

fins allows a free flow of air so that forward motion is unimpeded by excessive wind drag."

Chrysler designers are frank, however, in saying that the upswept fins were used largely due to styling considerations. They knew, of course, that fins, if they are big enough, do contribute to stability. This doesn't appear to have been the basic idea. The happy results of tests mentioned above—all carried out after '57 designs were frozen, by the way—were an added bonus they all appreciate.

A phrase used extensively in Chrysler ads and publicity releases, "the new shape of motion," is something of a hint as to another of the reasons for the wedge or dart shape. Even if it contributed nothing functional in the way of streamlining, it definitely gives an impression of sleekness, of readiness and willingness to go. It gives that feeling of the "freedom in motion" Exner has mentioned.

Chrysler designers have pointed out that this general shape, the wedge or dart, is common in nature. You see it in birds and fish, for example, which we associate with speed, motion and maneuverability. They point out that this shape has been used by other man-made creations than the automobile. Jet aircraft, guided missiles, rockets and racing boats have made use of this design theme too. These again denote motion, as well as contemporary design.

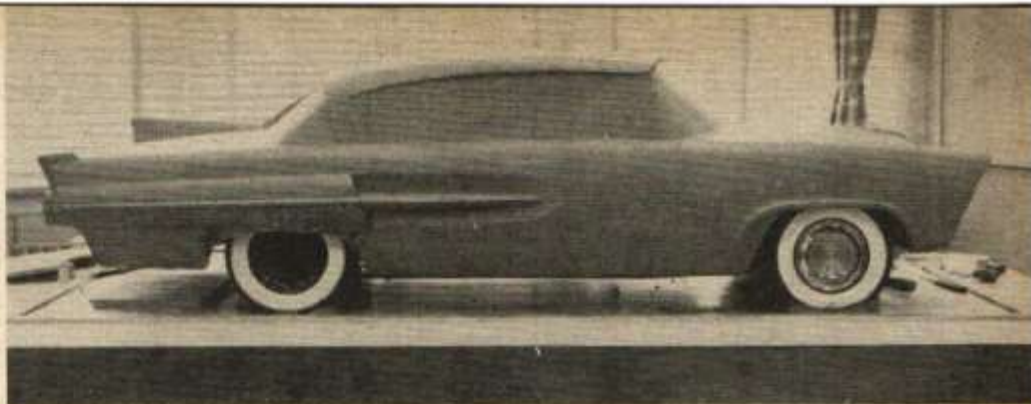
These factors have been paraded quite publicly since the new Chrysler line was announced last fall and, while valid, are less interesting than another reason for the company's current designs. To understand it fully requires explanation:

Automotive designers have discovered that their customers like things that are new—but not too new. We might admire or be attracted to things that are radically different, but we often won't buy them—at least until we are conditioned to them. (This is a major reason for dream cars; they help in the conditioning process.)

This is why automobiles change gradually, thru a process of evolution, for the most part. Chrysler was forced to speed up this process more than it might have liked. Evolution is fine when you've got cars that are selling well, cars with a basic design which is well accepted. It's no secret that this wasn't the case with Chrysler. There had to be a more abrupt change, an attempt made to come up with cars that would go over.

To cut down on some of the risk this entails, Chrysler designers are really trying an experiment with their 1957 cars. They have strayed from what had been generally accepted styling themes to a fairly radical degree. Yet they are using a basic shape which, as mentioned above, is familiar to everyone in other areas!

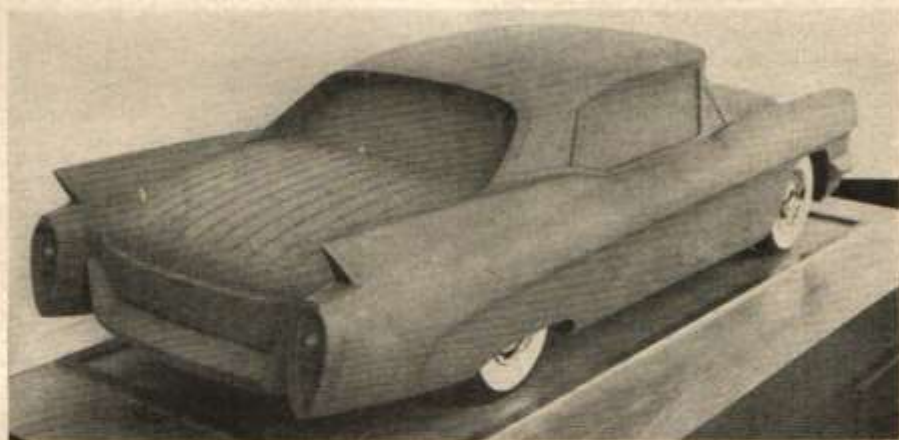
In other words, by using this dart shape we have become accustomed to in



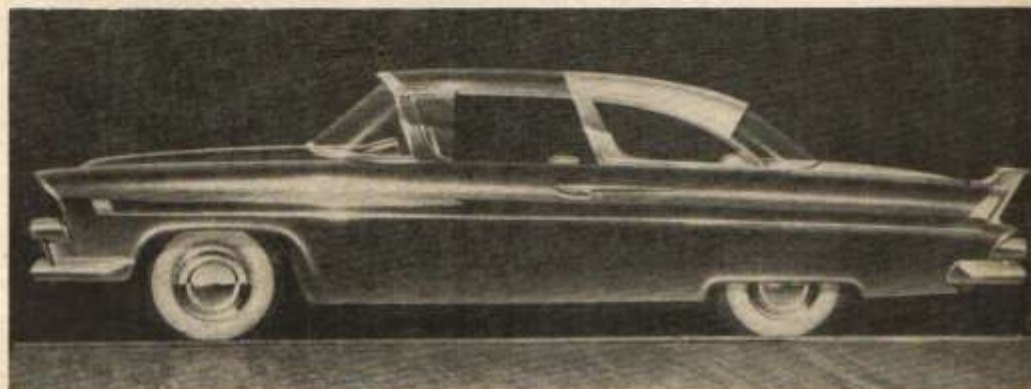
SCULPTURED STYLING on this nearly completed model shows scoop in leading edge of rear fender for brake cooling ducts. Chrysler, like other companies, has been studying brake cooling, and something like this could be seen on production models in the future.



STYLE RENDERING is of car quite similar to Dart dream car, although fins are not quite so accentuated. It features full wrap-around bumpers, like Dart, indicating Chrysler may be seriously considering this type of protection for their future production models.



ONE DESIGN investigated in planning for 1957 models was this one. Note textured surface of the deck lid, indented rear window and suggestion of visor lip over windshield. Both of the latter features would defeat Chrysler's avowed intent to improve streamlining.



EARLY RENDERING was prepared in period when stylists were working on earlier Forward Look cars which were meant to prepare public for '57 Dart shape. Note that the roof design, however, is very close to that used on some of the current Chrysler Corp. Imperials.