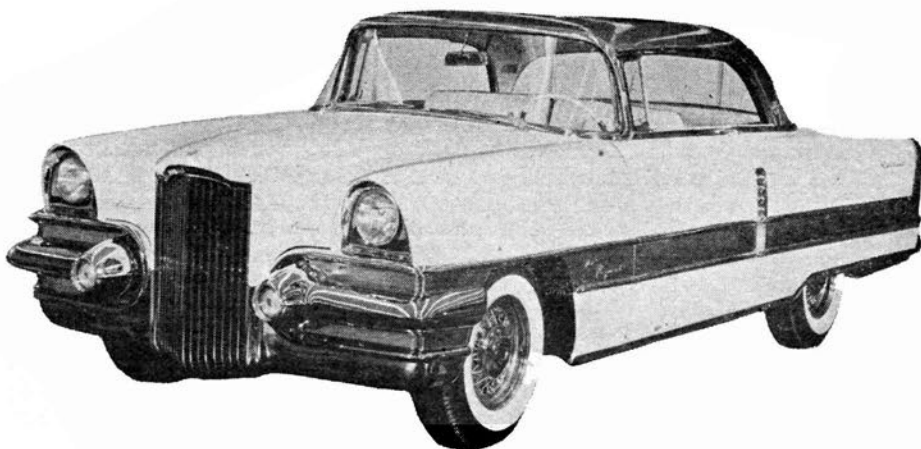


**PUBLIC RELATIONS MEN** are too busy blowing factory whistles over broken production records to contribute much else that is news this month. Chevrolet states that in "factory sales" (production), they creamed Ford to the tune of 50,000 passenger units in 1954. Ford meanwhile hints that they will win the race on the basis of registrations, the figure which really counts because it means cars in the hands of owners by 11:59 P.M., December 31, 1954. Final 1954 registration figures for all states are still not in as of presstime.

**PLYMOUTH AND BUICK** finished up January with the latter still in 3rd place, but only by a hairline margin of 1800 retail deliveries. It was an all-time-high January for both companies, but no real indication of anything except that Plymouth is sparking Chrysler's now assured comeback. Other divisions of Detroit's largest employer also report record acceptance of their "forward look"—unkindly called "borrowed" by competition. (This is a reference to Chrysler's \$250 million loan and not styling.) The parent Chrysler Division, for example, already has firm dealer orders for more cars than they produced during the whole of the 1954 model year.

**ONE DARK SHADOW** hangs over all of this corporate prosperity: the United Automobile Workers justifiably want



*Interesting attempt at classicism in Packard Request falls short due to short hood*

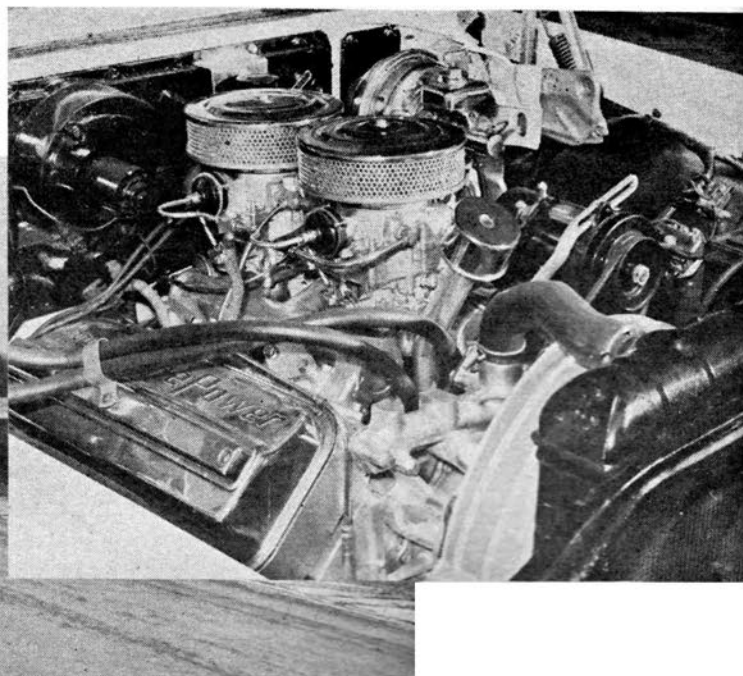
a chunk of it. Negotiations for contract renewal with General Motors and Ford will be going on as you read this. Key union demand will be the guaranteed annual wage, and Walter Reuther may settle for a big (but guaranteed) step in this desirable direction. Judging from GM President Harlow Curtice's violently negative reaction when a Miami reporter suggested that he (Curtice) was stock-piling cars in anticipation of a strike, it looks like GM will compromise in the direction Reuther wants. The others, of course, will follow suit as in other instances.

**NEW-CAR NEWS**, which is really of more interest to us, embraces one that is not for sale and one that is—

plus a suggestion, and a teaser. The first is a solecism which Packard calls the "Request." This attempt to wed the new with the old unfortunately falls short because of its short hood, but we must admit we were guilty of "requesting" it ourselves (see Oct. '53 MT, page 47). The car that is for sale is a fabulous powerhouse named the Chrysler "300," after the number of horses under the hood. You can buy it now at a price somewhere between the New Yorker and the Imperial.

Designed for enthusiasts only, it features a modified FirePower engine with twin 4-barrel carburetors, a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -race cam, and hard (but not roller) tappets. All-leather interior, wire wheels, PowerFlite, power brakes, but not pow-

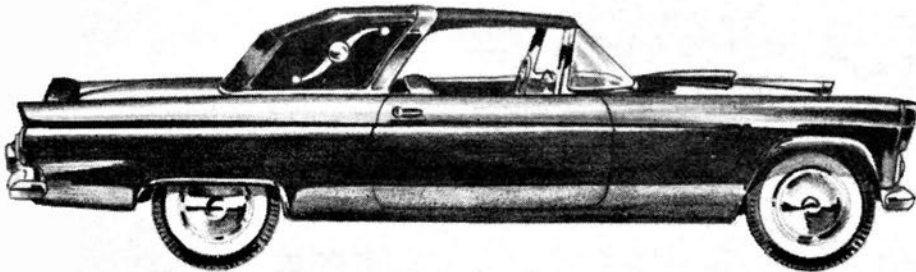
*As expected, this one ran wild at Speedweek. It's Chrysler's "300," with power of like proportion. FirePower mill has dual quad carbs,  $\frac{3}{4}$ -race cam. Suspension is stiff, car is otherwise cross between Chrysler's New Yorker and Imperial*





er steering are standard. Clean outside lines come from use of uncluttered Windsor side chrome and an Imperial grille . . . An overall height (59 inches) one inch lower than other hardtops in the Chrysler line is achieved by slightly flattened springs. Shocks are what would normally be called "export." Early public announcement of this car (in March MT as well as other publications) makes it officially OK to enter it as a sure winner in Class 4 (unlimited stock) speed trials at NASCAR'S Daytona Beach classic, Feb. 21-28. We should talk; DeSoto announced factory-installed dual exhausts as an option primarily because MT's entry in Class 3 needed them to make winning a better bet.

**OUR SUGGESTION-OF-THE-MONTH** is best described by Don Fell's drawing of an elongated Thunderbird. The elongation provides a well in which to keep your collection of house apes while touring, and emergency seating capacity is about all the fast-selling 'Bird has lacked up until



Artist Don Fell interprets a plausible suggestion: Thunderbird with extra seating

now. Our drawing is scaled to illustrate the car after it has been chopped in half at the B post and extended 2 feet, which gives room for an "opera" seat. Use of the landau-type top is purely an expedient to make the job easier for the backyard customizer; installation of rear-quarter windows would improve it but is a project best undertaken under factory auspices. Competent body shops in the Midwest area have estimated that if they were able to produce 4 of these a month (and thus use jigs), the job would cost the average 'Bird owner \$800. However, the deal is too much of a natural for Young Henry to neglect; watch for it in future production, possibly billed as a Mercury, complete with continental spare tire.

**THE TEASER INVOLVES CONTINENTAL**, this time capitalized. Ben D. Mills, Ford Motor Co.'s new Continental Division assistant general manager, gave a speech recently in Cambridge, Mass.; it was so interesting that we wish we had space to print it in its

entirety. Aside from sorting fact from fiction concerning the origin and development of Edsel Ford's original 1940 Lincoln Continental, he went into more detail on the forthcoming revival. He called the styling of the new car "modern formal," defining this as "a functional, enduring design emphasizing an air of distinction and elegant simplicity." Sounds like a certain '48 we know pretty well.

**THE MODERN-DAY VERSION** of the queen of the classics will have every characteristic of the old. Four outside consultants competed (literally) with chief stylist John Reinhart and his staff. The rules of the competition were such that no one design could be rendered with more highlights than another, or stretched out to look longer, or touched up to look more impressive. Each one had to fit a set of grid coordinates set up by Chief Engineer Harley Copp to insure sufficient passenger and engine room. A committee of top Ford management then gathered to view the most striking proposals for a new luxury au-

tomobile you would ever see under one roof. Each committeeman chose a design, and it was a tribute to John Reinhart that each member chose the same one—the 3rd of 3 designs developed by Continental Division stylists.

**MILLS DESCRIBED THE CONTINENTAL** at Cambridge without violating security (it won't be introduced until late fall). He said that it "is low, but not as low as it looks; it is wide, but not as wide as it looks." You can get an idea of its proportions from our photo of the engineering (not styling) prototype, cobbled from a standard '54 Lincoln convertible. The new car will have everything the old ever had, with the best of "modern formal" mixed in. We know; we've seen it but were sworn to secrecy before being allowed admittance to the studio. There will be no sales problem for this limited production gem. Amongst the thousand or so orders already received is one from Author John Steinbeck, who wrote admirably: "Many (Continued on page 74)

**MORE SPOTLIGHT PHOTOS ON PAGE 14**

## THE RUMOR MILL

"Chevrolet is working frantically to come up with a mid-season grille change . . ."

**FALSE**—Altho competitive stylists say that not enough attention was given to proper angling of chrome for glint and glitter, Chevy management is proud of their lithe, Ferrari-like design. They are selling like hot cakes and will set Chevy style pattern for at least another year. This widespread rumor was started by envious competition of the all-new car.

"American Motors and Studebaker-Packard will merge before the end of the year for mutual benefit . . ."

**NOT LIKELY**—Both companies need at least another year to digest what they have already separately undertaken. S-P's Nance publicly committed to being for any merger advantageous to him. A-M's Romney feels that he has basis for building strong industrial empire (cars, appliances, auto components) within existing bailiwick. Little chance for get-together here unless one or other suffers badly sales-wise in 1955. Rumor stems from Wall-Streeters who see obvious advantages (for them) in new "Big 4."

"Both Pontiac and Chevrolet experiencing excessive service problems with new V8's, specifically failure of 'stamped' rocker arms."

**LITTLE BASIS**—Rare instances have occurred where rocker arm has gone flying through valve cover, but incidence is so slight as to be statistically insignificant. Typical slur sure to be fostered by competitive dealers.

"1956 models will not only differ greatly from '55s but will bow early."

**MOST LIKELY**—Pre-war pattern (the really normal pattern in a buyer's market) of early fall introductions a sure bet. Model changes in all makes except those committed to "traditional evolution" will be relatively drastic. Big 3 said now to be amortizing tooling on a yearly basis; can profitably make basic body changes every 2 years. Married independents staggered by facts of life, but will compete successfully by exploiting special-purpose cars, extensive use of low-production (plastic and/or Kirksite) tooling, and clever engineering.

"Auto-Lite and Goodyear are going to be more active in auto racing this year."

**NO RUMOR**—MT's DeSoto smasher of the NASCAR Class 3 (stock car 250-299-cubic-inch displacement) speed record of Daytona used Auto-Lite ignition components and Goodyear tires. Both companies enthusiastically supported this record run, with engineers on spot. Champion and Firestone have held American monopoly in this field by default and welcome this healthy outcropping of competitive spirit from previously uninterested quarters.

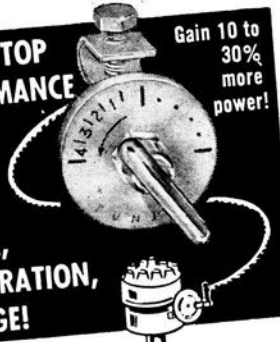


Release "Locked-in" Power With—

# SPEED-TUNER

TIMING & OCTANE SELECTOR

**TUNE IN TOP PERFORMANCE AS YOU DRIVE! BOOST POWER, ACCELERATION, MILEAGE!**



Gain 10 to 30% more power!

New SPEED-TUNER TIMING SELECTOR gives you instant finger-tip control over engine performance... A simple pull of a switch on the dash super-tunes spark timing for PEAK POWER OUTPUT. Compensates for changing driving conditions, load, speed, terrain, octane and differences in altitude & weather. With the "Speed Tuner," instantly ADVANCE OR RETARD timing to MAXIMUM POWER POINT while driving!

**STOP PING! CUT FUEL BILLS!**

"Speed-Tuner" permits premium performance on regular gas. Ping & spark-knock can be eliminated. Users report up to 50 more miles per tankful! Simple to install. Fits under dash, connects to distributor. (Does not interfere with present mechanism.) Easy tuning instructions included. For all passenger cars, trucks, boats, tractors & racing engines.

FOR ALL CARS \$6.95 ppd.

TRY "SPEED TUNER" 10 DAYS. MONEY BACK IF YOU'RE NOT COMPLETELY SATISFIED — (POWER BOOK FREE)

**FREE TRIAL**

**ALMQUIST ENGINEERING CO.**  
MILFORD 41T, PA.

# FREE! New 1955 POWER BOOK with "TUNER"



*Don't Buy 'til You See this Catalog*

**NEW LOW PRICES ON WORLD'S FINEST EQUIPMENT...**

**1** BIG NEW "HOW-TO" CATALOG shows everything in the Speed, Power, Economy, Racing & Customizing field! Thousands of MONEY SAVING VALUES for your car, racer, rod or custom — including many new items not in stores. Complete info, 100's of photos, charts, dyno tests. Order with confidence—WE GUARANTEE THE BEST FOR LESS!

**2** "MOTO-MATIC" POWER GUIDE shows how to easily boost your power, speed & mileage — at LOWEST COST! Includes latest TUNING DATA & "HOP UP MECHANIX" TIPS. Sent FREE with Catalog.

90,000 ITEMS FOR "SAME-DAY" SHIPMENT!



**MAIL THIS COUPON NOW**

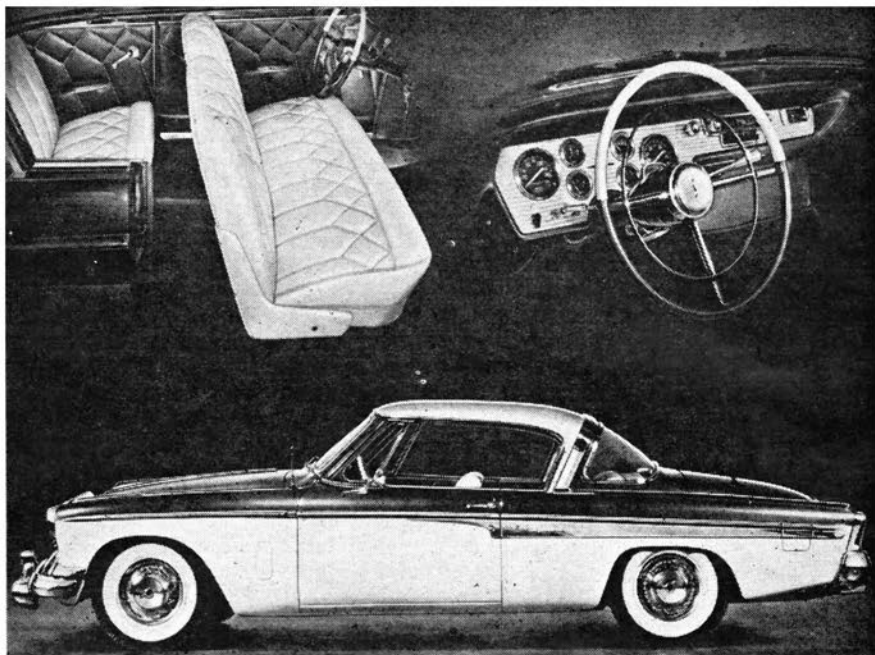
RUSH New 1955 MONEY SAVING POWER CATALOG and FREE "MOTO-MATIC TUNER". Enclosed is 25c to cover part of mailing cost, which will be credited to me on my first order.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

**ALMQUIST ENGINEERING CO.**  
MILFORD 4T, PA.

continued

## Spotlight on Detroit



You'll see more Studebaker Speedsters in the showrooms—and there'll be plenty of people looking them over. "Living it up" is the by-word, compact, peppy and plush



Departure from current station wagon styling. Pontiac Safari makes debut at GM's Motorama show. "Interpretation of a family dream car" is \$2714 at Pontiac, Mich.



One of several mechanical prototypes developed from a '53 Lincoln hardtop for testing chassis components of new Continental, which will have similar height and length