



formance saga for '56. It was the division's way of offering serious competitors the specialized parts they needed under the guise of being "factory stock."

Even before the first D-500s for the street had been announced, work was already under way on a D-500-1 "maximum duty" chassis. It included stronger chassis parts such as control arms, springs, axles, and wheels borrowed from the luxury Imperial (CA, August 1987). A rear end with an 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch ring gear and the buyer's choice of six axle ratios came with the \$53 package, but for another \$21, an 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rear (with eight—and later 10—gear ratio alternatives) could be had.

By the time the word went out on January 12 that the D-500-1 was available, another important element had been added—an aluminum dual-carburetor intake on which perched a pair of Carter four-barrels and a special air cleaner. The \$426 option, which included a freer-breathing exhaust system, was the inspiration of racing impresario Carl Kiekhaefer, according to Engle.

Kiekhaefer, the Wisconsin-based manufacturer of Mercury Outboard boat motors, had burst upon the NASCAR scene in 1955 with a team of well-prepared white Chrysler 300s. (Tim Flock won the season championship at the wheel of a Kiekhaefer car.) He returned in '56 with 300Bs, but also added Dodges for short-track events and the new convertible division races. Kiekhaefer wanted to improve his chances with the Dodge, however, and saw dual carbs as the solution. To have the setup pass muster with NASCAR, Dodge ordered a run of 100 "prototype" manifolds from Kiekhaefer, who managed to get the first 20 into Eames's hands in Daytona just in time for Speedweeks competition.

Some accounts through the years have said the top Dodge engines in '56 generated 285 to 295 bhp. However, a dynamometer test carried out on one of the early examples peaked at 276 bhp at 5000 rpm, while torque topped out at 322 pound-feet at 3600 rpm. (An April '56 memo from Carter to Eames makes mention of impending production of new

The closest Dodge may have come to giving D-500s the same exterior distinction seen on other high-performance Chrysler Corporation cars was the Golden Lancer. The gold-and-white cars came with the 315-cube Hemi. They're most often associated with the Custom Royal series, but they could even be found among entry-level Coronets (top). The motif continued inside (above left) with a gold-over-white dash and black, white, and gray upholstery. The stroked V-8 (above) had a 9.25:1 compression ratio. (Owner: Bob Riggs)

10.0:1 compression heads with larger exhaust valves. What increases in horsepower these parts may have contributed might explain the 285-plus horsepower accounts.)

Serious stock-car racers wanted either the Coronet two-door sedan (the lightest car in the Dodge lineup) or Coronet convertible, but with the three-speed stick-shift. The racing transmission and rear-end components were made of higher quality steel, and ball burnishing was used to provide stress relief to the components, making them less prone to