



Shown here running better than 100 miles per hour on the banked high-speed test track at Chrysler's proving ground, the Dart is a smooth riding car. Famed Torsion-Aire suspension also gives unbeatable ride, handling through curves, over rough roads.

BY RAY BROCK

Although the year 1960 will still be a couple of months away when this magazine reaches the newsstands, as far as the largest business in this country is concerned, the automotive industry, 1960 has already arrived. Nearly all of the 1960 model cars are on the showroom floors or soon will be by the time you read this issue of HRM. And, unless we miss our guess, this is going to be the most important year that the U. S. automotive industry has ever seen. Not only are there three brand new economy models for the public to choose from but there is also another entry in the popular low-priced field.

The economy models have already received their share of attention in the nation's press but the newcomer in the low-priced field has arrived without much ballyhoo because it is a conventional automobile without any unusual claims as far as price, size or engine location are concerned. Dart is the name of this new competitor for Chevrolet, Ford, and Plymouth. The increasing popularity of the low-priced field in recent years has been robbing sales from cars in the medium-price class. Dodge's answer to the slipping sales problem was simply to build the Dart, a car that would compete with the low-priced three.

The Dart will compete with Chevy, Ford and cousin Plymouth on a direct model basis. The lowest priced Seneca will compete dollar for dollar with the Chevy Biscayne, Ford Custom and Plymouth Savoy. The middle priced Dart is called the Pioneer

and will go after a share of the BelAir, Fairlane and Belvedere market. Dart's top line is called the Phoenix and competes both in quality and price with the Impalas, Galaxies and Furies.

In appearance, the Dart looks quite a bit like big brother Dodge but the grille and rear end treatments differ enough so that the average person should be able to tell one from the other after the 1960 models have been on the road a while. Beneath the Dart exterior and trim, everything else is interchangeable with either the 1960 Dodge or Plymouth. The wheelbase matches Plymouth at 118 inches as compared to Dodge's 122 inches. Overall length is 208.6 inches for the Dart, 212.6 for the two models bearing the Dodge nameplate, Matador and Polara.

Unit construction is one of Dodge's new features for 1960 and the absence of frame rails beneath the car body has been advantageous in providing the passengers with more foot room, better seat height and a comparatively rattle-free construction. Although not a single unit in a strict sense as are some of the other Detroit offerings, the Chrysler Corporation has achieved the same goal while not seriously disrupting their method for assembling automobiles. From the firewall back, everything is a single welded unit with no individual frame. Rear suspension components, shock absorbers, bumpers and such, fasten directly to reinforced sections of the body unit. From the firewall forward, a stub frame is used to which engine, front suspension and front sheet metal are attached. Actually, the section ahead

(Continued on following page)

LEFT—Dodge's hopes to get a bigger share of the American automobile market in 1960 are based on the Dart, priced to compete directly with Ford, Chevrolet and Plymouth models.

PHOTOS BY DODGE NEWS BUREAU, TOM WEDLEY