

nature and non-automotive applications they hope to remove some of the "strangeness" the public might otherwise feel about their automobiles.

This is a provocative idea and one of the most intriguing facets of Chrysler's current styling philosophy. It will be very interesting certainly to see how this transference of concepts works for the company.

But to get back to some of the other characteristics of Chrysler styling . . .

"Tumble home," or body lines which curve inward at top and bottom, is used extensively. This is in contrast to the sharp, clearly defined lines favored by designers of some of the other companies.

Windshields slope back from cowl to roof, are much further from the straight up-and-down position than most other makes. Backlights or rear windows are huge and complete the rounded lines of the greenhouse by flowing down into the rear deck. This rounded effect, heightened by the tumble home at the sides, helps emphasize the wedge shape by bringing the upper part of the car down "into" the body, more or less.

The high, upswept fins and low hood-lines serve to complete the illusion. Thus, Chrysler stylists have achieved this "new shape of motion" or dart effect.

Of course one of the basic necessities in getting it was lower overall height. This type of design would look utterly ridiculous if it were set too high off the ground. To offset additional height would have required fins so large as to make the present ones look puny by comparison.

This is where Chrysler's engineering

know-how came in mighty handy. Engineers might not have been too happy with the problems in getting overall height down to the limits stylists felt were absolutely necessary—but they did it. New suspensions, frame changes, revised engine accessories, different seat designs all helped.

"Our engineers and stylists united in purpose better, I believe, than ever before in designing the 1957 cars. It was teamwork of high order . . ." said Engineer Ackerman after it was all over.

And this points up the new attitude toward styling which was born not too long ago. Stylists now have an important place on the Chrysler Corporation team! This certainly was not always the case.

It's been common practice for years to cite the disastrous results of Chrysler's experiment with air-flow design back in the Thirties as the reason for its conservative approach to styling prior to 1955. That's only part of the answer.

Sure, Chrysler got stung on the air-flow models. You've heard the old saw about the reason being "they were 10 years ahead of their time." And they were—in many engineering respects. The truth was they were just horribly designed cars from an appearance standpoint. Why? Their styling, if you could even call it that, *was dictated by engineering considerations!*

Result: they didn't look good then; they wouldn't have looked good 10 years earlier, and they certainly didn't look anymore attractive 10 years later.

Chrysler didn't profit by that experience, however. Engineering continued to

dominate overall design of Chrysler—built cars—for many years—too many years. Even when it should have been obvious that the buying public wanted, was demanding, cars which appealed to them from a styling standpoint, Chrysler continued to build cars that were dowdy by comparison with their major competitors.

Other auto makers realized that Americans were becoming more style-conscious about everything, not only automobiles. Customers were even willing to sacrifice some of the things engineers might one time have deemed extremely desirable, if not necessary. And in other companies, stylists began to take on more importance in the scheme of things. The days of engineering a car and then wrapping sheet metal around it to fit, were past, like it or not.

Introduction of 1955 models demonstrated this attitude was being broken down at Chrysler. An entire new styling philosophy had been born. No longer is appearance of the company's cars of secondary importance.

(This doesn't mean engineering has taken over the back seat formerly occupied by styling, however. You don't have to look any farther than under the dart-shaped sheet metal of 1957 Chrysler products to see that. All the familiar Chrysler goodies, and a lot of interesting new ones, are there.)

Instead, there is now this "teamwork of high order" which Ackerman has talked about. This is as it should be.

Despite the new philosophy and greater freedom of styling at Chrysler, designers and stylists there still must cope with the same limitations which are customary industry-wide. Carl Reynolds, assistant director of styling, has an interesting and graphic way of describing this.

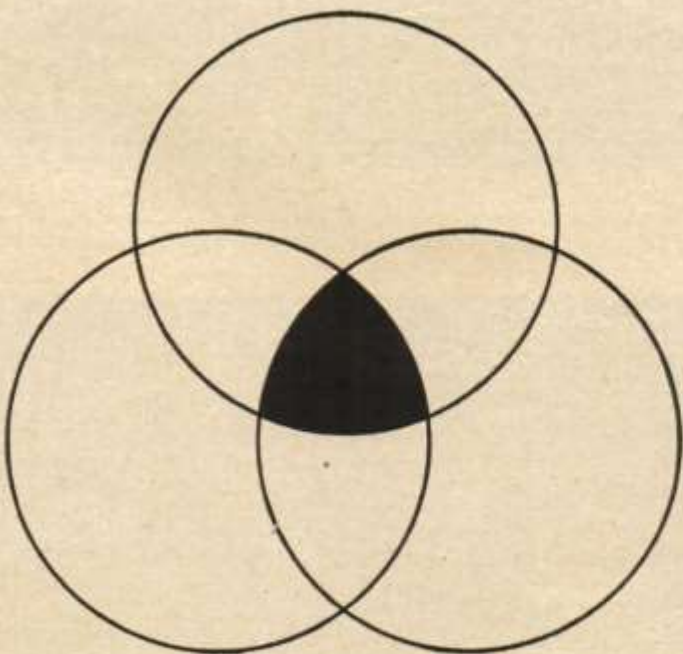
He first draws three linking circles, just like those you see in Ballantine beer ads.

"One circle represents aesthetic or functional values, the things designers might like to do; the second, manufacturing realities; the third, public tastes and needs together with competitive prices."

He then shades in the center area where the circles overlap and points out that it "represents the limits within which the designer must work."

This is as good an explanation as any of the fact that, even under Chrysler's relatively new and more liberal styling philosophy, designers there still have to face the same facts of automotive life as their opposite number in competitive companies.

It also points up the fact that stylists and designers are to a large degree dependent on engineering and manufacturing progress in their efforts to turn out more handsome and functional vehicles. It demonstrates too that stylists



**LIMITATIONS** in styling can be illustrated graphically by using the three circles of the familiar Ballantine ads. One circle in this case represents aesthetic or functional values; the second; manufacturing realities, and third; public tastes and needs together with competitive prices. The overlap area then (shaded) represents the limits in which designers must work,