Hey Joe,' he said, 'come here and look at the new Edsels'…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Problem Solving

"…On two occasions the convoy did have specific problems. One of the Edsels began to wander and produce tire squeal with no apparent provocation. We pulled-off the main street of a small town, found a service-station hoist and also the trouble…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…The Engineers were irate. Some of their fellows back in Dearborn had neglected to tighten a sleeve on the tie-rod. The front wheels were splaying like a llama's hoofs. At La Junta, Colorado, the carburetor picked rush-hour midtown traffic to stage a mild rebellion. At six o'clock next morning in Colorado Springs and in pouring rain, Jim, John and Harry found the cause – a little piece of dirt…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Hand-Fashioned

"…These things may not have happened on a production-line car, but the convoy cars were still largely hand-fashioned…"
***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

The Case of the Indifferent Waitress

"…We parked behind restaurants and motels where it was possible. Where it was not, we parked the Edsels facing away from the road and then parked the normal Ford crosswise behind their joint tails; a fairly effective concealment from casual notice, except in the case of the indifferent waitress…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…She was bored with us at a lunch-stop because we arrived too early, but halfway through the meal she suddenly turned attentive and friendly. We learned why after lunch as we prepared to get the convoy on the road. The waitress was there, her eyes shining. So were the Manager, the Cook and a couple of others who had caught sight of us through the kitchen door…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…We owed our stop at that particular Ozark restaurant to Harry's abilities as a prankster. He believed that automobile dealers always know the best eating places in their areas and he had gone into the shop of a competitive make of automobiles and inquired…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…The dealer had willingly recommended a roadside stop and then, apparently, had watched the stranger leave and had caught sight of our cars. As we wheeled past the dealer's shop the entire personnel of the place was struggling to get through the front door, waving arms and calling on us to stop. It must not have occurred to them that if we did take their lunch recommendation – and we did – they could drive out of town a mile or so and inspect us for an hour. They didn't show up…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Bringing Up Baby

"…The testing we did was not so much a matter of chronicling specific results, although John kept a close log on all aspects of the trip, but rather a simple expression of the intense interest of the Engineers in their own baby…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…The car ahead, particularly after a driver change the first day, might suddenly veer left and swish back with considerable violence. It was only the driver getting the feel of that car's stability and response…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…Once, in a Western State with no open-road limit, the driver then in the lead took a sudden interest in acceleration. The Edsel compression ratio is 10.5-to-1 – quite high – and the horsepower of the two V-8 engines offered are 300 and 345. So when he moved, he moved, reaching 102 miles-per-hour in one sustained burst. Satisfied, he dropped back to our normal, rather discreet, road speed…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Road Trials

"…On stretches of road which presented various peculiarities, the radio became a chattering party line…"
***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…Ohio and Indiana occasionally have a form of blacktop with odd swirls and slight ruts running lengthwise of the road. The lead car would check with the others. 'Are you getting any wheel pull from these ruts? 'Illinois has crosswise repairs that give a washboard effect. The radio would request: 'Report on body shake. And how about hood flutter? This production metal on the black car hood is behaving differently from the hand-stamped metal on the last trip. At tonight's stop let's have a look to see if a gusset is indicated'…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…Weather changes have more influence on a highway trial, but they are welcome since they add variety to the business of judging car behavior…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…Heavy rains are protective, with pedestrians under umbrellas and drivers preoccupied with vision. But rain in Colorado kept the convoy off Pikes Peak, whose ascent was scheduled principally for vapor-lock tests at high elevation…"
***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…The entire mountain was shrouded in clouds and cool rain and no serviceable test results could have been obtained. It was not a great loss since there were other heights and mountain conditions westward and at the end of the trip the cars were to go into the company proving grounds at Kingman, Arizona, for high temperature tests…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Parting Company

"…It was in Colorado that I left my pleasant engineering companions. The John Doe – Bert, Bill, Harry, John and Jim – dropped me at a railroad station…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Back to Normal(?)

"…The station looked deserted, with no cars near the door and few people visible inside. I stepped inside the station door in the belief that I was back to normal, no longer a part of a mystery that stirred a wake of curiosity as it moved along. But not quite. A traveler in a ten-gallon hat tapped me on the shoulder. 'Say, partner,' he said, 'what kind of cars were them that you just got out of?'…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

The Upper-Medium Niche

"…Except for its name and the fact of its being, the Edsel is not new within the Ford organization. Only the decision to make it is as new as 1954. A car for the upper-medium niche had been thought about somewhat before the war, considered more intensely in the intermediate postwar era and finally decided upon…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

The Inevitable Struggle

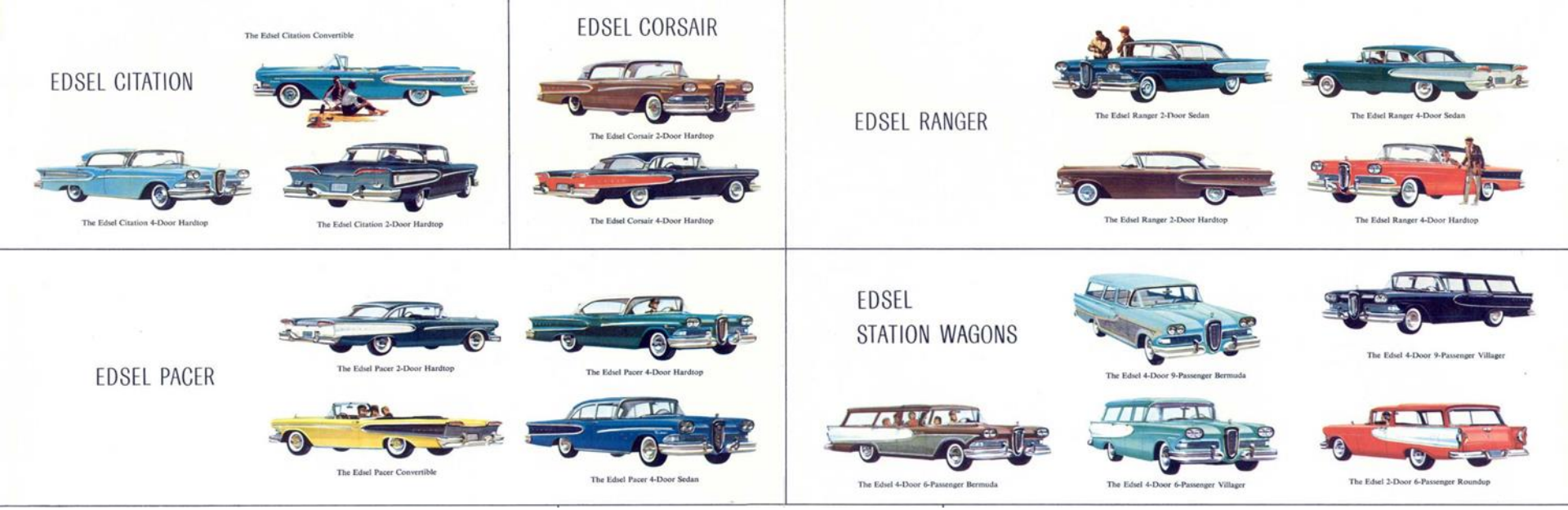
"…The first order was for the Engineers to design the basic mechanical package. This led directly to the perennial intra-mural tug-of-war between all Stylists and all Engineers, a tussle that can be summed-up in two oft-said sentences. The Engineers look at the style design produced by the Stylists and say, 'It's beautiful. Where are we going to put the motor?' The Stylists look at the engineering package and say, 'Re-markable job, but do we need a new truck in the line?'…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…Edsel, it is reported, came off very well in this inevitable struggle. Executive Engineer Bert Andren, the Bert of our convoy, who is responsible for Edsel engineering, was quite complimentary about the Stylists' willingness to adopt the car's costume to its engineering needs. George Walker, head of all Ford styling activities, was equally happy with the lee-way the Engineers permitted that section of his styling staff assigned to the Edsel Division…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Attracting Attention



"…The result is four series of automobiles that, when viewed against the average beauty of the industry's 1957 models, look rather distinguished…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

The Proof is in the Public

"…Even allowing for stepped-up style in the 1958 crop, the Edsel will doubtless attract its share of attention and in about ten years the Ford Company will know whether the cost of the Edsel introduction, approximately a quarter-billion dollars, has been well spent. Will the public respond to it immediately?…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…According to the Chief of the new Edsel Division, Richard Krafve, a Minnesotan with a broad car-production backgrou-nd, 'The public will tell us quite promptly whether they like the Edsel, and I think they will'…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Dispelling Rumors

"…The new car will also destroy some pre-introduction rumors. It does not, for example, have a fuel-injection system. The four Edsel series have two bodies and two newly designed engines which are of increased compression ratio, but without radical departures. It does not have pneumatic air springing, although both air and hydraulic springs, particularly air, were seriously considered as late as one month prior to the start of production…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Leap of Faith

"…Granting the Ford organization has the experience and competence for producing a sound new series of cars, there was always the problem of making the first Edsels strongly identify themselves on the highways as a first-time car without doing so in a manner violent enough to frighten the average, rather conservative, car buyer. This has been achieved principally with a front-end treatment that departs seriously from the bulky horizontal fronts which we have become used to in the last few seasons…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…Edsel has taken a steep jump to a vertical front-end design of faintly European cast. The central radiator ornamentation is an up-and-down design of concentric square-shouldered ovals. It is undeniably different and reactions to it may vary. I may see it as a classic eleventh-century Norman shield; you may see it as a horse-collar…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**



From the standpoint of style, Edsel's most striking feature is the vertical treatment of its front-end design, balanced by the horizontal lines of the air-duct grille and a massive "interrupted" bumper

Posterior Treatment

"…The rear view is also unusual and will not go unnoticed on the roads. It gets away from the high-fin trend by spreading considerable bulk over flat back fender and deck lines and ties the tail-lights into a set of open Vs that almost carry the lights clear across the rear-end…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**



"…The lights are, in fact, so much of the total rear-end that they extend well into the luggage compartment lid. When the lid is opened, half of the light bars go up with it…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

<u>Caption</u>: "Man-hole view of Edsel's stern emphasizes horizontal tail-lights. Half of each extends into the trunk lid."


KM 521
IND '58


1958
EDSEL

Exterior Treatment

"…The car had to be low because the tires demand that of all cars, and it is. It has a long hood, a Ford roof line and new, quite comfortable seat contours…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Interior Innovations



YOU CAN SHIFT
WITHOUT LIFTING A HAND FROM THE WHEEL

Edsel's Exclusive Teletouch Drive

Drive your Edsel—park it—reverse it—you can do all this without lifting a hand from the wheel. For Edsel Teletouch buttons are conveniently located in the center of the steering wheel. The button you touch sends a signal to the rugged, precision "brain" and it does the work smoothly, surely, electrically. You simply touch—and go. Available on all Edsel models.

"…Principal interior innovations are the shift-button closer atop the steering column, inches from the driver's fingers and a one-knob heat and ventilation control in which servomechanisms do the work of adjusting air flow…"

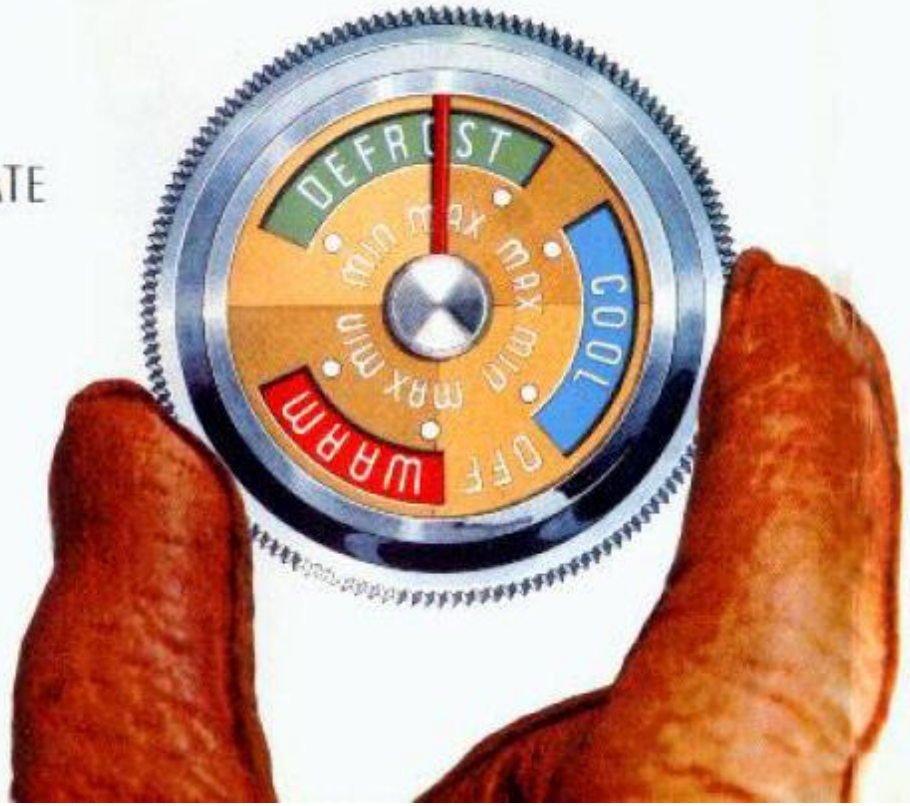
***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**



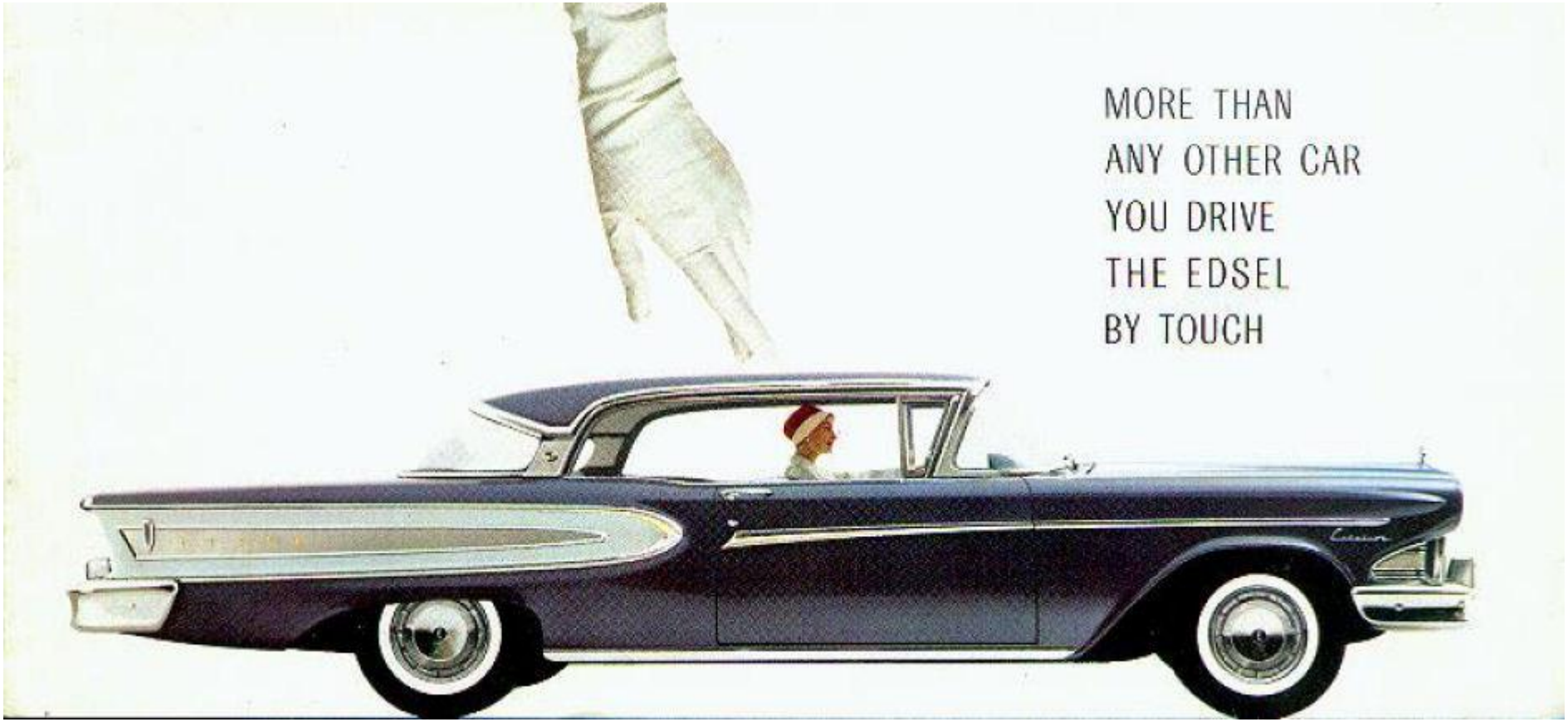
YOU MAKE YOUR OWN CLIMATE

Dial-temp Air System

Edsel's exclusive Dial-temp is the most convenient, easiest-to-operate fresh air heating, defrosting and air conditioning system ever put in an automobile. One control makes *all* the adjustments. You simply turn the dial to the temperature range you want—and enjoy the comfortable temperature you have dialed. You get plenty of outside air ventilation for hot summer driving. Quick, comfortable heater warmth is available during cold weather.



For Your Convenience . . .


MORE THAN
ANY OTHER CAR
YOU DRIVE
THE EDSEL
BY TOUCH

AT THE TOUCH OF A TOE  YOU EASE TO A STOP

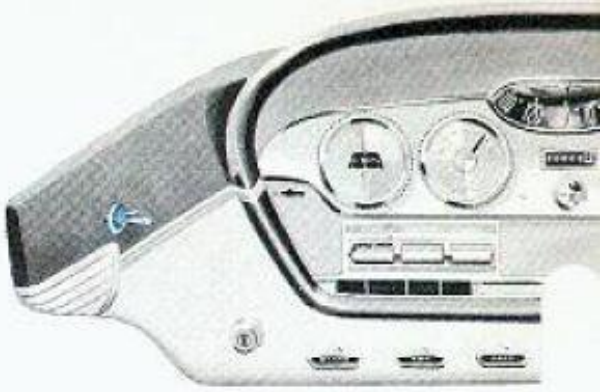


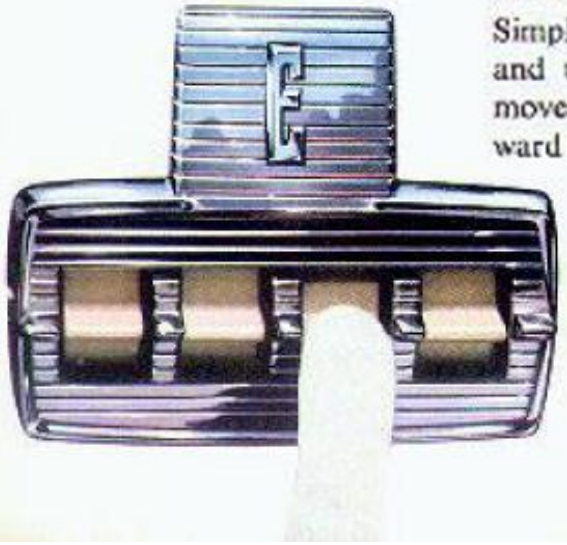
Edsel Power Brakes

You can ease to a stop surely, safely at the touch of a toe with these Edsel Power Brakes. Manifold vacuum does almost all of the pedal pushing for you. Direct mechanical linkage to the master cylinder has been retained for added safety.

To provide for continuous smooth stopping and long life, these Edsel power brakes are self-adjusting. They adjust automatically as brake is applied to stop when you are operating your car in reverse.

YOU POSITION YOUR SEAT AT THE FLICK OF A SWITCH





Edsel Power Seats

Simply flick the 4-way switch on the instrument panel and the wide, deep, comfortable Edsel power seat moves in the direction of the switch—up or down, forward or back. Available for all models.

YOU OPEN THE WINDOWS BY FINGER TOUCH

Edsel Power Windows

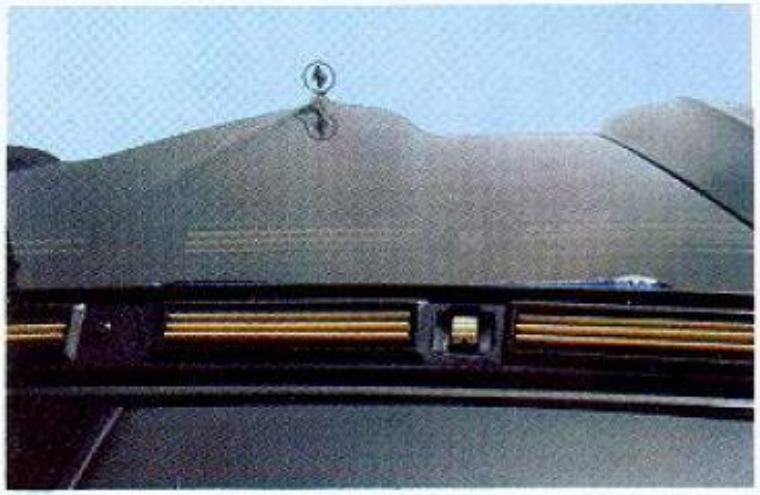
A master control on the door next to the driver operates all windows in the Edsel. Individual controls are located below other windows for passenger use. As an added safety precaution, power windows cannot be operated unless the ignition switch is on. Available for all models.

WITH THE TWIST OF A SINGLE DIAL



Dial-temp Air Conditioning

Designed for quick, efficient operation as well as easy control, Edsel's optional air conditioner can cool the interior of your Edsel in less than two minutes. To operate, you simply close windows and turn the Dial-temp control to "cool", locating the dial at the temperature range you desire. In minutes, dust, smoke, excess moisture and pollen are expelled and you ride cool and comfortable in filtered air.





AT THE TOUCH
OF A BAR
YOUR RADIO FINDS THE CLEAREST
STRONGEST SIGNAL

Edsel Station-Seeking Radio, and
Edsel Electric Antenna

On this powerful nine-tube transistor radio an amazing signal device seeks out the strongest station signal. Touch the bar and you get the strongest signal. Touch again, you get the second strongest. And so on.

May also be tuned with the five pre-set station buttons or with the manual selector.

An electric control on the instrument panel is also available to raise or lower the antenna for the best possible reception. Available for all models.

YOU TOUCH A TAB  TO RAISE
OR LOWER THE ANTENNA



AT THE TURN OF A DIAL YOU SET THE SPEED WARNING LIGHT

Edsel Speed Warning Light

This speed warning light is a valuable safety accessory. It casts a red glow over the speedometer if car speed exceeds your pre-set mile-per-hour limit. You can select the warning light's speed limit range by turning a dial below the speedometer.





YOU CAN EVEN LUBRICATE YOUR EDSEL AT THE TOUCH OF A BUTTON

Edsel Lubricator

Operated by a push button on the instrument panel, this optional device lets you lubricate your car as you drive. It automatically forces the proper amount of special oil to each lubrication fitting. A white light goes on, telling you when the lubrication process is completed.



Other Edsel accessories for your driving safety and convenience are: Tachometer; Auto Compass; Electric Clock; Parking Brake Warning Light; Fuel Level Warning Light; Oil Level Warning Light; Non-glare Rear-View Mirror; Outside Rear-View Mirror; Traffic Light Reflector; Windshield Washer; Seat Belts; Seat Covers; Wheel Covers; Curb Moulding; Rubber Insert Bumper Guards; Back-up Lights; Curb Signals; Courtesy Lights; Individual Lights for Engine Compartment, Luggage Compartment, Glove Box.

FOR YOUR
DRIVING
CONVENIENCE
THERE NEVER
HAS BEEN A CAR
LIKE THE EDSEL



Competitively Aimed

"…Ford officials don't say so directly, but it is pretty obvious that the Edsel is competitively aimed at Buick and De Soto, which means it will, at the extremes of its range, compete with several other cars, including a couple of Ford's own products…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**



The big question: How many Americans will drive home 1958 Edsels? Ford officials plan the new car to compete in the price class of General Motors' Buick.

Public Opinion

"…It will be sold by about 1,200 exclusive dealers. The customers of these dealers will ultimately declare what its niche shall be…"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

"…At any rate, this week's debut will clarify things for a freckled young man who viewed the convoy cars at a Midwestern fuel stop. Rather than risk a serious identification which might later prove wrong, he addressed a companion with pseudo self-confidence. 'It's a light bomber,' he said, 'but I can't see how they're going to get it off the ground.'"

***The Saturday Evening Post,* August 31, 1957**

Part 7

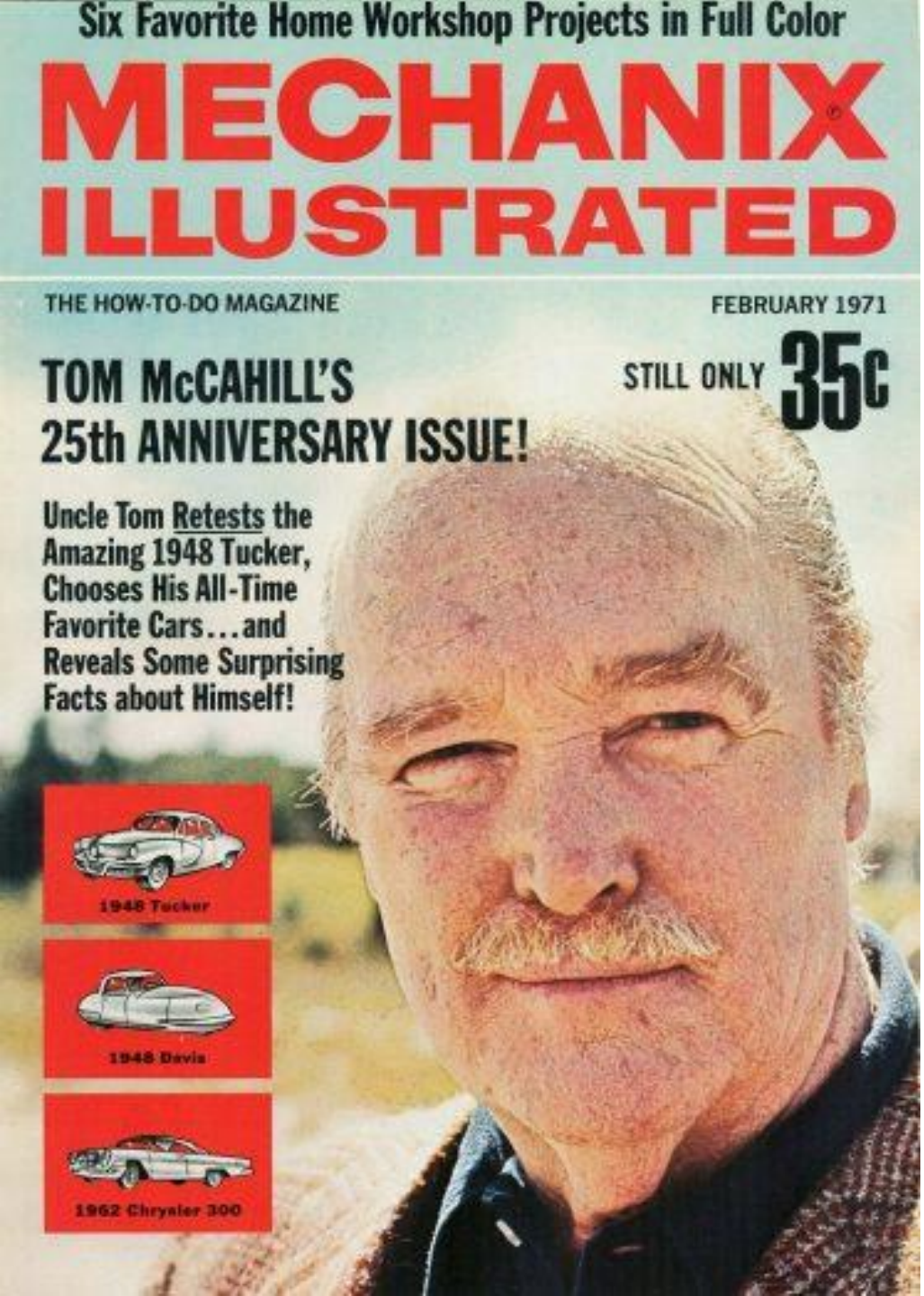
Tom's Take

Going for Broke

One-quarter of a billion dollars went into the Edsel before a single assembly-line car was seen by anyone. Two-hundred-thousand are scheduled for this first year's production. This is a tremendous gamble only companies as large as the Ford Motor Co. are able to take today.

***Mechanix Illustrated,* September 1957**

RE: introduction to an article written by *Tom McCahill* entitled: "McCahill Tests the Ford Motor Company's new EDSEL." Prone to using colorful metaphors (i.e. punching the accelerator on a '48 Olds is like "stepping on a wet sponge"), Yale graduate and one-time Marmon Salesman, Tom McCahill was the car tester for *Mechanix Illustrated* magazine for 29 years, until his death in 1975. Besides the many road tests, there was "Mail to McCahill," which readers found quite amusing.



Thomas Jay McCahill III was once America's foremost automotive journalist with a character as large as his substantial six-foot-two, 250-pound frame. The grandson of a wealthy lawyer, he graduated from Yale with a Fine Arts degree (possibly English, his story changed over time) and was surrounded by the automobile (his father owned Mercedes-Benz dealerships). Taking on two garages of his own, the Depression excised the McCahill wealth, leaving him destitute in NYC. That city's *TIMES* newspaper carried an ad for an Automotive Editor at *Popular Science* with a remit firmly stating: "simple technical review, no brand names." McCahill's sarcastic leanings thus, mentioning those taboo brands, got him sacked, only to be hired the very same day as a freelance writer with rival magazine: *Mechanix Illustrated.*

Loaded for Bear

"WHEN I went to Michigan to test this new offering, it seemed like Alumni Day at the Reform School, as I met old friends and acquaintances at every water cooler and desk. In fact, the new Edsel Division was stacked from top-to-bottom with the cream of former Lincoln, Ford and Mercury Engineers. This indicated to me at once that the Edsel wasn't any flash-in-the-pan, one-shot attempt by Ford to test the market with an 'If it goes - great; if it doesn't - well, we took a chance' attitude…"
***Mechanix Illustrated,* September 1957**

Crème de la Creme

"…Here was a full forward assault, or an automotive blitz-krieg if you prefer. Guys like Bill Burnett, former Ford Executive Engineer, is now Executive Engineer at Edsel. Neil Blume, former Chief Engineer at Lincoln-Mercury, is now Chief Engineer at Edsel. And there are literally dozens of others, the very backbone of the Ford organization. I realized that the Edsel group is a varsity team set-up for a major effort. But why? I wasn't quite sure when I arrived at Dearborn…"

***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**

Raison d’ Etre

"…After having my customary battle with the security-happy doorman at the Engineering Building, I went into conference with Neil Blume, Bill Burnett and Bert Andron, also Executive Engineer and long-time mainstay. My first question was, 'Wh-at the hell do you guys want to build another car for, any-how?' Blume told me that until now the Ford organization felt they lacked the sales power needed to completely cover the market. He came up with some statistics that I must admit flipped me, though I don't doubt them…"

***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**

"…These included the statement that the biggest buyer market is no longer the low-price field but the medium-price field, which is now getting more than 60 per cent of all new car business as against less than 20 per cent just a few years ago. As Blume explained, thanks to the current prosperity, more-and-more long-time Ford buyers have been toying with the idea of moving up a notch in their next car, as a badge of 'success' to show their pals and neighbors…"

***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**

"…Both the other two big camps, Chrysler and General Motors, have a number of cars for Plymouth and Chevy owners beginning to feel the pangs of the caste system. In the General Motors line-up, right above Chevy are Pontiac, the Buick Special and the Olds 88. Over at Chrysler there's Dodge, De Soto and even the Chrysler Windsor if you feel extra expansive. But the Ford Motor Company had only three cars. The next step above a Ford was Mercury, period…"

***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**

"…You don't have to be brighter than a rusty nail to know that not all prospective car-buyers like the same things. If an ambitious Chevy man didn't go for the Buick Special, GM could offer him a Pontiac or an Olds. The same is true at Chrysler. These companies had every buyer escape blocked. The Ford Motor Company, on the other hand, had Mercury and Lincoln - and the Ford boys realized only too well that if the Ford owner with expansive ants-in-his-pants didn't happen to like the Mercury, it was one helluva skip and jump from a Ford up to a Lincoln…"

***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**

"…This meant that many dyed-in-the-wool Ford fans of many years standing were sliding into the GM and Chrysler folds. Ford knew this years ago and the Edsel was fully conceived and underway back in 1954. By 1955 it was in high gear and thousands of designs were tried and tested. Styling (which is always the biggest gamble of all) was run through the wringer until more than 600 company stylists gave it their okay…"
***Mechanix Illustrated,* September 1957**

The Big Bombers

"…At the engineering conference I learned that the new Edsel engines, gigantic V-8s, come in two sizes: the Pacer and Ranger with 361 cubic-inches and the tiger-eating Corsair and Citation, with an engine bigger than Carnegie Hall, displacing 410 cubic-inches - at this writing the biggest automobile engine in many years. Most of my testing was done with the big bombers…"

***Mechanix Illustrated,* September 1957**

Déjà vu All Over Again

"…After our engineering conference, Bill Burnett drove with me to the new Edsel plant, where every model was on display and where I'd get my test cars. As we swung through the gates and approached a magnificent modern building, a little Chinaman in the back of my head hit a gong. The huge water tank said EDSEL. Gigantic silver letters over the entrance said EDSEL. Even the doormats said EDSEL. 'Bill,' I said to Burnett, 'if this isn't the old brand-new Continental factory I was in just two years ago, wrap me in tinfoil and bake me for a potato'…"

***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**

TORQUE-CRAMMED Corsair, Edsel's Executive Engineer Bill Burnett and Uncle Tom.



"…He had to admit it was. This was a little sad because the last time I entered this plant the hope flag was all the way up the pole for the about-to-be-introduced Continental, the original tenant of this huge car barn. Continentals are now being made in the same plant with the regular Lincolns…"
***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**

First Impression



"…Once inside this parts zoo I saw Edsels of every form and description and I believe my first words to Burnett were, 'So you stole the grille from an old Alfa-Romeo!'…"

***Mechanix Illustrated,* September 1957**

<u>Above</u>: 1955 Alfa Romeo 1900 CSS Coupe (front view of grille)


ALFA-ROMEO
MILANO

Not Since Elsa Maxwell Was a Girl

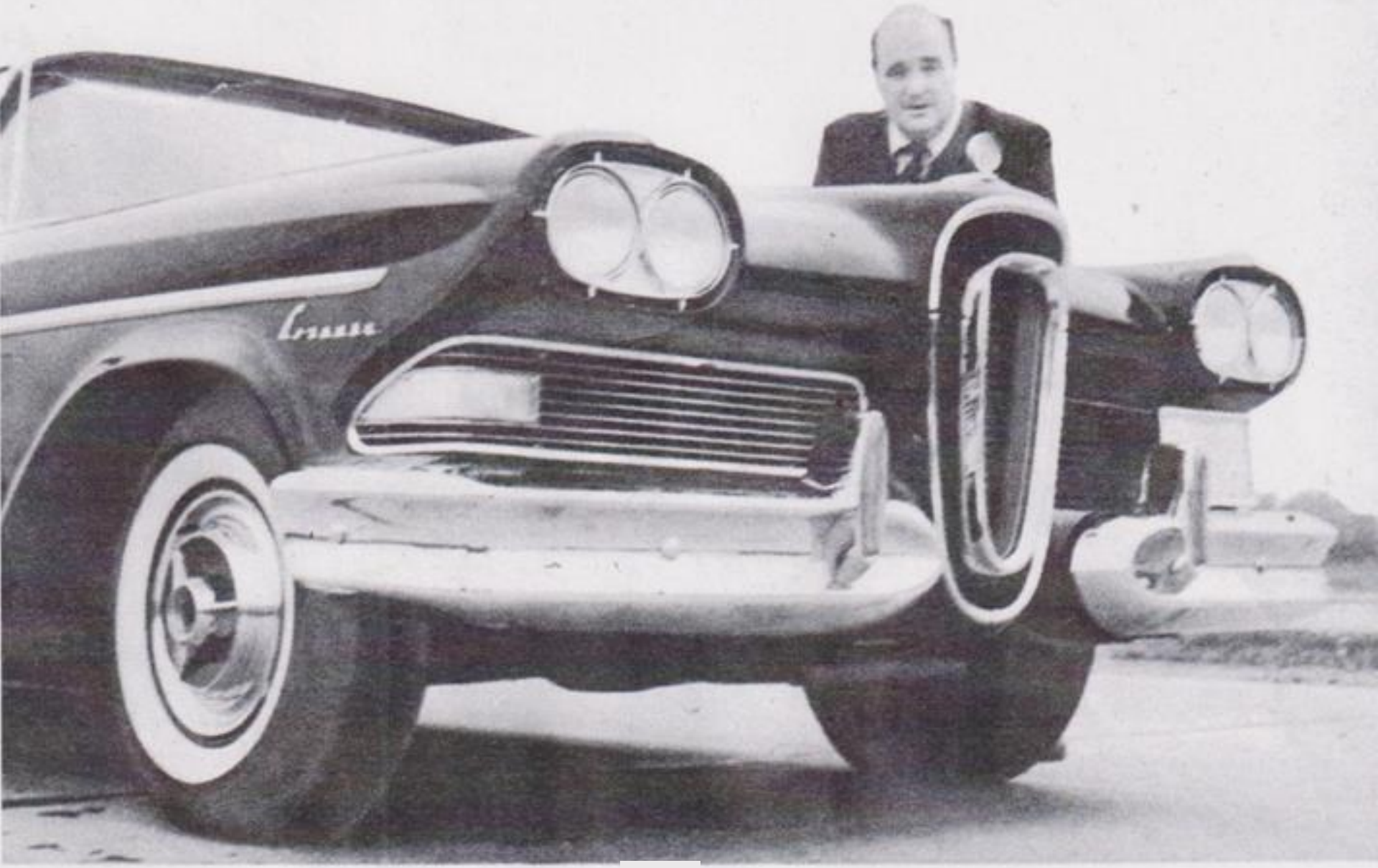




"…The Edsel's front-end is the really distinctive-looking thing about this car. It is the first up-and-down grille since Elsa Maxwell was a girl…"

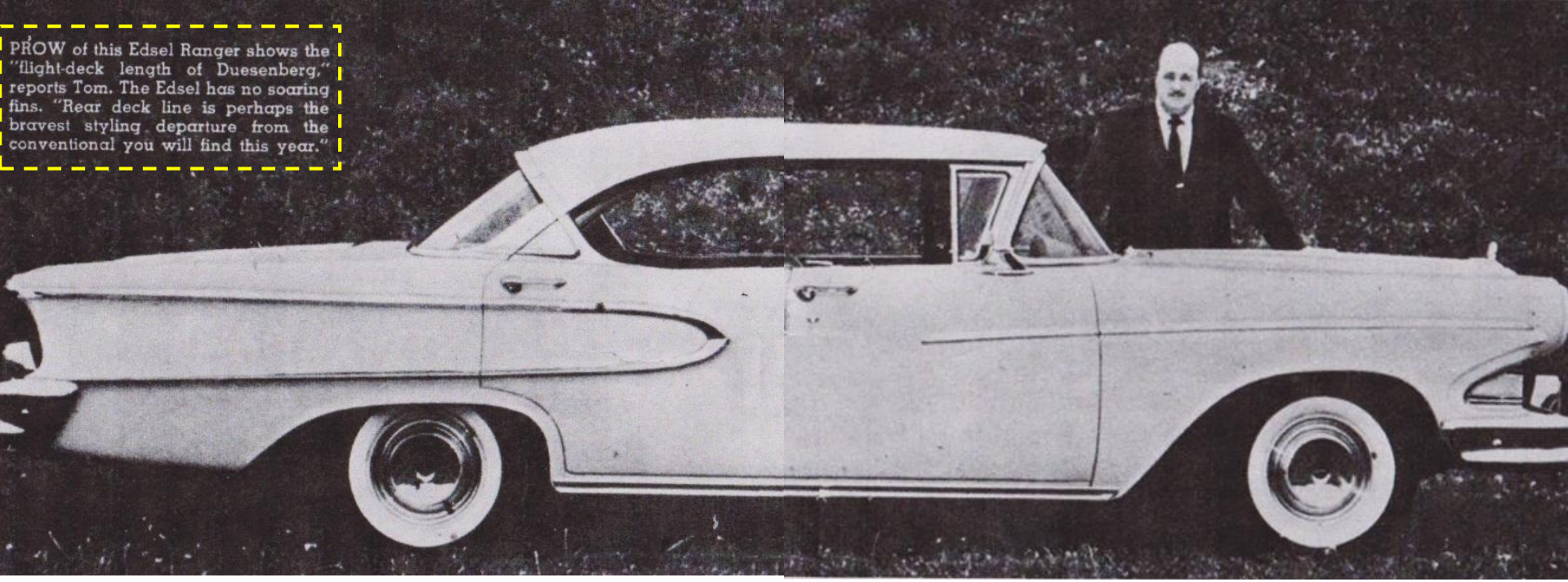
Mechanix Illustrated,
Sept. 1957

<u>Above & Left</u>: front-end view of 1958 Edsel



"EDSEL'S front end is the really distinctive-looking thing about this car," says Tom.

Past is Prologue



"…The long hood is another classic dive into the past and you boys of the raccoon-coat-and-hipflask school will be bursting with nostalgia, as the Edsel's prow has all the flight-deck-length of the Duesenberg and other great classics long gone over the hill…"

***Mechanix Illustrated,* September 1957**

Caption: "PROW of this Edsel Ranger shows the 'flight-deck length of Duesenberg,' reports Tom. The Edsel has no soaring fins. 'Rear deck line is perhaps the bravest styling departure from the conventional you will find this year.'"

"…When I was a callow youth about all you had to do to make a car's looks acceptable was to build your hood a foot or two longer than the competition's…"

***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**



SPLIT DESIGN of taillights is unique. Half of light is on trunk, half on rear deck.

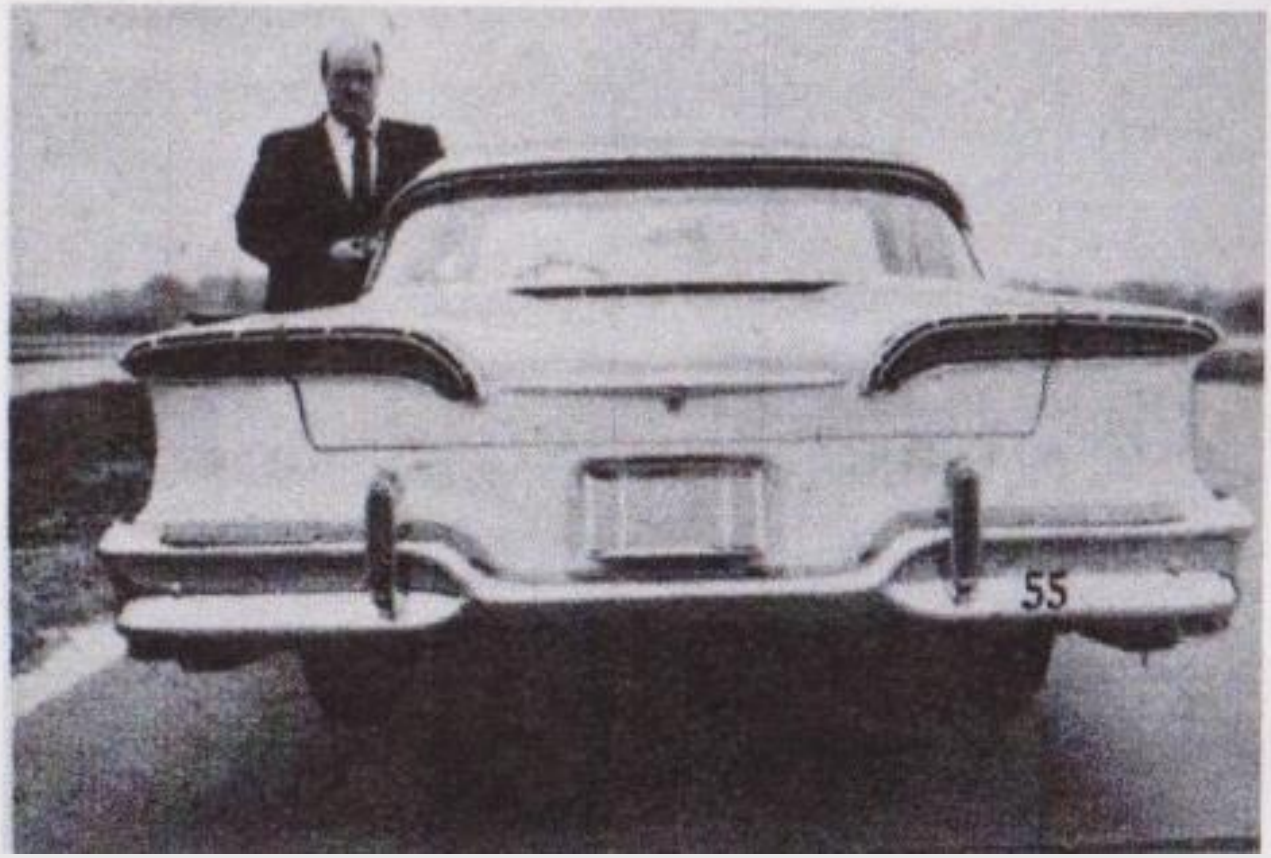


LIGHT SPLITS in two when the trunk is up. Design gives rear end of car a novel look.

"…The Edsel's rear deck line is perhaps the bravest styling departure from the conventional you will find this year. It has completely ignored the current popular trend toward fins. In fact, it is a flatty with two huge, boomerang-shaped tail-lights…"

***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**

REAR DECK is "flatty with two huge, boomerang-shaped taillights," according to Tom.




657


E D S E L


KM 521


KM 521
660


KM 521


E D S E L

Eyes on the Prize

"…How this will go across with the finny set is a matter for serious conjecture. An item such as this, silly as it may seem, could cause the failure or success of a new car in a field where anything less than 200,000 units-a-year is a flop…."
***Mechanix Illustrated,* September 1957**

Easy on the Eyes

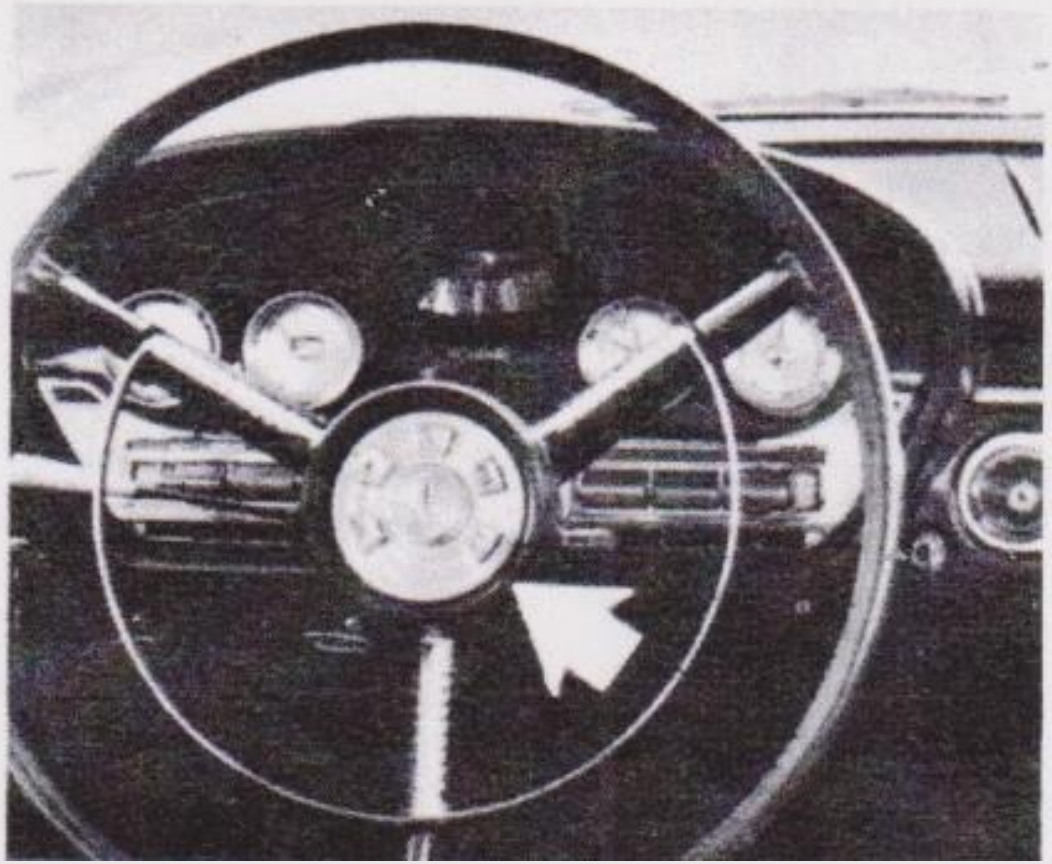
"…The instrument panel is nice and clean, with a huge revolving-type speedometer which during my tests developed unnecessary inertia but will unquestionably be dampened before these cars are turned over to the public…"
***Mechanix Illustrated,* September 1957**

No Small Accomplishment

"…On the automatic transmission jobs the shift is by push-buttons, located in the hub of the steering wheel where the horn button used to be and making them the easiest-to-find pushbuttons in the industry. This was no small accomplish-ment because the position of the buttons has to stay fixed ev-en when the wheel is turned. This was achieved through so-me very ingenious gearing which permits the outside of the wheel to turn while the center-hub with its pushbuttons and wires remains stationary…"

***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**

"EASIEST TO FIND pushbuttons in industry," says Tom, are where horn used to be.



"…Another feature of this transmission - and a real feature too - is that once it's been put into Park position (which locks the car up like a rock) it can't be taken out of Park until the ignition is turned on. This makes it pretty foolproof against the small Benedict Arnolds in your household…"

***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**

How She Goes

"…But now let's take the bolt bag out on the test track and see how she goes…"

***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**

A Blender Gone Wild

"…In straight-line performance the Edsel's tremendous torque actually presents a problem. With only myself in the big Corsair with its 410 cubic-inch engine, it was impossible on any type of road surface, including ribbed concrete, to give it a full jump start. On ribbed concrete every time I shot the throttle to the floor quickly, the wheels spun like a gone-wild Waring Blender. This car has enough starting torque to yank the Empire State Building off its foundations…"

***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**

"…When I asked what the rear-axle ratio of the test car was I was told 2.92. Later on at lunch I was informed by Dick Krafve, V.P. of the Ford Motor Company and General Manager of the Edsel Division, that they might go down to 2.73 on their production cars…"

***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**

"…As you rod boys know, with this sort of gearing if the torque would stay with you, you'd do almost 100 mph at idling speeds…"

***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**

"…The best 0-60 mph times I could make averaged 8.7 seconds and 0-30 averaged three seconds flat. To do this, I was forced to feather the throttle to avoid wheel break and I couldn't help but wonder what this salami would really do if it had enough road adhesion to keep the wheels from spinning and you could shove the throttle through to the front axle. As you approach top speeds the 2.92 rear axle makes itself known and unraveling from 90 mph-up is a bit slowish. However, the car will reach a full 120 mph eventually…"

***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**

Showgirls and Diamonds

"…This is a nice car to handle on the corners, responsive as a showgirl to diamonds and, in my opinion, pretty good-looking…"

***Mechanix Illustrated,* September 1957**

Horsebacky

"…In the big Citation I tested, at high speeds especially through corners, I found the suspension a little too horsebacky. In other words, it galloped when I didn't want it to gallop and was far too soft a ride for so much performance potential. I mentioned this to one of the top Engineers who told me that when the production models started coming off the line they would probably be a little stiffer than my test car…"

***Mechanix Illustrated,* September 1957**

A Christmas Surprise

"…In addition he said the Edsel could be ordered with what they call an 'Export Kit' - meaning heavier springs and shocks. For my dough I wouldn't own one except with the export kit; without stiffer suspension, a car with so much performance could prove similar to opening a Christmas basket of King Cobras in a small room with the lights out…"

***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**

For Your Convenience

"…Another nice new feature is the self-adjusting brake, which compensates for wear. The Edsel also has a red warning light on the dash which tips you off when any door is not fully closed. The new combination heating, air-conditioning and defrosting gizmo is all on one switch, and all electrically-operated, which simplifies operation. The turn indicator lights on the front-end wrap around so that your turning intentions can be seen even from the side…"

***Mechanix Illustrated,* September 1957**


110 120 0 10 20
24890


BLOWER
WIPERS
LIGHTER


LIGHTS
ANTENNA
COURTESY


E
F
FUEL
COURTESY


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R.P.M. x 1000
E
FUEL
LIGHTS
690


12
6
WIPERS
LIGHTER
691


HEAT
DEFROST
AIR
OFF
HI
LO
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692


5 5 6 7 8 9 11 14 16
OFF


OFF
694




696




SERIAL NUMBER
MADE IN U. S. A. BY
EDSEL
REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.
BODY COLOR TRIM DATE TRANS AXLE
THIS VEHICLE IS CONSTRUCTED UNDER UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENTS
2 270 122 2 590 719 2 628 833 2 677 572 2 708 594
2 290 927 2 612 829 2 631 694 2 677 574 2 726 894
2 310 416 2 617 681 2 639 938 2 698 012
OTHER PATENTS PENDING

Summing-up

"…In summing-up, the new Edsel models, with the big and even bigger engines, serve as ball-stoppers behind second base and shortstop all the way from the Ford line right th-rough Mercury and on up to Lincoln…"

***Mechanix Illustrated,* September 1957**

"…The small one (and it's small only by comparison) uses the Fairlane body shell from the Ford line while the bigger Citation series shares part of the Mercury shell. These are interesting-looking cars and a real gutty move to bring something new to the buyers…"

***Mechanix Illustrated*, September 1957**

New and Hot

SPECIFICATIONS

MODEL TESTED:
1958 Edsel Corsair (four-door hardtop sedan)

ENGINE:
V8 cylinder, OHV; bore 4.20 inches, stroke 3.70 inches; maximum torque 475 foot pounds @ 2900 rpm; brake horsepower 345 @ 4600 rpm; compression ratio 10.5 to 1

DIMENSIONS:
Wheelbase 124.05 inches; overall length 215.59 inches; tread 59.38 inches front, 59 rear; width 79.84 inches; height 56.80 inches; weight 4,381 pounds; standard tire size 8.50x14; gas tank 20 gals

PERFORMANCE:
0 to 30 mph, 3.0 seconds
0 to 50 mph, 7.0 seconds
0 to 60 mph, 8.7 seconds
0 to 70 mph, 13.1 seconds
Top speed, 120 mph

SPEEDOMETER ERROR:
At 60 mph on speedometer, actual speed 56.8 mph

"…The Edsel is loaded with performance and new ideas. The big engine at this writing claims 345 horsepower and 475 foot-pounds of torque in the Corsair and Citation models. The Pacer and Ranger have the 303-horsepower job. In a few words, Edsel is the newest - and it's hot."

Mechanix Illustrated,
Sept. 1957

Part 8

The Edsel (according to MT)

“E” is for Edsel

After several years of rumors. Ford has announced that the E (Edsel) car will be released in the fall of '57. Here on these pages are details of what MOTOR TREND thinks the Edsel will look like.

***MOTOR TREND,* February 1957**

RE: introduction to an article entitled: "Is This the Car?" As the 1950s progressed, U.S. automakers focused on satisfying the growing American affluence with an array of mid-priced offerings.

Style and Horse-sense



"BACK in 1934, Edsel Ford was responsible for the development of the Lincoln-Zephyr. There is a large field of prospects among the middle classes, he said, 'who are able to pay more for a car – and pride, vanity, a desire for something more impressive enter very strongly into the sale.' Henry Ford once said of the creator of the Lincoln-Continental, 'We've got a good man in my son. He knows style – how a car ought to look, and he has mechanical horse-sense, too'…"

***MOTOR TREND,* February 1957**

RE: the original prototype of the Lincoln-Continental, was built in 1939 (as a 1940 model) under the direction of Edsel Ford (when he was Pres.of FMC)

<u>Caption</u>: "FMC's Design Department in 1939"



The original Lincoln-Continental was conceived and built, initially, as a personal car for Edsel Ford. The car had a V-12 engine and was made in two body styles; coupe-hardtop and cabriolet (convertible). The first Lincoln-Continental was less than 62-inches-high.

<u>Caption</u>: “1941 Lincoln-Continental Cabriolet”

The Potentialities of the Market



"…Now, 23 years after the first Lincoln-Zephyr, Ford is preparing a car to dominate this upper middle-class market: the Edsel, named in honor of the man who believed in the potentialities of the market…"

***MOTOR TREND,* February 1957**

RE: in April 1939, Edsel Ford decided to produce 1940 Lincoln-Continentals and introduce them in October 1939, along with the rest of the Lincoln-Zephyr line

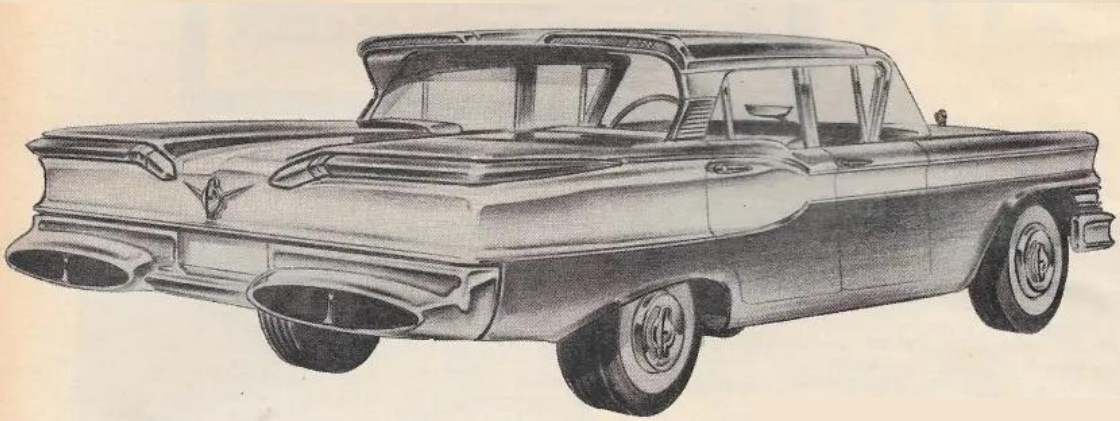
"…Also, another Edsel model will be built in the range between Ford and Mercury…"

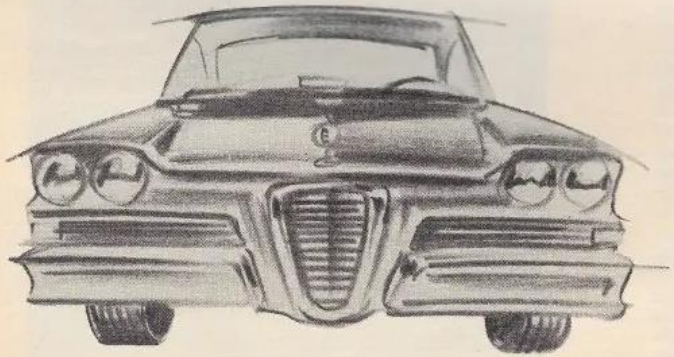
***MOTOR TREND,* February 1957**

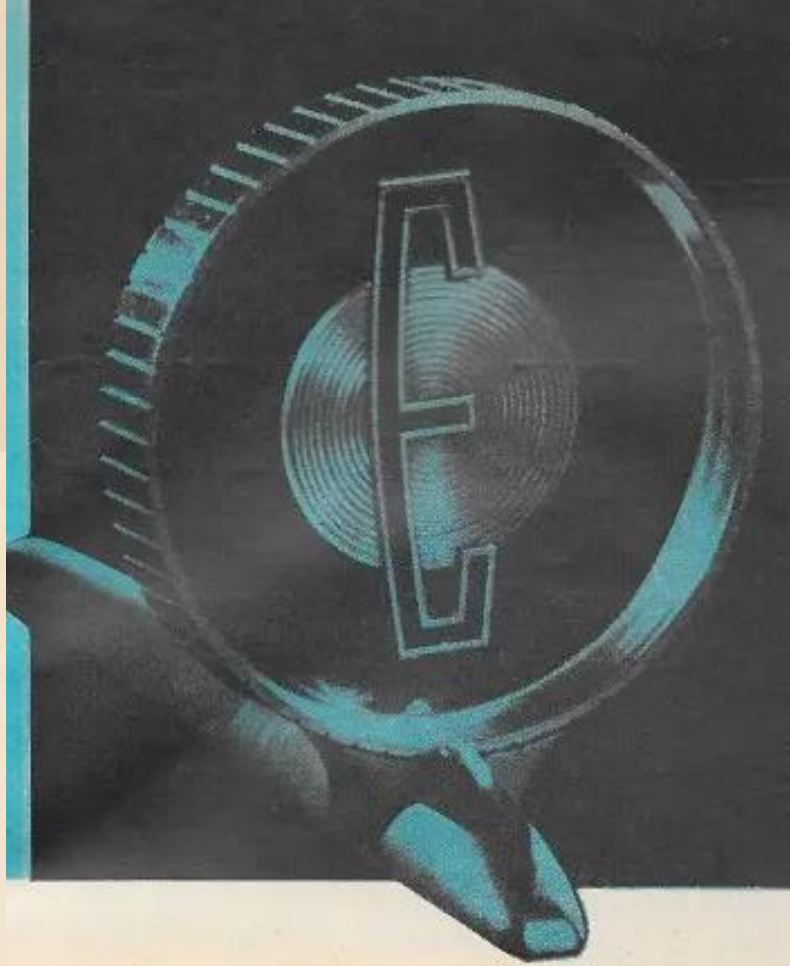
RE: FMC felt the need to broaden their upmarket range of cars. Thus, with great fanfare and expense, the new Edsel Division was launched and MT was there to put their two-cents worth in on the new mystery car.

Speculating









"…At MOTOR TREND we have made some speculations, styling-wise, and have come up with the ideas illustrated on these pages…"

MOTOR TREND,
Feb. 1957



"…We think we might be pretty close to the real thing. You will be able to judge <u>how</u> close when you see the car. We think there will be an effort to obtain a 'classic' appearance – a stateliness, combined with a minimum of flair…"

***MOTOR TREND*, February 1957**

Sharing Shells



"…The '57 Ford and Mercury don't share the same body shell as in previous years and it is rumored that both of the new bodies will be shared with the Edsel to effect the expansion of the middle-price range, both above and below the Mercury…"

***MOTOR TREND,* February 1957**

RE: the Ford line of cars grew in 1957. The Crown Victoria, with its chrome "crown" was no more and the acrylic glass-roofed Crown Victoria Skyliner was dropped in place of a new model; the retractable roof hardtop Skyliner. A new chassis allowed the floor pan to be placed lower, which led to a lower silhouette. Wheels were now 14-inches in diameter, adding to the lower profile. As well, the 312 cubic-inch V-8 had increased horsepower.

<u>Caption</u>: "1957 For Fairlane 500 Hardtop"

Likely to Have

"…The Edsel is likely to have the more expensive roll-down rear window and 'flying roof' of the Turnpike Cruiser. Without much doubt, it will also have a compound-curved windshield (wrapping over the top as well as to the sides)…"
***MOTOR TREND*, February 1957**

The *Futura* is Now



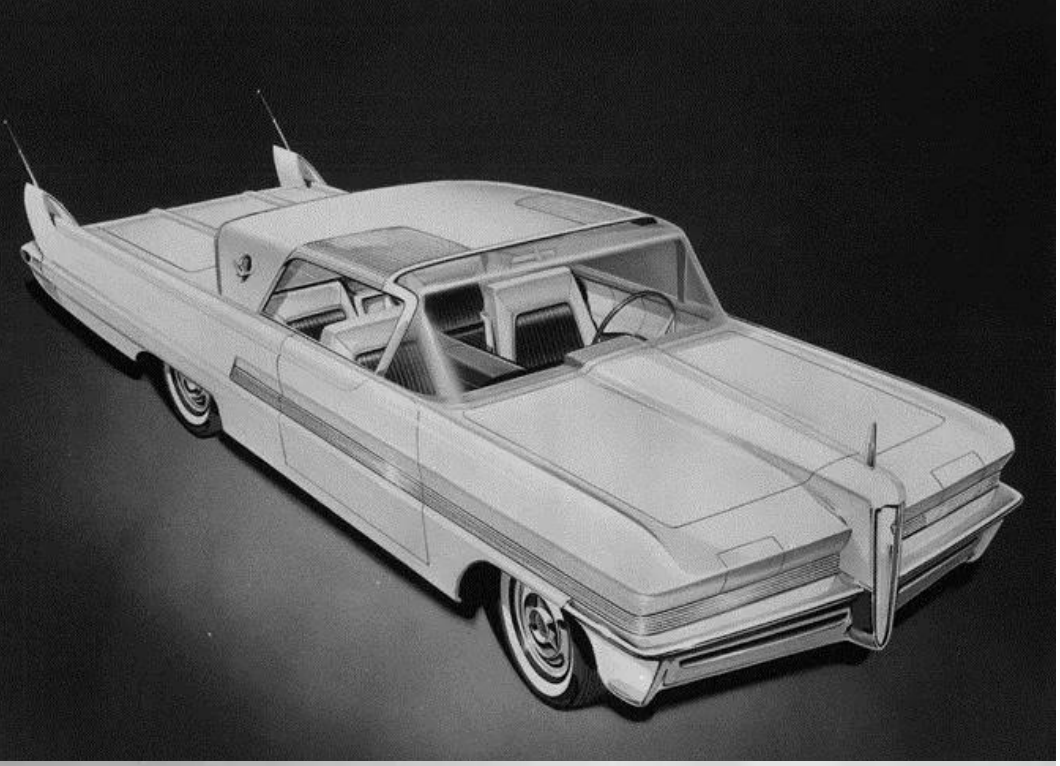
"…Elements of the experimental 'Futura,' built by the former Lincoln-Mercury Division, will probably show-up in such details as the tail-lights and bumpers…"

***MOTOR TREND,* February 1957**

<u>Above</u>: the 1955 Lincoln *Futura* was a concept car promoted by FMC's Lincoln-Mercury Division; hand-built by Ghia in Turin, Italy, at a cost of $250K. Displayed on the auto show circuit in 1955, the *Futura* was modified into the *Batmobile* for the 1966 TV series *Batman*.


GREASE LIGHTNING
BATMOBILE

A Distinctive Character

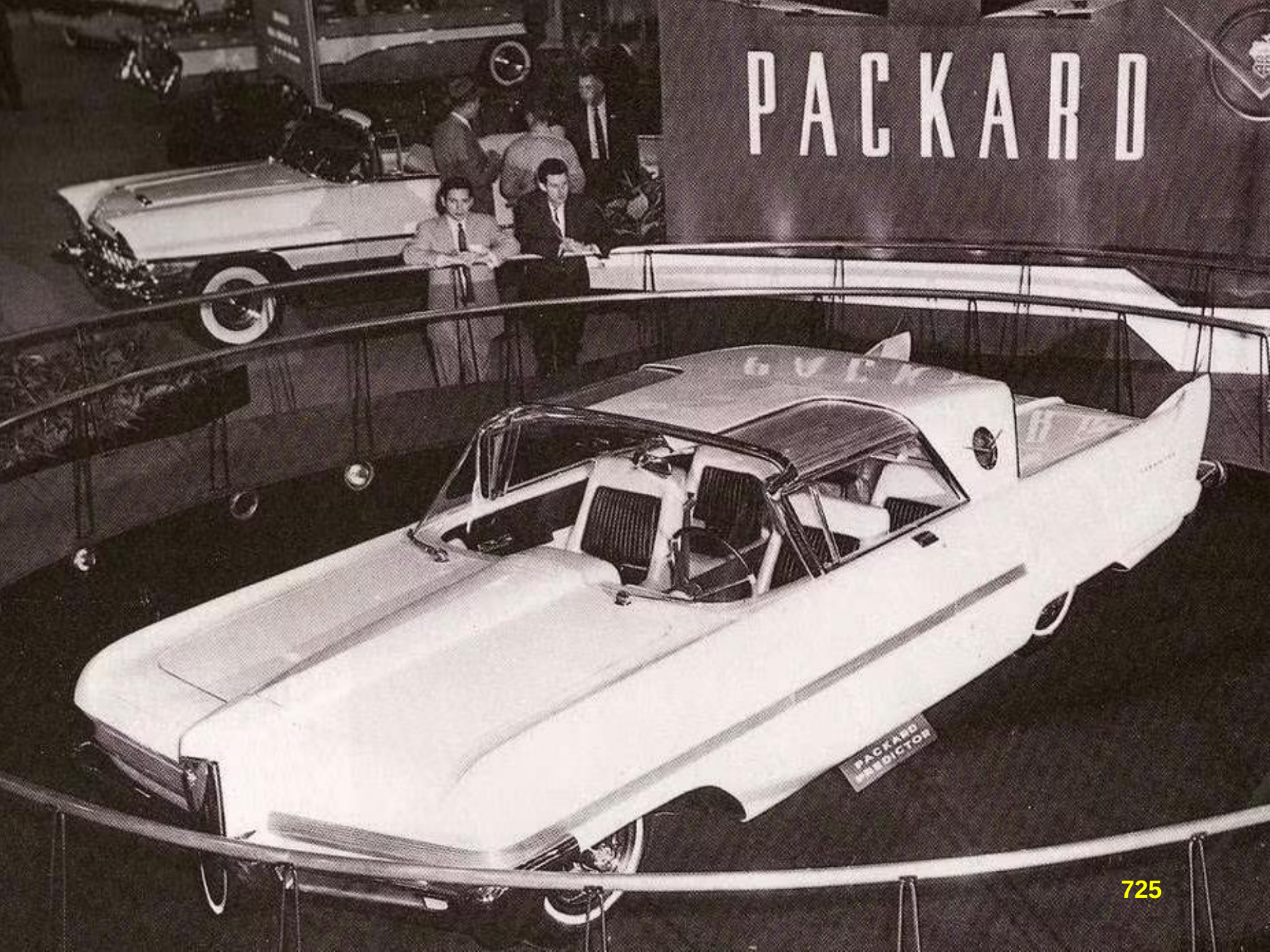




"…To establish the classic character and a definite identity, a vertical grille may be incorporated into the front-end, as Packard did on the 'Predictor.' The raised hood would probably then be carried through the roof and rear deck in the same manner as the concave sections of the Mercury…"

***MOTOR TREND,* February 1957**

<u>Left T&B</u>: the Packard *Predictor* concept car made its debut at the 1956 Chicago Auto Show. The one and only *Predictor* can be seen at the Studebaker National Museum in South Bend, IN.


PACKARD
PACKARD
PREDICTOR

"…Since this would be a radical departure from the contemporary concept, we have offered another solution with the more conventional flat hood that still retains a distinctive character. We will know at announcement time, say August or September."

***MOTOR TREND*, February 1957**

A Difference With a Distinction



In 1956, FMC introduced the Continental Mark II into a price class that had no domestic competitors. Established as a separate division, Continental built 3K units and suspended production mid-1957 for the second time. Most of the Mark IIs were sold by the time Cadillac began producing their competing Eldorado Brougham. Some say that the Continental styling was too 'old-fashioned' – yet a number of its aristocratic styling features were lifted and applied to the Thunderbird so that, even today, some people mistake one for the other at a distance. There is one big difference: the Thunderbird enjoyed an extremely healthy sales record.

***MOTOR TREND,* October 1957**

RE: introduction to an article, entitled: "How Good is the Edsel"

<u>Caption</u>: "1956 luxury: Continental Mark II (L) and Ford Thunderbird (R)"

In Over Their Heads(?)

"NOW Ford's third new postwar car has been announced – their most ambitious venture to-date. Fanfare has preceded this new car and some are now saying that they're in over their heads; that the Edsel hasn't a chance against the target area occupied by Dodge, De Soto, Pontiac, Oldsmobile and some Buicks. Other closer observers are of the opinion that FoMoCo is even competing against their own Ford and Mercury cars…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

Problematical

"…The economics of the matter are that the announced $250-million has to be paid-off, according to Edsel officials, in three years if the project is to be in the black. This means that in a price-range making up about 60 percent of the total new car market, Edsel must sell in the vicinity of 200-230,000 units per-year to reach the break-even point. It seems quite problematical whether a new car can enter such a stiffly competing area of the overall market and take that large a chunk out of it…"

***MOTOR TREND,* October 1957**

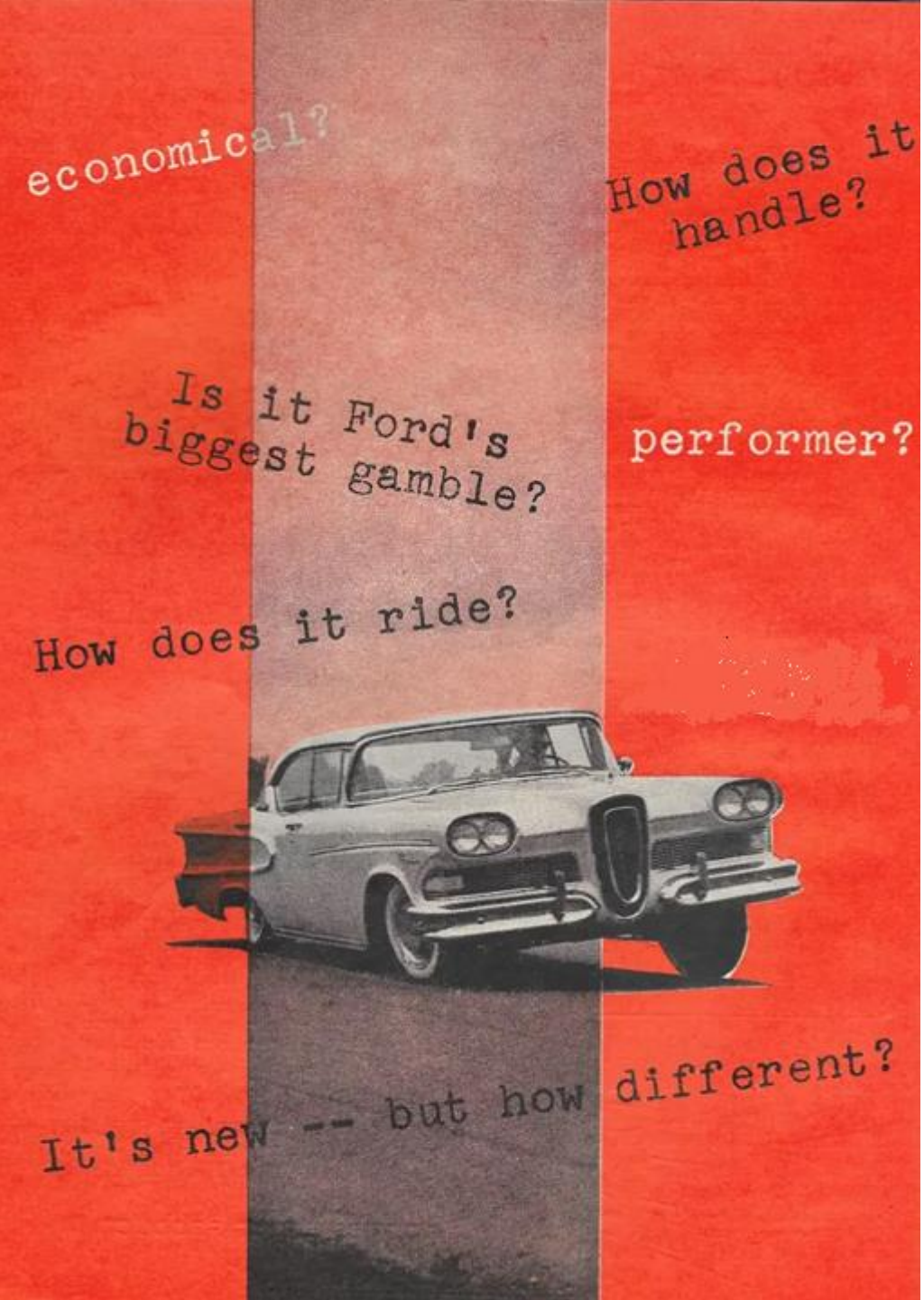
RE: MT expressed skepticism about the new Edsel division from the get-go, noting how challenging it would be for the car to break into the highly competitive mid-priced segment and immediately command a large share of sales. Edsel did not even come close to selling the +200K units needed to break-even: first year production topped-out at only 61,925 units. In the mid-priced bracket, only De Soto, with 49,445 units sold, did worse.

Conquest Car

"…A conquest car – one aimed at garnering other manufacturers' customers – is the way Edsel will be pushed. The monumental task of setting-up a new sales organization appears staggering to the imagination of those on the outside…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

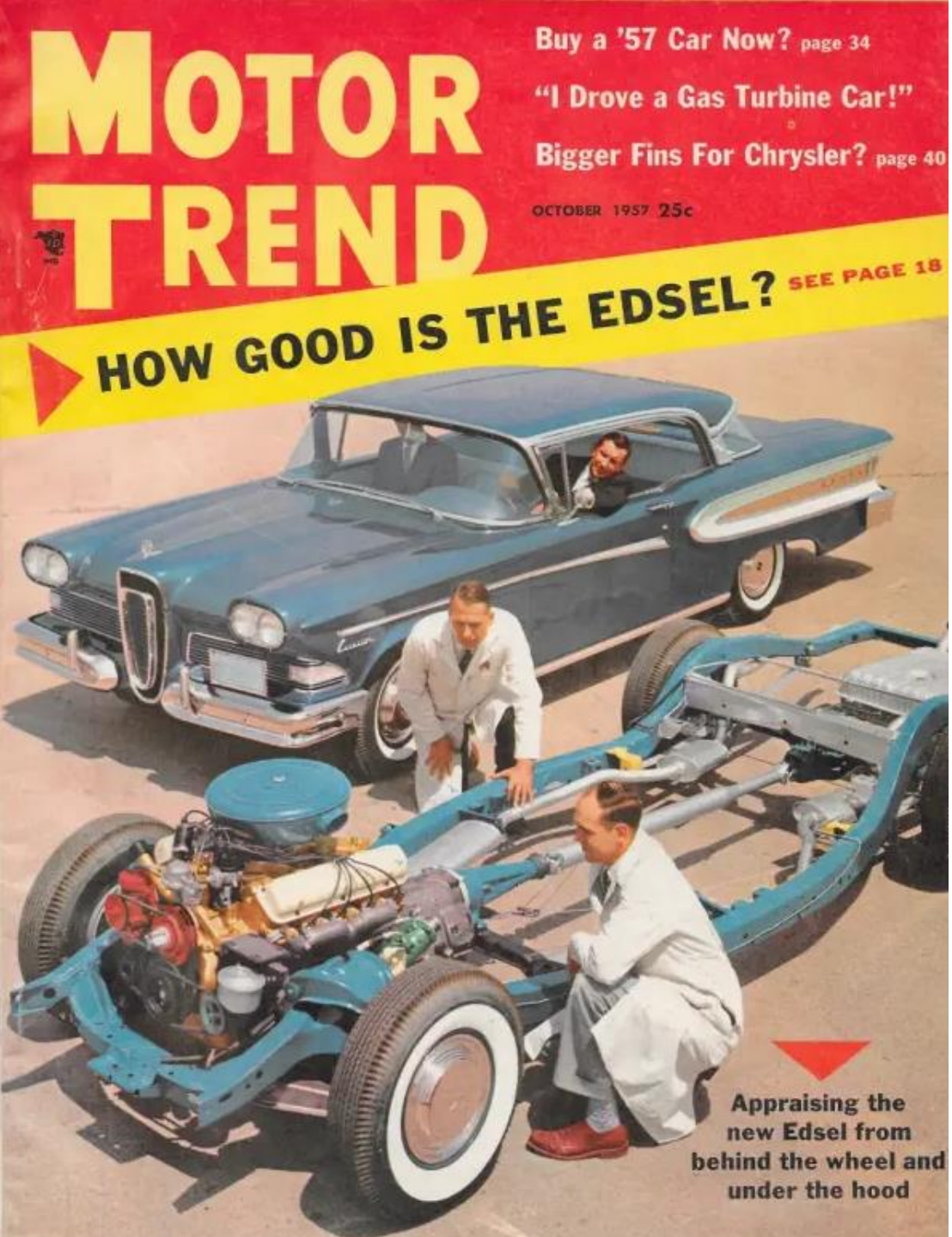
How Good?



"…If Edsel can accomplish the task set for it, the car had better be good! Just how good can best be answered by analyzing those features and points that you haven't seen (or won't see) in the showroom…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

Behind the Wheel & Under the Hood



"…This new car is longer than the longest '57 Ford and Mercury models. Height is another matter, for although the wheels are the new 14-inchers, the Edsel tops its '57 relatives by a fraction-of-an-inch. Headroom front and rear in the sedans is also fractionally less than in comparable '57 Fords and Mercurys. Hip room, however is greater than in the '57 Ford; approximately the same as in the Mercury. Your garage may seem a bit narrower; the Edsel is about two-to-five inches wider than both the '57 Ford and Big-M…"

MOTOR TREND,
Oct. 1957

Safety First! (Optional)

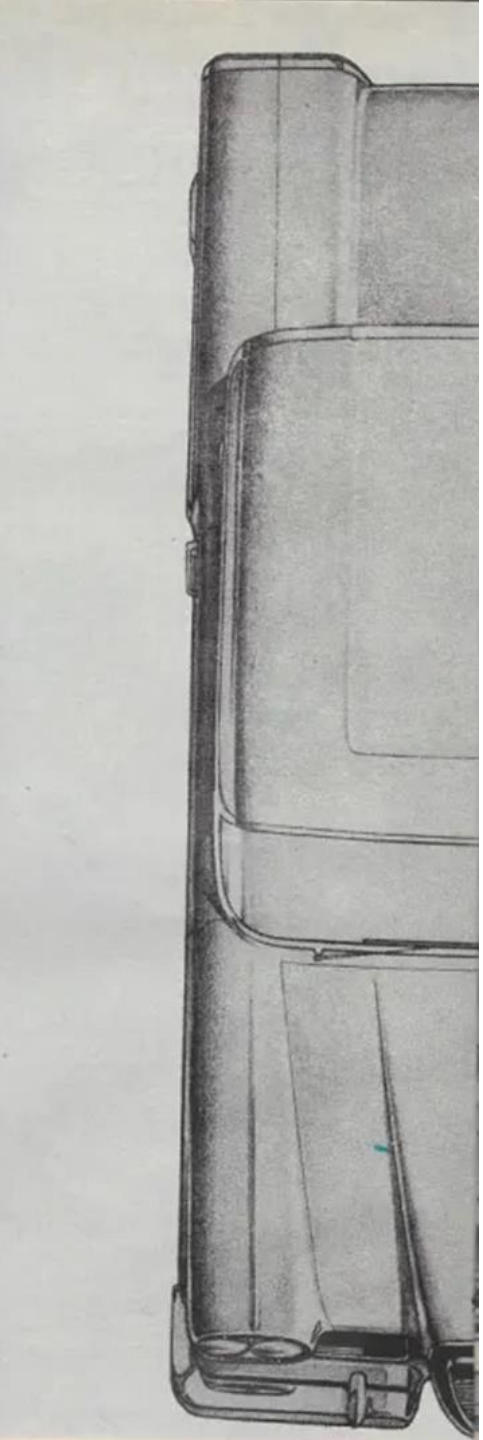
"…Interiors reflect FoMoCo's concern for safety with the installation of dished steering wheels, padded dashes and safety belts – optional in most cases…"
***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

In Every Respect

"…Though not six-feet tall by nearly two-inches, the writer found the Ranger and Pacer test-cars put at our disposal to be most comfortable in every respect. The front seats move easily in both manually and power-operated options. In the former case, the seat tracks slant upwards to raise the seat in its forward position; power options for seats include both two- and three-way options…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

Forward Vision



"…The driving position is excellent, with an over-hood view on-par with the best in '57. Only when cresting the steep test hills did the center-high nose protrude; the redeeming factor when in such a circumstance is that the gouged or depressed outer part of each side of the hood enhances forward vision…"
***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

"…The vacuum-operated wipers (on each test car) move in opposition and stop conveniently in the center; it appears that the usual difficulty of seeing out of the windshield corners in heavy rain or snow will be experienced. Distortion in the windshield glass was a shade above average – this problem is yet to be licked…"

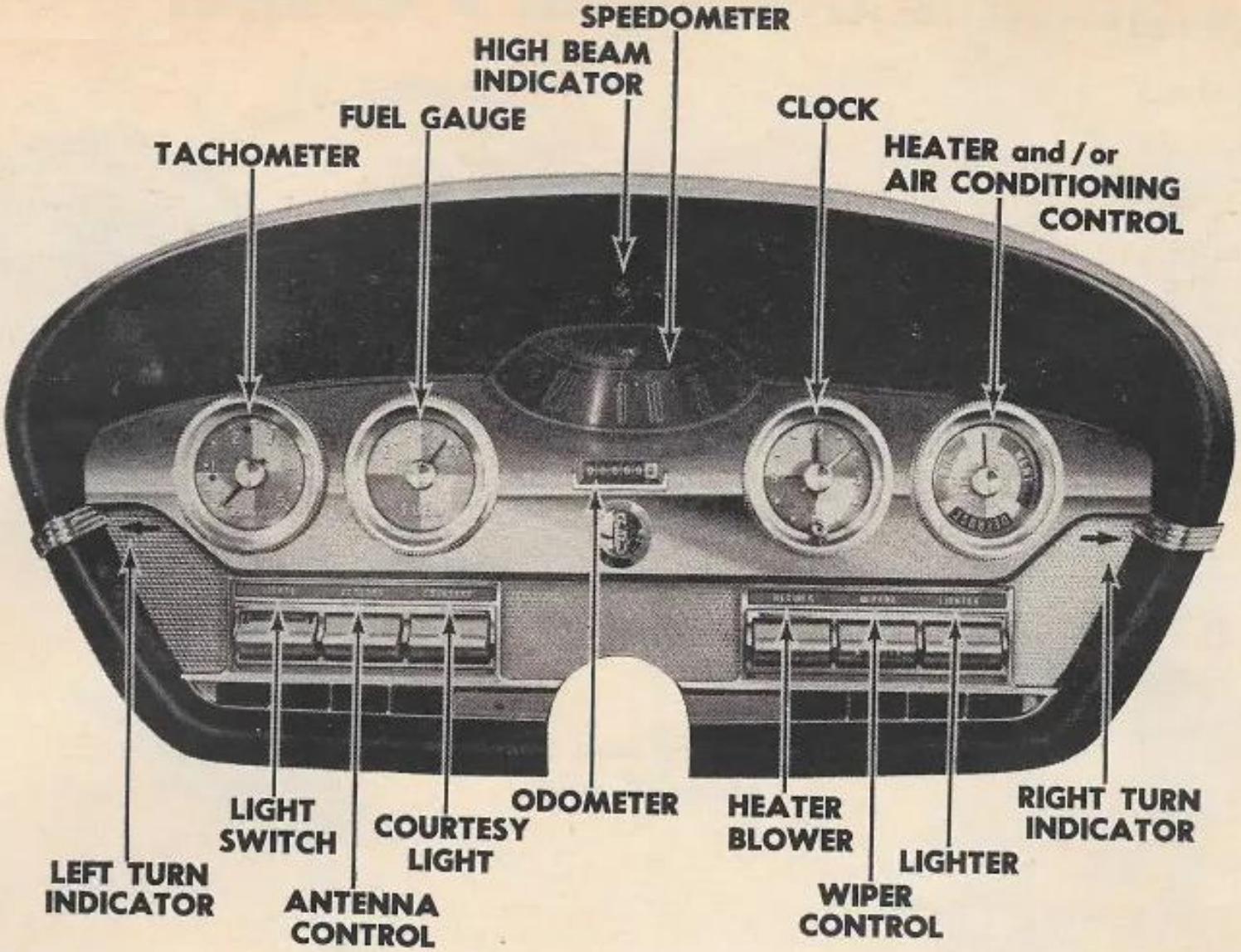
***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

Beautiful & Efficient



"…The instrument panel in a fully-equipped Edsel is both beautiful and quite efficient…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**



"…The speedometer; a stylized horizontally rolling dome-like object with large white figures on a dark background, is located where it is immediately readable…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

"…Two optional dials good for the gimmick fanciers are the tachometer and fresh-air control. The latter is a single knob with which you can dial the amount of exterior fresh air or heat desires. When equipped with air-conditioning the single dial controls the amount of refrigeration desired in one single motion – a true innovation…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

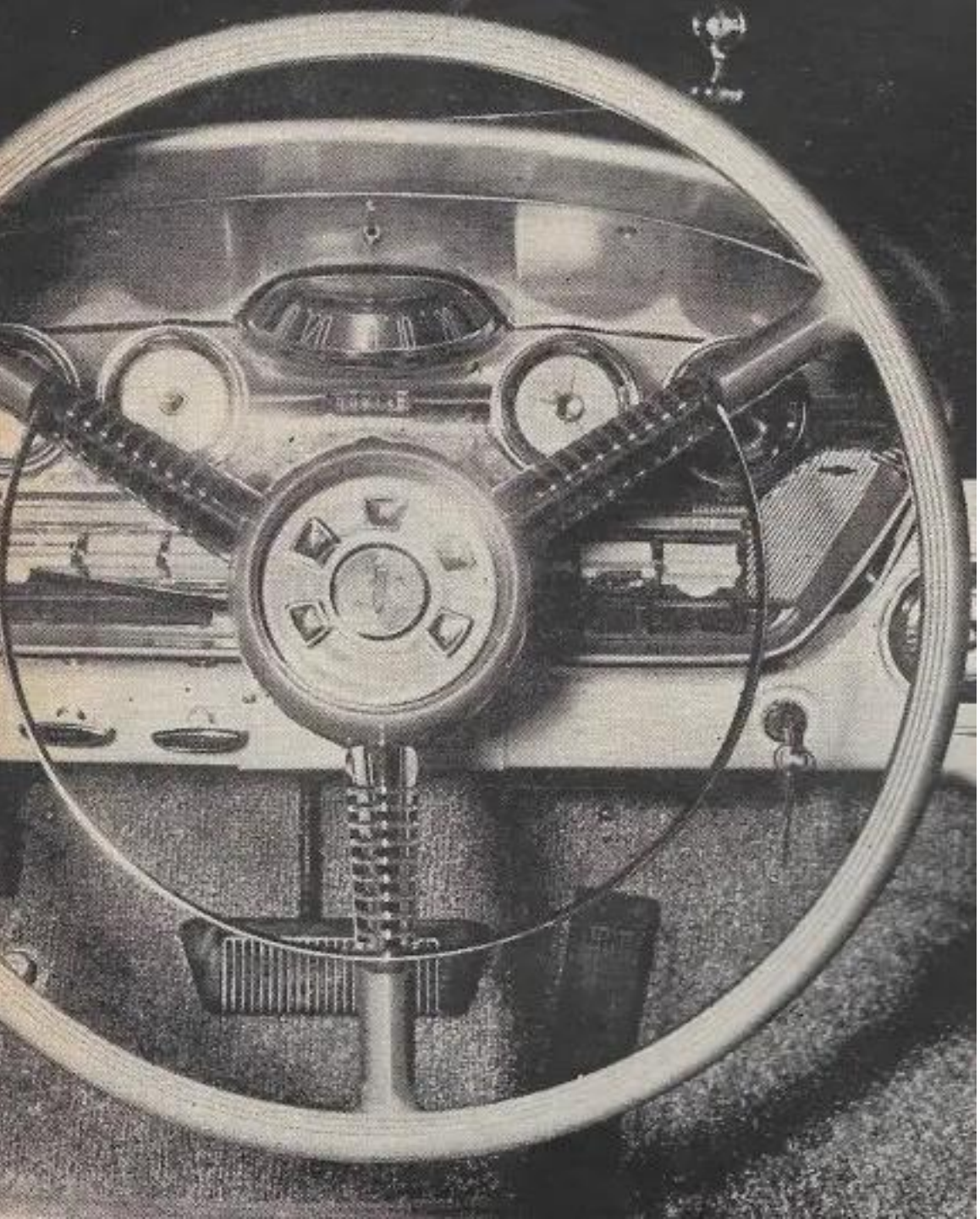
A Goodly Assortment

"…As so often is the case on modern cars, there is a goodly assortment of warning lights…"
***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

"…To supplement the standard fuel-level gauge there is an optional fuel level warning light, the oil-pressure light; one for generator; one for the hand brake; one to warn of an open door (a practical idea); an oil-level warning light; a green cold engine tell-tale and, finally, a red light to warn of an over-heated engine…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

The Big Edsel Innovation



"…The steering wheel, with its two-thirds horn-ring, has a good feel and is positioned well. The big Edsel innovation is the compact circular group of transmission control buttons in the wheel's hub. You need not take your eyes off the road for an instant, you need not grope to find the right button when jockeying for a parking place . . . Your hand soon learns the control positions for PARK, REVERSE, NEUTRAL, DRIVE and LOW…"

MOTOR TREND,
Oct. 1957

"…Called 'Teletouch,' the hub-mounted selector remedies a situation that other button systems have failed to recognize – that most folks are <u>not</u> left-handed and that there are some times (as when inadvertently stalled for a moment) when one's hands must fly from buttons on the left to the wheel, to the ignition switch key, back to buttons and wheel in order to get underway…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

"…For those who still prefer the 'ancient' lever-operated automatic transmission, he too can be satisfied by the Ranger, Pacer and all wagons can be had with the familiar lever…"
***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

Powertrain

"…The economy-minded can have the three-speed synchro-mesh stick-shift with or without optional overdrive, but only in the wagons and smaller Ranger and Pacer series. In the Corsair and Citation models the automatic torque converter with planetary gearset giving three overall ratios is standard…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

"…The engines are new and, though there are points of resemblance to last year's big FoMoCo units, there is no similarity in the specifications in either case, at least dimensionwise…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

"…Each engine has integral block and crankcase one-piece design cast of Ford's own iron alloy. There are five main bearings in each with end thrust being taken by number 3 main. Both mills use a molded-type crank made of 'Pearlitic' alloy iron – little final machining is required and these cranks are said to be extremely durable. Each block carries its oil filter at the left front and the lubrication system is of the full-pressure type with the exception of the piston-pins and tim-ing-gear or chain which are by oil mist and pressure spray, respectively…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

"…Servicing the filter will be easier on the bigger 'E-475' engine for one need not circumvent or fumble around the fuel pump mounted above the front of the block. The smaller 'E-400' plant has its fuel pump slightly in front and above the oil filter…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

"…Both engines use a new distributor with both vacuum and centrifugal spark advance, single four-barrel downdraft carburetors, more easily reached spark plugs and have disposable dry-pack type air cleaners of generous size…"
***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

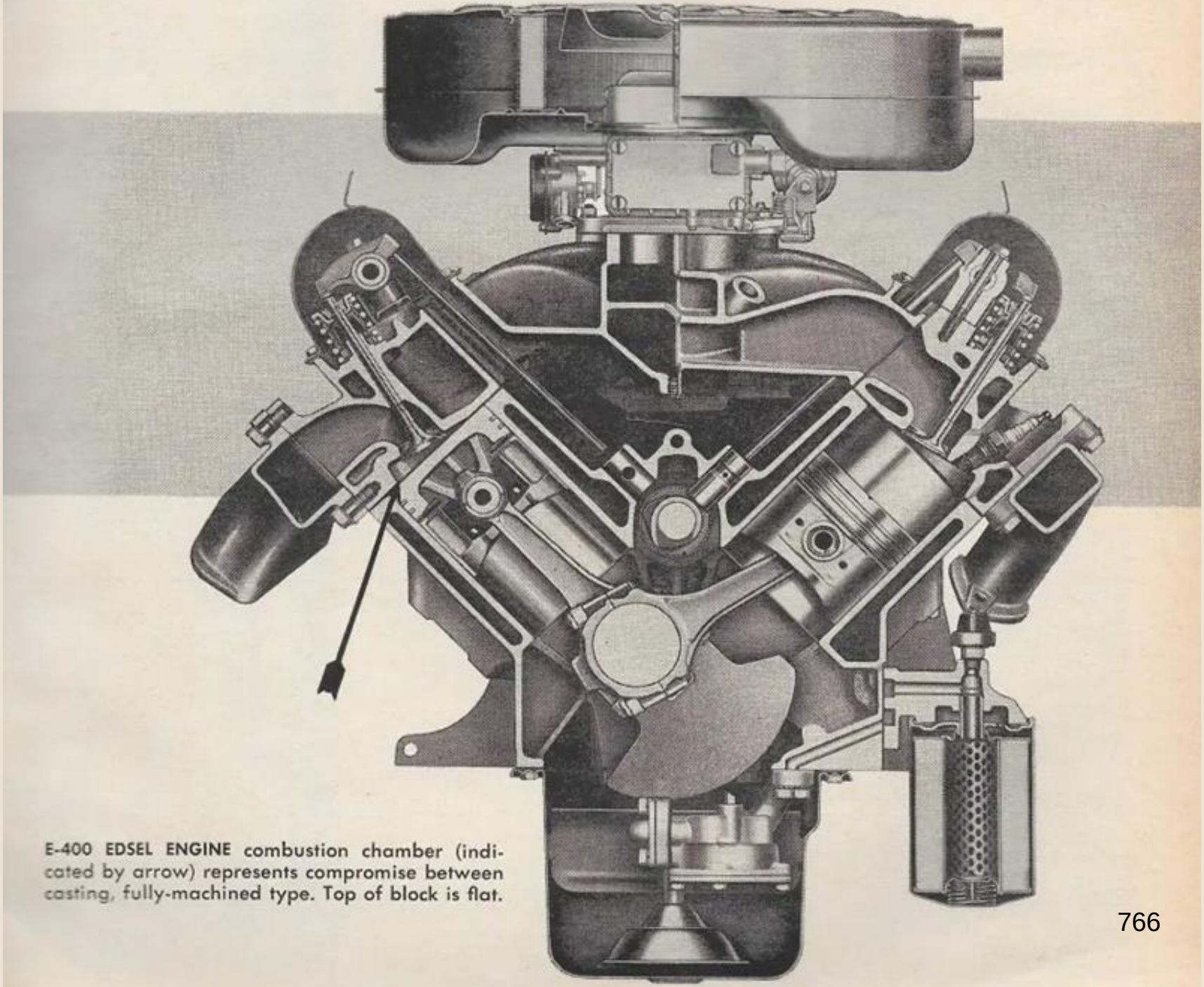
"…Each engine has hydraulic tappets only; intake valves exceeding two-inches diameter, exhaust valves of from 1.55 to 1.78-inches diameter…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

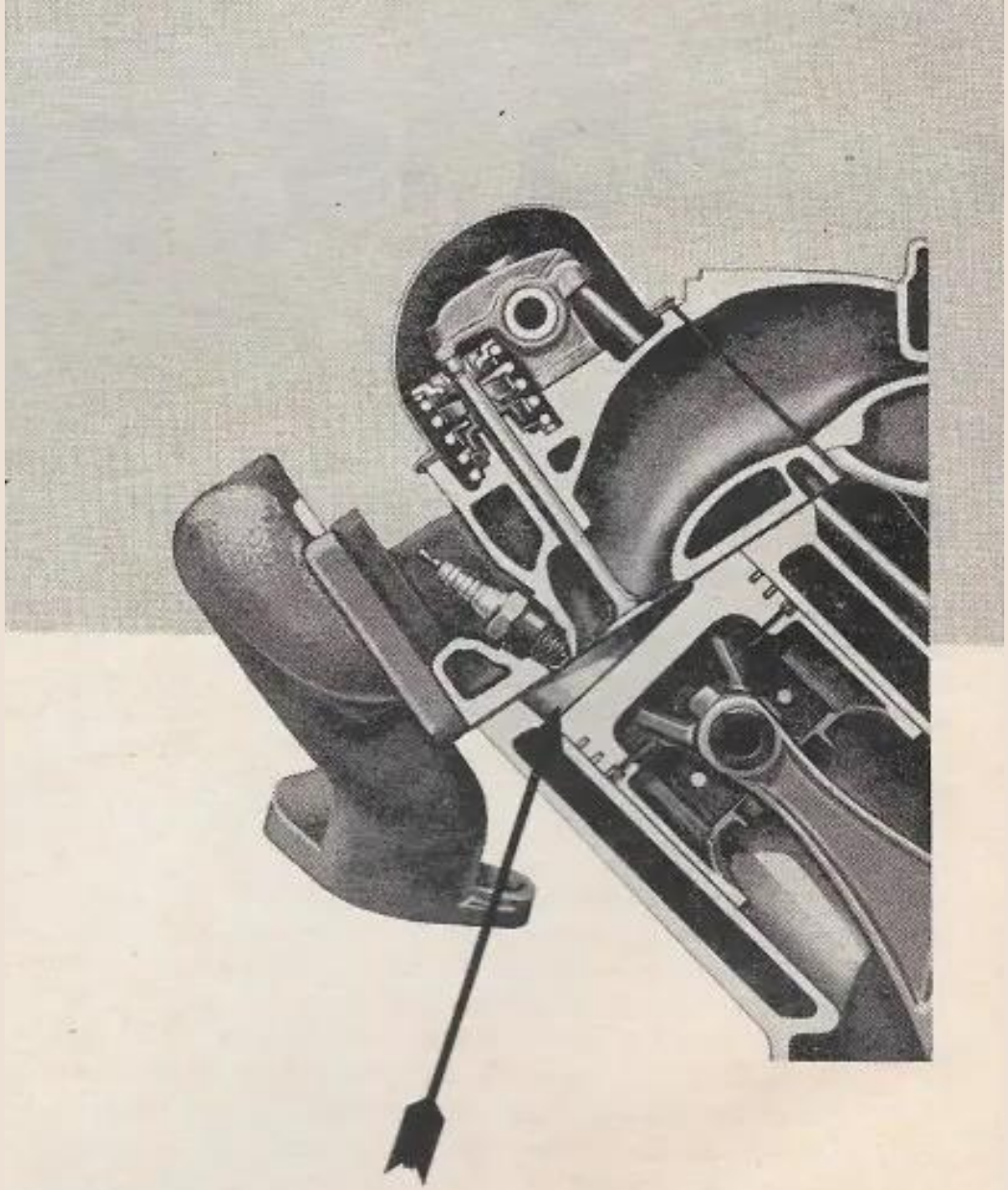
"…Three-stage cooling systems are used (similar to the '57 Mercury) and neither engine specifies the fan which freewheels at higher speeds…"
***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

"…An unusual but sensible engine innovation is evidenced on the 410 cubic-inch engine, which has the new cylindrical wedge combination chamber arrived at by the heads sitting on the respective cylinder banks at less than a right-angle – a feature we expect to set a trend…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**



E-400 EDSEL ENGINE combustion chamber (indicated by arrow) represents compromise between casting, fully-machined type. Top of block is flat.



BIGGER E-475 engine has fully-polished combustion chamber (arrow) in block, top of which is machined at 100-degrees instead of 90 degrees. Smoother surfaces are thereby provided by machining only the flat surface of the head.



W. E. BURNETT (r.), Executive Engineer, Engineering Operations, Edsel Div. discusses 410 cu. in. engine with author Wherry.

ENGINE SPECIFICATIONS

	Ranger-Pacer-Wagons	Corsair-Citation
Type	90° V8	90° V8
Displacement	361 cu. in.	410 cu. in.
Horsepower	303	345
Torque	400 ft.-lbs.	475 ft.-lbs.
Bore and Stroke	4.05 x 3.50	4.20 x 3.70
Compression Ratio	10.5:1	10.5:1
Combustion Chambers	Angle wedge	Cylindrical wedge
Crankshaft	Precision molded of Pearlitic alloy iron, with 5 main bearings, and end thrust taken by No. 3	Same
Camshaft	Precision molded of alloy iron, with chain drive and 5 bearings	Same
Fuel Pump	Mechanical	Mechanical
Carburetor	Downdraft 4-venturi	Downdraft 4-venturi
Air Cleaner	Dry replaceable element	Dry replacement element
Fuel Capacity	20 gallons	20 gallons
Electrical System	12-volt	12-volt
Distributor Drive	Vertical from camshaft front	Vertical from camshaft front
Spark advance	Vacuum and centrifugal	Vacuum and centrifugal
Spark plugs	18 mm	18 mm



Performance

"…When we tried-out the performance of the Edsel, we found that we could drop from DRIVE to LOW at speeds under 50 mph indicated. You get a LOW gear start when flooring the throttle and this was sufficient to take the 303-horsepower test Ranger hardtop sedan to a calibrated 60 mph in 10.2 seconds…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

"…In the more useful traffic speed-range this 'small' Edsel (the slightly higher priced but identically-sized Pacer would perform the same) scats from a dead-start to 30 mph in 3.7 and to 45 in just 6.6 seconds. On the straightaway the Ranger, locked in DRIVE range, got from 50 to 80 mph in a healthy 11.3 seconds. Upshift from low to second gear occurs, under full throttle, at about 45 mph and to third gear at about 62 mph…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

PERFORMANCE

SPEED IN MPH	RANGER 4D HARDTOP (361 cu. in. engine, automatic transmission)	CORSAIR 4D HARDTOP (410 cu. in. engine, automatic transmission)
0-30	3.7 secs.	3.4 secs.
0-45	6.6	6.3
0-60	10.2	9.7
50-80 (DRIVE)	11.3	10.9

"…The big-engine Corsair test car, which like the Ranger checked was a pre-production job, has a hefty 410 cubic-inches which churns-out a rated 345 bhp and 475 lbs. ft. of torque. Longer in wheelbase than the Ranger/Pacer models by six-inches and longer overall by 5.7-inches, this stylish brute digs 30 and 45 mph in a hasty 3.4 and 6.3 seconds, respectively. To 60 mph the extra torque, which feels as if the maximum boost is fairly constant in the acceleration ranges, took only 9.7 seconds. A performer in the true tradition, even if it won't show-up on any factory racing teams, the Corsair hit 80 mph from a cruising 50 in 10.9 seconds…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

"…Because pre-production test models are usually full of lead in unseen places, it might be assumed that a well-tuned production stock Edsel, of either size, would better these times by a fraction or two of a second…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

Handling



"…At any rate, the performance was as satisfying as the handling. As to the latter, both series felt very much like the Ford Fairlanes of '57 with perhaps a bit smoother ride (especially in the back seat).They also have about the same amount of heeling-over on a hard and quick corner…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

"…Each had power steering (an overall ratio of 23-to-1). Power steering wheels take 4-1/4 turns lock-to-lock, whereas non-assisted steering has 5-1/4 turns. Power steering is standard on the Corsair and Citation, optional on the smaller two series and all wagons. Both types use recirculating ball and nut gear…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

The Hard Way

"…On a 27 percent test hill we stopped the cars, set the foot-operated parking brake, killed the engines and then started-up the hard way…"
***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

"…The parking brake releases by means of a toggle beneath the dash on the left. A word of warning – you could accidentally pull the very close and identical toggle that releases the front-hinged hood, although little harm would be done when stopped since there are safety catches on each side. It would seem that less initial confusion would result if the hood release changed place with the optional one-shot chassis Multiluber; the latter is on the right adjacent to the ignition-starter switch keyway…:

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

Most Educated Hand

"…In loose gravel we tried rocking as one would need to do in snow. A built-in inhibitor switch prevents the automatic box from engaging reverse at more than five mph – but you can still play the 'R' and 'L' buttons very neatly with two fingers of your most educated hand, be it left or right…"
***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

Roadworthy

"…Swiftly traversing the Belgian blocks and washboard roads of the test area showed the Edsel to be a roadworthy car…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

Suspension

"…Air suspension and a limited slip rear axle are scheduled a bit later on. For the present the front coil springs with telescoping shocks inside are mounted quite conventionally between upper and lower control arms. The latter are angle 20-degrees toward the rear. An integral spindle (in one piece with top and bottom ball joint attaching brackets) is used, which is said to impart greater solidity and frontal rigidity…"
***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

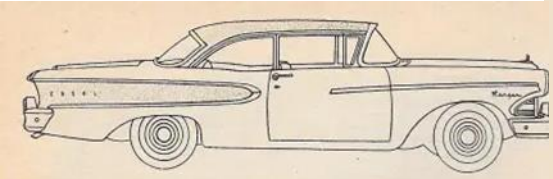
"…Rear suspension, too, is familiar – semi-elliptical leaf springs are used with the front-ends held by compression-type shackles with rubber sound-deadening blocks at the front-ends…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

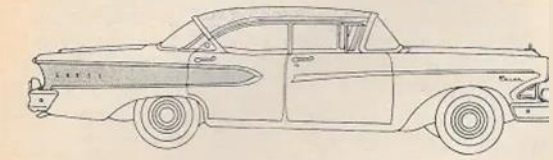
Chassis

"…On the 116- and 118-inch wheelbase chassis the front-ends of the longitudinal rear springs are mounted outboard of the frame side rails at the front. Inboard front spring mounting is used on the big 124-inch chassis…"
***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

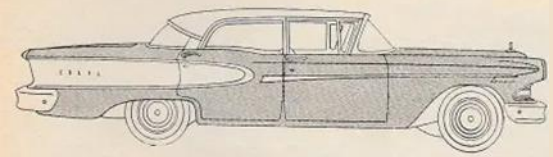
"…The telescopic rear shock absorbers are steeply angled inward, at the top, where they attach to the frame cross-member above and forward of the rear axle. This cross-member is tubular on the two short chassis…"
***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**



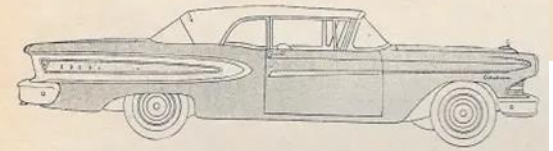
Ranger. 118-in. wheelbase, 2D hardtop.



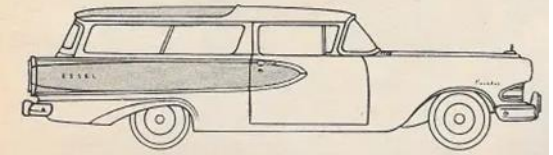
Pacer. 118-in. wheelbase, 4D hardtop.



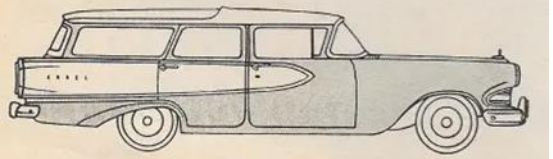
Corsair. 124-in. wheelbase, 4D hardtop.



Citation. 124-in. wheelbase convertible.



Roundup. 116-in. wheelbase, 2D, 6-pass. wagon.



Villager. 116-in. wheelbase, 4D, 6-pass. wagon.

BODY SERIES

Ranger	2D sedan, 2D hardtop, 4D sedan, 4D hardtop
Pacer	2D hardtop, 4D sedan, 4D hardtop, convertible
Corsair	2D hardtop, 4D hardtop
Citation	2D hardtop, 4D hardtop, convertible
Wagons	2D 6-passenger, 4D 6-passenger (2 models)
	4D 9-passenger (2 models)

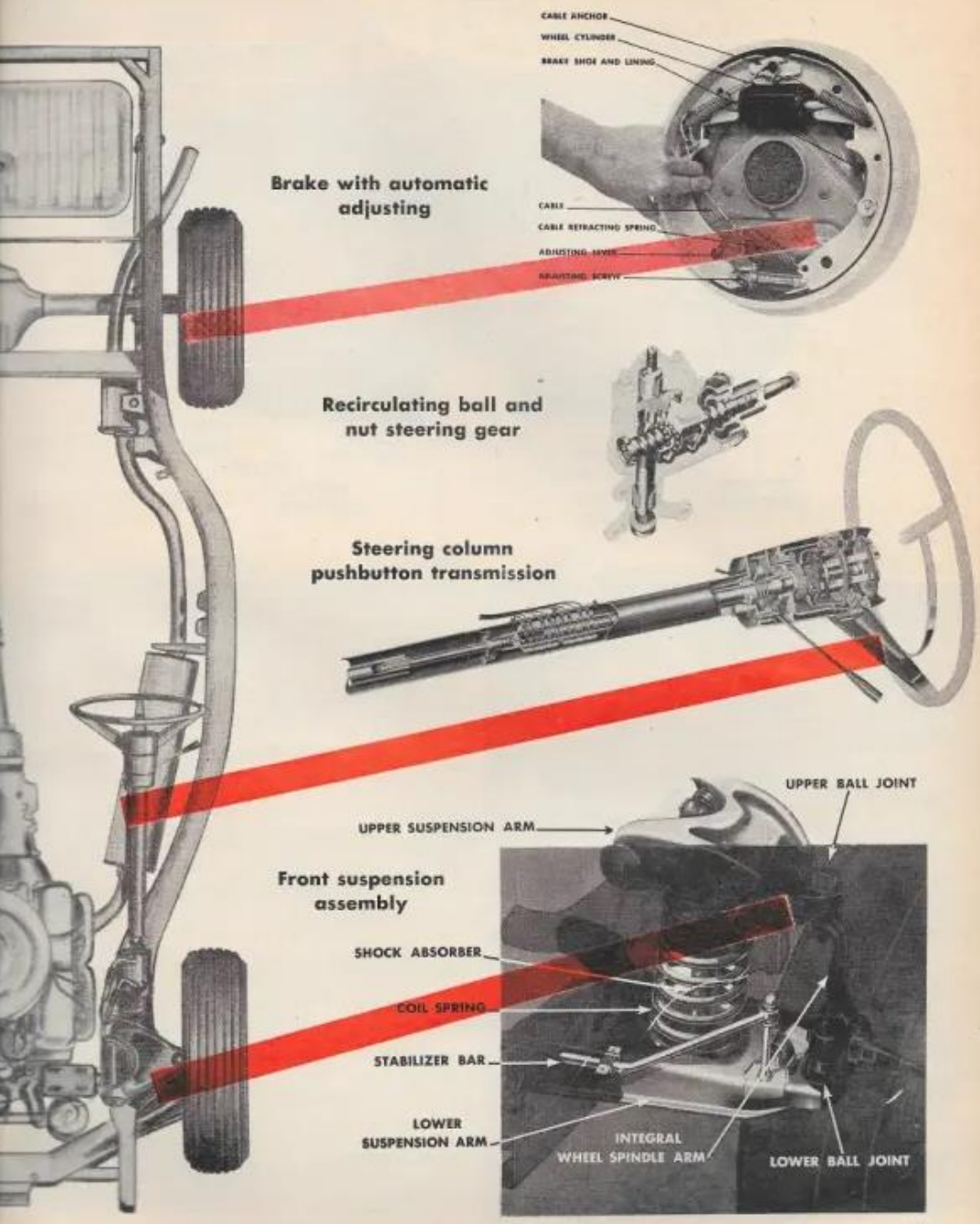
DIMENSIONS

Series	Wheelbase	Length	Height	Width
Ranger	118	213.1	56.4	78.8
Pacer	118	213.1	56.4	78.8
Corsair	124	218.8	56.8	79.8
Citation	124	218.8	56.8	79.8
Wagons	116	205.4	58.8	77.1

"…The 124-inch chassis uses a formed rectangular cross-sectioned member across the frame in the rear. Convertible frames have an additional I-beam, box-type 'X' member amidship. In each model size the chassis are of full-width and narrow forward of the kick-up over the rear axle…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

How good is the Edsel's suspension?



REAR AXLE

	Ranger-Pacer	Corsair-Citation	Wagons
Type	Semi-floating, hypoid final drive	Same	Same
Ratios:			
Standard Transmission	3.56	None	3.70
(Optional)	3.70	None	3.56
Overdrive	3.70	None	3.70
(Optional)	3.56	None	3.56
Automatic Transmission	2.91	2.91	3.22
(Optional)	3.22	None	2.91
Brake type	Bendix duo-servo with automatic brake adjuster		
Brake Lining Area (Sq. In.)	191.5	212.8	191.5

"…Further differences are few of great import, but the locations, relatively, of the standard single exhaust systems (duals are optional) are down the left-side of the chassis on the 116- and 118-inch frames and on the right-side in the big job…"

MOTOR TREND,
Oct. 1957

A Cut Apart

"…Definitely a cut apart from the majority of cars, it is extremely doubtful whether there will be a style remotely like the Edsel, at least in most components, within the next 12 months. However, lest we be accused of unduly 'raving' about it, let us say this: Edsel has the several unique approaches mentioned – but there were untold opportunities for more…"

***MOTOR TREND,* October 1957**

RE: many aspects of the new car didn't appear to be particularly revolutionary and there was little new ground broken from an engineering POV other than the steering-wheel-mounted automatic transmission controls, a/k/a "Teletouch," which were standard on the premium Corsair and Citation models, optional on the Ranger and Pacer

Obtainable Distinction

"…To some all the subtly increased fanfare over the past two years may seem to have been unwarranted – to others who can appreciate a fresh approach to styling and desire distinction unobtainable in Ford, Chevrolet or Plymouth, the Edsel may be the answer…"

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

The Tell

"…The Edsel performs fine, rides well and handles good. Our road test, later, will tell more."

***MOTOR TREND*, October 1957**

RE: there was more to come as MT would soon conduct an extended-use test; driving two Edsels cross-country

Cross-country

Cross-country 8,000-mile run in two EDSELS tells all!
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**
RE: introduction to an article written by *William Carroll* entitled: "Edsel on Trial"

No Better Way

"BORN of the year's old secret marriage between Ford and Mercury, apparent contradictions in their 250-million-dollar offspring (Edsel) led us far afield in evaluating this newest of transportation packages from the Ford Motor Co. To obtain a truly complete across-the-board appraisal of Edsel's merits, two new hardtops were driven a total of more than 8,000 miles across the United States…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

"…Yes, test cars were available to MOTOR TREND in Hollywood, but Engineers told us there's no better way to evaluate highway transportation than to use it. And use it we did…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

"…The Pacer, driven by MOTOR TREND'S Editor Walt Woron, logged 4,416 miles from Detroit to New York, then to California via New Orleans. The Corsair was driven by me from Detroit to New York, back to Detroit, to Minnesota and finally California, a total of 4,258 miles…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

RE: the first car tested was a Ford-based Pacer, one of 20,097 built for 1958, representing the first step-up in the model hierarchy from the entry-level Ranger. The second car tested was a Corsair; one of only 9,233 produced, which used a Mercury body and was positioned as more premium than the Pacer. Each car was picked-up in Detroit and driven around the country, ultimately ending-up in Los Angeles. The Pacer, after heading to NYC, took a southerly route through New Orleans; the Corsair also went east to NYC, then took a more northerly route to California.

As Good as it Gets

"…As you know, two low-priced Edsels (Ranger-Pacer) are built around the Ford body shell, chassis and T-Bird engine. Our test Pacer had power seats, windows, brakes, steering; a heater, radio and the extras usually attached to deluxe-equipped cars…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**



"…Given nearly idealistic pre-delivery attention by factory mechanics, it showed 186 recorded break-in miles when delivered. Body panels, doors and windows were perfectly fitted and the paint was excellent both inside and out. Only the hood latch acted-up to require a minor adjustment in New Orleans during factory warranty servicing…"

807

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

Ill Prepared

"…The other MOTOR TREND car was a handsome Corsair, selected for testing because it, like the Edsel Citation, is a 'kissing cousin' of the Mercury. It was equipped as the Pacer, except no power seats or windows. Unfortunately, pre-delivery service had not prepared the car for cross-country running and it was in and out of three Edsel garages, burnt-out one transmission motor (the second began to sag after 2,000 miles) and wore sheet metal that appeared to have been fitted in the dark…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

Starting an Edsel Proved a Cinch

"…After unlocking a door, the same key operates the ignition and starter lock located to the right of the steering column. Engine warm-up is average for the Pacer, downright rapid (one-minute in a cold Nebraska morning for the Corsair)…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

Speaking of the Pacer…

"…In speaking of the Pacer, Walt said: 'It's easy to park because of power steering and good vision. Streetcar tracks, ruts or pavement splits cause a side pulling action which may be the result of the 8:00 x 14 tires. Feels big in comfort, yet not tremendous in terms of traffic maneuvering'…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

Speaking of the Corsair…

"…The Corsair met with my approval on all the Pacer's points except the feeling of size. It is a large car and as such, does not lend itself to flying through dense traffic with the non-chalance of a Pacer…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

How Do They Handle?

"…Chassis of the Pacer, though basically Ford, has Edsel-designed modifications to improve softness of the ride. The Pacer handled well under all conditions, causing only a little 'whip' when driven off asphalt onto rough dirt shoulders. No drumming, cowl shake or wheel shudder was noted…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

Our Comment

"…'There's no vibration at any speed even on the roughest road – don't know how they dampened it out. Feels secure and solid on choppy, washboard or gravel roads. No wallowing action coming out of dips and holds a steady in-line position. Feels quite a bit like a Ford or Mercury ('57) and that's good. You can push it into corners and punch the throttle coming out in case you want to drive fast, or just take it slow. Feels good both ways'…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

au Contraire

"…In contradiction, the Corsair (mostly Mercury chassis components) is a complete disappointment in the handling department. It wallow like a whale, noses into corners then tries to play crack-the-whip with its rear. Cowl and steering wheel shake reach alarming proportions while wee irregularities of the Penns'y Turnpike shimmied up through the floor pan and seat to keep my rear from going to sleep. Handling is heavy, with power steering action erratic around even radius corners, forcing continuous control every inch of the turn…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

A Word of Warning

"…A word of warning about cornering on wet pavement: Feather your throttle carefully as the Corsair engine has so much low-speed torque (and rear tire adhesion is slight) you can whip sideways into other traffic faster than it takes to write this…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

A Modern Pair of Engines

"…Under both Edsel hoods is the most modern pair of engines it's been my experience to enjoy in production automobiles. Walt like the Pacer's E-400 and I'm certainly sold on the powerful E-475…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

"…Design shows critical attention to detail, with quality and long-life built into every part. They <u>are</u> accessible for service (plugs above the manifold, easily reached oil filter, distributor high in front) and have maximum torque outputs below 3,000 rpm…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

"…The Corsair never once failed to have more beef than I needed and on long grades easily separated the huge hardtop from painting Chevrolets and Dodges…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

"…Analysis of trip records showed the Pacer (E-400 engine) to be providing 15.04 miles to each gallon of Mobil gas. Average road speed was 49.92 miles-an-hour for the recorded run of 4,416 miles, during which one-quart of oil was consumed. In comparison, the larger Corsair traveled 11.71 miles-per-gallon on Mobil gas and only 187.5 miles to each quart of oil. Average speed was 48.65 miles-an-hour for its 4,258 miles. To achieve these average road speeds we had to drive 65 and 70 miles-an-hour on open highways while making-up for rural and suburban 25 mph zones…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

Checking Performance

"…Performance checks at the local drag strip showed the Corsair turning 80.70 in the quarter-mile. A '57 Olds Hydra-Matic Super 88 with three two-throats hit 81.79; a Fury with Torqueflite 78.18; a '57 Pontiac Hydra-Matic Chieftain with a single two-throat 83.25 and another '57 Olds Hydra-Matic with a single four-throat 79.15…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

"…Huge torque ratings and automatic transmission gearing provide more twist to the tail than rubber can handle, which results in smoky and noisy starts. A little practice and you can clip seconds off acceleration times by judicious throttle tickling at take-off time…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

FAQ

"…'What's it like inside?' was a frequently asked question. 'Terrific' is the answer which applies equally to either the Pacer or Corsair…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

Ingress/Egress

"…Other than small difference in the amount of legroom both cars offer exceptional ease-of-entry and exit, with dual-catch hinges holding doors open at the most convenient angle. Back seat passengers have loads of room created by deeply dished floor pans. The offset split-back hardtop front seat-backs give plenty of passing space to the rear seats, alth-ough the uneven floor detracts slightly from ease-of-entry…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

Interior Amenities

"…Walt (at 175 pounds) wasn't too happy with the soft seats of the Pacer and said, 'They might be good for a short trip, but not for long: On a severe bump I could feel the springs…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

"…On the other hand, I can't say enough about the wonderful seating in the Corsair. I'm no lightweight, but the driver's section (and it <u>is</u> a separate section) supported me firmly allowing 18 hours of nearly continual driving with no backache. Not only is the driver given a visibly separate section of the front seat, but springs in his area are of differing tensions to provide a shallow bucket seat effect for both back and seat…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**



"…Edsel designers went to a lot of trouble for driver comfort and I for one really appreciate their successful efforts. By comparison, the right two-thirds of the front seat is uniformly firm for its full width…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**



"…Both Walt and I like the wheel position and found Edsel's 'Model A' speedometer a genuine delight. No more searching a dial for speed ratings. Look at the same place each time. Speed is there and easy to read…"

***MOTOR TREND*,**
Dec. 1957

Left: 1928 Stewart-Warner speedometer/odometer for a 1928 Model A Ford (highlighted). Note the "floating" dial on the speedometer (top). The 1928 Model A was the replacement for the long-running Ford Model T.

"…The grouping of wonderful little sensing lights which indicate oil pressure, water temperature, etc., are, unfortunately, too low to be easily seen. Even direction signal arrows on the dash are hidden behind hands gripping the wheel at 'Ten' and 'Two' positions…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

Weather-wise

"…Weather-wise drivers are rightly concerned with heating and ventilation systems of new cars. We are too…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

"…On Edsel instrument panels is the 'Single Dial Temperature Control' which guides an electric motor to adjust incoming fresh air, the heater and defroster vents. The only thing left is to flip a quiet heater blower speed switch…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

"…Heat from the Pacer takes several minutes to arrive, while the Corsair's triple-thermostat-equipped engine provided hot water for interior heating in about one minute. Neither Pacer nor Corsair controls were ever able to shut cold outside air off completely; while, as though to make-up for its failure, the Pacer air intake always whistled at 50 mph…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

"…Wrap-around and cut-back windshields don't lend themselves to the design of efficient ventilators for front windows and Edsels are no exception. Tiny vent panes whistle and exercise little control on vagrant winds. A clever cone adjustment is in the top of each ventilator so those refusing to stay open at high speed can be tightened in a moment or two…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

Exterior Amenities

"…Vision is excellent from both cars and the broad rear fenders actually encourage accurate parking…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

"…Between the same fenders supersize Edsel trunks run the Ford Ranchero a good race to see who carries the most. Spare tires are mounted in a 'roll-out' position which eliminates the strain of lifting tire and wheel from a deep floor compartment. Trunk lids are well balanced and should lifts weaken with age, either torsion spring can be tightened to pop the lid skyward without help…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

The Big News

"…Pushbuttons are the big news with Edsel's transmission and believe you me, they are terrific…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**





"…Last year it took several weeks to find the buttons on my '57 Plymouth, but in only a few hours I was shifting the Edsel without taking my eyes from the road. No problems with pushing the wrong button either. Internal widgets prevent parking at 65 miles-an-hour or slamming into reverse at any speed over three miles-an-hour…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

Upper: 1958 Edsel "Teletouch" selector buttons on steering wheel hub

Lower: 1957 Plymouth Fury gear selector buttons on left-side of dashboard

Shifting

"…Shifts are no better or worse than any Ford-Mercury-Lincoln automatic, with smoothness depending on linkage adjustment and how far your throttle foot is shoved through the floor…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

"…Push the 'Lo' button and there the transmission stays – making no upshift. Use 'Dr' and make a full throttle start; the transmission shifts from First to Second to Direct. Kick-downs are found at any speed under 65 miles-an-hour, while the transmission shifts to a lower gear automatically as speed ranges of 10-to-20 mph are reached…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

"…On the sad-side: We burned-up one shifter motor on the Corsair and had a second motor malfunction 2,000 miles later. Though we've been told it's permissible to downshift at speed (slowing by compression), it is just possible early transmission servo motors were not up to shifting against the terrific oil pressures of mountain road speeds…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

Need-to-Know

"…A lot of people asked us about the brakes and Walt and I were glad to tell them that Edsel brakes really do the job…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

"…The power brake pedal is about as high as the accelerator pedal and easy to use with either left or right foot. They neither swerved nor locked-up and even during severe use in mountain driving, neither of us noticed evidence of fading…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

"...The self-adjusting feature (they adjust as the car is backed and the brakes applied) solves any problem of keeping top-notch efficiency. The mechanism is so designed that it is impossible to overtighten the shoes…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

A Point of Confusion

"...Buick may have had it longer, but Edsel was on the ball in adopting a step-on parking brake pedal which tightens rear brake shoes through action of steel cables. The 'T' pull-off handle is near a similar handle for the hood, which caused Walt to try opening his hood when all he wanted was to relax the parking brakes. He closed the hood, tried again and this time pulled the right 'T' handle…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

Noise Abatement

"...Rattles and squeaks (other than suspension squeaks for the first thousand Corsair miles) were non-existent when the cars were new and non-developed during their cross-country testing. Doors refused to flex or rattle on the roughest roads and maintained a secure tie to the lock pillar. Rubber cushions at corners of the hood and seal strips around the trunk lid made sure no sound developed at these points…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

Water-tightness

"...Unhappily, the Corsair windshield leaked madly during a rainstorm as did a yet unfound hole under the dash which filled my left shoe with water…"
***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

Positive Feedback

"...Across the country drivers and pedestrians turned to peer and comment on the beautiful Edsels. Approvals were in the majority, with styling comments usually 'Wow' or 'Hey Maw, look at the Edsel.' A cabby cut in front of the Pacer, stopped to block traffic and shouted, 'Sure looks good. How much?' An Air Force officer thought it looked enough like his jet fighter to be a good buy…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

Nay Sayers

"...Then there were 'don't likes': A '57 Olds owner holding his nose while passing; service station attendants (many) who hate rear-opening hoods because greasy hands have to be planted on top to shut the lid and safety latches that are opposite the dipstick forcing a trip around the front after opening the hood; the Edsel owner with oil leaks, a sticky hood and trunk he couldn't open; the dishwasher who thought it looked kinda funny; a wash rack having trouble trying to split bumpers…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

The Goal of Automaking

"...With nearly 10,000 miles of serious testing under our trousers we must admit to still being a little confused about an Edsel's merits, particularly after reading a recent FoMoCo press release which concluded with the following: 'Edsel (Ford) knew that the goal of automobile making was the pleasure of the owner and to this end he insisted on comfort, service, quality and beauty'…"

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

Agree to Disagree

"... We found that comfort varies greatly between the models, the Pacer provided service while the Corsair needed service much too often, quality is in the components but not in their assembly or inspection and as to beauty: Walt's not sure he likes the lines – and I believe it's the sharpest car of 1958."

***MOTOR TREND*, December 1957**

RE: the Edsel Corsair was singled-out by MT for especially poor assembly quality and a myriad mechanical issues. The handling of the Corsair was also harshly criticized. The Pacer fared better, since it seemed to have been more carefully built, though MT noted that it wasn't that much different than the Ford on which it was based. The Edsel's styling came into question as well, with a few anecdotes about the reaction to the Edsel from across the country, not all of it favorable. It was implied that MT's Editor, Walt Woron, didn't care much for the design whereas William Carroll, the article's author, liked the Edsel's lines. However, MT clearly stated they were unsure about the Edsel's merits and their coverage was in keeping with the marketplace reaction. By the time the extended-use test was underway, it was quite clear that FMC's new car was a loser - the public wasn't buying and FMC itself was rapidly backing away from their $250-million gamble.

Part 9

Ask the Man Who Owns One

Having Their Say

HOW GOOD is the Edsel? What do Edsel owners have to say about this newest member of the Ford family of ears?

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

RE: introduction to an article entitled: "What Owners Say About the EDSEL"

Their Story



"POPULAR MECHANICS asked 1,000 Edsel owners to tell you what they think about the car. This article is their story…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

Best-liked

"…Performance is the feature Edsel owners like best, but close behind comes ease of handling. Almost half of the owners in the PM survey ranked one of these two items on the best-liked list…"

***Popular Mechanics,* March 1958**

"…'I like its quick getaway. It does 120 miles-per-hour (on the speedometer) easily. Its best cruising speed is 90 miles-per hour.' - Illinois owner. 'It has the power to get around traffic-Plenty of speed. I have had six new cars in the last two years and this Edsel has them all beat in performance.' - Indiana automobile plant employee. 'I drove from Virginia to the West Coast averaging 850 miles-a-day. I have never driven a car with the handling ease of the Edsel.' - Washington service-man. 'It seems to fit me and this makes it an easy car to handle.' - Connecticut carpenter…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

"…Third on the list of best-liked features is riding comfort with 33 percent of the owners mentioning it. Right behind it, with 31 percent, is exterior styling…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

"…'We drove to Canada and hit some pretty bad roads on the way up. My wife was asleep in the back seat and on one of the roughest stretches of detour she didn't even wake-up. This is a truly smooth-riding car. She even put polish on her nails in the back seat with no smears.' - Texas drug salesman. 'I can say they took the driver into consideration in designing this car. He is at ease all the time.' - Illinois automobile mechanic. 'Lots of station wagons ride very rough. But this Edsel wagon has a smooth, comfortable ride.' – Pennsylvania self-employed owner. 'Best-riding ear I've ever been in. Has heavy car comfort, light car get-up-and-go.' - Maryland salesman. 'I like the clean-cut of the Edsel. It really looks sharp.' - Michigan salesman, 'I like the body style most. It is so different from any other car.' - Oklahoma tile-layer. 'Styling is prettiest in the industry. I am glad it does not have big, ugly tailfins. I would not have bought it if it had.'
- Kentucky oil-company employee…"
***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

And They Complain, Too

"…More than a third (36.3 percent) of the Edsel owners have no complaints at all about their cars. In fact, there is only one complaint that can be described as frequently mentioned. It is poor workmanship in assembly which results in many trips to the garage for service. Slightly more than 16 percent of the owners list this fault. Some of their criticism is serious…"
***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

"…'This car has been in the repair shop almost every other day. The exhaust pipes rattled. The tachometer clicked. The heater did not work. The electric shift did not work properly. Rear windows do not go up and down easily (it's a convertible). - New York owner. 'Workmanship very poor, the welding especially. After I paid for the car, the dealer took me aside and said, 'We want you to know, we only sell this car, we do not make it.' - New York procurement representative. 'Dealer replaced at no cost to me the following parts: automatic transmission, rear-end assembly, three windshields, speedometer.' - Indiana television engineer. 'Took a 1,600-mile trip. When I reached home only the motor and cigarette lighter were working. Power steering went out, radio dial jammed, vent motor failed with vents open, shift buttons failed at times.' - Alabama owner…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

"…The most frequently mentioned of the specific complaints deal with power-steering trouble, the engine, dealer service, body noises, poor gas mileage (a perennial complaint of new car owners) and sloppy paint job. Here are some of the things the owners say on these subjects…"

***Popular Mechanics,* March 1958**

"…'Power steering groans on sharp turns. The belts have been adjusted but it still groans.' - Ohio Osteopath. 'Steering not up to par. There's a rattle in the hub of the steering wheel too.' - New York factory worker}. 'Engine appears to be building-up carbon. Knocks in spite of spark adjustment. It may be that a big engine will have this trouble as it is rarely possible to operate it at any more than a small part of its power.' - Washington salesman. 'Noisy engine from the start. Rod bearings loose and replaced at 3,000 miles. Knocking again at 6,050 miles.' - Wisconsin supervisor…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

"…'Service is bad. I blame the factory. The people who service the car just don't know how to do so, They say they spent $250-million, they should have spent a couple of million more teaching Service Managers how to service the car before it was put on the market.' – Pennsylvania inspector. 'Too many squeaks and rattles.' - Wisconsin owner. 'Carburetor not adjusted right. Uses a lot of gas. About 10 miles-per-gallon.' Massachusetts Pharmacist. 'Have to use super fuel. When spark is retarded to eliminate knock, power and economy disappear. Dropped from 16 down to 13 miles-per-gallon.' - New York salesman…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

"…'Poor paint job. Dealer has repainted if twice. Worst paint job I ever saw on a new car.' - Montana druggist. 'Paint job is the worst I have ever seen. The fabric on the ceiling is a lousy job also. It is full of wrinkles.' - Ohio painter and decorator…"
***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

What Make Traded?

"…Since all Edsel sales are conquest sales (the term used in the industry to describe a change from one make to another), it is interesting to see what makes were traded…"
***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

"…As you might expect, more Fords were traded-in on Edsels than any other make, with Mercury coming in second, just a fraction of a percentage point above Chevrolet. Here are the percentages: Ford 32.8 percent; Mercury 11.7 percent; Chevrolet 11.5 percent; Buick 7.4 percent; Pontiac 6.8 percent…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

"…Asked what make they will buy next time, the Edsel owners show an average amount of loyalty. Just about half (51.6 percent) say they will buy another Edsel. About 30 percent are undecided or do not answer. Of those who plan to buy some other make, the one most likely to be bought is Ford with 4.1 percent. Chevrolet is next with 3.3 percent, then Oldsmobile, Buick and Chrysler with 1.4 percent each. There is little evidence that the Edsel buyers are going to trade-up in the Ford family as a mere 0.8 percent said they planned to buy Mercury next…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

What About That Grille?

"…The survey made clear that there is plenty of controversy about the oval-shaped Edsel grille, even among owners. When asked to name the exterior styling feature they like most, the owners rank the grille at the top of the best-liked list with 19.7 percent. When you add others who mentioned the 'front-end' as the thing they like best, the number totals a big 36.6 percent…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

"…But the next question asks owners to name the exterior styling feature they like least. Once again, the grille gets top honors as 9.0 percent list it. When the 'front-end' answers are added, the total is 13.4 percent. 'At first people couldn't get used to the grille. In fact, they didn't like it, but as time goes on they are liking it more.' - South Dakota hatchery operator. 'I like the front-end because it is entirely different from any other. I advise the other companies to break-up the straight hood like Edsel has done. It's beautiful,' - California sales-man. 'The front-end looks too heavy and bulky.' - Texas oil company worker. 'Don't like the horse-collar in front, but I don't see it when I'm driving.' - New York pipe-fitter. 'The oval-shaped grille is extended too high to be attractive.' - Ohio pol-isher. 'They should improve the grille although it is distinct-ive.' - Minnesota contractor…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**



Edsel owners don't agree about the attractiveness of the grille, but all seem to agree that it's distinctive

More Best-liked Features

"…Here, in order of frequency of mention, are more best-liked features listed by Edsel owners…"
***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

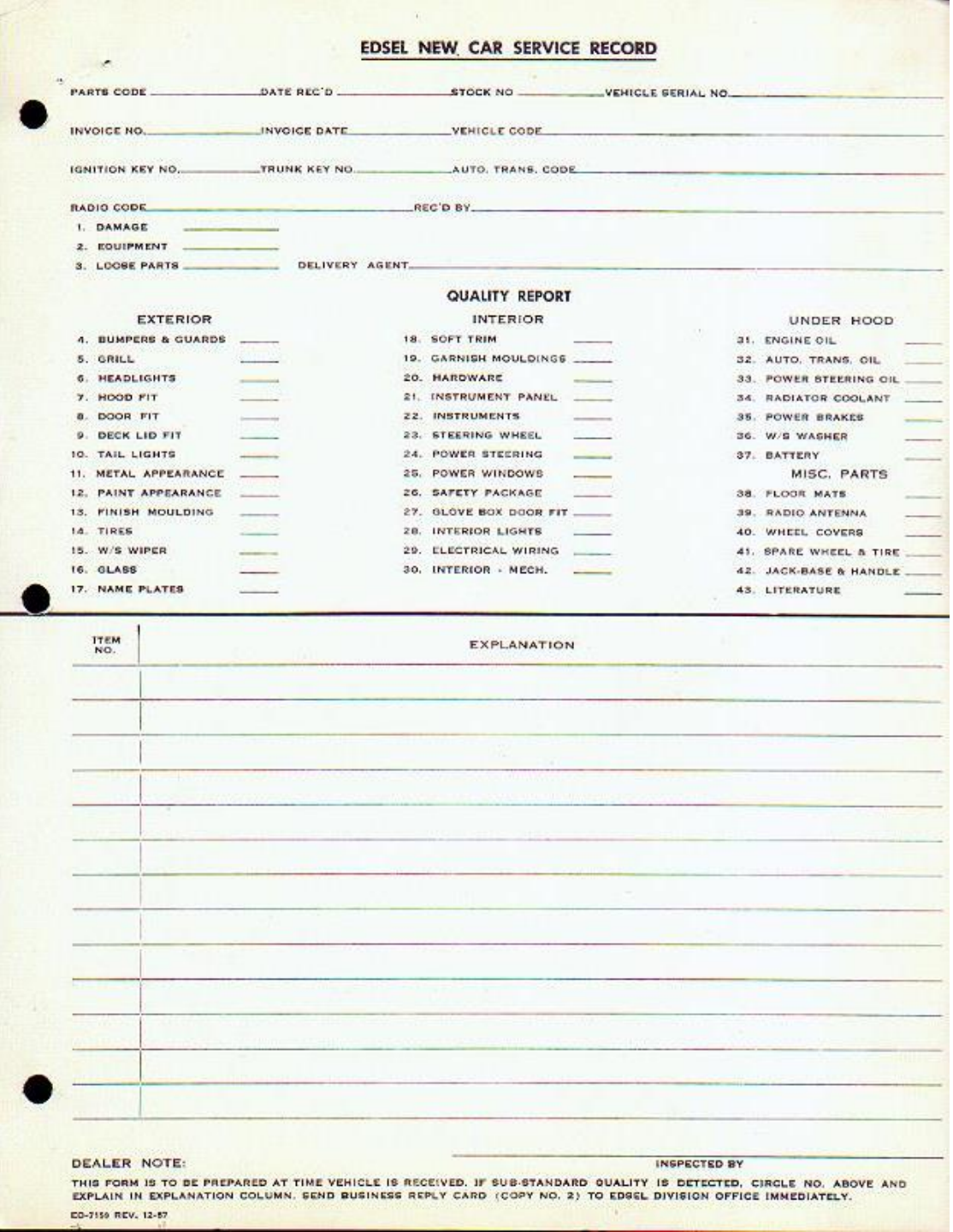
"…'I love the handy push-button shift on the steering wheel. It's the most handy one yet.' - Ohio owner. 'Push-buttons very good. Being able to shift with either hand is helpful.' – Wisconsin Minister. 'By using my thumb to shift, I can keep both hands on the wheel.' Colorado salesman. 'Fastest shift and handiest.' - Vermont salesman. 'Solid feel. Makes me feel safe in turns at 75 miles-per-hour.' - Georgia salesman. 'Substantial, secure feeling at 90 miles-per-hour,' - Illinois tool designer. 'It has a big-car feeling.' - South Dakota owner. 'Visibility. The large rear window gives more vision to the rear.' – Massachusetts typist. 'My wife says it is the only car in which she is able to see the right front fender while behind the wheel. She is only five-feet tall.' - Massachusetts foreman…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

"…'Enormous reserve power.' - Illinois Executive. 'Seats support back and shoulders. Passengers always comment favorably.' - Missouri Executive. 'Much more comfortable having the smaller part of the split front seat behind the driver.' – Illinois saw-man. 'I like the convenient controls: the flip switches on the panel, the heater control.' - Illinois owner. 'Large trunk area.' – New York maintenance-man. 'Im a rural letter carrier with 300 boxes on a route of 45 miles. I average 11 to 12 miles-per-gallon, which I think is good for a car this size. As I do most of my own service, I like the spark plugs being where I can change them easily and the oil filter is easy to remove also.' - Illinois owner…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

And More Complaints



EDSEL NEW CAR SERVICE RECORD

PARTS CODE _____ DATE REC'D _____ STOCK NO _____ VEHICLE SERIAL NO. _____

INVOICE NO. _____ INVOICE DATE _____ VEHICLE CODE _____

IGNITION KEY NO. _____ TRUNK KEY NO. _____ AUTO. TRANS. CODE _____

RADIO CODE _____ REC'D BY _____

1. DAMAGE _____
2. EQUIPMENT _____
3. LOOSE PARTS _____ DELIVERY AGENT _____

QUALITY REPORT

EXTERIOR

4. BUMPERS & GUARDS _____
5. GRILL _____
6. HEADLIGHTS _____
7. HOOD FIT _____
8. DOOR FIT _____
9. DECK LID FIT _____
10. TAIL LIGHTS _____
11. METAL APPEARANCE _____
12. PAINT APPEARANCE _____
13. FINISH MOULDING _____
14. TIRES _____
15. W/S WIPER _____
16. GLASS _____
17. NAME PLATES _____

INTERIOR

18. SOFT TRIM _____
19. GARNISH MOULDINGS _____
20. HARDWARE _____
21. INSTRUMENT PANEL _____
22. INSTRUMENTS _____
23. STEERING WHEEL _____
24. POWER STEERING _____
25. POWER WINDOWS _____
26. SAFETY PACKAGE _____
27. GLOVE BOX DOOR FIT _____
28. INTERIOR LIGHTS _____
29. ELECTRICAL WIRING _____
30. INTERIOR - MECH. _____

UNDER HOOD

31. ENGINE OIL _____
32. AUTO. TRANS. OIL _____
33. POWER STEERING OIL _____
34. RADIATOR COOLANT _____
35. POWER BRAKES _____
36. W/S WASHER _____
37. BATTERY _____

MISC. PARTS

38. FLOOR MATS _____
39. RADIO ANTENNA _____
40. WHEEL COVERS _____
41. SPARE WHEEL & TIRE _____
42. JACK-BASE & HANDLE _____
43. LITERATURE _____

ITEM NO.	EXPLANATION

DEALER NOTE:

INSPECTED BY _____

THIS FORM IS TO BE PREPARED AT TIME VEHICLE IS RECEIVED. IF SUB-STANDARD QUALITY IS DETECTED, CIRCLE NO. ABOVE AND EXPLAIN IN EXPLANATION COLUMN. SEND BUSINESS REPLY CARD (COPY NO. 2) TO EDSEL DIVISION OFFICE IMMEDIATELY.

ED-7159 REV. 12-57

"…'The front seat back is too thin. Not enough padding.' - Tennessee mine foreman. 'Piping between fabric and plastic on back of seat irritates your back when wearing a sport shirt.' - New York Cost Engineer. 'Heater control does not work as it should. Dial must be turned to almost full otherwise you get cold air.' - Ohio tire company worker…"

***Popular Mechanics,* March 1958**

Left: prior to the Edsel intrduction in September, 1957, dealers were given this *Edsel New Car Service Record (*Form-ED-71-59) so they could report sub-standard quality in any car they received.

"…'Automatic transmission is very rough when shifting. When it goes from starting gear to high it slips for a few seconds then takes hold with a grab.' - Maryland owner. 'Push-button shift on the steering post requires visual attention to operate. It's easy to push the wrong button.' - California physician. 'My three-year-old son can reach the push buttons. What happens if he pushes one of them while I'm driving?' - Illinois businessman. 'If Park button was elsewhere than in cluster there would be less chance of pushing it by mistake. Should be on dash above parking-brake release.' - Illinois Designer…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

OWNER'S NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

PHONE NO. _____ MILEAGE _____ DELIVERY DATE _____

PRE-DELIVERY INSPECTION

UNDER HOOD

1. _____ RADIATOR COOLANT & HOSE CONNECTIONS
2. _____ GENERATOR, FAN & POWER STEERING PUMP BELT
3. _____ ENGINE OIL LEVEL
4. _____ MASTER CYLINDER FLUID LEVEL
5. _____ TRANSMISSION NEUTRAL SWITCH
6. _____ START ENGINE AND BRING TO OPERATING TEMP.
7. _____ OIL, GAS & COOLING SYSTEM FOR LEAKS
8. _____ IGNITION TIMING, DWELL & ADVANCE
9. _____ CARBURETOR IDLE MIXTURE, IDLE SPEED & FAST IDLE
10. _____ THROTTLE LINKAGE FOR FREENESS & FULL THROTTLE
11. _____ AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION LINKAGE
12. _____ DASH POT SETTING
13. _____ MANIFOLD BOLT TORQUE
14. _____ CYLINDER HEAD BOLT TORQUE
15. _____ BATTERY WATER LEVEL, SPECIFIC GRAVITY, ALL CABLES TIGHT
16. _____ AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION FLUID
17. _____ POWER STEERING RESERVOIR OIL LEVEL
18. _____ LUBRICANT IN STEERING GEAR
19. _____ W/S WASHER OPERATION
20. _____ ANTI-FREEZE PROTECTION - RADIATOR & W/S WASHER

SERVICED BY _____

ELECTRICAL

1. _____ OPERATION OF ALL INSTRUMENTS INCL. HORN
2. _____ OPERATION OF ALL ACCESSORIES
3. _____ ANTENNA TRIMMER - PUSH BUTTONS TO LOCAL STATIONS
4. _____ AIM HEAD LIGHTS
5. _____ PUSH BUTTON SHIFT OPERATION
6. _____ ALL LIGHTS FOR PROPER OPERATION

SERVICED BY _____

FINAL ROAD TESTED BY _____

UNDERNEATH CAR

1. _____ WHEEL ATTACHING NUTS
2. _____ FRONT WHEEL TOE-IN & STEERING WHEEL ALIGNMENT
3. _____ OIL LEVEL IN STD. TRANSMISSION & DIFFERENTIAL
4. _____ OIL PAN, TRANSMISSION, DIFFERENTIAL & BRAKE SYSTEM LEAKS
5. _____ MUFFLER & TAIL PIPE ALIGNMENT
6. _____ LUBRICATE CAR
7. _____ TIRE INFLATION TO RECOMMENDED PRESSURE
8. _____ TIGHTNESS OF FOLLOWING:
   - A. _____ PITMAN ARM NUT
   - B. _____ STEERING IDLER ARM SUPPORT ATTACHING BOLTS
   - C. _____ LOWER CONTROL ARM TO CROSS MEMBER BOLTS
   - D. _____ TIE ROD CLAMP BOLTS
   - E. _____ FRONT WHEEL BEARING ADJUSTMENT
9. _____ PARKING BRAKE ADJUSTMENT
10. _____ BRAKE & CLUTCH PEDAL FOR FREE TRAVEL AND BRAKE RESERVE

SERVICED BY _____

BODY

1. _____ OPERATION OF CONVERTIBLE TOP, BRACKETS, JOINTS, FASTENERS & BOOT
2. _____ OPERATION OF LOCKS & KEYS
3. _____ SEAT ADJUSTMENT MECHANISM
4. _____ DOORS, WINDOWS & COMPARTMENT LIDS FOR PROPER OPERATION & FIT
5. _____ MISC. ITEMS - FLOOR MATS, TRIM, HARDWARE, PAINT & CHROME

SERVICED BY _____

APPEARANCE

1. _____ WASH CAR - CHECK FOR LEAKS, TOUCH-UP & POLISH AS REQUIRED
2. _____ INTERIOR CLEANLINESS
3. _____ GASOLINE LEVEL

SERVICED BY _____

1000 - MILE INSPECTION SERVICE

1. _____ IGNITION TIMING, DWELL & ADVANCE
2. _____ CARBURETOR IDLE, MIXTURE, IDLE SPEED & AUTO. CHOKE
3. _____ AUTO. TRANS. SHIFT POINT
4. _____ AUTO. TRANS. BANDS
5. _____ CLUTCH PEDAL FREE TRAVEL
6. _____ ROAD TEST FOR PERFORMANCE & HANDLING
7. _____ STEERING GEAR BEARING & MESH PRELOAD
8. _____ LUBRICATE CAR (OWNER'S EXPENSE)
9. _____ OIL, FUEL, COOLING SYSTEM & BRAKE SYSTEM FOR LEAKS

SERVICED, ROAD TESTED & APPROVED BY _____

DEALER NOTE: ALL ITEMS LISTED ABOVE SHOULD BE CHECKED AND ADJUSTMENTS MADE IF REQUIRED. IF ADJUSTMENT IS MADE INDICATE BY INSERTING LETTER "A" IN SPACE PROVIDED, OTHERWISE INSERT √ MARK IN THIS SPACE.

"…'Have to bail-out water from the depressed floor after the car stands out in the rain all night.' - Virginia housewife. 'Rear floor mat does not stay in-place. Had to have screws put into floor to hold it.' – Wisconsin chemist. 'On a cold morning, the engine idles so fast it moves the car at 40 miles-per-hour. I have to keep my foot on the brake all the way to work to bold it down to the legal speed limit.' - Ohio toolmaker.' 'The glove compartment is exceptionally small.' - Wisconsin brakeman…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

Left: the reverse of the *Edsel New Car Service Record* form was for the dealer's *Pre-delivery and 1K-mile Inspection*

Ford Motor Company — M-E-L DIVISION

Intra-Company Communication — GENERAL PARTS DEPOT

NS-58 TE-58
November 19, 1958

TO: District Sales Managers

CC: District Service Managers
Regional Sales Managers

SUBJECT: Edsel New Car Inspection Form - ED-7159

Prior to the introduction of the 1958 Edsel in September 1957, Edsel dealers were furnished with a supply of postage prepaid padded forms ED-7195. The "Hard Copy" of the form provided the dealer a method for reporting to us the quality of each new 1958 Edsel received.

We continue to receive these forms from the dealers and while we appreciate the dealers' cooperation, the form no longer fits into our reporting program. We suggest, therefore, that as District Representatives contact M-E-L dealers who were formerly exclusively Edsel dealers, they arrange to scrap any of the subject forms the dealers may have on hand, explaining to the dealers that the use of the form is no longer required.

Earl A. Brown

Earl A. Brown
Field Service Manager
National Service Department

"…'Station wagon looks too much like a Ford.' – Massachusetts manufacturer. 'Lack of instruments. I like dials because they make it easier to check on battery and engine. Lights only tell you a thing is or is not working, but not how it is working.' - Michigan guard…"

Popular Mechanics,
March 1958

<u>Left</u>: by Nov. 1958, the Edsel Division no longer existed thus, the FMC M.E.I. Division sent this letter (regarding Form-ED-7159) asking the District Representatives to have dealers scrap the remaining copies of the form.

Extra, Extra, Extra

"…'It seems as though everything on it but the body is extra, extra, extra. Costs too much. With the extras mine cost $4,0-88. And as far as I can see it has nothing other cars haven't had for years.' - Arkansas publisher…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**



You can put a lot of money into the dash—most everything costs extra. Cheapest item is $2 glovebox light

"…In each PM Owners Report survey we ask the owners to make one suggestion to the entire industry. Here are some of the more interesting suggestions…"
***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

"…'I see no reason for automobiles that are 18-feet-long and weigh two-tons and yet seat only four persons, rather uncomfortably at that. One must be a contortionist to enter and then, once inside, there is no adequate foot and headroom for the normal man, particularly in the back seat. The Edsel is a good as or better than the other medium-price cars in this respect.' - Georgia professor. 'Put the headlight dimmer switch in a more convenient place. I recommend the center of the steering post.' - Florida plant foreman. 'Have each maker try to be different rather than conform to a pattern. That is what I like about the Edsel.'- Wisconsin minister…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

"…'For years most cars have been misrepresented as being six-passenger models. Except for children, there is no leg-room in the center of either seat.' - Texas underwriter. 'Put a decent gas-filler pipe on the cars. When gas is spilled, the filling-station attendant always gets blamed for the mistake of the engineer.' - Wisconsin filling-station operator. 'Add a control that would increase or decrease the sound that signals when directional lights are blinking.' - Connecticut Executive. 'I believe that my Edsel is above average. But the industry trend to longer and wider cars is not in the public interest. The added width is dangerous on some of our older narrow roads and also on city streets when cars are parked on both sides. Cars have too much horsepower. I would like a somewhat plainer car and a lower price.' - Oregon field auditor…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

"…'I own four cars, three of them being big cars which are so-called gasoline hogs. If you have a good trouble-free engine getting 5 or 6 miles-per-gallon less than other engines it isn't worth worrying about. I have known people to spend enough on their cars trying to save gas that they would have to get 50 miles-per-gallon to pay for the garage bills.' – Indiana funeral director…"

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

HERE'S A SUMMARY OF THE EDSEL OWNERS' OPINIONS:

OVER-ALL RATING: Excellent 72.9% Average 21.6% Poor 5.5%

Best-Liked Features

Performance, acceleration	48.6%
Ease of handling	47.5%
Riding comfort	33.3%
Exterior styling	30.9%
Push-button transmission	13.4%
Roadability	13.1%
Big-car feel	6.8%

Most-frequent complaints

None at all	36.3%
Poor workmanship	16.1%
Power-steering trouble	7.9%
Noisy engine, engine trouble	7.7%
Dealer service poor	7.1%
Body noises	6.8%
Poor gas mileage	6.6%
Poor paint job	6.0%

Best-liked styling feature?

Grille	19.7%
Front end	16.9%
Rear-end design	13.9%
Taillights	11.7%

Least-liked styling feature?

Grille	9.0%
Front end	4.4%
Taillights	2.2%
Rear end	1.9%

Had trouble with engine?

No trouble	69.7%
Some trouble	24.6%
Considerable trouble	5.7%

What was engine trouble?

Carburetor, auto choke	9.9%
Valves	5.5%
Oil leaks	5.2%
Knock, pinging	3.0%
Generator trouble	1.6%

How is dealer service?

Excellent	59.9%
Average	28.3%
Poor	11.8%

Would buy from him again?

Yes, would	58.2%
No answer, undecided	29.2%
No, would not	12.6%

What car did dealer sell before?

Ford Motor Co. car	30.2%
Studebaker-Packard	23.5%
Chrysler Corp. car	14.7%
General Motors car	14.3%
Other	17.3%

What make was traded?

Ford	32.8%
Mercury	11.7%
Chevrolet	11.5%
Buick	7.4%
Pontiac	6.8%
Oldsmobile	6.3%
Plymouth	4.4%
Packard	3.6%
Studebaker	2.5%
All others	11.1%
No trade, no answer	4.4%

What make will buy next time?

Edsel	51.6%
Ford	3.3%
Chevrolet	1.4%
Oldsmobile	1.4%
Chrysler	1.4%
No answer, don't know	27.6%
All others	13.3%

Approve industry style trends?

Yes, approve	77.8%
No, do not approve	14.5%
No answer	7.7%

There You Have it

"…There you have it, the story of the new Edsel as told by the people who know it best - the owners themselves. At the moment, Edsel sales are not going well, but neither are sales of most cars. As one owner says, 'If there was a mistake in bringing out the Edsel, it is not in the car, but in the time it was brought out. It's a good car."

***Popular Mechanics*, March 1958**

Another Satisfied Customer

Nationwide independent survey proves it!
Proud Edsel owners everywhere are telling why!



C. J. FEENEY, Engineer, Winston-Salem, N.C. "My new Edsel handles easier than my last car—which cost me $1,000 more!"



MRS. J. JUNELL, Sales Clerk, Portland, Ore. "I liked the styling right away. And I received a wonderful deal on my Edsel!"



LLOYD E. TUTHILL, Engineer, Fontana, Calif. "Proud and satisfied—my Edsel's as economical as lighter cars I had before!"



E. F. HARRIS, Business Executive, Minneapolis, Minn. "I got the ultimate—in Edsel styling, features and the engineering."



E. A. MELCHER, Police Chief, No. Aurora, Ill. "Tested all the '58 models and chose Edsel—it's the best by far for police work!"



A. A. HERMANN, Horticulturist, Denver, Colo. "There's no car at *any* price I would rather have than my fine, new Edsel!"



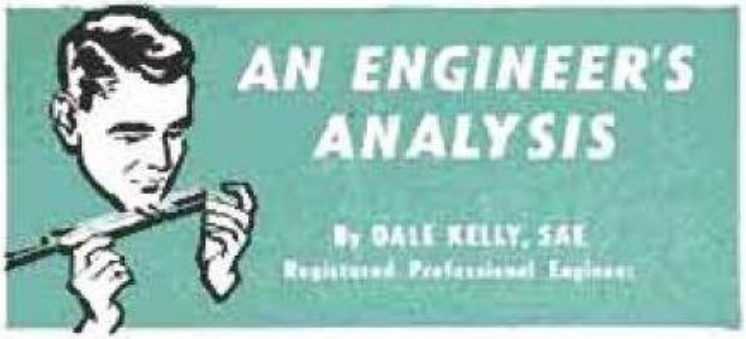
H. DOBBINS, Ranch Owner, Stapleton, Nebr. "Best car I've ever had—and that's after 8,000 miles, mostly over gravel!"



L. BOWERMAN, Retailer, Auburn, Ind. "Best looking car on the road—distinctive grille, sleek body lines and a rich interior."

(*Automotive News* - 1958 Almanac Issue)

Test Data



1958 EDSEL TEST DATA

MODEL TESTED: 1958 Edsel Citation four-door hardtop with four-barrel carburetor, single exhaust, automatic transmission, power brakes and linkage-type power steering.

Rear-axle ratio: 2.91 to 1. Wheelbase: 124 inches. Tires: 8.50 by 14. Weight: 4440 pounds with gas tank half full (56 percent on the front wheels, 44 percent on the rear).

Mileage on car at time of test: 4500 miles. Barometer: 29.52 inches. Temperature: 53 degrees F. Payload: 200 pounds.

ACCELERATION TIME FROM STANDING START *(in seconds)*



Ignition timed for:	0 to 20	0 to 40	0 to 60	0 to 80	¼ mile
Regular gasoline	2.8	6.4	11.0	17.2	18.2
Premium gasoline	2.6	6.1	10.2	15.9	17.6
Super-premium gasoline	2.6	6.1	10.0	15.5	17.4

(All tests in Drive range. Gasoline had the following octane ratings by Research method: Regular 90; Premium 97, Super-premium 105.)

FUEL ECONOMY *(miles per gallon)*



Ignition timed for:	Steady 30 m.p.h.	Steady 50 m.p.h.	Steady 70 m.p.h.	Traffic Route
Regular gasoline	17.15	14.65	12.1	8.5
Premium gasoline	17.5	15.2	12.5	8.3

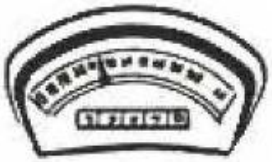
(In traffic test car makes 10 full stops per mile and is driven fast enough to average 15 miles per hour.)

Estimated average

ANNUAL GASOLINE BILL: $245 for 10,000 miles

(Based on exclusive use of premium gas at 33 cents a gallon.)

SPEEDOMETER ERROR *(miles per hour)*



Speedometer reading	20	30	40	50	60	70	80
True speed	21	31	41	51	61	71	81

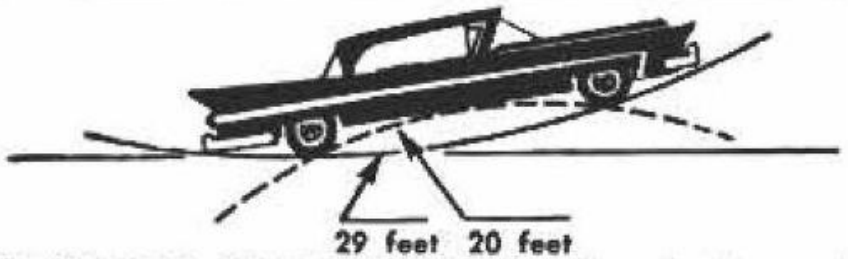
ODOMETER ERROR *(miles traveled)*

Odometer registered **91 miles** for an actual distance of 100 miles (see below).



DRIVER'S VISION

Driver could see part of road **20 feet** in front of car, full width of road **29 feet** in front of car.



GROUND CLEARANCE *(unloaded car)*

Worst dip that could be crossed.....29-ft. radius
Worst hump that could be crossed..20-ft. radius
Deepest rut that could be negotiated.....7.5 in.
Curb clearance for door opening.....12 in.

MISCELLANEOUS

STEERING

Steering-wheel turns for 100-ft. circle	1.05 turns
Curb-to-curb turn-circle diameter	43.5 feet
Wall-to-wall turn-circle diameter	46.0 feet
Steering-wheel turns, lock-to-lock	5.0 turns

CENTER OF GRAVITY: 23 inches

TRUNK CAPACITY

14 cartons (one cubic foot each)

WATER RESISTANCE (see Observations)

Splash-pan test: No leaks. Ignition not affected. Brakes slightly uneven a short time after test.

High-pressure test: Very slight leaks in passenger compartment and in trunk.

OBSERVATIONS

During a heavy rain, the trunk leaked badly and, because the drain hole in the spare-tire well was plugged with undercoating, the well filled with water and overflowed.

In place of a water-temperature indicator there are two warning lights. One (a red light) comes on when the temperature reaches 233 degrees F., the other (green) stays on until the temperature reaches 115 degrees. This range (from 115 to 233 degrees) is far too wide to ensure good engine performance. These lights, as well as the oil-pressure and generator-charge lights, are located very low on the instrument panel where they are partly obscured by the steering wheel.

The brightness control for the instrument-panel lights is separate from the headlight switch. It is not labeled and is obscurely located under the instrument panel.

The steering wheel requires far too much "winding" to negotiate a given curve.

If battery goes dead with pushbutton transmission control in Park, the car cannot be pushed as the transmission cannot be taken out of Park when no electricity is available.

The unusual odometer error (showing fewer miles than actually traveled) appears to be due to an assembly-line blunder in the selection of speedometer gears. Another Edsel was tested and found to register a more usual 102 miles for every 100 miles traveled. Had the test car been so geared, it would have had the usual optimistic speedometer also.

Part 10

Consumer Reports' Reports

Painstakingly Acquired

CU's automobile tests constitute a continuing project which has been going on now for close to a quarter-of-a-century (and under the direction of the same Chief Consultant for all this time). A great many cars have been purchased, driven, examined, tested, evaluated, compared and the cumulative experience thus painstakingly acquired underlies the present report on the American industry's 1958 offerings.

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

RE: introduction to a multi-part article entitled: "AUTOMOBILES 1958"

Front & Center

"AUTOS are the most expensive products hat consumers buy in large quantity and they are among the most complicated products that consumers buy at all. Approximately 95% of CU's members and subscribers are car owners. We get more mail (and we pay attention to our mail) about autos than about any other product. There is simply no denying the high importance of the automobile in American life, nor the frustration, often verging on idolatry, with which consumers regard their own or their neighbor's or the car dealer's models…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

More, More, More

So far this year, consumers have not responded to the old bait of "more horsepower in bigger cars" and new car sales have been a disappointment in Detroit. A possible reason may be that the new models cost more to buy, to operate, to maintain, to repair.

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

RE: introduction to a sub-article entitled: "The Auto Market 1958"

Boom & Bust

"DETROIT'S eyes, and those of the nation as a whole, have followed the reception of the 1958 cars with misgiving. Last fall, shortly before the new models were introduced, economic commentators were saying that perhaps the auto industry could do it again – could, as in 1955, give new life to a tired business boom. That year seven-million cars were sold. The next year, 1956, the final count was 5.9-million. Last year, sales fell somewhat below those of 1956…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

Cautiously Optimistic

"…But even as it became apparent that a recession was underway, the word from Detroit continued hopeful. The big 1955 car sales had been largely sales on-the-cuff. Auto debt jumped $3.5-billion that year to a $13.5-billion total. Most of those installment contracts had been written-up for 36 months. Thus, in 1958 the 1955 cars finally would be paid for. Their owners would be ready at last to trade them in and to trade-up. At least, so Detroit hoped and promised…"
***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

Up, Up, Up

"…From the early start of the 1958 car year, however, new car sales have been a disappointment. For the year-to-date, automobile production is off by 20 percent compared to last year. 'Cars have priced themselves out of their market,' said the bankers. 'Millions of Americans are driving automobiles they can't afford,' wrote a columnist in 'The Commercial and Financial Chronicle.' 'Not only has the price of the automobile gone up, but everything connected with it has increased'…"
***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

The Old Bugaboo

"…When consumer income is rising and job opportunities are expanding, families may risk a splurge on a car. When, as now, income is not rising relative to prices and unemployment is spreading, people grow cautious. The Federal Reserve Board found in its consumer purchase survey that fewer people expected to buy a new car this year than last year or the year before (replies to CU's Annual Questionnaire indicated the same probability)…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

Market Handicap

"…In short, the 1958 models had a market handicap to overcome. Something new, something special, perhaps a wholly different approach might have had at least a somewhat better response…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

Same Old Same Old

"…But Detroit's approach to 1958 was, to state it most simply, a repeat on its magic formula once again – making the 'low-priced' cars bigger and more powerful and hoisting price tags all along the line for the fourth year in a row. At the same time and despite a show of new features, the 1958 models, as a whole, exhibit no noticeable improvement in quality; they simply cost more money to buy and run than their predecessors, more to maintain and more to repair if damaged…"
***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

The “Classless Car”

"…With an assist from the horsepower race, the past few years have seen the rise of what may be called 'the classless car' – which varies little in size, room or performance, at any given price level, from cars at any other level except the very highest (you step into virtually the same body shell, for instance, in all Chrysler-built cars save for the Imperial) . . . medium-priced models increasingly are being passed-up in favor of the fancier models of the 'low-priced' cars…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

Economical Motoring



"…And while this goes on, Detroit and far more motorists than ever before are casting long looks at the only cars that can now justify that 'low-priced' tag – the low-horsepower, high-economy, small-sized foreign imports which four years ago accounted for less than one-half of one percent of the American market but this year (along with the only U.S. entry at this level of the market, the 'Rambler American') may, in the opinion of some industry observers, take well over five percent…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

<u>Caption</u>: "The new Rambler American, only current U.S. contribution to economical motoring"

Buying Advice

"…This commentary on the nature of the 1958 car market rather easily becomes basic buying advice. The main reference of any buyer's interest should be in the 'low-price' field to begin with. Here he will note that the Sixes offer one kind of transportation, the V-8s a different kind…"
***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

"…If the low-priced V-8s fail to satisfy him in size, distinctiveness or for some other reason, our buyer will have to venture into the lower-medium or upper-medium price ranges where, at least, there is ample variety from which to choose, together with some prestige-bearing names…"
***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

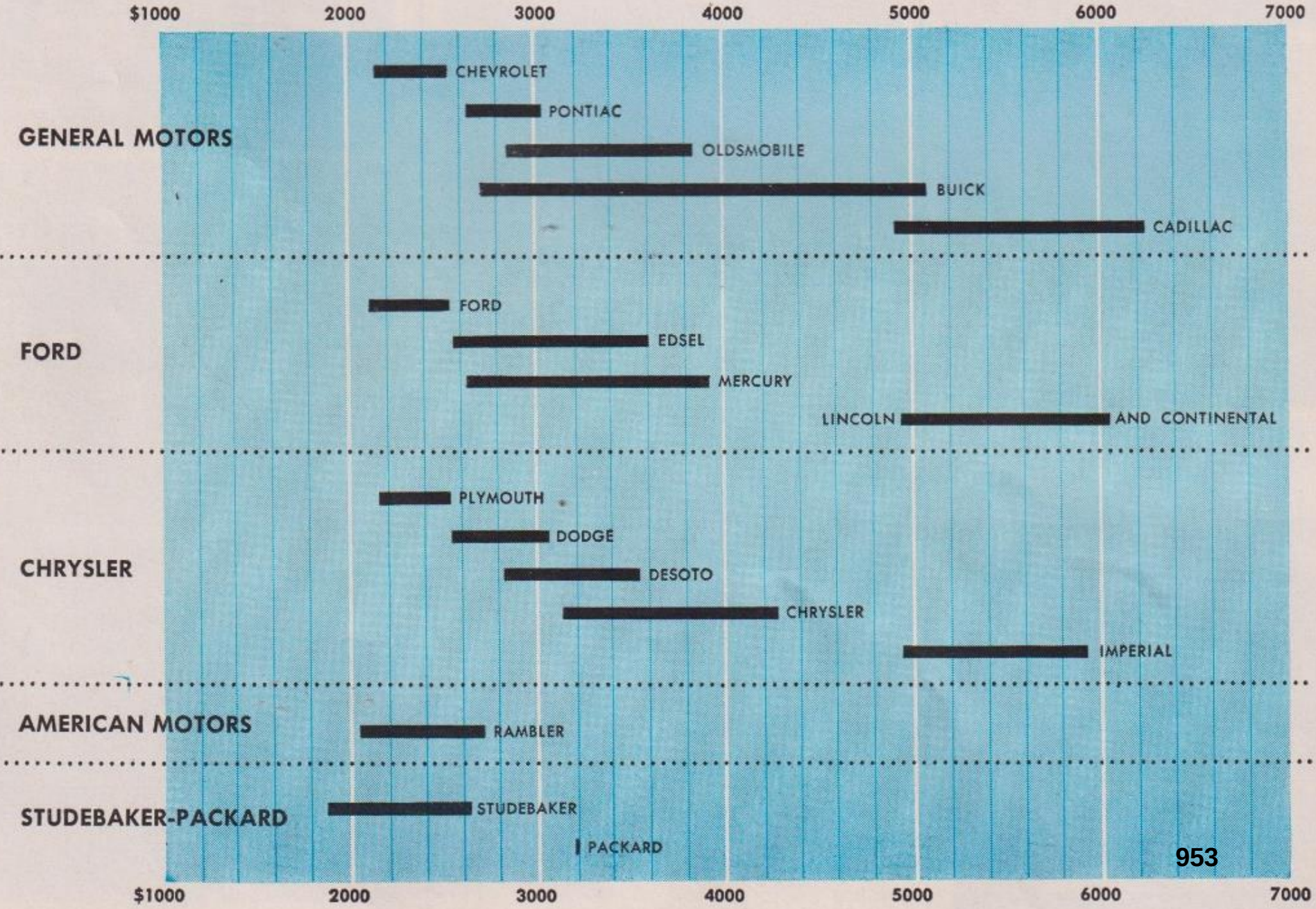
Equally Illogical

In the General Motors stable, Buick's price range nearly covers Pontiac's, completely covers Oldsmobile's and even overlaps the Cadillac's. Ford price ranges show-up as equally illogical, with Edsel competing with Mercury, instead of bridging the gap between Mercury and Lincoln. Among the Big Three, Chrysler has the most rational price picture, as drawn by the lines in the accompanying bar chart

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

RE: introduction to a sub-article entitled: "Who Makes What, For How Much"

DELIVERED-AT-FACTORY PRICES OF THE FOUR-DOOR SEDANS COVERED IN THIS REPORT



"…Just above the Ford Fairlane 500, and largely duplicating Mercury prices, come the two Ford-body-shell Edsels – the Ranger and Pacer – and the two Mercury-bodied Edsels – the Corsair and Citation…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

Bodies and Body Types

The principal dimensions of each U.S. four-door sedan rated by CU are listed in the accompanying tables (for several Group 3 and 4 models, there are no four-door versions; the dimensions in such cases are those of the standard four-door hardtops). The figures are those supplied by the car builders to the Automobile Manufacturers Association. Except for the data in the seat height category, all dimensions have been rounded to the closest inch. All interior dimensions are taken with the front seat in its rear-most position…

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

RE: introduction to a sub-article entitled: "Basic Body Dimensions of the 1958 Four-Door Sedans"

GROUP 1, LOW-PRICED CARS

	EXTERIOR DIMENSIONS IN INCHES				INTERIOR DIMENSIONS IN INCHES								
	A — OVERALL LENGTH	B — WHEEL BASE	C — OVERALL WIDTH	D — OVERALL HEIGHT	E — FRONT SEAT HEIGHT	F — REAR SEAT HEIGHT	G — FRONT HIP ROOM	H — REAR HIP ROOM	J — FRONT HEADROOM	K — REAR HEADROOM	L — FRONT LEGROOM	M — REAR SEATING SPACE	N — REAR SHOULDER ROOM
CHEVROLET	209	118	78	57	10¾	13	62	63	35	34	45	30	56
DODGE 6	214	122	78	57	10¾	12	63	63	36	34	46	31	60
FORD CUSTOM 300	202	116	78	57	10¾	14½	60	60	35	34	43	31	57
FORD FAIRLANE AND FAIRLANE 500	207	118	78	56	10¾	14	60	60	34	34	43	30	57
PLYMOUTH	206	118	79	57	10¾	12	63	63	36	34	46	30	60
RAMBLER 6 AND RAMBLER REBEL V-8	191	108	72	58	10½	14¼	60	60	36	35	43	28	58
STUDEBAKER CHAMPION AND SCOTSMAN	202	116	76	58	12½	12¼	60	59	36	35	43	28	54
STUDEBAKER COMMANDER	202	116	76	57	12½	12¼	60	59	36	35	43	28	54

GROUP 2, LOWER-MEDIUM-PRICED CARS

	EXTERIOR DIMENSIONS IN INCHES				INTERIOR DIMENSIONS IN INCHES								
	A OVERALL LENGTH	B WHEEL BASE	C OVERALL WIDTH	D OVERALL HEIGHT	E FRONT SEAT HEIGHT	F REAR SEAT HEIGHT	G FRONT HIP ROOM	H REAR HIP ROOM	J FRONT HEADROOM	K REAR HEADROOM	L FRONT LEGROOM	M REAR SEATING SPACE	N REAR SHOULDER ROOM
BUICK SPECIAL	212	122	78	58	11	12	63	62	35	33	43	32	56
DE SOTO FIRESWEEP	216	122	78	57	10¾	12	63	63	36	34	46	31	60
DODGE V-8	214	122	78	57	10¾	12	63	63	36	34	46	31	60
EDSEL RANGER AND PACER	213	118	79	56	10¾	14	60	60	34	34	43	29	57
MERCURY MEDALIST MONTEREY, MONTCLAIR	213	122	81	57	10½	14½	61	63	34	33	44	32	60
OLDSMOBILE DYNAMIC 88	208	122	79	57	11¼	11¾	62	62	35	34	44	31	56
PACKARD	213	120	77	58	12½	11¾	60	59	36	35	43	32	54
PONTIAC CHIEFTAIN	210	122	77	57	10½	13	62	63	35	34	45	30	56
PONTIAC SUPER CHIEF AND STAR CHIEF	216	124	77	57	10¼	12¾	62	63	35	34	44	30	56
RAMBLER AMBASSADOR	200	117	72	58	10½	14¼	60	60	36	35	43	28	58
STUDEBAKER PRESIDENT	206	120	76	57	12½	11¾	60	59	36	35	43	32	54

GROUP 3, UPPER-MEDIUM-PRICED CARS

	EXTERIOR DIMENSIONS IN INCHES				INTERIOR DIMENSIONS IN INCHES								
	A OVERALL LENGTH	B WHEEL BASE	C OVERALL WIDTH	D OVERALL HEIGHT	E FRONT SEAT HEIGHT	F REAR SEAT HEIGHT	G FRONT HIP ROOM	H REAR HIP ROOM	J FRONT HEADROOM	K REAR HEADROOM	L FRONT LEGROOM	M REAR SEATING SPACE	N REAR SHOULDER ROOM
BUICK CENTURY	212	122	78	58	10¾	12	63	62	35	33	43	32	56
BUICK SUPER	219	128	80	59	11	11	66	65	36	35	44	35	57
CHRYSLER WINDSOR	218	122	80	57	10¾	12	63	63	36	34	46	31	60
CHRYSLER SARATOGA	220	126	80	57	10¾	12	63	63	36	34	46	31	60
DE SOTO FIREDOME AND FIREFLITE	219	126	78	57	10¾	12	63	63	36	34	46	31	60
EDSEL CORSAIR AND CITATION	219	124	80	57	10½	14½	64	63	34	33	44	31	60
MERCURY PARK LANE	220	125	81	57	10½	14½	61	63	34	33	44	32	60
OLDSMOBILE SUPER 88	208	122	79	57	11¼	11½	62	62	35	34	44	31	56
OLDSMOBILE 98	217	126	79	57	11¼	12	62	62	35	33	44	31	56

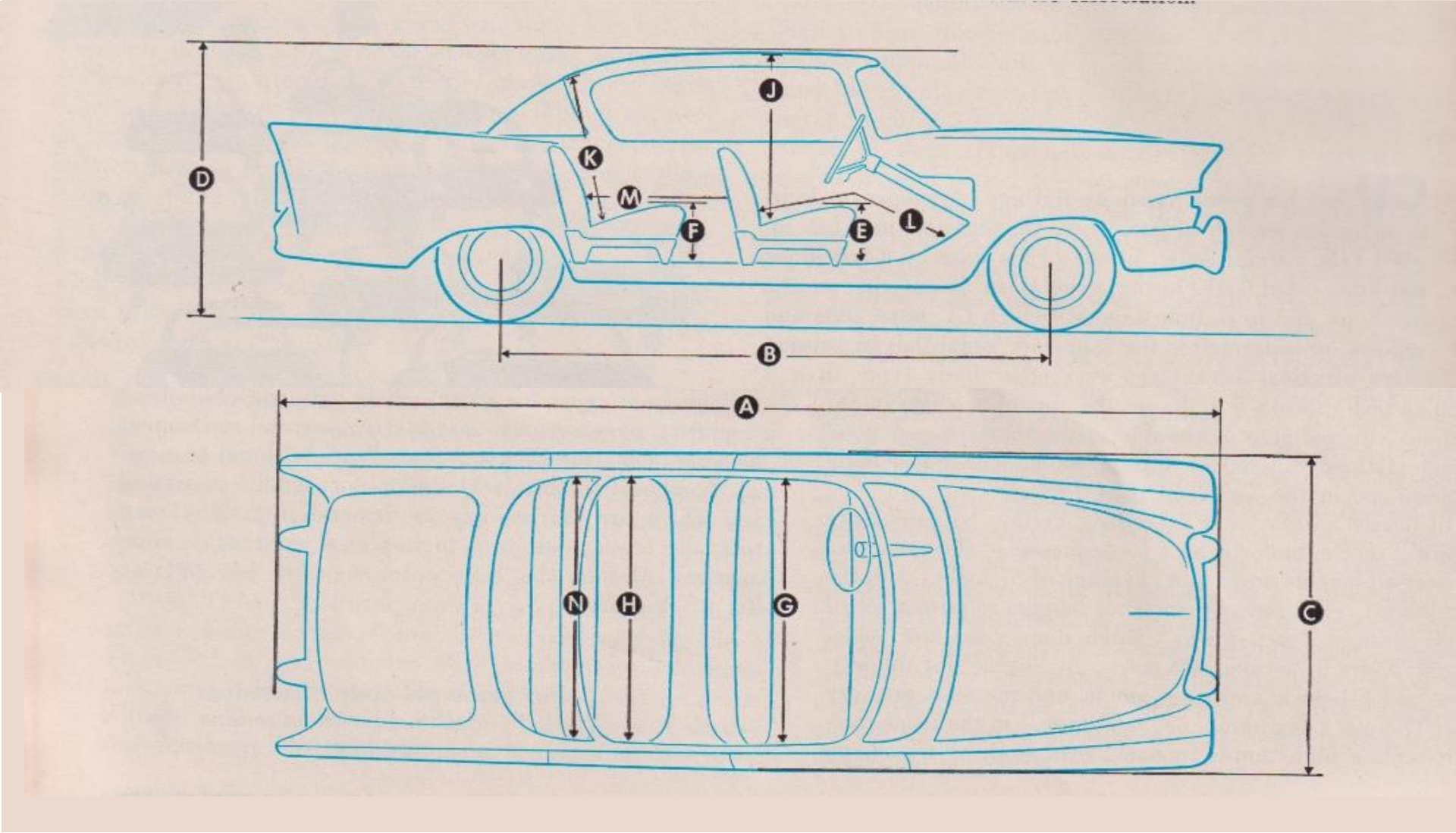
GROUP 4, HIGH-PRICED CARS

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N
	EXTERIOR DIMENSIONS IN INCHES				INTERIOR DIMENSIONS IN INCHES								
	OVERALL LENGTH	WHEEL BASE	OVERALL WIDTH	OVERALL HEIGHT	FRONT SEAT HEIGHT	REAR SEAT HEIGHT	FRONT HIP ROOM	REAR HIP ROOM	FRONT HEADROOM	REAR HEADROOM	FRONT LEGROOM	REAR SEATING SPACE	REAR SHOULDER ROOM
BUICK ROADMASTER 75	219	128	80	60	11¼	11¾	66	65	36	34	43	36	57
BUICK LIMITED	227	128	80	60	11¼	11¾	66	65	36	34	43	36	57
CADILLAC 62	217	130	80	59	13½	12½	65	65	35	35	45	35	56
CADILLAC 60 SPECIAL	225	133	80	59	13½	12½	65	65	34	35	45	35	56
CHRYSLER NEW YORKER	220	126	80	57	10¾	12	63	63	36	34	46	31	60
IMPERIAL	226	129	81	57	10¼	12½	61	60	35	34	46	34	62
LINCOLN	229	131	80	56	11½	14½	61	66	35	34	44	36	63
LINCOLN CONTINENTAL MARK III	229	131	80	56	11½	14½	61	65	35	34	44	22	67

			SMALLEST	AVERAGE	LARGEST	
OVERALL LENGTH	A	Rambler 6, Rebel	191 in.	213 in.	229 in.	Lincoln, Continer
WHEEL BASE	B	Rambler 6, Rebel	108	122	133	Cadillac 60S
OVERALL WIDTH	C	Rambler	72	78	81	Mercury; Imperi
OVERALL HEIGHT	D	Ford Fairlane; Edsel Ranger, Pacer; Lincoln, Continental	56	57	60	Buick Roadmaste
FRONT-SEAT HEIGHT	E	Pontiac Chieftain, Super Chief; Imperial	10¼	11	13½	Cadillac
REAR-SEAT HEIGHT	F	Buick Super	11	12¾	14½	Ford Custom 300 Edsel Corsair, Ci Lincoln and Cont
FRONT-SEAT HIP ROOM	G	Ford; Rambler; Stud.-Packard; Edsel Ranger, Pacer	60	62	66	Buick Super, Ro and Limited
REAR-SEAT HIP ROOM	H	Studebaker-Packard	59	62	66	Lincoln
FRONT-SEAT HEAD ROOM	J	Ford Fairlane; Edsel; Mercury; Cadillac 60 Special	34	35	36	Plymouth; Ramb Packard; Dodge; Chrysler; Buick Roadmaster 75 a
REAR-SEAT HEAD ROOM	K	Buick Special, Century; Edsel; Oldsmobile 98; Mercury	33	34	35	Rambler; Stud.-P Buick Super; Ca
FRONT-SEAT LEGROOM	L	Ford; Rambler; Stud.-Packard; Buick; Edsel Pacer, Ranger	43	44	46	Plymouth; Dodg Chrysler, Imperia
REAR-SEATING SPACE	M	Rambler; Studebaker Champion, Commander	28	31	36	Buick Roadmaste Limited; Lincoln
REAR SHOULDER ROOM	N	Studebaker-Packard	54	58	67	Continental

…The composite table above lists the averages, for each dimension, for all U.S. four-doors. The minimum and maximum figures which flank the column of averages are also given, with the names of the specific cars to which they apply…

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**



…The drawings above (T&B) indicate where the specific measurements are made. CU checks these measurements, as well as others, on each of the cars it road tests and has, in general, found very close correlation with the figures provided by the Automobile Manufacturers Assoc.

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

"…In nearly all current U.S. sedans, certain hardships are inflicted on the motorist as a consequence of the reduction of overall heights down to an average of 57-inches with the car loaded. The reduced entrance heights require a lot of back-bending. 'Step-downs' (high door sills) are introduced, floors in the rear are cut-up by 'wells' for the feet, knee or legroom is no longer ample and the seats are very low. There is a big hump, or 'doghouse,' in the front compartment, a high tunnel in back, over both of which, on some cars, the cushions are apt to be thin or hard, making each seat actually comfortable for only two passengers, despite the six-and-a-half-foot width of many cars…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

"…What these changes mean is that, to a considerable extent – and not because of any clearly expressed mandate from consumers – the industry is building low, fast, extra-powerful road cars instead of the modest-horsepower, easy-access family cars-of-all-work that made it world famous. These big, new, low cars, as an offset to their dimensional disadvantages, handle much better, ride better and treat their passengers to less sway and discomfort going fast over the road than an older family sedans…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**



"…They are rather specialized vehicles for the purpose of fast, main-road travel; and the available body types for 1958 include only one example of a compact, easy-to-enter, easy-to-drive, errand-running or 'hacking' car – the 'Rambler Six' . . . Aside from American Motors, the U.S. motor industry has little to offer in this field…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

<u>Above</u>: 1958 Rambler Six Super

Ratings

Group 2 – Lower-Medium-Priced Cars

"$2,810 to $3,286. All the cars in this lower-medium-price group are V-8s, all have more power than any sane motorist will know what to do with. They are, on the whole, more luxurious than the 'low-priced' cars, but little more so than the most de luxe of those models . . . The Group 2 cars are mostly longer than those in Group 1…

Special Mention: Except where driver preference demands maximum road sense at the price of high-effort parking, CU recommends power steering on all cars of this category. In fact, aside from *Pontiac* and *Rambler,* all steer so slowly without power that their ability to maneuver quickly is dangerously restricted…"

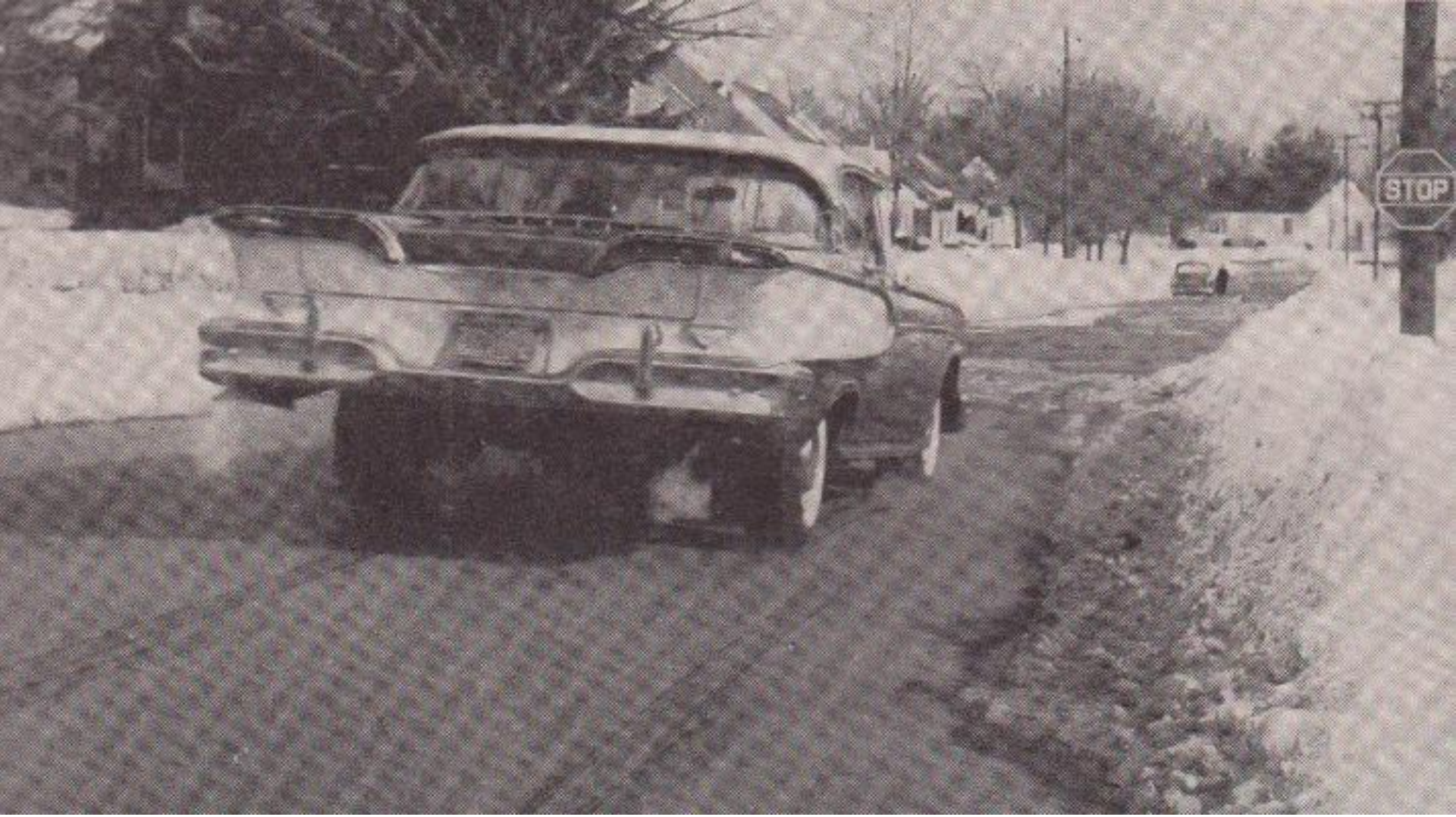
***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

RE: introduction to a sub-article whereby all cars tested were broken down into four groups based on price range and quality rating for family use. The Edsel Ranger was within this category (Group 2) and ranked 11 out of 13 for quality.

"EDSEL RANGER, with automatic transmission, $2,810. The same car in more de luxe trim appears as the *Pacer*.

This, the smaller Edsel model (*Corsair* and *Citation* are larger cars), uses the 'smallest' of a new range of engines which go also into Mercury and Lincoln cars for 1958. It's more accessible than Ford Motor Company's older engines and is one of the more powerful in this Group, with corresponding low gas mileage. Aside from the new engine, the *Edsel Ranger* parallels Ford cars in design. Room and glass area are those of the *Ford Fairlane* in Group 1, with changed sheet metal at front and rear extending the car half-a-foot beyond the Ford's overall length and hampering close-in vision in front. Riding qualities are a step or two above the Ford's, but the same cannot be said of Edsel's worse-than-average shake on rough roads. Steering and handling are satisfactory…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**



"…The brakes have less area and almost 300 more pounds of car to deal with than in the *Ford Fairlane.* Frequency-of-repair standing and probable trade-in value unknown."

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

<u>Caption</u>: "Chassis suspension, as well as brakes, must be good enough to bring a car to a stop without the 'nosediving' of the Edsel"

SUMMING UP: This *Edsel* compares rather unfavorably on the whole with the *Mercury Custom,* which pays more attention to comfort and vision, although it provides somewhat less engine.

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

Group 3 – Upper-Medium-Priced Cars

"$3,305 to $3,944. Though the cars in this upper-medium price group average slightly longer overall than the Group 2 cars, only one – the *Buick Super* - offers more room inside. Nor are these cars more powerful performers – in fact, they are less powerful than their Group 2 brothers. They do represent greater luxury in interior trim and are somewhat quieter. Their aim is to appear more massive and luxurious in order to justify their added cost and to an extent, they succeed – for the customers to whom these values are paramount…

Special Mention: Seven of the 10 cars have automatic transmissions as standard equipment. All are of such weight as to require power steering. Neither *Mercury, Buick Super* nor *Edsel* make a four-door sedan; the cars listed for each are four-door hardtops. In this Group, luxury for passengers is epitomized by the *Buick Super* body. The driver comes off best in the Chrysler Corporation cars and the *Mercury*, where the highest standards for steering and handling are set. The car which most nearly meets family-car specifications is the *Oldsmobile 88*, though it has power enough for two families."

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

RE: introduction to a sub-article whereby all cars tested were broken down into four groups based on price range and quality rating for family use. The *Edsel Corsair* was within this category (Group 3) and ranked 10 out of 10 for quality.

"EDSEL CORSAIR (Teletouch transmission, is standard), $3,425 for the four-door hardtop; no sedan made. The same car in more de luxe trim appears as the *Citation*.

This latest addition to the upper-medium-priced Group uses the *Mercury* body shell to provide quite acceptable interior room and vision (the wheelbase is wo-inched longer than the *Mercury's*; overall length is six-inches greater). Body trim is lavish; cushions are particularly good. The *Corsair's* engine is one of the all-new group developed for 1958; its displacement is 410 cubic-inches – the biggest available except for its brother, used in the *Lincoln* and the *Mercury Park Lane.* Gas mileage almost inevitably will be unsatisfactory. *Corsair's* Teletouch transmission is similar to the Fordomatic, but gears are selected electrically by pushbuttons on the hub of the steering wheel. The *Corsair's* riding qualities, soft and pillowy, are not adequately controlled on big bumps. The car's steering is satisfactory, but handling is sluggish on curves and corners. Structural shake on rough surfaces is abnormal. The brakes are capable, although CU found them rather erratic. All-in-all, the car adds no laurels to the Ford reputation and possesses nothing of original or outstanding (*Edsel's* self-adjusting brakes, for instance, are also used by *Mercury* and *Rambler*). *Edsel's* frequency-of-repair record is yet to be established and so is its probable trade-in value."

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

SUMMING UP: Since the less bulky *Mercury Monterey* and the *Montclair* offer the same accommodations, better riding and better handling, with slightly better gas mileage, there's little margin in which to establish a preference for the *Edsel* in this Group.

Defending the Edsel

The late Thomas E. Bonsall was one of the better American Automotive Historians, but some of his takes could be rather "old-school"

***indieauto.org,* August 23, 2025**

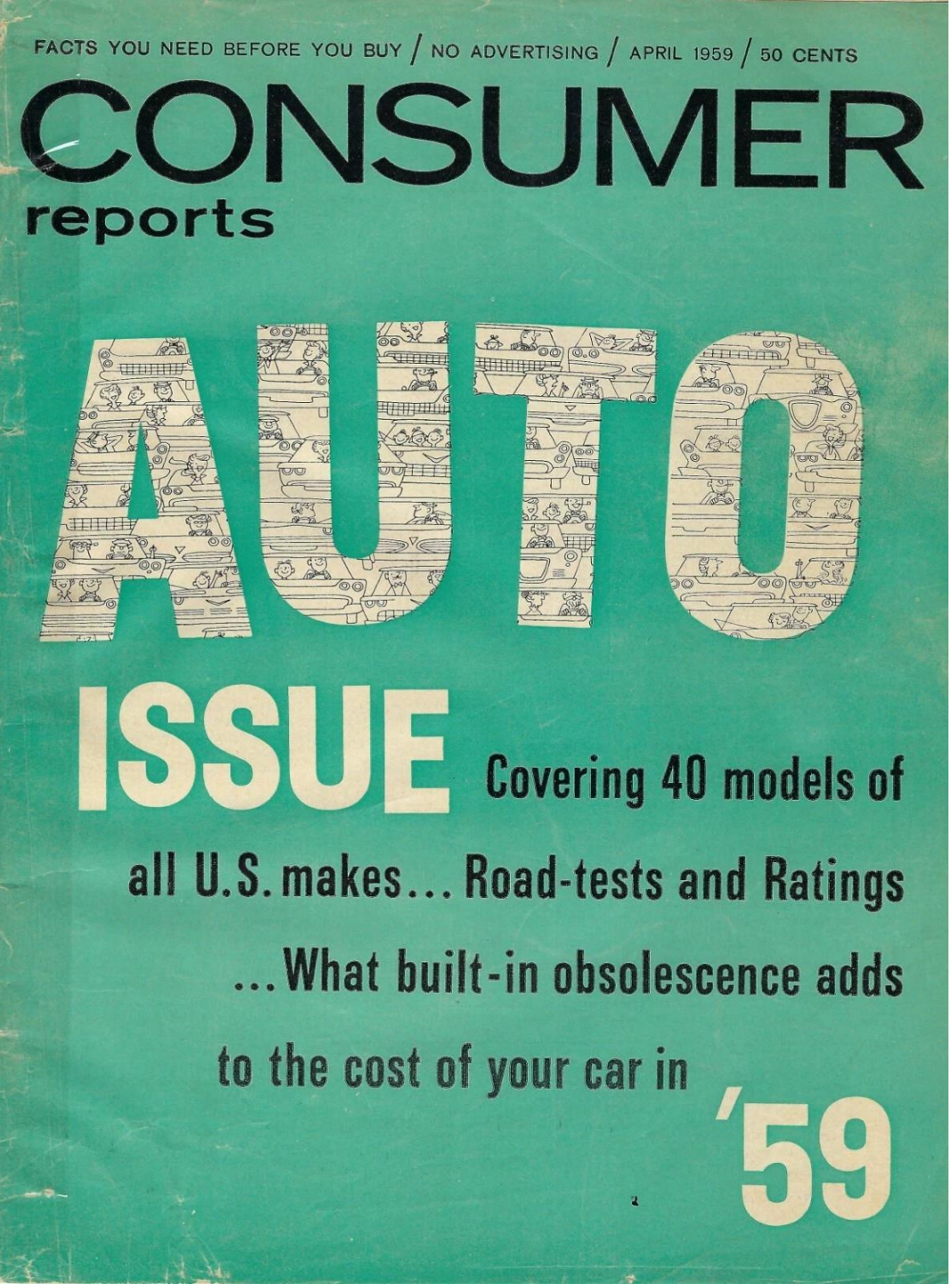
RE: introduction to an article entitled: "Thomas Bonsall Defended the 1958 Edsel Against Consumer Reports"

“FOR example, in his book about the Edsel, he concluded that the 1958 models were ‘actually a modest success that deserved continued support’…”
***indieauto.org,* August 23, 2025**

An Anti-Detroit Bias

"…Elsewhere in his book, Bonsall dismissed Consumer Reports' harsh criticism of the 1958 Edsel. He argued that in this era the magazine had a marked anti-Detroit bias' and 'constantly railed against useless frills, such as fancy styling, upgraded trim on the more deluxe models and more powerful engines - in other words, all the 'non-essentials' that had been driving the market since Alfred Sloan cottoned onto them in the 1920s…"

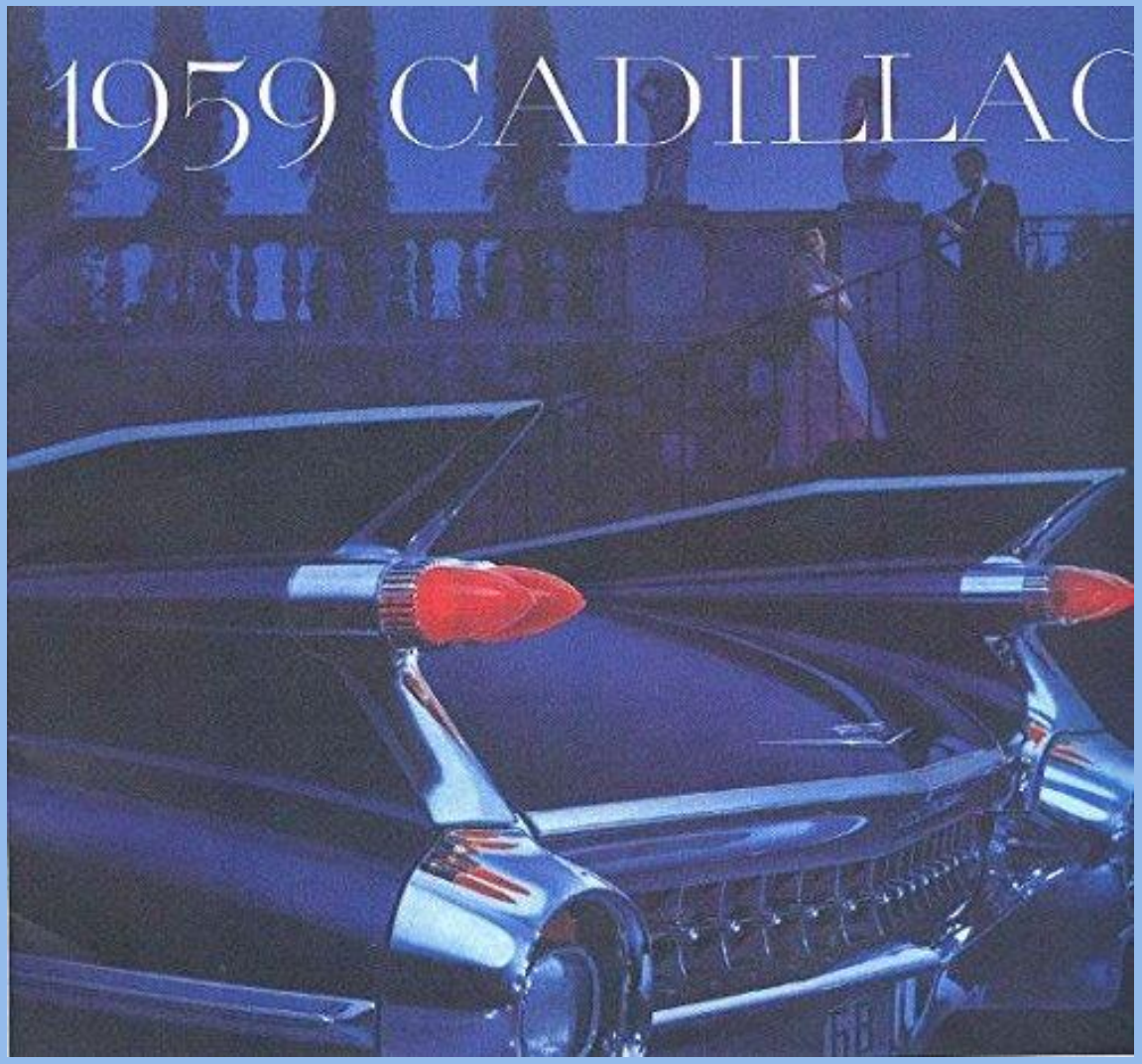
***indieauto.org,* August 23, 2025**



"…In an endnote, Bonsall added that Consumer Reports' attitude toward cars, in general, can perhaps best be divined by its conclusion on the 1959 Cadillac Sixty Special in its 1959 new car issue: 'An expenditure sufficient to buy this Cadillac will also buy two other very satisfactory U.S. vehicles, which would provide more and more various, services to facilitate a family's motoring pleasure'…"

indieauto.org,

Aug. 23, 2025


1959 CADILLAC

Consumer Reports Viewed Cars as Mere Appliances?

"…Bonsall juxtaposed Consumer Reports' take on the Cadillac with that of David Wallace, an Edsel Marketing Specialist who later remarked, 'We said to ourselves, 'Let's face it, there is no great difference in basic mechanism between a $2,000 Chevrolet and a $6,000 Cadillac. Nevertheless, there's something - there's got to be something - in the makeup of a certain number of people that gives them a yen for a Cadillac, in spite of its high price - or maybe because of it'…"

***indieauto.org,* August 23, 2025**

"…Wallace would engage in an extensive amount of 'motivational research' to better target potential Edsel buyers. Bonsall noted that although Wallace started off not knowing 'why someone would pay $6,000 for a Cadillac, either, he, at least, took the trouble to try and find out. Consumer Reports, apparently, didn't know and didn't care. Cars were only appliances to them'…"

***indieauto.org,* August 23, 2025**

Rubbed the Wrong Way

"…What did Consumer Reports say about the Edsel that rubbed Bonsall the wrong way? Here are major points it made in a road test:

'The Edsel has no important basic advantages over other brands. . . . The amount of shake in this Corsair body on rough roads - which wasn't long in making itself heard as squeaks and rattles - went well beyond any acceptable limit . . . As a matter of simple fact, combined with the car's tendency to shake like jelly, Edsel handling represents regression rather than progress . . . The center of the steering wheel is not, in CU's opinion, a good push-button location . . . The 'luxury-loaded' Edsel - as one magazine described it - will certainly please anyone who confuses gadgetry with luxury.'…"

***indieauto.org*, August 23, 2025**

But Weren’t the Edsel Criticisms Accurate?



"…The most curious aspect of Bonsall's dismissal of Consumer Reports was that he didn't question the accuracy of its Edsel assessment. His was purely an ad hominem attack on the magazine. Although CU did focus on the cost-effectiveness of the products it tested, it was an exaggeration to say that the magazine 'would have loved the Model T and this alone made the Edsel Corsair they tested an unlikely favorite'…"

***indieauto.org,* August 23, 2025**

<u>Caption</u>: "1958 Edsel Corsair 4-door hardtop"

Comparing Notes

What do the lower-medium-priced models offer that their "low-priced" mates do not?

***Consumer Reports,* March 1959**

RE: introduction to an article entitled: "Road Tests on the '59 Dodge, Edsel, Pontiac"

Similar DNA

EDSEL
DODGE
PONTIAC







"ALL three of the lower-medium-priced cars tested for this issue have blood-relatives among the so-called low-priced cars. Pontiac shares its body shell with Chevrolet. Dodge's similarity to Plymouth includes (in the less expensive models) the standard engine and most of the chassis, as well as the body shell. And the Edsel is almost completely a Ford in engine, chassis and body, though clever styling conceals the fact…"

***Consumer Reports,* March 1959**

The Question Asked

"…Since all three of these lower-medium-priced cars in their least expensive models cost roughly $150 to $200 more than the middle-range 'low-priced' cars which CU reported on last month, it's highly pertinent to ask what you get for your money? The answer is, not too much…"

***Consumer Reports,* March 1959**

A Closer Look

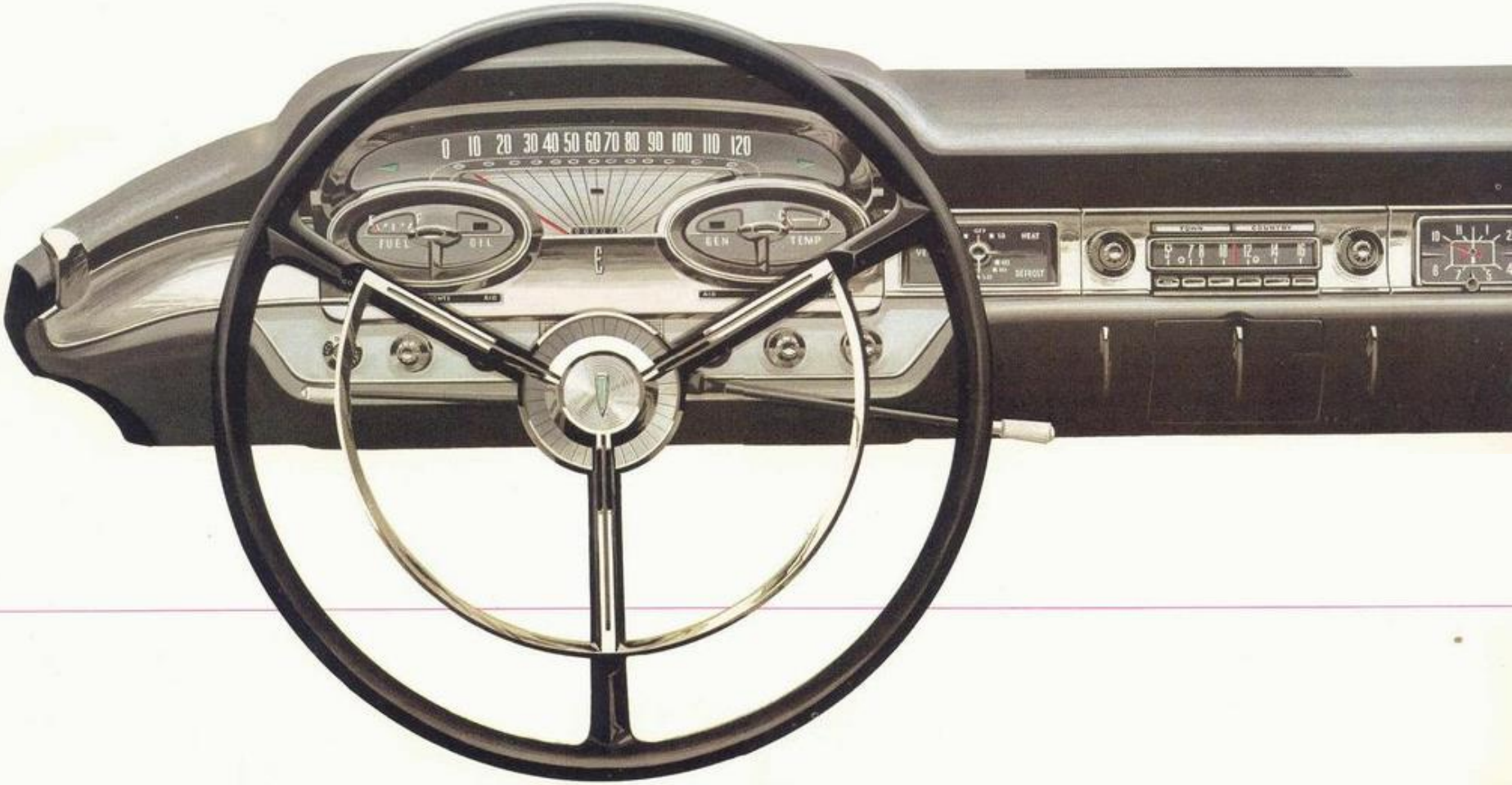
"…Consider the three cars separately . . . What the Edsel Ranger offers that the Ford Fairlane lacks is simpler: three inches more length and width, better trim and somewhat better seating, enough more insulation to lower the noise level slightly, a more usefully arranged trunk and an easier manual steering – gained by a gear of such high ratio that power-steering must be advised for maneuverability's sake…"
***Consumer Reports,* March 1959**

Course Correction

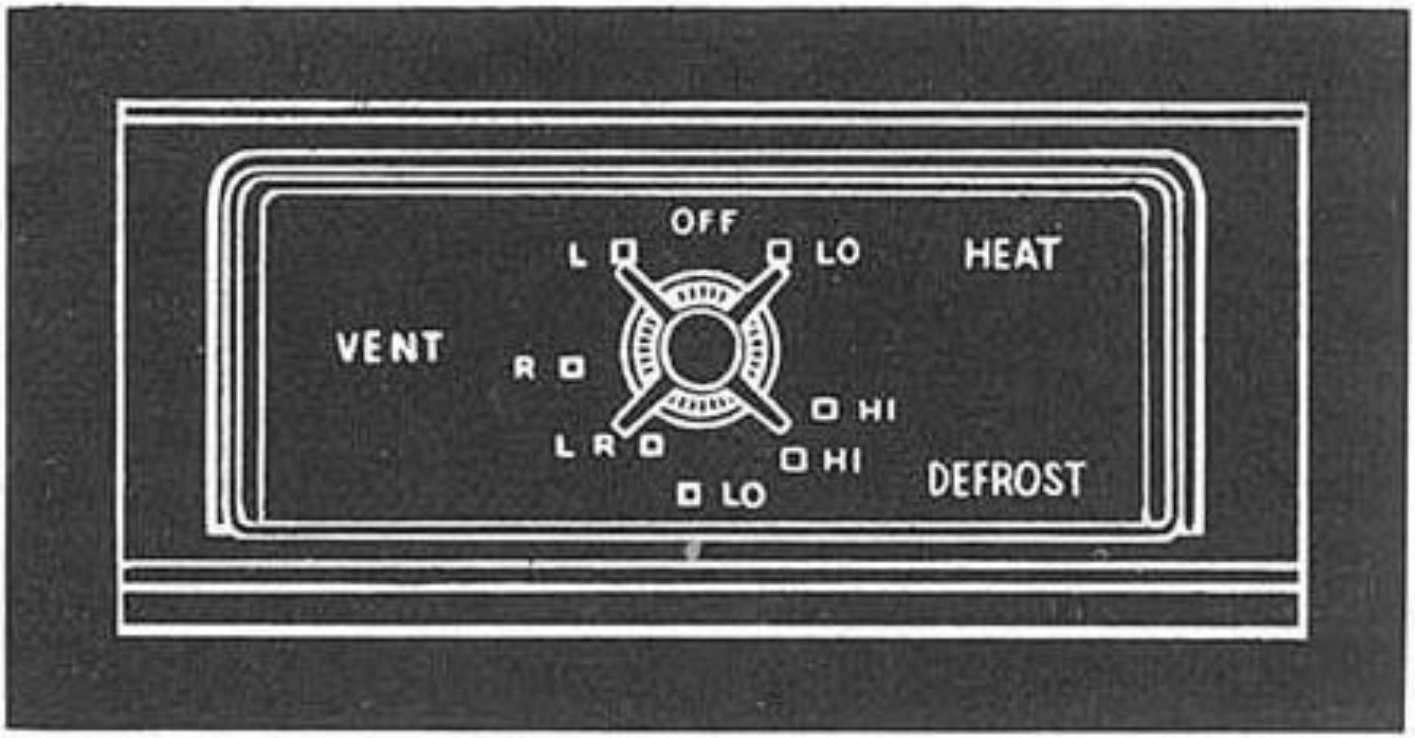
"…Yet the Edsel – whether the Ranger or the more expensive Corsair model – is for all practical purposes, a Ford. Its only relationship to last year's unhappy Edsel is in some of the styling elements and even these are much better handled than last year…"

***Consumer Reports,* March 1959**

RE: nearly all the Edsel's technical features were discarded for '59, including the drum speedometer and the bug-ridden "Teletouch" push-button shifter with its controls in the steering wheel hub. The '59 dash was a restyled Ford component and the shifter was now an ordinary lever on the steering column.



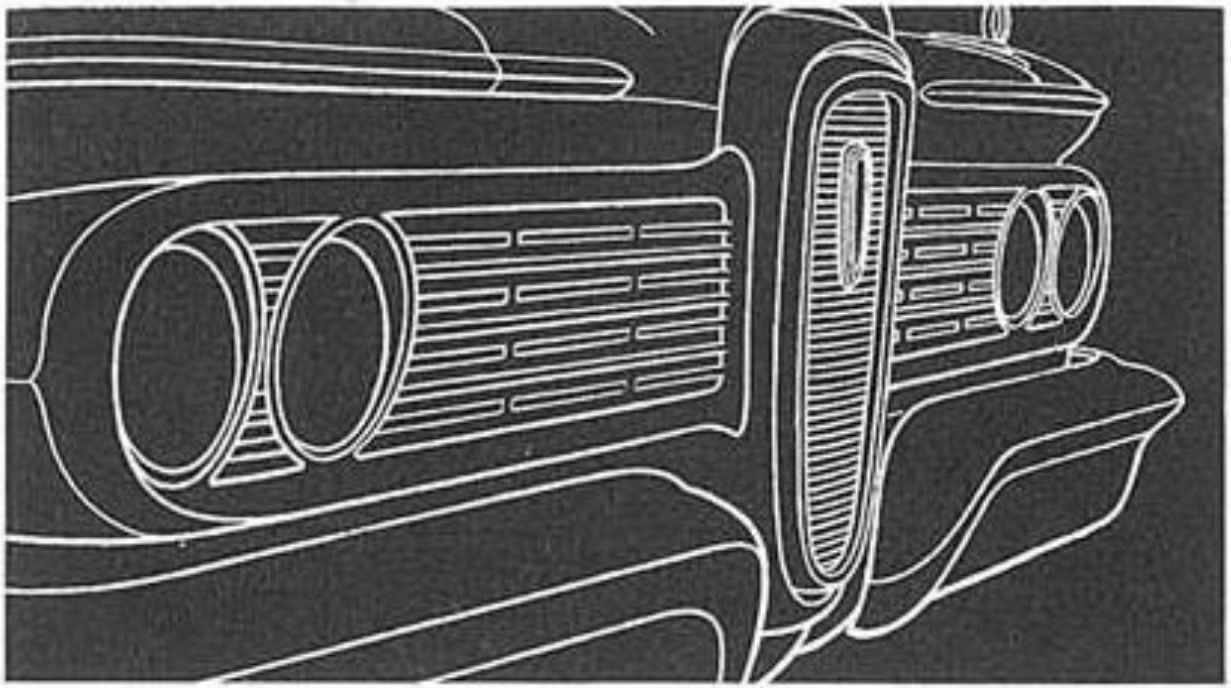
Function and styling blend neatly in the new Edsel instrument panel. Gages are handsomely set into twin ovals at each end of the wide-angle speedometer—one glance covers them all. Special safety padding that is covered in color-matched vinyl is available in all Edsel models at extra cost.



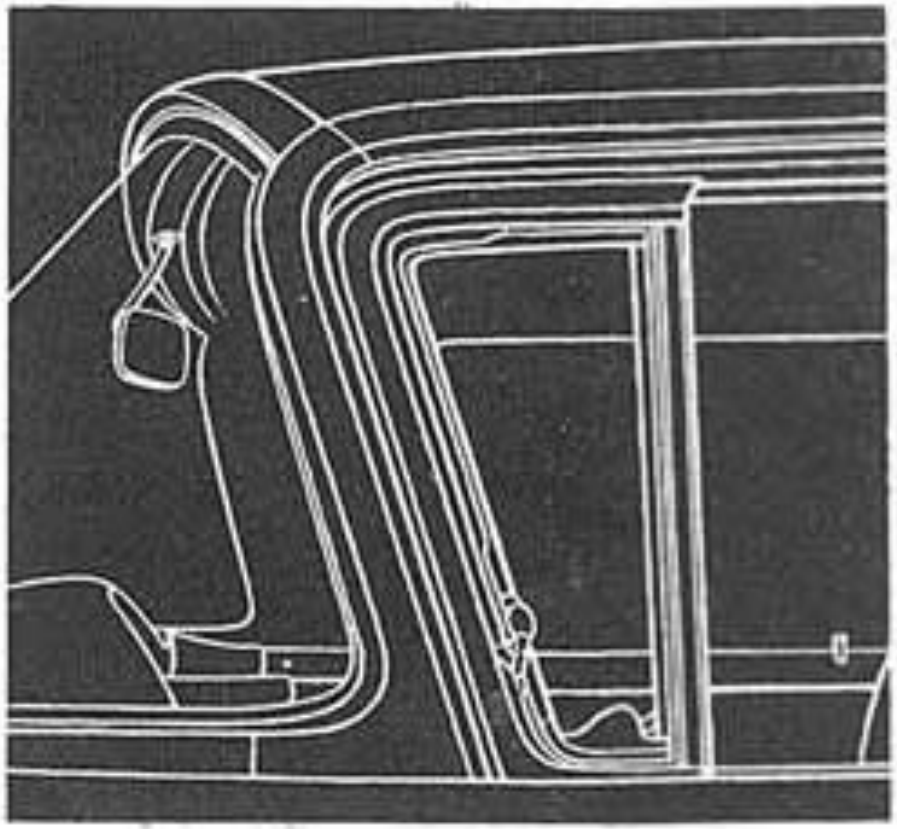
Edsel's famous Dial-temp heating and ventilation option lets you control the climate with one control—the most convenient system ever designed into a car.



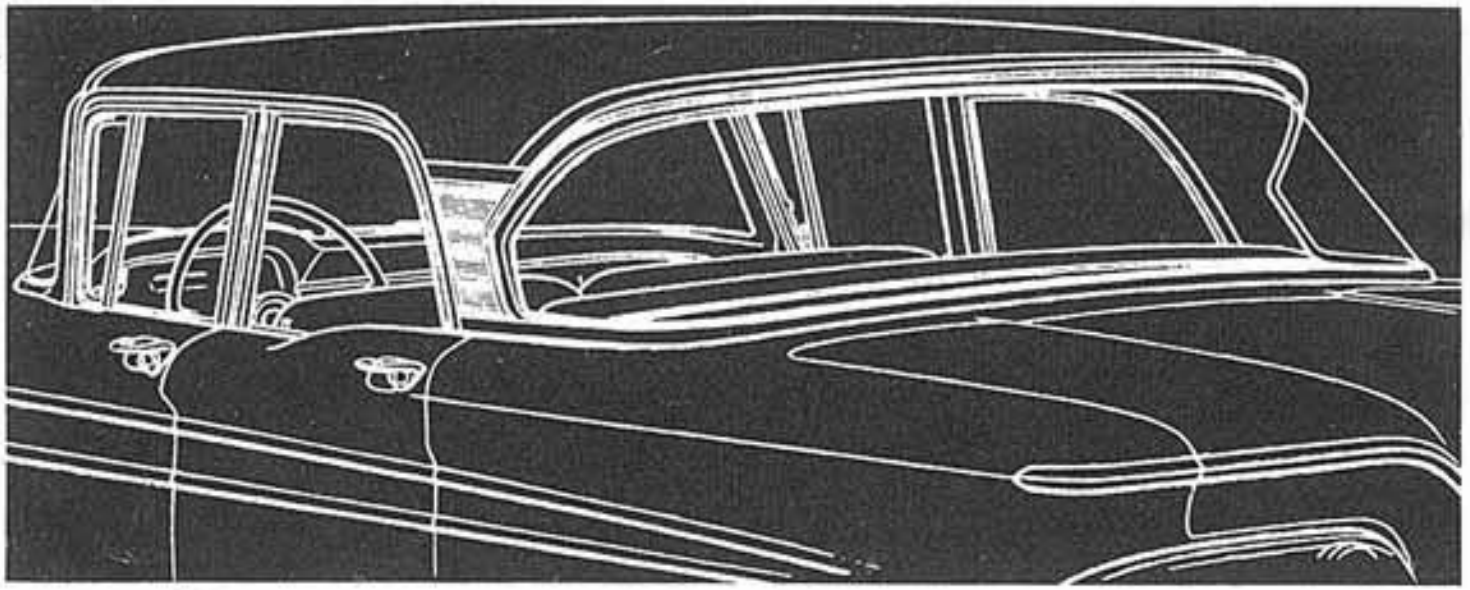
<u>Above</u>: the flamboyant Edsel exterior design was toned-down as well for ‘59. While the controversial vertical grille was retained, the overall look now leaned towards the conventional. The gull-wing tail fins were flattened and the tail-lights were broken-up with a string of six round lenses.



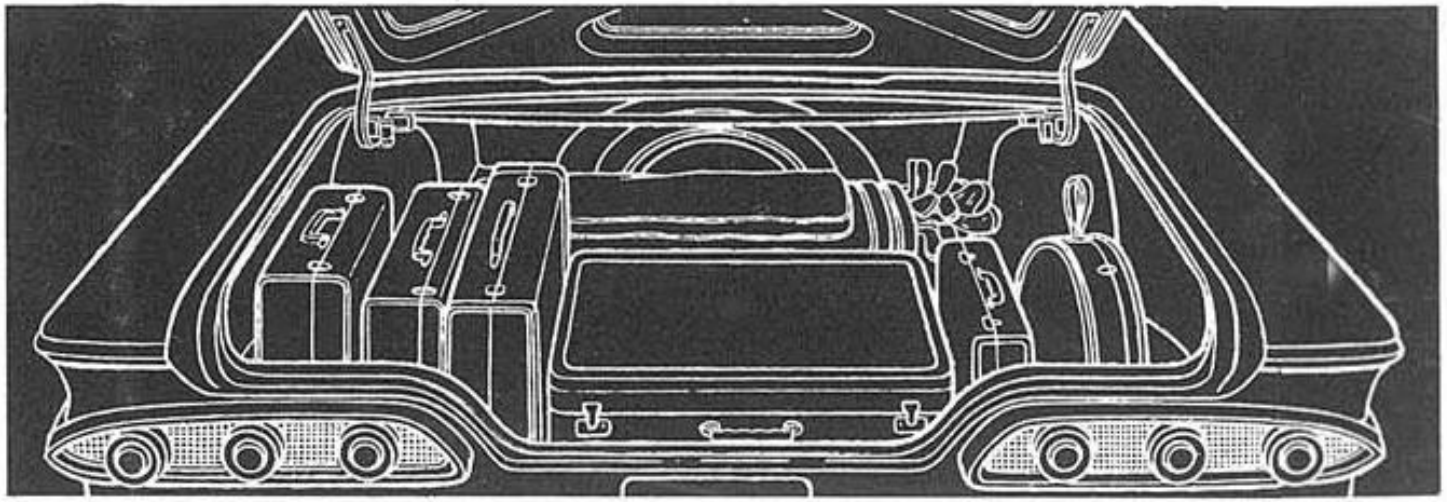
Edsel's new vertical grille offers distinction and originality that look-alike cars just can't match. New lowered dual headlights blend into the grille.



New high-crown windshield styling gives you new styling *without* wrap-over windshield glare.



Hardtop styling in sedans brings new grace and beauty to both 2- and 4-door Edsel sedans. Slim, strong, box-beam pillars are neatly concealed by chrome window moldings.



New wider luggage space now gives you the full Edsel width for easier storage of more load conveniently at hand—affords more than 6 feet of wall-to-wall width overall. Rear flight deck is counterbalanced to open and close easily.

FREE
Take One

EDSEL EXTRA

SPECIAL
KING-SIZE
EDITION

NEWS ★ ★ ★ PICTURES ★ ★ ★ FEATURE STORIES ★ ★ ★ VOL. I, No. 4

EDSEL: KING-SIZE VALUE IN THE LOW-PRICE FIELD



EDSEL ECONOMY INCREASES ITS POPULARITY

Across the country, car buyers are thinking more and more in terms of the low-priced Edsel. Latest figures show that Edsel sales continue to exceed the same months last year.

What's the reason for this continuing sales growth? For one thing, Edsel is now priced down with many models of Chevrolet, Plymouth and Ford. Edsel offers many "extras", too, at no additional cost. And there are two Edsel V-8's and an economy Six that run on regular gas.

Model for model, never before has an automobile offered the American car buyer so much for so little as the '59 Edsel.

Big-Car Comfort . . .
King-Size Economy

The 1959 Edsel has proved to be today's top car value in many different ways. Here is the car that gives you the size, luxury, comfort and performance of medium-priced cars costing much more. Yet, Edsel costs no more than many models of Plymouth, Chevrolet and Ford.

The big thing to remember, though, is that you really *save* with Edsel. First, when you buy it—because Edsel costs less money initially—and second, as you drive Edsel, because it gives you premium performance and fuel economy on *regular gasoline.*

Even more, Edsel features a long list of "extras" that you don't have to pay one penny more for—many of which competition either doesn't have, or charges extra for. These are only a few of the reasons why we say that no matter how you measure it, Edsel is the year's "king-size value in the low-price field!" Ask your Edsel salesman for a demonstration ride. Discover for yourself the thrill of driving an Edsel.

Edsel Planned, Engineered To Be "King-Size" Value in Low-Price Field . . .



EDSEL QUALITY CUTS MAINTENANCE COSTS

Solidly Engineered, "Proved Out" For Dependability By Rigid Testing

One of the main objectives behind the introduction and production of the 1959 Edsel was to give the American car buyer an automobile with a maximum of quality and dependability.

Edsel parts and materials, for instance, were put through tortuous tests and "proved out" before being given an O.K. for general production. Edsel designers and engineers checked and re-checked working parts and designs to provide proper fit and longer wear. A unique Quality Control program was instituted, too—one that searches out defects, reduces any "bugs" which might appear.

In the hundreds of thousands of hours spent in developing the 1959 Edsel, each component—suspension, steering, frame and dozens more—was developed, refined and tested. Slowly, gradually, the solidly built and engineered Edsel emerged.

Some of the first Edsels built were taken to Ford Motor Company's high-speed oval track at Kingman, Arizona, where they were exposed to hot weather, high-speed endurance testing.

Other Edsels went to Ford's proving grounds in Romeo, Michigan, where they were torture-tested under every condition imaginable. They climbed unbelievably steep grades in forward gears and in reverse. They were driven unmercifully over extra-rough roads. They were run through deep water and sand pits. All this, to make sure that Edsel gives you, the American car buyer, the kind of car that can really take it . . . stand up under practically every condition of driving.

The Edsel body finish was proved out, too—keeps its beautiful, lustrous appearance longer. Edsel engineers at research headquarters sprayed the cars with salt spray, hour after hour, to determine the corrosion resistance of chrome and paint. They also tested the interiors and exteriors for weathering and sun fading.

This is the basic story behind the 1959 Edsel. Every effort has been put forth to give you a quality car . . . a solid, dependable automobile that gives you dependable operation and cuts your maintenance costs.

Comfort Engineering—

A New Approach to Edsel Design

When it comes to designing an automobile for human comfort, Edsel engineers go much further than measurements and slide rules.

Edsel engineers "comfort engineer" every inch of available space. They move seats up and down, slide them forward and backward, tilt them forward and backward—test every angle to insure the greatest sitting comfort. Every possible combination of driver and passenger position is checked out.

Edsel engineers also subject the car to wind-tunnel tests to determine the efficiency of heating, cooling and ventilating controls and design. Edsel air conditioning is tested under heat conditions of summer desert temperatures.

The result? The 1959 Edsel offers driver and passengers alike more roomy comfort . . . there's extra head room, leg room and greater width on the inside for relaxed, "stretch-out" sitting. And Edsel offers more heating and ventilating comfort, too!

EDSEL: KING-SIZE BUY

Extra Size, Performance, Mileage, Quality...at No Extra Cost!

This year, while many other car prices have jumped up, Edsel prices have come down! In fact, Edsel prices now match many models of Ford, Chevrolet and Plymouth.

But reducing the price of the Edsel doesn't mean that its high standard of value and quality has been lowered. On the contrary. The '59 Edsel still lets you enjoy the distinction, performance and luxury of a bigger, more expensive car—but at a low-priced car investment.

And think of the advantages Edsel has to offer you. For one, it's a full-sized car with a 120-inch wheelbase . . . doesn't skimp on room. Handles with a feather touch, too! As for gas economy, Edsel saves you money while you drive, with two V-8 engines and a special Economy Six engine that operate best on regular gasoline—squeeze extra miles out of every drop!

There are no extra charges for Edsel's many "built-in" features, either. Features like wall-to-wall carpeting, foam rubber front-seat cushions, aluminized long-life muffler and many, many more. And Edsel—comparably equipped, item for item, with many models of the popular three—sells in the same price range!

Edsel has big-car "feel", too. That's because quality has been built into it. You get the weight, wheelbase and comfort you expect to find in much higher priced cars. And you'll notice, as you inspect Edsel, that careful attention to detail throughout is a part of Edsel's wonderful and important quality story for 1959.

EDSEL: Built To Give More of Everything for Less Money

With Edsel, big-car advantages are yours at a price you can easily afford to pay. For example, the Edsel Ranger is actually priced below 40% of Chevrolet's models.

Some of the fine car features you will find in Edsel include self-adjusting brakes, double-panel door construction, single-control heating and ventilating system and luxurious, thick loop-pile, wall-to-wall carpeting.

Edsel also offers you a host of other extras at no additional cost—power-booster windshield wipers, inside hood release, electric clock and oil filter, to name a few.

There's a lot more than meets the eye when talking about Edsel value, too. Underneath, you'll find big, leaf-type springs and famous ball-joint suspension—they cushion you in comfort, give you a road-poise ride. To prevent road sway, there's a torsion bar. And, all of these superb ride features are mounted on a wheelbase longer than that of the "popular three."



EDSEL RANGER 4-DOOR SEDAN. *Other Ranger models include a 4-Door Hardtop, a 2-Door Hardtop and a 2-Door Sedan.*



EDSEL VILLAGER 6-PASSENGER STATION WAGON. *Also available is an Edsel Villager 9-passenger Station Wagon.*



EDSEL CORSAIR 4-DOOR SEDAN. *Other Corsair models: Convertible, 4-Door Hardtop and a 2-Door Hardtop.*

EDSEL—Top-Notch Performer on Regular Gasoline

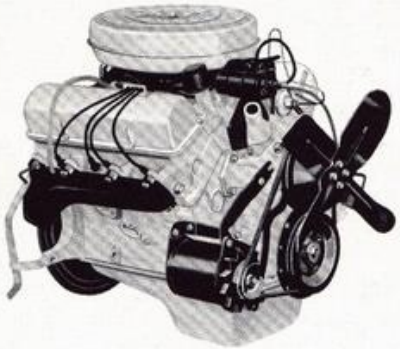
Decide what you want an engine to do—then take your choice from Edsel's four new engines. You have a big choice, too, because Edsel has designed its new engines to give the vast majority of American motorists exactly what they want in performance and economy.

The Edsel Economy Six is a special engine option at *lower cost*. This high-mileage maker saves you money every time you drive. Deep-block, over-square design principles provide greater efficiency, give power plus economy.

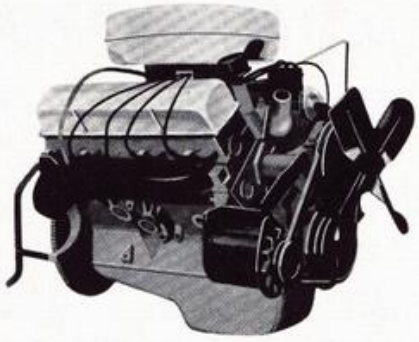
If your choice is a balance of both power and economy, consider either the all-new Edsel Express V-8 or the Ranger V-8. Their advanced short-stroke, deep-block design means shorter piston travel. And this means increased efficiency, reduced friction and less wear. They give more power for less fuel. Quality features include precision-balanced crankshaft, special plated pistons, and many other advantages.

If you want outstanding performance with good fuel economy, you'll want Edsel's new Super Express V-8 engine. This is one of the biggest, most powerful engines in the low-price range.

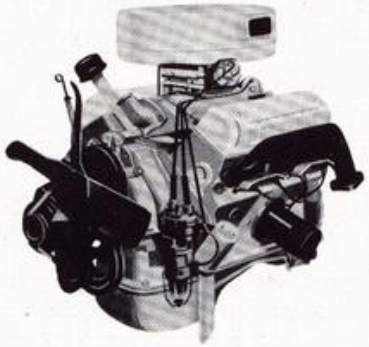
The big news about Edsel's engines, though, is that you can save money every mile you drive. Two of the V-8's—Edsel Express V-8 and Ranger V-8—and the Economy Six operate *best on regular gas!*



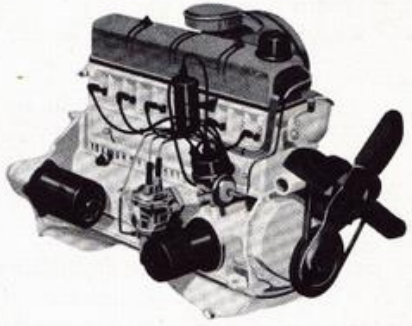
SUPER EXPRESS V-8—303 horsepower. Maximum torque, 390 ft-lbs. Compression ratio, 9.6:1. Available in all Edsel models. One of the biggest in its price field.



EXPRESS V-8—225 horsepower. Maximum torque, 325 ft-lbs. Compression ratio, 8.9:1. Standard engine for all Corsairs and Villagers. Performs best on regular fuel.

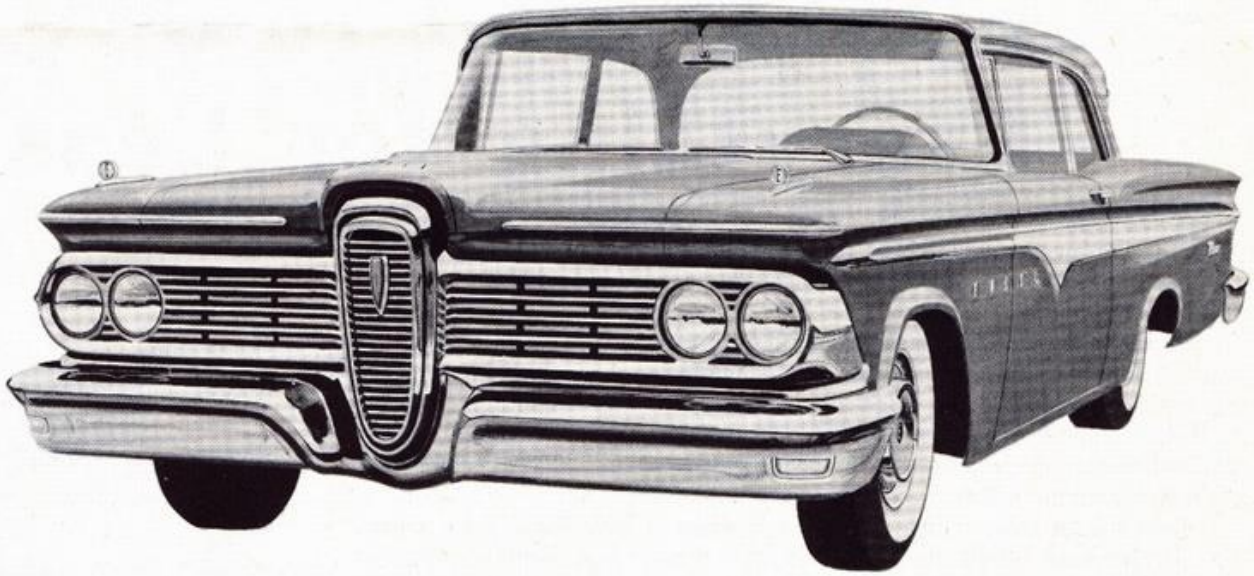


RANGER V-8—200 horsepower. Maximum torque, 285 ft-lbs. Compression ratio, 8.8:1. Standard engine for Rangers. Provides V-8 performance on regular fuel.



ECONOMY SIX—145 horsepower. Maximum torque, 206 ft-lbs. Compression ratio, 8.4:1. Reduced cost in Ranger and Villager models. Uses regular fuel.

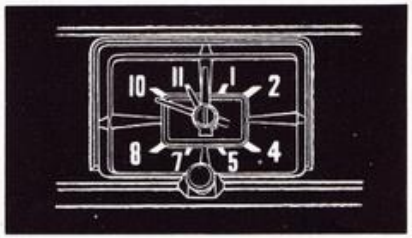
You Don't Pay a Penny Extra For These Features



EDSEL RANGER 2-DOOR SEDAN. *Top quality in even the lowest priced Edsel. Features beautiful, color-keyed fabrics with matching roof linings; spacious interiors; a smooth, comfortable road-poise ride and powerful, efficient engine that operates best on regular gas.*

Designed to offer more value all the way around, the 1959 Edsel gives you big-car luxury at low prices. Many outstanding features that Edsel pioneered last year are standard equipment in '59. Self-adjusting brakes, aluminized muffler and Diamond Lustre enamel finish are a few examples.

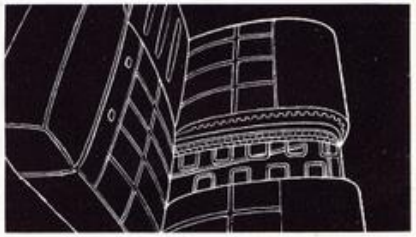
In addition, the 1959 Edsel offers these extras at no additional cost—foam rubber front-seat cushions, safety steering wheel, electric clock, oil filter, air cleaner, wall-to-wall carpeting, power-booster windshield wipers, turn signals, arm rests (front and rear), inside hood release and dual sun visors.



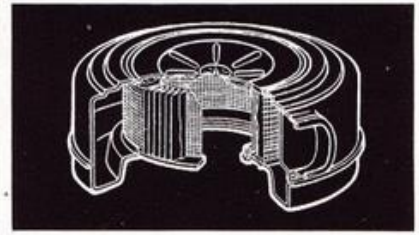
ELECTRIC CLOCK



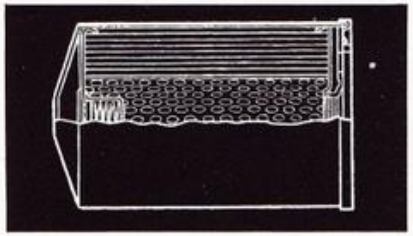
SAFETY STEERING WHEEL



FOAM RUBBER FRONT-SEAT CUSHION



AIR CLEANER



OIL FILTER



WALL-TO-WALL CARPETING

Edsel superiority is even more noticeable when compared with the medium-price field. The lower price is just the beginning of Edsel's greater value. Notice the extra features Edsel offers at no additional cost. The manufacturers' suggested retail prices here are for cars equipped as most people buy them. Corsair prices include 225-hp V-8 engine, Mile-O-Matic Drive, Lever-temp heater, push-button radio, whitewall tires, wheel covers, electric clock, wall-to-wall carpeting, oil filter, air cleaner, power-booster windshield wipers and foam rubber front-seat cushion. Transportation charges, not included, vary across the country. However, they are about the same for all cars.



EDSEL CORSAIR vs.		BUICK LE SABRE	DODGE ROYAL B	OLDSMOBILE "88"	PONTIAC STAR CHIEF
Corsair 2-Door Hardtop	$3200.28	$3357.76 $157.48 more than Edsel	$3468.95 $268.67 more than Edsel	$3476.06 $275.78 more than Edsel	NO MODEL
Corsair 4-Door Hardtop	3265.78	3433.76 $167.98 more than Edsel	3547.45 $281.67 more than Edsel	3554.06 $288.78 more than Edsel	$3630.72 $364.94 more than Edsel
Corsair 4-Door Sedan	3193.28	3312.76 $119.48 more than Edsel	3412.95 $219.67 more than Edsel	3420.06 $226.78 more than Edsel	3497.72 $304.44 more than Edsel
Corsair Convertible	3453.28	3637.76 $184.48 more than Edsel	NO MODEL	3804.06 $350.78 more than Edsel	NO MODEL
EDSEL Product Advantages		Edsel has self-adjusting brakes—Buick does not • Edsel Corsair has wide range of V-8 power • Buick LeSabre has only one engine size • Edsel has comfortable contour seats—Buick has ordinary seats • Edsel has full wall-to-wall carpeting—Buick LeSabre has rubber mats • Electric clock is standard in Edsel Corsair—but not in Buick LeSabre.	Edsel's styling is all-new—Dodge's is 3 years old • Edsel has convenient range selector vs. Dodge's left-hand push buttons • Edsel has step-on parking brake vs. old-type pull-handle parking brake • Edsel's brakes are self-adjusting—Dodge's are not • Edsel has comfortable contour seats—Dodge does not.	Edsel has self-adjusting brakes—Oldsmobile does not • Edsel Corsair has contour seats—Oldsmobile has ordinary seats • There are 32 cu. ft. of luggage space in an Edsel and 17.6 cu. ft. in an Oldsmobile • Edsel has full carpeting vs. rubber mats in the Oldsmobile "88"	Edsel has self-adjusting brakes—Pontiac does not • Edsel has contour seats front and rear • Edsel has 32 cu. ft. of luggage space vs. 24.3 cu. ft. for Pontiac • Edsel has the safety and comfort of a Guard-Rail frame—Pontiac does not.

Notice how much more you get from Edsel—
yet Edsel is priced below competitive cars.

Somewhat Likeable

"…But by becoming basically a Ford, the Edsel emerges as a quite satisfactory, in some ways even likeable car, unlike the 1958 model…"

***Consumer Reports*, March 1959**



When it was introduced in Sept. 1957, the 1958 Edsel was touted as glamorous, luxurious, the most fabulous automobile in a generation. Henry Ford II called it "the only truly new car on the American road." FMC expected to sell 200K cars in the first year, but the total volume amounted to only 63K – something had to be done. Just one year later, in October 1958, the bold product strategy was scrapped and the 1959 Edsel was presented as a modest and practical family hauler. No longer a rival to Buick and/or Oldsmobile, this Edsel was "an all-new quality car in the low-price range." Right alongside Ford, that could be taken to mean: "The 1959 Edsel makes history by making sense," as the copywriters declared.

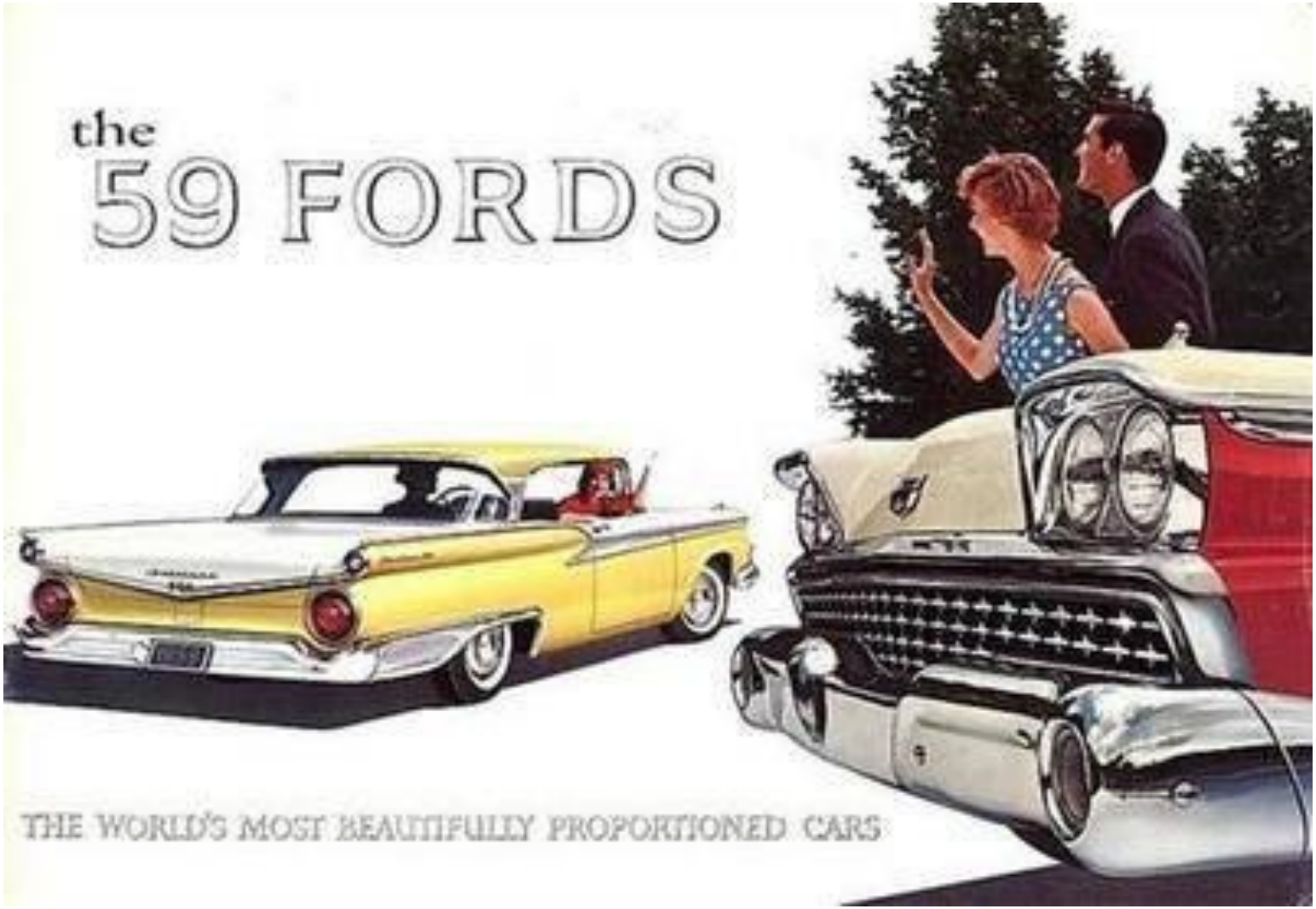
With its Clothes Off



EDSEL RANGER 4-DOOR HARDTOP

"…CU's Edsel was a four-door hardtop, but otherwise was the standard Ranger model in all respects. Only the most superficial mechanical differences – self-adjusting brakes, for instance, and higher-ratio steering – distinguish it, with the clothes off, from the '59 Ford Fairlane, although the styling and detail changes and the greater length and width added about 180 pounds above the Ford's weight…"

***Consumer Reports,* March 1959**


the
59 FORDS
THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFULLY PROPORTIONED CARS



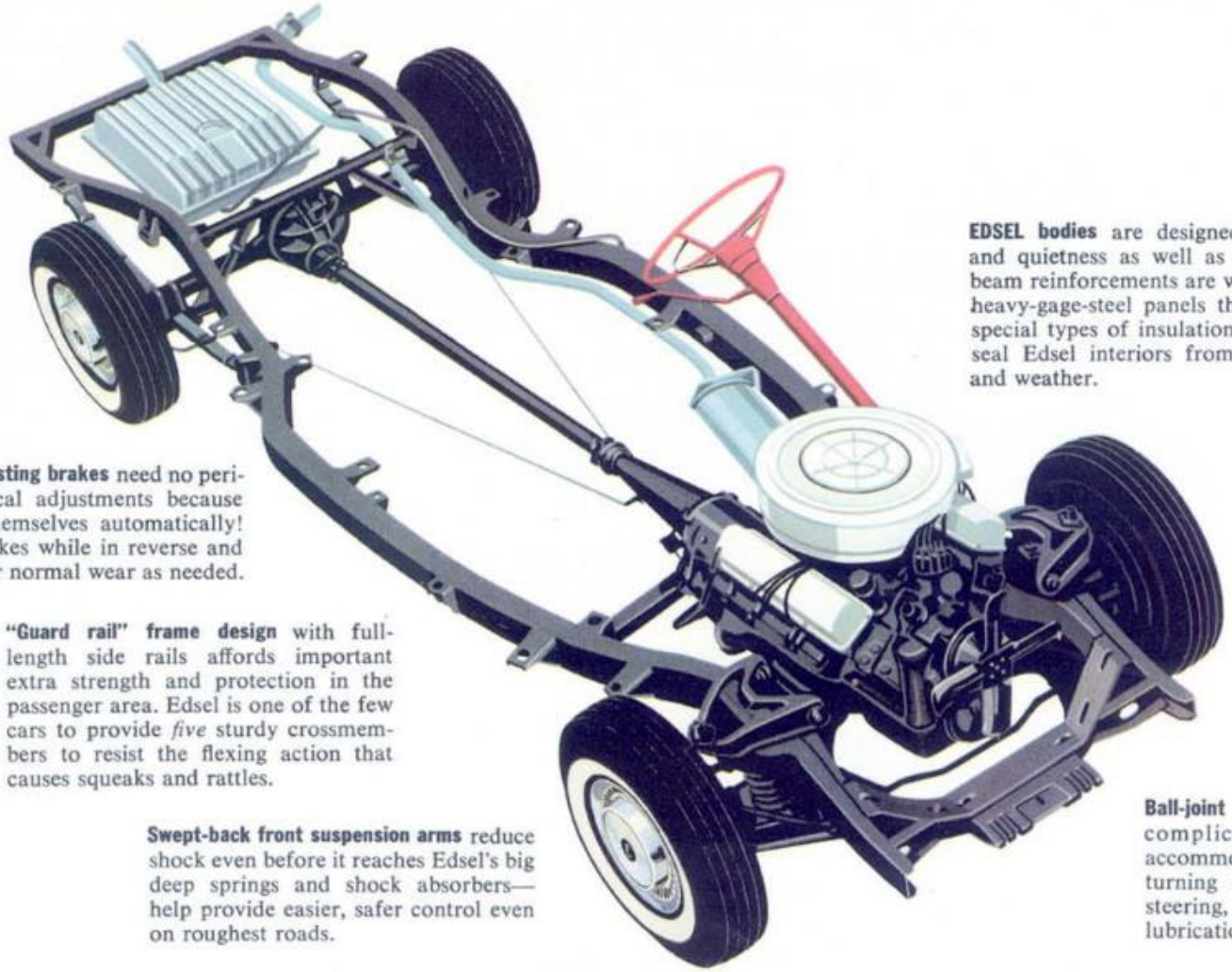
"…The same Edsel chassis (there is only one: Edsel has reduced the number of lines it offers from four in '58 to two this year), using the 332 cu-bic-inch Ford engine fitted wi-th hydraulic valve-lifters, bec-omes the top-line Edsel Cor-sair…"

***Consumer Reports,* March 1959**

RE: for the 1959 model year, there was now a single Ford-based ch-assis with a 120-in. wheelbase and the body styles were pared down to 10 (left). The big 410 ci E-475 engine was discontinued as powerplant choices were redu-ced to four; an inline six and th-ree V-8s. The largest was a 361 ci V-8 with 303-hp.


1959 EDSEL
EAST
LIMIT
MAX

The EDSEL is soundly engineered, solidly built



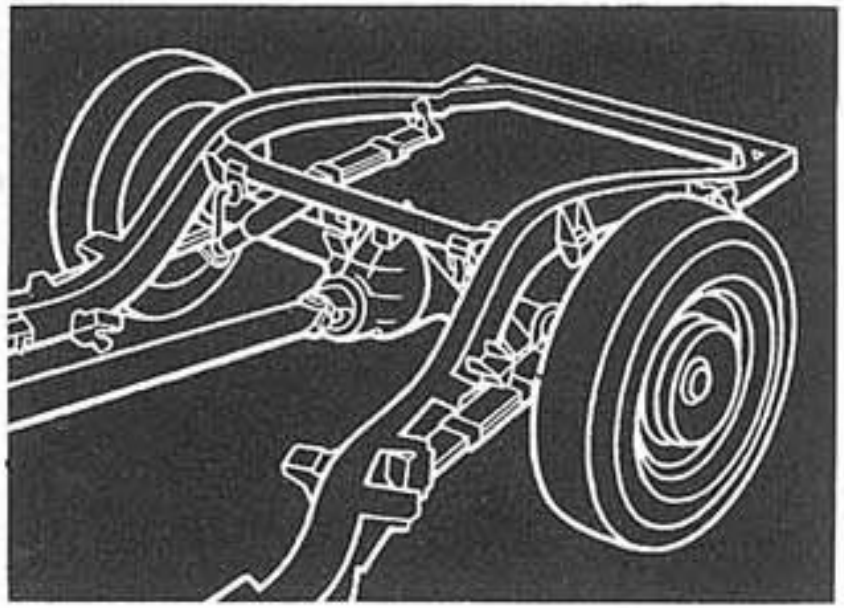
EDSEL bodies are designed for safety and quietness as well as style. Steel-beam reinforcements are welded to the heavy-gage-steel panels throughout; 5 special types of insulation are used to seal Edsel interiors from noise, dust and weather.

EDSEL self-adjusting brakes need no periodic mechanical adjustments because they adjust themselves automatically! Apply the brakes while in reverse and they adjust for normal wear as needed.

"Guard rail" frame design with full-length side rails affords important extra strength and protection in the passenger area. Edsel is one of the few cars to provide *five* sturdy crossmembers to resist the flexing action that causes squeaks and rattles.

Swept-back front suspension arms reduce shock even before it reaches Edsel's big deep springs and shock absorbers—help provide easier, safer control even on roughest roads.

Ball-joint front suspension eliminates complicated suspension elements, accommodates both up-and-down and turning actions. The result is easier steering, more rigid alignment and few lubrication points.



Exclusive Road-Poise Ride gives you a new kind of big-car driving comfort and stability in the low price range!

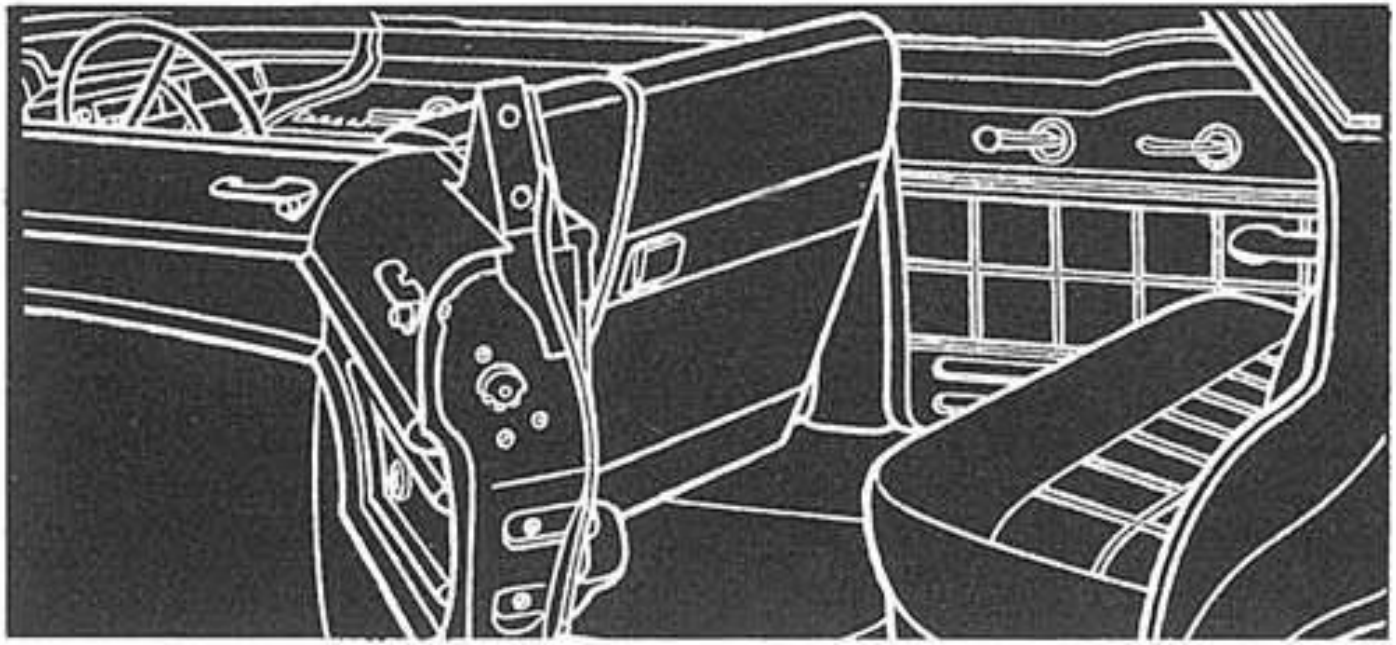
Differences Without Distinction

"…CU does not find it hard to conclude that neither the Dodge, the Edsel nor the Pontiac Catalina offers anything much more worthwhile than the '59 Plymouth, Ford or Chevrolet. Excepting only the slightly narrower interior of the Edsel, the differences in roominess among these cars is not great…"
***Consumer Reports,* March 1959**

Comfort Zones

"…All three have plenty of leg room in front, just about enough in the rear. All three have adequate headroom in front. All three would be more comfortable for most drivers if the front seats were higher. The rear footwells in the Edsel and Pontiac make for a more comfortable leg position than the flat floor of the Dodge. But Dodge has the widest shoulder room. The Pontiac has the lowest front seat, the highest rear seat and has the least rear headroom…"

***Consumer Reports,* March 1959**



Easier entry, easier exit — Edsel's new wide-frame, wide-floor design gives you more footroom while riding, new room to spare for easy entry and exit—front and rear.

Painfully Aware

"…All three cars are wide enough for three passengers on each seat. But their lowered floors necessitate a transmission hump in front and driveshaft tunnel in the rear that interfere with the middle passenger's feet. The tunnel also obtrudes into the already-low seat cushions, with the result that the springing under the center portion of the seats may be too thin to provide sufficient cushioning and the middle passengers become painfully aware of the steel tunnel beneath them…"

***Consumer Reports*, March 1959**

Tolerable Springing

"…Of the three cars tested for this report, the Edsel's cushions have tolerable springing for the center passenger; those of the Dodge and Pontiac (especially the rear cushion of the Pontiac) are sub-marginal for any but short trips…"

***Consumer Reports,* March 1959**

Failure to Pay-off

"…Thus, the 80-inch outside width of these cars – such a nuisance in parking, garaging and maneuvering – fails to pay-off in really useful interior width…"

***Consumer Reports,* March 1959**

Powerplants and Performance

New wide selection in economy-minded Edsel power

Now you can custom-blend your Edsel's performance from three advanced-design V-8's and an Economy Six. Pick the exact balance of power and economy you want for the kind of driving you do!

EVERY EDSEL ENGINE is 1959-new in precision and economy

New-design carburetors for extra economy in all ranges.

Deep-block engineering for extra strength and durability.

Short-stroke pistons and "over-square" cylinder design reduce friction and piston travel.

New direct-flow V-8 manifolds for peak operating efficiency.

Wedge-shaped combustion chambers give you maximum power from each gallon of gasoline.

Oversize valves for faster, easier "breathing" flow in and out of combustion chambers.

18-mm spark plugs for anti-fouling efficiency, longer life.

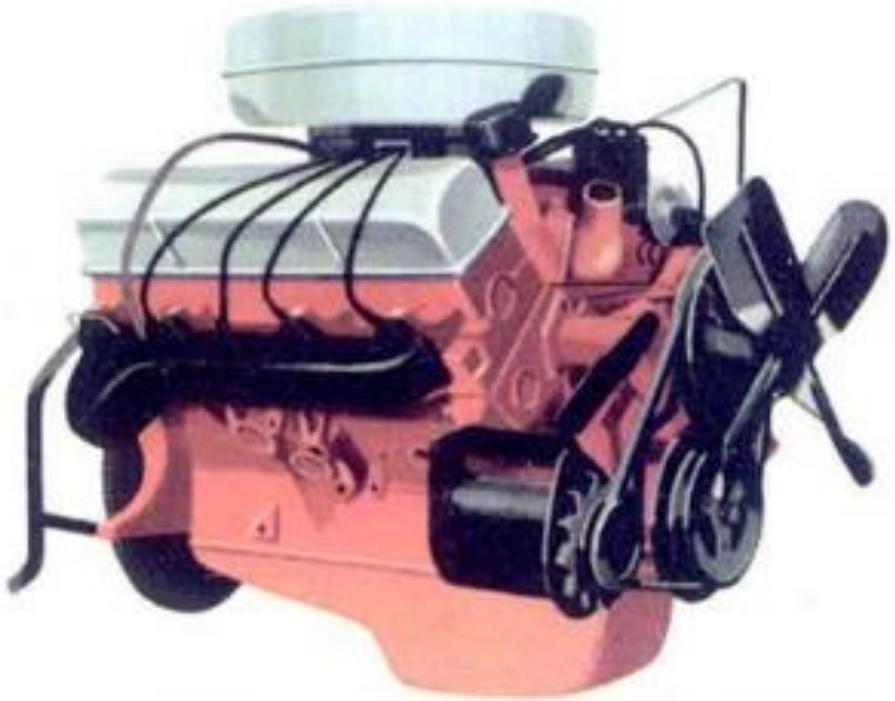
Exhaust system is aluminized for extra-long life.

"…The standard engine in the Edsel Ranger is the same 292 cubic-inch V-8 used for the Ford Custom 300 and Fairlane models and the automatic transmission that goes with it is Ford's new two-speed 'Fordomatic.' This combination gives modest (by the standards of today's cars) performance, with acceleration and hill-climbing power entirely satisfactory for the majority of motorists…"

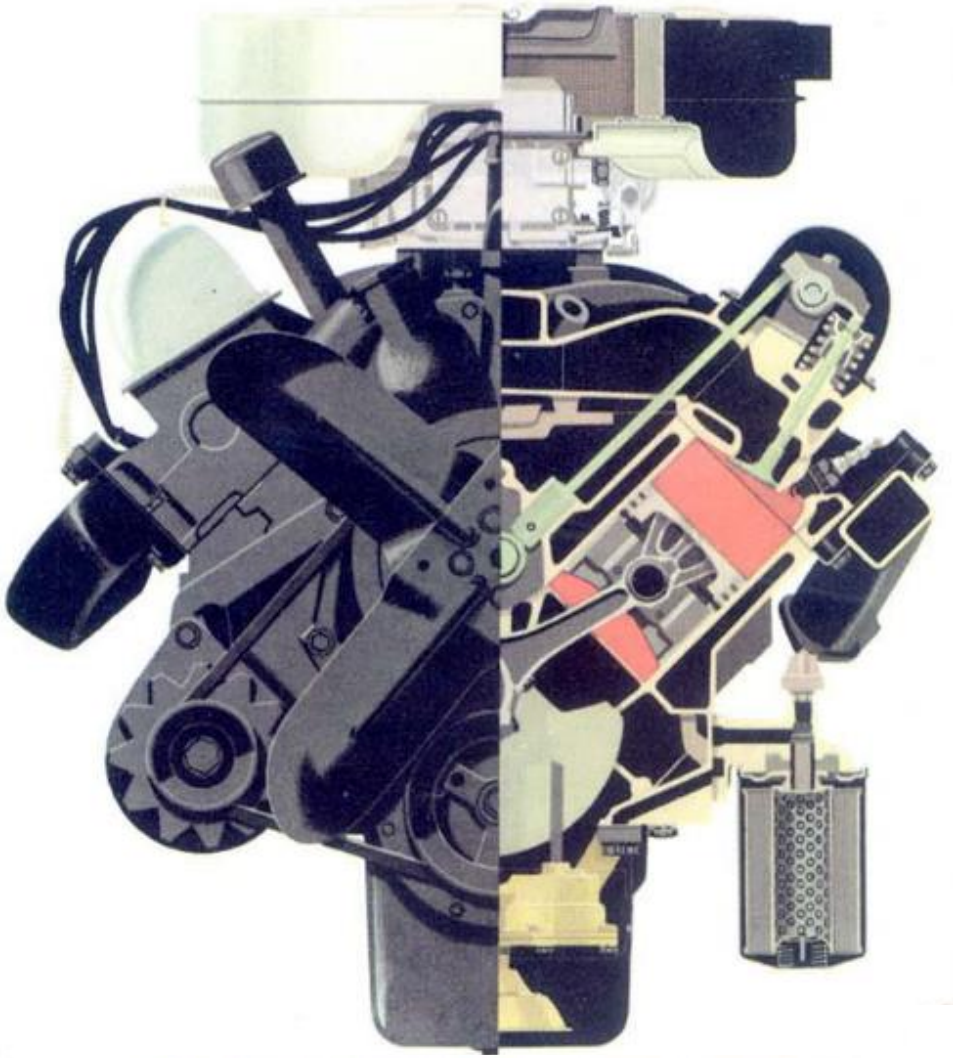
***Consumer Reports*, March 1959**



Edsel Ranger V-8 — V-8 response with outstanding economy—on regular fuel! Advanced Edsel engineering delivers more power for less gasoline; extra-quality features add up to an exceptionally rugged and reliable V-8. 200 hp, 292 cu. in. displacement. Two-barrel carburetor, 8.8:1 compression.



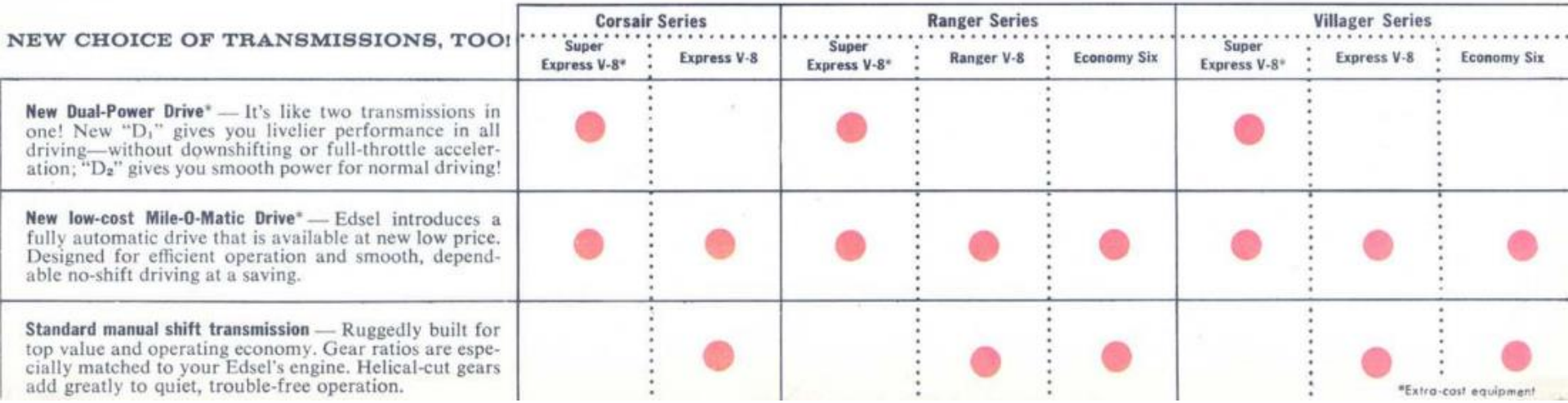
Edsel Express V-8—New standard V-8 in Corsairs and Villagers offers an excellent balance of premium performance and fuel economy. Low-speed piston travel, hydraulic valve lifters improve dependability and reduce friction. 225 hp, 332 cu. in. displacement. Two-barrel carburetor, 8.9:1 compression.



Edsel Super Express V-8 — Special premium-performance option for all Edsel models. You get the most usable power you've ever known from the biggest engine in the low price range. Designed and engineered with high-performance V-8 features to give you greater efficiency and economy—smooth, quiet operation, too. 303 hp, 361 cu. in. displacement. Four-barrel carburetion, 9.6:1 compression.



Edsel Economy Six—Modern deep-block, "short stroke" design is outstanding in the low price range — combines new efficiency with basic six-cylinder simplicity and economical operation. 145 hp, 223 cu. in. displacement. Single-venturi carburetor, 8 4:1 compression.



NEW CHOICE OF TRANSMISSIONS, TOO!	Corsair Series		Ranger Series			Villager Series		
	Super Express V-8*	Express V-8	Super Express V-8*	Ranger V-8	Economy Six	Super Express V-8*	Express V-8	Economy Six
New Dual-Power Drive* — It's like two transmissions in one! New "D_1" gives you livelier performance in all driving—without downshifting or full-throttle acceleration; "D_2" gives you smooth power for normal driving!	●		●			●		
New low-cost Mile-O-Matic Drive* — Edsel introduces a fully automatic drive that is available at new low price. Designed for efficient operation and smooth, dependable no-shift driving at a saving.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Standard manual shift transmission — Ruggedly built for top value and operating economy. Gear ratios are especially matched to your Edsel's engine. Helical-cut gears add greatly to quiet, trouble-free operation.		●		●	●		●	●

*Extra-cost equipment

"…A three-speed automatic would accelerate or go up hills faster and give more engine braking on descents, but to get a three-speed unit in the Edsel Ranger one must buy, for $41 more than the 'Fordomatic,' a 'package,' the other half of which gives substantially lower fuel economy – and on premium fuel, at that. To CU, this solution for the budget-minded motorist would be worse than putting-up with the minor shortcomings of the two-speed 'Fordomatic'…"

1043

***Consumer Reports*, March 1959**

Fuel Economy

"…Gasoline economy can best be measured in fuel-cost-per-mile, and here the grade of fuel that the engine requires becomes a factor. Thus, in order to perform properly to CU's tests, all three of the cars being reported on for this issue had to be given, at their factory ignition settings, fuel of a higher octane rating than the specifications called for. This circumstance meant using premium gasoline the Edsel and Pontiac and super-premium gasoline in the Dodge Custom Royal…"
***Consumer Reports,* March 1959**

Road Behavior

"…Power steering must be recommended for all three cars reported on this month in order to obtain the quick maneuvering ability so desirable at moderate speeds and in parking…"

***Consumer Reports*, March 1959**

"…Despite the high ratios used with manual steering, parking effort would be quite burdensome, though less so in the Edsel than in the other two cars. Edsel's steering, to some extent, lacked precision in control while Pontiac and Dodge steered very accurately by U.S. standards…"

***Consumer Reports,* March 1959**

"…Both Pontiac and Dodge were judged excellent in handling, the Dodge leaning more than the Pontiac in hard turns, but staying tighter to the road. The Edsel fell below this standard; it required more aiming in taking curves and was a little vague in making small corrections…"

***Consumer Reports,* March 1959**

"…The rear wheels of all three cars maintained traction on rough roads and did not bounce off course…"

***Consumer Reports*, March 1959**

"…The differences in riding qualities among the three were not spectacular and parallel their lower-priced counterparts very closely . . . The ride characteristics of the Edsel were similar to those of the Ford and rated slightly below the Dodge-Pontiac level. The Edsel, too, had a comfortable, floating type of ride, but tended to an undesirable loss of suspension control or large motion over really bad roads; the overall ride was, however, very satisfactory…"

***Consumer Reports,* March 1959**

Summing-up

"…Let us assume that, for adequate reasons, you decide to buy among the lower-medium-priced cars instead of sticking to the Chevrolet-Ford-Plymouth-Rambler group, as CU fairly strongly recommends. Which of the trio of cars is the best choice? The margins of choice among the three cars are narrow, and vary, too, according to what the car is going to be used for, and by whom…"

***Consumer Reports*, March 1959**

"…For the benefit of those who habitually carry a full cargo of passengers (the driver still needn't be pitied), CU would choose the Edsel, with its full seats, footrests in the rear, less sun-on-the-back-of-the-neck rear window and full-width frame…"

***Consumer Reports,* March 1959**

Facts and Figures

A GUIDE TO THE FACTS AND FIGURES

PRICE DELIVERED AT FACTORY. For a four-door sedan. Includes Federal tax, but not local taxes, freight, or optional extras, except as noted in the table.

ROAD CLEARANCE. Distance from road surface to lowest part of car likely to hit high spots in the road.

TURNING CIRCLE. Path traced by outermost tip of front bumper with wheels all the way to left, as for a tight U-turn. Some cars turn shorter to the right.

STEERING FACTOR. Number of turns of the steering wheel required to make a "right-angle" turn of 30-foot radius.

CURB WEIGHT. Weight of equipped car, full of gas, oil, and water, ready (at the curb) for occupants.

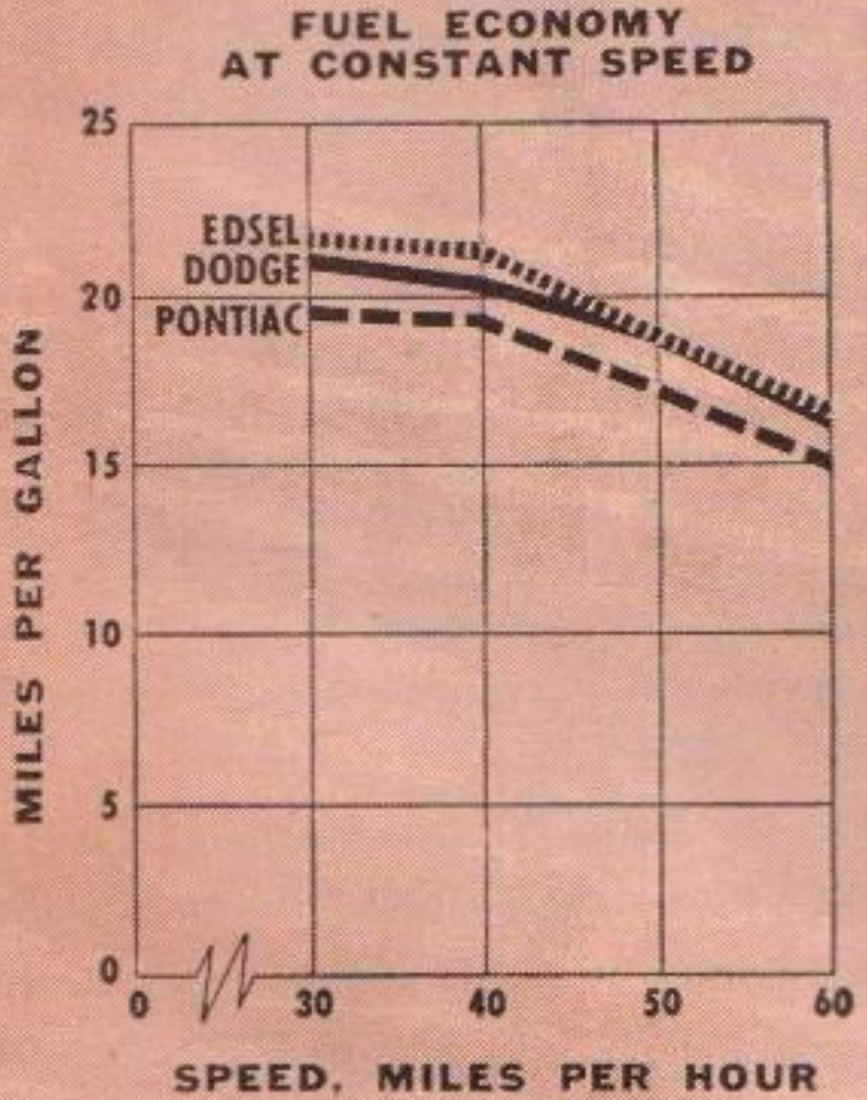
TIRE CAPACITY. Official but conservative load-carrying rating for the four tires (inflated to 24 pounds), minus curb weight of car. Low capacity predisposes to more rapid tire wear.

ENGINE DATA. From factory figures.

PERFORMANCE. 0-60 mph and ¼-mile runs, with all gears used to maximum advantage; 45-65 mph and 9% grade runs, with floored accelerator but no manual shifting.

ECONOMY. Constant-speed tests offer controlled comparisons among cars. In normal driving at comparable average speeds, mileage will be much lower. Traffic pattern involves moderate acceleration, 35 mph maximum, average speed for course of about 21 mph.

Mileage per gallon of fuel is recorded at various constant speeds for CU's test cars. Acceleration from 0-60 mph is with wide-open throttle, the car moving from a standstill to 60 mph



	Dodge Custom Royal	Edsel Ranger	Pontiac Catalina
PRICE			
delivered at factory with automatic transmission and power steering	$3464	$2956	$3043
DIMENSIONS			
WHEELBASE	122 in.	120 in.	122 in.
OVERALL LENGTH	217 in.	211 in.	214 in.
OVERALL WIDTH	80 in.	80 in.	81 in.
OVERALL HEIGHT, loaded	54 in.	56 in.	56 in.
ROAD CLEARANCE—no load	6.7 in.	7.3 in.	6.6 in.
—loaded	5.3 in.	5.5 in.	5.6 in.
TURNING CIRCLE DIAMETER (wall-to-wall)	46 ft.	45 ft.	46 ft.
STEERING FACTOR—manual	1.56	1.63	1.51
—power	0.99	1.38	1.14
WEIGHT AND TIRES			
CURB WEIGHT	4000 lb.	3932 lb.	4270 lb.
PER CENT WEIGHT ON REAR WHEELS	44%	45%	47%
TIRE SIZE	8.00 x 14 in.	8.00 x 14 in.	8.00 x 14 in.
RATED TIRE-CARRYING CAPACITY (4-tire capacity minus curb weight)	700 lb.	768 lb.	430 lb.

ENGINE

TYPE	Overhead-valve V-8	Overhead-valve V-8	Overhead-valve V-8
BORE AND STROKE	4.12 x 3.38 in.	3.75 x 3.30 in.	4.06 x 3.75 in.
PISTON DISPLACEMENT	361 cu. in.	292 cu. in.	389 cu. in.
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.1	8.8	8.6
MAXIMUM ADVERTISED HORSEPOWER	305 @ 4600 rpm	200 @ 4400 rpm	215 @ 3600 rpm
MAXIMUM ADVERTISED TORQUE	400 ft. lb. @ 2800 rpm	285 ft. lb. @ 2200 rpm	390 ft. lb. @ 2000 rpm

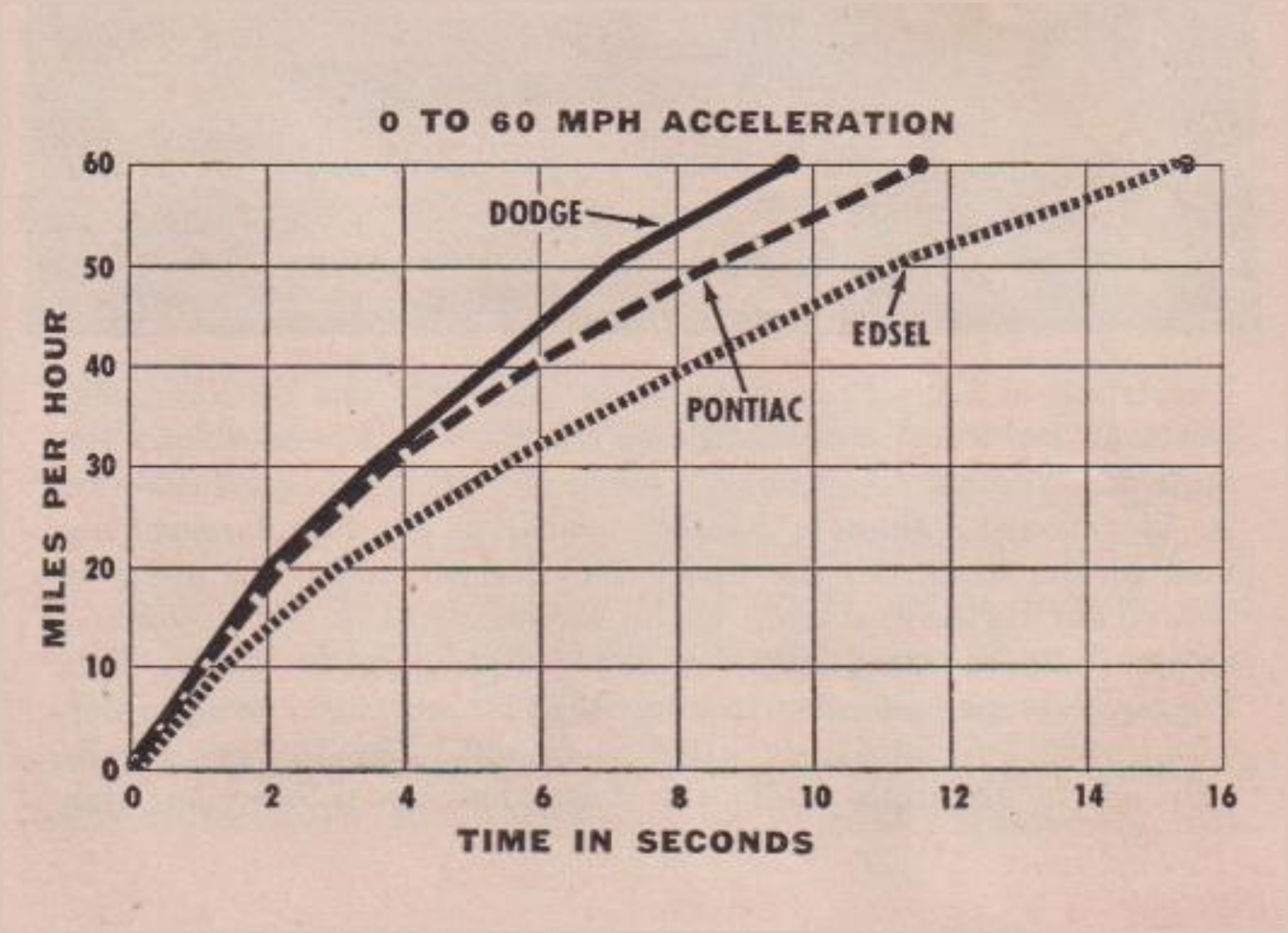
ENGINE SPEEDS

AXLE RATIO	2.93	3.10	2.87
ENGINE REVS PER MILE, HIGH GEAR	2227	2387	2164
PISTON TRAVEL PER MILE, HIGH GEAR	1255 ft.	1313 ft.	1353 ft.

PERFORMANCE

ACCELERATING, HILL CLIMBING

LEVEL ACCELERATION			
0 to 60 mph	9.7 sec.	15.4 sec.	11.7 sec.
covered ¼ mile, standing start	17.5 sec.	20.6 sec.	18.5 sec.
45 to 65 mph	6.4 sec.	10.4 sec.	7.4 sec.
ACCELERATION ON 9% GRADE			
from 30 to 40 mph	2.2 sec.	4.7 sec.	3.5 sec.
from 30 to 50 mph	5.2 sec.	11.3 sec.	8.0 sec.
from 30 to 60 mph	10.3 sec.	——	15.3 sec.
top speed attainable on grade	76 mph	54 mph	69 mph


0 TO 60 MPH ACCELERATION
MILES PER HOUR
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
DODGE
PONTIAC
EDSEL
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
14
16
TIME IN SECONDS

ECONOMY			
CONSTANT-SPEED GASOLINE MILEAGE			
at steady 30 mph	21.0 mpg	21.6 mpg	19.7 mpg
at steady 40 mph	20.2 mpg	21.3 mpg	19.3 mpg
at steady 50 mph	18.8 mpg	18.8 mpg	17.1 mpg
at steady 60 mph	16.2 mpg	16.3 mpg	15.0 mpg
TRAFFIC GAS MILEAGE (simulated traffic test)	11.6 mpg	11.7 mpg	9.8 mpg
OVERALL GAS MILEAGE	13.0 mpg for 2200 mi.	14.0 mpg for 2400 mi.	12.6 mpg for 2025 mi
OIL CONSUMPTION RATE AFTER BREAK-IN	1000 mi./qt.	None added	3500 mi./qt.

Misc.

AUTHORIZED EDSEL DEALERS

NORTH SIDE

1. **BERENS MOTORS, INC.**
   6221 North Western Avenue
   Chicago, Illinois
   Phone: RO 1-4444
2. **GRAND CENTRAL MOTORS, INC.**
   3601-21 West Grand Avenue
   Chicago, Illinois
   Phone: DI 2-1400
3. **MADISON STREET MOTORS, INC.**
   4525-33 West Madison Street
   Chicago, Illinois
   Phone: CO 1-5500
4. **MILFORD MERCURY, INC.**
   6954 West Grand Avenue
   Chicago, Illinois
   Phone: TU 9-8800
5. **SLAVIN MOTORS**
   4305 North Elston Avenue
   Chicago, Illinois
   Phone: KE 9-4000

SOUTH SIDE

6. **CRANE MOTOR SALES**
   4808 Archer Avenue
   Chicago, Illinois
   Phone: CL 4-3700
7. **KENN MOTOR SALES**
   741 West 115th Street
   Chicago, Illinois
   Phone: IN 3-8500
8. **LAKE PARK MOTORS, INC.**
   6035 Cottage Grove Avenue
   Chicago, Illinois
   Phone: HY 3-3445
9. **LITSINGER EDSEL SALES CO.**
   1238 West Randolph Street
   Chicago, Illinois
   Phone: SE 3-7400
10. **M. J. McCARTHY MOTOR SALES**
    6515 South Western Avenue
    Chicago, Illinois
    Phone: HE 4-8400
11. **MIKE McCARTHY LINCOLN-MERCURY**
    1705 West 95th Street
    Chicago, Illinois
    Phone: HI 5-0400
12. **REWERS EDSEL SALES**
    8454 Commercial Avenue
    Chicago, Illinois
    Phone: RE 4-7707
13. **WEST GATE MOTOR CO.**
    5420 West Cermak Road
    Chicago, Illinois
    Phone: BI 2-1575

SUBURBAN

14. **ROTO MERCURY SALES**
    1410 East Northwest Highway
    Arlington Heights, Illinois
    Phone: CL 5-5700
15. **PHILLIP A. TAFEL, INC.**
    1565 Ellenwood Street
    Des Plaines, Illinois
    Phone: VA 4-8101
16. **BRIGHT AUTO & REPAIR CO.**
    131 Schiller Street
    Elmhurst, Illinois
    Phone: TE 2-0080
17. **PRESTIEGE MOTOR SALES, INC.**
    1822 Ridge Avenue
    Evanston, Illinois
    Phone: RO 4-8842
18. **HIGHLAND PARK LINCOLN-MERCURY**
    1890 First Street
    Highland Park, Illinois
    Phone: ID 2-6300
19. **SHEPHERD EDSEL, INC.**
    260 West Madison Street
    Oak Park, Illinois
    Phone: AU 7-2100
20. **TOUHY AVENUE MOTORS, INC.**
    826 Touhy Avenue
    Park Ridge, Illinois
    Phone: NE 1-1721
21. **OGDEN AVENUE MOTOR SALES**
    233 West Ogden Avenue
    Westmont, Illinois
    Phone: WO 8-5600
22. **ESQUIRE MOTORS, INC.**
    315 South Main Street
    Wheaton, Illinois
    Phone: MO 8-3520
23. **MANOR MERCURY SALES, INC.**
    7000 Ogden Avenue
    Berwyn, Illinois
    Phone: PI 9-2250
24. **SWETS LINCOLN-MERCURY**
    12413 South Western Avenue
    Blue Island, Illinois
    Phone: FU 5-4500
25. **STRATFORD MOTOR SALES**
    219 West Hillgrove
    La Grange, Illinois
    Phone: FL 2-6650
26. **TOWN & COUNTRY CARS**
    4610 Southwest Highway
    Oak Lawn, Illinois
    Phone: GA 3-4810
27. **BOB MILLER MERCURY**
    9911 West 143rd Street
    Orland Park, Illinois
    Phone: FI 9-3400
28. **EAST CHICAGO MOTORS, INC.**
    610 Chicago Avenue
    East Chicago, Indiana
    Phone: EX 8-0175
29. **J & J MOTORS, INC.**
    1443 Emerald
    Chicago Heights, Illinois
    Phone: SK 5-1000
30. **CALUMET MOTOR SALES**
    5814 Calumet Avenue
    Hammond, Indiana
    Phone: WE 2-2500
31. **DUNELAND MOTORS, INC.**
    921 West 5th Avenue
    Gary, Indiana
    Phone: TU 6-1536
32. **FERGUS EDSEL, INC.**
    1015 Waukegan Road
    Glenview, Illinois
    Phone: GL 4-5565

GARY 31

MANUFACTURER'S SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICES

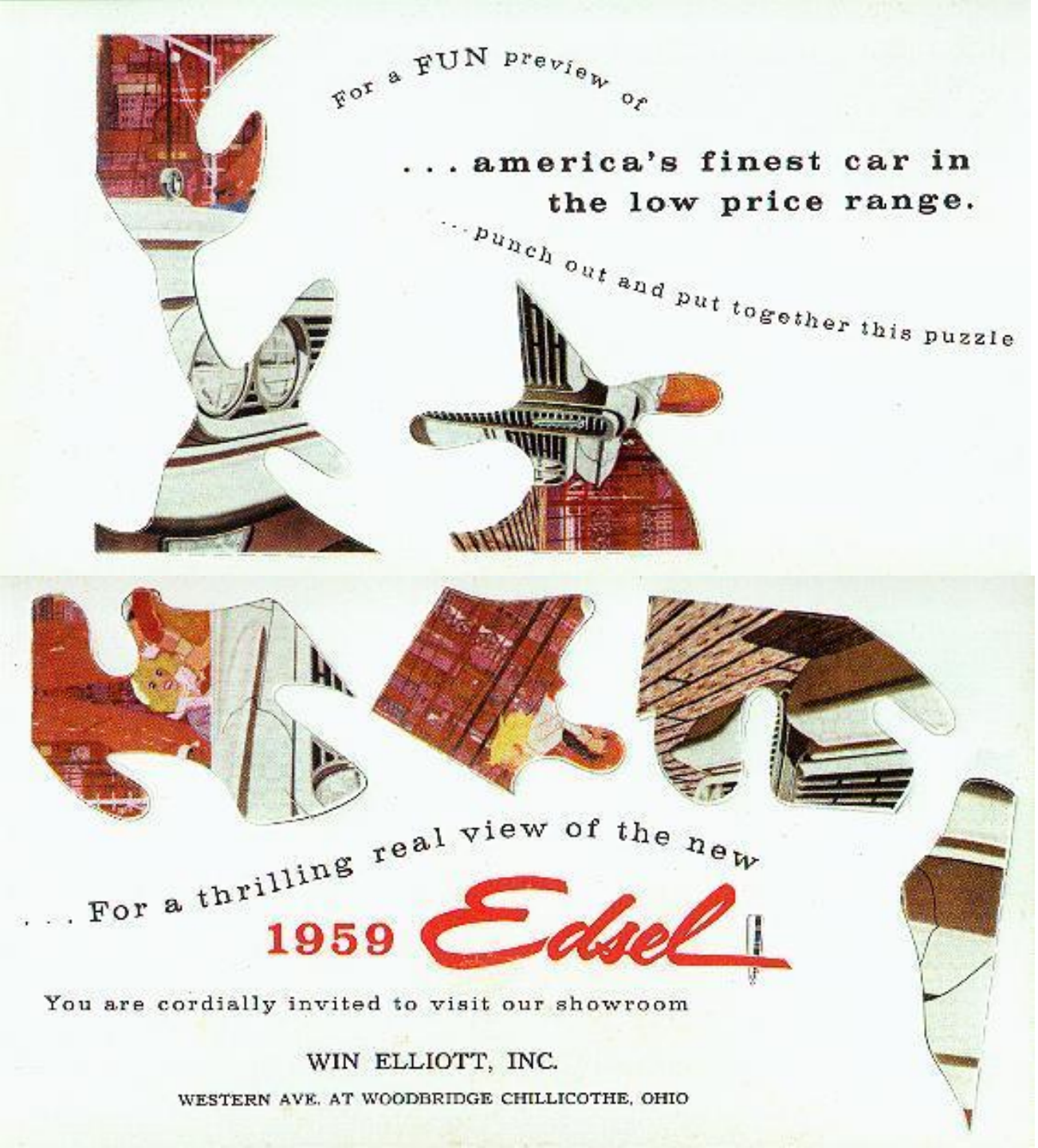
RANGER†		CORSAIR		VILLAGER STATION WAGONS†	
Two-Door Sedan	$2,545.30	Four-Door Sedan	$2,812.00	6 Passenger — Four-Door	$2,874.50
Four-Door Sedan	2,599.80	Two-Door Hardtop	2,819.00	9 Passenger — Four-Door	2,959.10
Two-Door Hardtop	2,606.80	Four-Door Hardtop	2,884.50		
Four-Door Hardtop	2,671.80	Convertible	3,072.00		

† Prices shown on Ranger models and Station Wagons are with 6 cylinder engines.

Manufacturer's suggest retail car prices listed below include reimbursement for Federal Excise Tax and suggested dealer preparation and conditioning charge. Transportation charges, gasoline, anti-freeze, license and title fees, state and local taxes, and options and accessories are not included.

The prices and specifications shown here were in effect at the time this printing was approved. M-E-L Division of Ford Motor Company reserves the right to change prices and specifications, or discontinue models at any time without notice and without incurring obligation.

<u>Left</u>: a listing of authorized Edsel dealers in the Chicago area for 1959. It includes the Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Prices for the 1959 model year



Left: from Win Elliott Edsel, Ohio, this is a dealer give-away 1959 Edsel puzzle that previewed the second year's models

1959 EDSEL PRICES

CAR PRICES

RANGER - 200 h.p. V8 Engine

Two door Sedan	$2629.00
Four door Sedan	2683.50
Two door Hardtop	2690.50
Four door Hardtop	2755.50

CORSAIR - 225 h.p. V8 Engine

Four door Sedan	2812.00
Two door Hardtop	2819.00
Four door Hardtop	2884.50
Convertible	3072.00

VILLAGER STATION WAGON - 225 h.p. V8 Engine

Four door - 6 passenger	2971.00
Four door - 9 passenger	3054.70

* * *

ACCESSORY PRICES

ENGINES

Economy Six

Ranger (Delete Option)	$(83.70)
Wagon (Delete option)	(96.50)

Super Express V8

Ranger	48.90
Corsair and Wagon	29.60

AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSIONS

Mile-O-Matic Drive	189.60
Dual Power Drive	230.80

POWER ASSISTS

Power Brakes	43.25
Power Seats	70.20
Power Steering	81.80
Power Windows	102.05
Dial Temp Air Cond. & Heater	431.20
Back up Lights	9.42
Dual Exhaust System	31.90
Heater & Defroster - Lever Temp	74.45
- Dial Temp	90.10

Above: from Krieger Edsel; a 1959 price list for cars and accessories



1959 EDSEL • America's Finest Car in the Low Price Range

	MFR'S SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
CORSAIR 4 DOOR HARDTOP	2884.50
SUPER EXPRESS V8 ENGINE	29.60
WHITE SIDEWALL TIRES	35.68
DUAL POWER DRIVE	230.80
CURB MOLDING	17.00
DIAL TEMP HTR & DEFROST	90.10
8 TUBE RADIO	64.95
TINTED GLASS	37.90
SAFETY PACKAGE	20.60
VISIBILITY GROUP	35.40
WHEEL COVER APPLIQUES	28.00
POWER STEERING	81.80
TWO TONE PAINT	21.55
TRANSPORTATION CHARGES	50.00
TOTAL	3627.88

SOLD TO:
KRIEGER EDSEL INC
COLUMBUS OHIO

METHOD OF TRANS.
CONVOY

SHIP TO (IF OTHER THAN ABOVE)

VEHICLE SERIAL NUMBER: W9UX 703356

ASSEMBLY PLANT: LOUISVILLE KY

THIS LABEL IS AFFIXED PURSUANT TO FEDERAL AUTOMOBILE INFORMATION DISCLOSURE ACT. MANUFACTURER'S SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE INCLUDES REIMBURSEMENT FOR FEDERAL EXCISE TAX AND SUGGESTED DEALER PREPARATION AND CONDITIONING CHARGE. GASOLINE, ANTI-FREEZE, LICENSE AND TITLE FEES, STATE AND LOCAL TAXES, AND DEALER INSTALLED OPTIONS AND ACCESSORIES ARE NOT INCLUDED.

IMPORTANT!
These quality features included in every Edsel at no extra cost!

- Aluminized muffler
- Self-adjusting brakes for lining wear
- Foam-rubber front seat cushion
- Baked enamel finish
- Guard-Rail Frame with full length, full-strength box-section side rails
- Double-gripping safety door locks
- Recessed-hub safety steering wheel
- Safety tubeless tires and wide-rim design wheels
- Safety glass in every window
- Full-view turn indicators

plus MANY MORE

Ask your salesman about other luxury features Edsel provides as standard equipment in this model.

EDSEL DIVISION
FORD MOTOR COMPANY

Left: original 1959 window sticker from Krieger Edsel Inc., Columbus, Ohio

Turn-of-Events



High in distinction–but low in price!

Makes history by making sense

Exciting new kind of car! Luxury without going overboard. Power without gulping gas. Full-size, six-passenger comfort. And priced with the most popular three!

This is a new breed of car. A car with looks, features, power *and price* that make sense. It's styled with beauty and grace you usually find only in expensive cars. It's soundly engineered. Edsel's compact 120-inch wheelbase makes parking a pleasure. Yet there's room for six adults to ride *comfortably*. You get your choice of four new Edsel engines including a thrifty six and a new *economy* V-8. Plus practical luxury features like contour seats and self-adjusting brakes. Price? *The 1959 Edsel is actually priced with the most popular three—Plymouth, Chevrolet and Ford!*

EDSEL DIVISION • FORD MOTOR COMPANY

"…Bonsall would later contradict that point when he noted Consumer Reports' positive assessment of the 1959 Edsel, which it summed-up as a 'respectable and even likable automobile.' He described this turn-of-events as 'ironic, but was it? Simply put, the 1958 models were not very well sorted whereas the 1959s were. Of course that's going to show-up in a credible road test…"

indieauto.org,

Aug. 23, 2025

The 800-lb. Gorilla

"…The deeper problem with Bonsall's take was that he bought into the continuing relevance of Sloan's hierarchy-of-brands philosophy without addressing the 800-pound gorilla sitting in the living room: by the late-50s the functional differences between low-, medium- and high-priced brands had declined - yet the price differential had not…"

***indieauto.org,* August 23, 2025**



"…This was most obviously seen with the 1959 Cadillac, which shared a stretched version of the same body used by Chevrolet. In addition, you could now get many of the same features in a Chevy that were once only available on more costly brands, such as a V-8, automatic transmission and various power accessories…."

***indieauto.org*, August 23, 2025**

<u>Above</u>: 1959 Chevrolet



The Bel Air 4-Door Sedan with Body by Fisher

NOTHING'S NEW LIKE CHEVY'S NEW!



. . . and just look at the Impala Sport Coupe.

One look tells you '59 Chevrolet has a whole new slant on driving, from the overhead curve of its windshield to the sheen of its Magic-Mirror finish—a new acrylic lacquer that does away with waxing and polishing for up to three years.

But to discover all that's fresh and fine you must relax in Chevy's wider seats, feel the loungelike comfort of its new interior, experience the hushed tranquillity of its smoother-than-ever ride.

Once on the road you'll also find such basic benefits as bigger, better cooled brakes, a quieter, solidly built Body by Fisher, new easy ratio steering.

Your Chevrolet dealer's waiting now to show you the car that's shaped to the new American taste. . . . Chevrolet Division of General Motors, Detroit 2, Michigan.

One look tells you '59 Chevrolet has a whole new slant on driving, from the overhead curve of its windshield to the sheen of its Magic-Mirror finish—a new acrylic lacquer that does away with waxing and polishing for up to three years.

But to discover all that's fresh and fine you must relax in Chevy's wider seats, feel the loungelike comfort of its new interior, experience the hushed tranquillity of its smoother-than-ever ride.

Once on the road you'll also find such basic benefits as bigger, better cooled brakes, a quieter, solidly built Body by Fisher, new easy ratio steering.

Your Chevrolet dealer's waiting now to show you the car that's shaped to the new American taste. . . . Chevrolet Division of General Motors, Detroit 2, Michigan.



What America wants, America gets in a Chevy!

The Hierarchy of Brands

"…Bonsall was apparently too enshrouded in Detroit group-think to see that the drive to maximize economies-of-scale - in combination with product proliferation - would increasingly undercut the viability of a hierarchy of brands."
***indieauto.org,* August 23, 2025**

Part 11

Selling the Edsel

Edsel-only



"…Implementing the Edsel's introduction is a campaign to establish dealerships selling only the one car for 'more stalls in the marketplace,' Norman K. Van Derzee, the sales head, has some 1,400 Edsel-only dealers among a total of 1,500. The others sell other Ford Motor Co. cars also…"

Popular Science,
Sept.1957

"The new Edsel line will be introduced and marketed by a completely new dealer organization"

Henry Ford II

RE: in late 1956, Henry Ford II made an announcement that would greatly impact his new car's distribution. Selling the Edsel would have been far easier using existing Ford and/or Mercury dealers, however, Ford took a dim view of "dualed" dealerships, preferring instead to style its growing family of nameplates after GM, which offered mostly single-brand dealers. It was thought that this business model would benefit Edsel by providing it with a more loyal sales force, but pursuing this course also meant that, within Ford's new Edsel division, a relatively small cohort of employees needed to build a nationwide sales organization from scratch, within about a year's time. Developing a dealer network from scratch was a formidable job. Notably, success hinged upon convincing businessmen nationwide to gamble on a franchise for vehicles that remained, for the most part, an unknown quantity.



The mighty task fell on the shoulders of J.C. “Larry” Doyle (left), who had worked for FMC since 1916, eventually becoming the company’s Sales and Advertising Manager. Chosen in 1955 to become the Special Products Division’s General Sales and Marketing Manager, Doyle plunged into the role of creating over 1K Edsel dealerships. The work to accomplish this feat took every minute of time that Doyle and his small staff had.

Where and Who?

Doyle's first task was to figure-out just where dealerships should be located. By examining demographics, vehicle registrations, migration patterns and areas of rapid growth, rough maps were pieced together. Ten employees devoted themselves to plotting county-by-county vehicle sales in 60 metropolitan areas. None of these men was an economist, statistician or product planner. Instead, they were all salesmen, but their exacting work compensated for their lack of direct experience.

By the end of 1956, with a rough outline of *where*, Doyle moved on to the question of *who* his dealers should be. But first, he would need to explain to potential dealers just what kind of car they'd be selling. Doyle knew many details that the public did not, though he could share little. Chief among those details was what the Edsel would look like.

The Back-door Approach

As the Edsel's details coalesced, Doyle's crew firmed-up their plan to recruit 1,200 dealers by the fall of 1957, when the cars were expected to go on-sale. To do this, Doyle hired dozens of people who worked mostly in the field. Many of these new hires had held regional-sales positions with GM, Chrysler or the Independents. This experience helped in talking with, and understanding, the needs of prospective dealers. These recruiters traversed their territories seeking qualified future Edsel dealers, but instead of cold-calling or hard-selling, they took a back-door approach.

Teams of Edsel marketing staff arranged for meetings with bankers in locations around the country, asking them to point-out financially healthy auto dealers or other local entrepreneurs. Approaching recruitment through bankers was a shrewd move. For example, when Edsel reps met with new prospects, being able to tell businessmen that they were recommended by a prominent banker gave credence to the Edsel sales pitch. Just as important, local financial leaders saw that FMC was practicing due diligence in selecting its retailers. This would help greatly when new Edsel dealers returned to those very same bankers looking for financing.

Sealing the Deal

When prospective new dealers became seriously interested in starting an Edsel franchise, they would apply to one of 24 district offices. Each application was then forwarded to one of five regional offices and, finally, to Dearborn. Each did a round of vetting. As noted, FMC minimized the number of Ford or Mercury dealers receiving Edsel franchises, but such dealers would be permitted to be Edsel dealers under some circumstances, assuming they set-up discrete Edsel facilities. A separate round of vetting in these cases ensured that only Ford dealers with good reputations within the company were included (the situation differed in Canada, where Edsels replaced the Monarch brand and were sold by Ford dealers). Franchisees were not limited to those recommended by local bankers; the Edsel Division received a great deal of unsolicited inquiries on starting a franchise - both from new and used car dealers and also from business owners unaffiliated with the auto industry.

The Right Stuff

The Edsel Division also advertised in business-oriented magazines extolling the benefits taking on an Edsel franchise. Unsolicited applicants were vetted similarly, with Edsel valuing applicants with access to capital and a solid understanding of the business world. Among other things, Edsel promised "elbow room" for new dealers – a boon, since many car dealers at the time complained about an excess of competitors.

Not only will its dealers have more to sell in the Edsel — they'll have more room to sell it in. The Edsel Division has surveyed and studied every single market in the country to provide each Edsel dealer a maximum slice of the market without being crowded. Priced from just above the lowest to just below the highest, with more that's new than any new car has ever had, the Edsel represents an historic opportunity in automobile selling.

How Accredited Edsel Dealers Are Being Selected

While our initial dealerships will only number around 1,500, we now have over 4,250 direct inquiries. However, we are well aware that except for the car itself, nothing will affect the Edsel's future more than the caliber of the men who become Accredited Edsel Dealers. We are determined, therefore, to secure the strongest group of dealers a new car has ever had.

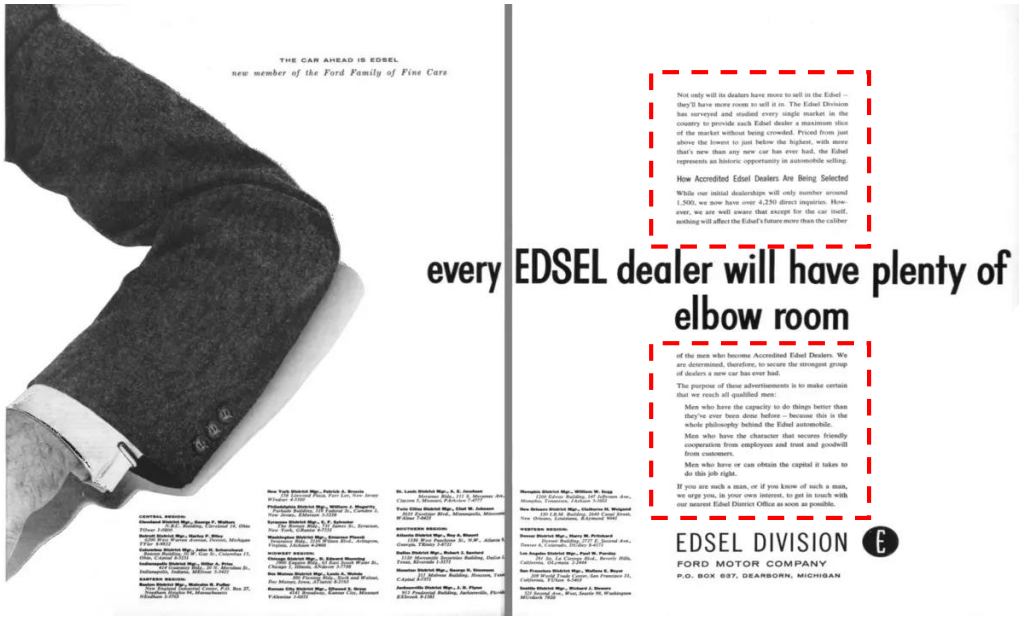
The purpose of these advertisements is to make certain that we reach all qualified men:

Men who have the capacity to do things better than they've ever been done before — because this is the whole philosophy behind the Edsel automobile.

Men who have the character that secures friendly cooperation from employees and trust and goodwill from customers.

Men who have or can obtain the capital it takes to do this job right.

If you are such a man, or if you know of such a man, we urge you, in your own interest, to get in touch with our nearest Edsel District Office as soon as possible.



Sneak Peek

Occasionally, the Edsel Division would become aware of an otherwise solid dealer prospect who was hesitant to commit. For such cases, Doyle stored a handful of Edsel prototypes under lock-and-key at the five regional offices and provided a peek at the new cars to apprehensive prospective dealers. Given the secrecy surrounding Edsel, this was a major enticement. It worked, with most such prospects ending-up committing to a franchise.

Generating Interest

In the late 1950s, opening a car dealership was an expensive proposition, generally costing between $100K and $200K. To convince businessmen to make such an investment on a car with no track record was no easy task. Accordingly, Doyle came up with a strategy to supplement his division's recruitment efforts by getting Edsel news in local newspapers.



Edsel Line Includes 18 Models

2 Convertibles Are Available

BUFFALO, N. Y.—Two convertibles and five station wagons will be among the 18 models of the new Edsel medium price car line which will be introduced early this fall.

J. C. (Larry) Doyle, general sales and marketing manager of the Edsel Division, Ford Motor Company, outlined the full 18 model complement here today. He spoke at a luncheon sponsored by Edsel Division for prominent Buffalo-Niagara banking and finance executives, and at a Sales Executives Club dinner.

"One convertible will be offered in the Pacer, the next to lowest priced of our four series, and the other in the top Citation series," Doyle said. The four-passenger car series, starting with the lowest priced, will be Ranger, Pacer, Corsair, and Citation.

The separate series of five Edsel station wagons, Doyle said, will include the "Roundup," a two-door, six-passenger model, the "Villager," available as a four-door in either six or nine passenger styles, and the "Bermuda," the top four-door which



Official Talks Edsel Auto Into 'Picture'

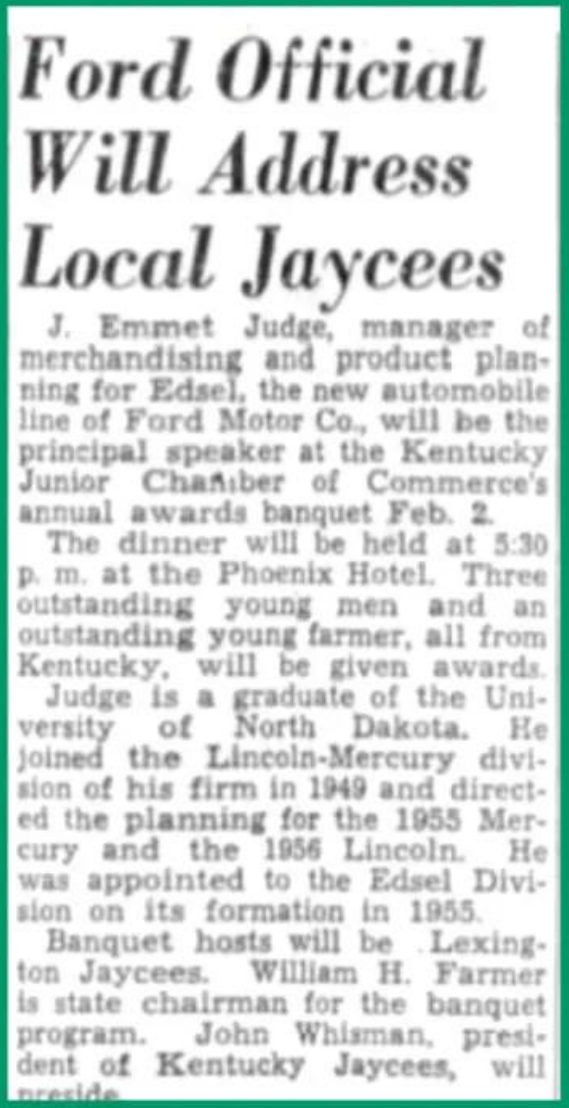
A limited "word picture preview" of the Edsel automobile, scheduled for introduction this fall as 1958 models, was presented Tuesday before Salt Lake Rotary Club at Hotel Utah.

Featured speaker was J. C. (Larry) Doyle, general sales and marketing manager of the Edsel Division, Ford Motor Co. He said development of the new medium-priced car started three or four years ago.

"WE ARE NOW working on 1959 models," Mr. Doyle added. "I can't tell you much about it or even show you a picture of the car, but it will embody completely new concepts . . . not sensational departures, but readily recognizable on the road."

Sounding a note of optimism regarding the nation's economic future, Mr. Doyle urged "a pioneering return to basic business principles with emphasis on opportunities rather than security."

"Our confidence in the future is perhaps best expressed by the fact that we of Ford Motor Co. will have invested $4,100,000,000 in facilities expansion since the end of World War II when the current 1957 projects are completed," Mr. Doyle said.



Ford Official Will Address Local Jaycees

J. Emmet Judge, manager of merchandising and product planning for Edsel, the new automobile line of Ford Motor Co., will be the principal speaker at the Kentucky Junior Chamber of Commerce's annual awards banquet Feb. 2.

The dinner will be held at 5:30 p. m. at the Phoenix Hotel. Three outstanding young men and an outstanding young farmer, all from Kentucky, will be given awards.

Judge is a graduate of the University of North Dakota. He joined the Lincoln-Mercury division of his firm in 1949 and directed the planning for the 1955 Mercury and the 1956 Lincoln. He was appointed to the Edsel Division on its formation in 1955.

Banquet hosts will be Lexington Jaycees. William H. Farmer is state chairman for the banquet program. John Whisman, president of Kentucky Jaycees, will preside.



Top Sales For Edsel Predicted

L. T. (Doc) Kouns, western regional sales manager for Ford Motor Company's new Edsel division, said in a speech before the Southern section of the California Newspaper Advertising Managers Association last night that based on a projected first year sales volume Edsel will rank among the top 50 companies in the nation in sales.

Ford has spent eight years and a quarter of a billion dollars in planning the introduction of the new medium-price-class car which is scheduled to make its appearance this fall, Kouns disclosed.

Kouns pointed out that the 18 models in the Edsel line are "designed for the man on his way up" and will strengthen Ford's family of cars in an area where competition now has two and three lines and does some 65 per cent of its business.

Kouns explained that at present a man owning a Ford who wants

This strategy consisted of speaking at business events throughout the U.S. For about eight months, starting in the fall of 1956, a handful of Edsel Executives traveled the country promoting their upcoming product to local business leaders.

Satisfying the public's appetite for Edsel news wasn't the only aim of these presentations. In-person audiences at such events represented a region's business leadership, including car dealers and finance professionals - that crowd was the real target. These presentations sought to generate excitement from those who might open new dealerships and to present a positive image for Edsel's financial health, which would, in-turn, benefit nascent dealers seeking loans in the coming months. While largely the same script repeated in dozens of localities, occasionally the featured speaker would drop a tidbit of information.

The Chosen



Edsel Division signed its first franchise agreement in early April 1957, with +1K following in the five months leading to the Edsel's public debut. To obtain a signed agreement, prospective Edsel dealers needed to prove that they owned or leased a site (with a building, or one under construction) in a location approved by Doyle's staff and that the franchisee assumed responsibility for equipping the building with fixtures and tools. Recognizing that dealers would remain with little income until they could begin selling Edsels, Doyle urged newly-approved dealerships to start selling used cars immediately, as a way to bring in cash flow. For existing dealerships rebranding to Edsel, he recommended that they continue to operate service departments for their former brands; it would provide income and, hopefully, a source of future Edsel customers.

EDSEL DIVISION
Ford Motor Company

OAKWOOD BOULEVARD AT THE EDSEL FORD EXPRESSWAY, P. O. BOX 637, DEARBORN, MICHIGAN

May 31, 1957

Mr. Morton Manes
Jamaica, New York

Dear Mr. Manes:

We have received your application, dated May 1st, 1957, for appointment as an Edsel dealer in the locality described generally as including Jamaica, New York.

As previously discussed between you and ourselves, you can realize the full advantages of an Edsel dealership only if you commence business with the capital, facilities, equipment, management and personnel described in the Sales Agreement. Although you do not now have available to Edsel certain of the requirements for successful operation, you have agreed to provide those set forth in the Schedule annexed hereto, by July 1st, 1957. We hereby assure you, if you fulfill your agreement by such date, we will enter into a standard Edsel Sales Agreement with you or with a corporation which you may form and in which you would be a substantial stockholder.

In order to justify our investment in the Edsel line, we must secure and appoint, prior to the Edsel's public introduction date, a sufficient complement of qualified dealers to sell the line in adequate volume. Accordingly, we will be forced to seek other representation in the event you are unable to fulfill your agreement on time.

We are enclosing herewith an unexecuted copy of our standard Edsel Sales Agreement. While all of the provisions of the Agreement are important, it is particularly noted that all Edsel Sales Agreements will be subject to termination or expiration and non-renewal as therein provided, and it is understood that dealers will be expected fully to perform all of their duties, obligations and responsibilities thereunder. The execution by us and delivery to you of such an agreement will supersede this Letter of Intent.

Very truly yours,

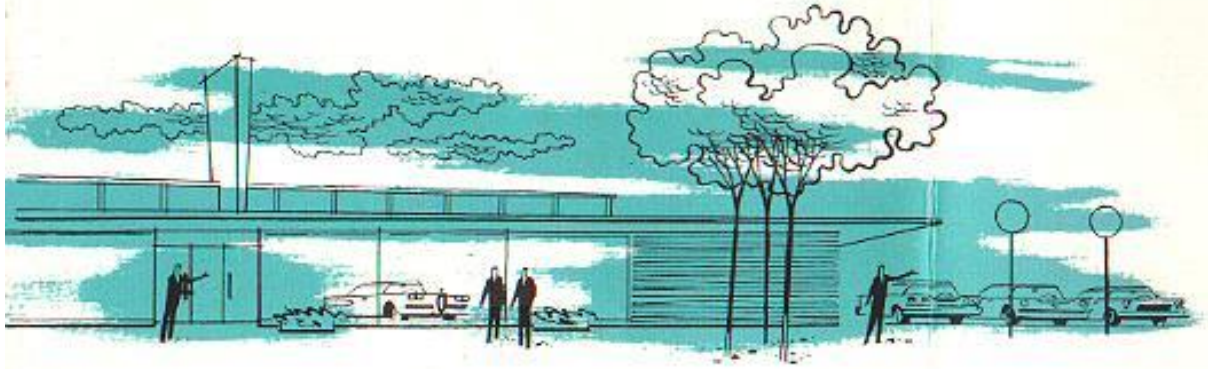
FORD MOTOR COMPANY

By Richard E. Krafve
Richard E. Krafve
Vice President

Accepted, June, 1957
Morton Manes

Facilities Guide


EDSEL
EDSEL SERVICE
EDSEL
DEALERSHIP
FACILITIES
GUIDE
Helpful suggestions on building • remodeling • converting • buying • or renting
a dealership facility



THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK...

Your facilities can be your greatest sales attraction.

Through your facilities, you have an opportunity, possessed by no other dealership in your community, to attract, impress, gain and retain new customers. Your prospects have been conditioned to expect more from Edsel—to watch Edsel for things that are dramatically new and different. You can bring these things "home" to them with facilities that offer *new* accessibility, *new* shopping convenience, *new* service efficiency.

This book is offered as a practical planning reference to help you achieve these new standards of excellence in your community—whether you intend to build from the ground up or to convert, renovate or expand existing facilities. Some of the ideas you may be able to put to use at once, such as those on color and lighting. Others may suggest to you specific projects which you will want to develop with the assistance of local architects or builders.

Most important—review this book carefully before you finalize *any* building or remodeling plans. It can save you inconvenience and money. And remember, before you *build*, you can arrange to have existing plans evaluated, or plans developed for you without cost, simply by contacting your District Sales Office.

Copyright 1957, Ford Motor Company, Dearborn, Michigan

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NOTE—Lighting specifications and arrangements shown in this book were furnished and approved by the Detroit Edison Co., Detroit, Mich.

1102

EXTERIORS

THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD "FRONT"

A well-planned, well-designed "store front" can be a tremendous asset in attracting people to your dealership. Plan to make the most of your dealership's "pulling power" by giving it a dynamic Edsel Look that will make it easy to spot and identify.

Display is the prime requisite of modern store front design . . . display that is keyed to today's fast-moving motoring traffic. Your building front should provide a showcase setting and be designed to create a favorable impression in the few seconds it takes for a motorist to drive by. Your product display should be the major focal point.

Factors to Consider in Designing or Remodeling the Dealership Exterior

In designing a dealership front for maximum "pulling power," there are several important factors to consider. These include:

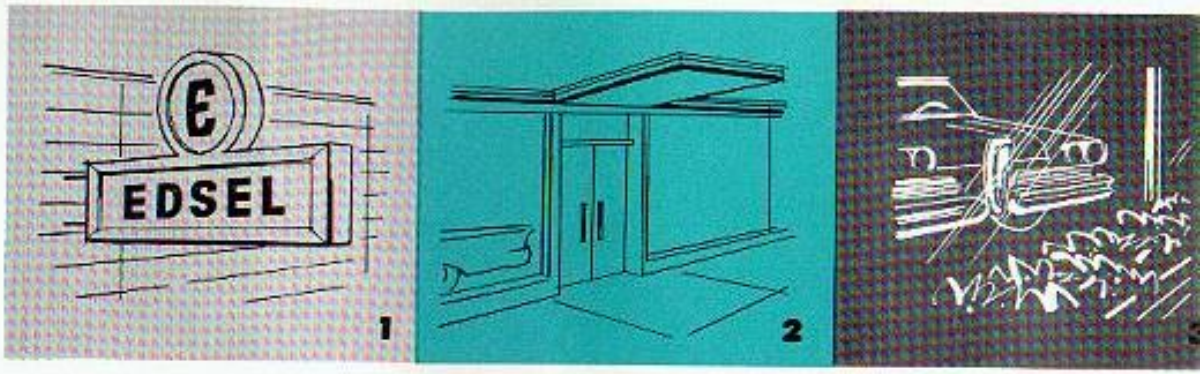
1. Identification. Size and placement of your identification signs are vitally important—they should attract attention from at least a block away. Additional identification value can be gained by using the Edsel-approved exterior color scheme of white, gray and green.

2. Showroom entrance. If you are building a new showroom, be sure to consider raising it above ground level. This may require one or two steps up for entry, but makes a most dramatic entrance and gives maximum display impact.

Entrance doors should have an inviting effect and offer easy access from parking areas. Location at the front of the showroom is preferable. On corner lots, a front, center location is desirable.

Overly-elaborate entrances should be avoided as they tend to reduce the effectiveness of displays. Heat-tempered all-glass doors are particularly well suited to the modern all-glass front since they present an unobstructed view of the interior.

A canopy adds an attractive touch and is appreciated by customers during inclement weather. Types range from inexpensive canvas to custom-designed creations of concrete or steel and plastic. Another convenience to consider is a vestibule, which forms a barrier against heat and cold; however, if used, it should be designed so as not to obstruct the view or take up valuable showroom space.



3. The over-all Edsel Look. This includes proper lighting, color selection (see page 17), and the general finishing touches needed to make your dealership look "Edsel-new." Driveways and general housekeeping are also important in creating a pleasing atmosphere. Landscaping is an easy and relatively inexpensive way to dress up the dealership front. The use of green shrubbery, growing no higher than the window sill, will soften the exterior and serve to dramatize your product display.

Materials to Consider in Designing or Remodeling the Exterior

The all-glass front is gaining increased favor with automobile dealers. It offers wide-open visibility for new car displays and is adaptable to a wide variety of ultra-modern designs. Tinted glass is also finding wide acceptance. It produces a feeling of coolness by reducing annoying heat and glare while allowing daylight to enter. Double-glazed show windows have the advantage of reducing heat loss and, at the same time, reduce fogging and frosting on the glass. If you are planning to use a design with angled windows, be sure the proper angle is used to avoid distracting reflections.

FACING MATERIALS are available in a wide range of types and make possible an almost endless number of designs. Some of these materials are: porcelain enameled steel panels (available in Edsel-approved colors); colored structural glass; cast stone; stucco; tile; marble; glazed brick; limestone; asbestos products; architectural concrete; and veneered woods. Stainless steel and structural aluminum trim are desirable because they resist rust and require no paint. Some architects incorporate in their designs a ribbed metal moulding which harmonizes well with modern interiors.

NEW CAR SALES AREA

FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN REMODELIN

The showroom can be considered as a "stage" to present your new cars to public view. On the outside it should be an outstanding focal point which attracts and invites passersby to come in. On the inside, its attractiveness should complement the product without competing with it for customer attention. Surroundings should be comfortable and designed to make it easy for the salesman to sell and the customer to buy.

GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS—TOTAL SHOWROOM SPACE APPROXIMATELY 11% OF BUILDING

1. SHOWROOM SPACE—Minimum depth 28'; maximum depth 45'. Approximately 460 square feet of space for each new car displayed. Allow a minimum of 3 feet clearance at the front, a 4-foot clearance at the rear, and a 6-foot clearance at each side of a car.

2. SALES MANAGER'S OFFICE—Approximately 110 square feet.

3. CLOSING ROOMS—50 square feet of space per closing room. Use a ratio of one closing room for every four full-time salesmen. Consider two part-time men as one full-time man.

4. SALES MEETING ROOM—Estimate size as follows on the basis of largest group consistently using area: 60 square feet for the first two persons and 20 square feet for each additional person.

5. WAITING AREA—Some space, with comfortable chairs, ash trays, etc. should be available for waiting service customers.

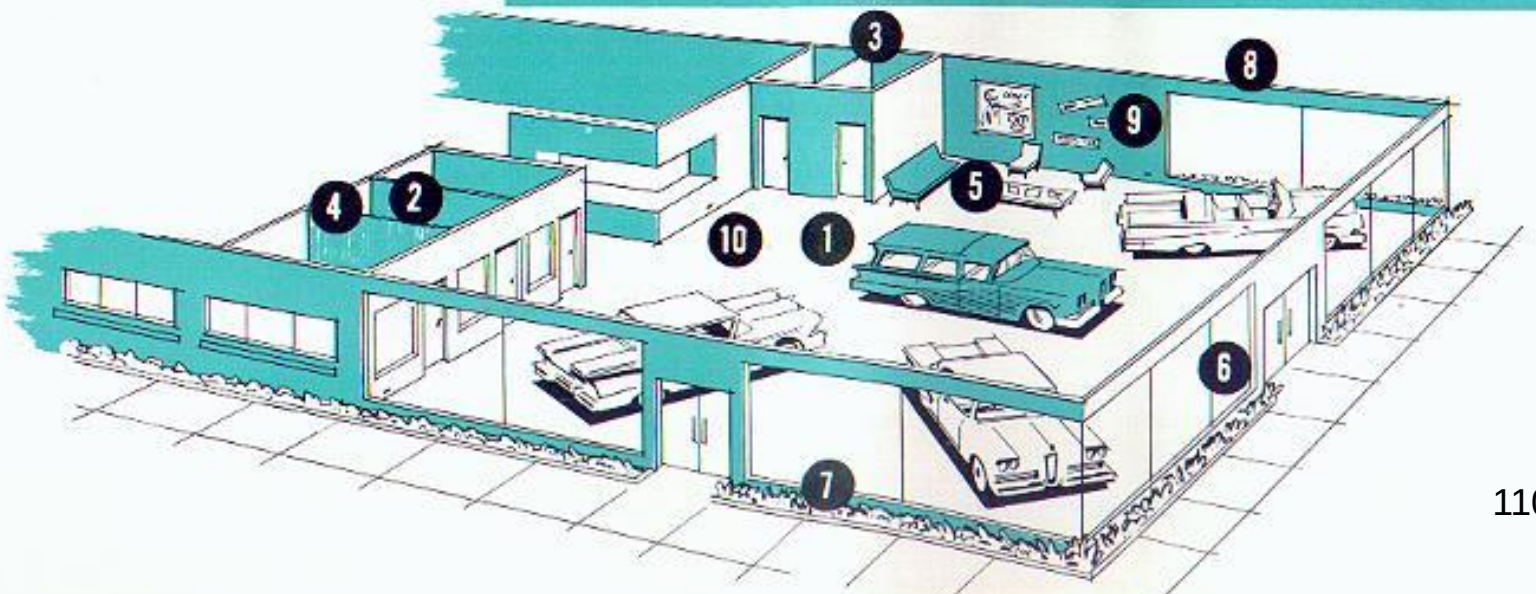
6. WINDOW HEIGHT—Minimum 10'6" to allow good external view of showroom display.

7. WINDOW SILLS—4" to 6" maximum. High bulkheads obscure portions of the new car display. Minimum 2" to 3". (Setting glass flush with floor may result in moisture seepage.)

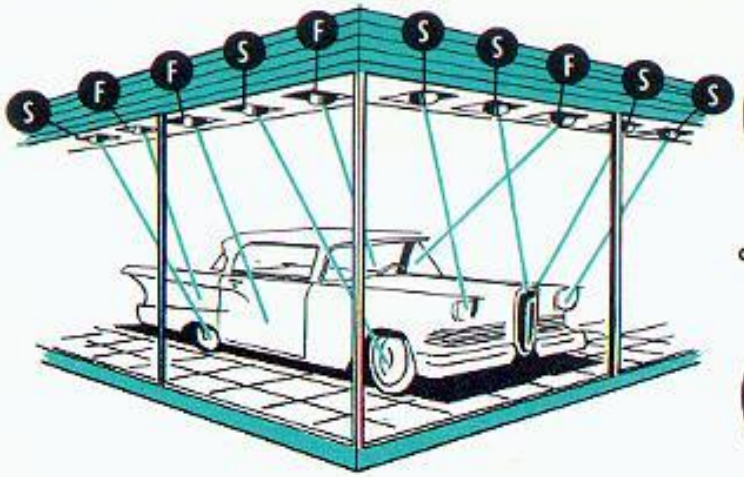
8. HEIGHT OF SHOWROOM CEILING—12'0". Should be 6" to 1' above window head where conditions permit, to eliminate need for a valance to conceal light sources.

9. WALL DISPLAY SPACE—Wherever feasible, some wall space should be made available for mounting banners, emblems, or other display material.

10. ELECTRICAL OUTLETS—Outlets should be spaced 10' apart around perimeter of showroom for convenience in lighting special displays, using vacuum cleaner, etc. Along windows they may be installed in columns between windows, or in the floor.



1104





GIMBAL RING SPOT (RECESSED)



CIRCLINE 22-WATT BULB



SWEDISH BRONZE HOOD

Your show window should have the prominence of a stage and be the major focal point of your dealership. Proper show window lighting dramatizes your product . . . merchandises for you day and night and it should be planned to reduce distracting reflections of moving traffic and buildings opposite you.

HOW MUCH WINDOW LIGHTING?—Window lighting (or perimeter lighting) as discussed in this section is considered to be that which is placed within five feet of the window or wall, and is generally used for highlighting a feature display.

Your *general lighting* (see chart on next page) should be the base for determining your window lighting (highlighting) requirements. The contrast of intensity between highlighting and general lighting should be at least 6 to 1, and preferably 10 to 1. For example, if you have 100 footcandles of general lighting, you should have at least 600 footcandles of highlighting to be effective.

YOUR FIRST STEP in planning your show window lighting should be to have your present lighting measured with a footcandle meter by your local utility company. Use this as a basis for planning the merchandising lighting for your feature displays.

HERE'S HOW TO HIGHLIGHT YOUR DISPLAY CAR—With just 10 lamps, you can make your display car stand out and sparkle in a way you may never have thought possible. This method requires outlets with a minimum capacity of 300 watts, installed above the windows, close to the sash, spaced 2′ apart, or use of a continuous bus duct. 300-watt PAR/56 spot and floodlamps are recommended for highly competitive and medium competitive areas. Lamps range in size from 150 to 500-watts. The proper size of lamp for your job will depend on the amount of intensity you have as determined by your lighting check. Lamps should be on adjustable swivel porcelain sockets, either recessed or ceiling mounted. When ceiling mounted fixtures are used, a 1′ or 2′ valance (wood, plaster, or painted on) should be provided to accommodate the perimeter lighting, shield it from street view, and eliminate "light scallops."

HIGHLIGHTING THE DISPLAY CAR—Aim one 300-watt PAR/56 spot on each headlamp—two spots on the grille—two 300-watt PAR/56 floodlamps on windshield. For lighting the side of the car, aim one spot on each hub cap—one floodlamp each on the front and rear panels. The car door may be left open for added eye appeal. A deluxe cool white fluorescent Circline 22-watt bulb can be mounted at the center of the dome to highlight the car interior. If the other side of the car is to be covered, aim one spot on each hub cap and one floodlamp each on front and rear panel. IMPORTANT—Recessed floor outlets should be provided in show-room area for plugging in special displays and interior car lighting.

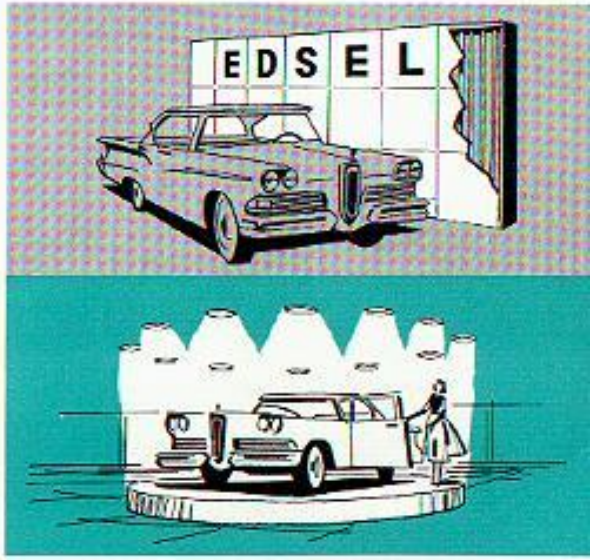


PROPER AIMING IS IMPORTANT—For best effect, lamps should be kept aimed at the points they are intended to highlight. If the display car is moved, lamps can be re-aimed as shown, by lining up the center of the beam using a cord extended from the lamp to the point being highlighted. IMPORTANT: Avoid aiming lamps toward showroom window glass as this can cause distracting glare.

OTHER DRAMATIC EFFECTS

PORTABLE BACKGROUND FOR OPEN WINDOW DISPLAYS

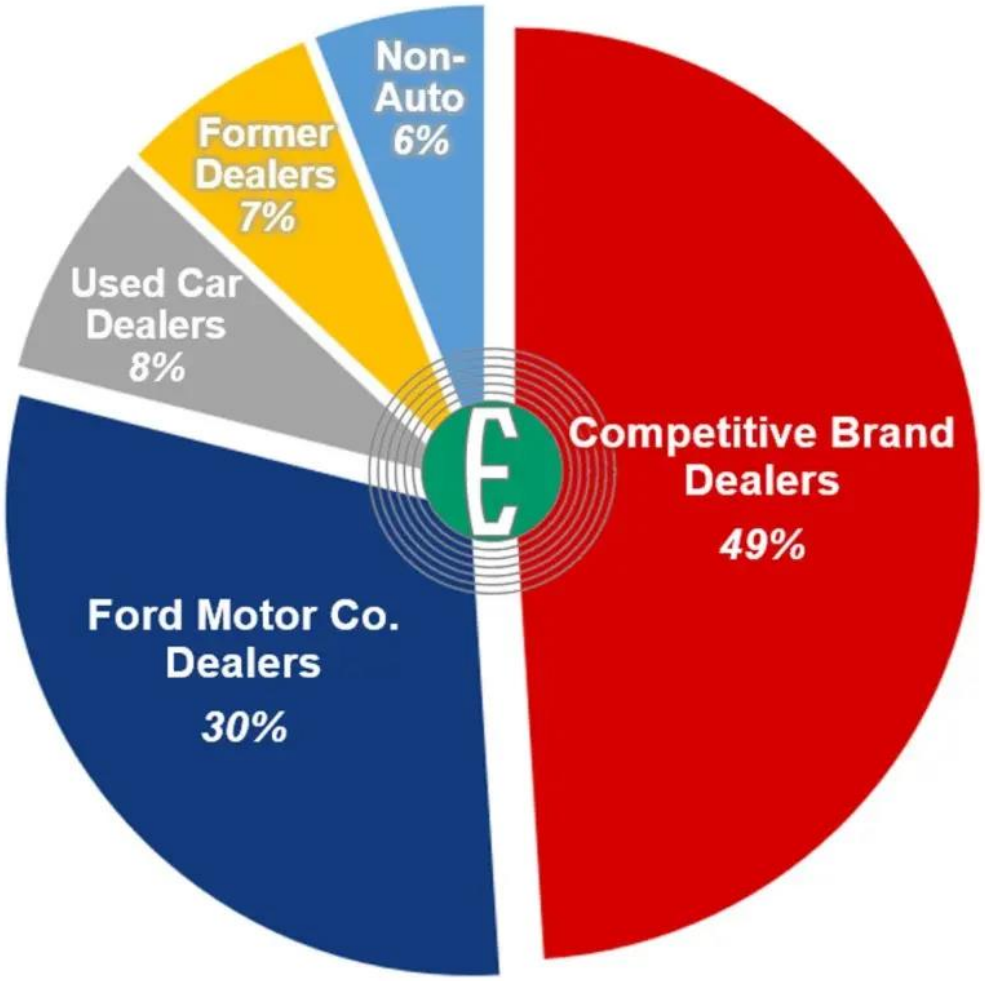
A LUMINOUS PLASTIC WALL provides an outstanding background for a special display car. It can be constructed in 4′—6′ and 8′ sections 6′ to 8′ high with an opaque back, or made translucent, both sides with silhouette-letter messages as desired. White vinyl or acrylic plastic can be used. Fluorescent lamps should be used, spaced on 1′—2′ centers. This display should be supplied with an extension cord to be plugged into the nearest electric outlet. In addition to setting off the display car, this type of background wall also helps eliminate undesirable exterior window reflections. This type of display requires U.L. approval.



A TURNTABLE makes a spectacular display for projecting-type or extra-large-showrooms—and the cost is not excessive. It can be dramatically illuminated with overhead spotlighting. If you are interested in a turntable for your dealership, check with your local authorities to determine whether this type of display is permissible, then contact your District Office for further information or assistance.

By Edsel's September 1957 introduction, Doyle's organization accredited about 1,100 dealers; very close to his original goal of 1,200. However, many more were still in under consideration. He could have had still more (5K applications were submitted), but the Edsel Division favored maintaining their rigorous standards and accepting only the most qualified applicants. Those accepted dealers came from diverse business backgrounds; nearly half had switched from a "competitive brand" (i.e. Buick, Oldsmobile, Dodge, Studebaker, etc.), while 30% were existing FMC dealers that created separate Edsel sales and service operations. Eight percent were used car dealers; 7% former dealers re-entering the auto sales world and 6% non-automotive business owners.

1958 U.S. Edsel Dealers
Shown by Previous Type of Business



Sell-O-Graph

SPECIFICATIONS	EDSEL		DODGE
	RANGER	PACER	6 CYL. CORONET
Horsepower	303 @ 4600	303 @ 4600	138 @ 4000
Torque	400 @ 2800	400 @ 2800	208 @ 1600
Piston displacement (cu. in.)	361	361	230
Compression ratio	10.5:1	10.5:1	8.0:1
4 Barrel carburetion (Std.)	Yes	Yes	No
"Teletouch" automatic transmission	Yes	Yes	No
Self-adjusting brakes	Yes	Yes	No
Brake lining area (sq. in.)	191.5	191.5	207.0
Lubricator	Yes	Yes	No
Turning radius (feet)	41.71	41.71	43.7
Complete warning light system	Yes	Yes	No
Contour seats	No	Yes	No
Distinctive sculptured styling	Yes	Yes	No
"Dial-Temp" single heat control	Yes	Yes	No
Overdrive	Yes	Yes	No
Control Center instrument panel	Yes	Yes	No
Air suspension	Yes	Yes	No
Wrap-around parking lights	Yes	Yes	No

SPOTLIGHT EDSEL'S
PRODUCT ADVANTAGES



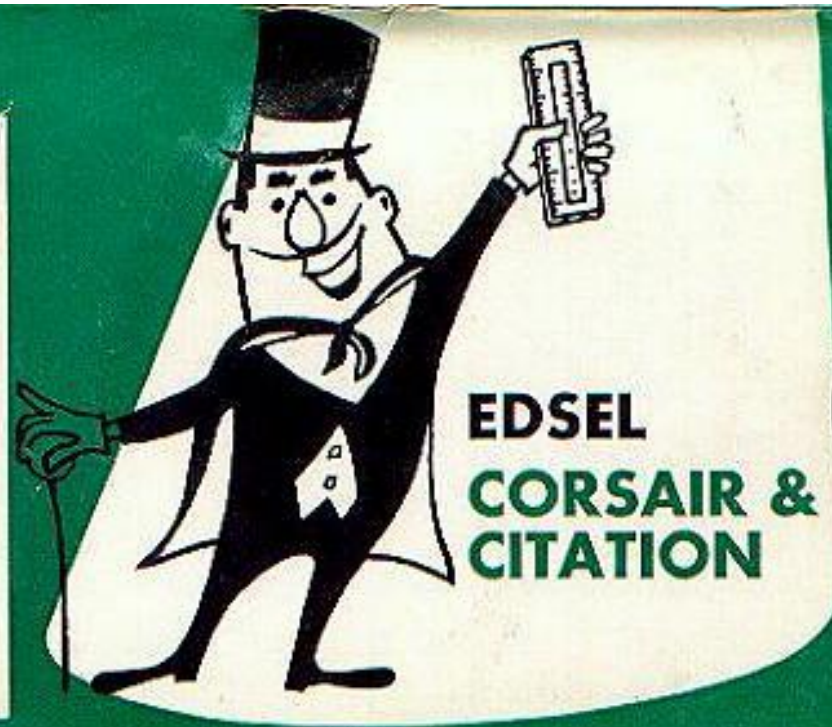
THE EDSEL
SELL-O-GRAPH

PRESENTING
EDSEL
RANGER
& PACER

BUICK SPECIAL	BUICK CENTURY	OLDSMOBILE DYNAMIC 88	PONTIAC CHIEFTAIN	PONTIAC SUPER CHIEF	DODGE 6 CYL. CORONET	DODGE CUSTOM CORONET	DODGE ROYAL	DODGE CUSTOM ROYAL	DESOTO FIRESWEEP	CHRYSLER WINDSOR
250 @ 4400	300 @ 4600	265 @ 4400	240 @ 4500	240 @ 4500	138 @ 4000	252 @ 4400	265 @ 4400	295 @ 4600	280 @ 4600	290 @ 4600
380 @ 2400	400 @ 3200	390 @ 2400	345 @ 2600	345 @ 2600	208 @ 1600	345 @ 2400	355 @ 2800	385 @ 2800	380 @ 2400	385 @ 2000
364	364	371	370	370	230	325	325	350	350	354
9.5:1	10.0:1	10.0:1	8.6:1	8.6:1	8.0:1	9.0:1	9.0:1	10.0:1	10.0:1	10.0:1
No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
160.01	160.01	191.7	178.0	178.0	207.0	207.0	207.0	207.0	230.0	230.0
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
43.2	43.2	42.0	42.9	N/AV	43.7	43.7	43.7	43.7	43.7	43.7
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

SPECIFICATIONS

	EDSEL		PONTIAC
	CORSAIR	CITATION	STAR CHIEF
Horsepower	345 @ 4600	345 @ 4600	255 @ 4500
Torque	475 @ 2900	475 @ 2900	360 @ 2600
Piston displacement (cu. in.)	410	410	370
Compression ratio	10.5:1	10.5:1	8.6:1
4 Barrel carburetion (Std.)	Yes	Yes	Yes
"Teletouch" automatic transmission (Std.)	Yes	Yes	No
Self adjusting brakes	Yes	Yes	No
Brake lining area (sq. in.)	212.8	212.8	178.0
Lubricator	Yes	Yes	No
Turning radius (feet)	43.18	43.18	N/AV
Complete warning light system	Yes	Yes	No
Contour seats	Yes	Yes	No
Distinctive sculptured styling	Yes	Yes	Yes
"Dial-Temp" single heat control	Yes	Yes	No
Air suspension	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wrap-around parking lights	Yes	Yes	No
3-Stage cooling	Yes	Yes	No
Controlled temperature air induction system	Yes	Yes	No



EDSEL
CORSAIR & CITATION

Information for this Slide Rule has been obtained from authoritative sources and is based upon the most reliable information available at the time this material was prepared, however, it is not guaranteed. Prepared for the Edsel Division, Ford Motor Co., as a confidential service, by Regan Film Productions, Inc., Detroit, Mich.

BUICK CENTURY	BUICK SUPER	BUICK ROADMASTER	OLDSMOBILE SUPER 88	OLDSMOBILE NINETY EIGHT	PONTIAC STAR CHIEF	DODGE CUSTOM ROYAL	DESOTO FIREDOME	DESOTO FIREFLITE	CHRYSLER WINDSOR	CHRYSLER SARATOGA	CHRYSLER NEW YORKER
300 @ 4600	300 @ 4600	300 @ 4600	305 @ 4600	305 @ 4600	255 @ 4500	295 @ 4600	295 @ 4600	305 @ 4600	290 @ 4600	310 @ 4600	345 @ 4600
400 @ 3200	400 @ 3200	400 @ 3200	410 @ 2800	410 @ 2800	360 @ 2600	385 @ 2800	390 @ 2400	400 @ 2800	385 @ 2000	405 @ 3200	450 @ 2800
364	364	364	371	371	370	350	361	361	354	354	354
10.0:1	10.0:1	10.0:1	10.0:1	10.0:1	8.6:1	10.0:1	10.0:1	10.0:1	10.0:1	10.0:1	10.0:1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
160.01	218.03	218.03	191.7	191.7	178.0	207.0	251.0	251.0	230.0	251.0	251.0
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
43.2	44.5	44.5	42.0	43.0	N/AV	43.7	46.11	46.11	43.7	46.11	46.11
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

MONTHLY COST TO HAVE YOUR EDSEL EQUIPPED WITH THE NEWEST OPTIONS & ACCESSORIES *

ACCESSORIES	6 Mos. Contract
Teletouch	$3.5.83
Overdrive	$19.74
Power Brakes	$ 9.92
Power Steering	$13.16
Power Window Lifts (4)	$15.63
Power Seats (4 way)	$11.84
Station Seeking Radio & Electric Antenna	$22.25
Push Button Radio	$14.74
Lubricator	$ 6.58
Air Conditioner - Ranger - Pacer	$64.70
Air Conditioner - Corsair - Citation	$71.27
Dial-Temp	$14.49
Auxiliary Warning Light Set	$ 5.49
Dress-Up Group 1	$ 7.53
Dress-Up Group 2	$ 9.72
Two-Tone (Roof & Scallop)	$ 4.11
Tri-Tone	$ 4.78
White Side Walls 8.00x14 (Rayon)	$ 6.24
White Side Walls 8.50x14 (Rayon)	$ 6.84
Tinted Glass	$ 5.27
Wheel Covers	$ 1.98
Wheel Covers with Applique	$ 4.28
Better Sight Set. (Sedan & Conv.)	$ 3.57

* The monthly cost excludes interest and applicable taxes and is based upon suggested list prices.

ACCESSORIES PAY FOR THEMSELVES IN LUXURY, SAFETY, CONVENIENCE and RESALE VALUE



DRESS-UP GROUP 1 INCLUDES—Wheel Covers • Rocker Panel Mouldings • Bumper Guards—Front & Rear • License Plate Frame

DRESS-UP GROUP 2 INCLUDES—Wheel Covers with Applique • Rocker Panel Mouldings • Bumper Guards—Front & Rear • License Plate Frame

BETTER SIGHT SET (Sedan & Conv.) INCLUDES—Back-Up Lights • Engine Compartment Light • Inside Rear-View Mirror—Non-Glare • Outside Rear-View Mirror—Hooded • Luggage Compartment Light

WARNING LIGHT SET INCLUDES—Excess Speed Warning Light • Open Door Warning Light • Oil Level Warning Light • Fuel Level Warning Light • Parking Brake Warning Light

OTHER EDSEL ACCESSORIES ARE AVAILABLE AT THE LOW-COST OF PENNIES A MONTH

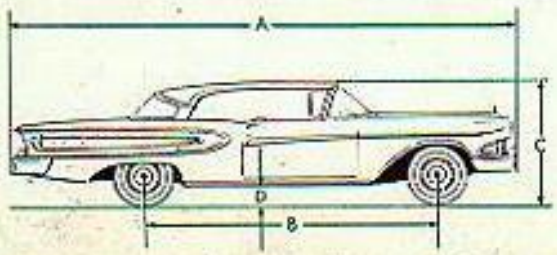
12 Mos. Contract	18 Mos. Contract	24 Mos. Contract	30 Mos. Contract	36 Mos. Contract
$17.92	$11.94	$ 8.96	$ 7.17	$ 5.97
$ 9.87	$ 6.58	$ 4.94	$ 3.95	$ 3.29
$ 2.96	$ 1.98	$ 1.48	$ 1.19	$ 0.99
$ 6.58	$ 4.39	$ 3.29	$ 2.63	$ 2.19
$ 7.81	$ 5.21	$ 3.91	$ 3.13	$ 2.60
$ 5.92	$ 3.95	$ 2.96	$ 2.37	$ 1.97
$11.14	$ 7.43	$ 5.57	$ 4.46	$ 3.71
$ 7.37	$ 4.91	$ 3.69	$ 2.95	$ 2.46
$ 3.29	$ 2.19	$ 1.65	$ 1.32	$ 1.10
$32.35	$21.57	$16.18	$12.94	$10.78
$35.64	$23.76	$17.82	$14.26	$11.88
$ 7.24	$ 4.83	$ 3.62	$ 2.90	$ 2.41
$ 2.75	$ 1.83	$ 1.37	$ 1.10	$ 0.92
$ 3.77	$ 2.51	$ 1.88	$ 1.51	$ 1.26
$ 4.86	$ 3.24	$ 2.43	$ 1.94	$ 1.62
$ 2.06	$ 1.37	$ 1.03	$ 0.82	$ 0.69
$ 2.39	$ 1.59	$ 1.19	$ 0.96	$ 0.80
$ 3.12	$ 2.08	$ 1.56	$ 1.25	$ 1.04
$ 3.42	$ 2.28	$ 1.71	$ 1.37	$ 1.14
$ 2.63	$ 1.76	$ 1.32	$ 1.05	$ 0.88
$ 0.99	$ 0.66	$ 0.49	$ 0.40	$ 0.33
$ 2.14	$ 1.43	$ 1.07	$ 0.86	$ 0.71
$ 1.78	$ 1.19	$ 0.89	$ 0.71	$ 0.59

When You Size It Up... EDSEL

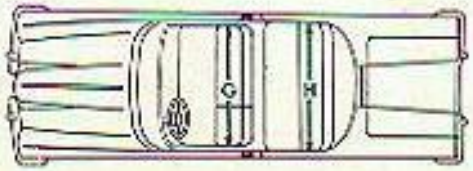
IN THE MEDIUM PRICE FIELD
THE ONE THAT'S REALLY NEW
IS THE LOWEST PRICED, TOO!

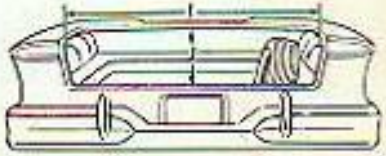
1958 EDSEL

GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS	EDSEL RANGER PACER	EDSEL CORSAIR CITATION	CHRYSLER SARATOGA
A Overall length	213.17	218.86	220.2
B Wheelbase	118.04	124.05	126.0
C Overall height	56.42	56.83	57.0
D Min. road clearance	6.18	6.26	5.4
E Overall width	78.82	79.84	79.6
F Wheel tread (Frt.)	59.44	59.38	60.9
G Front seat shoulder room	57.26	59.70	60.5
H Rear seat shoulder room	57.0	59.65	60.4
I Trunk opening width	49.16	50.50	57.4
J Vertical trunk depth	19.43	19.0	14.4









BUICK SPECIAL	BUICK CENTURY	BUICK SUPER	BUICK ROAD-MASTER	OLDSMOBILE Dynamic 88 Super 88	OLDSMOBILE NINETY EIGHT	PONTIAC CHIEFTAIN	PONTIAC SUPER CHIEF STAR CHIEF	DODGE CORONET 6 & Custom	DODGE ROYAL	DODGE CUSTOM ROYAL	DESOTO FIRE SWEEP	DESOTO FIREDOME	DESOTO FIREFLITE	CHRYSLER WINDSOR	CHRYSLER SARATOGA
211.8	211.8	219.1	219.1	208.2	216.7	210.5	215.5	213.8	213.8	213.8	216.5	218.1	218.6	218.1	220.2
122.0	122.0	127.5	127.5	122.5	126.5	122.0	124.0	122.0	122.0	122.0	122.0	126.0	126.0	122.0	126.0
57.6	56.9	59.4	59.6	57.4	57.4	57.0	57.0	56.6	56.8	57.1	56.8	57.1	57.1	56.8	57.0
6.1	6.4	6.4	6.6	6.0	6.0	6.26	6.26	5.4	5.6	5.6	5.3	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.4
78.1	78.1	79.8	79.8	78.5	78.5	77.4	77.4	78.3	78.3	78.3	78.3	78.3	78.3	79.6	79.6
59.5	60.0	60.0	60.0	59.0	59.0	58.8	58.8	61.4	60.9	60.9	60.9	60.9	60.9	60.9	60.9
56.9	56.9	58.5	58.5	56.9	56.9	56.4	56.4	60.5	60.5	60.5	60.5	60.5	60.5	60.5	60.5
55.7	55.7	56.8	56.8	55.7	55.7	56.2	56.2	60.4	60.4	60.4	60.4	60.4	60.4	60.4	60.4
46.84	46.84	52.80	52.80	46.8	46.8	44.1	44.1	58.4	58.4	58.4	57.4	57.4	57.4	57.4	57.4
15.50	15.50	16.06	16.06	15.7	15.7	17.4	17.4	15.4	15.4	15.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4

Service Policy

AUTHORIZED EDSEL DEALER'S

Service Policy

IMPORTANT
Inspections and new car service by appointment only.
Call TR 1122 . Service en

PRESENTATION OF POLICY

Keep this policy in your glove box so that you can present it to an Authorized Edsel Dealer whenever you request any inspection service or warranty service authorized below.

PROPER CARE OF VEHICLE BY OWNER

We, the selling dealer, have inspected and prepared your new Edsel in accordance with Ford Motor Company pre-delivery inspection and conditioning schedules. The efficiency and economical operation of your new Edsel now depend largely on the care it receives. Your systematic attention to lubrication, inspection and adjustment by an Authorized Edsel Dealer usually will result in greater satisfaction for you.

The break-in engine oil should be changed at 1,000 miles. You will be charged for the engine oil used.

1,000 MILE INSPECTION SERVICE

As the owner of a new Edsel, you are entitled to the 1,000 mile inspection service as provided in the coupon attached to this policy. You should bring your new Edsel back to us, your selling dealer, for this inspection service within the period provided therefor in said coupon. If this inspection service is due while you are on an extended trip or after you have changed your residence to a distant locality, this inspection service will be performed by any Authorized Edsel Dealer within the United States provided you bring your vehicle to him.

There will be no charge for this inspection service, except for the chassis lubrication and any oil used. You will be charged for any service authorized by you which may be required by reason of misuse, negligence, accident or use of parts not made or supplied by Ford Motor Company.

WARRANTY SERVICE

Should the replacement of any part become necessary under the warranty, we, the selling dealer, will make the replacement without charge to you for the part or labor required to replace the part. To obtain this service, you must bring your vehicle back to us before the warranty period expires.

During the warranty period, if you are traveling or if you change your residence to a distant locality, warranty service as provided by this policy will be performed by any Authorized Edsel Dealer. There will be no charge for the part or for the labor to replace the part provided you bring your vehicle to him.

Always take your vehicle to an Authorized Edsel Dealer for this service.

Dealer Warranty

Dealer Warranty

Dealer warrants to Purchaser (except as hereinafter provided) each part of each Ford Motor Company product sold by Dealer to Purchaser to be free under normal use and service from defects in material and workmanship until such product has been driven, used or operated for a distance of four thousand (4,000) miles or for a period of ninety (90) days from the date of delivery to Purchaser, whichever event first shall occur. Dealer makes no warranty whatsoever with respect to tires or tubes. Dealer's obligation under this warranty is limited to replacement of, at Dealer's location, or credit for, such parts as shall be returned to Dealer with transportation charges prepaid and as shall be acknowledged by Dealer to be defective. This warranty shall not apply to any Ford Motor Company product that has been subject to misuse, negligence or accident, or in which parts not made or supplied by Ford Motor Company are used if, in the sole judgment of Dealer, such use affects its performance, stability or reliability, or which shall have been altered or repaired outside of Dealer's place of business in a manner which, in the sole judgment of Dealer, affects its performance, stability or reliability. This warranty is expressly in lieu of all other warranties, express or implied, and of all other obligations or liabilities on the part of Dealer, except such obligation or liability as Dealer may assume by its Authorized Edsel Dealer's Service Policy or separate written instrument.

FORM 5711 LITHO IN U.S.A.

Part 12

Along Automobile Row

1K or Bust

An undercover fight has raged for months along Automobile Row. Edsel's Larry Doyle was out to get a thousand or more dealers by Introduction Day. He seems to have them – half from GM, Chrysler and the independents.

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

RE: introduction to an article written by *Thomas P. Murphy* entitled: "How Edsel Lured Those Dealers"

Come Next Week

"BY dusk next Wednesday, September 4, every American whose sight and hearing are not badly impaired, will have learned three things: the Edsel is here; it is made by Ford Motor Co.; it is a medium-price car…"

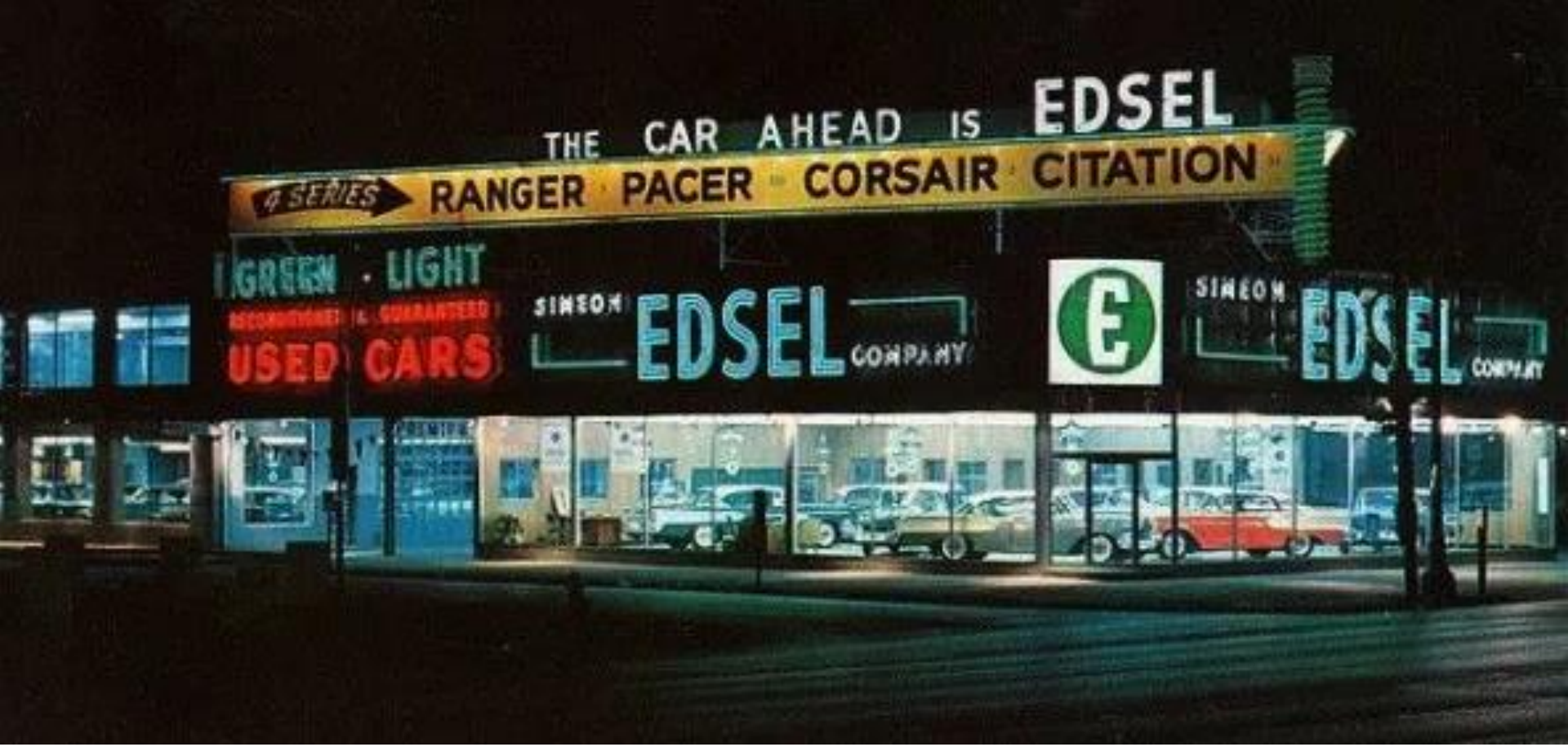
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

No Escape

"…To be entirely certain these essential facts escape no one, Ford has been pumping money into teaser advertising and in a languorous climax, will saturate local radio, TV and news-papers on Introduction Day…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

The Coming Battle of Detroit



"…At that point, a thousand or so freshly ordained Edsel dealers will add their home-grown hoopla. In Cambridge, Massachusetts, a band will lead a motorcade of gleaming Edsels up Massachusetts Avenue to University Motor Sales off Porter Square. In Richmond, California, a helicopter, hired by the Cortese brothers, will float a giant Edsel sign over San Francisco Bay. Thus will begin what has been breathlessly heralded as the coming 'Battle of Detroit'…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

The Battle Joined

"…But in Detroit the strategists who manage the battle know that it actually has been going on for months and a critical phase of it has in fact just ended. Edsel fought this phase last spring and through the hot summer…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…It fought over strange terrain – bars, country clubs, hotel rooms, dealers' back rooms; anywhere that a surreptitious meeting could be held with a General Motors, Chrysler or independent dealer. Edsel's fieldmen were trying to persuade the competition's dealers to drop their present brand of cars and take-on the new Edsel…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Surveying the Damage

"…This month, Chrysler's General Manager of Group Marketing; Byron Nichols, and the General Motors Vice-President In-charge of Distribution, William F. Hufstader, can take a glum look at their dealer maps and see just how well Edsel has done…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…A lot of old pins are gone; a trickle of letters in June, re-signing dealerships had become a steady stream during July and August. Chrysler management believed in mid-June that it had lost only three dealers and casually assumed that, of course, a few more would defect…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…Actually, by mid-June, Chrysler had lost thirty dealers to Edsel and by September, according to industry estimates, it had lost 145 more (out of about 9,000). General Motors probably lost 165 of its 18,500 dealers…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…The Chrysler and GM loses were more serious than the numbers imply. Many were key dealers in big cities and men who had been with GM and Chrysler for years. Furthermore, the timing could not have been worse; just before the introduction of the 1958 models. The independents; Studebaker-Packard and American Motors, already pressed to maintain their distribution, lost about 200 of their 4,700 dealers…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Open Secret

"…The most surprising aspect of the defections was the fact that Edsel's competition was surprised. Automobile manufacturing is an industry where the care used to guard secrets is exceeded only by the ingenuity employed to ferret them out. Chrysler and GM officers knew Edsel fieldmen were talking to their dealers. Their own fieldmen had run into the Edsel recruiters at the showrooms and had seen them around local bars and hotels. Often dealers themselves had reported Edsel's efforts back to their factories – protesting that they themselves were not, not in the least bit, interested in selling Edsels…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

The Old Switcheroo

"…It was all very reassuring – until the cancellation letters started arriving in Detroit. Then the impact of Edsel's campaign became clear. Hundreds of dealers had been biding their time. They had secretly accepted Edsel dealerships and, in the meantime, had squeezed the last dollars out of their old franchises…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**



"…As Edsel Introduction Day approached, they exercised their thirty-day cancellation clause in their contracts, dumped their inventories and began splashing Edsel's new gray and green paint over their showrooms…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

<u>Above</u>: Edsel showroom

A Calculated Risk

"…What Ford Motor Co. had decided to do, in fact, was something no major automobile manufacturer had dared try in almost thirty years – introduce a new brand of cars through a completely new dealer organization. It was a calculated risk of awesome proportions…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

The Size of the Effort

"…Ford's earning statements reflect the size of the effort behind the Edsel. Second-quarter sales were $1.4-billion; a rise of nearly 25 percent over the same period in 1956. Meanwhile, profits were up only 23 percent (from $58-million to $70,500-,000); considering the large profit leverage that increased volume normally gives to an automobile maker, it was clear that the Edsel was eating into Ford's net…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Hedging

"…Actually, Ford is prepared to spend $250-million getting its new car on American roads, If the car fails, some of the gamble can be recovered; the $150-million invested to expand existing plants could be salvaged to produce Fords and Mercurys. But the $100-million invested in the Edsel organization; in tooling and in promotion, would go straight down the drain…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

The Trouble With “Duals”

"…To businessmen outside of the automobile industry, the risk of putting out Edsel through a new dealer organization not only seems enormous, it probably seems unnecessary. The Edsel, after all, could have been eased into the market through established Ford and Lincoln-Mercury dealers. That was the way Chrysler finally got the Plymouth launched in 1930 (after two years trying to build an exclusive organization) and the way the Ford Motor Co. introduced Mercury, the last major new brand of the Big Three, in 1938. Why do things differently?..."

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…Ford thinks there are good reasons. It has been the experience of automobile makers who sell two brands through one dealer that the dealer and his salesmen tend to sell the car that is easier to sell, which usually is the lower-price one…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…Again, in those off years when the stylists miss the swing in fashion, dealers with several brands to sell will let the 'dog' sit and will turn his effort to the more attractive brand. The exclusive dealer, however, will keep pushing his unloved bra-nd because he has to; he hasn't anything else…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**



GENERAL MOTORS
leads the way
with the High Fashion Five
for Fifty-Five

"…Ford Motor Co. could look at the success of General Motors; only in smaller towns or in agencies where the dealer was given several brands many years ago does GM permit any of the 18,500 dealers to 'dual.' GM's five brands have been just about as competitive with each other as with the rest of the industry and it's been good for all of them…"

***FORTUNE*, Sept. 1957**

Left: 1955 ad featuring all five GM automobile divisions

"…Or Ford could look at Chrysler. Now, twenty-seven years after it gave the Plymouth car to its Dodge, DeSoto and Chrysler dealers, it is trying to get Plymouth into exclusive dealership; in fact, it is trying to set-up exclusive dealerships for each brand…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…Dual dealerships, which seem like the safe and inexpensive way to introduce a new brand, can be more costly over the long run…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

The Chosen Man

“And who is the chosen man, that I may appoint”
Jeremiah 49:1950:44

"…In other word's, Ford's decision was a well-calculated risk, but it was still a risk and no one knew this better than James C. ('Larry') Doyle, whom Ford put in-charge of creating an Edsel dealer organization…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Both Feet Off the Floor

"…Now fifty-seven, Doyle started his career as an office boy in Ford's Kansas City district sales office in 1916 and climbed the long ladder of Ford distribution. Perhaps because he is a cautious man, he survived the wrenching shake-ups that used to be so common in Ford's sales. 'When I play pool I like to keep at least one foot on the floor,' says Doyle, but both feet were well off the floor when he went after exclusive distribution for the Edsel…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

No Shoestring Affair

"…Consider the ramifications of the decision the dealers had to make. Automobile retailing is no shoestring affair. The nation's 40,000 new-car dealers now have an average of $108,000 invested in their business; many an Edsel dealer would need a lot more than that, for Edsel was recruiting the big-volume urban dealers. In some cities Edsel would have to find a man who had a half-million dollars in capital and credit and, as the saying goes, still wanted to work…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…Automobile agencies have become complicated businesses requiring deft management. The average dealer had nineteen employees on his payroll. He sells 150 new cars-a-year and 225 used ones; he carries a large inventory of parts that become obsolete quickly; he is also in the repair business. All this gives him again, according to national average, a $711,000 annual sales volume. It is not the sort of retailing that just anyone, even anyone with capital, can walk into and survive…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Taking the Plunge

"…Edsel needed thoroughly experienced retailers and its recruiters concentrated on them. Experienced dealers have seen a lot of new brands come and go. Persuading such dealers to take the plunge with Edsel was sometimes quite a feat…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Overcoming Doubts

"…The recruiters could usually convince prospective dealers that the Edsel would sell or at least had a good chance to sell. The car is new, loaded with 'features' and talking points, backed by Ford Motor Co. But a more serious doubt had to be overcome…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…A successful dealer normally expects to pay all his overhead expenses with his parts and service business. The Edsel dealer, with no backlog of aging cars on the road needing body work and engine overhauls, etc., would get little service business for eighteen months. He could not expect a normal volume of repairs for four or five years. This, with the tissue-thin margins now prevailing in auto retailing (0.8 percent profit before taxes in 1956) could make the difference between success and failure…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…The Edsel recruiters had anticipated the objection and they had an answer. They agreed that since the Edsel had many parts that were interchangeable with other Ford lines, the new Edsel dealer could support his service department by repairing Fords and Mercurys. In addition, if he were an established dealer with another make, they suggested that he hold onto as much of its repair business as he could. This was unnecessary advice…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Nationwide Distribution

"…Of course, any manufacturer can spread a thin web across America and call it nationwide distribution. But this was not Ford Motor Co.'s purpose. The Edsel Division needed from 1,000 to 1,200 dealers to introduce its car; 2,000 by the end of the year - and, though the timing here is less specific, 3,000 to 3,500 by 1960…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Blame Game

"…Further, it needed what the industry calls 'quality' dealers – good merchandisers offering good service. Since it is all but impossible to cancel-out a dealer today owing to the more favorable contracts the manufacturers gave their dealers after the 1956 Congressional hearing, the caliber of men recruited now would affect, for years to come, the success of the Edsel. 'We simply have to have quality dealers,' says Richard E. Krafve, the Ford Motor Co. Vice-President in-charge of the Edsel Division. 'A customer who gets poor service on an established brand of cars blames it on the dealer. But if he gets bad service on an Edsel, he will blame it on the car'…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Recruiting Recruiters



"…Doyle's blitz on Automobile Row started quickly enough. In May, 1955, he had been made General Sales Manager of what was then called the 'Special Products Division.' He was assigned three Ford Sales Executives and the group moved to the little gray rooms of the old Henry Ford Trade School in Dearborn. From his office in the school's old chapel, Doyle was to plan a sales organization, then create it, then plan a dealer organization and create it too. All in a little more than two years…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

<u>Caption</u>: "Henry Ford Trade School Building, August 1923"

That Man May Prosper


YOUTH MUST LEARN
THAT
MAN
MAY
PROSPER
HENRY FORD TRADE SCHOOL
DEARBORN MICHIGAN · · FOUNDED 1916
PRESENT ENROLLMENT - 1700


1178


X4
X4
X3
1179

"…Doyle first decided that Edsel would need five regional offices (Newark, Chicago, Detroit, New Orleans and San Francisco) and twenty-four district offices. His three-man sales force would have to number 200 in the field and home office by February, 1957, when dealer recruiting was to start; 750 by June; 900 by Introduction Day in September…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…Doyle had been given carte blanche to recruit men within the Ford Motor Co.; that is, he could hire anyone for the Special Products sales force, so long as the man's department head would release him…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…But as Doyle's massive raiding got underway, his welcome began to wear out around the company. He turned then to other automobile companies, where he recruited men so vigorously that American Motors' President, George Rooney, complained to Henry Ford II, who had to put Doyle under strict injunction: no more telephone calls to the independents…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…By last February, Doyle's sales force was almost up to scheduled size; sixty-five percent of its personnel was from GM, Chrysler or the independents…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…As things developed, this was a decided advantage when the fieldmen began talking to prospective dealers. Some of them had been calling on the same dealers for years. Many a dealer felt that if these Chrysler or GM fieldmen had gone over to Edsel, there must be something to this new car of Ford's…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

The Mission

"…The field force launched itself on the nation's Automobile Rows with a buoyant sense of mission, carrying maps showing where Edsel showrooms should be located. A nine-man research team had spent the previous twelve months on the maps, dividing the U.S. into marketing areas (primarily by number of families with $5,000 or more income)…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…Once in the field, however, Edsel men discovered that the maps weren't worth much. Edsel needed established dealers and established dealers already had showrooms. So regardless of what the maps indicated as to the best locations for agencies, Edsel took the best dealers wherever it could find them and realistically left them where they were…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

“Floor Planning”

"…The beginning of the search for dealers had been carefully ritualized back in Dearborn. In each city the Edsel fieldmen first talked to six local businessmen – three bankers, three finance company officers. The ostensible object of these ch-ats (which left some of the local businessmen bemused) was to find out what their reaction was to 'floor planning' the Edsel. 'Floor Planning' is the euphemism for loaning money against a dealer's inventory of cars…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Scratching for Prospects

"…What the Edsel men were really scratching for were prospects. Car dealers are heavy borrowers and the bankers and finance men know the financial situation of each local dealer. They also knew pretty well who were the good merchandisers…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…The fieldmen first called on the dealer with the best reputation. Their approach was disarmingly off-hand. 'Usually,' Doyle says, 'they went into the showroom and asked the dealer who <u>he</u> thought was the best automobile dealer in town. You'd be surprised,' Doyle says, beaming, 'how many of them said 'What's wrong with me?'…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Bandwagon Psychology

"…During the critical months from February on, while the Edsel field force was buttonholing dealers, the news released from Dearborn exuded confidence. It was all part of the poker game. Edsel's success in recruitment depended partly on a bandwagon psychology…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…When prospects asked how recruiting was going, the standard answer was a blithe statement that 4,600 inquiries had been received and only 1,000 to 1,200 dealers were needed on Introduction Day. This left the impression, quite erroneous, that all Edsel had to do was pick-out the most deserving men from all the eager candidates…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…Actually, many of the inquiries were from Ford dealers who wanted to put the Edsel into their showrooms along with Ford or Mercury. This was permitted only in small towns. Probably not 5 percent of the inquiring individuals, outside of Ford Motor Co. dealers, ever became Edsel dealers…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Wanting and Having

"…In a few cities, of course, there were more good applicants than Edsel could use, but in most markets the good prospects knew they were good and played a waiting game, and Larry Doyle's men had to work for them like fraternity recruiters during rush weeks. 'Two Edsel fieldmen practically moved into my showroom,' says a Pennsylvania Chrysler-Plymouth dealer. 'They had both been Chrysler fieldmen. They wanted this place bad' (they didn't get it)…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Thanks, But No Thanks

"…For every prospect, Edsel's fieldmen met a dozen skeptics. One well-fixed Louisianan Chevrolet dealer reports: 'Sure, they offered me an Edsel dealership, but I said no, thanks. It is going to be tough sledding for Edsel. A new make runs into tremendous competition and I don't feel like waiting for service business'…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Sooner or Later

"…The chain dealership owners were also among the skeptics. 'Why be first? Why should I jump now?' says one owner of a dozen big dealerships. 'If the Edsel is good, I can sooner or later pick-up an agency. Agencies hardly ever sell for more than their book value…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Salubrious Climate

"…The best prospects, however, were not necessarily optimists or pessimists; they were simply the dealers who, beleaguered by circumstances, were ready to consider a change…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…When the decision was made to sell the Edsel through its own dealers, no one could have anticipated what the climate would be along Automobile Row in 1957. As it turned out, the climate was wonderfully salubrious – for Edsel. Many dealers were quarreling with their factories, they were bewildered by razzle-dazzle competition and they weren't making the kind of money they had grown accustomed to…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Feast or Famine

"…According to the National Automobile Dealers Association, the average car dealer, in lush 1950, made 6.3 percent net before taxes. This can be translated, roughly, into a 40 percent return on net worth. By 1956, the year of the dealer revolt and the acrimonious Congressional hearings, profits on sales were down to 0.8 percent; only a 5.2 percent return on net worth. This is little more than the 'dealer reserve,' the rebate a dealer gets for steering business to a bank or finance company…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

RE: the 1956 auto dealer revolt was a major uprising by American car retailers against manufacturers. In February 1956, 1,500 *National Automobile Dealers Association* (NADA) members met with lawmakers on Capitol Hill to protest unfair practices such as forced quotas, "phantom freight" charges and unfair franchise terminations. The "Automobile Dealers' Day-in-Court Act" was signed by President Eisenhower on August 8, 1956, giving dealers legal recourse against coercive factory practices. This period marked a shift in power, creating regulations that favored independent dealers over automakers.

"…Automobile retailing had become a marvelously efficient distribution channel, with the average gross profit margin only 14.5 percent on sales; a figure considerably lower than the 17.9 percent margin in grocery supermarkets. But this is not the kind of efficiency that cheers dealers…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

A Drink and a Discussion

"…General Motors dealers were having a bad year, the first in years. Sales were down for Chevrolet, Oldsmobile and Buick and some GM dealers who would ordinarily have shooed Edsel fieldmen out of their showrooms were happy to join them for a drink and a discussion…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

De-Dualing

"…Doyle got another kind of break in his raid on Chrysler dealers. They were having a banner year, but right as Chrysler President L.L. 'Tex' Colbert had been about tail fins, he may have been wrong – at least in his timing – about distribution…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…Practically all Chrysler dealers sell either Dodge, DeSoto or Chrysler plus the Plymouth. In 1955, Colbert announced that the company would try to set-up one-brand dealerships. This de-dualing policy was something Edsel fieldmen were able to exploit…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…Despite the fact that Edsel obviously did not believe in dual dealerships for Edsel, the fieldmen could make de-dualing look like a pretty ominous development for Chrysler dealers. 'Of course you are doing alright this year, but could you get along if they took Plymouth away from you?'…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

The Untouchables

"…Proselytizing American Motors and Studebaker-Packard dealers was embarrassingly easy. But Detroit, for all its roughhouse tactics, has no desire to push the two independents out of the car business and indeed has adopted, covertly, a somewhat protective attitude toward them…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**



"…General Motors will not recruit at all from surviving independent dealers. One of them remembers his experience with GM. 'I dropped Studebaker-Packard thinking I could get a Pontiac deal, then I found out Pontiac wouldn't even talk to me until I'd been away from the independents for a full year. It was like I had leprosy'..."

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

<u>Above</u>: Studebaker-Packard dealer, ca. 1958 (used cars in front)

Fair Game

"…Edsel recruiters were not under so severe an injunction. They were told not to solicit independent dealers, but when an independent came of his own free will to Edsel, he was fair game…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Quality First

"…The Edsel fieldmen made one pitch that struck a responsive chord in many a dealer's heart. Edsel, the fieldmen promised, was going to use none but 'quality' dealers…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

“Stimulators” Not Welcome

"…There may be some question about what a 'quality' dealer is in the auto retailer's argot, but there is no question about what he is not. He is very definitely <u>not</u> a 'stimulator' dealer; a high-volume, low-markup operator who relies on razzle-dazzle promotion. The stimulators, according to the many orthodox dealers, are not strong on servicing cars…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Soldier’s Farewell

"…'A soldier's farewell is what the cars get,' says a wrathful dealer who was put out-of-business by a stimulator. 'He doesn't even wash the cars before he delivers them. It's just goodbye and good luck'…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Anyone, Anywhere

"…But the stimulator is an important tool of factory strategy. He is used to jog dealers in communities where the factory thinks its dealers are not capturing enough of the market. While the more genteel dealer waters his potted palms, preserves an air of propriety and is a little embarrassed to sell cars outside of his own 'territory,' the stimulator uses all the tricks in his book, sells to anyone, anywhere and has no scruple about breaking the market price on the brand he is peddling…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Come-Ons and High-Balls

"…The card slipped beneath a wiper blade (would you take $2,000 for you 1951 Hudson against a new Mercury?) is one of the stimulator's come-ons. So is the 'high-ball' – offering an absurdly high price for a used car to a lone woman shopper on the assumption that she won't close the deal then and there but will have to come back with her husband. When the two return, their appetite for a new car well whetted, the salesman professes to have misunderstood the lady. 'I thought you said that was a 1956 car. You mean your car is a '46?' he says with a look of shock…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Horse-trading

"…'It's a horse-trading business,' one stimulator dealer says cheerfully. 'It has gotten to be an unethical business,' said a long-time Chrysler-Plymouth dealer who had just rented his showroom to an Edsel franchise holder, 'and that's why I'm getting out'…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Willing to Listen

"…When the Edsel recruiters talked of a car distributed exclusively by 'quality' dealers, many a dealer fed-up with the 'stimulating' colleagues in his own brand line was willing to listen…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Lebensraum

"…Among all the discontents along Automobile Row, Doyle and his fieldmen found that the most exploitable was the dealers' unhappiness over the way their territories had been crowded together…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Another Matter

"…Dealers are rarely upset by competition from another make of car, which outs them on their mettle as salesmen. But competition from another dealer selling the same make (and not necessarily a stimulator either) is another matter; It usually becomes price competition. 'It is the way,' says a Long Island Chevrolet dealer. 'My boys work half-a-day selling every feature of the Chevrolet. They <u>sell</u> Chevrolet alright – but the next thing we know the guy has bought one from another dealer. There are forty Chevy dealers in New York City,' he concludes glumly,' and we're cutting each other's throats'…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Suburbanization

"…Dissatisfaction with territory, though an old story in auto retailing, has grown more acute in the past five years. The migration to suburban communities has dislocated the automobile market. A lot of downtown dealers have been left behind. The Washington D.C. market is typical; in 1947 two-thirds of its new-car sales were made in downtown Washington. Now two-thirds of the sales are made in the suburbs…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Fresh Start

"…Edsel, starting fresh, did not have to saddle itself with and outmoded distribution pattern and the fieldmen glowingly emphasized territory; dealerships would go into markets dictated by today's population distribution and dealers would get big, rich territories. 'We've got a big market,' says a Chrysler-Plymouth dealer who kept his own business but put his son-in-law into an Edsel agency,' and we're going to make good money out of it'…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

The Big Catch

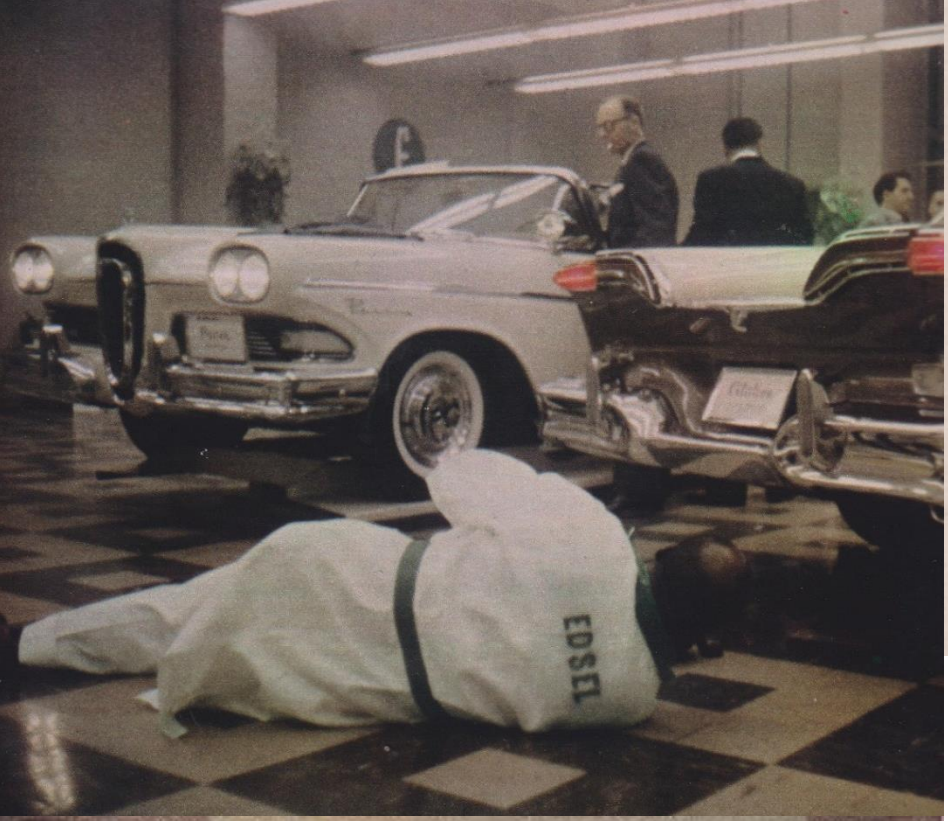
"…It was territory that won for Edsel its biggest bellwether dealer; New York's Charles Kreisler. Kreisler, who has made himself known by his folksy, nasal-voiced radio commercials, was the city's leading Oldsmobile dealer. Though he managed to sell 200 cars-a-month from his Park Avenue showroom, the competition from five other Manhattan dealers made it unprofitable. 'I was losing money,' Kreisler says. 'The Olds 88, which should sell for $3,700, doesn't find a buyer; I can sell it for $3,000, but I can't afford that. I could afford to sell it for $3,250, but that is really difficult…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**



1957 Oldsmobile Super 88 Holiday Coupe

1244





Newly minted Edsel dealers are getting their showrooms ready for introduction day —September 4. Half of them were competitors of Ford a month ago. This is Charles Kreisler's onetime Oldsmobile showroom in New York. The Oldsmobile signs have been replaced by white E's. Car on left is the Edsel Pacer convertible, which lists stripped for about $2,700. Buyers will have no trouble spending an additional $1,000 on equipment. Below, a Kreisler bookkeeper experimentally pokes an Edsel innovation: push-button transmission located on the steering post.

"…Kreisler was a big catch for Edsel and to get him Larry Doyle had to make one of the few 'deals' that Edsel accepted. Kreisler was allowed to keep his foreign car agency (Jaguar, Ferrari, etc.) and was guaranteed an exclusive Edsel agency in Manhattan for one year, with first option on a second dealership if Edsel decided it needed one..."

FORTUNE,
September 1957

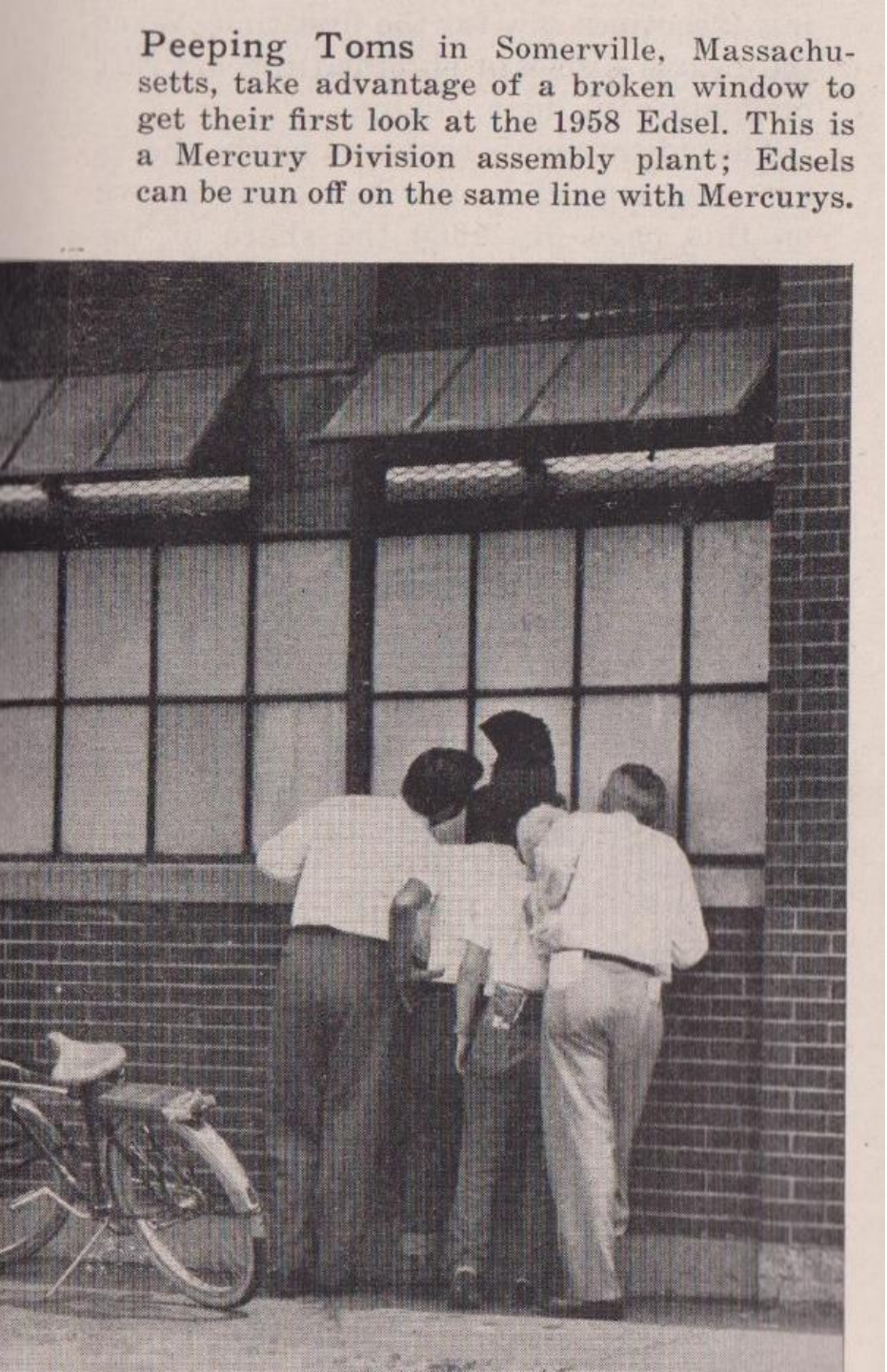
Following the Leader

"…Doyle's deal paid-off quickly, however, as soon as Kreisler made his decision known, a friend of his, a big Midwestern Oldsmobile dealer, followed the lead and decided to take an Edsel franchise…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

So Long as it’s Ford

"…Although automobile dealers are scarcely sentimentalists, Larry Doyle is happy to admit that sentiment eased his field staff's way, particularly when they were trying to persuade lo-ng-time Ford dealers to open separate Edsel agencies…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**



Peeping Toms in Somerville, Massachusetts, take advantage of a broken window to get their first look at the 1958 Edsel. This is a Mercury Division assembly plant; Edsels can be run off on the same line with Mercurys.

"…Ford's postwar resurgence and its more liberal policy toward dealers have rekindled old loyalties and admiration for the Ford company. Edsel fieldmen were astounded when long-established Ford dealers, amiably agreeing to invest $100,000 or more in an Edsel agency, dismissed the fieldman's offer to show them the new car with the confident observation that if it wasn't alright this year, Ford would straighten things out later. It was a fairly common attitude…"

***FORTUNE*, September 1957**

"…Charles Soderstrom, a civic leader in San Pedro, California, a Ford dealer for twenty-five years and now an Edsel dealer as well, says Unabashedly: 'I once met old Henry Ford and that made a great impression on me . . . I can't help feeling that anything Ford represents is the finest.' In 1936 Soderstrom took on Lincoln-Zephyr and in 1938 he helped introduce Mercury. When Ford stock went on sale in 1956, Charlie Soderstrom was on-hand. 'I bought all I could afford,' he says…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Inevitable Edsel

"…Through the tense seven months while Doyle's field-force continued its onslaught on the automobile dealers, the Edsel car itself received surprisingly little attention. Some dealers agreed to open an Edsel agency with nothing more to go on than a description of the car. Others were satisfied with a per-functory tour through one of Doyle's five showrooms. Only a few dealers hesitated to sign-up because they had misgivings about the product. Doyle succeeded along Automobile Row because the stylists, the Engineers and the market-research men had produced a car that seemed right to the dealers…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**



Larry Doyle's sales clincher for a reluctant dealer was a sneak preview of the Edsel in one of its five elaborate showrooms. Doyle (left), who is Edsel general sales manager, here talks to rapt Frank Gary, a Nash dealer from Lorain, Ohio. Gary took the franchise.

Acres of Edsels piled up at assembly-plant parking lots such as the one shown below at Somerville. By August 12 about 9,000 of them had spilled over lots into remote fields, where Ford hoped no one would see them until they arrived at dealers' showrooms. During shipment, canvas covers—"diapers" to the Edsel people—concealed the cars' most distinguishing features, the vertical radiator grille and twenty-five-inch-wide "gull wing" taillights.



"…And the dealers can face the public with the confidence that the whole project was carefully thought-out. How much planning went into the Edsel? In a sense, it must be the most thoroughly planned product ever introduced…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…Over the past twenty years there has rarely been a time when someone, somewhere at Ford Motor Co. was not researching or designing a car that could be considered some kind of spiritual cousin to the Edsel…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**



"…The company's need for a line of medium-price cars is as obvious as the brass radiator on an old Model T, and almost dates back to the same time…"

1258

***FORTUNE*, September 1957**

"…About the only man at Ford who couldn't see that the company needed medium-price cars was Henry Ford. It was not until 1936 that Henry, cajoled by his son Edsel, finally introduced the Lincoln-Zephyr and, two years later, the Mercury. But nothing happened to either of those brands during Henry's lifetime to make him think he had been wrong. So it remained for Henry Ford II, who will be forty years-old on Edsel's Introduction Day, to do what his grandfather opposed and his father did not quite succeed in doing: carving-out a firm place in the market for the Mercury and launching a second, medium-price Ford-built car…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

For the Record

"…For the record, 1948 is as good a year as any to date the conception of what is the closest progenitor of the Edsel. During that year, Henry Ford II told the company's Forward Product Planning Committee to research the possibility of a new medium-price car. The car was still in the market-research stage in 1950 when the Korean War forced the committee to put its plans on the shelf…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…Research was intensified again in 1952 and in January, 19-55, the planners finally presented their research to the Exec-utive Committee with the recommendation that Ford launch a second, medium-price brand of cars. Their report (six volu-mes) was approved by the Board of Directors three months later…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…The Planning Committee had no illusion that there was a vast consumer yearning for a new car nor did it (or Ford Engineers) believe that startling mechanical innovations could be devised to ensure a new car's success. The logic of the decision, the committee figured, was the logic of marketing: the medium-price market is big and growing bigger, ergo, an attractive car sold through an industrious dealer body could be shoehorned into the market…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

The Mass Market

"…The planners could show that 32 percent of the nation's families had incomes of $5,000 or more a year, which put a medium-price car within their grasp. Some 60 percent of the cars being sold were, by planners' reckonings, medium-price (a calculation that included sales of the more expensive lines of Chevrolet, Ford and Plymouth). The medium-price market, in other words, was the mass market. By 1965, things should be even better. Almost half of all families should be making $5,000 or more…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…From the moment the Edsel was authorized, it was agreed that the car would blanket middle-price buying. The planners doubtless had an eye on Buick when they made their recommendations for Edsel, like Buick, has four series of cars (the Ranger, Pacer, Corsair and Citation) and eighteen models. Edsel prices will start about the same as the most expensive Ford Fairlane; around $2,300, and like Buick ascend gracefully into the lower reaches of the luxury-car market; around $3,500…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…Thus, the Edsel overlaps the higher-price Fords and will, by 1957 pricing, sell both below and above the Mercury. This broad pricing was a great selling point when Larry Doyle's field-force talked to prospective Edsel dealers…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…The Planning Committee had another angle in-mind. Car buyers show a distinct loyalty not only to brands but to corporations as well. A study of Michigan auto registrations showed that about nine out of ten Chevrolet owners who trade-up stay with General Motors. Plymouth owners who shift to more expensive cars show a preference for other Chrysler makes; almost five-out-of-ten of them stay with the company. Ford, in contrast, found that only one in four of its up-trading owners was buying Mercury. The Edsel would fill a gap…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

How Low is Medium?

"…How sound are all these calculations on which Ford and its new dealers have based their big gamble? No one in the industry questions the existence of consumer loyalty and no one questions the wisdom of a broad line of cars, but the really basic premise behind the Edsel decision – that medium-price cars already account for 60 percent of sales and are destined to get more – has raised some eyebrows…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…To reach its 60 percent estimate, the Ford planners included the expensive models of the three low-price cars. Without them, the medium-price market is not expanding, it may even be contracting. While no one argues that a $2,400 Chevrolet Bel Air or Ford Fairlane is a low-price car, it remains to be seen whether buyers will return to the more austere models of the medium-price cars or continue their trend toward the heavily be-chromed models of Chevrolet, Ford and Plymouth…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Market Share

"…The medium-price field is, by any reckoning, the most bitterly competitive today. The Big Three have seven well-entrenched brands in the market contrasted with one brand each in the low and high-price fields. Larry Doyle, however, claims to be unmoved by all this and confidently talks to his dealers about capturing 3 to 3.3 percent of the total U.S. market in 1958…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…Assuming a six-million-car year, Doyle's expectations amount to roughly 200,000 units. This is more than Cadillac's 1956 unit sales or those of De Soto or Chrysler, or the total of all the imported cars…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Big-package Look





"…If Ford's new product appeals to the public as effectively as it did to the dealers who saw it, the credit will go, in no small degree, to forty-year-old Roy A. Brown. Brown, a Designer in the Lincoln styling studio, was put in-charge of styling the Edsel almost a year before the division was form-ed…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

<u>Left T&B</u>: caption: "Edsel designer Roy A. Brown, Chief Stylist for the E-car project, in his studio"

"…His first move was to take his stylists out to a busy Dearborn intersection to look at cars. To no one's surprise, they decided all the American cars looked pretty much alike. Brown knew the car he was to design would have to conform to the dimensions of the Ford or Mercury body shell on which it would be built, but within these dimensions he resolved to design something that looked different. 'I wanted a car with strong identity,' Brown says, 'one that could be recognized instantly from the front, the side or rear'…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**



"…Radiator grilles, what Brown calls 'the front-end theme,' proved a fruitful area of attack. Virtually all current American cars, to give the illusion of great width and lowness, use massive horizontal grilles. Brown, with the encouragement of Ford Motor Co.'s styling boss, George Walker, proposed to move against the trend and make the Edsel's grille vertical. He is delighted with the result. 'It is crisp and fresh looking,' he says. 'That grille could become a classic'…"

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***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

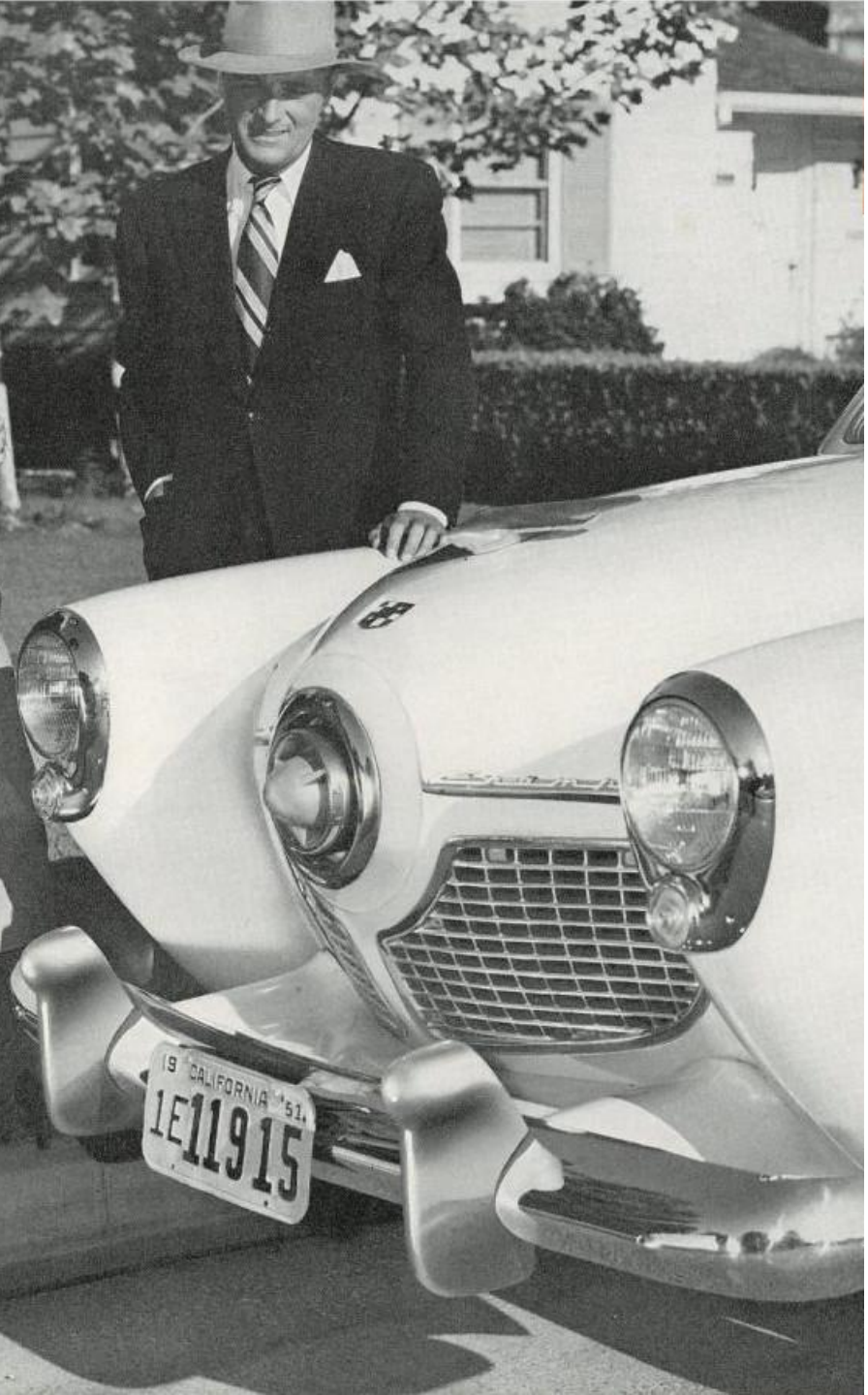


"…For the rear of the car, Brown retained only vestigial tail fins, which left him with the problem of finding a distinctive design theme. He finally splashed twenty-five-inch-wide tail-lights across the rear fenders and trunk lid. They were promptly dubbed 'gull-wing' tail-lights by the advertising copywriters…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**



<u>Above T&B</u>: in 1968, just ten years after the Edsel's vertical grille made its debut, Pontiac adapted the look on their front-end (top). Even in the rear (bottom), the Edsel's unique, boomerang-shaped taillights were reinterpreted.



"…Brown believes he has a design that, if not conservative, is at least as restrained as it is possible to make without risking public apathy. 'You know,' he says wistfully, 'it has come to the point where we take competitive cars and measure the number of square-inches of chrome they carry.' The Edsel, Brown is pleased to note, is somewhat sparing of chrome. Walker likes Edsel's 'Big-package' look. 'You take Loewy's '51 Studebaker,' he says. 'That was a swell design, but it wasn't big'…"

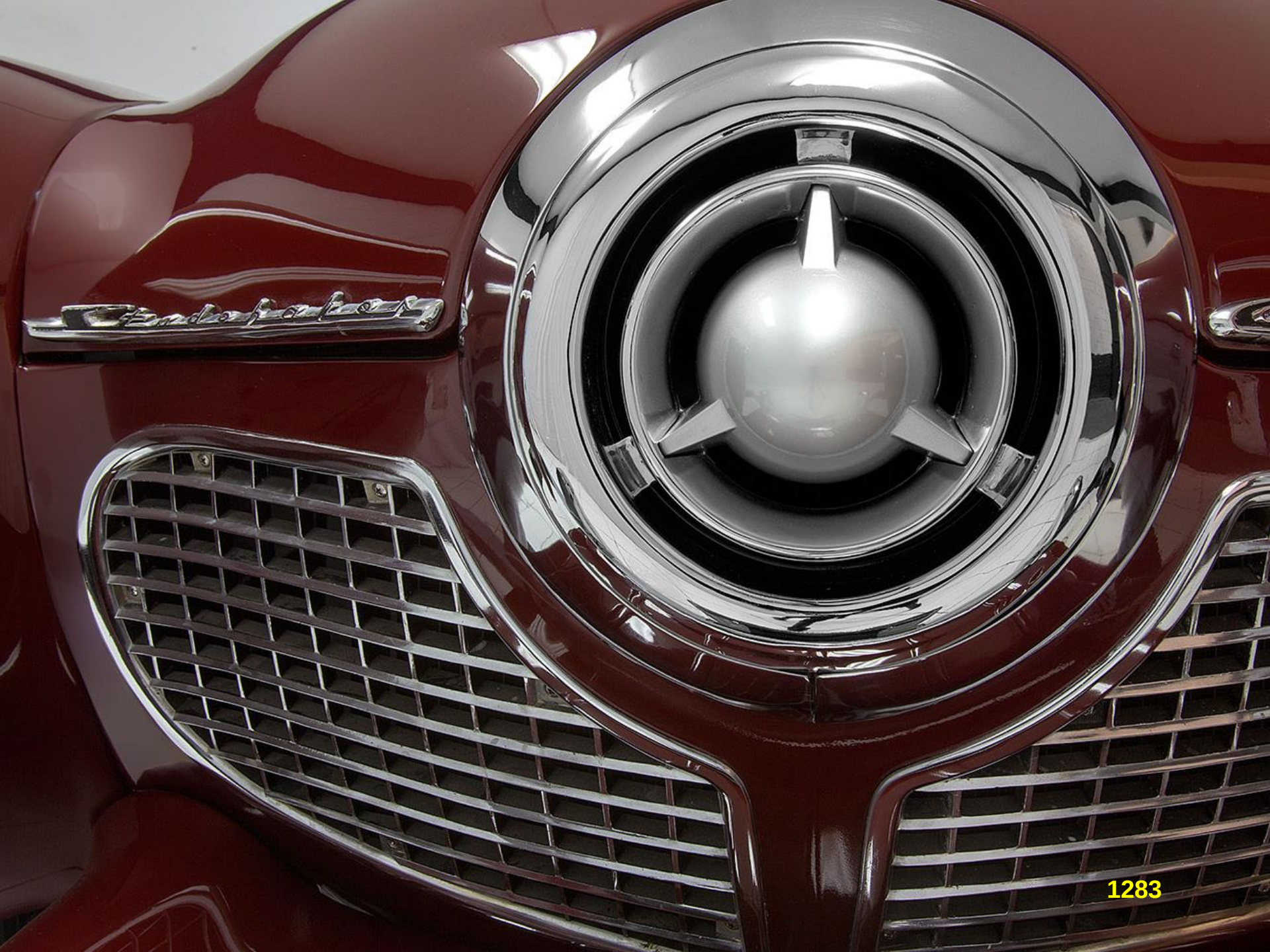
***FORTUNE*, September 1957**

Left: 1951 Studebaker front-end design





<u>Above L&R</u>: Studebaker cars from 1947-1949 marked the first major redesign since the end of WWII. Studebaker independent Designer Raymond Loewy's concepts were executed by Virgil Exner. Loewy discovered that Exner was trying to have himself installed as the main Designer for Studebaker thus, Loewy fired Exner and replaced him with Studebaker's Staff Designer Bob Bourke, who then worked in Loewy's firm helping design the 1950 Studebaker models. The bullet-nose design is generally credited to Bob Bourke who had been working on a bullet-nose design since 1941. The bullet-nose models came in three different size vehicles: *Champion*, *Commander* and *Land Cruiser*. The front-end of these vehicles was matched with large wrap-around rear windows (some people jokingly asked "Which way is it going?").


1283





1951 STUDEBAKER COMMANDER STATE

Starlight Coupe

This graceful 5-passenger coupe is the choice of those who want youthful styling with the power of Studebaker's new 120 horsepower Commander engine. Panoramic rear view windows feature the long, low body lines of this tremendously popular car. Newly designed wide-leaf rear springs, double-action tubular shock absorbers, a one-piece stabilizer and long-travel coil springs in front contribute to the "Miracle Ride" of this 1951 style star.



Passing Range

"…It was the job of Neil L. Blume in engineering the car to load it with exciting things for Edsel dealers to talk about. Blume also worked to get as much interchangeability as he could with Ford and Mercury…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…For the engine of he two lower-price cars, Blume used the Ford V-8 engine-block casting and drilled it to his own specifications; the larger Edsel uses the same engine-block casting as the Mercury. Performances, however, will be quite different. Blume managed to get 303-hp out of the smaller block and 345-hp from the larger one. These make the Edsel, to put it mildly, a peppy car…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

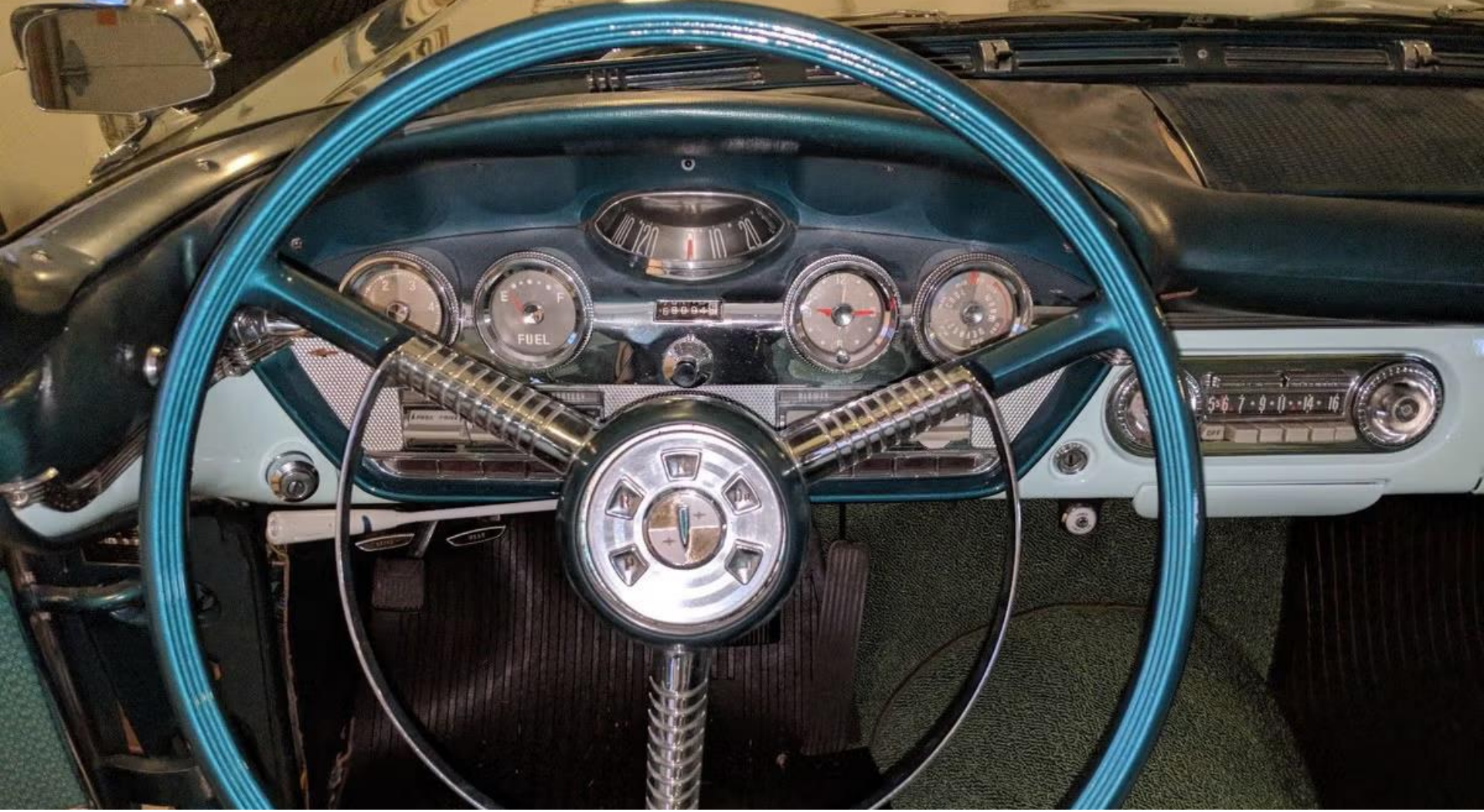
"…The horsepower of the 1958 Edsel Corsair and Citation exceeds that of all 1957 stock cars. Even Blume does not know what speed that gives the Edsel and he disclaims interest in the topic. 'The engine,' Blume earnestly explains, 'was designed for torque, for maximum acceleration. Especially,' he says, 'in the passing range; thirty-five miles-per-hour to seventy' (the industry no longer advertises speed, but it can still advertise 'passing ability')…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Things to Talk About

"…Originally, Blume had hoped to introduce the car with air-suspension as an option, but engineering problems prevented that. He was still left with twenty-three things, as he puts it, 'for the advertising to talk about'…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…Among them is a drum-type speedometer that glows a menacing red when the car exceeds a preset speed; a push-button on the dashboard that pops the trunk lid open; automatic brake adjustment; a single-dial heating and ventilating control; a thermometer that registers the temperature both inside and outside the car and, most important, gearshift push buttons sensibly located in the steering-wheel hub…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

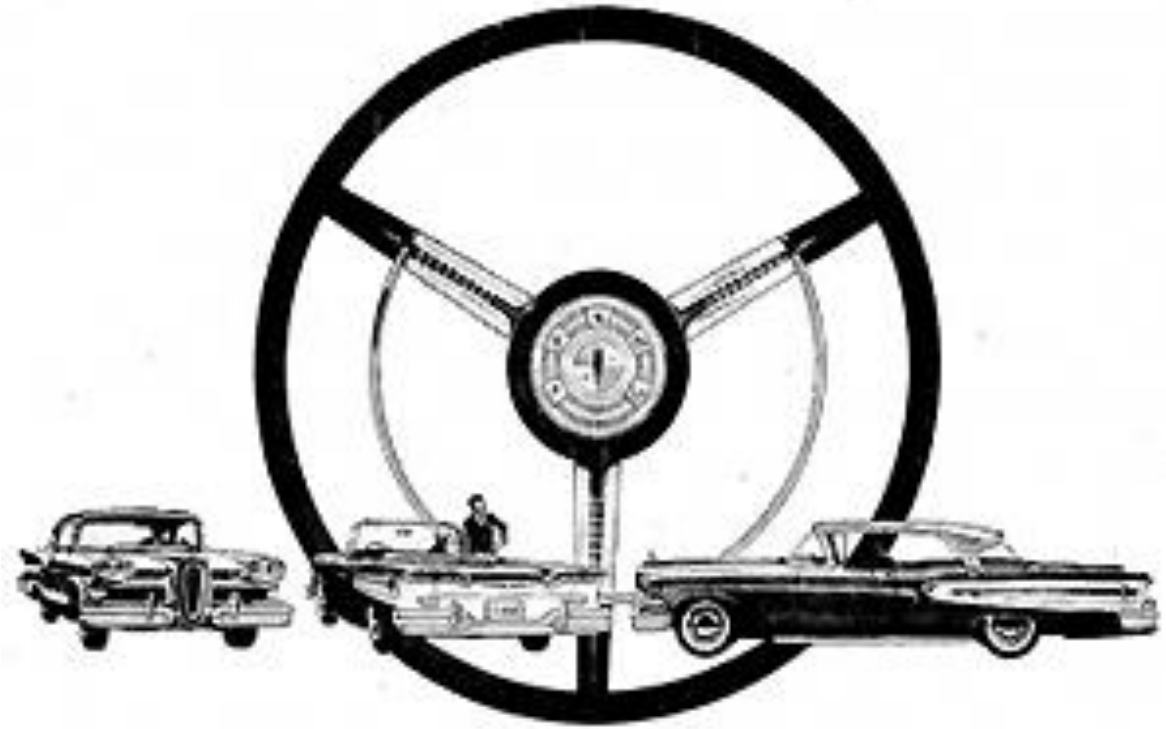


"…It was the stylists' idea to put the shift buttons there, but no one was sure all the electric components could be crowded into a steering post. 'We just ran scared with that one,' says Blume, 'and it worked'…"

***FORTUNE,* Sept. 1957**

This is the **EDSEL**

"It puts shifting where it belongs"



Rolling Into Production

"…The Edsel rolled into the production lines July 15, and with a minimum of trouble. It's 400-man engineering staff had had twenty-six months to do their work. Some bugs cropped-up, but they were all on the order of the instrument-panel metal stamping that just would not stamp smooth. Enameling the stamping, as originally intended, would have magnified the creases. Blume met the crisis calmly: he suggested crackled-finish paint…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…Even the Ford Division, which had not been given to praising its upstart sister, complimented the Edsel Division on its trouble-free assembly…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

An Idealized Personality

"…The very thing that worries Edsel's new dealers; the fact that the car has no 'personality' in the public's mind, seems like a major advantage to Dave Wallace, Edsel's Director of Market Research. 'We can give the car an idealized personality,' he says. 'That is something no brand has ever been able to do before'…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Market Research

"…Wallace, with the help of Columbia University's Bureau of Applied Social Research, spent two years delving into what he calls 'the social and product images of American cars.' He found that Americans, at least the 1,000 interviewed in Peoria and San Bernardino, have some strong opinions about the various brands and the kind of people that drive them…"
***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

"…The Buick, for example, is considered by a majority of people to be 'the doctor's car.' It is an enviable possession, associated with middle-aged and older buyers; the fairly well-to-do. The Dodge also connotes an older buyer, but one that is not so affluent. Mercury, Wallace found, is distinctly a masculine car and consumers associate it, surprisingly, with buyers of lower income than that of Ford buyers…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

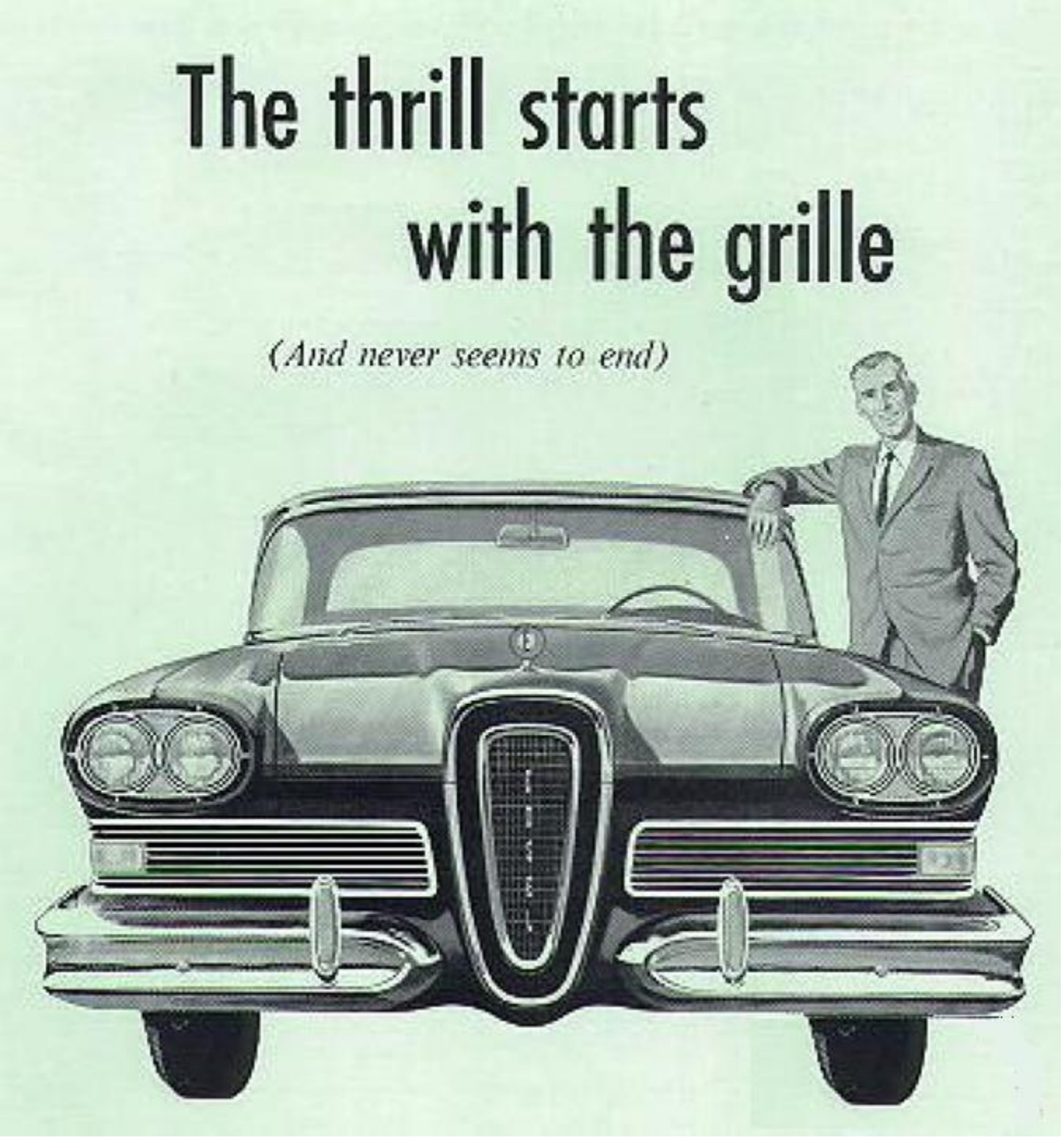
"…It is one thing to know what the consumers' images of the various brands are and quite another to do something about them. Wallace is concerned about the first Edsel buyers. He would like to think they will be solid citizens, but he fears, on the basis of studies with other new products, that they won't be. 'The real opinion leaders,' Wallace says resignedly, 'probably won't buy the car until late winter or spring. They are the kind who hold-off for a while'…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**

Creating Personality

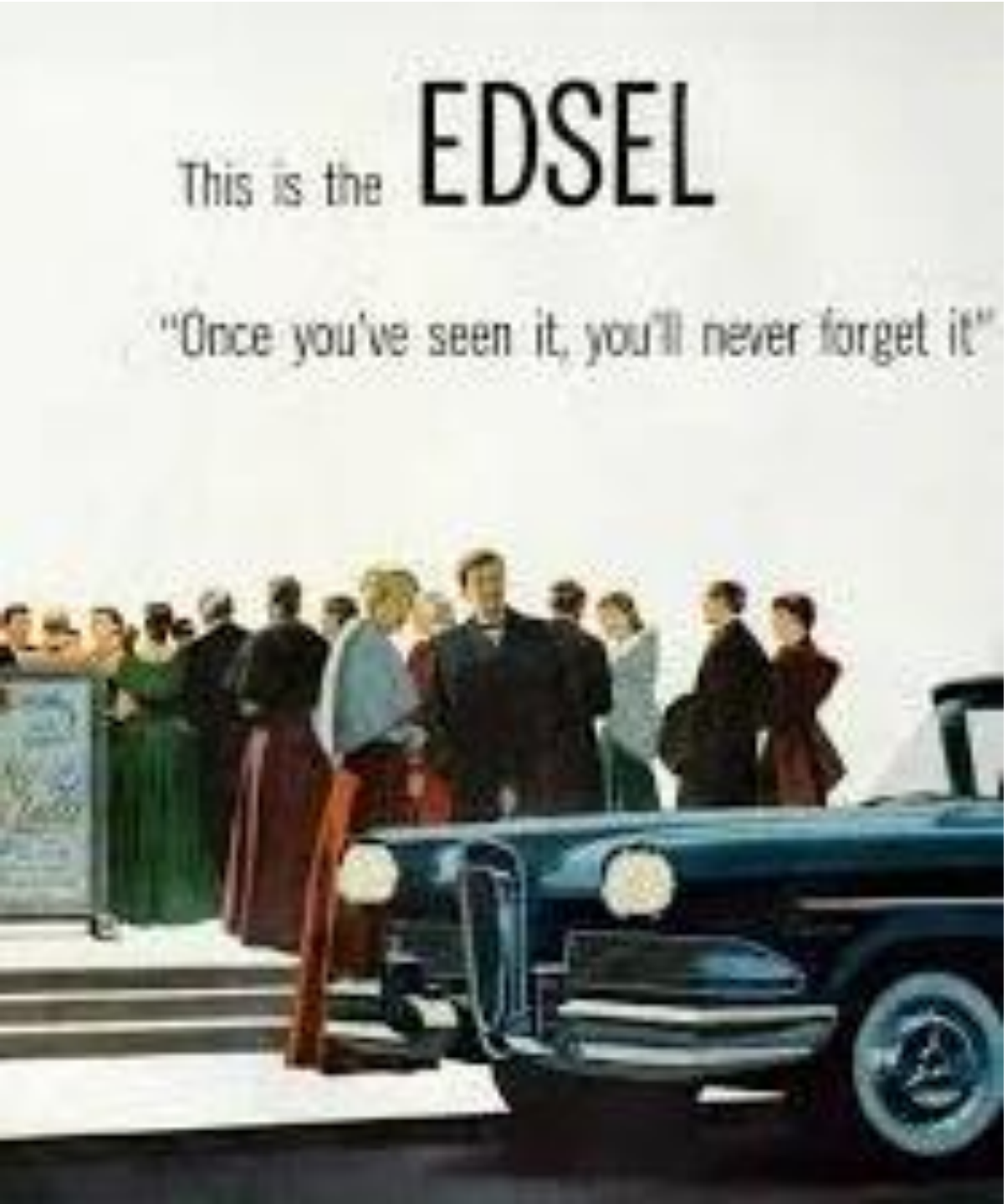
"…At least, neither Wallace nor Fairfax Cone, Chairman of the Executive Committee of Edsel's advertising agency; Foote, Cone & Belding, has any doubts about the kind of personality they will try to create for the Edsel. The way Cone puts it, Edsel is 'the smart car for the younger American family on its way up'…"

***FORTUNE,* September 1957**



"…To appeal to this group, Edsel's advertising uses a stylish, restrained treatment. The full-page magazine and newspaper advertisements are almost Spartan…"
FORTUNE,
Sept. 1957

This is the Edsel!



"…Cone had an unprecedented chance to shout 'NEW.' Instead, he used the simple, confident headline 'This is the Edsel.' Larry Doyle likes that headline. It has the same tone of confidence that worked so well for him along Automobile Row."
***FORTUNE*, Sept. 1957**

Part 13

Puttin’ on a Show

Serious Juice

No matter how you feel about the Edsel, you certainly can't argue with this: the car's launch had some serious juice behind it

***hagerty.com,* October 5, 2017**

RE: introduction to an article written by *Jeff Peek* entitled: "The Hype Before the Flop: A Look Back at *The Edsel Show*"

Failing Big-time

"SURE, it failed. Big-time. The Edsel, widely considered the biggest flop in automotive history, flat-lined for a number of reasons: bad timing, insufficient market research, confusing pricing, shaky dealer organization, quality and reliability issues, lack of distinction from other Ford Motor Company models and, of course, an exterior design that many found, well, unsightly…"

***hagerty.com,* October 5, 2017**

Marketing Muscle

"…But the car's failure wasn't due to a lack of effort, certainly not in the Marketing Department. Imagine Beyoncé, Adele, and Paul McCartney joining forces for a live television show created solely to introduce the newest lineup of Ford automobiles. That was the idea behind 'The Edsel Show,' an hour-long CBS special that aired 60 years ago on Oct. 13, 1957. It starred entertainment icons Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Rosemary Clooney, Louis Armstrong and Bob Hope, and it bumped 'The Ed Sullivan Show' from its usual Sunday night time slot. Now that's real marketing muscle…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**



1315

"…While the public actually got its first glimpse of the Edsel on Sept. 4, five weeks prior to the show, the televised variety hour was the car's true coming-out party, and Ford spared no expense. Crosby, Sinatra, Clooney and Armstrong received top billing and were joined by a 'surprise guest' (Hope), as well as Crosby's son Lindsay, The Four Preps male quartet, and the tap dance team of Conn and Mann. But no one danced around the elephant in the room - the Edsel was in the spotlight from start to finish…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**


1317

Videotape vs. Kinescope

"…If not for the persistence of Los Angeles Video Editor and longtime Edsel enthusiast Kris Trexler, images and sound from the show wouldn't be as clear as those available today. As Trexler explained on YouTube, 'Prior to videotape recording, the only way to archive a television program produced with electronic TV cameras was to record it on motion picture film using a film camera pointed at a TV monitor. This 'Kinescope' process produced inferior pictures and sound compared to the live TV broadcast'…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

"…Trexler owned a Kinescope copy of The Edsel Show, but knowing the history of videotape - which began on a limited basis at CBS starting in 1956 - he thought the star-studded special might have been recorded in that format as well. He was right. Since videotape was not considered 100-percent reliable at the time and CBS needed to record the show and broadcast it on West Coast three hours later, the studio played it safe and used both methods. Only the Kinescope version made it into the public's hands, however…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

"…Trexler reached out to CBS and asked if the videotaped version might have survived. Months passed before the query finally reached an Engineer at CBS Television City, and he knew exactly where to find 'Tape #I-60.' He was using it as a paperweight. The black-and-white recording is the oldest surviving videotape in existence. Trexler shared it on YouTube, along with a comparison of the two recording methods…"
***hagerty.com,* October 5, 2017**


TAPE
#1-60
PROD. DEPT. MEMO
Edsel
Show
Dec. 10-13-57
Orig Safe
SCOTCH
79
50

The Spotlight

"…The Edsel Show begins with a roll call of the stars, and then the curtain parts to reveal Ford's newest passenger vehicle. A female choir sings - rising in pitch and volume with each sentence. 'This is the Edsel…This is the Edsel…This is The Edsel Show!'…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**


The EDSEL Show



"…Crosby greets the live studio audience, referring to himself as 'the Model T,' before admitting it's time to 'address the business at-hand.' After a duet with Armstrong, Crosby announces, 'And now we'd like to show you how the Ford Motor Company has opened the gateway to a whole new world, a new vista of motoring pleasure, with the '58 Edsel. Won't you come in?'…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**


1327

"…As an Edsel two-door hardtop appears on screen, the distinctive voice of radio and TV personality Warren Hull shares all the details. 'This is the Edsel. Unlike any other car you've ever seen. This is the Edsel [image of the front]. This is the Edsel [image of the rear fender]. This is the Edsel [image of the rear]. This is the Edsel [full image of the car]. You can see how it looks. You have to feel the power of the newest V-8 engines in the world - the big new Edsel 400 and the larger Edsel 475. It is unlikely you have ever driven a car with so much usable power as the Edsel…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

"…'And with Edsel's exclusive 'Teletouch Drive' you drive more safely, more easily than you ever have before because both hands can stay at the wheel while the Edsel shifts electrically'…"

***hagerty.com,* October 5, 2017**


Teletouch Drive

"…'This is the Edsel. As its graceful flight deck and classic vertical grille suggest, it is elegant in every detail. And it acts the way it looks, but it doesn't cost that much. See, drive and be sure to price the new member of the Ford family of fine cars, the Edsel, at your Edsel dealer'…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

Current Events

"…In addition to learning about the car, the show offers a look at life in the late 1950s, with plenty of references to then-current events. As Crosby and Sinatra finish singing 'On the Road to Morocco,' Hope drops by to break it up. 'What about this bit?' he asks Crosby. 'You're singing our song . . . with him! After all, Dean wouldn't do this to Jerry.' Of course, the comedy team of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis broke-up the year before. Crosby defends himself by explaining, 'I thought you went for a ride on the Russian Moon,' a reference to Russia's Sputnik satellite, which launched on Oct. 4, 1957, only nine days before the show aired. Hope makes fun of the Hawaiian leis that Crosby and Sinatra are wearing, teasing them, 'You look like two flower girls left over from Marlon's wedding.' Marlon Brando married Anna Kashfi on Oct. 11, 1957, two days before the show…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**



"…Steering the conversation back to the Edsel, Crosby thanks Hope for coming. 'Say, it's real nice of you to drop in on the opening show, Bob, tonight for Edsel. We really appreciate it.' Hope answers, 'Edsel? Is that what this is? Well, this will get 'em out on the highways, I'll tell you that'…"
***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

Some Meat With the Potatoes

"…Clooney sings, 'I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan,' but the show doesn't waver from its sole purpose. Soon after Clooney hits her final note, we're deluged with the largest portion of Edsel advertising in the show, a 2-minute, 21-second introduction of each car in the new lineup. In an era of black-and-white television, it's amusing that announcer Hull actually has to tell us the color of each car…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

"…'This is the 1958 Edsel, the car that presents originality and elegance never seen before in any car at any price, and presents them in 18 different models,' Hull says as the parade begins. 'This expensive-looking car is one of the Edsel Ranger series. A four-door, ice-green sedan styled like a hardtop that sells for no more than some models of America's low-priced cars…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

"…'The turquoise and white convertible you see driving up now is one of the Edsel Pacer series, with elegant Edsel styling throughout, such as these Edsel contour seats that are scientifically designed to give you separate back and shoulder support, with an overall feeling of luxurious comfort that means hour-upon-hour of fatigue-free, enjoyable driving and the back of the front seat is divided in a new way that gives the middle passenger a full back rest, so you ride more comfortably than you ever have before'…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

"…'This two-door hardtop is one of the large and luxurious cars in the Edsel Corsair series. Its colors are copper metallic and white, one of over 90 Edsel color combinations that you can choose from, so you can completely satisfy your individual color tastes'…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

"…'This amber red and white four-door hardtop is one of the magnificent Citation series. Upholstered in white vinyl and gold nylon, just one of an attractive array of the very latest high-fashion decorator fabrics, all color-keyed to match the car exterior'…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

"…'Here is the distinctive Edsel Bermuda, done in charcoal brown and driftwood, one of five Edsel station wagons, which give you your choice of both two- and four-door, six- and nine-passenger models'…"
***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**



1343



1958 Edsel Bermuda Station Wagon

1344

"…'And this is the Edsel Citation convertible, in gold and white. Undoubtedly the most beautiful convertible in the world. See this and the other elegantly styled Edsels at your Edsel dealer this week. Remember, this is the year to get out of your old car and into the most elegant automobile of your lifetime'…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

The Show Must Go On



"…Just as viewers are about to cry uncle, they are gifted 17 straight minutes of entertainment, beginning with tap routine from Conn and Mann (oddly enough, after beginning the number with a head butt), followed by a Crosby-Sinatra medley, Lindsay Crosby singing with 'The Four Preps' and Sinatra and Armstrong singing another duet…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

"…Then, in a restaurant scene that borders on sexist by modern standards, a man and woman discuss the Edsel:

Man: 'And you just turn the key on the dashboard and the trunk opens electrically. And here's how easy it is to drive… Can you flick that light switch?'

Woman: 'Why certainly, anyone can.'

Man: 'Then you can drive the Edsel'…"
***hagerty.com,* October 5, 2017**

"…Hull breaks in with a final dose of Edsel info. 'That's right, driving the 1958 Edsel is as easy as flicking a light switch. For Edsel's exclusive new 'Teletouch Drive' shifts electrically at a touch. It's a new idea that puts shifting where it belongs, so you can keep both hands safely at the wheel. And look, you can shift and turn the wheel at the same time, for the control remains stationary, which makes Edsel the world's easiest car to handle. On the Edsel's instrument panel, you'll find many more new ideas, like this speedometer that glows red when you exceed the safe maximum speed you've set it for; this one simple dial that sets heat, ventilation and air conditioning at a twist of the wrist; even a remote trunk release that electrically opens the luggage compartment'…"
***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

"…'And under that long, straight Edsel hood you'll find the newest V-8 engines in the world - the big new Edsel 400 and the larger Edsel 475, each one power matched to the weight of the car to put more usable power at your command than you have ever known before…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

"…'Remember, driving an Edsel is an experience no man sh-ould miss. Discover for yourself the thrill of driving an Edsel, 1958's one really new car. Visit your Edsel dealer soon, and when you do you'll meet a fine Businessman with a broad automobile experience. He became an Edsel dealer because he had driven the Edsel, he had compared it and he had carefully evaluated it. He'll be glad to demonstrate to you, as he did to himself, that the 1958 Edsel is the car that offers you the most in elegance of styling and performance. There are 18 models and four series to choose from. Edsel prices are surprisingly low with models priced just above the lowest and ranging through the entire medium-priced field. You can afford an Edsel. Stop in and see - and drive - the Edsel tomor-row at your Edsel dealer'…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

"…Song and dance fill the final 11 minutes of the special, but not before - in a clear case of overkill - Hull reminds us, 'The Edsel Show has been presented by Edsel!'…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

The Show Outshined the Car

"…Even now, in an era where celebrities endorse everything from headphones to digestion-promoting yogurt, this spectacle seems a little over-the-top. At the time, however, it was a major cultural moment that captivated the country…"
***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

"…'The Edsel Show' won 'LOOK' magazine's award for Best Musical Show of 1957 and was also nominated for an Emmy. It was considered Bing Crosby's breakthrough TV performance and led to a contract with ABC for two Crosby specials each year. 'VARIETY' magazine loved the show too, writing: ''The Edsel Show,' a special kick-off for Ford's new line of cars on TV, was a smooth, fast ride all the way.' 'VARIETY' went further, calling Crosby's performance 'his best TV showing to-date.' Crosby used the event to score a charitable contribution for his alma mater by arranging for Gonzaga University to produce the show. The Washington school earned about $250,000 in profits, tax-free…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**

"…Rosemary Clooney could have predicted the Edsel's failure. In her 1999 autobiography, 'Girl Singer,' Clooney wrote: 'The show was built around the newest Ford offering, the 1958 Edsel. A new vista of motoring pleasure, unlike any other car you've ever seen. The only Edsel I ever saw was one they gave me to drive while I was rehearsing. I came out of the CBS Building, up those little steps to the street where my purple Edsel was waiting, like the Normandie in dry dock. Mr. Ford [Henry Ford II] was right behind me, heading for his Edsel. I opened the door of my car and the handle came off. I turned to him, holding it out to him. 'About your car'…"

***hagerty.com*, October 5, 2017**


The Edsel Show
CBS
OCT. 13
1957
BING CROSBY ROSEMARY CLOONEY FRANK SINATRA LOUIS ARMSTRONG

Part 14

Case Study

The Edsel: A Case Study in the Economics of Discretionary Behavior and Objectives of a Firm

*****

by John G. Sullivan
Lt. Commander, USN
United States Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, California
1965

Abstract

The history of the Ford Motor Company pertaining to the Edsel is reviewed in comparison to a theory of the firm, which suggests a utility maximization vice the classical profit maximization concept. The conclusion is reached and tends to support the utility maximization concept. Additionally, the conclusion is reached that the utility maximization concept is useful only in providing insight in particular cases.

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The Edsel

I. The Final Decision

In early 1955, the executive structure of the company had changed. Lewis Crusoe moved from head of the Ford Division to become Executive Vice-President, Car and Truck Divisions; McNamara was made head of Ford Division and F.C. Reith became a member of Crusoe's staff and, as such, joined the Product Planning Committee.

The Product Planning Committee was now chaired by Crusoe.

The automobile industry was in a state of optimism according to *Automotive News:*

At the moment, Detroit is in the middle of a boom, the public has bought two million cars in the off-peak season from January to April and now is established to be buying at a 600,000 a month clip. That's a rate of more than 7,000,000 a year.

In this atmosphere, Reith presented an overall plan for Ford's future. His plan was supported by an outside firm, Lehman Brothers; the study pointed out that G.M. held about 50 percent of the market.

At G.M., 45 percent of new car registrations are in the medium-price field. At Chrysler, 47 percent are in the medium-price field. At Ford, only 17 percent of the registrations are in the medium-price field. When looked at from this view, 50 percent of G.M.'s volume rests on Chevrolet, while at Ford, 80 percent of volume is generated by the Ford automobile. This means that the success and profitability depends on the Ford Division alone.

The study went on to say that this imbalance shows in the marketplace. G.M. has 67 percent of the medium-low-market, Ford 16 percent and Chrysler, 14 percent. In the upper-medium bracket, G.M. has 56 percent, Chrysler, 29 percent and Ford, 3 percent if the *Thunderbird* is included. The study also concluded that when a company has two or more entries in the medium-price field, the result is to strengthen the sales of all its car lines.

Reith also pointed out that partly because of this gap the company had fewer dealers than G.M. and Chrysler. The time was as "auspicious" as could be imagined. Population was growing and consumer income was rising.

Reith's proposal was using three basic body shells; one slightly modified to produce seven basic automobiles:

Number 1 for Ford mainline and other standard Fords.

Number 1 (modified) Ford Fairlane and low-priced E car.

Number 2 Mercury and high-priced E car.

Number 3 New Super Mercury, Lincoln.

Reith's basic plan was approved by the Board of Directors apparently as a result of or coincident with Reith's proposal, the following organizational changes took place:

Lincoln-Mercury Division became two divisions; Ben Mills became Vice-President of the company and was named General Manager of the new Lincoln unit.

Reith was made a Vice-President and put in-charge of the Mercury unit.

A Special Products Division was formed to develop the E-car under R. E. Krafve.

William Clay Ford, at that time Vice-President and in-charge of the Continental Division, became Group Director for that unit and the Lincoln.

Benson Ford, formerly Vice-President and General Manager of Lincoln-Mercury, now became Group Director of the Ford, Lincoln-Mercury and Special Products Division.

Richard Krafve had been a ales engineer and management consultant before joining Ford in 1947 and was moved to his new position from the Lincoln-Mercury Division.

II. The Design

The automobile was designed within the basic limitations set by the production policy on body shells. The designer, Roy A. Brown, actually the “stylist,” said in an interview:

Our goal was to create a vehicle which would be unique in the sense that it would be readily recognizable in styling theme from the nineteen other makes on the road at the time. We went to the extent of making photographic studies from some distance of all nineteen of these cars and it became obvious that at a distance of a few hundred feet the similarity was so great that it was practically impossible to distinguish one make from the others. They were all peas-in-a-pod. We decided to select a style that would be “new” in the sense that it was unique and yet, at the same time, familiar.

The car was presented on August 15, 1955, to the Product Planning Committee, including Henry Ford II and Breech. During the unveiling ceremony:

The audience sat in utter silence for what seemed like a full minute and then, as one man, burst into a round of applause. Nothing of that kind had ever happened at an intra-company first showing at Ford . . .

In so far as being unique, a novel horse-collar-shaped radiator grille was set vertically in the center of a conventionally low, wide end. The rear-end was a departure from the familiar for instead of the high “tail-fins” which were in-style at the time, there were wide-spread horizontal wings filled from the rear with 25-inch tail-lights, later dubbed “gull wings.” This innovation was copied by the rest of the industry for the “tail-fin” disappeared from other models in 1959-1960.

George Walker, Chief Stylist for Ford said later, after the Edsel was placed on the market:

The front grill is a classic . . . I liked the “big package look” of the car. You take Lowey’s 51 Studebaker, that was a swell design, but it wasn’t big.

Neil L. Blume, who was the engineer in-charge of the Edsel, stated that it was the styling group which was responsible for the transmission control buttons which were placed in the center of the steering column. This problem gave them “a fit” and was not ready until just before production began. Engineering wasn’t at all sure it could be done. Blume also said that they tried to build “selling points” into the car.

These selling points; “something for the dealers to talk about,” consisted of such items as a thermometer that displayed inside and outside temperature, a speedometer which glowed red when it reached a preset speed, push-button operation of the trunk and hood, single control for both heating and cooling and several other almost non-functional items.

On the more functional side, the automobile in the larger series was provided with a 385-horsepower engine and in the smaller version, 303-horsepower. The engine was equipped with a unique multiple thermostat system that overcame warm-up problems that were typical of the larger engines of that time. The brakes provided were self-adjusting and an air-suspension system was provided for later production models. Blume said, “The automobile was engineered for passing ability, torque and acceleration.”

III. Market Research

Conventional market research never went into the Edsel. Ford used a type of motivational research called “imagery studies.” While this departure from standard practice seems unusual, it is probably true, for no source indicates that any other type of research was conducted.

Business Week observed that if the conventional studies had been made, even in 1955, no “chink” in the middle-price bracket would have been observed:

This observation is supported by Roy Abernethy who has stated that their decision (American Motors) to enter the compact market in 1956 was carefully calculated, despite the fact that the 1955 market consisted of 38 percent medium- and upper-price automobiles. According to Abernethy, the procedure to be used was, to a great degree, responsible for G.M. taking the lead from Ford in the 1930s era:

> *General Motors moved to capitalize on the fact that cars could be glamorized and merchandized as symbols of status of their owners . . . merchandising put heavy emphasis on the symbolism theme.*

The Director of Planning for Marketing Research for the Special Products Division was David Wallace. He has stated that in the planning for the Edsel, they followed this line:

We said to ourselves, lets face it, there is no great difference in basic mechanisms between a two-thousand dollar Chevrolet and a six-thousand dollar Cadillac. Forget about all the ballyhoo, we said, and you'll see that they are pretty much the same thing. Nevertheless, there's something – there's got to be something in the make-up of a certain number of people that gives them a yen for a Cadillac, in spite of its high price, or maybe because of it . . . we concluded . . . cars are the means to a sort of dream fulfillment . . . some irrational factor in people that makes them want one kind of a car rather than another - something that has to do with . . . the car's personality.

Wallace has said that he and others at Ford were aware of the research conducted by Pierre D. Martineau (*Automobiles: What They Mean To Americans*). Martineau was Director of Research and Marketing at the Chicago *Tribune* and had first presented his work in a lecture at the University of Michigan in 1954. It was also published in another form in the Chicago *Tribune* and later in the work cited. His study compared, among other things, the Buick to the Ford

Buick is seen as the car for successful people moving upward . . . Ford retains from its tin-lizzie past . . . which values it . . . for rugged wear, a plain farm car. It is intensely attractive to youngsters.

These ideas were not new, but certainly they impressed people in Ford at that time. Crusoe has been quoted as saying: “I don’t want people to leave my store to buy something better . . . and stopping for a Buick.”

These studies used to measure the interaction between buyer and product might be interestingly applied to the interaction between producer and product.

Wallace decided to make a full assessment of the “personalities” of all of the medium-price automobiles on the market and some of the lower-price models as well. Columbia University *Bureau of Applied Social Research* was engaged to interview 800 recent new car buyers in Peoria, Illinois, and 800 in San Bernardino, California. The survey supported the Martineau Studies and assisted in finding the correct personality for the E-car.

In early 1956, Wallace proposed the following in a report to the Special Products Division:

The most advantageous personality for the E-car might well be the smart car for the younger Executive or professional family on its way up. Smart car: recognition by others of the owner's good style and taste. Younger: appealing to spirited but responsible adventurers. Executive or Professional: Millions pretent to this status, whether they can attain it or not. Family: not exclusively masculine; a wholesome "good" role. On its way up: "The E-car has faith in you, son; we'll help you make it!"

The main task for Wallace now was to find a name for the E-car. To this end he hired research groups to poll in the streets. He entered into a lengthy correspondence with the poet, Marianne Moore, which was later published in the *New Yorker* and by Morgan Library. Although the correspondence was charming, it yielded no usable name for the E-car. Foote, Cone and Bielding were called in and from a list of 6,000 names they finally submitted four: Ranger, Pacer, Corsair, Citation.

These were the proposed names that Krafve took to the Executive Committee. In that meeting, Breech said that he didn't care for any of them and named the Edsel. This name was objectionable to the Ford Brothers (not in attendance) but Henry Ford II, when consulted after the meeting said, if it was the committee's desire, he would abide by it. The other four names were assigned to the four models of the car that were produced.

No break-down on the full advertising expenditures is available, but some appreciation of its size can be gained. The advertising campaign was under the personal direction of Fairfax M. Cone. The agency established a Detroit office to handle the Edsel account. The office staff consisted of sixty people other than those who came from the home offices.

IV. Selling

Selling the Edsel with a new dealer organization was generally considered by Ford and the other industry members to be the most risky portion of the operation. The lack of a solid dealer organization was generally considered to be the reason for the Kaiser failure.

The best reason Ford could give for establishing a separate dealer organization instead of “dualing,” an industry term referring to one dealer having more than one make, was explained by the Edsel Sales Manager, J.C. Doyle. It was common knowledge that when dealers dualed and one car had an off-year, they would not “push it” and that compounded the sales problem. The dual dealer would push only the good seller, usually the lower-priced car. G.M. does not dual except in low-volume areas and Chrysler has had problems in this field also. Dualing seems to be more expensive in the long-run. The only places Edsel would be dualed was in areas that would not support the single car. Edsel needed about 1,200 dealers to open sales.

In May, 1955, Doyle formed a planning group of nine men and began a county-by-county breakdown of sales areas. The group took each area in the country's 60 major metropolitan market areas and determined population, population over 21, number of families, number of families with an income over $4,000, median value of homes, percent dilapidation of homes and automobile population. Other factors were considered: location of the income groupings, location of shopping centers, traffic-flow, where "the automobile row" was and how vital it was, location of other dealers.

The studies were finished in September, 1956. The total number of dealers required by "introduction day" was 1,184 and the eventual number would be about 3,000.

Five regional sales offices were established (Newark, Chicago, Detroit, New Orleans, San Francisco) with 24 districts and 900 persons were placed as field sales representatives. The marketing group in Detroit grew to 149 by January 1, 1957.

Doyle had some inter-divisional problems when he started lining up dealers, since some of them came from the Ford Division and some from former Lincoln-Mercury dealers. The final grouping contained about 65% "Shift Over" dealers who left other companies.

Doyle maintained that they were very careful to select only “quality dealers,” those with excellent reputations.

It was generally conceded within the industry that the Edsel dealer system was well-established on “introduction day.”

V. Manufacturing

The Edsel was produced in plants along with Fords and Mercurys. Krafve had asked for plants of his own, but was turned-down. Unfortunately, the first Edsels were of poor quality. *Automotive News* reported that the earliest Edsels suffered from poor paint, inferior sheet metal and faulty accessories. A former Executive of the Edsel Division estimated that only about half of the first Edsels really performed properly.

Krafve's reasons for asking for his own plants were based on the fear that in the Ford and Mercury plants, the Edsel would suffer. He stated that inter-divisional rivalry was intense, but he did not intend to imply that there were any conditions approaching sabotage. Minor problems were to be expected in any new car.

This opinion was shared by Consumer Reports:

The Edsel invites the standard warning against buying cars produced before the assembly lines are running smoothly and before at least some built-in troubles have been rectified. The warning - applicable to any make - was justified once again by CU's Edsel.

This problem in manufacturing is generally conceded to be a standard problem in the automotive industry.

VI. The Other Divisions

Between the time that the Edsel was conceived and the time that the car was introduced, the other divisions at Ford were busy pushing into the middle-price market. The reasons for this policy are not clear, although, *Business Week* claims that the independence of the divisions within Ford was responsible, for after all, "the higher a car's price, the more profit," for any given division.

The situation Ford created looked like this:

1955	1958 Reith Proposal	1958 Actual
Mean Industry Wholesale Price $1,572		$1,881
Middle-Price Market Start $2,100		$2,300

Below Middle Price

Ford Mainline 6 1606-1753 Ford Customline 6 1801-1845 Ford Fairlane 6 1914-2204 Ford Mainline 8 1706-1853 Ford Customline 8 1901-1945	Ford Mainline Ford Customline Ford Fairlane***	Ford Custom V8 1923-2054 Ford Fairlane V8 2147-2332

Middle Price

F. Thunderbird No Data Ford Fairlane 8 2014-2304 Mer. Custom 2218-2686 Mer. Monterey 2400-2464 Mer. Montclair 2631-2712	F. Thunderbird Ford Fairlane Low Price E Car Mer. Monterey High Price E Car Super Mercury	F. Thunderbird No Data F. Fairlane 500 2289-2907 Edsel Ranger 2300-2466 Edsel Pacer 2499-2771 Mer. Monterey 2422-2822 Mer. Montclair 2966-3284 Edsel Corsair 3066-3139 Edsel Citation 3242-3489 Mer. Parklane 3555-3788

Above Middle Price

Lincoln Custom 3563-3666 Lincoln Capri 3752-4071	Lincoln Custom Lincoln Capri L. Continental	Lincoln Capri 4415-4553 L. Premier 4894-5124 L. Continental 5367-5792

The situation on the introduction of the Edsel was completely different from Reith's proposed plan. Additionally, Chevrolet and Plymouth had followed Crusoe's 1955 Fairlane into the middle-price market.

It is no wonder that Fortune's writer, Thomas P. Murphy, questioned the reasoning of Ford on the introduction of the Edsel in September, 1957:

No one questions consumer loyalty, no one questions broad sales policy. But the basic promise that the middle-price market is expanding is wrong, for to account for 60% of sales, Ford had to use the three high-priced cars of the traditionally low-priced three. Without counting these cars, the field is not expanding.

Interestingly, American Motor's reading of the high-point in the middle-price market was 38%.

To reach the desired 200,000 units-per-year, the Edsel would have to take about 3% of the total market. In September, 1957, predictions were that the dealers would end the model year with the second largest inventory in history.

VII. The End of the Edsel

In general, the Edsel was reported on favorably by the press and periodicals, except *Consumer Reports,* which purchased a Corsair for test purposes. They happened to purchase a car which suffered from the effects of initial production. The delivered car had:

Among other troubles, the wrong axle ratio, loss of water when an expansion plug blew-out, a noisy and leaking power steering pump, noisy rear-axle gears and a heater which issued blasts of hot air whenever engine speed reached 3,600 RPM.

The report went on to say that too much effort apparently went into making a piece of novelty merchandise, too little into making a superior vehicle. They rated the car the lowest of the middle-price class. The other magazines who tested the car found little to complain about, but all accused the car of being too noisy and of having little road adhesion. If attacked at all, the car was classed as being just another of Detroit's middle-priced gadgets.

To reach the 200,000 unit goal, the Edsel would have to sell at a rate of between 600 and 700 units per-business-day. The first day of sales, 6,500 orders were placed. However, for the first 10 days in October, 1957, sales were only 2,751.

On the 27th of November, Edsel's only dealer in Manhattan announced that he was dropping Edsel and taking on American Motor's *Rambler.*

Edsel finished the year with sales of 26,681. The sales picture across the automobile industry looked grim.

On January 14, 1958, Ford announced that it was consolidating the Mercury, Lincoln and Edsel Divisions under James J. Nance. Only the sales force of the Edsel Division would remain intact. As a result of this consolidation, 6,000 salaried employees were released. The amount of advertising devoted to the Edsel was reduced. Doyle has said that this move marked the end of the car. "With that much competition in a division, the Edsel wasn't going anywhere; it became a stepchild."

The 1959 Edsel was offered in only two models and was scaled-down in size. The car was eight inches shorter, 500 pounds lighter and horsepower had been reduced by 158-horsepower. Price was reduced by five to eight-hundred dollars. *Consumer Reports* rated it as a "likeable car."

By this time Rambler had 4.0% of the market and the small imported cars accounted for 8.12% of the market.

1959 sales were 40,779, about the same as De Soto sales, but by now 16% of sales were going to American Motor's *Rambler* and the foreign cars. A 1960 model was brought out without "horse-collar" in mid-October, 1959, a month after the Ford *Falcon*, but was discontinued in November, when production had slipped to 20 cars-per-day.

A report had been made to the Executive Committee in January of 1959, recommending dropping the Edsel, but was not approved because of anticipated dealer reaction. Consideration had been given to marketing a new compact under the Edsel name to preserve the dealers, but it was feared that the name alone would be too much of a handicap.

VIII. Summary

The Edsel was simply an unprofitable venture. The automobile was no better or no worse than any other middle-price automobile on the market at the time. Mechanical problems that plagued the first models were apparently anticipated and are part of the hazard in introducing any new product in the automotive industry.

The dealer organization was well planned and established and sales did not suffer because of inadequacy in this area. The car did sell, and rather well, if placed in comparison with other automobiles. Sales for its total life were 109,-466, ignoring the 1960 model year. In two years time, it sold twice as well as the "highly profitable *Thunderbird,"* which sold only 53,166 units in the first three years of its life.

The total sales are even more impressive when consideration is given to the fact that 1958 was only a 4.7-million unit-year across the industry, as opposed to 6-million in 1957 and 6.1-million in 1959. Motivational Research did not seem to hurt, or help sales. This area is still a matter of controversy, although it is conceded at this time that there is no evidence to support the fact that an effective market policy can be based on this strategy.

The middle-price market was a tight market at the time and was made tighter by the introduction of the other divisions' entries and this probably hurt sales, but the middle-price market was not destroyed by the small car. Ford apparently had good reason to enter the market based on their economic forecasts which were largely correct, if on the low-side. There is little reason to believe that Ford Executives were rash enough to believe they had reached the projected "mille-nnium" in 1955. Total registrations were 52.1-million in 1955 and their report predicted only 70 million by 1965, a relatively steady growth rate.

In consideration of the "Light Car" there is sufficient evidence to indicate that this alternative was unattractive both from a profitability stand and from the standpoint of the corporation's objectives of "dominating" the industry. It is also possible to generalize that bounded by industry standards, they could not con-ceptualize a light car as being any more than a stripped-down version of a higher priced car and as such, non-salable.

Quite simply, the economic production level was 200,000 units and it was not achieved. How much lower the economic production level would have been under the alternative plans proposed, or if these alternative plans could have met the objective of gaining more of the middle-price market, is partly a matter of speculation. It can be said, however, that under any of the other plans the level would have been lower. The enormity of the 200,000 unit level can be appreciated by comparing industry figures. This volume in the peak industry sales year of 1955 (also the decision year) represented more than the total of all Chrysler and Imperial sales which were 156,518 combined; alternatively, it represented one-third of the total Buick sales. In 1956, the planning year, 2000, 000 units represented about one-half of Buick sales and was approximately equal to combined Chrysler and De Soto sales. The production decision was remarkably high, yet required to support the organization established.

Business Week summarized the situation. Within four years time, Ford expanded to include the following automobile divisions! Ford, Lincoln, Mercury, Edsel, Continental, then closed them because sales weren't sufficient to carry the overhead. In January, 1959, the Mercury-Lincoln and Edsel Divisions were combined and 6,000 salaried employees were released. Upon consolidating production and leaving the Lincoln-Mercury Division (after Edsel was dropped in November, 1959) as a sales division only an additional 600 salaried employees were dropped.

An additional casualty of the four year expansion was the Continental Division. In regard to the demise of this division, an unidentified Ford Executive was reported as arguing that the “prestige” of the Continental was worth the losses incurred.

Part 15

Laying an Egg

Why the Edsel Laid an Egg:
Motivational Research vs. the Reality Principle

ETC: A Review of General Semantics,
Vol. 15, No. 3 - Spring 1958

by S.I. Hayakawa

THE FOLLOWING are later reflections on the American automobile, aroused by the many letters (see pp. 231-236 of this issue) which I have received in response to my article, "Sexual Fantasy and the 1957 Car" (*ETC.*, XIV [Spring, 1957], 163-168). Among the questions raised by my correspondents is why automobiles are discussed at all in a journal of general semantics. This question is easily answered. As *ETC.'s* cover says, it is "concerned with the role of language and other symbols in human behavior and human affairs."

The automobile is certainly one of the most important nonlinguistic symbols in American culture. As the advertisements keep telling us, it is one of our ways of telling others who we are, from Cadillac as a "symbol of achievement," to Ford as a symbol of "young-mindedness," to Plymouth, which says, according to a recent ad, "We're not the richest people in town, but we're the proudest. We're the kind of family that gets a big bang out of living." Even those who simply want transportation, with no fads or frills or nonsense, can buy a Jeep and "say" so. The auto-makers are therefore the grammarians of this nonverbal "language," and shortcomings in the "language" are necessarily shortcomings in the range of expression available to the consumer.

Different people have different needs, with respect both to transportation and self-expression. Hence there should be, in a rich economy like that of the United States, variety in automobiles no less than in other facets of life. Hence I believe that manufacturers should build *some* cars of very high horsepower for those who need such cars, whether for practical or psychological reasons. I do not object to *some* cars being styled to allay unconscious sexual anxieties or to provoke space-ship fantasies, if people want such cars. *Some* cars should be little and unpretentious, because there are many modest, unassuming people in the U.S., hard as this may be to believe on the basis of car ads. And since, as one obscene cigarette ad puts it, some people "like their pleasure BIG," [1] *some* cars, whether for practical or psychological reasons, should be big. Some people love ostentation; hence it is inevitable and necessary in the free economy that manufacturers produce for their benefit *some* huge and suitably dazzling ostentation wagons.[2]

My quarrel with the American automobile industry in 1957 was not that it produces overpriced, overpowered, oversized, and over-elaborate cars, but that it produces them almost to the exclusion of all other kinds. Except for some interesting experiments at the fringes of the market by American Motors and Studebaker, the dominating forces in the industry—General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler—are still carrying on in 1958 their assault on consumer intelligence. The "Big Three" are producing no cars that are not expensive, hideous, and (except for a few sixes) costly to operate and powered far beyond the needs of the ordinary motorist.

The Chevrolet, already too long, low and broad in 1957 for the practical, day-to-day chores which Chevrolets have been put ever since I can recall, is 9” longer, 2-1/2” lower and 4” broader in 1958. Mercury (“The Big M” – for masculinity?) offers engines from 312 to 400-hp in its “Marauder” line. [3] Again we are being told what we need is power (“Try the B-12,000 engine. It puts 12,000 pounds of thrust behind every engine stroke!), Gull-Wing fenders, Swept-Wing styling, with Turbo-Flash performance, in Fireweep Corsair Star Chief hardtops with the Bold New Look.” Again the explicit statement of the sex theme, “Hot, Handsome, a Honey to Handle.”

FOR WHAT? For Father to commute 17 miles to work—a distance which, with favorable traffic conditions (and they are not always favorable), he will cover at an average rate of 30 m.p.h. For Mother to drop Chrissie off at dancing school, stopping at the supermarket and the public library on the way back. For Doug, the candy salesman, to make his calls on neighborhood stores. For Florence, the social caseworker, to visit her clients. For Pete, the insurance adjuster; for Stanley, the instructor at the university extension center; for Andy, the television repair man—all of whom need their cars for their work and their occasional holiday week-ends.

It does not come altogether as a surprise, therefore, that in the spring of 1958 the volume of new automobile sales is crushingly disappointing to the trade. The Edsel has laid a colossal egg. *Time* (March 31, 1958) reports that the sale of "medium-priced" cars has fallen distastrously. The manufacturers blame the recession.

The first real casualty of the current recession may well be the middle-priced automobile

***TIME,* March 31, 1958**

RE: introduction to an article entitled: "AUTO PRESTIGE: Conspicuous Consumption is Waning"

"FOR years it not only provided transportation for the middle class but was a firm steppingstone on the stratified pyramid of personal material progress. From a Ford, Chevrolet or Plymouth, the buyer progressed to a Pontiac, Buick, De Soto or Oldsmobile, all the while hoping for, and perhaps eventually achieving, a Chrysler, Lincoln or Cadillac…"

***TIME,* March 31, 1958**

"…But the steppingstone is no longer attractive - or necessary - to most Americans. Sales of middle-priced cars have declined from 37% of the market in 1955 to 29% last year - and their production decline this year has been phenomenal…"

***TIME,* March 31, 1958**

"…Middle-priced car production so far in 1958 is down 51% from the same period last year, far more than other sections of the industry. Production of Oldsmobile has dropped 44%; Buick, which was once in third place, 40%; De Soto 77%; Mercury 64%; Pontiac 31%; Dodge 70%. Ford's middle-priced Edsel, brought onto the market last year, is a flop…"

***TIME,* March 31, 1958**

"…The decline in popularity of the middle-priced car parallels the decline in prestige buying, once one of the big forces behind U.S. auto sales. Americans have found many other sources of prestige and enjoyment, e.g., homes, boats, foreign travel, family vacations, summer houses in the country, etc…"
***TIME,* March 31, 1958**

"…To the evidence that conspicuous consumption - as typified by the bigger auto - is waning in the U.S., Harvard Economist Sumner Slichter adds his voice: 'Having stocked themselves up for the past ten years with cars, people have been shifting their expenditures to other things'…"

***TIME,* March 31, 1958**

"…The real drop of the middle-priced car has been brought about by Detroit itself. Until the 1940s, the low-priced three - Ford, Chevrolet and Plymouth - manufactured cheap, compact cars meant chiefly for transportation. As demand grew for wider and longer cars with more room and comfort, Detroit changed the once small cars into big ones. From 1938 to date, Chevrolet has grown two-feet overall; Ford has grown four-feet since 1928. Both are now bigger than the Pontiac, Packard or Oldsmobile of ten years ago…"

***TIME,* March 31, 1958**

"…The difference in quality and comfort between low-priced and high-priced cars narrowed. Cheaper cars picked-up more horsepower (Chevrolet offers 280-hp today, about the same as the 1955 Cadillac). Once major mechanical improvements were the exclusive property of more expensive autos, e.g., Oldsmobile's automatic shift; now lower-priced models have all of them…"

***TIME,* March 31, 1958**



"…Among the lower-priced cars, it is the highest-priced models that are doing best. Ford sales are down, but its Thunderbird and Fairlane are selling best - to many people who a few years ago would have bought a middle-priced car. Sales of Chevrolet are neck-and-neck with 1957, with the biggest sellers its most expensive models, including the Impala…"

***TIME,* March 31, 1958**

"…Prestige buying still helps the sale of small foreign cars. Foreign-car purchasers often give lower operating costs as the reason for buying. But Detroit surveys show that most foreign-car buyers have higher incomes than the national average, could afford to buy a bigger U.S. car. Says Ronald Saracco, Sales Manager of Manhattan's Fine Cars Inc.: 'A sort of reverse appeal has now given more prestige to the small foreign car'…"

***TIME,* March 31, 1958**

"…While all U.S. car sales are down about 25% this year, sales of small foreign cars reached 200,000 last year, a gain of 110% over 1956, and they are expected to continue rising in 1958. Detroit automakers do not believe that there is a big U.S. market for small cars, consider their popularity a fad that is about at its peak. Some foreign-car dealers agree. Says Albert E. Birt, President of Manhattan's Hambro Automotive Corp., which sold 24,000 British cars in the U.S. last year: 'The imported-car market might increase to 300,000, but I ca-n't believe it will go beyond that'…"

***TIME,* March 31, 1958**

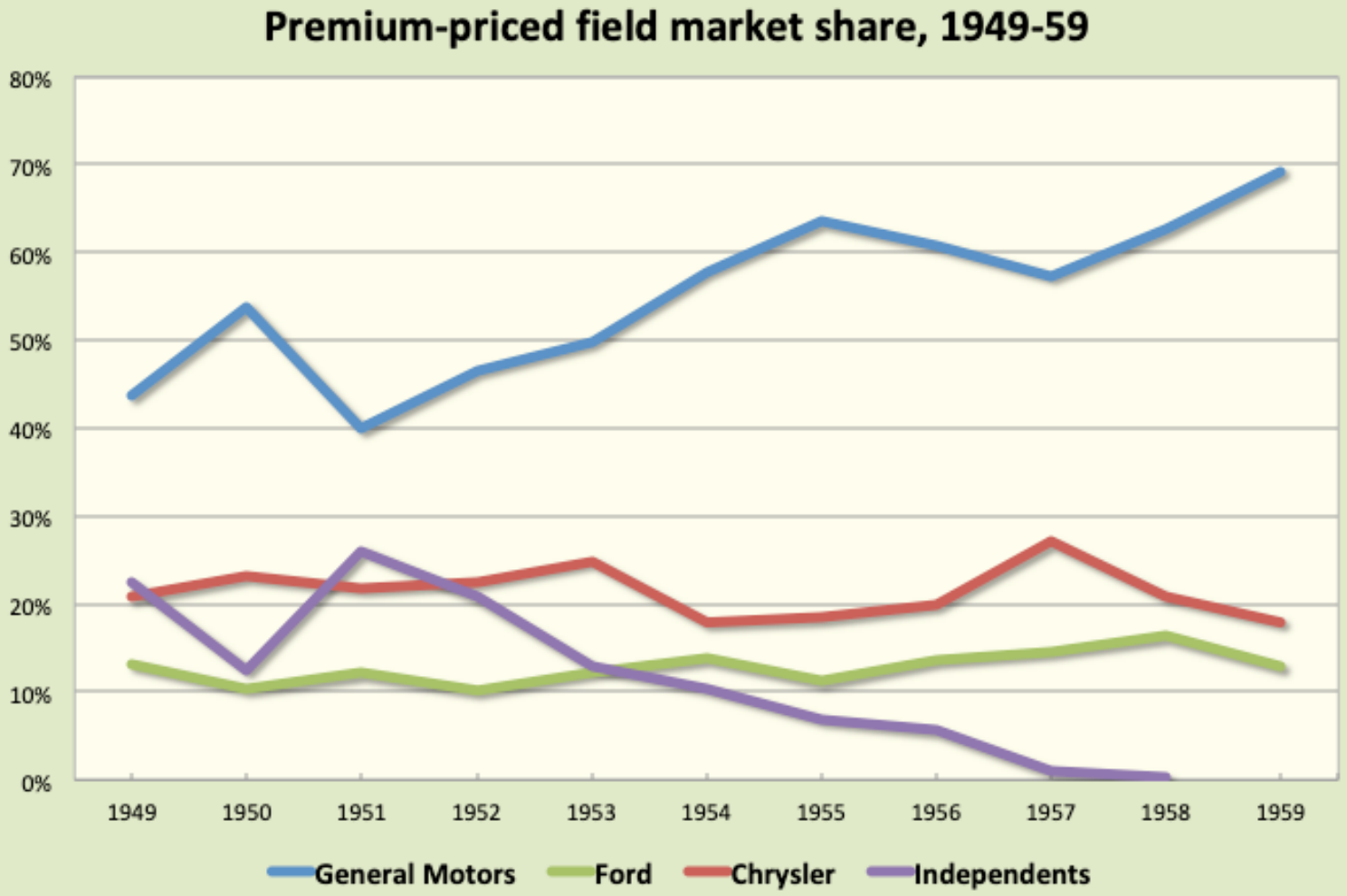
"…Does the popularity of foreign cars, plus the upgrading of Ford, Chevrolet and Plymouth, leave an opening for a U.S.-made small car? Automakers say that the potential market would have to reach at least 500,000 before they would consider producing one. They have solid evidence that a small U.S. car would cost little less than present low-priced U.S. models since the cost of labor, advertising and marketing would be the same. They also point-out that the U.S. buyer can already buy a low-priced U.S. model with no accessories for only a little more than a foreign car…"

***TIME,* March 31, 1958**

"…For such reasons, the small-car boom worries Detroit less than the decline of the middle-priced car. Since its beginning, the U.S. auto industry has narrowed from more than 2,000 different automobiles to 17 makes turned out by five major companies that produce 96% of all cars sold in the U.S. In the future, many of the overlapping models produced by the big five may also disappear."

***TIME,* March 31, 1958**

RE: the purpose of the Edsel Division was to increase FMC's presence in the premium-price field, which had lagged in third place behind Chrysler Corp. For 1958, FMC's market share of that field did grow to what was then a peak of 16.3%. However, by 1959 it fell to 12.8%. That was even below the 13.6% the automaker had hit in 1956, which was the year before it began its expansion effort. It might be suggested that FMC did get closer to Chrysler's market share by the end of the decade. However, that was primarily because Chrysler saw its premium-priced output fall by 49% from 1957-59.


Premium-priced field market share, 1949-59
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
1949
1950
1951
1952
1953
1954
1955
1956
1957
1958
1959
General Motors
Ford
Chrysler
Independents

One wonders, however, whether the recession itself is not partly to be blamed on the car-makers who, in defiance of all rational consumer interests—economy, convenience, safety, maneuverability, and beauty—have been trying to foist upon the *majority* of the public fabulously overpriced jukeboxes such as only people of deprived origins or the neurotic would want to buy and only the prosperous can afford to maintain. What I objected to in the cars of 1957, and what I still object to in 1958, is the assumption apparently held by car-makers—an assumption revealed in the 200-plus h.p. engines and the tail-fins and the space-ship platforms with which they have equipped the lowest-priced and most popular cars, the Ford, Plymouth, and Chevrolet—that *the majority of the population is mentally ill.*

THE TROUBLE with car manufacturers (who, like other isolated people in underdeveloped areas, are devout believers in voodoo) is that they have been listening too long to the motivation research people. Motivation researchers are those harlot social scientists who, in impressive psychoanalytic and/or sociological jargon, tell their clients what their clients want to hear, namely, that *appeals to human irrationality are likely to be far more profitable than appeals to rationality.* This doctrine appeals to moguls and would-be moguls of all times and places, because it implies that if you hold the key to people's irrationality, you can exploit and diddle them to your heart's content and be loved for it.

The Great Gimmick of the motivation researchers, therefore, is the investigation of irrationality, of which we all have, goodness knows, an abundance.

many people (perhaps most) Have sexual anxieties and fears of impotence, as the motivation researchers say. Many upward-strivers (most, I am sure) like to impress their neighbors with the display of costly status symbols. Many people (surely not most!) allay their feelings of inadequacy with space-ship fantasies.

But what the motivation researchers, many of whom call themselves Freudians, do not bother to investigate, since it is too obvious, is rationality—or what Freud called the reality principle.[4] Father may indeed see a bright-red convertible as a surrogate mistress and the hardtop as a combination wife-and-mistress,[5] but he settles for a lesser car than either because Chrissie is going to an orthodontist. Doug, in his secret fantasies, screams along the track of the Mille Miglia at 200 m.p.h., but in actuality, especially when his wife and children are with him, he never drives above 55. Andy's dreams are crowded with jet-propulsion themes which clearly mark him as haunted by feelings of sexual inadequacy, but on his $85-a-week salary he cannot be snow-jobbed into a conviction that his self-respect requires him to maintain a car that swallows $6 worth of gasoline every 200 miles and costs $100 to repair every time his fender is dented.

What the motivation researchers failed to tell their clients (perhaps because they hadn't thought of it themselves) is that *only* the psychotic and the gravely neurotic *act out* their irrationalities and their compensatory fantasies—and it is because they act them out that we classify them as mentally ill. The rest of us—the mildly neurotic and the mature, who together constitute the majority (among whom I make bold to include myself)—are reasonably well oriented to reality. We do not indulge our fantasies unless it is socially and psychologically safe to do so (as in taking fencing lessons or marching in regalia in a Shriners' parade) and within our financial means (as in reading paperback murder mysteries).

Motivation researchers seem not to know the difference between the sane and the unsane. Having learned through their "depth" techniques that we all have our irrationalities (no great discovery at this date), they fatuously conclude that we are equally governed by those irrationalities at *all* levels of consumer expenditure—although it doesn't take a social science genius to point out that the more expensive an object is, the more its purchase compels the recognition of reality. The fact that irrationalities may drive people from Pall Mall cigarettes to Marlboro or vice versa proves little about what the average person is likely to do in selecting the most expensive object (other than a house) that he ever buys.

THE TROUBLE with selling symbolic gratification via such expensive items as the Phallic Ford, the Edsel Hermaphrodite, and the Plymouth with the Rear-End Invitation is the competition offered by much cheaper forms of symbolic gratification, such as *Playboy* (50 cents a copy), *Astounding Science Fiction* (35 cents a copy), and television (free). When, on the advice of their voodoo men, auto-makers abandon their basic social function of providing better, safer, and more efficient means of transportation in favor of entering the business of selling dreams (in which the literary and entertainment industries have far more experience and resources), they cannot but encounter competition which they are not equipped to meet.

The consumer rush to the little foreign cars does not appear to me a passing fad, although Detroit is trying to reassure itself by saying that the foreign-car trend has reached its peak. The Morris Minor, the English Fords, the Hillman, the Simca, the Volkswagen, the Volvo, the Fiat, and all the other lovely little bugs that we see today in increasing numbers are cheap to operate. As for what they "communicate," they give out simple, unassuming messages devoid of delusions of grandeur. Their popularity indicates a widespread reassertion of an orientation towards reality, which says that $1600 is less than $2800, that 30 miles per gallon is cheaper transportation than 8 to 13 miles per gallon, that a 155" Renault is easier to park than a 214" Dodge. The very people who are writing the ads for Plymouth, Ford, and Chevrolet are driving DKW's, MG's, and Triumphs, while their bosses, the agency heads, ride around in Jaguars and Bentleys. It will take the American auto industry five years, if not a decade or two, to regain the respect and confidence of their best friend, the American consumer.

Now that American auto-makers, with hundreds of thousands of unsold cars on their hands, are in such deep trouble, you would think that they would turn away in disgust from the voodoo men who gave them such a bum steer. But they are slow to learn. *Consumer Reports* (April, 1958) quotes as follows from *The Wall Street Journal:* "Ford Motor has called on the Institute for Motivational Research to find out why Americans buy foreign economy cars."

Although the answer is right there in the question, I am sure that the Institute for Motivational Research is not so stupid as to point out this fact to the Ford Motor Company. I foresee, therefore, years of prosperity ahead for the Institute for Motivational Research, for Social Research, Inc., and all the other Shamans of the Hard Sell. But will Ford be able to survive another round of good advice such as they got on the Edsel?

Notations

[1] See Vance Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders* (New York: David McKay, 1957), pp. 127-129; also Chapter VIII, "The Built-in Sexual Overtone."

[2] Phrase coined by Luther Asbury of Mill Valley, California.

[3] "After psychiatric probing a Midwestern ad agency concluded that a major appeal of buying a shiny new and more powerful car every couple of years is that 'it gives him (the buyer) a renewed sense of power and reassures him of his masculinity.'" Packard, p. 79.

[4] "But what about those consumer-motivation studies . . .? The trouble here seems to have been the elemental mistake on which research can founder—failure to ask questions which elicit meaningful replies. For example, the Ford Motor Company asked no questions at all about: car prices, cost of upkeep, cost of operation, rising insurance rates, growing difficulty in parking, irritation at cars too long for garages, etc. In fact, the consumer research program . . . completely ignored automobiles as functioning machines of transportation." *Consumer Reports*, April, 1958, p. 218.

[5] Packard, p. 87.

Ten Reasons Why

Had Edsel survived longer than three model years, we'd be savoring birthday cake topped with 60 candles on September 4. That's the day, in 1957, when Americans got their first look at the highly anticipated Edsel lineup; a promotion television show would follow about five weeks later. But what Ford Motor Company promoted as "the car of the future" instead became the poster child for commercial failure. The Edsel's appearance usually gets the blame for the brand's failure. That didn't help, but there's more to the story. Looking back, it's clear that the deck was stacked against Edsel. What follows are 10 reasons why the program crashed and burned in only 24 months.

***hagerty.com,* August 30, 2017**

RE: introduction to an article written by *Don Sherman* entitled: "10 Reasons Why the Ford Edsel Floundered"

Bad Timing

"ECONOMIC recession beset the U.S. only a few weeks after Edsel's launch. At least five other upscale brands – De Soto, Hudson, Nash, Packard, and Studebaker - would succumb as buyer preferences shifted smartly toward economy cars. During the late 1950s, Volkswagen's Beetle gained momentum thanks to its cuteness, cheap price and exemplary fuel economy…"

***hagerty.com,* August 30, 2017**

Insufficient Market Research

"…New Edsels were shipped to dealers sealed under wraps to heighten the surprise on announcement day. Ford conducted virtually no test marketing with actual consumers to bolster its conviction that this was the right car at right time. That mistake ended-up costing the company $250-million, which is the equivalent of 10 times that amount in 21st-century dollars…"

***hagerty.com,* August 30, 2017**

Confusing Pricing

"…The new Edsel Division was part of Ford's grand plan to expand its business into five distinct operating units. In addition to Edsel, the Ford, Mercury, Lincoln and Continental brands each had separate sales and marketing organizations. The intention was for Edsel to slip neatly between Ford and Mercury. Unfortunately, the gap between the most expensive Ford and the cheapest Mercury was only $136, much too narrow for the four Edsel series launched for 1958 to enjoy any elbow room, particularly after optional equipment was factored-in. Customers inevitably suffering sticker shock sought refuge in well-established brands and more sensible pricing structures. In essence, Edsel's most direct competition was Ford and Mercury cars…"

***hagerty.com*, August 30, 2017**

Shaky Dealer Organization

"…The Edsel retail organization initially consisted of 1,187 exclusive dealers, part of Ford's effort to match Chrysler's 10,000-dealer count while moving closer to GM's 16,000 retail stores. When the Edsels proved tough to sell, many dealers folded or added Ford or Mercury lines to stay afloat. The parent organization left these businesses in the lurch with insufficient marketing and promotional help to move the metal…"
***hagerty.com,* August 30, 2017**

Lack of Distinction From Other Ford Motor Co. Models

"…While Edsels did introduce a few innovative features – such as the 'Teletouch' automatic transmission shifter positioned at the center of the steering wheel - most chassis and powertrain components were similar to hardware sold throughout the Blue Oval Empire. Since they were built in existing Ford or Mercury assembly plants, no valid claims could be made about superior craftsmanship…"

***hagerty.com,* August 30, 2017**

Quality and Reliability Issues

"…Surveyed owners compiled a laundry list of problems, including faulty welds, leaky trunks, and power steering failure. The complex 'Teletouch' shifter was a service nightmare, in part because control wires were routed too close to hot exhaust system parts. Because assembly workers had to use different tools to install some parts distinct from mainstream Ford and Mercury models, it was common practice for dealers to receive unfinished Edsels with the disparate parts chucked in the trunk. Like every all-new car, start-up issues were inevitable during the initial manufacturing months…"
***hagerty.com*, August 30, 2017**

Exterior Design

"…Edsel design Chief Roy A. Brown intended the vertical grille feature to be much more slender than what resulted in production. Engineers enlarged his grille, insisting that the original design wouldn't have delivered sufficient cooling air to the radiator. The resulting shape was commonly called the horse-collar, an Oldsmobile sucking a lemon and a toilet seat…"

***hagerty.com,* August 30, 2017**



"…Improvements were made for the second model year and the vertical grille was replaced with a horizontal motif for the third year, ironically resembling a 1959 Pontiac…" 1450

***hagerty.com,* August 30, 2017**



1959 Pontiac Bonneville

Corporate Discord

"…Ford's Executive Vice-President, Ernest Breech, in essence the Edsel's father, convinced the company's top management that upscale midsize models would succeed based on early 1950s market research and a thriving U.S. economy. Chairman Henry Ford II was nervous about risking his father's good name with a model venturing into uncharted waters, yet the Edsel label was approved in his absence. Robert McNamara, responsible for keeping Ford financially on-track, counseled against so many sales divisions, the Edsel's mechanical distinctions and the new car's promotion and advertising budget. When the E-car didn't fly, he was the first to recommend pulling the plug to avoid deeper losses. The pity is that the brilliant Lee Iacocca's attention was focused elsewhere. Had he provided his astute sense of customer wants and needs, the Edsel program might have fared better…"

***hagerty.com*, August 30, 2017**

The ‘Forward Look’

"…At Chrysler, designer Virgil Exner shifted the entire lineup in a new aircraft-inspired direction called the 'Forward Look,' beginning with 1955 models. By 1957, Plymouth, Dodge, De Soto and Chrysler tail fins, roof lines and overall proportions were the envy of the industry. Even GM was caught in a cat-ch-up game that yielded wild designs across its entire lineup for the 1959 model year. It's little wonder that the homely Ed-sel was swamped by the tidal wave of more attractive designs when it came to the market in the fall of 1957…"

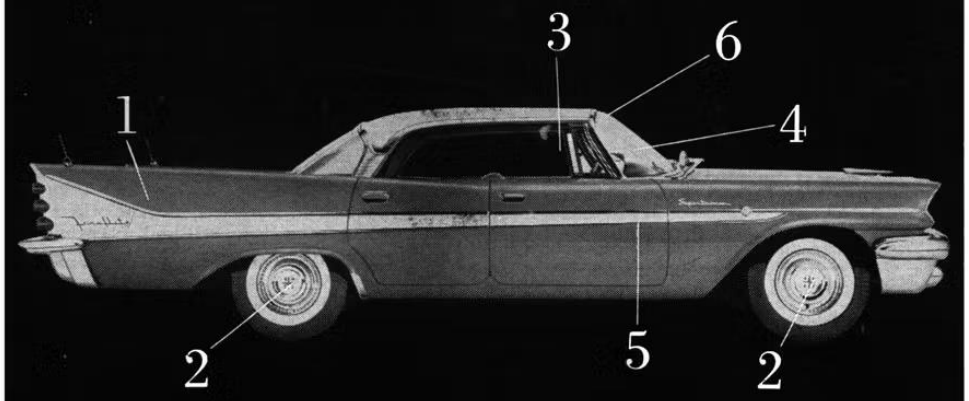
***hagerty.com,* August 30, 2017**

RE: the *Forward Look* era, which spanned from the late 1950s to the early 1960s, was a pivotal period in the automotive industry. This was especial-ly true for Chrysler Corporation and its brands: Chrysler, De Soto, Dodge and Plymouth. Led by visionary designer Virgil Exner, this era marked a bold departure from the conservative designs of the past. It embraced futuristic styling and innovative engineering. During this time, cars were more than just transportation, rather, they were symbols of prog-ress, prosperity and the American dream.



Virgil Exner, the creative force behind Chrysler's *Forward Look*, chose to defy conventional automotive design. His goal was to create cars that were not only visually striking but also reflected the optimism and energy of the era. Under his guidance, Chrysler released groundbreaking designs that captivated car enthusiasts worldwide. One of the most iconic features of the *Forward Look* cars was their sleek, aerodynamic profiles. Exner included elements such as dramatic tail-fins, sweeping contours and bold chrome accents. These design choices gave the cars a futuristic appearance while improving aerodynamics and stability at high speeds.

THE ADVANCE DESIGN OF THE *FORWARD* LOOK



WHY IT IS SO RIGHT • WHY IT MEANS SUCH VALUE FOR YOU

In just 12 months more than one million people bought new cars of The *Forward* Look. And nearly *half a million* switched to them from other makes of car. Their reasons? They're finding more that's new . . . more that's right . . . than they find anywhere else.

1 **Take, for example, the rightness of style—the dart-shape of motion.** No other design contributes so much to performance. Even cuts steering corrections in cross-winds as much as 20%!

2 **There's the wonderful difference of Torsion-Aire Ride.** It's America's one new completely different, completely proved system of suspension. So right it prevents starting squat, braking dip, lean on curves. *Yours at no extra cost* in every Plymouth, Dodge, De Soto, Chrysler, Imperial.

3 **Pushbutton TorqueFlite — A "first" and so right** — found only in cars of The *Forward* Look. Reliable, mechanically-linked control buttons, placed safely at the driver's left. Plus *full control* of automatic transmission with *two* extra selector buttons for such conditions as mud or snow, for downhill engine braking, for flexibility in traffic and up steep hills.

4 **New Constant-Control Power Steering makes a wonderful difference, too.** It works the right way—full time, not part time. Pioneered by Chrysler Corporation, it takes the work out of steering, yet gives you full control, wonderful new "feel" of the road.

5 **Your toe works less, the brakes do more, with Total-Contact braking.** The difference here is big and right: quicker straight-line stops with up to 25% less pedal pressure; longer lining life, and only cars of The *Forward* Look have two cylinders working each front brake.

6 **You see up to 50% better** with Control Tower windshields that sweep back into the roofline to let you look *up* as well as out. With safety glass all around, of course. The "all outdoors" feeling comes true again in the roominess we give you inside. More, model for model, than any other makes of car!

But the rightness goes further! In every great engineering achievement, in every fine detail of styling, in the total design and total *value* of these cars. It's simply a matter of giving you more for what you pay. But don't just look at a great '58 of The *Forward* Look—drive around, and discover the rightness for yourself!

CHRYSLER CORPORATION ➤ **THE *FORWARD* LOOK**

PLYMOUTH • DODGE • DESOTO • CHRYSLER • IMPERIAL

1 **Take, for example, the rightness of style—the dart-shape of motion.** No other design contributes so much to performance. Even cuts steering corrections in cross-winds as much as 20%!

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Chained to Dealers' Showroom Floors

"…The 1958 Edsel lineup consisted of 18 models in four series and six body styles built on two wheelbases. Unfortunately, demand was less than one-third of what Ford Executives expected. Worse, sales figures dropped 29 percent for the 1959 model year. Adequate power was not the problem. The top 410-cubic-inch (6.7-liter) V-8, rated at 345-horsepower (gross), provided competitive acceleration but insufficient urge to snap the imaginary restraints holding Edsels securely in-place at dealer showrooms…"

***hagerty.com*, August 30, 2017**



1958 Edsel Pacer four-door sedan

1460

Legacy



"…Four Edsel nameplates - Citation, Ranger, Pacer and Villager - were subsequently recycled. Edsel owners and collectors are passionate for the brand that most consumers shunned…"

***hagerty.com,* August 30, 2017**

<u>Above</u>: 1958 Edsel Corsair 2-door Hardtop



"…Rare models - such as the 1960 Ranger Deluxe four-door hardtop (only 31 made) - command top dollar when they trade hands…"

***hagerty.com,* August 30, 2017**

1463

<u>Caption</u>: "One of only 275 2-door Edsel Ranger hardtops built for 1960"





End Game

"…Approximately 116,000 Edsels were built and sold for the 1958-60 model years. After Ford announced production would cease, used values plummeted so fast that disgruntled owners were given rebate vouchers worth $300-$400 dollars. Looking at Edsel with 60 years hindsight, it's clear that no single tactical error can be blamed for the brand's quick demise. Rather, a perfect storm of overwhelming adversity sank this ship."

***hagerty.com*, August 30, 2017**

Symbol of Failure

The Edsel: Forty Years as a Symbol of Failure

TOM DICKE

NO AUTOMOBILE HAS BEEN SO WIDELY ANTICIPATED AND SO QUICKLY rejected as the Ford Edsel. Within two months of its highly publicized launch on September 4, 1957 the Edsel became a rolling joke. By the time the last car, a beige six-passenger Villager station wagon, rolled off the line on November 20, 1959 the word "Edsel" had become convenient shorthand for any massive and embarrassingly public failure. In the nearly two generations since that day millions who have never seen the car have recognized the name and image as a synonym for failure. In actuality, however, the Edsel, while undeniably unpopular, was, at most, an ambiguous failure.

Accounts of the Edsel give a variety of reasons why it failed but essentially they all come down to consumer apathy: The Edsel failed because consumers did not buy it. While true as far as it goes, this version of events is misleading because it assumes that Ford wanted the Edsel to succeed (Bonsall; Daines). In reality, however, Ford terminated the Edsel largely because shortly before Ford introduced the car a change in leadership brought a change in corporate strategy that made the Edsel irrelevant to Ford Motor Company's (FMCs) long-range plans. As a result, when it floundered on launch Ford's top management made no serious effort to salvage the Edsel program. Given that Ford's Executive Committee shifted their strategy before they introduced the Edsel and they did so because they considered the program unnecessary, not because they believed the car would be unpopular, then Edsel's status as an icon for failure is undeserved. In actuality, the Edsel is most accurately remembered not as a product failure but as a powerful example of the potential hazards of strategic waffling.

Magnificent Ambition

Ford had big ambitions for Edsel. Unfortunately, they were too big.

***roadandtrack.com,* January 23, 2017**

RE: introduction to an article written by *Chris Perkins* entitled: "The Edsel Proved Why You Should Never Design a Car by Committee"

DOA

"FORD in the 1950s was nothing if not ambitious. Unfortunately, this ambition gave birth to the Edsel, whose name became synonymous with abject corporate failure after the nascent brand was killed in 1959…"

***roadandtrack.com,* January 23, 2017**

A Cautionary Tale

"…The Edsel's short history makes a fascinating cautionary tale for anyone in business - not just the car industry…"
***roadandtrack.com,* January 23, 2017**

A Great Listen

"…Our pals at 'Regular Car Reviews' got into the history of Edsel in a new documentary podcast. It's a great listen for anyone interested in the car business…"

***roadandtrack.com,* January 23, 2017**

The Whiz Kids

"…Under the leadership of Henry Ford II, the Ford Motor Company hired some of the brightest minds in America as Executives. This group, dubbed the 'Whiz Kids,' wanted to increase Ford's market share in the U.S. with a new brand to slot between Ford and Mercury…"

***roadandtrack.com,* January 23, 2017**

Settling

"…Only trouble is, they couldn't come up with a good name. After literally thousands of names were suggested, they eventually settled on 'Edsel,' the first name of Henry Ford's son, Henry II's father – 'settled' being the key word here..."
***roadandtrack.com*, January 23, 2017**

Lack of Vision

"…They threw lots of new technology at the Edsel too, but no one really had a clear vision for what the car was supposed to be. To make matters worse, the first Edsels built were plagued with production problems, enraging dealers. The public didn't really understand this bizarrely-styled, badly-named, poorly-conceived car either. …"

***roadandtrack.com*, January 23, 2017**

The Edsel’s Demise

"…Whatever small chance of success the Edsel had when it debuted in 1958 was killed by an economic recession. To their credit, Ford Executives realized how much of a failure they had on their hands, killing the Edsel brand at the end of 1959…"

***roadandtrack.com,* January 23, 2017**

"…Bad circumstances played a big role in the Edsel's demise, but in hindsight, it seems the car was doomed from the start. Ford had a wealth of smart Executives at the time, but with too many hands working on the Edsel, the project had no direction…"

***roadandtrack.com,* January 23, 2017**

Design by Committee

“A Camel is a Horse designed by a committee”
Ancient Proverb

"…It's no coincidence that world's most successful cars - the Model T, the Beetle, the Mini and others - were conceived by individuals or small groups. The more people working on a car, the more its intent gets muddied. Even if you have the brightest, best-intentioned minds in the business."

***roadandtrack.com,* January 23, 2017**

Stayin’ Alive

Not So Fast

Automotive Historian Thomas E. Bonsall argued that the 1958 Edsel wasn't a flop. Indeed, he insisted that the Ford Motor Company shouldn't have given up on the brand so quickly.

***indieauto.org,* April 26, 2025**

RE: introduction to an article entitled: "Should the Ford Motor Company Have Kept the Edsel Alive?

A Modest Success

"THE 'real failure in the Edsel saga' had little to do with the car itself, Bonsall insisted in his book, 'Disaster in Dearborn: The Story of the Edsel.' Instead, Ford management failed to recognize that the 1958 models were 'actually a modest success that deserved continued support'…"

***indieauto.org,* April 26, 2025**

"…'In terms of market penetration, [the Edsel] fell solidly within the range of what it was supposed to do and can hardly be faulted for the general, temporary deterioration in the market,' Bonsall argued. The Edsel held five percent of the premium-priced field, which was 'almost identical to the market segment penetration the Mercury had achieved in 1939 in its maiden year'…"

***indieauto.org,* April 26, 2025**

Bonsall Says Comet Could Have Saved Edsel

"…'There are more than a few industry observers who remain convinced that the Edsel would have made it if the company had just hung in there,' Bonsall wrote. 'Instead, Ford Motor Company turned a potential silk purse into a certain sow's ear and let it go down in the record books as the greatest automotive marketing disaster of all time. Persistence would have involved risk and some pain, but hardly more pain than that caused by the actual fiasco'…"

***indieauto.org,* April 26, 2025**



"…Bonsall argued that the Edsel might have been successful if it had been kept alive long enough for the Comet to be introduced later in the 1960 model year. The larger version of the compact Falcon had originally been planned as a junior Edsel…"

***indieauto.org,* April 26, 2025**

RE: born as an Edsel, FMC's *Comet* compact was first marketed as a stand-alone brand for two years before it ultimately joined the Mercury lineup.

<u>Above</u>: 1960 Comet – rear view


Comet
America's newest compact car
styled like a fine car—
priced with or below other compacts

1500

Two Choices

"…Whether you agree with Bonsall's take may depend upon whether you think that: 1) the Edsel brand was salvageable and, 2) whether Ford needed two premium-priced brands."
***indieauto.org,* April 26, 2025**

Part 16

The Eye of the Beholder

Looking Good (?)

A recent study found that more than 20 percent of videos recommended to new *YouTube* viewers were low-quality content made from artificial intelligence (Down, 2025). This aligns with my anecdotal sense that there has been a boomlet in "AI slop" devoted to automotive history. Thus, I find it refreshing to come across a video that compares favorably with some of the better-written histories.

***indieauto.org,* December 31, 2025**

RE: introduction to an article entitled: "Did the 1958 Edsel Look Good – Especially Compared to GM's Cars?

Is it Ugly?



"CONSIDER the Hubcap Club's (2025) recent episode on the 1958 Edsel, which asked: 'Is it ugly?' The YouTube channel's host, Rob, stated that he 'once thought 1958 Edsels were ugly,' but realized that his 'opinion was poisoned by the majority opinion…"

1507

***indieauto.org,* December 31, 2025**

Sea Change



"…I had never taken a really objective look at the car. After viewing it with fresh eyes, I now think it looks pretty good - especially compared to some of GM's 1958 monstro-sities'…"

1509

***indieauto.org*, December 31, 2025**


1510

Informed Thought



"…Rob's thinking was informed by the designers' rationale for the Edsel's styling. The car's most distinguishing feature - its vertical grille - was intended to be easily recognizable from a distance…"

***indieauto.org,* December 31, 2025**

<u>Caption</u>: "1958 Edsel Citation two-door hardtop"

Lowering the Bar

"…I can't find fault in the quality of Rob's thorough research about the Edsel's development. However, I would beg to differ that the car looked good. It may have been less awful than competing cars from General Motors, but that was not a terribly difficult threshold to cross. Nineteen-fifty-eight was a particularly bad year for American automobile design…"
***indieauto.org,* December 31, 2025**

The 1958 Edsel Does Have its Defenders



"…We should acknowledge that Rob's take has support. Historian Thomas E. Bonsall argued that the car's styling was 'far from bad.' Indeed, it had a 'high-degree of unity and integrity to it - far more, in fact, than many 'successful' cars of that era.' He suggested that the Edsel 'may have been the best-looking car built by the Ford Motor Company' in 1958 besides the Thunderbird…"

***indieauto.org*, December 31, 2025**

FORD° PRESENTS THE 4-PASSENGER

THUNDERBIRD



AMERICA'S MOST INDIVIDUAL CAR

"…To bolster his case, Bonsall quoted GM designer David Holls: 'I thought it a very imaginative car, not laughable at all. It was controversial, brash. But, you couldn't run with the flock or you wouldn't have anything'…"
***indieauto.org*, December 31, 2025**



"…Given the difficulties of launching a new car brand, it made sense to try to stand out from the crowd. And as Rob shows in in his video, Packard had also been experimenting with vertical grilles. They showed up on some concept cars as well as a stillborn 1957 production model…"

***indieauto.org,* December 31, 2025**

<u>Above</u>: the 1956 Packard *Predictor,* a concept car built by Ghia, was created to drum-up some interest in the Packard brand, which was waning


1520



"…I would even agree that the Edsel did have some decent lines - at least in the lower-priced series. As the banner photo illustrates, the more rounded door sheet-metal that these Edsels shared with the Ford gave them a more lithe appearance than their higher-priced siblings. The latter shared boxier door sheet-metal with the Mercury…"

***indieauto.org,* December 31, 2025**

<u>Caption</u>: "1958 Edsel Pacer 2-door hardtop"



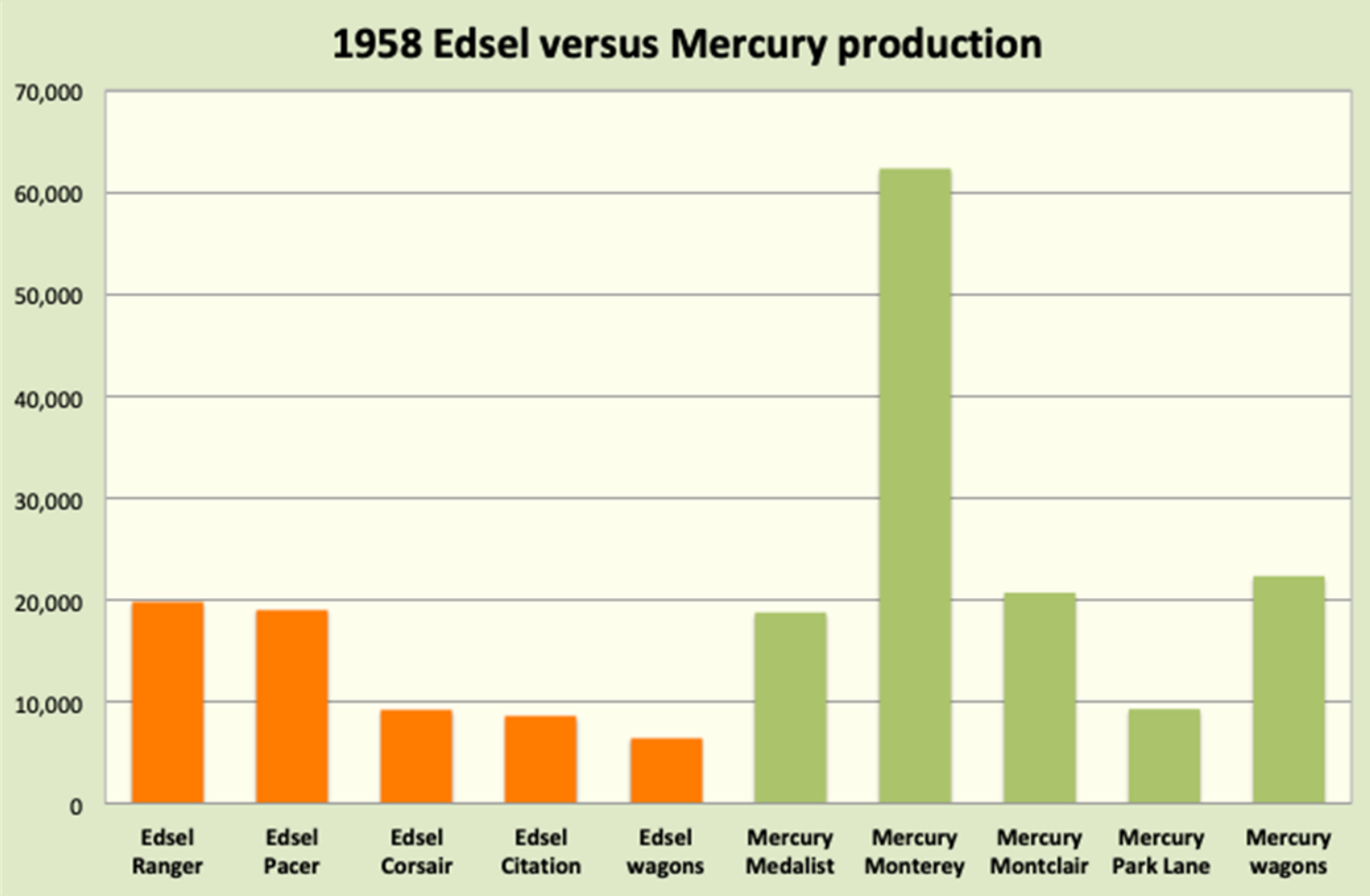
The Edsel was priced somewhat below the premium-priced Mercury – whose top-end models had moved substantially upmarket since 1956. For 1959, the Edsel's high-end models were discontinued and the brand focused on the entry-level, premium-priced market niche that Mercury had previously occupied.

<u>Caption</u>: "1959 Edsel Ranger 2-door hardtop"


List prices for Edsel and Mercury, 1958-59
EDSEL
Ranger
Pacer
Corsair
Citation
Wagons
MERCURY
Medalist
Monterey
Montclair
Park Lane
Wagons
$2,400
$2,600
$2,800
$3,000
$3,200
$3,400
$3,600
$3,800
$4,000
$4,200
1958
1959



The only 1958 Edsel series that managed to outsell its Mercury counterpart was the entry-level *Ranger,* which almost hit 20K units - roughly 1K units more than the *Medalist.* However, Mercury's *Monterey* series came within 1K units of outselling the entire Edsel lineup.


1958 Edsel versus Mercury production
70,000
60,000
50,000
40,000
30,000
20,000
10,000
0
Edsel Ranger
Edsel Pacer
Edsel Corsair
Edsel Citation
Edsel wagons
Mercury Medalist
Mercury Monterey
Mercury Montclair
Mercury Park Lane
Mercury wagons

Yes, But the Devil is in the Details. . .



"…A vertical grille could have worked okay with better proportions. Rob noted that the designers' job was made more difficult by Engineers insisting that the grille be widened for more air intake. Perhaps, but an alternative solution was to shrink the grille so that it better fit the shape of a late-50s American car…"

***indieauto.org,* December 31, 2025**



<u>Above</u>: arguably, the Edsel's vertical grille would have looked better if it had been smaller. The bumper was would have also benefitted from a more conventional shape that curved inward at the bottom.



"…Meanwhile, the bumper's massive concave shape made the fascia look too tall. In addition, the bumper protruded so far forward of the side grilles that it had a bucktoothed quality…"

***indieauto.org*, December 31, 2025**



"…Another weakness of the Edsel's styling was that the tail-lights were positioned so high on the deck that they made the rear of the car both ponderous and overly plain…" 1530

***indieauto.org,* December 31, 2025**

A Better Approach



"…The 1959 models used a better approach, which was to move the tail-lights into the middle of the deck…"

***indieauto.org*, December 31, 2025** 1532

RE: both the 1958 and '59 Edsels had a prominent rear brow, but the tail-lights were handled in a substantially different manner


CLEVELAND
SSY 753
1959 EDSEL
© EDSEL OWNERS CLUB ©
USA
1533

"…These kind of changes may have made the Edsel less 'brash,' but they also might have reduced the potential for the public to turn against the car. Of course, no matter how well the Edsel's styling was received, the brand might have still faltered due to a variety of other issues. They included quality-control problems, a recession and a public tilt toward smaller, more economical cars."

***indieauto.org,* December 31, 2025**

RE: the 1958 Edsel's weak sales could be blamed on a recession that hurt the whole premium-priced field, but Mercury rebounded by 26% in 1959 whereas the Edsel dropped 29%. The only other premium brand whose output also fell that year was De Soto; but it still managed to slightly outsell the Edsel. The Edsel sold so poorly that it was killed early in the 1960 model year after a grand total of roughly +110K were built. The brand's peak year was in 1958, when slightly more than 63K cars left the factory. That was less than half as many cars as Mercury produced but more than De Soto and Studebaker. Even the Chrysler brand's output was only 600 units higher than the Edsel's.

Part 17

Edsel Timeline

July 30, 1863: Henry Ford is born.

April 11, 1888: Henry marries Clara J. Bryant.

November 6, 1893: Edsel Bryant Ford is born.

June 16, 1903: Ford Motor Company is founded.

August 1, 1916: Edsel Ford marries Eleanor Lowthian Clay.

September 4, 1917: Henry Ford II is born to Edsel & Eleanor.

January 1, 1919: Edsel Ford becomes President of the Ford Motor Co.

September 17, 1919: Henry & Edsel become sole owners of the Ford Motor Co.

May 26, 1943: Edsel Ford dies.

September 21, 1945: Henry Ford II becomes President of Ford Motor Co.

September 28, 1948: Henry Ford II tells his Forward Product Planning Committee to begin research on production of a new medium-priced car.

June 1950: The outbreak of the Korean War puts the new car plans on hold.

October 13, 1952: Wayne, Michigan, manufacturing plant opened.

July 7, 1954: The new car program is given to stylists for long-range planning.

December 6, 1954: The Planning Committee presents details of the program to the Ford Administrative Committee.

January 10, 1955: The Planning Committee presents its formal presentation to Ford's Executive Committee.

April 15, 1955: Ford's Executive Committee votes favorably on adding a new line of medium-priced cars and to create a separate division based on GM's Buick line. The car is referred to as the "E-car," for Experimental.

April 18, 1955: The "Special Products Division" is formally established.

May 1, 1955: J.C. (Larry) Doyle is named General Sales & Marketing Manager of the Special Products Division.

August 15, 1955: The E-car designers unveil the first full-size clay mock-up to Henry Ford II and the Planning Committee. An uncharacteristic round of applause comes from the audience.

September 29, 1955: Mahwah, New Jersey, manufacturing plant is dedicated.

October 18, 1955: Louisville, Kentucky, manufacturing plant is dedicated.

October 19, 1955: After having problems determining a suitable name for the E-car, renowned poet Marianne Moore is approached to submit inspirational names.

November 7, 1955: Marianne Moore began to offer her list of names, which included such notables as: “Resilient Bullet,” “Ford Silver Sword,” “Mongoose Civique,” “Varsity Stroke,” “Pastelogram” and “Andante con Moto.”

December 8, 1955: Miss Moore submitted her last candidate: "Utopian Turtletop.”

December 1955: Fairfax Cone of the advertising agency Foote, Cone & Belding (FCB) presents his vision of the E-car's campaign to Ford.

January 17, 1956: Ford stock goes public.

February 13, 1956: FCB wins the E-car advertising account.

August 7, 1956: Five regional sales offices are established by Ford's Special Products Division to market the E-car.

August 15, 1956: Basic E-car sheet metal styling is approved.

October 10, 1956: Richard E. Krafve is elected Vice President of Ford Motor Co.

October 15, 1956: The selection of 24 district Sales Managers is made.

November 19, 1956: Ford announces the name of the new car: "Edsel." The Special Products Division becomes known as the Edsel Division of Ford Motor Co.

January 11, 1957: Ford announces that the design of the Edsel will be far more radical than any of its other products and that equally radical sales and marketing techniques will be used to promote it.

January 15, 1957: Sales goal for model year 1958 is set at 200K units.

January 21, 1957: Edsel GM Richard Krafve predicts “The new Edsel line of cars will surpass the originally announced first-year sales goal of 200K units.”

February 5, 1957: Ford releases the names and characteristics of each Edsel series.

February 15, 1957: Ford’s 25 millionth V-8 engine is produced, in Lima, Ohio. It is an Edsel E-475.

March 10, 1957: Ford announces five assembly plant locations where the Edsel will be produced, adding that a sixth plant, on the West Coast, is also planned.

April 9, 1957: The first Edsel dealership franchise agreements are signed.

April 15, 1957: Eight pre-production (pilot) model Edsels are built in Mahwah, NJ.

June 28, 1957: Approximately six pre-production (pilot) cars are built at the San Jose Ford plant.

July 15, 1957: Full-scale production of the 1958 Edsel begins.

July 22, 1957: The first Edsel advertising appeared, in *LIFE* magazine. The 2-page ads featured wrapped cars and blurred photos.

July 31, 1957: Month-end production totals 3,729 units.

August 27, 1957: Edsel Press introduction.

August 31, 1957: Month-end production totals 19,876 units.

September 4, 1957: E Day. The Edsel is finally introduced to the public after months of secrecy.

September 11, 1957: The Edsel is introduced in Canada.

September 30, 1957: Month-end production totals 18,815 units.

October 13, 1957: *The Edsel Show*, a one-hour special hosted by Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Louis Armstrong and Rosemary Clooney airs on CBS in place of the Sunday night fixture: *The Ed Sullivan Show*.

October 23, 1957: The short-lived Edsel sponsorship of TV's *Wagon Train* begins.

October 31, 1957: Month-end production totals 7,566 units.

November 21, 1957: Edsel dealers are shown a promotional telecast from the home office, with Henry Ford II stating "Gentleman, the Edsel is here to stay!"

November 30, 1957: Month-end production totals 2,483 units.

December 31, 1957: Month-end production totals 2,138 units.

January 14, 1958: Mercury-Edsel-Lincoln (M-E-L) Division is formed.

September 23, 1958: Production begins on the 1959 Edsel.

October 31, 1958: The 1959 Edsel line is introduced to the public.

January 31, 1959: Month-end production totals 5,880 units.

February 28, 1959: Month-end production totals 3,819 units.

March 31, 1959: Month-end production totals 4,035 units.

April 10, 1959: The Edsel advertising account is reassigned from Foote, Cone & Belding to Kenyon & Eckhardt.

April 25, 1959: M-E-L management reluctantly decides to go forward with the 1960 model Edsel.

April 30, 1959: Month-end production totals: 4,031 units.

May 31, 1959: Month-end production totals: 2,959 units.

June 30, 1959: Month-end production totals: 2,575 units.

July 31, 1959: Month-end production totals: 1,971 units.

August 7, 1959: The first 1960 Edsel pre-production (pilot) cars are built.

August 31, 1959: Month-end production totals 1,561 units.

September 14, 1959: Full-scale production begins on the 1960 model Edsel.

September 30, 1959: Month-end production totals 889 units.

October 15, 1959: The 1960 Edsel models are introduced to the public.

October 31, 1959: Month-end production totals 1,767 units.

November 19, 1959: Ford Motor Co. discontinues the Edsel.

November 21, 1959: The last Edsel magazine ad appears in the *Saturday Evening Post.*

November 30, 1959: Month-end production totals 190 units.

December 8, 1967: The first meeting of the Edsel Owners Club, in Oakland CA, takes place.

December 26, 1968: *The CBS Evening News* nationally airs Charles Kuralt's interview with members of the Edsel Owners Club.

February 3, 1969: The Edsel Owners Club is incorporated as a non-profit organization for the promotion and restoration of the Edsel automobile. The International Edsel Club is incorporated later the same year.

July 19, 1997: Edsel.com goes online.

December 23, 1997: The Edsel Club is incorporated as the third major non-profit Edsel preservation society.



1546

Part 18

Epilogue

Behind the Scenes

Behind the scenes of the automobile extravaganza that excited Detroit but left consumers apathetic
***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**
RE: introduction to an article entitled: "The Edsel Story"

The Full Monty

"IT took a reported $250-million to conceive, publicize, design, produce, distribute and advertise the Edsel, the new car added this year to the Ford Motor Company' family line of Ford, Mercury and Lincoln. All the publicity resources of the world's second largest auto manufacturer were tapped to glamorize the birth of this commercial prince…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

Heir Apparent

"…The Edsel was heralded as the heir to the accumulated engineering know-how of the past plus the latest wisdom to be gleaned from the new research techniques in the consumer-motivation field…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

Doubly Designed for Success

"…The Edsel, so the mountainous publicity ran, was therefore doubly designed for success. It was to be more than the best and newest car; in reality it was to be the embodiment of a dream of a car as well – a dream already existing in the minds of prospective buyers…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

The Dream Made Real

"…On September 4, 1957, after a year of intensive and elaborate build-up (in which no detail of the car was revealed) and better than a month before any other 1958 models were out, the public was finally invited in to see the dream made real…"
***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

The Pay-off

"…During that first month crowds flocked to the showrooms of the approximately 1,160 newly recruited Edsel dealers. The long-drawn-out publicity had paid-off: people were curious…"
***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

High Hopes

"…That first week the size of the crowds ballooned the dealers' already high hopes still higher. Before the end of the month, however, the bubble had collapsed. People looked, but they didn't buy…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

Wait and See

"…'They're simply waiting to see what the other makes will offer, they'll be back,' Edsel headquarters promised. But other October sales were below the disappointing September total, and November's were below October's (a 30-day inventory is held to be about the largest stock desirable)…"
***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

Giving Up the Ghost

"…Early in November, New York City's key Edsel dealer, Charles Kreisler, who had given up an Oldsmobile franchise to take on Edsel, gave up his new franchise, saying succinctly, 'the Ford Motor Company has laid an egg' (Kreisler is now selling Ramblers)…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

"CHARLES KREISLER, the only Edsel dealer in Manhattan, disclosed yesterday that he was giving-up his franchise. Mr. Kreisler, who switched from selling Oldsmobiles only three months ago to take on the new Ford Motor Company line, explained his decision by saying: 'We could not maintain enough volume on Edsel to make it profitable for an organization of our size.' When he quit Oldsmobile last summer 'because sales were poor and competition was stiff,' Mr. Kreisler predicted that he would sell at least 2,000 Edsels the first year in his three showrooms. His franchise gave him exclusive rights in Manhattan. There are seven other Edsel dealers in the other four boroughs of New York. Ford officials said that they were 'undisturbed' by Mr. Kreisler's decision to drop their line. They emphasized that the company had put $250,000,000 into the first new car by a major producer in twenty years and had warned that it would take a long time to win a firm place in the automotive market. The com-pany reported that it had lost nineteen dealers since the medium-priced car made its debut on Sept. 4 but had signed-up 105 others. There are now 1,167 agencies handling Edsels and on a sales-per-dealer basis Edsel tops the medium-priced field with 16.6 per cent. Buick is second with 13.7."

***The New York Times,* November 28, 1957**

Time and Again

"…Across the country the remark was repeated time and again as other Edsel dealers went bankrupt or gave up just-in-time to avoid bankruptcy. Some of them were cleaned-out in no more than three months time after having had to put-up around $100,000 to establish their dealerships. Meantime, the dealers who stuck-it-out struggled with unsold stock which, burdensome as they were, were inadequate…"
***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

Truth in Advertising

"…Edsel, like most other cars, comes in so many models, sizes and color combinations that even a swollen inventory frequently cannot furnish the precise combination of the many variables advertised as available. But the Edsel dealer, unlike his competitors, was seldom in a position to order the car particularly specified if he didn't have it in inventory because, typically, his credit with his banker was strained to the utmost…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

Funding Famine

"…Automobile manufacturers must, according to the way things are done in that business, be paid in-full on delivery. For the dealer, unless he has a plentiful supply of cash of his own, the wherewithal to meet this inflexible demand comes from a bank in the form of a loan. But bankers who already had funds tied-up in 90-day inventories in Edsel showrooms were also commenting about the egg laid by the Ford Motor Company. They were in no mood to lend Edsel dealers any more money…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

Help From Headquarters



"…Edsel headquarters struggled to help dealers push their dead-weight of stock out into consumer garages…"
***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

Catch-as-catch-can

"…They offered sales bonuses to dealers, a rebating device which led the dealers to cut their profit margins by discounting Edsels. They organized a system for dealer exchanges of models, sizes, colors, etc. They launched a huge demonstration-ride program in which 500,000 'prospects' drove the car. They upped the national advertising program to a reported $20,000,000. They offered Edsels at substantial discounts to state highway officials in order to get the car out on the road where it could be seen. They interceded with those local bankers who were getting restive and tough…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

"…And while this frantic – but, to a degree, effective – catch-as-catch-can struggle to salvage what might be salvaged fr-om the collapse went on, the rest of the industry and much of the public watched in wonder and gossiped with an acid ton-gue…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

How?

"…How could it have happened? How could the Ford Motor Company <u>not</u> have known that cars in the middle-price bracket had been in trouble, that it was taking more sales blitzing, more price peaks, more ridiculous trade-in evaluations to move the middle-priced cars than any others?..."

***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

From Motor-magnet to Garage Mechanic

"…In 1956 and 1957, cars in the Edsel's price bracket were known by everyone in the business; from motor-magnet to garage mechanic, to be the industry's big marketing head-ache…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

BASIC (FACTORY-DELIVERED) PRICES OF 1958 MODELS

The prices given are for four-door sedans (or four-door hardtops where a line does not include a four-door sedan). To these basic prices add a charge for freight, ranging from about $40 for a light car near Detroit to about $200 for a heavy car on the West Coast. The average charge should be about $100.

GROUP 2

Lower-medium-priced cars

(Price of automatic transmission included)

BUICK SPECIAL	$2920
DE SOTO FIRESWEEP	2999
DODGE CORONET V-8	2817
DODGE ROYAL	2977
DODGE CUSTOM ROYAL	3250
EDSEL RANGER	2810
EDSEL PACER	2953
MERCURY CUSTOM	2843
MERCURY MONTEREY	2947
MERCURY MONTCLAIR	3236[2]
OLDSMOBILE DYNAMIC 88	3068
PACKARD	3212[2]
PONTIAC CHIEFTAIN	2853
PONTIAC SUPER CHIEF	3049
PONTIAC STAR CHIEF	3286
RAMBLER AMBASSADOR SUPER	2817
RAMBLER AMBASSADOR CUSTOM	2962
STUDEBAKER PRESIDENT	2828
CHRYSLER WINDSOR	3349
CHRYSLER SARATOGA	3818[2,4]
DE SOTO FIREDOME	3305
DE SOTO FIREFLITE	3583[2]
EDSEL CORSAIR	3425[2,3]
EDSEL CITATION	3615[2,3]
MERCURY PARK LANE	3944[2,3,4,5]
OLDSMOBILE SUPER 88	3343
OLDSMOBILE 98	3824[2,4,5]

GROUP 3

Upper-medium-priced cars

(Price of automatic transmission included)

BUICK CENTURY	$3316[2]
BUICK SUPER	3789[2,3,4]

Butt of Jokes

"…Along with the questions went the gossip and the jokes. The very unusualness of the dream car's styling took the brunt of the latter, of course. Edsel's distinctive grille inspired a raft of biting – even bawdy – comment…"
***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

Statements of Faith

"…The various statements of faith in the car, or the rationalizations of what had happened which Edsel officials were forced to make to inquiring trade press reporters, were hooted at. And up and down automobile row, in city after city ran the judgement: what Ford should have done was to bring out a low-priced and truly original economy model, to compete with cars in the Volkswagen class…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

20/20 Hindsight

"…Such a judgment, made with hindsight clarity achieved by setting the Edsel's flop against the rising sales curve of the small cars, seemed wholly obvious. But hindsight is not always so illuminating…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

The Credit Bubble

"…One plane of the many-faceted analysis of how it happened that the Ford Company pulled such a monumental blunder is precisely that events of the recent past misled the motor maker – the past since 1953 when exploding consumer credit began to shoot auto sales upward at a boom pace…"
***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

The Irreversible Road

"…It takes years to plan a new car these days. And once the plan is set and action is underway, it takes at least a year to translate all the paperwork into an inventory of raw materials, a network of contracts with parts suppliers, a production line, a dealer organization for distribution and so on…"
***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

"…So, fairly early in 1956, a full year before the Edsel appeared, the Ford Motor Company was already well along on its irreversible road toward September 4, 1957, guided by directives that were based on market data from 1955, the year when more than 7,000,000 U.S. passenger cars were sold – the biggest year, by far, in history…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

Where You've Been

"…It has frequently been said that market statistics are tricky because the best they can do is tell you where you have been, not where you are going…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

Trade-up Mood

"…On the basis of detailed market analyses of the years up through 1955, the Ford Motor Company became convinced that consumers were in a long-term trade-up mood, determined to live more expensively and elaborately each year; to buy bigger and bigger cars every two years. Some of the market data also indicated that when Ford owners wanted to enhance their social status by trading-up into the middle-price bracket, some 70% of them left the Ford family to buy Oldsmobiles, Buicks and Dodges instead of Mercurys, Ford's middle-bracket car…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

The Germination of an Idea

"…Here is where the idea for the Edsel was actually germinated. The latest edition to the Ford line was not originally conceived of as a consumer dream nor guided into being via consumer-motivation engineering. Such studies were certainly launched, but for all practical purposes they came <u>after</u> the decision was made to put a second car in the middle-bracket price class, one which would lure more Ford trade-ins back to the Ford family line…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

First and Foremost

"…The Edsel was designed first and foremost because the Ford Motor Company was avid for a greater share of the consumer's automobile dollar…"
***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

How the Stage Was Set

"…There is almost no seller these days who believes that he is getting 'his share' of the market. Few sellers, however, have the gigantic resources with which to gamble for the bigger share they covet on the scale that the Ford Motor Company did with the Edsel. Had the Edsel made its appearance in 1953, 1954 or even 1955, chances are its fate might have been different; certainly it would have been less disastrous. But the Edsel and the current economic recession hit the market at almost precisely the same time…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

Alone in the Limelight

"…During that first month of the Edsel's showings, September 1957, when it stood alone in the limelight as the first 1958 model, the stage it dominated was wobbly. The stock market was in a trough and, most important to Edsel's fate, other car dealers were slashing prices on their 1957s in an attempt to clear-out stock to make ready for their own 1958 models not yet on the market. Edsel, with its high 1958 prices, looked very expensive indeed compared with the heavily discounted 1957s. Thus, the limelight that Edsel sought by its early introduction narrowed into a sharp spotlight on its price tag…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

Smoldering Resentment

"…All the smoldering resentment against high auto prices on the part of consumers, dealers and bankers seemed to spark into flame. When the other 1958s came out, they too had high price tags…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

Maddening Regularity

"…Motor manufacturers have raised prices with maddening regularity for 12 years now, but Edsel had maneuvered itself into a fall guy's position by its publicity-dictated early introduction…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

Epitomizing Excess

"…Furthermore, the car itself, as well as its price, seemed to epitomize the many excesses which, despite sales volume, were repulsing more and more potential car buyers…"
***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

"…Edsel was longer, more uselessly over-powered, more chr-ome laden, more gadget bedecked, more hung with expen-sive accessories than any car in its price class. To be sure, the market and sales statistics studied by the Ford Motor Company had seemed to indicate that this was precisely what consumers wanted in a car, or at least had wanted up through 1955…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

What Consumers Know

"…But what about those consumer-motivation studies – th-ose vaunted new techniques with which researchers claim to be able to learn from consumers what they (the consumers) really know and feel but do not yet know that they know and feel?..."

***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

"…Those studies sponsored by the Ford Motor Company continued through 1955, 1956 and 1957; and they are still in process. Surely such a probe should have touched the live nerve in consumer reactions which was inaccessible through any statistical analysis based on old market data…"
***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

The Question *Not* Asked

"…The trouble here seems to have been the elemental mistake on which research can founder – failure to ask questions which elicit meaningful replies. For example, the Ford Motor Company asked no questions at all about: car prices; cost of upkeep; cost of operation; rising insurance rates; growing difficulty in parking; irritation at cars too long for garages, etc…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

"…In fact, the consumer research program conducted on behalf of the motor company completely ignored automobiles as functioning machines of transportation. It centered instead on cars as status symbols, as extensions of ego. The questions were all about the feelings of car owners and none was about comparative car performance. And the feelings probed were those about personality identification – car personality vis-à-vis owner social status; product snobbery, to put it simply…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS,* April 1958**

The Consumer Psyche

"…There has been some talk in advertising circles to the effect that Edsel's woeful failure to find the profitable image in the consumer mind would set back motivation research for a decade or more, but the Ford Motor Company, it appears, is not yet disenchanted with attempts to mine gold out of the consumer psyche…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

"…In the latter part of last year, after the Edsel egg was freshly laid, the following note appeared in the Wall Street Journal: 'Ford Motor Co. has called on the Institute of Motivational Research to find out why Americans buy foreign economy cars'…"

***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

Come Next Year

"…As for the Edsel itself, the following item appeared in NEWSWEEK magazine just a little more than a month ago: 'Edsel cars, a sharp disappointment to Ford this year, will be drastically restyled and cheaper when the 1959 models come out.'"

***CONSUMER REPORTS*, April 1958**

From Our Family to Yours

EDSEL – NEW MEMBER OF THE FORD FAMILY OF FINE CARS

