

FACTS & FORECASTS

INSIDE INFORMATION • EXCLUSIVE REPORTS • BEHIND THE DETROIT SCENE

Rambler boom continues. Main plant at Kenosha, Wisconsin, has been working six days a week, three shifts per day. All this while many other auto makers are cutting back.

New smaller Cadillac is being planned to compete as Thunderbird-type compact luxury car. Target is 100,000 annually. Whether it is intended to replace completely the current standard size is not known.

More on the forthcoming small small Ford: Engine is air-cooled ohv V-4, with offset cylinders. Wheelbase reportedly is near 95 inches, the same as Volkswagen. One reliable source says engine may be mounted in the rear!—which would be a surprise.

Power kit for Corvair, announced months ago, is now becoming generally available. Price is \$27.00.

Another V-6, and the first for a passenger car, apparently is in the works. Rambler is the car involved and the design is believed to be a variation of the air-cooled V-4 now in production for the military. Only other domestic V-6 is the GMC pickup truck job, which was tested in the May, 1960 issue of MOTOR LIFE.

CADILLAC TO BE NEXT IN COMPACT PARADE

Dodge will announce a compact car, probably called the Lancer, as a 1961 model. The fact, often rumored, has been officially confirmed. It presumably will be based on the Valiant design.

Will there be a compact from Chrysler division? Although there's been no evidence of one, many observers often have wondered. Now the head of the division has publicly stated there will not be.

Front drive experiments aren't a Ford exclusive. At least two GM divisions are working with front drive adaptations on medium compact cars, both involving some very unusual mechanical layouts.

Four-speed transaxle arrangement for the Corvette is in the works. One independent rear suspension test car is now running at GM's Technical Center proving ground track.

Buick and Olds compacts are set for 215-cubic-inch aluminum V-8 engine and it is a powerplant with many production innovations. Cylinder heads will be cast in slices, then bonded together like a sandwich—to reduce casting die cost. Iron cylinder sleeves will be cast integral with the block, instead of being inserted separately.

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FRONT DRIVE CONSIDERED BY MORE MAKES

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More alternators are on the way from Chrysler Corporation. 1961 Chrysler, Imperial and 300-G will all bow in with new constant-flow generator device that currently graces the Valiant and 300-F Special.

Ultra compact cars are causing a new Detroit debate. Ford and Chrysler think they can crack the Volkswagen-Renault market and are pushing ahead with development of 1600-lb. designs with four-cylinder engines. Chevrolet doubts that there is a big enough market for these tiny cars to justify volume tooling.

Car heights may drop another notch in 1961. All-new GM body shells are said to be nearly one inch lower than the '60s. Styling is aimed to emphasize the low height. Many observers say Detroit is near the minimum practical figure, at 52 to 53 inches.

Rumors of an open sports version of the Corvair persist. Prototypes are said to be near completion, but no road testing has been done. Cars would presumably have completely separate body and underbracing, using current suspension components, power train and engine. Some sources say Duntov is experimenting with a one-of-a-kind "RSK" Corvair, with space frame and super light aluminum body.

Chrysler may offer a choice in ram-induction manifolds. Special high speed manifold castings on 400-hp 300-F have shortened effective passage lengths to "tune" at 4400 rpm, instead of the standard 2800 rpm. They may be offered on all makes this summer to help them improve drag strip performance.

New sheet metal for the Lark? Styling prototypes have been spotted in and around South Bend. Observers say the new cars have a Mercedes-like look in the full profile.

Power and racing equipment for Studebakers will be offered soon through all dealers. Components have been developed by Holman & Moody, North Carolina speed merchants.

No more station wagons for Chrysler Division of Chrysler Corporation is indicated now from first reports on the 1961 model lineup.

Compact sales continue to please Detroit. Production of the six makes has grown to 25 per cent of total industry output. Such enthusiastic acceptance is pushing GM and Chrysler toward more elaborate medium compacts.

Has the bloom gone out of the boom? As dealer inventories of unsold new cars build up over the 900,000 mark, Detroit sales executives are taking a new look at optimistic estimates of a 7.5-million car year. Some have scaled the goal down to six million. The flaw: Too much faith was put in post-steel-strike production rates, when companies were catching up.

Vital research on car safety continues to come from the Cornell Aeronautical Lab of Buffalo, New York. One device has standard car body mounted between turnables to simulate rollovers. Instrumented dummies measure impacts and G forces in crashes. One finding: Seat belts are effective in preventing head injuries.

Tomorrow's auto tire could be all metal! Goodyear has produced an all-metal tire for space craft that can withstand temperatures up to 2,000 degrees F. Tread section is made of wire tufts, something like a wire brush, that show load-deflection characteristics similar to those of pneumatic tires.