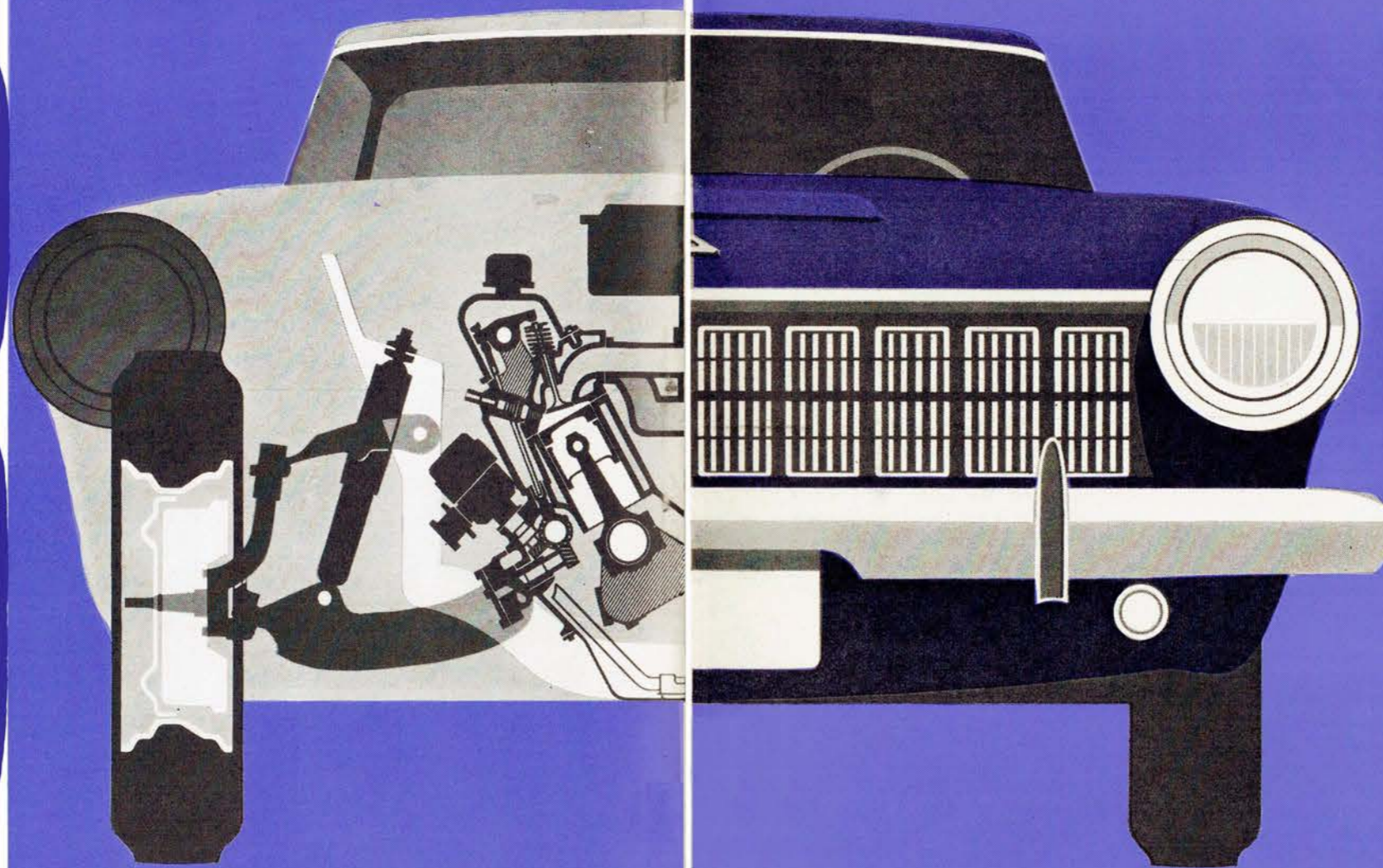


1963 CARS

MT's authoritative car-by-car first reports on the exciting new models for the coming year



DETROIT'S season of excitement is with us again. Across the country conversation centers on cars and the shapes and sizes that are about to be unveiled for the 1963 model year. Will it be a year of revolution with the accent on engineering changes, or will it be a season of evolution with the stylists leading the way?

The official announcements have not been made, but, as in the past, MOTOR TREND is able to present to its readers the first look through authoritative speculation. On the following pages are first reports of all of the 1963 cars. The information is based upon the reports of our own correspondents and the experienced analysis of our editors. Naturally, all of the facts are not here, but, if our batting average of the past is any criterion, the following reports add up to a good picture of '63. /MT

Corvair

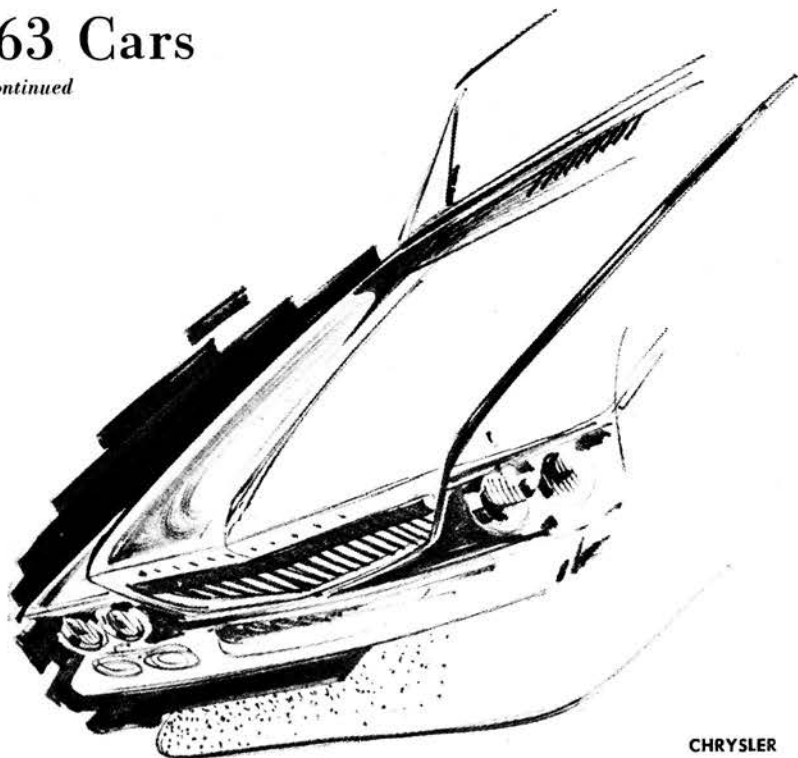
You'll have to look twice to tell a '63 Corvair from a '62. Biggest difference is the split chrome trim across the front center of the body nose is changed to a wide, solid chrome bar. No important mechanical changes. The rumored new cylinder heads, with larger ports and valves, don't look likely for '63. Instead, they will push development of the turbo-charged Spyder engine — and it will eventually be optional in all Corvair lines. This setup has a lot of untapped potential. Also look for heavy-duty suspension to be optional on all lines.

Meteor

Mercury's Meteor line is based on the Fairlane body and components, so can also be expected to follow the new Fairlane theme closely. No big sheet-metal or mechanical changes are in sight. A new station wagon and hardtop are due this fall, with a convertible likely in the spring. Meteor may also follow Fairlane in developing more potent performance options — if not for announcement this fall, then for 1963½ introduction next spring. Mercury Division officials today are more "hep" to the performance market than in years.

'63 Cars

continued



CHRYSLER

Avanti

Studebaker's new sports coupe is considered a 1963 model. No changes are planned this fall, other than running corrections of possible bugs. It is expected, however, that special hand-built supercharged engines — with much additional speed equipment — will soon be available on special order from Paxton Products. Other performance equipment may be added next year.

Buick

The new Buick bodies will be slightly longer than in '62, with restyling aimed at softening the deep sculptured look of current models. They will look smoother and more rounded. Front ends are quite similar. No important mechanical changes.

The big news from Buick for '63 is the new four-seat Thunderbird-type "personal" car. This car has been under development for two years, and it will definitely be in the showrooms next fall. They will call it the Riviera. It will be based on the regular Buick chassis (frame, running gear, transmissions) and will use the big 401-cubic-inch engine. Wheelbase is shorter, however, at around 117 inches. The body is all new. It has a relatively massive, rounded look below the belt line, but the roof structure looks quite spindly and deli-

cate. The overall look is something like a large VW Karmann-Ghia. The front fenders are brought forward to a relatively sharp ridge that sweeps down vertically to the bumper. The parking lights are built into these ridges, and are covered with cast grilles, reminiscent of the 1940 LaSalle grille, with the dual headlights set inside the two ridges. The grille is much like the current Buicks. Dual square tail lights give a nice touch to the back. There are two indentations in the lower part of the body, just ahead of the rear wheels — something like the current Corvette side treatment. It's an extremely attractive package — with excellent passenger comfort, trunk space and acceleration.

Cadillac

Cadillac is sticking with prominent fins on the rear fenders for '63. (They started the fin trend in the late '40s, and they're *not* giving up the ship now!) Rear window glass area is reduced somewhat, and the body has more prominent horizontal trimming. Front end features a rather massive bumper. Word is that Cadillac has been tooling a brand-new, cast-iron V-8 of over 400 cubic inches and that the new engine will likely be ready for the '63s. The horsepower rating is said to continue at the 325 level. The floor hump in the front com-

partment will be lowered by use of a new three-piece driveshaft. They say this is a preliminary step to a transaxle in 1964.

Chevrolet

Styling changes will be relatively minor. The hood is swept downward more from the windshield, so the grille looks closer to the ground. The grille itself is much like '62, but has more prominent horizontal bars. A horizontal convex ridge runs down the body side. Rear of the body is reminiscent of 1960, with some lateral fin effect. Some 1963 Chevrolets will be fitted with aluminum radiators (the company has been experimenting heavily along this line for two years.) Alternators will likely be standard equipment — and word is that Chevy is going to the 30,000-mile lubrication gimmick. No other radical mechanical innovations — though development is continuing on the many performance options. Word is that the 409-cubic-inch, high-performance engine will be opened out to 456 inches this summer! Turbo-supercharger options are possible by Daytona time next winter.

Chevy II

Very minor styling changes for '63. A broad spear points forward on the body side. About half of the Sixes will be fitted with aluminum radiators. A wide range of performance options is rumored for the '63 Chevy II's — including assembly-line installation of the Corvette V-8 engine, 14-inch wheels, heavy-duty suspension, four-speed transmissions, etc. Some Chevy engineers feel there is a vast market for economical compacts with the performance of the modern Super/Stock.

Corvette

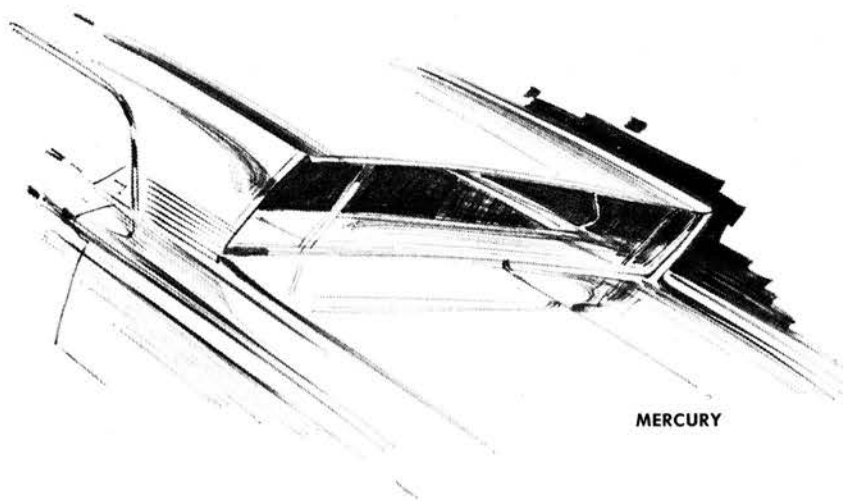
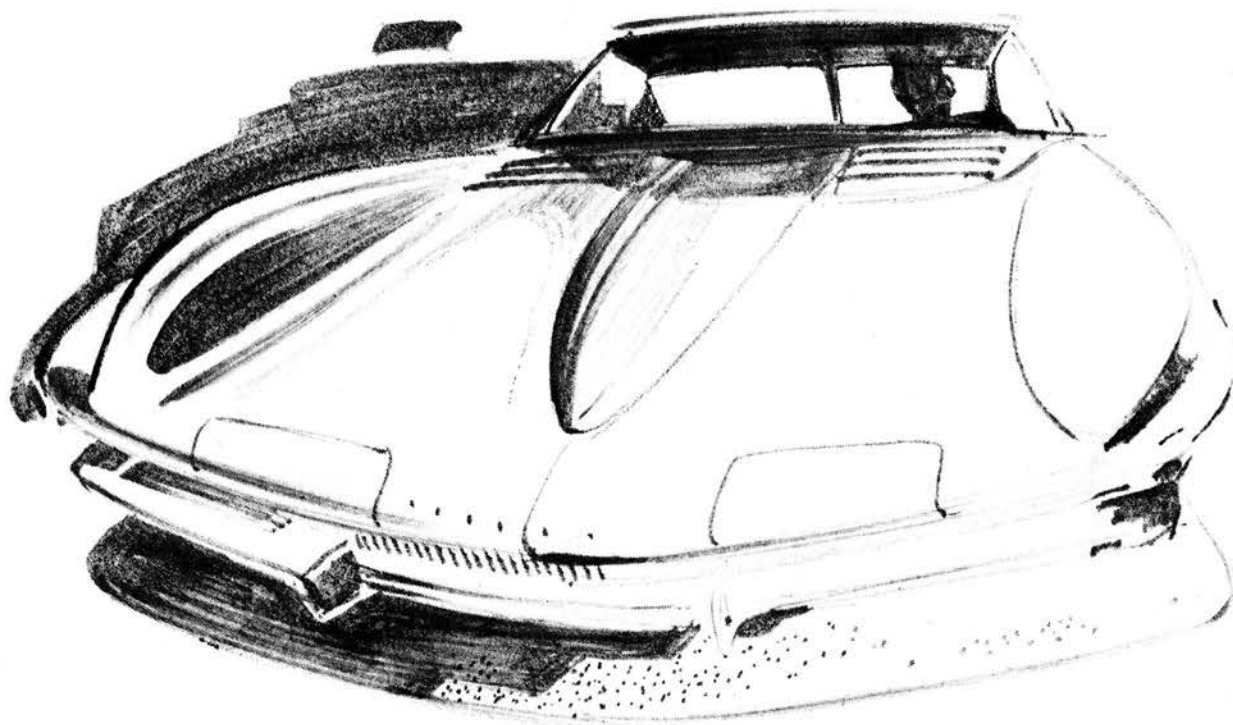
The 1963 Corvette promises to be the most advanced car to hit the American market in a decade. This is the "all-new" Corvette we've been hearing rumors about for three years. The fiberglass body is new from the rear fenders forward. The lines are a lot like the well-known Stingray sports-racing car. The hood slopes down steeply, between the front wheels, to a low ridge that crosses the front at the center of the body. The swept-back grille is below this, with thin bumpers that sweep inward, and then down under the body. The front fenders actually reach up above the hood line.

Dual front headlights pivot on panels to disappear inside the body when not in use, leaving a beautiful smooth expanse of surface for minimum wind resistance. The well-known sculptured dip in the side of the Corvette body is gone—replaced by two smaller notches that sweep back just behind the front wheels. The rear of the body looks much like '62. The interior is also all new, with a beautiful new instrument panel featuring large matching speedometer and tach dials.

And the new Corvette is just as interesting underneath. The frame and front suspension are basically '62—but there will be a new independent rear suspension system that will improve handling and cancel the lateral torque that hurts traction by lifting the right rear wheel. The differential is frame-mounted, with the wheels carried on lateral A-frames. Springing is by coils. The brakes are outboard on the wheels. There appears to be some negative camber on the rear wheels to improve cornering bite. Engine and transmission options will likely be nearly the same—though there is word that some kind of supercharger will be offered on the 327-cubic-inch engine as an all-out racing option. This *may not* be a turbo.

And the hottest rumor of all: A beautiful new fastback coupe is in the works for Corvette. This may not come out next fall...but it is very possible for next spring, as a "1963½" model.

CORVETTE



MERCURY

Chrysler

The '63 Chryslers will be smaller cars. The New Yorker line will have its wheelbase shortened from 126 inches to the 122-inch Newport size. Bodies are restyled from the belt line down, with the roof structures remaining much the same as last year. The body is slightly longer than the current Newport, with softer, more rounded lines. Chrysler's new styling chief, Elwood Engle, had a considerable hand in this crash restyling program. The 300 series is being continued, and the sports-luxury 300-I will be available with 413 cubic inches and over 400 hp. They say a floor gearshift linkage will be offered as an option on all '63 Chryslers.

Mercury

The 1963 Mercury Monterey line will again be based on the Ford Galaxie, with some extra frills—so will follow the Ford styling theme quite closely, with just enough trim differences to identify it as a Mercury. But there will be one special sports body (name unknown at this time) that will be really radical around the top area. The top extends back a foot or more, and the rear window slants inward toward the rear seat. The window is flat, and can be rolled up and down—like on the '58-'59 Lincoln. They say the lines look real flashy on this particular body. There are no major mechanical changes on the '63 Mercurys.

continued

'63 Cars *continued*

Comet

Only significant styling change will be a new grille, with more horizontal emphasis. Engine and transmission options are virtually unchanged. Ford isn't anxious to rock the boat, with Comets selling hot and giving excellent operating economy. But look for a new convertible body.

Dodge

The '62 Dodge and Plymouth lines, with very similar styling and specifications, have not been selling too well. So Chrysler officials will separate them as much as possible for '63. The Dodge Dart will get bigger—with wheelbase stretched from 116 to 119 inches and the body shell stretched out to give longer, more flowing lines. There is less sculpturing on the body sides, and there is more of the "wedge" look of the earlier Exner bodies. The new grille is quite squarish, in contrast to last year's oval shape, and the trunk deck doesn't slope down so much. The overall lines look much more conventional. The Dart name will definitely be dropped from this short-wheelbase line. The current Dodge Custom 880 series, on the longer 122-inch wheelbase, will be continued with relatively fewer changes. No important mechanical changes.

F-85

GM officials have decided that their "medium" compact lines—the F-85, Buick Special and Tempest—were too small to appeal to the mass market in this price range. So the 1963 models will have a new body shell that gives considerably more interior and trunk space—but with a minimum increase in external dimensions. The wheelbase appears to be longer, with overall body length up maybe three to five inches. The F-85 body for '63 has very soft, rounded lines—with no sculpturing at all on the sides and no fin effect whatsoever. The grille is much like '62, but has more horizontal emphasis and is higher. Tail lights are large squares. No important mechanical changes. The 215-cubic-inch aluminum V-8 remains as the standard engine—but adoption of the Buick cast-iron V-6 later on is likely. The turbo-charged engine will be available in all lines.

Fairlane

Styling changes for '63 will be minor—but there will be several new body types offered. Word is that a station wagon and hardtop will be offered with the regular '63 fall introductions, and that a new convertible body will come out as a 1963½ next spring. You can also look for more performance options in this line. The Warner four-speed transmission is rumored, and it is possible the 292-cubic-inch Ford V-8 will be offered with some special performance equipment. (This is the same basic engine as the 1957 312-cubic-inch Thunderbird, so there is plenty of hot equipment in the shelf for it.) Other '62 engine and transmission options are continued.

Falcon

Here's another hot-selling line that Ford hesitates to tamper with. Changes for '63 will be minor. A new grille with heavier lines and more robust tail light treatment are evident. And there will be a new convertible body. Perhaps the biggest news for Falcon lovers is that *performance* will get more attention this fall. They say a cute powerpack has been prepared for the 170-cubic-inch Six—and the 260-cubic-inch Fairlane V-8 is supposed to be an assembly-line option in the Falcon by next spring, with four-speed transmission yet! Meanwhile Ford engineers are busy developing various types of special performance equipment for this basic engine, so power ratings well over 200 hp should be available by then. The late '63 Falcon could offer near Super/Stock acceleration!

Ford

The '63 Ford will feature some grille and body-side restyling to get away from a resemblance to Chevrolet on the current models. The new lines will tend to be sharper and more sculptured—in contrast to the soft, rounded GM look for '63. But this is definitely not a major restyling year at Ford. Also no big mechanical changes are in the works. Ford may offer the small 260-cubic-inch Fairlane V-8 as an option in the Galaxies. And there is word that the current 406-cubic-inch high-performance engine will be "stroked" to 428 cubic inches—to fit the new NASCAR inch limit, and give the drag strip boys a little more punch.

Hawk

Biggest change on the '63 Hawk will be a new front end with a broad horizontal motif instead of the more or less vertical emphasis now. The grille will be all new. It will be remembered that the original 1953 version of this basic Loewy-designed body shell had a sweeping horizontal front—and it looks like the Studebaker stylists may go back in that direction. The rest of the body is little changed. No important engine or chassis changes—though it has been rumored that the supercharged Avanti engine may be offered in the Hawk.

Imperial

Chrysler's luxury Imperial line uses an entirely separate frame and body shell from the regular Chrysler lines—and will continue to do so in 1963. So don't look for any big styling changes. There will be only minor sheet-metal and grille changes for new-model identification. Also no important mechanical changes underneath. Chrysler officials would like to see the Imperial as America's top prestige car, but they can't afford to spend a lot of money for a radical new body—which would seem necessary to promote the image.

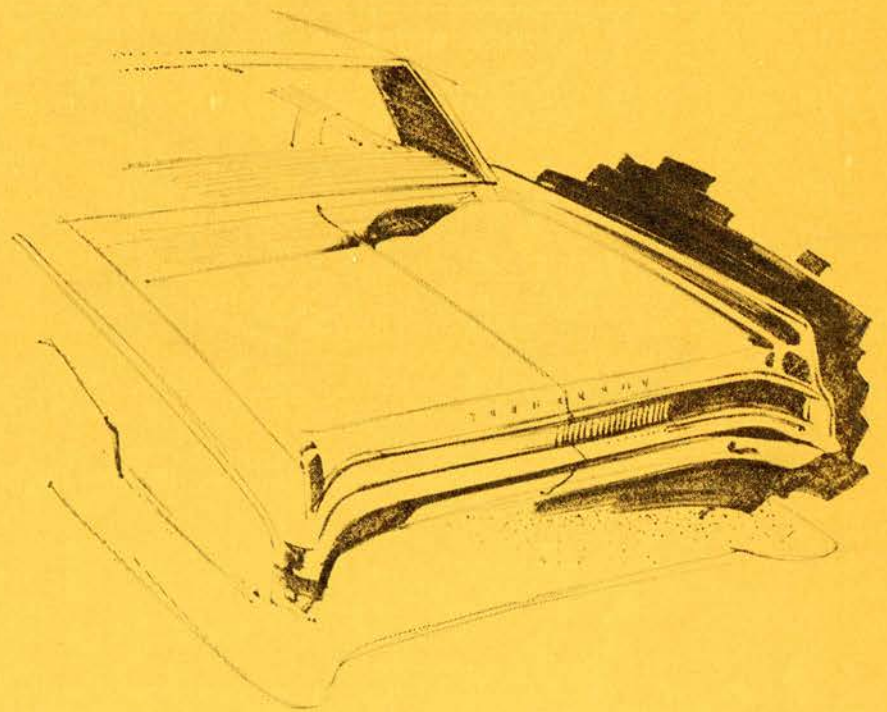
Dart

Dodge's Lancer compact line is going to be revamped considerably, and will get the Dart name. The new car will be considerably larger. Wheelbase will be stretched from 106½ to 111 inches and overall length will be at least six inches longer. The car will use most of the new Valiant body shell, but insert side panels will stretch out the length—much like the Falcon body shell was stretched to make the Comet. In fact, the whole car will have that long, lean look of the Comet, with none of the boxiness of current models. The grille is all new, more massive than the '62. There are small fins on the rear fenders and large tail lights. Engine and transmission options are virtually unchanged. It doesn't look like Chrysler will do much performance development work on their compacts. And take special note: Expect to see this new Dart in a price class substantially above the '63 Valiant. It will be equivalent to the present Dodge Dart—and then the '63 Dodge will be up-graded to the low-medium price category. This will give Chrysler Corporation a more complete blanketing of the market.

Special

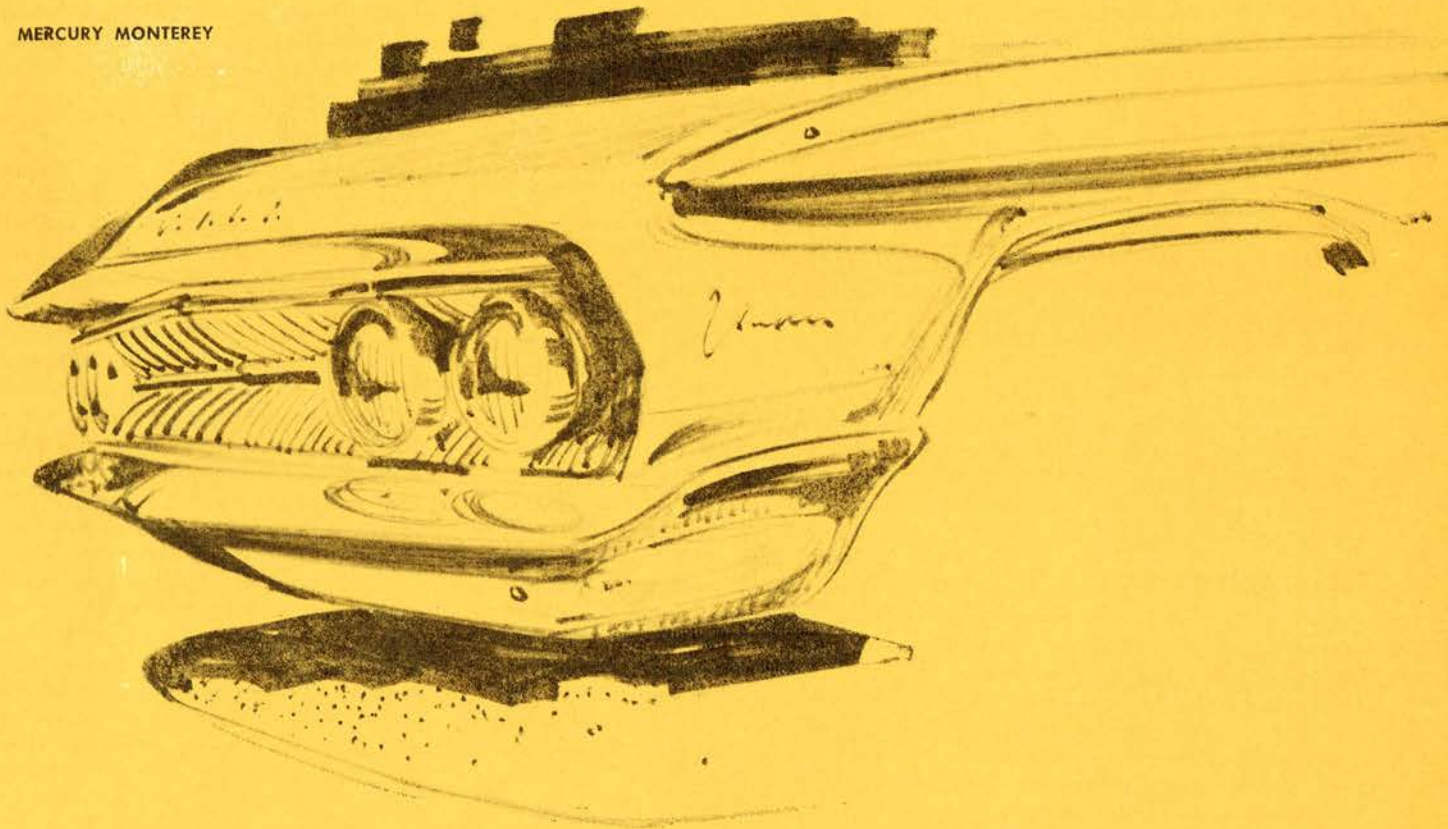
The Buick Special will share the same new body shell with F-85 and Tempest. It will have considerably more interior and trunk space, somewhat larger external dimensions (including height), and longer wheelbase. Weight is said to be up 150 pounds. This general car size now approaches that of the Ford Fairlane. In styling lines the Special will follow closely the theme of the big Buicks. There is a definite attempt to show great family resemblance between these medium compacts and their big-car brothers in '63 — in contrast to the original '61-'62 designs. No great mechanical changes. The aluminum V-8 and iron V-6 are continued — with the Six being pushed for economy. More performance options are likely for the V-8.

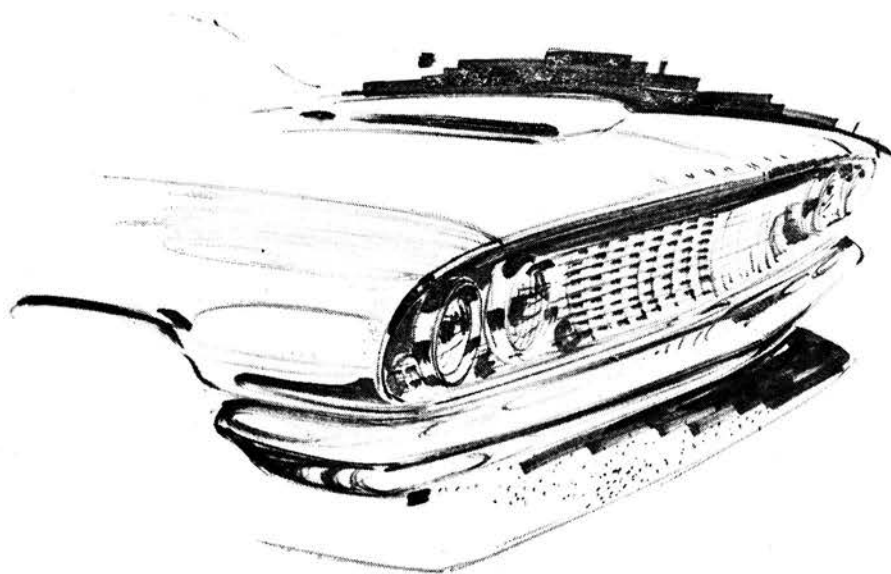
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BUICK SPECIAL

MERCURY MONTEREY





FORD

'63 Cars

continued

Lark

Studebaker's new president, Sherwood Egbert, plans his big styling and engineering changes for 1964. So the '63 Lark will get only a minor face lift—new grille and some sheet-metal changes. No major mechanical changes. However, the Lark Daytona line may get additional optional performance equipment. You can expect Studebaker to go in pretty heavy for performance under the new president.

Lincoln

Only minor styling changes are in the works—mostly around the grille—and no major mechanical innovations. Ford officials are pretty well satisfied with their new luxury car; it's selling very well—and is actually beginning to push Cadillac a little as our top prestige car. They're going to hold on to the design for at least another year. One possible change: they may drop the curved glass in the side windows, because of sealing and distortion problems. This could come in '63 or '64. This basic body shell may be retained another two years.

Oldsmobile

Oldsmobile will feature perhaps the most radical styling change in the GM camp for 1963. The body sides have quite deep sculpturing, unlike most other GM cars. A broad band of metal running straight down the side extends outward several inches; then above and below this band are deeply indented areas—one running just below the belt line and one right along the bottom of the body. The new sculpturing catches

the highlights, and looks very impressive. Sharp ridges on the front edges of the front fenders continue the theme. The grille is something like the '62, but narrower and taller. The new Starfire will also feature something new. The rear window is *concave*—sweeping down steeply, then leveling off and sweeping far back on the rear deck. (The window runs straight across the car, and the sweep would be visible from the side.) Something really different. No important mechanical changes on the '63 Olds. Rumors of heavy performance development, with the possibility of a Super/Stock contender by next spring, do not seem justified.

Plymouth

The '63 Plymouths will be Chrysler's real low-price, bread-and-butter line, and will retain the current 116-inch wheelbase. But the body has been extensively restyled. They're back to dual headlights within the grille section, which now has a much heavier meshwork. The same basic body shell is used, but the long-hood effect has been softened by lengthening and rounding the trunk section. The new body is said to have a more "balanced" look—which probably means, in the modern idiom, that the front hood and rear deck lengths are more nearly equal. Large hexagonal tail lights are used. Mechanical changes will be minor, though there will be increasing emphasis on performance options. There may be several new combinations based on the 413- and 383-cubic-inch blocks. And there is persistent rumor that Dodge and Plymouth will offer the Warner four-speed transmission in '63.

Pontiac

The '63 Pontiac will probably be the best-looking of the GM big cars. The grille is not greatly changed—still has the two horizontal sections with a division between that juts forward. But the dual headlights are now placed vertically, one above the other. Looks very impressive from the front. From the side the belt line rises slightly from the front and from the rear, reaching a high point at the rear quarter panel of the roof section. There is a small fin at this point. Then there is a low ridge that runs straight down the side of the body from front to rear. Tail lights are high and narrow, and slant inward at the top. The Grand Prix line is said to be jazzed up even more, with more fancy equipment and interior appointments. This has been a real bread-and-butter car for Pontiac. Biggest news in the mechanical department for Pontiac is that they may offer the Dunlop-Bendix disc brakes as optional equipment on front wheels. This is the same basic disc brake design being used by the Studebaker Avanti. Pontiac engineers have been experimenting extensively with it, and it could appear on the '63s. Engine and transmission options will remain pretty much as now. Pontiac has experimented with bored and stroked blocks near 500 cubic inches, but it is doubtful if something like this will be available off the assembly line before next spring (in view of the recent NAS-CAR limit of 428 cubic inches).

Rambler

The big Rambler will get nearly an entirely new body for 1963. Wheelbase is being lengthened from 108 to 112 inches but the internal and external body dimensions will be little different from now. The new body will be much cleaner and less cluttered. A new wrap-around grille with a broad horizontal motif will be featured. They say a new method of construction will be used for the body. The entire body side will be formed from a single steel stamping—one piece for the outside surface and one for the inside. When these are welded together they will form a very sturdy box section. Thus, the body side will contribute more to the overall body stiffness, which formerly has depended mostly on the floor section, roof and cowl structure. There is talk that the side windows will be curved. It is also rumored that American Motors will drop their die-cast aluminum cylinder block at the end of the '62 model run, and go back to cast iron—but in an entirely new block design. It is said that the cost of purchasing aluminum blocks from Doehler-Jarvis, plus the loss

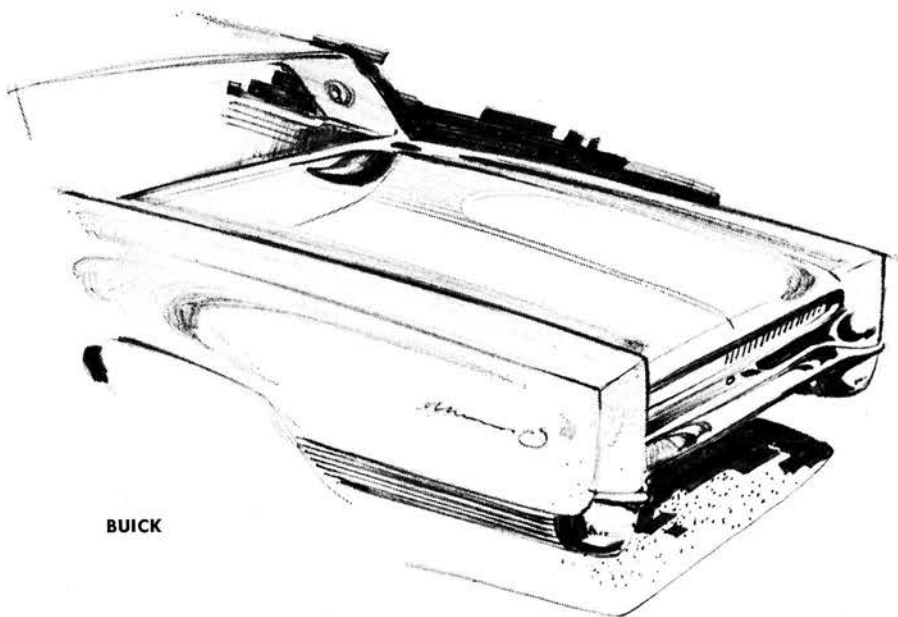
in later scrappage and servicing costs, have made the aluminum idea less attractive. And one other rumor: Rambler will offer several potent performance options based on the big V-8 engine in '63.

American

There will be no major styling or mechanical changes on the '63 American. This line is slated for a big change in 1964 — but this year the A.M. engineers are concentrating on the big Rambler.

Tempest

The '63 Tempest will also have the new larger GM compact body shell — and the styling lines will follow the big Pontiac closely. There will be the same rise of the belt line to the rear quarter panel of the roof, with a small fin at this point. The rear deck slopes down quite a bit. Also the Tempest body borrows the indented spear of the '62 Pontiac body and puts it on the rear fender. The front grillework has the usual two sections with division between — but the lines are more graceful and lower down. The LeMans models retain the good-looking squarish tail lights. This is one of the best-looking of GM's '63 compacts. There are also big mechanical changes in the works. An entire new independent rear suspension is rumored. Tempest has been using the basic Corvair rear end, as you know — and they've had a lot of trouble with the higher torque of the big Four and V-8. For '63 they will have their own new design, similar in basic layout but much beefier. This will also pave the way for hotter performance options in the engine room. One of these is said to be a 336-cubic-



BUICK

inch cast-iron V-8, based on the big Pontiac engine. But it will have new block and head castings that feature this new "thinwall" iron casting technique — so the engine will weigh nearly 100 pounds less. The Buick aluminum V-8 option is to be dropped. Some rumors say the equipment options on the 336-cubic-inch V-8 will give horsepower ratings over 300 — and that the '63 Tempest may approach Super/Stock performance! There will also be a new four-speed transmission with closer ratios. This is going to be a terrific automobile.

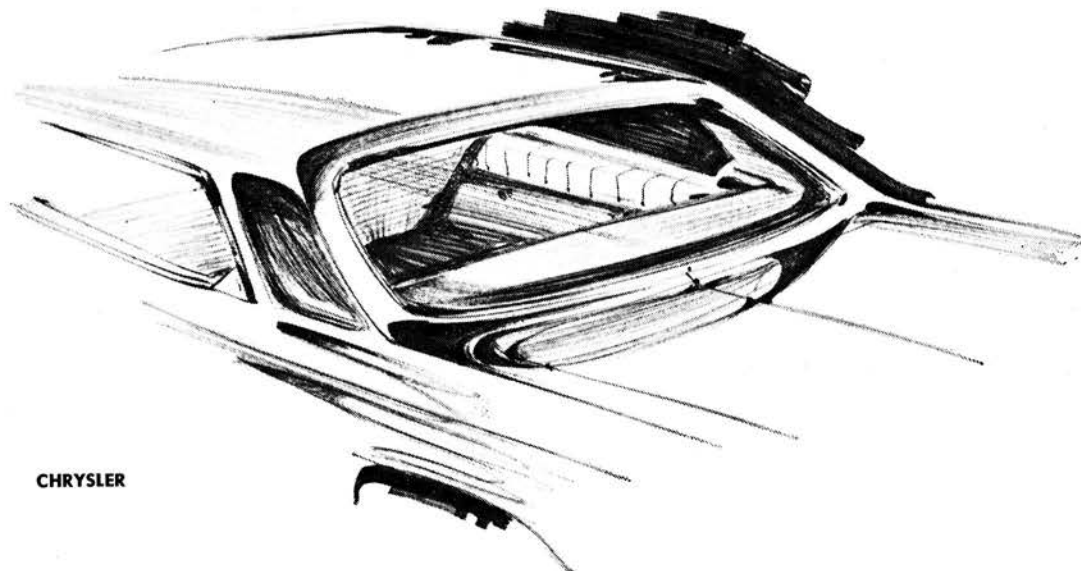
Thunderbird

Only a minor face-lift is in the works for the '63 Thunderbird. But they say more performance options will be offered

off the assembly line. This is to include the Warner four-speed transmission and probably the big 406-cubic-inch block, with all the extra goodies that go with it.

Valiant

The '63 Valiant will retain its same 106½-inch wheelbase, but the body shell will be all new and very much changed. The lines will seem a little higher and more boxy, without the angular foreign look of the current design. The grille will be lower and wider. The small rear windows on the body sides will disappear, so there are just the conventional two side windows. Twin tail lights are featured. External dimensions of the car are not greatly changed, but it looks bigger. No important mechanical changes. /MT



CHRYSLER