

AMERICAN MOTORS PHOTOS



SEVERAL YEARS BACK, George Romney, then president of American Motors, promised the Rambler-buying public that his products in the future would not change for the sake of change, but only for the sake of definite improvement.

Then, in 1959, when time-worn dies for the original Rambler American were discarded, an all-new body/chassis replaced the car that originally

had appeared in 1949. Along came 1962 and the Classic/Ambassador sheet metal got a complete revamping. In both cases, the changes wrought were definite improvements. Rising sales figures bore out the wisdom behind the creation of the new models, and, in the case of the American, little year-to-year change was necessary in styling; in fact, the American received probably less "face-lifting" than did any other U.S.

car, despite the fact that it was competing in the toughest end of the market, i.e., the lowest price range.

Through all this, the stylists and engineers were working toward the next change, scheduled to take place for the '64 Americans. Slightly slipping sales of the '63 American may have expedited the program, but the end result must be ranked as one of the most handsome Ramblers ever built.

Although based on the Classic/Ambassador "unise" stampings, the American bears no "me, too" look. A definitely separate identity is maintained. And, the American has completely lost the stubby, boxy appearance which characterized the 1961-63 versions.

Wheelbase has been lengthened 6 in. to 106, and the overall length has increased to 177.3 in. (4 in. longer than

'63), which has resulted in 12 in. more hiproom in the rear, a lower roofline and a better, less choppy ride. Curb weight, however, has remained almost the same, about 2600 lb.

Body construction utilizes the Classic/Ambassador sides, as mentioned, but with different floor pan, cowl section and roof, to place them 3 in. closer together. The shorter wheelbase is accomplished in the front and rear-end

substructures, which in effect place the wheels closer to the unit body than those of the 112-in. wheelbase Classic/Ambassador.

The American also utilizes the bigger cars' curved glass side windows, larger front and rear windows and generally roomy interior—all while maintaining the shortest wheelbase and overall length of any sedan built in the U.S.

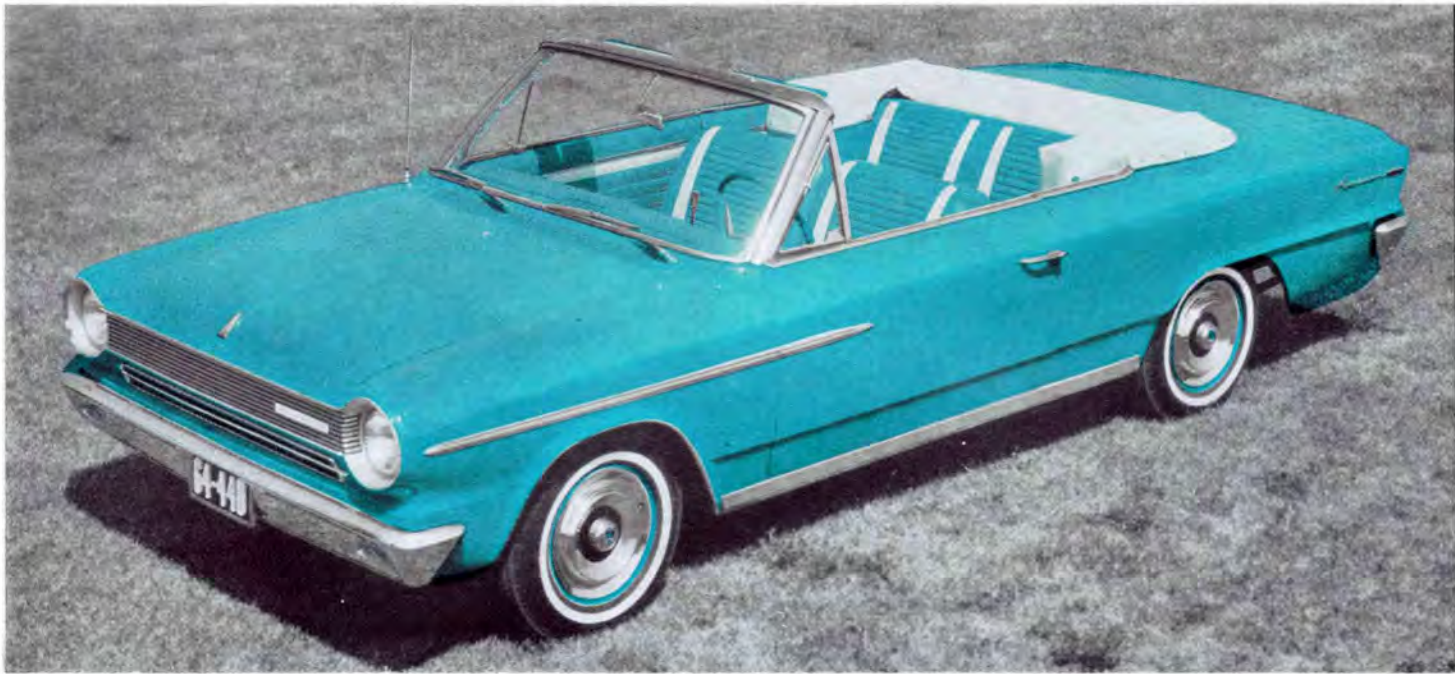
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STYLISH AMERICAN station wagon now has strong family resemblance to other Ramblers after adaptation of the bigger cars' unibody side panels.

American

also redone for '64, to improve both durability and operation. The upper arm trunnion now operates in Clevebloc (molded rubber) bushings which are lubricated and sealed for the vehicle's lifetime. The lower trunnion has a ball-joint connection with lower control arm and requires lubrication only every 33,000 miles.

Power steering (by GM's Saginaw Div.) is offered for those who don't like to fight the wheel, even on the light-steering American.

The rear suspension was changed slightly, for softer ride and for more roll understeer. Spring length was changed from 45 to 52 in., the front mounted in a "Silentbloc" rubber bush-

ing, and the rear eye raised above the level of the front eye. This imparts a slight shortening of the wheelbase on the side being compressed due to body roll during cornering, which causes an increase in understeer.

Fourteen-inch wheels of 4.5-in. width are standard on the American, marking the capitulation of one of the holdouts for the 15-in. wheel. However, the larger size is still available. Rambler lists a 5-in. rim for station wagons.

Some softening of the spring rates has taken place on the American—from 107 to 91 lb.-in. in the rear of the sedans, and 125 to 102 lb.-in. in the station wagons. Fronts remain the same at 93 lb.-in.

As previously, a 440-H will be the top-of-the-line model. It will have Rambler's overhead-valve 6-cyl. engine in its 138-bhp form. The standard American engine remains the long-used L-head 6-cyl. The 125-bhp ohv 6-cyl. will be standard on the 440 line and optional for the others.

The buyer also will have the choice of manual 3-speed, manual 3-speed plus overdrive (Twin Stick), manual plus automatic clutch (E-stick) and 3-speed automatic transmissions. Axle ratios range from 2.73 to 4.11:1, depending upon which power train is ordered.

Rambler has achieved slightly more differentiation between the Classic and Ambassador series, although both now have V-8 engines and both share the same body, trimmings and underpinnings. For one thing, the 880 model has

SIMPLE HORIZONTAL grille makes tasteful front end styling.



AMERICAN WAGON has drop-down tailgate; simple, sculptured lines.





NEW HARDTOP ROOFLINE, shown here on the Ambassador, is 1-in. lower and is executed with classic simplicity. New grilles make front end less busy.

been dropped from the Ambassador line, thus providing a slightly wider pricing gap. For another, certain luxury options are found only on the Ambassador list.

Biggest difference, of course, is in the motivation. The Classic has the 127-bhp ohv 6-cyl. as its standard plant, where the Ambassador has its 250-bhp ohv V-8. For options, the Classic has a 138-bhp Six and a 198-bhp version of the same V-8 (0.25 in. less bore) while the Ambassador has a peppery 270-bhp.

However, there are certain developments and improvements shared by both the Classic and Ambassador, among them a striking new 2-door hardtop sedan. This model has a shorter windshield and rear window and thus a 1-in. lower roofline than the regular sedans. The hardtop will be available in Classic 770 as well as the Amba-

sador 990 and 990-H series.

Both lines also will be available with the new "Shift Command" automatic transmission which can be held to maximum engine rpm in any of its three

RAMBLER ENGINES FOR '64

Displ.	Type	Bhp	Carb.	Use
195.6	L-6	90	1x1	std. American 220, 330
195.6	ohv-6	125	1x1	std. American 440; opt. 220, 330
195.6	ohv-6	138	1x2	std. American 440-H; opt. 440, 330, 220, Classic
195.6	ohv-6	127	1x1	std. Classic
287.0	V-8	198	1x2	opt. Classic
327.0	V-8	250	1x2	std. Ambassador 990
327.0	V-8	270	1x4	std. Ambassador 990-H; opt. 990

forward speeds. A variation of the less-controllable "Flight-O-Matic" also offered by AMC, it is the same transmission developed by Borg-Warner for Studebaker's Avanti.

Following another current trend, the Classic and Ambassador will have adjustable steering wheels for '64—this feature also coming from Saginaw. A steering post-mounted lever allows the wheel to be adjusted to seven different positions in 5° increments.

Detail improvements abound in all the AMC cars, such as a suede-textured paint atop all instrument panels to reduce glaring reflections in the windshield, coil springs rather than zig-zag wires in rear seat construction, improved electrical systems and components, larger clutches for the 6-cyl. engines, and a stronger-design differential and case.

With new models, new colors, new trim and tasteful good looks, American Motors' 24 models (10 American, 10 Classic, 4 Ambassador) should prove highly popular in 1964. ■

AMBASSADOR wagon retains the side-opening fifth door tailgate.



SIMULATED grille decorates restyled trunk section.

