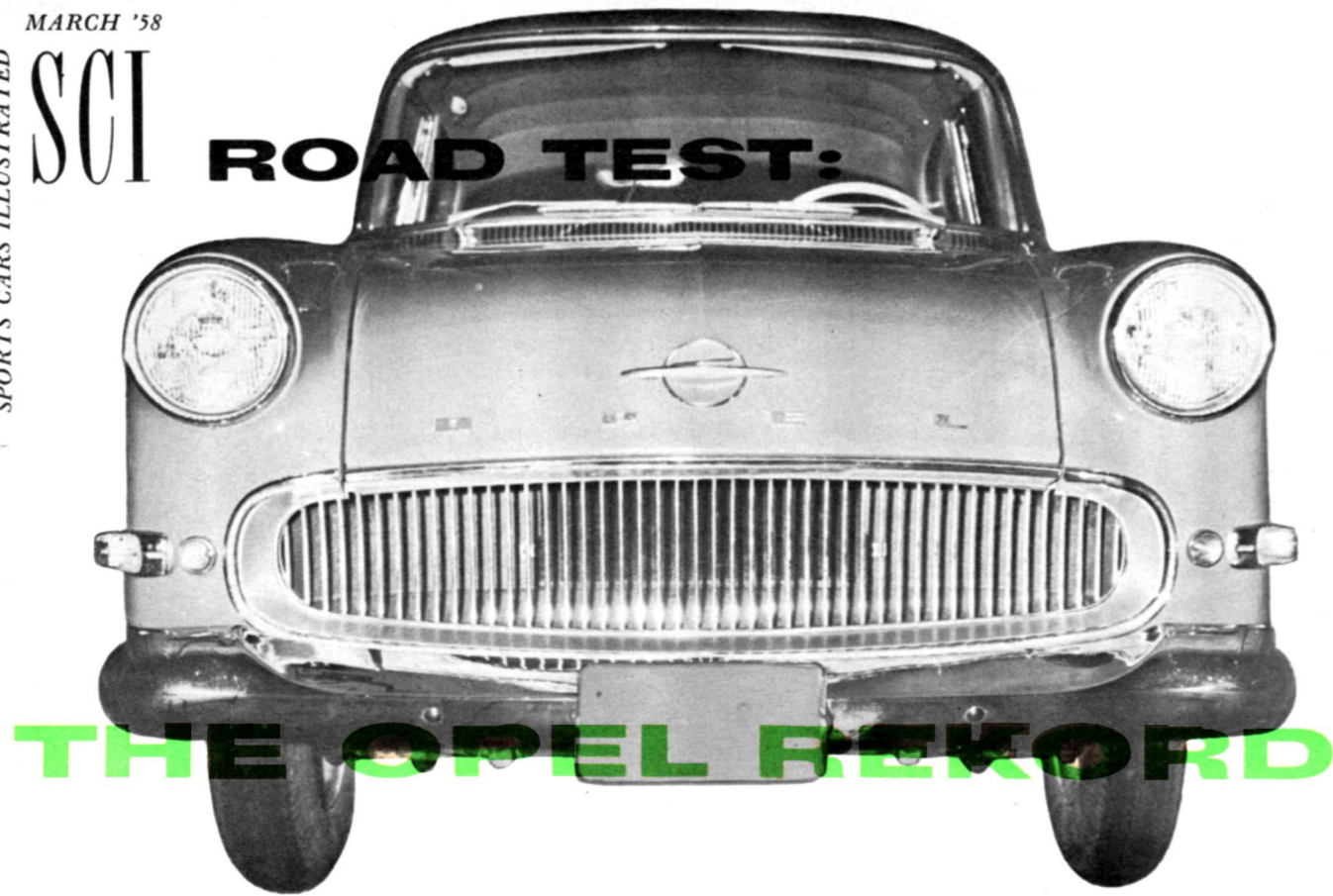


SCI

ROAD TEST:



THE OPEL REKORD

THE OPEL is made in Germany by GM, designed for the American market rather than the European. Considerably more effort has been put into making the Opel comfortable, roomy and well appointed, rather than just "economy". It could be supposed that a lot of handling and performance had been sacrificed; however, the Rekord is a happy blend that is well suited to either city or suburban driving.

Although the Rekord is not a sports machine, and it seemed a bit unfair to subject it to the same punishing series of tests to which we subject the hotter equipment, we decided to go all out. We drove to Lime Rock, and after two practice laps, set a lap time — with two passengers and driver aboard — of 1:41.2. Interesting, because we were stop-watch dicing with a sports car of considerably higher repute and equal displacement, that averaged 1:38.5! More interesting yet is the fact that a good portion of the course was covered with ice — which the Opel took in stride.

The Opel is one of those machines that we can, with impunity, call an understeering car. Negotiating the turns at Lime Rock, we pretty consistently had the wheel at full lock, but the slip angles were so large that we had to back off in order to bring the tail around. If the track had been free of ice, it would have taken us longer to negotiate a lap. As it was, occasional icy patches helped the rear wheels to slide out, kicking out the rear end. But then, understeer is built into American cars: the American driver expects it.

But if you curve below this mush-limit, the Opel is a remarkably solid-feeling car that handles as if it wants to stay on the road. The ride is smooth, and even the jolts of washboard surfaces are absorbed by the suspension and are barely felt by the passengers.

We got a surprise while testing the brakes. Frankly, we expected to make three or four stops, and run out of pedal; but after completing ten stops, the pedal felt fine. So we gave it seven more stops, for a total of seventeen! We ground off a lot of lining, but could not completely fade the brakes! The

braking efficiency was in the order $\frac{2}{3}$ "g", or 70% efficiency, and did not fall off appreciably. Of course it must be remembered that it takes considerably longer for the "Rekord" to get up to 60 mph than it does many strictly-sports cars.

The interior is roomy enough to comfortably seat four adults, though it can carry five or six, depending on the degree of crowding one is willing to endure. The instrumentation is simple, with two lights that serve as ammeter and low oil pressure warning, and two gauges for fuel and engine water temperature.

Some people claim that cars have personalities. If that is the case, the Opel is certainly pessimistic. The fuel gauge on American cars is designed to read, for example, half-full; the Opel tank reads half empty; to do a legitimate 80 mph on an American car, the speedometer has to read somewhere near ninety; we did 78 mph in the Opel with the speedometer reading 77 mph; top speed (according to the manual is "approximately 77.67"; we did 78 mph; etc.)

The four-cylinder, ohv pushrod, 1500 cc engine is rated 56 hp at 4400 rpm. Since the engine is oversquare (shorter stroke than bore), the piston speed at maximum power is quite nominal, indicating that the wear rates would not be excessive. We averaged 22 mpg on regular gasoline, but it must be remembered that the car was relatively new and at no time did we ever operate the Rekord in the speed ranges or under the conditions for which it was designed. Unquestionably judicious handling will produce far better mileage.

Price: \$1995. In mountainous Switzerland, the Rekord is priced competitively with another popular German car, and it sells with its competitor about equally despite its three speed transmission (which, incidentally, is 3-speed synchro). Apparently it's comfortable enough and pretty enough to compensate for the lack of fourth gear. By American standards, it's a good-handling, pleasantly-styled automobile. By the more demanding driver's standards — the Rekord holds its own.

Len Griffing



Opel "Rekord" is miniaturized Detroit, complete with soft seats and lots of room. Light atop doorpost is parking light.



On Lime Rock with wheel at full lock, the Rekord mashes, turns slowly. With ice slipping rear out, lap time: 1:41.2

TOP SPEED:

Two-way average	76 mph
Fastest one-way run	77 mph

ACCELERATION:

From zero to	seconds
30 mph	5.7
40 mph	8.8
50 mph	12.8
60 mph	21.6
Standing 1/4 mile	21.8
Speed at end of quarter	60 mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION:

Hard Driving	22 mpg
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POWER UNIT:

Type	Pushrod ohv in-line four
Bore & Stroke	3.15 x 2.91 in (80 x 74 mm)
Stroke/Bore Ratio	0.92/1
Displacement	90.8 cu in
Compression Ratio	7.5/1
Max. bhp @ rpm	56 bhp (SAE) @ 4400 rpm
Max. Torque @ rpm	84 lb-ft @ 2200-2600 rpm

DRIVE TRAIN:

Transmission ratios I	3.24
II	1.68
III	1.00
Final drive ratio	3.89

CHASSIS:

Wheelbase	100 in
Tread	50 in
Suspension, front	Coil and wishbone
Suspension, rear	Hotchkiss drive, leaf springs
Shock absorbers	Telescopic
Steering type	Circulating ball
Turning diameter	34 ft
Brake type	2LS front, L&T rear
Brake lining area	109 sq in
Tire size	5.60 x 13

GENERAL:

Length	174 in
Width	64 in
Height	59 in
Weight	2000 lbs
Fuel capacity	10.57 U. S. gallons

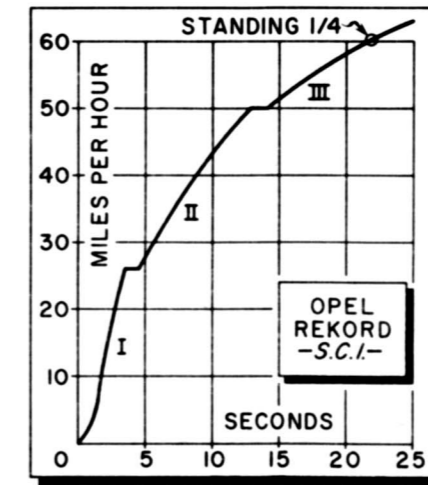
RATING FACTORS:

Bhp per cu in	0.62
Bhp per sq in piston area	1.80
Torque (lb-ft) per cu in	0.92
Pounds per bhp	35.7
Piston speed @ 60 mph	1700 fpm
Piston speed @ max bhp	2130 fpm
Brake lining area per ton	109 sq in

The Opel is miniaturized Buick, down to peaked tail lights and side flashing.



Acceleration isn't staggering, but the car's not stressed and is easy to drive.



Unstressed, oversquare 1.5-ohv engine doesn't scream, should last a long time.

