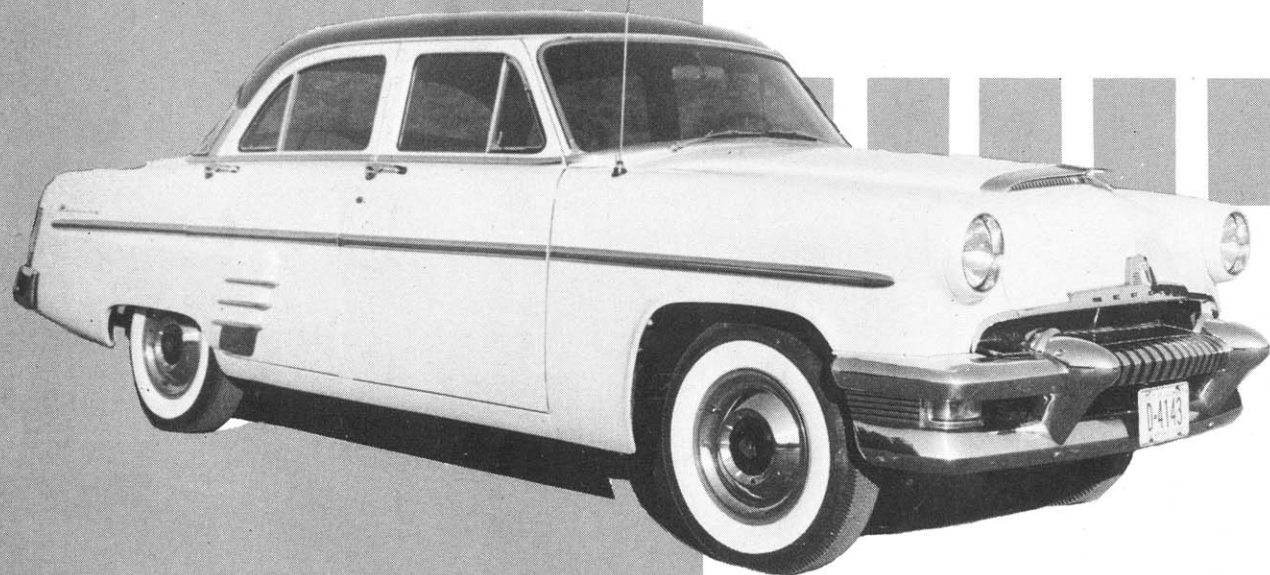


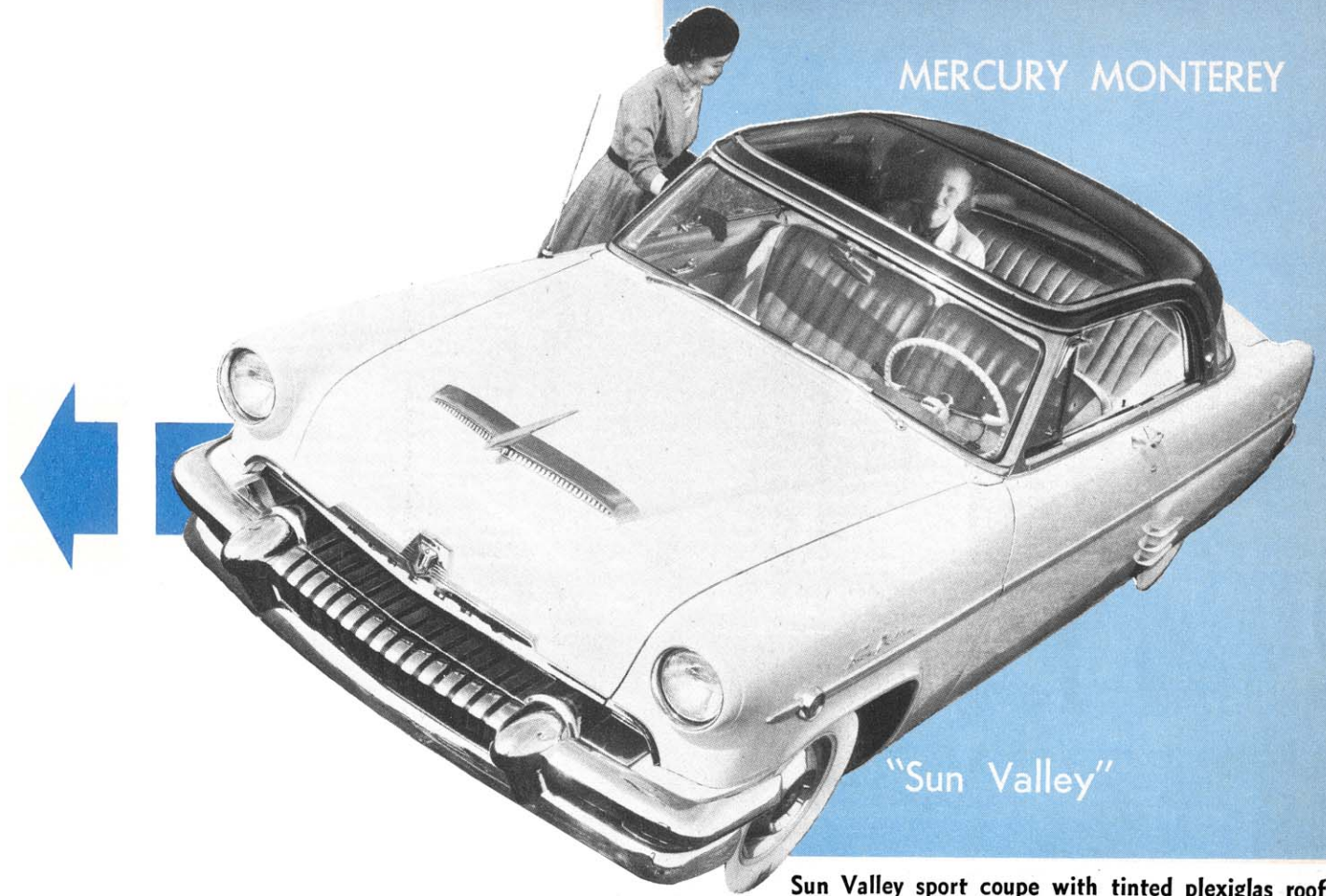
Road Test Report . . .

1954 MERCURY

Car Life experts put the new Mercury through the paces and discuss the new powerplant and new suspension.



MERCURY MONTEREY



Sun Valley sport coupe with tinted plexiglas roof.

Car Life Staff Report

Photos by DICK ADAMS

SOME wit has already registered one complaint against the new-engined 1954 Mercury. It wrinkles the back of the driver's coat at throttle-stomping speed.

But aside from this highly complimentary jest, Mercury has the best car to date in its weight and price class. CAR LIFE staff, after over 1,000 miles of testing, had nothing less than 'good' to give a new 4-door custom sedan with Merc-O-Matic and driver-powered brakes.

It's overall rating is good-plus. It's ease of handling, cruising and riding—excellent. The sedan, with standard steering, still left the driver with full feel of the road.

Visibility is excellent; Driver fatigue potential, passenger comfort and braking efficiency were all good.

That is plus to say of any car which began the test with three miles on the odometer, even though it had a valve and carburetor adjustment at 500.

Pre-introduction reports said the 1954 Mercury, rolling on the Lincoln ball-joint suspension, would actually be the 1952 Lincoln.

The Merc is good, with its 161-horsepower, overhead valve V8, but it isn't quite up to that comparison—yet. The basic engine design is an excellent one and one which can be built on for years. Piston travel has been reduced 22% by shortening the stroke and a larger bore

adds to the longevity of the powerplant.

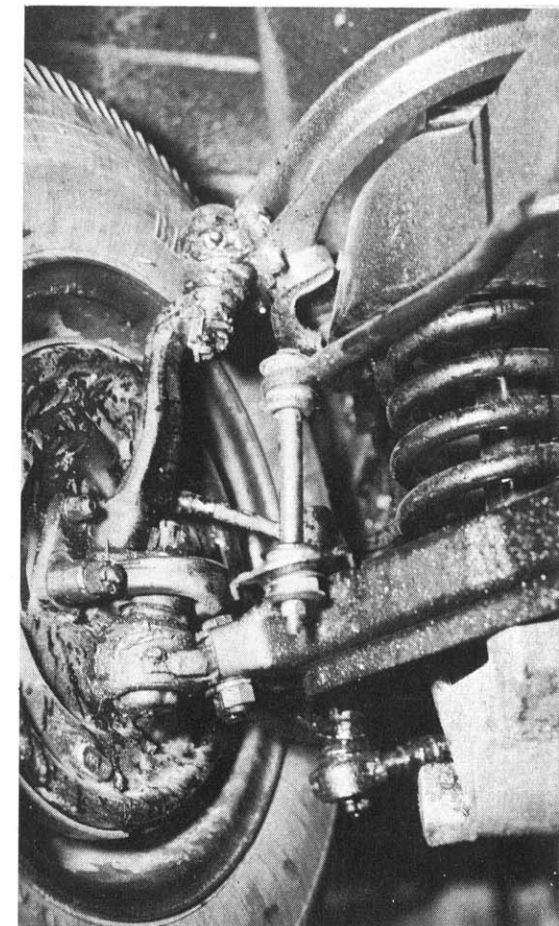
Throughout the test and with a concentrated effort, the test driver was unable to produce detonation. The engine, with high turbulence advertised in its combustion chamber, seemed, from description, to be a good candidate for 'ping.' The firing chamber is kidney-shaped, with a quench area at a point farthest from the spark. On the compression stroke, the mixture is squeezed into the main volume and creates the mixing essential to even burning.

Engineers guarantee that valve bounce won't occur below 5500 RPM. Five main bearings dampen sound far below the 1953 production.

There was minor disappointment on the road tests. One of them came in a passing range, say 45 or 50 miles an hour when 60 was desired. It could be built-in economy. On the Mercury's 4-barrel carburetor, as in most such types, you're running on two of them part of the time. All four are in operation above 60.

One of the unfair aspects of new-car testing is that the car would give a better performance if it had another 5,000 miles on it. Private owners could have piled up more miles than that and done their own testing if the test-men waited.

Mercury stepped away out into the wide open spaces of automotive evolution when it came up this year with the Sun Valley—a handsome hardtop coupe with half of the top in tinted plexiglas. It may be a hit as a novelty. It may catch on. For the man on a cross-country tour in mid-summer with a morn-



New ball-joint front suspension.

MERCURY ROAD TEST

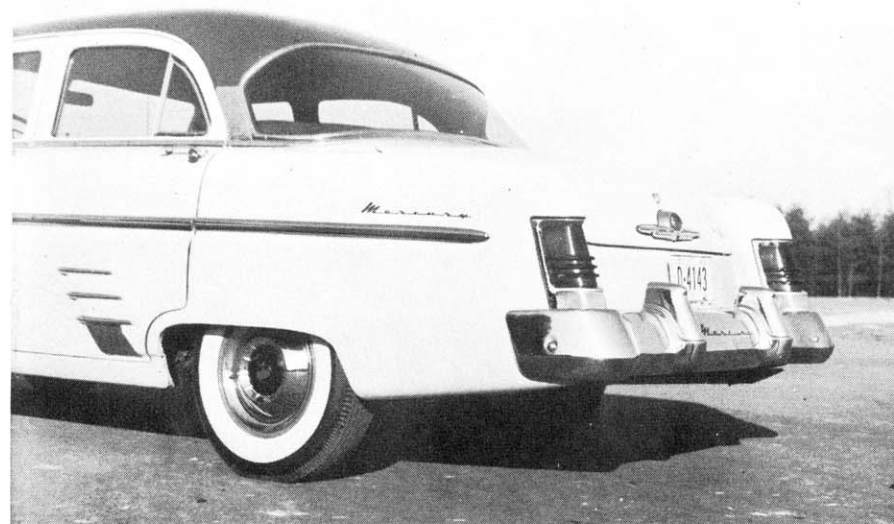
ing skull-buster coming out of Las Vegas, engineers have a good word. It is only about two degrees warmer inside.

The line offers two series in eight models. The custom comes in a 2-door sedan, 4-door and sport hardtop. The Monterey special, in addition to Sun Valley, has a 4-door sedan, hardtop, convertible and 4-door station wagon.

There are three transmission choices: Silent-ease synchronized standard; Merc-O-Matic and overdrive. Optional equipment includes 4-way power seats, power steering, power windows and power brakes. Tests showed the power brakes needed a little more foot-power, in event of engine stall, because no more vacuum is supplied to the engine, but one stall will leave enough impression to remember the incident.



Test crew rates Mercury as good—plus.



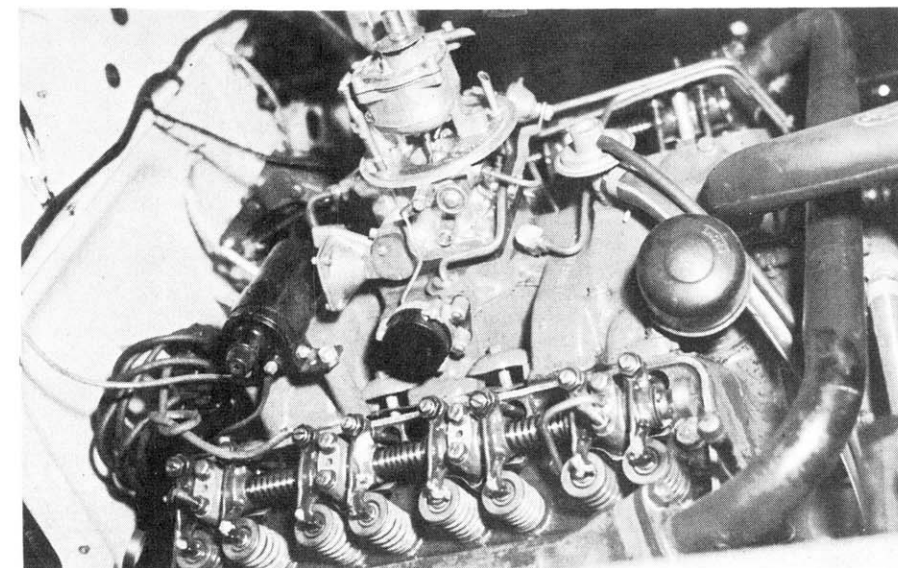
Rear-styling improved. Note massive bumper.

There's no disputing the well-publicized claims that the Mercury's engine is new. The amazing thing is the well-kept secret. CAR LIFE had a staffer on a privileged Dearborn tour more than two years ago when newsmen, magazine writers and radiomen were taken into newly-opened sections of the vast research laboratory. Somewhere at that time, Ford engineers were at work on the Mercury engine destined for this year. Yet no hint and no sign of it appeared.

To produce the 1954 power package, the company built 640 experimental engines and then rebuilt each one an average of EIGHT times!

V8s were nothing new at Ford. This year's Mercury engine is the product of a development program which started in 1948.

It delivers 36 more horsepower than its predecessor without an increase in size. One feature of the 4-barrel carburetor is an arrangement to protect



Mercury's improved powerplant develops 161 bhp.

against vapor lock—a continuous flow of clean, oil-filtered air completely around the fuel bowl.

At various stages during manufacture, the engine receives a precise balancing of individual parts and sub-assemblies, plus a final mass balancing after assembly to guarantee smoother and quieter running.

The car tested wasn't perfect. Mechanically, it left little to be desired. As is too often the case in a right-off-the-line automobile—most any automobile—there were defects which should have been spotted on the final inspection after assembly. In this case, there was a water leak on the driver's side. There were rattles. That is a 2,000-mile check problem which falls on the dealer's shoulders.

But to repeat praise worth repeating, it is the best to date in weight and price class. It has more than enough power to pull its weight; its ride is stable and comfortable. There is little drift on

turns under 65 and it pays little heed to cross-winds. On normal turns the passenger isn't pressed against the driver or the door, but he'll lean on tight turns. It undoubtedly was a case of minor brake adjustment, but the test-drive car had enough grabbing tendencies on panic stops to give the driver a fraction of a bad time.

From a dead stop, 'drive' wouldn't move it on a 30% grade, but it's a wheel-spinner in low gear on the same hill.

You'll like it. ☆ ☆

Statistical data on page 65



Entrance clearance to rear seat is adequate.

(Continued from page 21)

STATISTICAL DATA 1954 MERCURY 4-DOOR SEDAN

Engine Specifications

Cylinders	8
Arrangement	90° V
Valve arrangement	Overhead
Bore (inches)	3.62
Stroke (inches)	3.10
Displacement (cubic inches)	256
Compression ratio	7.5 to 1
Taxable horsepower	42.05
Brake horsepower	161 @ 4400 rpm
Max. torque (foot pounds at rpm)	238 @ 2200-2800 rpm
Oil capacity (quarts)	5
Fuel capacity (gallons)	19
Water capacity (quarts)	
without heater	19
with heater	20

Transmission

Standard			
3-speed synchro-mesh selective sliding gear Overdrive			
3-speed transmission with semi-automatic gear train for overdrive.			
Automatic			
Single stage, 3-element torque converter with 3-speed planetary gear train.			
Ratios:			
	Automatic	Standard	Overdrive
1st.	2.440	2.637	2.637
2nd.	1.480	1.634	1.634
3rd.	1.000	1.000	1.000
4th.	_____	_____	_____
Reverse	2.000	3.245	3.245

Interior Specifications

Depth of front seat (inches)	58.9
Depth of rear seat (inches)	58.9
Headroom, front (inches)	35.4
Headroom, rear (inches)	34.2
Legroom, front (inches)	42.8
Legroom, rear (inches)	41.5
Trunk room (cubic feet) with tire	27.7
Trunk room (cubic feet) without tire	30.4

Chassis

Frame:	
Ladder type with double channel, box section side rails	
Wheelbase (inches)	118
Overall length (inches)	203.7
Overall width (inches)	74.4
Overall height (inches)	62.2
Road clearance (inches)	8.3
Tread:	
Front (inches)	58
Rear (inches)	56
Curb Weight (pounds)	3696
Suspension:	
Front	independent ball-joint
Rear	semi-elliptic
Rear axle:	
Type	semi-floating
Gearing	hypoid
Ratio	3.54 to 1
Tires:	
Size—Closed cars	7.10 x 15
Convertible, Station Wagon	7.60 x 15
Pressure:	
Front (pounds)	26

Rear (pounds)	22
Brakes:	
Drum diameter (inches)	11
Effective area (square inches)	159.08
Type	duo-servo
Steering:	
Type	worm roller
Ratio	25.4 to 1
Turning diameter (feet)	40.95
Steering wheel turns full left to full right	5 1/4

Performance Data Acceleration

Drive:		
0-30 mph	5.60	seconds
0-40 mph	8.00	seconds
0-60 mph	13.20	seconds
0-70 mph	18.00	seconds
0-80 mph	22.80	seconds
Drive:		
30-60 mph	8.10	seconds
60-80 mph	10.80	seconds
Drive and Stepdown:		
50-60 mph	3.70	seconds
Braking:		
Complete stop, 30 mph	42.5	feet
60 mph	190	feet
Speedometer error:		
Indicated	Actual	
40 mph	39	mph
50 mph	48	mph
60 mph	56.5	mph
70 mph	64.28	mph

Prices

	Suggested List Price	Suggested Delivered*
Custom		
2-door sedan	\$2,004	\$2,714
4-door sedan	2,057	2,771
Sport Coupe (hard top)	2,117	2,836
Monterey		
4-door sedan	2,133	2,858
Hard-top	2,244	2,977
Sun Valley	2,365	3,086
Convertible	2,390	3,114
Station Wagon (4 dr., 8 pass.)	2,545	3,281

* Prices include radio, heater and extra-cost equipment installed on majority of cars, preparation and conditioning, gas and oil. Freight, state and local taxes, license and title are extra.

Accessories

Prices do not include state or local taxes.	
Radio—8-tube	\$105.93
Heater and Defroster	72.30
Overdrive	109.70
Automatic transmissions	189.77
Wheel covers	21.00
Directional signals	17.83
Tinted glass	23.00
Power steering	139.80
Power Brakes	40.37
Four-way power seat	64.50
Four-way seat and electric window lift	166.70
Two-way seat and electric window lifts	129.00

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