



the 1957 Dodge. Ford Motor Company introduced the Edsel on September 4, 1957. The anticipated flocks of "upwardly mobile, middle income, and professional families" looked at it but didn't buy. The medium-price market began to collapse.

Industrial production fell by 10 percent between August 1957 and February 1958. Unemployment rose to its highest level since the end of World War II. Pundits dubbed the economic downturn the "Eisenhower Recession." Americans didn't just stop buying cars, they shunned them.

Ford chief designer George Walker called 1958 the "hate autos year." The publication of John Keats's *The Insolent Chariots* in September 1958 confirmed it. "Once upon a time," Keats wrote, "the American met the automobile and fell in love. Unfortunately, this led him into matrimony and so he did not live happily ever after."

Dodge responded to the downturn with springtime trim upgrades that made the already glittery '58 Royals and Custom Royals look like the automotive caricatures in Keats's book. Defying economics, Dodge eclipsed the Custom Royal in mid-season with the pricey Regal Lancer. The plush two-door hardtop with bronze-and-black or bronze-and-white paint and a dressed-up interior cost \$3245—\$174 more than a Custom Royal Lancer. There were bigger and more powerful engines, too, including an extremely rare 361-cube Super D-500 option that made 333 bhp with Bendix electronic fuel injection

Ann Sink, a Denver housewife who

