

1959

ROAD TEST



GOOD LOOKS were highlight of the Ford Country Squire test wagon, with white finish and simulated wood side panelling.

FORD-DODGE WAGONS

OWNER loyalty is one of the strongest cards in Detroit's sales deck and few makes have gained such solid year-after-year support as Ford and Dodge. The features that have gained this steady repeat business have been nicely adapted by both to their station wagon lines.

DODGE

Dodge builds one of the most pleasant and practical station wagons on the market. Though the basic design is in its third year, its combination of driving ease and carrying space continues to be among the best.

The test car, a six-passenger Custom Sierra, handled so smoothly that it was easy to forget its bulk; it was more enjoyable to drive than many standard sedans.

The 305-hp engine, three-speed automatic transmission and 2.93-to-1 rear axle ratio were all the same as the Custom Royal hardtop sedan tested earlier this year. Performance differences were slight, as the Sierra is only 125 pounds heavier. The 0-to-60 time, for example, was 11.1 seconds, just half a second slower. Fuel consumption was increased from 14.2 mpg to 13.7, but this was partly due to different driving conditions.

In handling, the Royal had a greater edge. Though the wagon had a torsion type stabilizer in front, its higher center of gravity caused more of a tendency to sway in hard turns. This was partly offset, however, by better weight distribution. With most of the added bulk toward the rear, only 50 per cent is on the front wheels, compared with 55 per cent for the sedan.

Two frequent objections to a wagon body have been overcome in the Sierra. There are no rattling tail gate brackets and there is an enclosed luggage compartment with a separate lock.

The rear window retracts into the tail gate with power operated switches under the dash and in the gate handle. When open, the lower part rests on the bumper, eliminating any need for brackets. There are two rubber bumpers attached to the

outside panel which prevent marring of the paint.

The enclosed space for luggage is made possible by the fender well for the spare tire, inside the right tail fin. Thus, a large compartment is available under the floor, where the tire usually goes, for valuables that might tempt thieves if left in sight.

The rear seat can be collapsed easily and quickly, leaving a fully carpeted cargo compartment. This might not appeal to those who pack messy materials but it does offer protection against scuffing and snagging for the objects most people actually carry in a wagon.

The car had the usual small assembly faults that have been plaguing some Chrysler products but the only repeated criti-

Test Data

Test Car: 1959 Ford Country Squire
 Body Type: Nine-passenger station wagon
 Basic Price: \$3076
 Engine: ohv V-8
 Carburetion: Single four-barrel
 Displacement: 352 cubic inches
 Bore & Stroke: 4.00 x 3.30
 Compression Ratio: 9.6-to-1
 Horsepower: 300 @ 4600 rpm
 Horsepower per cubic inch: .85
 Torque: 380 lb.-ft. @ 2800 rpm
 Test Weight: 4430 lbs. without driver
 Weight Distribution: 51.25 per cent on front wheels
 Power-Weight Ratio: 14.77 lbs. per horsepower
 Transmission: Cruisomatic (three speed automatic)
 Rear Axle Ratio: 2.69-to-1
 Steering: 5 turns lock-to-lock
 Dimensions: Overall length 208 inches, width 76.6, height 56, wheelbase 118, tread 59 front, 56.4 rear
 Springs: Independent coils front, leaf rear
 Tires: 8.00 x 14
 Gas Mileage: 14.9 mpg
 Speedometer Error: Indicated 30, 45 and 60 mph are actual 28, 41.5 and 54.5 mph, respectively
 Acceleration: 0-30 mph in 5 seconds, 0-45 mph in 8.2 and 0-60 mph in 13.2 seconds

Test Data

Test Car: 1959 Dodge Custom Sierra
 Body Type: Six passenger station wagon
 Basic Price: \$3318
 Engine: ohv V-8
 Carburetion: Single four-barrel
 Displacement: 361 cubic inches
 Bore & Stroke: 4.12 x 3.38
 Compression Ratio: 10.1-to-1
 Horsepower: 305 @ 4600 rpm
 Horsepower per cubic inch: .84
 Torque: 400 lb.-ft. @ 2800 rpm
 Test Weight: 4300 lbs. without driver
 Weight Distribution: 50 per cent on front wheels
 Power-Weight Ratio: 13.7 lbs. per horsepower
 Transmission: Torqueflite (three speed automatic)
 Rear Axle Ratio: 2.93-to-1
 Steering: 3.5 turns lock-to-lock
 Dimensions: Overall length 216.4 inches, width 80, height 57.1, wheelbase 122, tread 60.9 front, 59.8 rear
 Springs: Torsion bar front, leaf rear
 Tires: 8.00 x 14
 Gas Mileage: 13.7 mpg
 Speedometer Error: Indicated 30, 45 and 60 mph are actual 29.5, 43 and 58.5 mph, respectively
 Acceleration: 0-30 mph in 4.3 seconds, 0-45 mph in 7.1 and 0-60 mph in 11.1 seconds