

'56 DODGE

ROAD TEST

When the once-modest Dodge shattered all U.S. closed car records at Bonneville, it foretold an all-out sales assault on other makes in the low-medium bracket

AN MT RESEARCH REPORT



DODGE is a serious contender for more than its usual share of sales in the medium-price field for 1956. Competitive anticipation keynotes this car from grille to "flight-sweep" rear fins. In between, items such as increased power, pushbutton shifting, record player, and an abundance of power assists have been incorporated to create a package of "that's for me" sales appeal which will be hard to resist.

Test car: Custom Royal Lancer V8 2-door hardtop with powerpack (230-hp) engine. Equipment included PowerFlite transmission; dual exhausts; power-assisted steering, brakes, windows, and front seat; radio; heater and safety belts. Rear-axle ratio 3.54 with 7.60 x 15 tubeless tires.

Engine: Dodge's bid for performance laurels this year is based upon a revised 230-horsepower "Super-Powered Super Red Ram" V8 with a 3.63-inch bore and a 3.80-inch stroke (highest powered of 3 available V8 engines). This engine boasts 315 cubic inches working under a com-

pression ratio of 8.0 to 1, representing an increase of 45 cubic inches over last year's hemispherical combustion chamber model with dual rocker arms (giving 183 hp).

Other options: In keeping with the general trend, Dodge offers a full complement of optional equipment. In addition to the usual array of power assists, music lovers will find the new record player another reason why motoring is America's greatest pastime. Up to one hour of thoroly mixed music is featured on each side of the 6 records furnished with the unit. Air conditioning, seatbelts, windshield washers and the like make this "optional at extra cost" list as extra as you want it. Safety doorlatches, rear-door safety lock and safety rim wheels are standard equipment.

Aside from PowerFlite, either 3-speed or overdrive transmission can be had in any Dodge model, 6 or V8. These transmissions should be desirable when an economy package (such as the Dodge 6 with overdrive) is under consideration. However, don't treat them too roughly if cou-

pled with the top engine, as they are an old design and slow of gate. Power brake and steering options should be considered only in the light of your either being willing to pay for extreme driving convenience or planning for an economic situation at trade-in time. The cars without these options are adequately easy to handle.

WHAT THE CAR IS LIKE TO DRIVE

Exit and entry: You'll have no trouble getting in or out of this car. Body dimensions are the same as last year, featuring wide-angle door hinges, plenty of headroom and kneeroom from doorsill to windshield cornerpost, and a steering wheel that is high enough to slide under easily.

Driving position: This can best be described as comfortable for most people. Power seat will operate up, down, forward and backward but has no tilt arrangement. Seatback is positioned rather erectly, and a slight feeling of top-heaviness may worry driver until several hours have been