

Fifth wheel is checked prior to gasoline mileage tests. Cad is surprisingly economical, can travel all day on single fill.

ROAD TEST

Cadillac

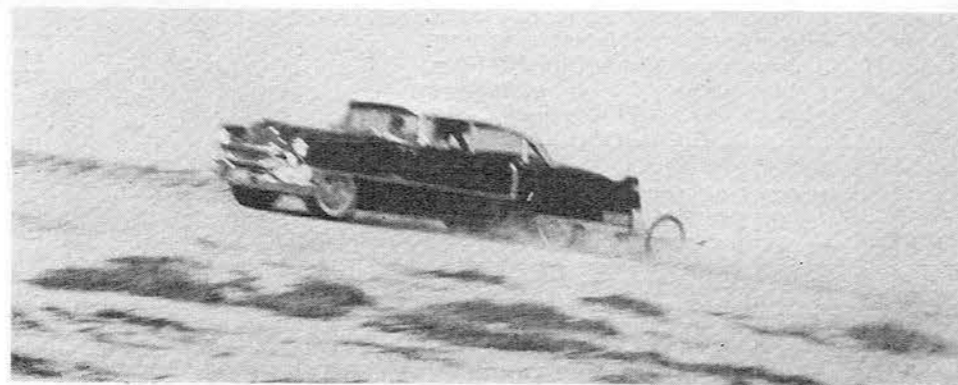
FLEETWOOD 60 SPECIAL

This car has the reputation . . . does it have the stuff to back it up? Here's a good look at all its features

Photos by Dean Moon

Cellular grille was derived from Park Avenue experimental shown in GM's '54 Motorama. Bullets are fixed to frame.

Cadillac probably is fastest volume production car on the road, with accelerating ability exceeded only by its top speed. When taken over 60 miles of hilly dirt road, as shown here, passenger and trunk compartments remained free of dust.



CADILLAC is regarded by millions of Americans as the ultimate in automobiles. Much of this reputation seems to be derived from the fact that ownership of a Cadillac has a certain amount of social significance. So it is interesting to determine if such extraordinary opinions are supported by the quality of construction, performance and design.

For road testing purposes, a Fleetwood Series 60 Special four-door sedan, with 76 miles on the odometer, was obtained. No customary break-in period was required, however, since Cadillac advises its owners that new models may be driven without limitations on maximum speed.

During an eight-day test, the Cadillac was driven over 1400 miles of California and Nevada, which provided a wide variety of city and open road conditions. Runs for top speed were made in the Mojave desert, while balance of the performance figures were secured near sea level.

The car does not have a clear monopoly on any important feature. Each separate item can be found on one rival make of car or another. But it is the *only* car that combines the maximum number of desirable features in a single package. In brief, Cadillac has just about the best of everything that is available on a modern car, plus a few items that come as extras.

The performance picture can be read at a glance in the accompanying tabulation. It reveals that Cadillac is the fastest volume production car on the road, at an actual 116 mph under the clocks. This high speed run was made with a strong sidewind, yet the driver found the car held to the road with perfect control.

This enormous performance potential has been achieved in Cadillac without sacrificing economy. Over-the-road fuel consumption figures are genuinely remarkable, considering the horsepower output, car weight and loading of powered accessories.

Refinements in Cadillac's engine compartment for 1955, which contribute to the overall performance increase, include boosting the compression ratio from 8.5 to 9-to-1. Valve rocker arms have been

redesigned for better breathing on both intake and exhaust. The crankshaft has been strengthened, connecting rod bearings are now narrower, and the water pump is a new unit which gives 20 per cent better circulation at lower speeds, for more even engine operating temperatures. Horsepower is rated at 250 at 4400 rpm, against 230 in 1954, while torque is 345 ft.-lbs. at 2800 rpm, in contrast to 332 on last year's car.

Servicing ease on engine and accessories rates high on Cadillac. The fuel pump is above and in front of the block, with the sediment bowl visible and conveniently located. The generator also is favorably positioned. Spark plugs are above the exhaust manifold. All units involving liquids—oil filter, windshield washer, radiator cap, dip stick, power steering tank, and brake master cylinder—are handy to a wrench from the same side of the car. The voltage regulator has been removed from heat of the engine compartment for simpler adjustments and is immediately behind the grille. These are but a few examples how careful design has provided for efficient mechanical care.

On the roadability side, the reactions of various drivers of the test car were almost identical: the car has a "solid" feel. Road and engine noises are virtually absent, the result of good quality control and ample quantities of insulation in the body and under the hood (where the glass fiber is vinyl covered!). Handling, despite the Cadillac's size, was easy (power steering is standard equipment) and parking seemed to be no more of a problem than with any average car. All four fenders are visible from the driver's seat. The steering wheel itself has superior feel, with gripping areas cleverly designed for firm control. Riding in the Cadillac is exceedingly comfortable, even over long distances, without being excessively soft.

It was noted during the highway travel that drivers would sometimes run the car up to 50 and 60 mph with the selector lever in third gear of the dual-range transmission. While this is further evidence (Continued on page 66)

Although Cadillac is a big, heavy car, its brakes brought it to a quick stop in a straight line. Distinguishing feature of Fleetwood style is Florentine curve on rear window styling, which is shared with Series 62 coupe and Coupe de Ville '55 models.

Attention to detail can be found everywhere. For example, rubber molding catches water runoff when door is open.

MOTOR LIFE ROAD TEST

CAR TESTED: CADILLAC
FLEETWOOD 60 SPECIAL

TEST CONDITIONS

Altitude 210 feet
Temperature 53 degrees
Wind 4 mph
Gasoline MOBIL GAS PREMIUM

ACCELERATION AND TOP SPEED

MPH	Seconds
0-30	<u>3.6</u>
0-45	<u>7.5</u>
0-60	<u>11.2</u>
30-50	<u>5.3</u>
40-60	<u>5.9</u>
Standing 1/4 mile	<u>19</u> seconds
Fastest one-way run	<u>116</u> mph
Top speed avg. 4 runs	<u>114.1</u> mph

BRAKING DISTANCE

MPH	Stopping distance
30	<u>40.2</u> feet
45	<u>88.7</u> feet
60	<u>159</u> feet

FUEL CONSUMPTION

MPH	Average
30	<u>21.7</u> mpg
45	<u>20.5</u> mpg
60	<u>16.5</u> mpg

SPEEDOMETER CORRECTIONS

Car speedometer	Actual speeds
20	<u>19</u>
30	<u>27.5</u>
40	<u>37</u>
50	<u>46.5</u>
60	<u>55</u>
70	<u>64</u>
80	<u>72</u>
90	<u>80.5</u>
100	<u>-</u>

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See page four

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CADILLAC ROAD TEST

(Continued from page 41)

of engine quietness, the mileage benefits of top gear are lost. It would not be surprising if GM shortly produced some kind of visual reminder for forgetful motorists in this respect.

Cadillac's heat and ventilating system employs the cowl intake, with warm air conducted through the vented front door panel to the rear seat area. The arrangement is an elaborate one, but is simply controlled and highly functional. Unlike many modern cars, it can be mastered without undue study of the owner's manual furnished by the division.

Today's wrap-around windshields have created an annoying situation caused by wipers which are inadequate for the curved glass. On Cadillac, a cam guides the blades effectively around the curve, wiping cleanly to within two inches of the corner posts. The windshield washer-wiper system is fully automatic—touch of a button puts both into operation and the cutoff takes place a few seconds later without further attention.

Additional evidence of manufacturing care can be found inside the vast trunk, which is upholstered more luxuriously than the passenger compartments of many other automobiles. Cadillac provides its owners with a rubber covered lug wrench, jack is fixed to the floor in a non-rattling position by a spring, while a triangular piece of wood (painted black) is included for blocking the tires while jacking.

Cadillac likes to point out that some of its models cost no more than comparable cars in other makes. This is true, but in order to enjoy many of the features commented upon here, you will have to pay a high price. As of this moment, a fully equipped Cadillac is one of the costliest American cars on the road.

On the other hand, Cadillac depreciates at a slower rate than almost any other car. This, along with good mileage and dependability, gives the expensive vehicle certain qualities of economy. It's a paradoxical situation, but actually an honest argument which Cadillac salesmen have found highly effective. •

SPECIFICATIONS

TEST CAR: 1955 Cadillac Fleetwood Series 60 Special sedan.
ENGINE: ohv V-8. Bore 3 $\frac{1}{16}$, stroke 3 $\frac{5}{8}$. Displacement 331 cubic inches. Compression ratio 9 to 1. Bhp 250 at 4600 rpm. Torque 345 ft.-lbs. at 2800 rpm. Crankcase capacity (with filter) 6 quarts. Fuel tank capacity 20 gallons. Cooling system capacity (with heater) 22 quarts. Electrical system 12 volts.
TRANSMISSION: Hydra-Matic standard on all models is dual-range with four forward speeds and fluid coupling. Ratios: 1st 3.82, 2nd 2.63, 3rd 1.45, 4th 1.0, reverse 4.03. Rear axle ratio: standard 3.36, optional 3.07.
OVERALL DIMENSIONS: Wheelbase 129 inches. Tread 60 front, 63 rear. Length 227.3, width 80, height 62.1. Dry weight 4540 lbs. Turning circle 45 feet. Tire size 8.00 x 15 tubeless.
PRICES: Series 60 Special four-door sedan \$4728. Radio \$214. Power brakes \$47. Electric seat adjustment \$53.

FORD'S CONTINENTAL

(Continued from page 26)

industry. The car does not have independent rear suspension, but Copp says it has "a better ride, better handling, and a better feel and noise level than any car we've ever driven." Part of this effect is due to a new patented shock absorber that allows a soft ride at city-type speeds but at high speeds allows changes in the orificing of the valve to keep the car from bouncing all over the road.

Still, the greatest appeal of the Continental will probably be its sheer good looks. The car is built so low—not for the sake of lowness alone but for the sake of overall elegance—that one of the major production problems dealt with this factor—making a car of its height comfortable and feasible. Because of its lowness it looks longer and wider than it actually is. It is not a small car, but its dimensions make a lot of sense compared to the grossly bulky cars that are currently fashionable. Bill Ford says, "We aren't trying to compete on size; we're competing on the grounds of innate beauty."

The Continental probably will retain the hallmark of the name, the visible spare wheel at the rear, but in a new form that will not lend itself to kit imitation. Ben Mills, assistant general manager of what in October, 1954, became (instead of the Special Product Operation) the Continental Division, says, "We made several attempts to design a casting or stamping for our wheel covers that would be in keeping with the theme of the car's design, but we found that it just didn't work. Rather than accept a set of covers that might be adequate but not perfect, we developed a design requiring the joining together of numerous components. Only in this way could we achieve the sharpness of angle and the crispness of line we wanted."

Today the Continental Division is preparing to move into a new plant, a building where the new car's hand-crafted assembly will be carried on. Every car will be subjected to a thorough quality test inside and out. Each engine will be shaken down on a dynamometer and will be tested again after installation in the car. All the other operating components will be checked and double-checked. Then the finished car will get a workout on the company's famous test track, and any bugs revealed during the test will be minutely inspected and corrected. The customer service policy will be equally exceptional.

It's been many years since an American car was built to this kind of rigid quality specification. The Ford Motor Company is betting \$20,000,000 that some people—enough to support a production schedule of a few thousand units a year—will pay nine to ten thousand dollars to get it. FMC's gamble amounts to a flattering and daring act of faith in the good taste of the American public. •