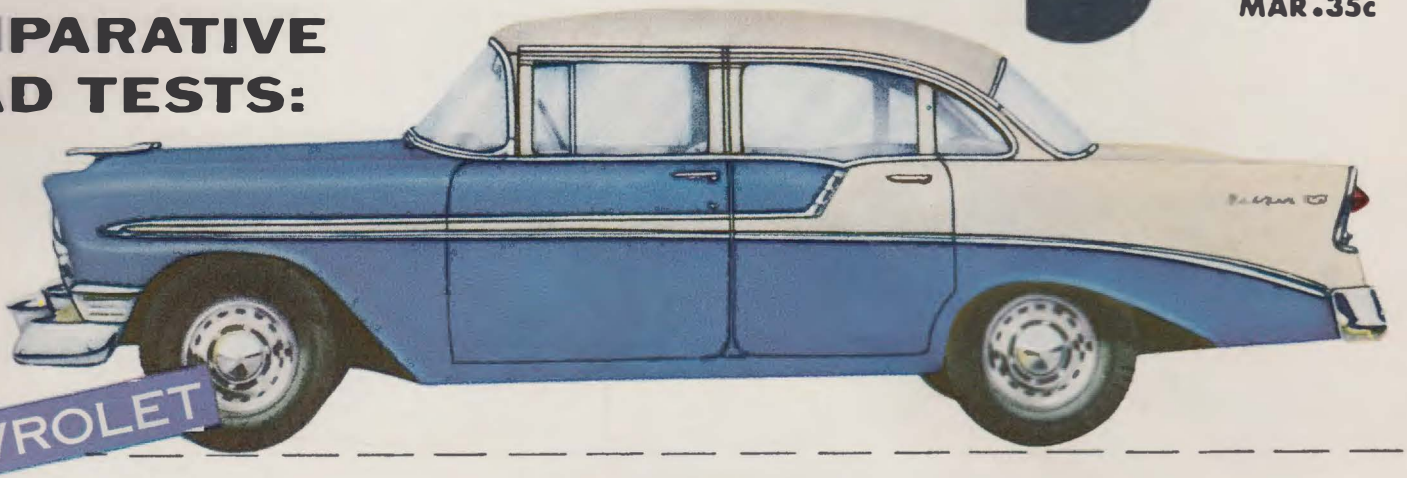
SPECIAL FULL COLOR PAGES

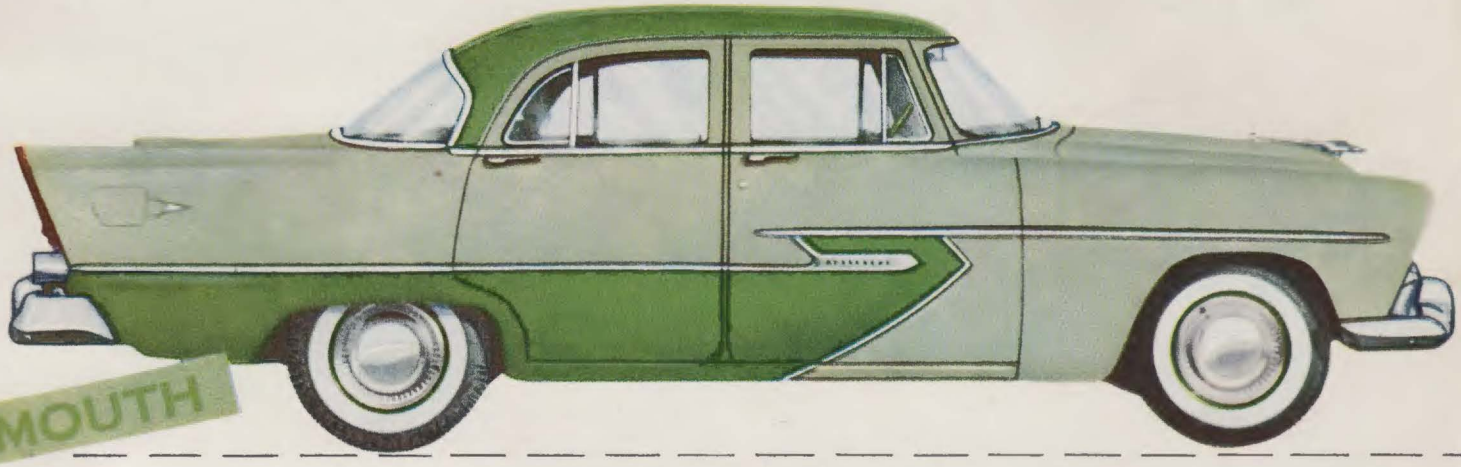
auto age

MAR.35c

COMPARATIVE ROAD TESTS:



CHEVROLET



PLYMOUTH

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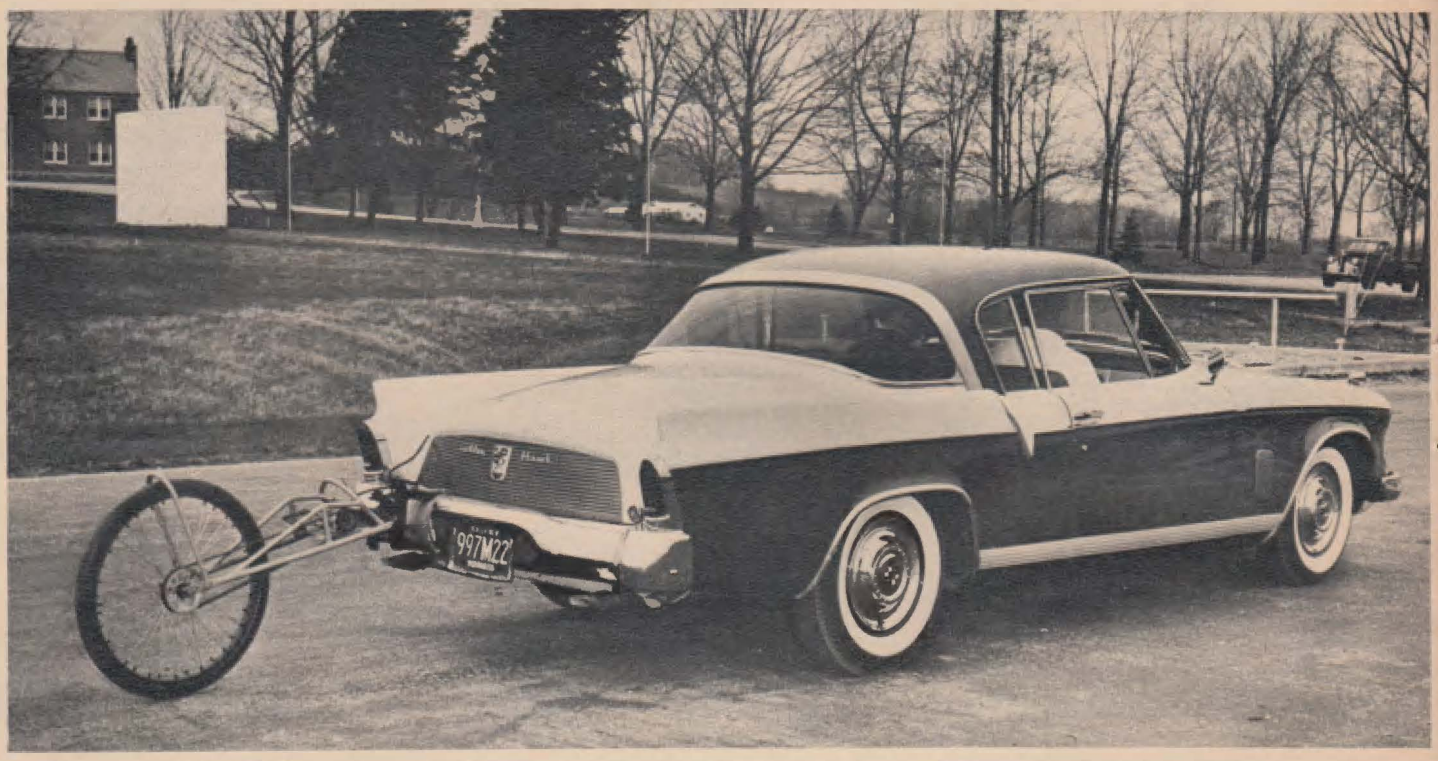
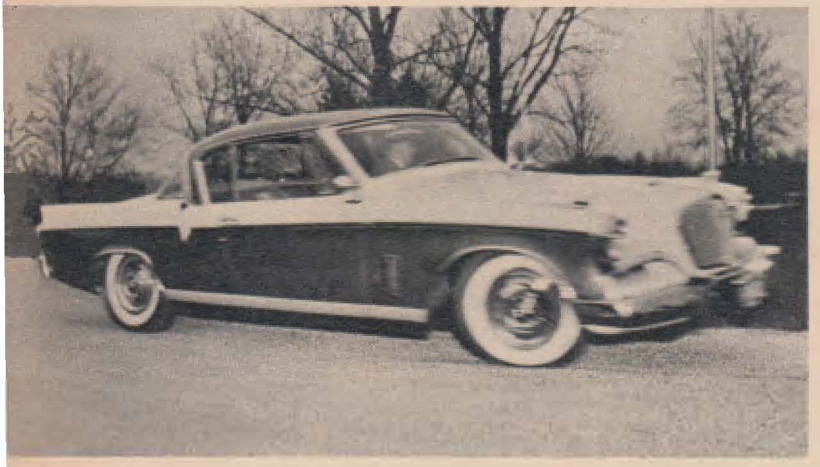
STUDEBAKER GOLDEN HAWK–*New Speed Champ*



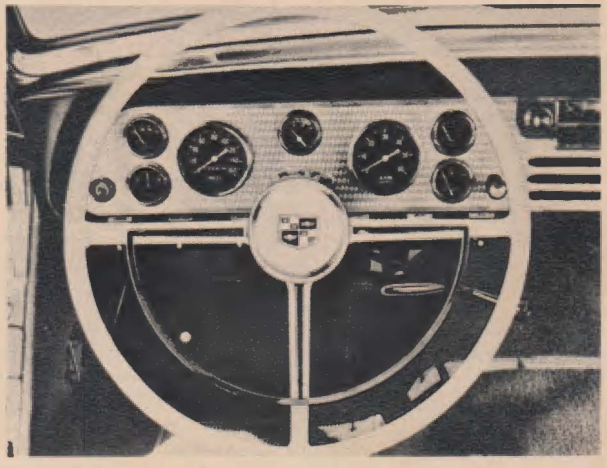
Here our Golden Hawk test car is off to the proving grounds. Performance figures we obtained were startling to say the least.

STUDEBAKER'S

**All of our testers agreed on this one—
it's the sports-type car to beat for '56, from every standpoint.**



Over-all handling was fine, even above usual Studebaker standards. The Hawk understeers, has good correction control and fine brakes.



Dashboard is completely outfitted with Stewart-Warner instruments set into coined metal. Note big tach on right.

GOLDEN HAWK

ROAD AUTO AGE TEST

AN AUTO AGE STAFF REPORT

WHEN ONE THINKS of a hawk there is usually an immediate association with three things—grace, speed and determination of purpose. Someone at Studebaker had what may well turn out to be the best automotive selling idea of the year when he thought to call his company's latest sports-type car the "Hawk" line. Whoever he was, he must have driven the cars first, because the name is a fitting one indeed. The Golden Hawk, in particular, is one of the fastest and best looking cars ever made on these shores. As for determination of purpose, you might even go so far as to call this a car of prey because it is going out after the Thunderbird, Corvette, Chrysler "300" market with a vengeance.

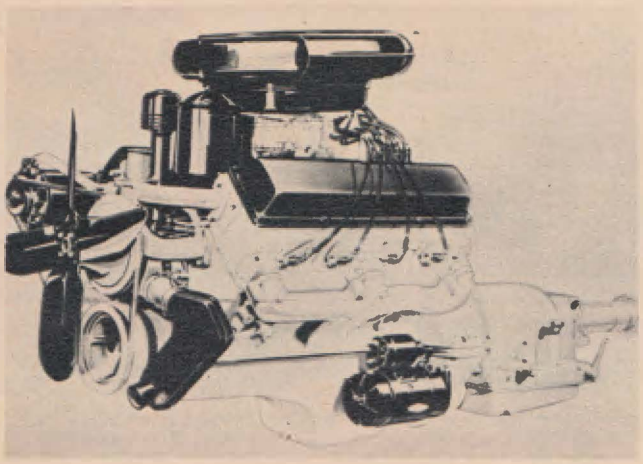
What is it like to drive the Golden Hawk? We'll get to that, but let's take a close look at it first. Outwardly, it is more than strongly reminiscent of last year's Studebaker Speedster, the major styling changes being a built-up, very Italian-looking and very handsome front grille and larger, higher rear fenders leading into a squared-off trunk lid, also with a grille effect. A long chrome strip from the headlight on either side all the way to the end of the car is deeply Veed just behind the rear window and we are told that the owner's initials may be placed in the V. In any event, the chrome also serves as a lovely separation for the two tones of paint. Frankly, we don't much care who gets the credit for this styling job, but we have always considered the basic Loewy Studebaker hardtops and coupes to be the most beautiful American body designs since the early Classic days, and the Hawk series is the best yet.

On the inside, the new "closer to Europe" theme has been carried through nobly. The dashboard is of coined metal with a real custom look and instrumentation by Stewart-Warner is complete even to a vacuum gauge, a tachometer and a clock with a sweep-second hand. All dials are large, completely calibrated and easy to read at a glance. Nor has safety been overlooked. Standard equipment includes two crash panels —one on the dash and the other behind the front seat—and safety door latches. Seat belts are optional.

Seating position is excellent; steering-wheel angle is just right and all the floor pedals come easily to foot, as the British might say. Visibility is excellent, even without a fishbowl windshield, and headroom is adequate unless you are a monster. Incidentally, the "old-fashioned" windshield makes entry and exit easier than in almost any other 1956 American car, in spite of the fact that the Golden Hawk is only a fraction over 56 inches high.

Getting in and out of the rear seats is a little more of a problem, but really no more so than in any two-door coupe, and anyone who complains about a scarcity of leg room doesn't deserve to own either a Golden Hawk or a Continental Mark II—or any other specialized machine. At that, there is actually plenty of room for two people on a long trip.

By the time we had discovered all of this we were fairly itching to drive the car, and since we were at the Studebaker proving grounds at South Bend, Indiana, we did just that. First came a feeling-out period on the long, winding country-type road they call Route 1. This is a sort of open-air torture chamber, with surfaces, grades and corners worse than you are apt to find in 10 years of (*Continued on page* 56)



Here is the monster 275-hp power plant that gives the Golden Hawk its fantastic performance. The car's actual top speed is over 120 mph.

Golden Hawk does lean when cornered hard, but less than any other 5-passenger American automobile. It "tracks" well, never gets floppy.

Studebaker's Golden Hawk

Continued from page 23

normal driving. We sailed at high speed over dozens of bad dips, holes, dirt and gravel spots and even though almost every imperfection in the road made itself known, it was a friendly acquaintance and one which tended to build up our confidence in the car. The steering felt perhaps a trifle slow for so fast a car, but dead accurate and free from play, and there was a slight but pleasant degree of understeer. When certain corners were taken with a bit too much enthusiasm the car forgave us, slowly and politely, sliding outwards across the road, never giving any suggestion of wanting to spin.

Already the acceleration of this automatic-transmission car (a standard shift and overdrive is available) was proving to be nothing short of amazing and the impossible-looking 30-per-cent grade was swallowed in one ferocious gulp, so quickly, in fact, that the Hawk nearly left the ground at the crest. A few more fast corners, with no side sway and not enough lean to make the passengers uncomfortable, and we found ourselves back in front of the high-speed track. Here is what we had been waiting for.

First we took a few fast laps around the three-mile track, banked at either end, to get the feel of the car "at speed." The faster we went the better it felt and that same understeer stood us in good stead as we hit the curves harder and harder. Soon we were coming off the longer of the two banked curves at an indicated 95 mph, and since this led into a completely-flat .8-mile stretch we decided to run our top-speed tests right then and there. Floorboarded at 95 mph (actually closer to an honest 90) the Golden Hawk fairly leaped ahead and we got nearly 115 before we had to back off for the turn ahead. This was tried several times and several runs of 115 mph and better were achieved with the car still accelerating. Then we just ran out of room. On the faster Packard track in Detroit, Bill Holland did nearly 125 mph with a Golden Hawk and this, we feel, is closer to its true top speed.

If you have been wondering, by the way, what the heavier Packard engine has done to the balance of the Studebaker, let us say that the car does seem noticeably heavier at the front than last year's Speedster, but this works out seemingly to its advantage.

With a fifth wheel and electric speedometer connected to the car, we proceeded to run off our acceleration tests. We made half a dozen runs to each speed, in both directions, just to be sure, and here are the results:

Zero-to-30-mph time averaged out to 3.4 seconds. To 40 mph took 5.1 seconds and to 45 just eight-tenths of a second more—5.9. Our zero-to-60-mph runs hit an average of 9 seconds flat. These were all actual speeds, taken with the stopwatch and throttle being punched at the same instant, rather than waiting for the car to move. Using the latter method you could hit 60 mph in just a fraction over 8 seconds, but we'd rather be honest about it. Besides, these figures are pretty fantastic as they stand, even for an honest-to-goodness sports car. We tried several runs to 80 mph in the lower drive range of the Ultramatic transmission (the range used for all fast acceleration tests) and forgot at first that it keeps the car in third gear until you lift your foot for an instant. The result was that the engine peaked out at about 79 mph on our first try and we had to go back and do it again. This time the transmission was upshifted nicely and a run of 17.8 seconds was recorded from zero to 80 mph. This figure proved to be just about average.

All through our acceleration tests we had been checking the brakes as well. The Golden Hawk is equipped this year with new finned brakes that are designed to reduce fade. After every acceleration run, to every speed, we slammed the brakes on hard, and after more than 25 such applications they had definitely faded, requiring much greater pedal pressure. But at all times the car could be brought to a stop and one fast lap around the track was sufficient to bring them back almost to normal.

The only test that we didn't make with the Golden Hawk was one for gasoline mileage. Actually it should be quite economical considering the fact that the engine will be loafing most of the time at normal highway speeds. But we didn't feel that gas mileage was a strong consideration with a vehicle of this type, and so didn't take the time to run off our usual test.

With everything else considered, however, we nominate this as the American sports-type car of the year to beat. It's got everything from looks to handling to speed to plenty of room for four or five people. Every sort of power-assist equipment is available but we'll bet that lots of the Hawks will be sold with standard shift and regular steering. That's the way we'd like to own one. And the price is right, too. Suggested list in South Bend for the basic model of the Golden Hawk is $2,800. We would still call it a lot of car for $1,000 more than that. If you really like to drive, be sure to take a close look at this one. It's the end. ●

GOLDEN HAWK SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE: V-8, overhead valve; bore, 4 in.; stroke, 3.5 in.; total displacement, 352 cu. in.; developed hp, 275; maximum torque, 380 lbs./ft. at 2,800 rpm; compression ratio, 9.5 to 1; four-barrel carburetor; mechanical fuel pump; ignition, 12 volt.

TRANSMISSION: Ultramatic with two drive ranges; overdrive also available.

REAR AXLE RATIO: Ultramatic, 3.07 to 1; overdrive, 3.92 to 1. (3.31 to 1 optional).

BRAKES: self-centering, self-energizing four-wheel hydraulic; finned brake drums; power booster available.

DIMENSIONS: wheelbase, 120.5 in.; width, 70 7/16 in.; height, 56 5/16 in.; overall length, 203 15/16 in.; weight, not available; tires, tubeless, 7.10 x 15.

What's Your Problem?

Continued from page 45

Answer. Your friend has the right idea. While it is easy to bend the small annealed tubing generally used in automotive work, care must be exercised. If you just bend the tubing with your hands and take no precautions the tubing tends to flatten out at the bend.

One simple way of preventing this is to use a bending spring as your friend suggests. For very small tubing, a spring that just fits the outside diameter of the tubing is slipped around the pipe at the point where the bend is to be made. Then the bend is made as gently as possible.

Cleaning upholstery

What is a good way to clean the upholstery in my car? The children have gotten chewing gum and food stains on the back seats and the adult passengers have ground in cigarette ashes.

Peter Martenson
San Francisco, Calif.

Answer. The safest and probably the best fluid for dry cleaning fabrics is carbon tetrachloride. "Carbona" is a common trade name for this. You can buy carbon tetrachloride combined with a foaming detergent that helps remove most dirt, including chewing gum.

If the cigarette ashes won't come out with carbon tetrachloride, try a weak solution of ammonia. ●