



ROAD TEST **PORSCHE D**

A desirable car made more desirable, and more expensive

CHANGES in a product that has been proved and accepted are very often mistakes rather than improvements. The changes in the Porsche Speedster, now called the Convertible D, are improvements and will make an already successful car even more so.

It is welcome news for anyone who has coveted one of these cars from Stuttgart but objected to the appearance or lack of comfort of the Speedster, and yet couldn't afford the cabriolet or coupe. The Convertible D has roll-up windows, excellent seats, and adequate headroom and good visibility with the top up. The Speedster had none of these, although coupe seats could be had as an option.

Bodies for the new car are built by Drauz, unlike other Porsches (they have bodies by Reutter). The body is similar in appearance to both the Speedster and cabriolet, but discerning Porsche enthusiasts (and what Porsche enthusiast isn't discerning?) will note a slight difference in the line at the top of the doors.

The higher windshield and top give the car a silhouette

slightly different from either the Speedster or the cabriolet. Measurements show the Convertible D to be 3.5 inches higher than the Speedster but this much difference, at least from the outside, isn't obvious. Once inside, the headroom and visibility lend credence to the measurement. Most Speedster owners will admit, if cornered, that they could use some additional headroom.

The Convertible D seats are very similar to those used in the coupe and are comfortable in the extreme. The car is a sports car in every sense; yet it is luxuriously appointed as befits a car costing almost \$4000 (including tax and license) and makes the buyer feel as though he is really getting his money's worth (he is). This is not to imply that the Speedster was not worth the money. Far from it. But the accommodations were sparse, the bucket seats were not the most comfortable, and good visibility with the top up just wasn't one of its features. Its main excuse for existence was performance, plus a lot of rather Spartan fun.

Handling and over-all performance of the new car are not

much different from other models in the line. Its weight (1900 pounds) is almost as much as the coupe's at 1930 and considerably heavier than the Speedster's at 1790, but weight distribution is almost the same on all three cars.

The rear suspension of the test car had been decambered, which helped reduce the oversteering tendencies to almost nil. This procedure, while seeming to fight the geometry of the rear suspension design, accomplishes the desired effect by lowering the roll center at the rear and fractionally increasing the rear tread.

Our test of the Porsche D was broken up into two sessions about three weeks apart, because the car didn't have adequate miles on the odometer for the acceleration runs to be made during the first trial.

During this interim period the car was used as a demonstrator by the Porsche distributor's salesmen. When we picked it up for the second time, with several thousand more miles on the odometer, the car had loosened up and the performance was notably improved. We thus had a chance to re-evaluate the car after a thorough break-in.

Vision with the top up, as we have said, is good for a convertible. But a flaw in the armor made itself evident after the top had been folded several times: the plastic rear window quickly became hard to see through because of surface scratches acquired during the folding operation.

One of the test crew had an interesting experience with the car while on the way to work one morning. A mushy, wallowing feeling indicated all was not right with the suspension and, as he pulled over to the curb to check, the left rear tire went flat, the victim of a 10-penny nail.

No instruction manual was to be found in the car and the test driver, being alone, had to figure out the jacking procedure for himself. To those familiar with Porsche jacks it is a simple operation and almost foolproof. But to a neophyte, bleary-eyed from rising too early, the task seemed almost insurmountable. Once figured out, the operation displayed the ingenious nature of the beast and did the job quickly and easily, as indeed it should.

Entrance and exit are good, and once inside there is enough leg and headroom for all but the most unusually lanky driver.

In the absence of the usual glove compartment there is a pocket in the carpeted kick panel on each side of the car, and two pockets (one locking) in each door. None of these is capable of carrying much in itself but added together and used wisely, a surprising amount of maps, gloves, flashlights and other bits of more or less useful odds and ends can be carried.

Workmanship on the new D-type is equal to other Porsches and still superior to most cars on the road today. Very little improvement could be asked of these cars and the most objectionable feature of the entire car was the noise level. Odd sounds from the air-cooled flat 4 filter into the passenger compartment in greater volume than one might expect from an engine mounted in the rear. The noise is only bothersome at first and we found that the longer we drove the car the less we noticed it.

It is amazing how a company can continue to improve a car so much over a period of years with only detail refinements. The basic design of a Porsche remains almost the same today as it was on the first model tested by Road & Track, away back in November 1952.

The Convertible D, like the other body styles, will be available with the Super engine for \$425 more, and while the performance of the normal (as tested) version is adequate, the Super adds that desirable little bit. (West Coast prices quoted here and on data panel; slightly lower in East.)

Summing up the effect of a week with the car, it seems to us the best buy in a highly desirable line and will probably give more driving pleasure per dollar than almost any car you can buy.

ROAD & TRACK ROAD TEST **200**



PORSCHE 1600 CONVERTIBLE D

SPECIFICATIONS

List price	53695
Curb weight	1900
Test weight	2220
distribution, %	43.6/56.4
Dimensions, length	156
width	65.6
height	51.5
Wheelbase	82.7
Tread, f and r	51.4/50.1
Tire size	5.60-15
Brake lining area	122
Steering, turns	2.5
turning circle	36
Engine type	flat 4, ohv
Bore & stroke	3.25 x 2.91
Displacement, cu in	96.5
cc	1582
Compression ratio	7.5
Bhp @ rpm	70 @ 4500
equivalent mph	86.0
Torque, lb.-ft.	86.2 @ 2800
equivalent mph	53.5

PERFORMANCE

Top speed (4th), mph	98
best timed run	100
3rd (5000)	75
2nd (5000)	48
1st (5100)	27

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Normal range, mpg	26/30
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ACCELERATION

0-30 mph, sec	4.5
0-40 mph	7.1
0-50 mph	10.6
0-60 mph	14.0
0-70 mph	19.2
0-80 mph	26.0
0-90 mph	
0-100 mph	
Standing 1/4 mile	19.4
speed at end, mph	70

GEAR RATIOS

O/d (n.a.), overall	
4th (0.88)	3.91
3rd (1.12)	5.00
2nd (1.76)	7.81
1st (3.17)	14.1

TAPLEY DATA

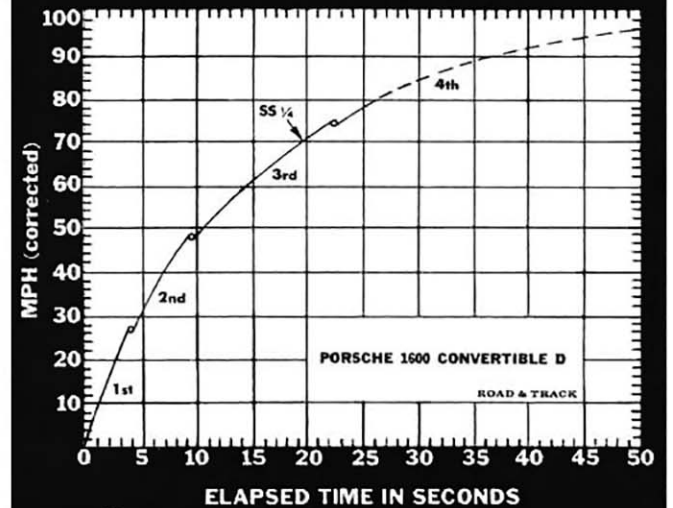
4th, lb./ton @ mph	190 @ 60
3rd	290 @ 50
2nd	400 @ 38
1st	580 @ 25
Total drag at 60 mph, lb	99

CALCULATED DATA

Lb/hp (test wt)	31.7
Cu ft/ton mile	78.9
Mph/1000 rpm (4th)	19.1
Engine revs./mile	3140
Piston travel, ft./mile	1525
Rpm @ 2500 ft./min	5150
equivalent mph	98.6
R&T wear index	47.9

SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph	actual 27.0
40 mph	35.8
50 mph	45.0
60 mph	53.8
70 mph	64.2
80 mph	74.5
90 mph	
100 mph	



The sporting motorist can ride in comfort.



PHOTOGRAPHY: POOLE

Full-width rear window is a worthwhile addition.

