



CAR LIFE
ROAD TEST

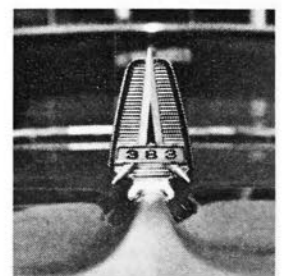
Satellite



The Chrysler Corp. has
Lost its Buttons



SCOTT MALCOLM PHOTOS



WHAT, NO push-buttons? Nope: For 1965, Chrysler Corp. has lost its buttons, joining the rest of the industry's practice of offering only floor- or steering column-mounted shift levers. Chrysler market analysts discovered that prospective buyers were shying away from the buttons, apparently due to a combination of their unfamiliarity and the difficulty of accepting the button as a power symbol. So, as far as Chrysler is concerned, the buttons are long gone and, hopefully, forgotten.

At any rate, by the time we became fully acclimated to the Satellite's mid-console lever we had made a few furtive moves toward the now-blank left end of the instrument panel. Then, with only a slight trace of nostalgia for the tidy, child-proof old arrangement, we

quickly began to take increasing pleasure in the way the console-mounted, in-line selector communicated with the optional TorqueFlite transmission. We had no difficulty in accepting its thick, chromed lever and big knob as a symbol of mechanical strength.

The TorqueFlite, of course, is Chrysler's rugged and time-proven 3-speed automatic which was introduced in 1958 and still is recognized as one of the industry's most durable, positive-acting transmissions. It has gathered minor improvements through the years, few of which make good copy, but all combining to keep it thoroughly competitive. The news flash for 1965 is typical: A sliding spline in the transmission and new cross and roller front universal joint to reduce drive-line vibration, as well as anti-creep torque converter im-

provements. (We were somewhat gleeful to note that our test car *did* creep—we clocked it at 9 mph at an indicated 750 rpm.)

In addition to the transmission, we found the optional 330-bhp, 383-cu. in. V-8 engine (a 273-cu. in. V-8 is standard) a dependable source of stimulation and enjoyment. Fed by a single 4-barrel carburetor and with its digestion aided by a special long-duration camshaft, "unsilenced" air cleaner and dual exhausts, the big, healthy powerplant fairly begged for excitement. Though hampered by a too-long 2.93:1 rear axle ratio and pulling an air conditioning unit, the Satellite managed a 16.2 sec. standing ¼ mile—strong medicine indeed for a 2-ton Plymouth.

However, intrigued by a press release which stated, "Although basically a

family car, it [the Belvedere line] may be adapted to compete successfully in competitive motor sports," we had expected better performance from this engine/transmission combination. An examination of the factory specifications turned up an unwelcome answer: The wrong rear axle ratio had been installed. The 383-cu. in. engine should have been accompanied by a 3.23:1 ratio, which would have produced notably improved acceleration.

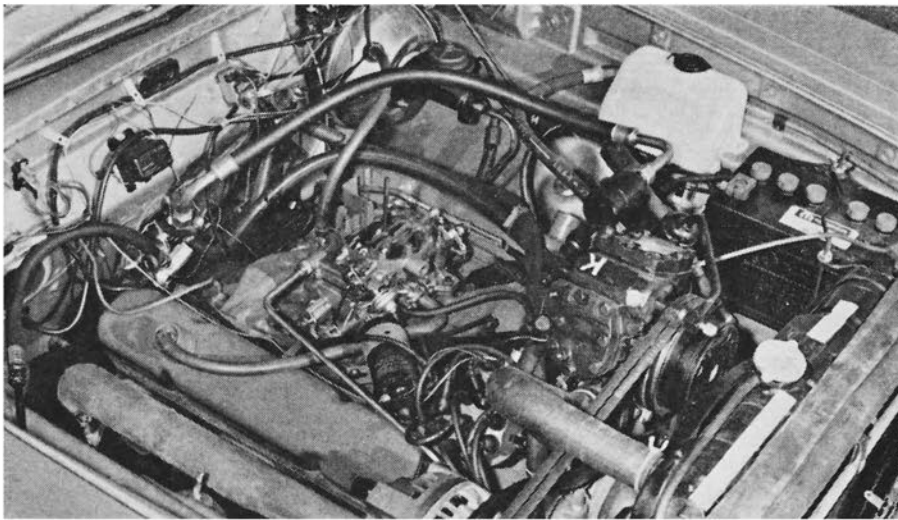
High-performance buffs will be interested in the availability of Chrysler's three 426-cu. in. engine packages for the Belvederes. They range from 365 through 470 bhp (the latter with a thumping 480 lb.-ft. of torque at 4400 rpm!), with increased carburetion and compression ratio. The Big Daddy 426 is meant for the tracks and strips, is

"not recommended for general highway driving," and is "not covered by Chrysler's 5-year/50,000-mile engine and drive-train warranty." These signs of foreboding will probably fail to deter very many students of the Big Surge.

Our test car carried more than \$1000 worth of extra equipment, an air conditioner (which invariably gave us a 3-min. bath of hot air before settling down to business) accounting for almost half the total. Yet, even when the visible evidences of this optional profligacy were disregarded, the Satellite seemed a plushy package indeed to be a member of the Plymouth Belvedere line. The standard fold-forward bucket seats are firm and comfortable and, though sports car addicts will cock an eyebrow at their lack of strong lateral body support, the individually adjustable seats

are a boon to physically mismatched front passengers. All-vinyl trim throughout is standard in the Satellites. The console between the seats is roomy and useful, and visibility out of the wide-open hardtop window area is excellent.

The exterior appearance is also pleasing, continuing Plymouth's welcome adoption of simplicity of line and balanced mass, and the trend away from hoke for hoke's sake. Decorated only with narrow stainless steel wheel opening and sill trim, wheel covers with spinner hubs, stainless window framing and a furtive little flock of vertical ribs huddled at the rear flank (whose only purpose is to aid Satellite identification) the car is refreshingly free of stylist's blight and highlight-itis. Overall Plymouth design has come a long way since the *fin de siècle* '50s.



4-BARREL EQUIPPED 383-cu. in. V-8 is one of hotter engines available in Satellite. With warmish camshaft and 10:1 compression, it yields 330 bhp.

Plymouth Satellite

The configuration of the Satellite bodies (this model is also available as a convertible) is all but identical to that of the 1964 Plymouth Sport Fury (CL, November 1963), with little more than fenders, grille and trim to bring it individuality. Overall Belvedere length has been reduced by 3.1 in. this year, to 203.4 in., with the Chevelle and Fairlane "intermediate" market as its intended target; the Satellite is the top, and sporty, member of the line.

Those who search in vain among Plymouths this year for their familiar Savoy models will find them under another name. The entire 8-car Savoy series has been dropped for 1965 and

the Belvedere models increased in number from eight to eighteen. The line is divided into three categories, ranging upward in appointments and price through the Belvedere I, Belvedere II and Satellite. The I and II models are all available with either Chrysler's 225-cu. in. 145-bhp ohv Slant Six or the 273-cu. in. 180-bhp V-8, both listed as standard engines. The V-8, however, is standard at extra cost—about \$89 additional. Satellites are not available with the Six.

As standard packages, the Belvederes come already equipped with a plenitude of niceties, including front seat belts, electric windshield wipers,

self-adjusting brakes, armrests all around, separate ashtrays in the rear and a heating/defrosting system. The air-conditioning ducts are completely variable and can be pulled up and back from over the instrument panel to blow directly at the front-seat occupants.

The Satellite heater is a powerful, flexible system and we learned the hard way that some care must be exercised in its use. One cool night, luckily in only medium-dense traffic, we pulled the heat control halfway down and turned on the blower. Instantly, the windshield was covered with mist and we were driving blind. We punched the Defrost button, switched the blower up to full blast and prayed a little, invoking the name of Chrysler Engineering. Within a few moments a clear spot appeared, quickly followed by complete vision, but those were king-sized moments.

The torsion-bar and ball-joint front/leaf-spring rear suspension is another Chrysler tradition. Again, however, correction and improvement have taken place each year without fanfare. The Satellite was a little firmer over the bumps, a little more controllable in the curves and generally a better handling, more manageable Plymouth than we can remember.

In spite of a few signs of ham-handed assembly and preparation, the body and interior were tight, sound, quiet and comfortable. We were disappointed to find that one door didn't close properly and left a 1/4-in. gap between itself and the body; there were free-standing gobs of grease on the door catches; the headlight switch operated on and off intermittently; and that one of the chromed-plastic armrests had been defaced with a careless

DISTINCTIVE insignia sets Satellite apart from lesser species of Plymouth.



LARGE, FLAT trunk has been Plymouth hallmark for several years, can accommodate a wide variety of objects. Note tailored tire cover.



file stroke. The defects could all be corrected at once by a reputable dealer, of course, but they are annoying to find on a new automobile.

Listed mechanical improvements to the Belvedere series this year are few and constitute somewhat less than a revolutionary threat to the industry. They include only the above anti-creep, anti-vibration measures, plus improvements to the electrical system for reliability and convenience. The starter motor, spark plugs and alternator have been strengthened and a new hard-rubber battery cover installed, to

seal in the individual battery cells and the intercell connectors. Another innovation is the use of "buffable" acrylic enamel.

The instrument panel of the Satellite is simple, readable and glare free, happily passing up the styling temptations brought by advances in juke-box technology. There are no protruding hyper-thyroid hemispheres, rolling multi-colored cylinders or deep-dish chrome salads—just instruments with black and white dials, numerals and moving needles. All, that is, but the oil gauge, whose light gauges only the sudden loss

of oil pressure. The warning value of a red light is undeniable, but we still prefer the quantitative gauge.

In an automotive era whose products largely equal or exceed tire manufacturers' weight limits, it was surprising and reassuring to find that the Satellite's 8.25-14s are comfortably within their load ratings. Indeed, this plus factor may be taken as one evidence of the overall character of our test Satellite: It is a tough, strong car capable of doing its intended job easily and well, with that important little extra left over for emergencies. ■

CAR LIFE ROAD TEST

1965 PLYMOUTH Belvedere Satellite

SPECIFICATIONS

List price.....	\$2869
Price, as tested.....	3929
Curb weight, lb.....	3720
Test weight.....	4060
distribution, %.....	56/44
Tire size.....	8.25-14
Tire capacity, lb. @ 24 psi.....	4840
Brake swept area.....	314
Engine type.....	V-8, ohv
Bore & stroke.....	4.25 x 3.38
Displacement, cu. in.....	383
Compression ratio.....	10.0
Carburetion.....	1 x 4
Bhp @ rpm.....	330 @ 4600
equivalent mph.....	125
Torque, lb.-ft.....	425 @ 2800
equivalent mph.....	77

EXTRA-COST OPTIONS

383/330 V-8, auto. trans., power steering, power brakes, tinted glass, wsw tires, padded dash, air cond., radio, w.s. washer.

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase, in.....	116.0
Tread, f & r.....	59.5/58.5
Overall length, in.....	203.4
width.....	75.6
height.....	55.2
equivalent vol., cu. ft.....	492
Frontal area, sq. ft.....	23.2
Ground clearance, in.....	5.1
Steering ratio, o/a.....	18.8
turns, lock to lock.....	3.5
turning circle, ft.....	40.8
Hip room, front.....	2 x 21
Hip room, rear.....	59.0
Pedal to seat back, max.....	44.2
Floor to ground.....	12.0
Luggage vol., cu. ft.....	17.3
Fuel tank capacity, gal.....	20.0

GEAR RATIOS

3rd (1.00) overall.....	2.93
2nd (1.45).....	4.25
1st (2.45).....	7.18
1st (2.45 x 2.2).....	15.8



CALCULATED DATA

Lb./bhp (test wt).....	12.3
Cu. ft./ton mile.....	122
Mph/1000 rpm.....	27.3
Engine revs./mile.....	2200
Piston travel, ft./mile.....	1240
Car Life wear index.....	27.3

PERFORMANCE

Top speed (4200), mph.....	115
Shifts, @ mph (auto)	
3rd ().....	
2nd (4300).....	81
1st (4000).....	45
Total drag at 60 mph, lb.....	160

SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph, actual.....	31.0
60 mph.....	60.3
90 mph.....	88.3

ACCELERATION

0-30 mph, sec.....	3.3
0-40.....	4.7
0-50.....	6.7
0-60.....	8.7
0-70.....	11.2
0-80.....	14.4
0-100.....	25.9
Standing ¼ mile, sec.....	16.2
speed at end, mph.....	83

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Normal range, mpg.....	14-17
------------------------	-------

