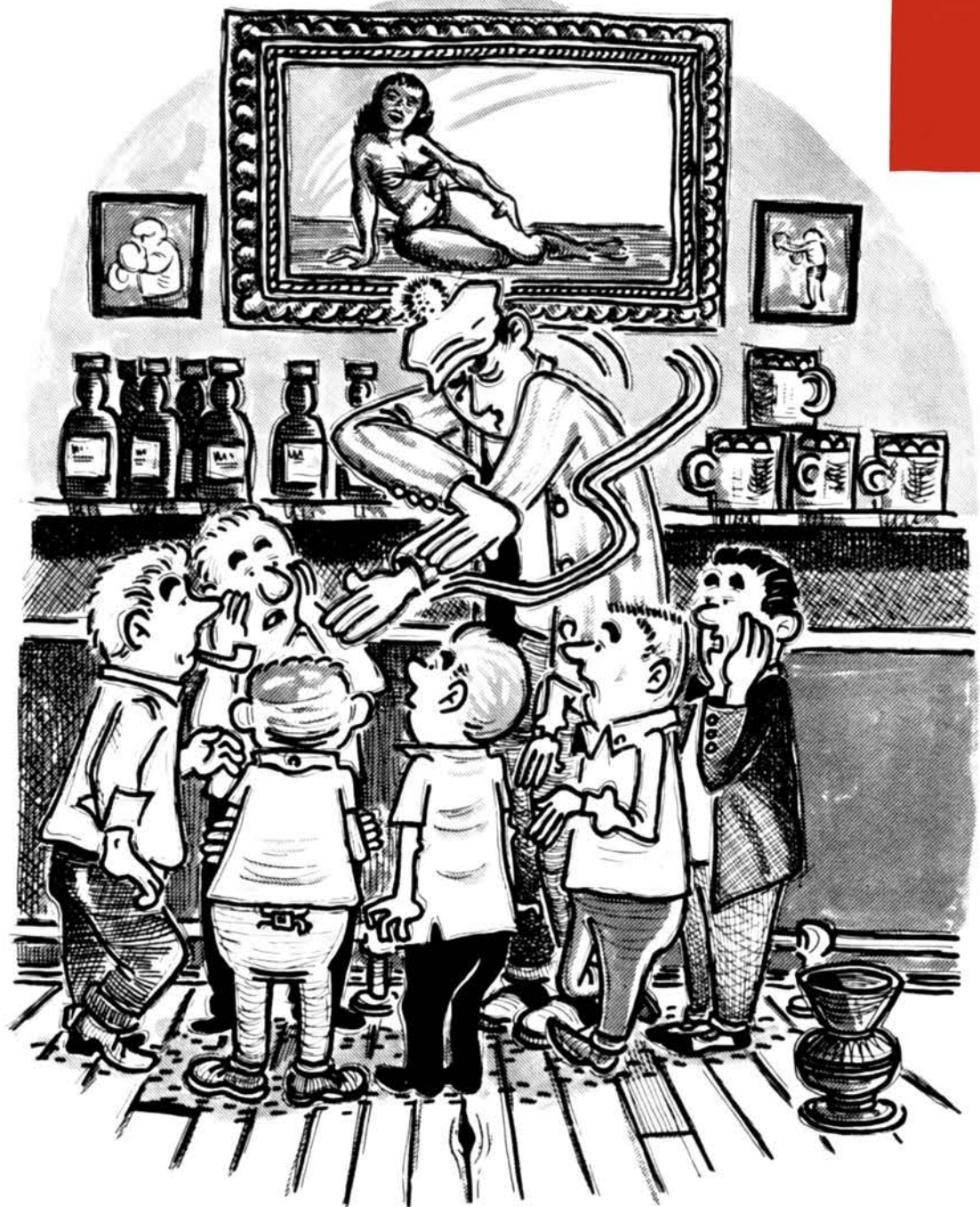


THE BIG FAST

The crude business of blowing off Detroitware is getting harder — these days you NEED a Ferrari!

by Ken Purdy



"I murdered him in the bends but . . . he caught me on the straight" used to be the standard cliché of the hero driver. Now, the shoe is on the other fellow's foot.



... the first butcher's boy who creamed an MG with his Chevy panel, complete with sausage.

IN the year of Our Lord and Grace 1936, when I was laboring 14 hours a day on a small New England newspaper, and for a wage that would not today tempt a totally unambitious office-boy, my publisher decided that a road-race would make an excellent promotion stunt. He was a Yale man and he knew The Right People—and only The Right People drove sports cars in those days. He made a few phone calls and a couple of Saturdays later the town was stirred by the sight of some strange-looking automobiles, most of them wearing open pipes, and all of them driven by citizens who were obviously skilled at getting the most decibels out of the least number of cubic centimeters. I wish I could remember what they were driving, but I was young and innocent and all I can recall is a gaggle of TA MG's and a Type 35 Bugatti. Some of them were on tow, but I can remember only one of the tractors: an impressive 12-cylinder boat-tail Auburn roadster. As it turned out, the city fathers put the thumb on the race, but before the dashing pilots left they had managed to blow off everything in town. I remember a LaSalle sedan in earnest pursuit of one of the MG's. It was pretty funny. Of course, if that lamp-post hadn't been there the LaSalle might have made the corner . . . maybe.

After the War, when the first TC's came in, a lot of new boys were recruited for the sport—and I don't mean The Sport, exactly—I mean the crude business of blowing off American iron. I remember one particularly adept practitioner named Stevenson. (Yes, I remember his first name, too, which began with B. and rhymed with spruce, but he has since reformed and gone straight). He was extremely good at cutting, say, a Buick out of the herd of a Sunday, getting in front of it and irritating its driver by weaving back and forth until he was sure the fellow was on the *qui vive*. Alertness on the part of the prospective victim was important, you could get hurt otherwise. When he was sure the fellow was ripe for the plucking, Stevenson would

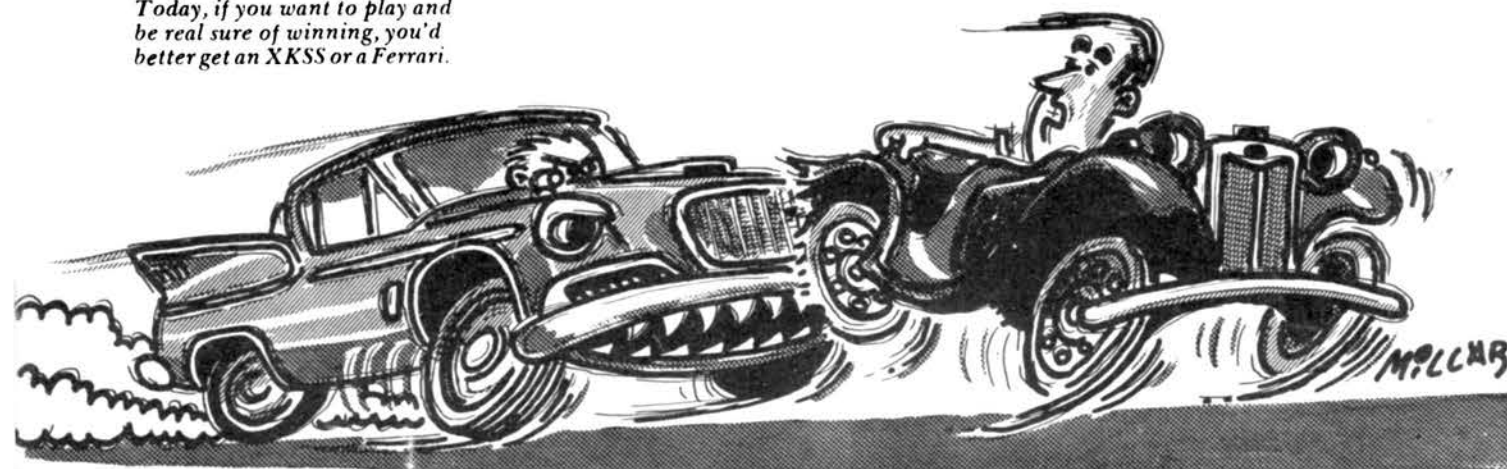
suddenly stand on everything, eye in the mirror. Just as the Buick had the panic button down and locked, Stevenson would dump the TC into first and take off, leaving his victim standing in the middle of the road, the body of the Buick going "whoomp, boomp" on its big fat springs like some crazy see-saw. This was a specialty, but of course everybody had a favorite corner for sucking people into, and the business of hanging on to a Detroit until big gobs of red-hot carbon began to blow out the pipes was common.

It was all good fun, if not very clean fun, and people who heard the tale told it to other people who told it again, and a whole generation of sports-car drivers was reared up, all of them believing that they could dust off anything that carried a Made In USA tag. Our English cousins believed this as Holy Writ, and many of them still do; but on this side of the pond, in case you haven't noticed, it's been getting harder and harder the last few years. I don't know the name of the first butcher's delivery boy who creamed an MG with his Chevie panel truck, with two sides of beef and fifty pounds of sausage in back, at that, but somewhere there should be a monument to him because he was a Pioneer, to be sure. Yes, it's been getting harder lately, and today, if you want to play, and be real sure of winning, you'd better have an XKSS or a Ferrari *America*. Running anything less potent, you may not quite make it. And I'm assuming now that you are standing at the traffic lights alongside something strictly stock, never mind oddments like the Studebaker station wagon with the blown Chrysler in it that a friend of mine currently amuses himself with. I'm talking now about ordinary go-to-meeting five-passenger sedans, machinery like the Plymouth *Fury*, the Dodge *D-500*, the Studebaker *Golden Hawk*, the Chrysler *300C*.

These are automobiles that will run from 115 to 145 miles an hour, that will get to 60 in the 7-to-9 second bracket, and will stay right-side-up in a bend while they're

(Continued on page 44)

Today, if you want to play and be real sure of winning, you'd better get an XKSS or a Ferrari.





BRITISH AUTO PARTS

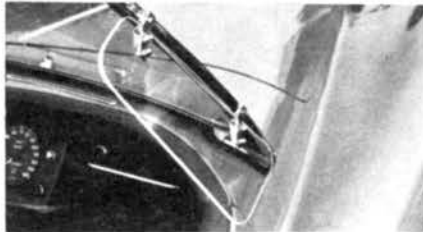
ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST DISTRIBUTORS OF FOREIGN CAR PARTS

FREE

Holiday Offer

A PAIR of these genuine \$10⁰⁰ Wingard Fender Mirrors FREE when ordering any one of the items listed below!!

Wingard the finest name in Universal mirrors — the same mirrors that regularly sell for \$10.00 a pair. — Fully Guaranteed.



DELUXE WIND WINGS

Machined brass fittings — chrome plate heavy plastic wings, for —

| | |
|------------------------|---------|
| MGA | \$16.95 |
| TRIUMPH II - III | 16.95 |
| HEALEY 100 | 19.95 |
| JAGUAR XK120 | 19.95 |

Free fender mirrors with order.

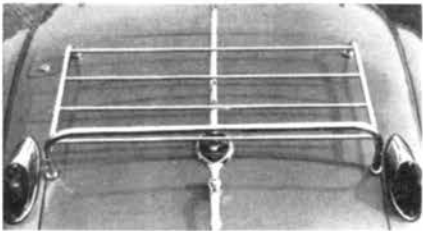


GRILL GUARD

Curved solid steel bar is machined flat to fit spring steel supports. Support brackets of solid one piece construction. No holes to drill — comes complete — chrome plated. MGA only

\$29.95

Free fender mirrors with order.



LUGGAGE RACK

Strong steel — triple plate chrome — simple installation.

| | |
|------------------------|---------|
| MGA | \$39.95 |
| TRIUMPH II - III | 39.95 |
| HEALEY 100 | 39.95 |
| JAGUAR XK120 | 39.95 |

Free fender mirrors with order.



TONNEAU COVER

Heavy plastic — perfect fit — available in TAN, BLACK or WHITE — Guaranteed.

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| MG - TD or TF — Black, Tan or White | \$31.95 |
| MGA — Black or Tan | \$19.95, White... 24.95 |
| HEALEY 100 — Black, Tan or White | 34.95 |
| JAGUAR XK120—Black, Tan or White | 39.95 |

Free fender mirrors with order.

WE CARRY A COMPLETE LINE OF THE ABOVE FOR MOST FOREIGN CARS. WRITE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION. MONEY BACK GUARANTEE.

Distributed in the U.S.A. by
BRITISH AUTO PARTS
 NEW YORK—47-19 34th Ave.,
 Long Island City
 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.
 530 Golden Gate
 SEATTLE, WASH.
 605 E. Pike

ASSOCIATE DISTRIBUTORS
 CHICAGO, ILL.—S. H. Arnolt,
 2130 N. Lincoln Ave.
 BIRMINGHAM, ALA.
 Southeastern Imp. Parts Co.,
 219 South 21st St.
 LOS ANGELES, CAL.
 Brigham St. John, Inc.,
 7713 Melrose Ave.

← SEND TO NEAREST DEALER—Dept. S. C. I.

Please send FREE Fender Mirrors with order

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

ITEM _____ COLOR _____ PRICE _____

CAR MAKE _____ YEAR _____

Price quoted includes all taxes and shipping. Send cash, check or Money Orders — NO COD's please.

Big Fast Four

(Continued from page 17)

doing it. They have heaters, radios, windshield washers, electric-lift windows and all the rest of the amenities, you can buy them for from \$3000 to \$6000, and they'll run past the average two-seater they meet, no matter what kind of pierced-back driving gloves the fellow is using to hang on to his adjustable steering wheel. To get speed equivalent to that put out by a Chrysler 300C, for example, you'd have to spoil \$7000 for an imported two-seater, and to get speed plus comparable luxury you'd better start with \$10,000—and that may not be enough, because you're going to have to engage the services of some Old World panel-beaters and upholsterers.

Consider the Chrysler 300C for a starter. This is a fast automobile by any standard: it has done an honest 145 miles an hour around the 4.7-mile Chrysler Proving Ground track. You have here a 392-inch V-8 running a 9.25-to-1 compression ratio and putting out 375 horsepower at 5200 rpm, with a maximum torque figure of 420 ft lbs at 4000. The planetary geared torque converter provides three forward ratios, and you can have any rear-axle set-up you like from 2.92 to 6.17. Just a little while ago, when it looked as if racing might be making a comeback in Detroit, the 300C was demonstrably the fastest stocker in the country. It won the 1955 and 1956 NASCAR Stock Car Championships, the 1955 AAA Stock Car Championships, the 1955 and 1956 NASCAR National Speed Trials Championships and the 1955 and 1956 Women's National Speed Trials Championships. The \$6000 that a 300C costs buys a lot of car, a lot of history, a lot of performance and a great deal of comfort. For comparable performance and comfort you've almost got to go to the Bentley Continental, at \$19,000, and while you'll get a shade more comfort and considerably more silence, you'll also have to settle for 25 miles an hour less speed. And there is still the \$13,000 difference in initial cost.

In the European market, any of the cars we're talking about would be tagged "Gran Turismo." Consider another Chrysler product, the Plymouth Fury. This is a car that will go, and stick, with almost anything. It is probably the most roadable automobile made in America, and there are people who insist that no better-handling production car can be bought here at any price. That statement covers a lot of ground, ruling out as it does such venerated items as the XK140 and the 300SL. The Fury will turn inside some sports cars of considerable repute, and on a twisting road, an enterprising Fury driver who isn't carrying too many black points on his license can stand off an XK140. He'll be taken, of course, on the first long straight—an amusing statement when you think about it for a minute. "I murdered him in the bends but naturally he caught me on the straights" used

(Continued on page 46)

LODGE

SPARK PLUGS

consistently take more
1st places than any other
spark plugs in the World!



Sam Hanks (Belong Ex-haust Special) 1957 500 mile Indianapolis Race using Lodge Spark Plugs

1st. INDIANAPOLIS

1st. SEBRING

1st. LE MANS • 1st. PIKES PEAK

and NOW new records at Bonneville!

13 out of 19 records at Bonneville—besides going 245 mph in an MG.

A COMPLETE RANGE OF PLUGS FOR ANY CAR

LODGE Improved Regular Plugs:

Sturdy, single point, standard design, precision built throughout, with patented Sintox insulator and corrosion-resistant electrodes.

LODGE Triple Electrode Plugs:

Custom engineered for motorcycles. An extremely reliable, long-wearing plug. Original equipment on some of the finest engines.

LODGE Silver Tip Plug:

A brand new product of Lodge Research. Wide heat range type specially developed for 2-stroke and other medium compression engines.

LODGE Grand Prix Racing Plugs:

Special tested high-heat range plugs for racing. Choice of Championship drivers the world over.

← the world famous Lodge Platinum Plug

For maximum performance. This aristocrat of all spark plugs has double the normal heat range. Resists low speed fouling—defies high temperature. Lasts thousands of miles longer than any other plug made.

LODGE SPARK PLUG CO.

401 E. Washington Blvd., Los Angeles 15, Calif.

WRITE ABOVE FOR NEAREST DEALER

Big Fast Four

(Continued from page 44)

to be one of the standard clichés of the sports-car driver rubbing the buttons of his striped weskit up against the bar and telling the other yo-yos about his last encounter with a V-8 Glugmobile on his way to the rallye. The shoe is now, as it were, on the other fellow's foot.

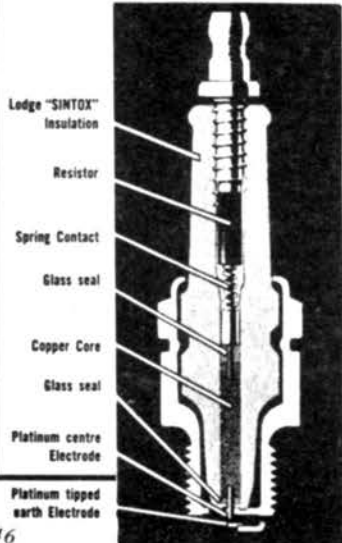
The current Detroit contribution to fast motoring—most of the spade-work has been Chrysler's—is the production of fast multi-passenger automobiles that are both comfortable and safe on the road. You don't have to be old enough to be reading this with bi-focals to remember when the law that said a safe car had to be sprung like a concrete basement had the same standing as the law of gravity. You could have comfort or you could have road-ability, but you couldn't have both. The first hole in this dike was dug in Europe, naturally, but, and also naturally, it was left to the Detroit slip-stick operators to put the polish on it. The *Fury's* springs and shocks are 25 per cent stiffer than those that hold up the standard Plymouth, yet the ride is not notably harsher. And at the car's top speed—115 mph—it's just as solid as it is at 60 or lower.

It would be amusing to take a *Fury* chassis to Italy, put a Farina hard-top coupe body and a Belzano or Fugatti name-badge on it and see what it would fetch in the open market. Around \$12,500 with no trouble at all, I'd guess.

Another nice little family carriage, suitable for shopping and short commuter hauls is the Dodge D500, which will perform these little tasks for you at around 110-112 miles an hour when you have no bananas for your corn-flakes, or the train is coming early around the bend. Thirty-three hundred U. S. dollars, approximately, will buy this six- or seven-place transportation. Not quite as special as the Plymouth *Fury*, the *D500* is actually an engine option on the Red Ram power plant and costs \$113.65. It will move the *Coronet*, for example, to 60 in 8.5 seconds, to 100 in 20 seconds more, and it will show 83 miles an hour at the end of a standing quarter-mile. In addition to all this it's a safe, smooth-handling car, although it won't tolerate quite as much enterprise as the *Fury*.

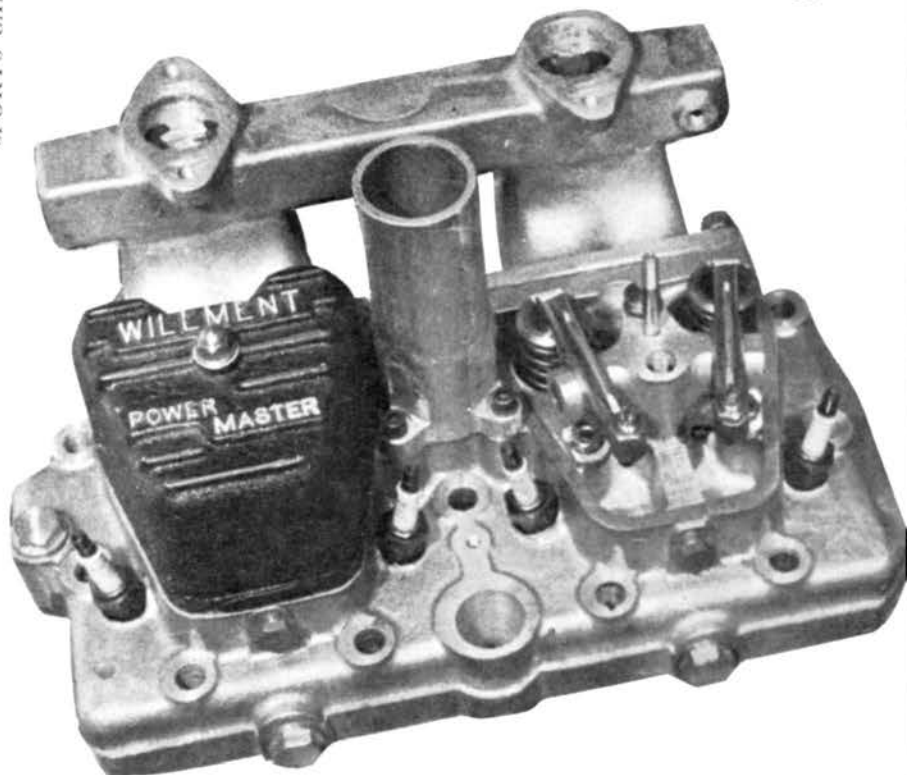
Studebaker's *Golden Hawk* is in rather a separate sub-category in this listing of fast multi-passenger home-baked products, because the South Bend factory designed the car, or evolved it, as a compromise. The Studebaker people wanted a car that would look like and act like a sports car but would still transport a family through a rain-storm without getting anybody's feet wet. Chrysler, in announcing the *300C*, the *Fury* and the *D500*, made no such claim. Chrysler's was the soft sell. The automobiles were turned loose to prove themselves, tagged only as production-line hard-tops. A subdued-but-purposeful roll of drums preceded the entrance of the *Golden Hawk*.

That being the case, it's odd that the *Golden Hawk*, while the second-fastest
(Continued on page 48)



Overhead Valve Conversion Kit

FORD 1172cc 100E Engine



61 BHP @ 6000 RPM

When fitted to the Ford Anglia, Prefect, Morgan and Lotus.

Using stock camshaft and exhaust manifold. 30 to 38 MPG.

All parts necessary for installation included.

\$295.00 less carburetors.



Genuine

FOREIGN PARTS

811 SCARSDALE AVE. SCARSDALE, N. Y.

SCarsdale 5-3950

Big Fast Four

(Continued from page 46)

of the lot—it has been tested at 127 miles an hour—is inferior to the others in handling. Not so much inferior, mind you, as to make it hazardous or anything even close to hazardous, but enough to make the difference between it and, say, a *Fury* pretty plain.

The first *Golden Hawk* was a gilded dog. It ran on a huge Packard engine that weighed a jolly 800-odd pounds.

every ounce of which tried to drag the front end off the road in a bend. It was a reasonably quick car, but some of the quickness was more theoretical than real in that it couldn't be used on anything but the Utah salt flats. When the intrepid *Hawk* pilot saw a corner coming up, he got off the loud-pedal if he wished to be intrepid on another day. Otherwise, he could crank the wheel over and sit there with his mouth open while the whole load mushed grumpily right off the road. I had this pleasure on several occasions and it was no pleasure.

But that *Hawk* is with us no longer. Modern science, or something, has come

up with a new, better, more sanitary *Hawk*, delivered direct from the finance company to you with something called a "Jet Stream Supercharger" (ah, there, mr. McCullough!) bolted to its new, smaller Studebaker engine. This device, which I understand works something like an electric fan shoved into the end of a drain-pipe, enables the smaller engine to deliver the same 275 horsepower produced by the old, bigger one. Thus it is, junior, that the *Golden Hawk* will do 125 miles an hour any old day, which is probably roughly 50 miles an hour faster than you ought even to think about driving. It is still not any threat to a Lancia in the road, adherence to, department, but the nose-heaviness of yore, while still evident, is not nearly so offensive. And while we're cutting the car into sections we should say that the back end has a limited-slip differential optionally available and this is a handy device in certain situations.

That brief beef over, we can say that the *Golden Hawk*, while not as clean in design, and not as well integrated as the Chrysler line, is still an extraordinarily handsome automobile, looks smaller, looks more purposeful, more sporting. (And remember, it's faster than a Corvette or a Thunderbird!) It is remarkably economical on gasoline, considering its performance, and it's about as well-built as a production-line car can be in America today. Very few things fall off brand-new *Golden Hawks*. And last but not at all least, it has the most sensible instrumentation being delivered anywhere in the world today at any price: speedometer, tachometer, fuel, amps, temperature, oil pressure and engine vacuum all black-and-white, all round, not a bilious-looking purple light bulb anywhere in sight.

For a long time it hasn't been fashionable to give Detroit credit for much but the ability to put wheels under anything and sell it, but the present trend toward fast, roadable, comfortable *Gran Turismo* automobiles is most laudable. To appreciate the ground that has been covered one has only to think back to just before the war, when 100 mph-plus automobiles offering any degree of civilized comfort and reasonable safety on the road were exclusively available to those who could afford to pay \$10,000 and up for them. Mostly, up. And you can call that \$15,000 in terms of today's money.

It hardly seems sensible not to have at least a pair of them in the barn.

—Ken Purdy

Next Month:
VIOLENT VW
How Fast Can
the Beetle Be?