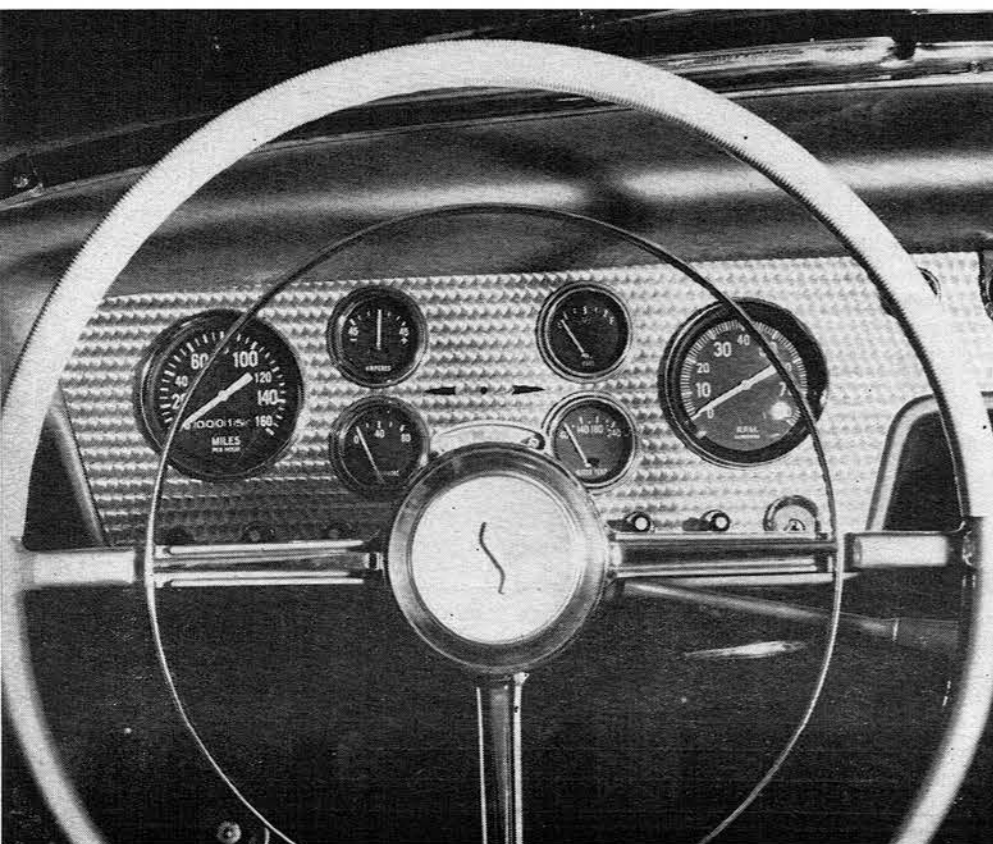


South Bend's

SECRET SPEEDSTER

Instrumentation used on Speedster is designed for appeal to enthusiasts. It features 3000 rpm tach and a 160 mph speedometer set in new dash moulded at factory of fiberglass.



WITH as much secrecy as surrounded the "new" designs in 1953, Studebaker unveiled their 1955 models far in advance of the rest of the industry and, in so doing, revealed a heavy compromise with the horsepower race and with stylist and industrial designer Raymond Loewy.

The new Studebakers, overall, show horsepower increases, price decreases, a heavily modified frontal styling, a revived line of cars and a highly promising secret "dream" car. The secret dream car, a souped-up version of the President models, is nearer reality than many people realize for, this year, much of Studebaker's emphasis will be on performance in the top lines. Evidently, someone at Studebaker also feels there will be plenty of room for a low-cost, economy car and, despite predictions of every expert in the field (including *MOTOR Life*), Studebaker has retained the L-head straight six for its Champion series.

Power in the Champion engine has been upped to 101 hp at 4000 rpm. The Commander series boasts power increases from 130 hp last year to 140 hp this year.

But it is in the President series that the "sleepers" lie. Revived after 12 years, the President now boasts the same V-8 engine but with a power increase which reaches 175 hp.

This additional power stems from stroking the V-8 engine and from the addition of a four-throat carburetor. The same engine then, has two versions and two names. In the Commander series it is called the Pacesetter and in the President it is called the Wildcat.

Studebaker's exclusive hillholder is still standard equipment on the Commander and President models. The Commander is available in two models (Deluxe and Regal) and in several body styles including sedans, hardtops, coupes and station wagons. Station wagons, by the way, were highly successful for Studebaker last year. They accounted for some 16% of the company's total sales.

Those enthusiasts who felt that the 1954 version of Studebaker was "glopped up" with excessive chrome will be highly disappointed with the immense amount of chrome carried on this year's frontal treatment. Other consumers, however, will probably like Studebaker's return to the American car look.

Other changes on the 1955 Studebaker line include new, larger tail lights, and on Regal and State models, a chrome side molding which begins at the headlights, continues back along the fender

and door, widens just beyond the door depression into what Studebaker calls a "quill" pattern. Instruments and dash treatment have been changed too. All switches are of the toggle-type or pull type and have been touched off with ball knobs. Two circular dials contain all necessary gauges and a sponge rubber crash pad is now standard equipment on the President and offered as an accessory item on other models.

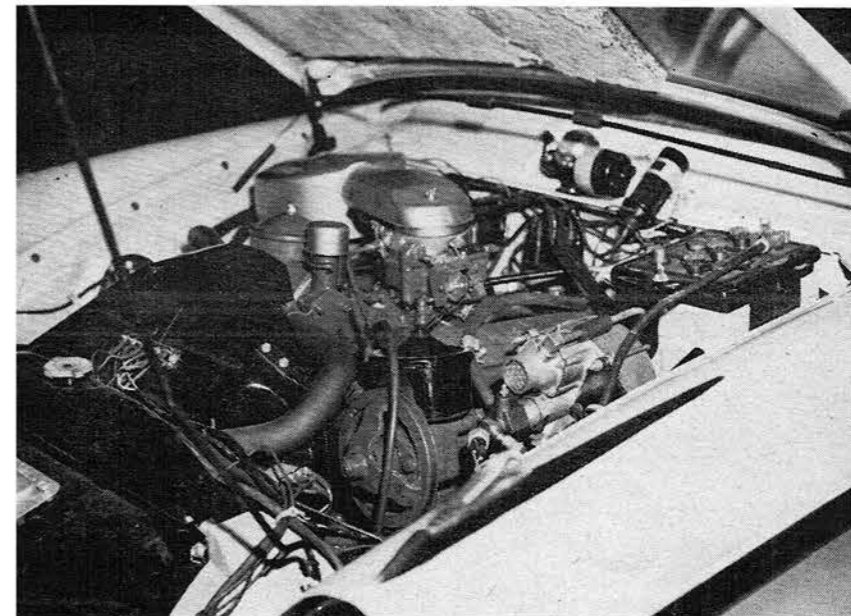
With such a wide range of extras being included as standard equipment on the President model, one might conclude that Studebaker has great plans for the newly revived series. It would seem so for the President, discontinued since 1942, will represent Studebaker-Packard's bid to reclaim the sales market once occupied by that series. Part of this prestige may well come from a car which is not yet built. Standard-looking but with custom trim, custom upholstery and instrumentation, the car is also supplied with a hot version of the President V-8. The cars which have been constructed are scheduled for highly secret dealer exhibitions and most of these do not fully represent the final version. Even so, they do give a psychiatrist's glance into the minds of Studebaker officials. The car, as now scheduled, checks out like this:

It will be powered by either a souped-up version of the President V-8 or the even hotter Packard V-8. Present plans call for use of the President V-8 bored out at least 25 thousandths. New heads will up the compression from the stock 7.5 to 1 to at least 8.5 to 1 and it may come amazingly close to 9 to 1 if fuel responses are o.k. Running on today's premium fuels, coupled with dual exhausts and the four-throat carburetor, the 8.5 to 1 compression engine should supply close to 200 hp.

To carry out this sport-car theme, the Speedster will have a wide dash full of sports car instruments. Included are a tachometer which is calibrated to 8000 rpm even though the souped-up engine should peak out at 5000, a speedometer which is calibrated to 160 mph—even though the present test speeds show about 125 mph top speed—and the standard pressure and ampere gauges.

Upholstery will be luxury quality with leather in subtle shades of chartreuse, yellow, green and red. Because of the changes in engine, trim and instrumentation, the car will cost several hundred dollars more than the standard President series, though exact prices will not be selected till the car is scheduled for production.

The present Speedsters are strictly test cars, designed to see if Studebaker's secret dream car could become a profitable reality. While the final count has not been tabulated, early results tend to indicate an enthusiastic response by dealers. It could be that Studebaker's secret Speedster may soon become public domain. ●



President V-8 features new four-throat Carter carburetor. Speedster will use bored out engine coupled with dual exhausts to up 175 hp engine to 200 hp. Car may hit 130 mph.



Body styling of 1955 President is similar to Speedster (above) with exception of custom chrome trim. General body lines of entire 1955 line show a compromise with original Loewy treatment plus Americanization of grille. All model prices were reduced.

