



Road Testing the **PORSCHE SUPER** *high performance with comfort and economy*

photographs by Rolofson

THE "dream car of twenty million people" may be a new Cadillac, but half a million Volkswagen owners dream of someday owning a Porsche! When the Porsche was first shown in the United States, in 1950, its 40 bhp and \$4000 price tag fell fairly flat in spite of many good qualities. The advent of two 1488 cc models of 55 and 70 bhp respectively changed all of that in a hurry.

The 70 horsepower Porsche Super is an experience which we dare the twenty million dreamers to try. It will carry two people around town or on coast to coast trips in equal comfort, at equal speeds, and with far greater safety. Although we did not test the 55 horsepower Porsche America model, it too, will give the big American car owner something to think about, where only two people are to be transported. The top speed of the America, though substantially less than the Super, is still an honest 95 mph, a speed which can be maintained indefinitely so far as engine durability is concerned. Acceleration of the America is also excellent; a factory figure known to be conservative

giving a zero-to-60 mph time of 13.9 seconds.

However this road test was on the more potent Super model and it far exceeded our expectations in every way. Factory literature gives the top speed as 100 mph. Our timed tests over a surveyed strip gave an average top speed of 107.6 mph, with a best one-way run at 108.3. Substituting the standard carburetor venturis with ones slightly larger and using No. 100 main jets instead of No. 85, we got one timed run at 111.1 mph. The carburetor changes also improved acceleration times to 60 mph and over the standing $\frac{1}{4}$ mile by .5 second. However, the acceleration data and plotted curve were obtained with standard carburetion as it was felt that few owners would tolerate the galloping idle (1200 rpm) and lumpy running below 2200 rpm which the "competition-tuned" carburetors gave.

While on the subject of idling characteristics, there has been a lot of comment on the irregular idle of the stock Super. There is no question about it being irregular, at about 800 rpm minimum speed. But strange-

ly enough the engine never dies, and the instant the clutch is engaged the car moves away smoothly with absolutely no trace of fussiness. Common sense, with four excellent forward ratios, dictates a minimum rpm in each gear of about 1800/2000 rpm. In the ultra-high 4th speed, (which is actually an overdrive,) the acceleration and pulling power is smooth and responsive even at 2000 rpm, but 2nd gear is generally advisable for trickling through slow traffic. Using the gears is not at all unpleasant for an excellent synchromesh is provided and the gears are absolutely silent.

Out on the open highway 3rd gear can be used for any situation demanding extremely fast acceleration. Once we followed a truck at 45 mph, waiting for an opportunity to pass. When the opening came, 3rd gear swept us around so quickly that we were ashamed of our timidity. Fifty to 80 mph in this gear takes only 14 seconds.

Normal cruising speed of the Super is almost anything you like. Even 90 mph felt very safe and comfortable and is well with-



Air-intake on the rear deck is the only clue to engine location.



Functional design is good looking, gives high speed with economy.

in the limits of reasonable piston speed. As a matter of interest, a piston speed of 2500 fpm is about equal to the timed top speed.

As expected, there is a slight amount of oversteer. This characteristic takes time and experience to get used to, but it certainly makes twisty roads easy to negotiate. On the other hand, the car was a little sensitive to steer in a straight line at speeds of over 100 mph, if any wind was blowing. In general steering was as good as any car we've ever tried and although it required only 2.3 turns lock to lock, parking was a simple matter, thanks to the lightly loaded front wheels. This weight distribution should also make the Porsche a cinch to drive on wet roads or on ice and snow—the antithesis of nose-heavy U.S. cars which require power steering to park and rear chains on snow.

The all-around performance of the Porsche is so good that it makes one wonder why any sports car need have an engine larger than 1500 cc (91.5 cu in.). The car's low drag factor is of course the primary contributing factor, since the horsepower required for an honest 100 mph is only 60. Our Tapley meter readings on the coasting tests recorded an average of 75 lbs/ton at 60 mph. Since the test weight was 1.09 tons, the sum of wind and rolling resistance force at 60 mph is only 81.8 lbs., one of the lowest we have ever found.

When you combine efficient streamlining with the comfort advantages of a fixed roof, the popularity of the open sports car appears to be on the wane. However, Porsche also can supply a convertible and a few roadsters have been built. The seats in this coupe appeared to be very comfortable, but after 6 hours of near-continuous sitting, the pleated leather left aches and pains which would make our vote go in favor of cloth upholstery. There is plenty of leg room and the reclining seat feature is something every car should have.

This particular car is the property of Johnny Von Neumann, Porsche and Volkswagen distributor for Southern California. Just back from two days of competition at Torrey Pines (full story next month), and with only 1400 miles on it, the test car gave no indication of rough use. Preparation for our road test consisted of installing original wheels and tires, re-converting the carburetors to stock, and a tune-up.

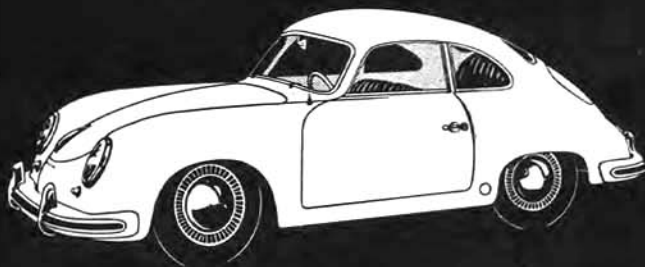
Wide-spread enthusiasm and booming sales are an indication that the Porsche is the answer for many who desire an outstanding sports car at a medium price.



Rear mounted engine is accessible for tune-ups, yet can be "dropped" in 20 minutes.

ROAD AND TRACK ROAD TEST NO. F-12-54

PORSCHE SUPER COUPE



SPECIFICATIONS

List price	\$4395
Wheelbase	83 in.
Tread, front	50.8 in.
rear	49.3 in.
Tire size	5.00-16
Curb weight	1860 lbs
distribution	45/55
Test weight	2180 lbs
Engine	flat four
Valves	ohv
Bore & stroke	3.15 x 2.91
Displacement	90.8 cu in.
(1488 cc)	
Compression ratio	8.20
Horsepower	70
peaking speed	5000
equivalent mph	105.5
Torque, ft/lbs	79
peaking speed	3600
equivalent mph	76
Mph per 1000 rpm	21.1
Mph at 2500 fpm	
piston speed	108.8
Gear ratios (overall)	
4th	3.56
3rd	4.94
2nd	7.70
1st	13.9
R & T perf. factor	34.7

PERFORMANCE

Top speed (avg.)	107.6
fastest one way	111.1
Max speeds in gears—	
3rd	84
2nd	54
1st	30
Shift points from—	
3rd	78
2nd	50
1st	29
Mileage	22/28 mpg

TAPLEY READINGS

Gear	Lbs/ton	at	Mph
1st	560	at	22
2nd	440	at	39
3rd	250	at	54
4th	145	at	74

COASTING

(wind and rolling resistance)			
75 lbs/ton	at	60 mph	
40 lbs/ton	at	30 mph	
25 lbs/ton	at	10 mph	

ACCELERATION

0-30 mph	4.3
0-40 mph	6.4
0-50 mph	8.7
0-60 mph	12.4
0-70 mph	16.3
0-80 mph	22.5
0-90 mph	30.6
Standing start 1/4 mile—	
average	18.9 secs.
best	18.4 secs.

SPEEDO ERROR

Indicated	Actual
10	11.7
20	21.2
30	30.3
40	39.2
50	48.9
60	58.6
70	68.4
80	78.0
90	88.0

