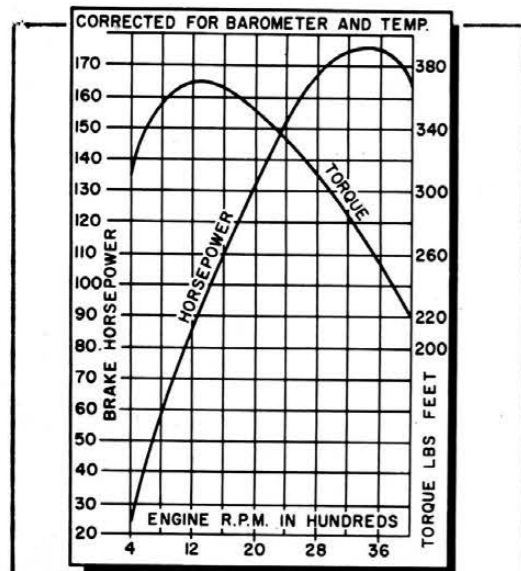


The graceful lines and beautiful body contours of this '35 roadster shows why Packard was the style leader of its day.

# PACKARD'S ELEGANT TRUCK



Torque and Horsepower curves for the twelves from '35 to '39. Best torque was developed at low end of rpm scale.

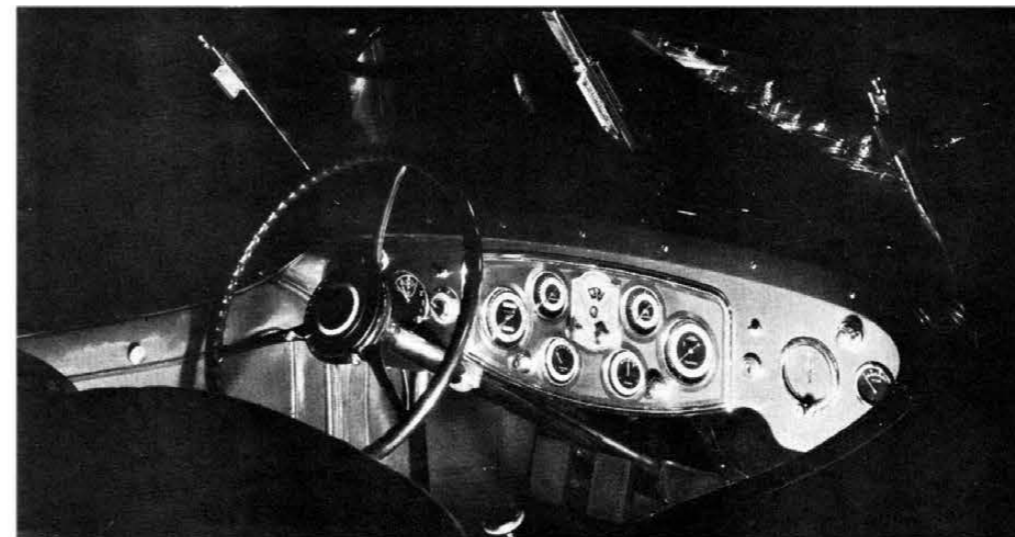
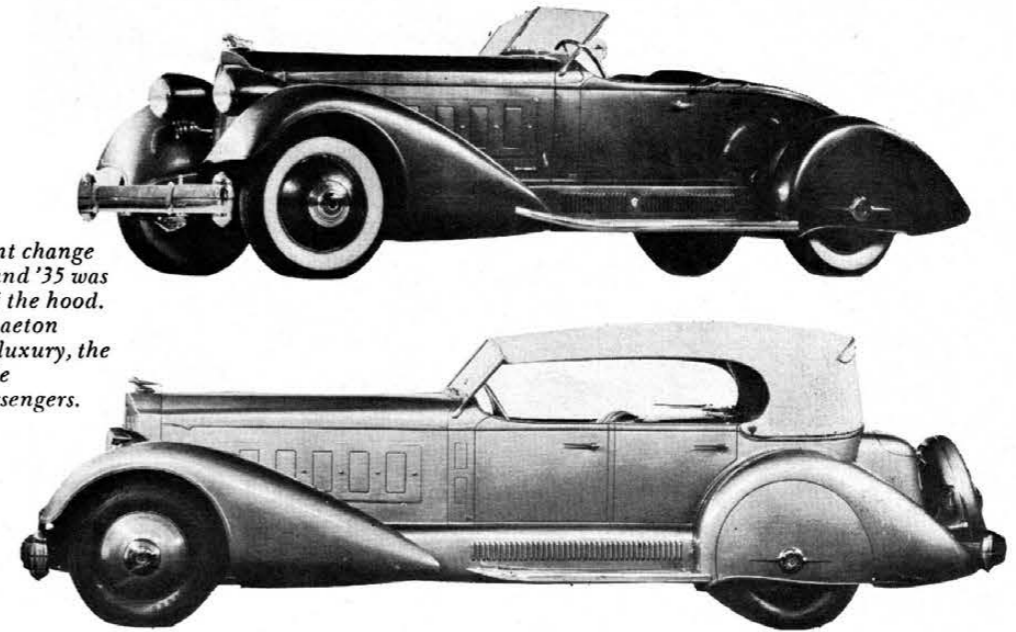
By EUGENE JADERQUIST

**I**F there were enough analysts to service the entire American public, someone might come up with a reason for the illogical preferences we show. Why, just for one example, is Marilyn Monroe the focus of all those thoughts American males have, but cannot express due to postal regulations? This is not to say that men should not appreciate such girls, but why have they singled out this one particular blonde from the thousands of females of similar dimensions?

Don't answer by saying, "Publicity." Sure the girl has received the benefit of the best prose the \$500- and \$1,000 per week flacks can produce, but so have a lot of other girls with equally sensational equipment.

It is with regret that we leave Marilyn Monroe to extend this example to include automobiles. The MM of the auto field today is undoubtedly Cadillac. Visit a Cad showroom one day right after the introduction of the '57 models and you'll see money under the table, hear impassioned pleas from old customers, watch year-old Cads going for ridiculously low trade-in prices — all for the privilege of buying a new Cadillac. Like MM, the Cad is a superb example of a

ABOVE: Only apparent change in design between '34 and '35 was the vents on the side of the hood. BELOW: The 1934 Phaeton twin-cowl. Ultimate in luxury, the car sported a collapsible windshield for rear passengers.



Center unit in this '33 instrument panel is stock Packard. Altimeter and Vacuum gauge, at right, are special. Between clock and center panel, at left, is brake regulator knob—standard on all models.

modern luxury item. And, like the legion of girls of more than average beauty, the other luxury cars sit begging at the window side for recognition.

Thus it once was with Packard. In the two decades before World War II, Packard's Twelves and Eights and Sixes controlled the market. For some of us it was a lasting thing. As late as 1948 I lavished money, affection, time, patience, and what little skill I had on a 1935 Packard Twelve in the latter stages of decay. Three years and about \$1,200 later I ruefully conceded that the magic had managed to decay and said goodbye as a junk dealer towed the car to his boneyard.

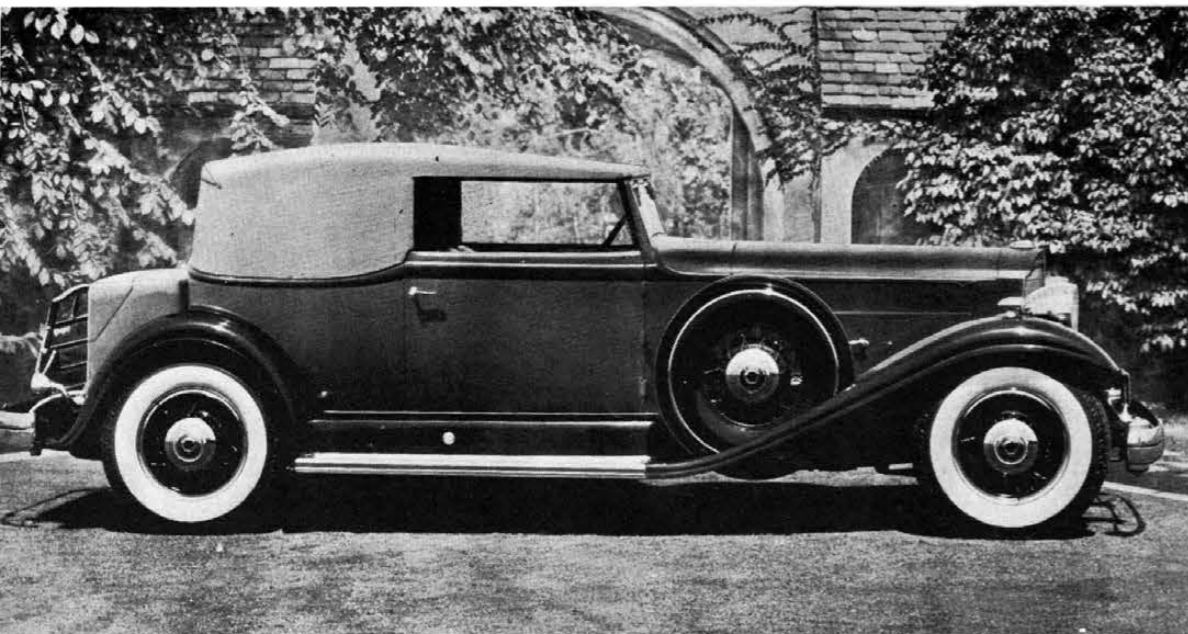
Others have not been disillusioned. Among picture collectors, Packard photos are treasured items. In the classified advertising column of the specialty car magazines the prices of used Twelves are holding up nicely. In classic-car shows and parades restored Packard predominate. Some of this popularity is based on an emotionalism similar to that which has boomed Cadillac to its present position; the rest of it is based on technical and historical fact.

There is no question that the Packard Twelve was one of America's great cars. It appeared first in 1932 (it was called

the Twin Six that year to remind buyers of Packard's earlier Twin Six.) and disappeared from the market after the 1939 model year. Only 5,744 Twelves were made, an average of 718 per year. Throughout its eight-year production history it changed as little in specifications and appearance as any car in America. To distinguish a '33 from a '34, for example, the only sure way is to inspect the instrument panel. If the dials are grouped so that there is a radio control panel, or space for one, in the top center, the car is a '34. Owners of '33 Twelves had to hang their radio controls from the bottom of the dashboard.

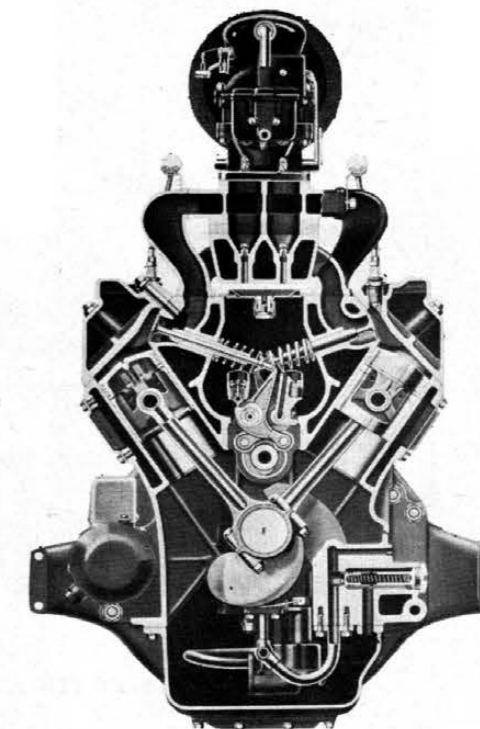
The frame was a massive structure of the double-drop type with an eight-inch depth of 5/32-inch steel. There were six cross-members on the earlier Twelves to handle the larger wheelbases, five cross-members after frame length had been chopped. Through 1936 the front suspension was semi-elliptic, changing to heavy coils and independent front suspension on the '37 through '39 models. Rear suspension remained semi-elliptic. The steering was worm and roller throughout the history of the Twelve.

Brakes were always a strong point of the car. Through



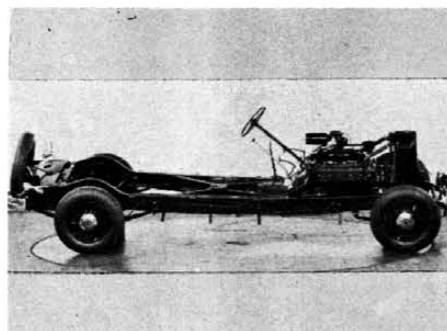
*The '32 Packard Victoria was so ultra classic, it was a study in geometric composition. A trunk at the rear of any car was a luxury or can't you remember that far in the past?*

*Cutaway of the power plant. Valves were activated directly by camshaft through roller bearings on internal rockers.*

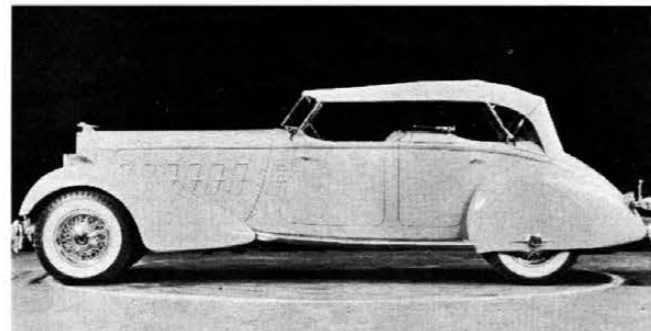


was more important than power and speed. A Twelve in top condition could be started from rest in high gear alone without jerking or evident strain. The combination of low-speed power and a 4.41 to 1 rear end ratio gave the Twelve a pre-Hydra-Matic version of clutchless driving. Even if you didn't want to load the engine and drive heavily by starting in high, you never had to use all three transmission gears. You started in low to overcome the inertia and shifted directly to high as soon as you were rolling.

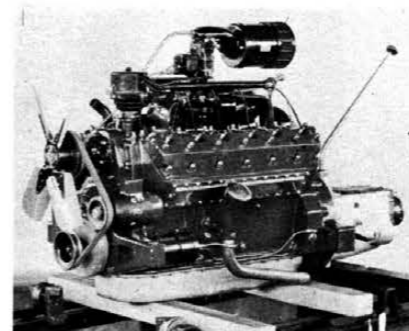
Without malice toward Packard, the Twelve can be described as a luxury truck. That's the way popular tastes ran in those days, and Cadillac, Lincoln, Marmon, Pierce-Arrow and the others also built luxury trucks. Judged strictly from a comfort standpoint, the '56 Ford is a better luxury car than any of the classics. Where the older cars had a firm, solid



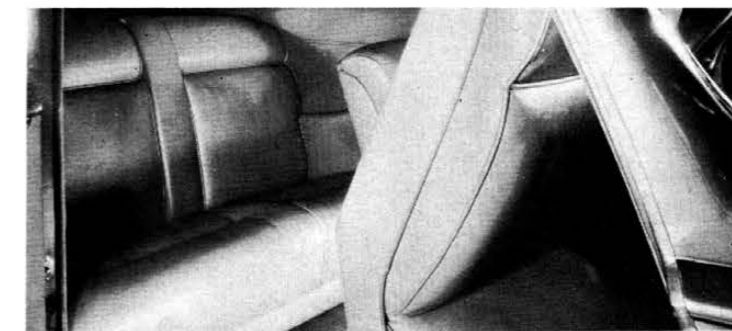
*They just don't build 'em like this today. Some of these massive structures had 6 cross-members to handle the enormous weight and wheelbase.*



*The 1934 Le Baron Special Phaeton. Packards were pretty well standard from grille to cowl, but after that body designs varied according to the coachbuilders' conceptions.*



*Smoothness was more important than speed or power. Maximum torque (366 lbs/ft) developed between 1200 and 1400 rpm, top bhp (175) at 3400 rpm.*



*Covered in top grain leather with not a stitch out of place, interiors were the ultimate in quality. Of course rear passengers in this coupe saw little scenery.*

1936 Packard, like Ford, held staunchly to mechanical brakes. The Twelves had a lining area of 283 $\frac{5}{8}$  square inches and a device known to the company as a "selective control vacuum booster." On the dash panel just below the steering wheel was a large four-position switch. The driver could vary the amount of boost to conform to road conditions and his own muscular development. When turned up to full boost, the assist was immediate and powerful. My own Twelve could be brought to a full wheels-locked stop with no more pressure than most modern cars. Later, when the '37 Twelves appeared with hydraulic brakes, the booster was retained. In addition, the lining area had been increased despite the smaller size of the new wheels by increasing the width of the drum. These later Twelves required careful handling to keep from pitching passengers and stray packages against the windshield in a panic stop.

Throughout the Twelves there was evidenced a callous disregard for lightness. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the engine compartment. The engine-clutch-transmission unit weighed 1,346 pounds despite aluminum heads and crankcase. Add to this the additional weight of the 10

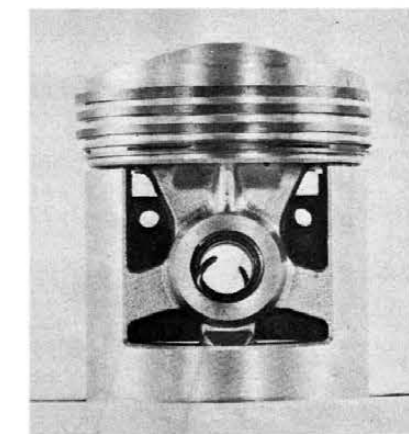
quarts of oil and the 40 quarts of water required by the engine's designer, and you have some idea of the ponderous quality of the car. This theme was carried out in the heavy steel body—all but a rare few custom models had steel bodies—and in the lush interior where there was extensive use of big slabs of wood. Total car weight, unloaded, varied between 5,000 and 6,000 pounds depending on the type of body. The bare chassis weighed 3,965 pounds.

Nothing less than a vast engine could have handled this weight. The Twelve first had 445.5 cubic inches, then was stroked  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch to up displacement to 473 cubic inches. As the performance curves show, most of the work from these inches came in the low-speed range. Maximum torque of 366 pounds-feet was developed between 1,200 and 1,400 rpm; maximum horsepower of 175 came at 3,400 rpm. (Compare these figures with the Cadillac Eldorado for 1956. The Cad gets 400 pounds-feet torque at 3,200; 305 bhp at 4,700.) Packard accomplished this low-speed performance by using a modest compression ratio (6.0 to 1 in the earlier cars, 6.4 to 1 in the later models), mild valve timing (225-degree duration for both intake and exhaust valves). Smoothness

ride, the Ford is cradlesoft; Ford seats are wider and better suited to the human figure. In performance, the Ford has vastly superior acceleration and more top speed. A direct comparison with one of today's expensive machines — Continental, for example — would be even more damaging to the classic myth.

One thing the Twelve did have was good workmanship. Packard's Senior lines were built partly by hand, and such items as upholstery, body, instrument panel and finish showed a loving attention to detail not even the Continental can boast today. The hand throttle linkage was beautifully constructed and probably cost more than a set of tires for a Model A Ford. But when things went wrong, the corner garage was helpless to correct them. Through 1935, Packard had a honeycomb oil cooler that couldn't quite take the 50-pound pressure in the oil lines. More than one Packard owner was rudely jolted by the sight of a geyser of oil spouting from his radiator cap. Unfortunately this warning did not come in time. Before the blow-off, oil and water had been mixed into a creamy emulsion in the radiator. Correcting this Packard deficiency cost the price of one new oil

*(Continued on page 65)*



*The 12's piston was aluminum. Right half of piston came almost flush against head, left half part of combustion chamber.*



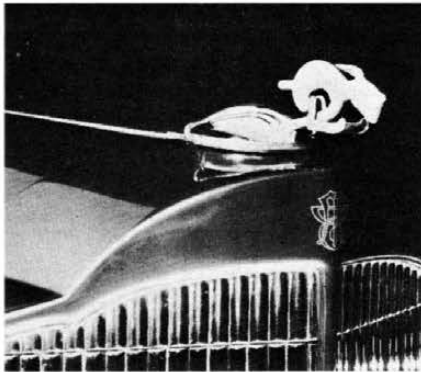
## Packard

(Continued from page 47)

cooler plus a complete block and radiator cleaning job.

When you drove a Twelve you had to keep the design limitations in mind. It was made to perform wonders at low speeds, but steady, flat-out driving was not healthy. One Packard test driver told me that he gave the big cars their failure tests on the proving grounds. The Twelve could be held wide open—about 103 mph—for about 1,250 miles but no longer. At that point the rods began to clamor for attention.

The Mechanical brakes were another item to keep in mind. When new they were great; when they were worn and the weather was wet, a San Francisco hill was not the place to be. I pulled out of the Mark Hopkins hotel on top



Classic grille—distinctive mark of car.

of Nob Hill one rainy night and made the nearly fatal error of taking the shortcut down Mason Street. The right rear wheel locked at the first touch on the brakes and three tons of Packard slid, rolled and skidded down one of America's steepest grades. To complicate matters, the transmission was worn and couldn't be held in low gear unless considerable pressure was applied to the shift lever. We reached the bottom of the hill in a broadside slide and a state of extreme exhilaration.

### Bugs

Throughout the car there were luxury gadgets that would, in time, quietly cease to function. Take the Bijur lubrication system, if you will. This theoretically insured intermittent lubrication of springs, a few other chassis points, and the clutch throwout bearing. A bottle of heavy oil was clamped to the firewall in the engine compartment and from this bottle there ran copper tubes to the required points. This was all very

(Continued on page 66)

# book review

## RACING SPORTS CARS

By Louis Klementaski and Michael Frostick  
Hamish Hamilton, London, 90 Great Russell Street, W.C. 1  
Distributed in U.S. A. by leading automotive booksellers.  
\$4.00

**A** PAIR of outstanding books on motor racing have appeared recently in England, both the result of the combined efforts of Louis Klementaski, top racing photographer, and Michael Frostick, a well-known British motoring writer. The first volume, titled "Drivers in Action," appeared last year and is a photographic study of the high speed attitudes of 13 post-war continental racing drivers; the shots are nothing short of fantastic and it goes without saying that this book should be on the shelf of every follower of the sport. Now, a companion piece to "Drivers In Action" has just been published.

Titled "Racing Sports Cars," it is an attempt on the part of the authors to trace the development of the "racing sports car" as it has evolved out of designs laid down prior to the war; by means of photographs, the book brings home a point that has become all too obvious of late, i.e. the very close similarity between the prototype racing sports car and the pure, out and out, honest-to-goodness Formula car. The authors make no attempt to criticize or to pass judgment on this situation but merely illustrate it via Klementaski's photographs. Fortunately, the text of the book is short and to the point — the real meat consisting in outstanding action photographs taken at race meets in England and on the continent of Europe.

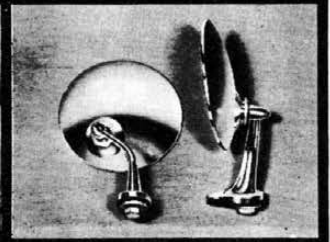
In the first part of the volume, the author of the text, Michael Frostick, attempts to answer the oldest "64 dollar question" in the history of motoring, namely: "What is a sports car?" In this discussion, he differentiates between the approach towards sports cars of the "Anglo-Saxon" and the "Latin" types, remarking that these two schools of thought have endured up to the present. The Anglo-Saxon is inclined to think of a sports car as "a touring car with various bits lopped off and as many additional horses (as can be) extracted from the engine of a basically production model," while "in the more sunny and excitable regions of Europe . . . a sports car was generally considered to be any racing car onto which some kind of windscreen and mudwings could conveniently be attached."

A short history of the current prototype sports racing cars precedes a chapter titled: "Technique" in which the reader finds out how and how *not* to make a Le Mans start. Through the well written and sometimes amusing captions he is given an insight into the problems confronting the contemporary driver. A final group of photographs illustrates pit atmosphere.

Practically all of the pictures have never been published before, thus making "Racing Sports Cars" by Louis Klementaski and Michael Frostick a book that will not be read just once and quickly forgotten but a volume that the sports car lover will pick up countless times . . . if only to glance at the superb Klementaski photographs.

— Jesse Alexander

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who you  
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(or who is  
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## MISCELLANEOUS

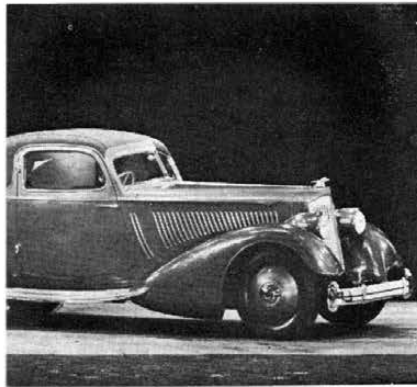
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(Continued from page 65)

fine, but there were no signal lights to tell you when one of the tubes developed a blockage. You only knew this when the clutch throwout burned out. Then there was the headlight circuit. The Twelve had four distinct light beams, labeled, Park, City, Drive and Pass. In addition to these was a foot dimmer that operated when your main switch was on Drive or Pass. All these circuits went through dashboard indicator lights as well. When the Twelves were new, a good electrical repair man could trace through these connections if he had a circuit diagram to follow. When the Twelves had aged a dozen years and many hands had been



*Whether they came through with special or production bodies, Packards were always dressed the same in front.*

toying with the wiring and all the color coding had been eroded away, it was considered a major repair victory to restore the legal minimum of the Drive circuit and the dimmer switch.

Women who have driven the big Packards like them—except for the steering. As long as the car is moving it can be turned, but a few times through the five turns lock to lock in a parallel parking situation is a good day's work.

Aside from the steering, the biggest Packard was not hard to fit into a parking place. Though most casual admirers consider them huge, they were not much larger than a '56 Ford and in some ways smaller. The 1933 Twelve had an overall length of 218 11/16 inches; the '56 Ford is 198 inches long. The '33 Twelve was 70 13/16 inches high; the same measurement on the '56 Ford is 60 inches. In width, the Ford has it all the way — 75 inches as compared to the Twelve's 71 7/8 inches. In wheelbase, the difference in design is apparent — the Ford puts all this body on a 115-inch wheelbase while the Packard had a 147-inch wheelbase. The Packard was designed like a traditional sports car — 50/50 weight distribution, grille jutting just slightly over the centerline of the front axle, virtually no overhang in the rear.

## Glass area

One item the designer of the Twelve cared little about was visibility. Some of the limousine, town car and sedan models were not bad, but the convertibles had the equivalent of a modern chopped top. The driver sat well down in the front seat, peering out through the spokes of the 18-inch steering wheel along no less than six running feet of high hood. Great fenders rose on each side of the hood, so you could estimate side clearances, but it was impossible to see over the hood. You simply sighted along it and hoped nothing was immediately underwheel. Rear vision was negligible unless fender or side window mirrors were installed.

By 1937, Packard had decided that the classic design was no longer the answer. The Twelve was gradually retired over the next years and finally eliminated.

Whatever its shortcomings, the Packard Twelve was truly a luxury car, a symbol of wealth and prestige admired all over the world. It was superseded technically, as were such other automotive giants as Locomobile, Stearns-Knight, the Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost and the Mercedes K, but it remains an important figure in its period.

Jaderquist

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