

# MOTOR TREND



FEBRUARY 1956 25c

**LOOK OUT FOR  
THE SHARPIES!**

See Page 17

**The Silent, Silvery  
ROLLS-ROYCE**

**2**

**'56 STUDEBAKER  
ROAD TESTS**



**Road Testing  
PLYMOUTH**

**The Revitalized '56 Chevy Corvette** ➤





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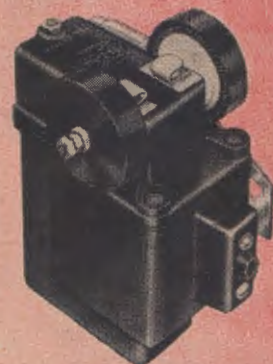
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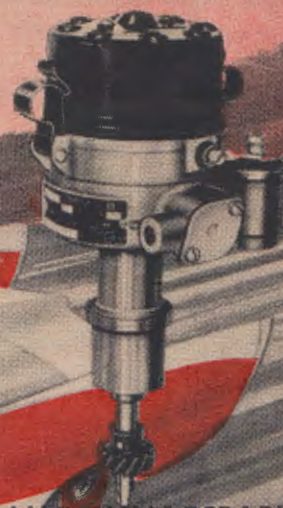
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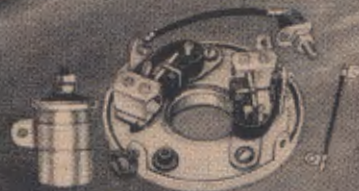
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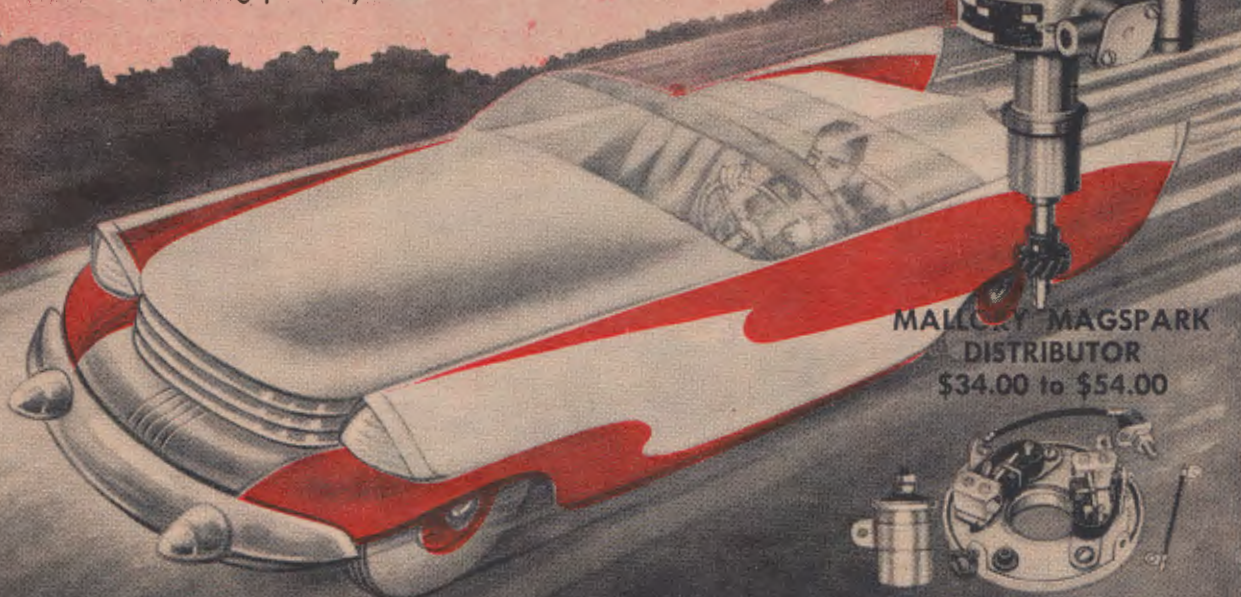
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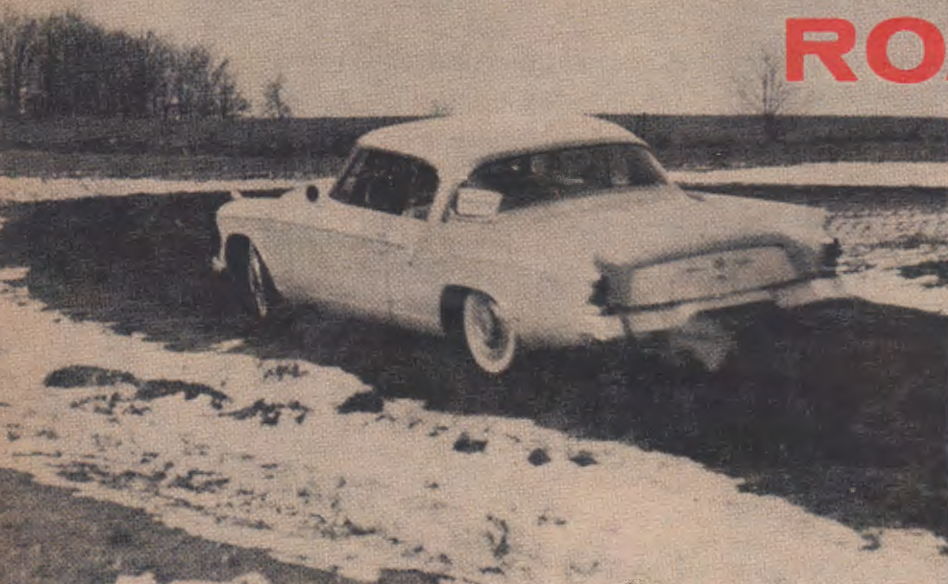


**MALLORY ELECTRIC CORPORATION**  
12416 CLOVERDALE AVE. — DETROIT 4, MICH.



# '56

# STUDEBAKER GOLDEN HAWK ROAD TEST



*Independents don't  
always suffer when they  
lose some of their  
identity. Here's a very  
happy alliance*

**AN MT RESEARCH REPORT**

**O**NE OF THE 1ST THINGS that came to our minds when the Studebaker-Packard Corp. was formed in October '54 was the potent package that could be produced by the efforts of the 2 companies. Each in its own right held down some unique features: Studebaker's lightweight sedans and neat coupes, Packard's monstrous new V8 engine, torsion bar suspension and, lately, its 1st-in-the-industry limited-slip differential.

And that brings us to this road test for the '56 Golden Hawk. Studebaker's top-line, sports-type car has been mated with not only the Packard engine, but with that

engine's personal transmission, Ultramatic. As for torsion bars and differential—not yet. The results of this merger-within-a-merger are pretty impressive—and bound to make even advocates of the square-cornered look come up for closer inspection of the racy Golden Hawk hardtop.

**Test car:** Most powerful, most deluxe of the Hawk series. MT's yellow-and-white hardtop had Ultramatic transmission, no power brakes, no power steering, but did have 2 convenient options: 2-way power seat (horizontal movement only), and powered door windows. The most-looked-

at car we've driven in a long, long time, Hawk differs from last year's coupes and pillarless coupes by its new-formed hood and grille, parking-light turn-signal lights atop front fenders, by the raised, "wash-board" rear deck, and by the Fiberglas fin buildup on the rear fenders. Other than that, you can replace most non-mechanical '56 parts from '55 stock.

The Hawks differ radically from 4-door and 2-door sedan bodies; nothing is common between them—not even bumpers. Thus (appearance-wise) S-P has created 2 distinctive series within the Studebaker line, a distinction that could possibly be-



Straight-on rear view of Golden Hawk is different from older coupes, new sedans



But there's a surprise inside: decklid is false bustle, gives no more room in trunk



come as clear as the division between Clipper and Packard.

**Engine:** This discussion concerns our Golden Hawk test car, but could well be written for a Clipper Custom, for they share a duplicate, Packard-built engine. Like other modern V8s, it puts out staggering rated horsepower, churns up torque that was unheard of not so many years ago, and does all this in a relatively efficient manner.

Heads are standard at 9.5 to 1, dual exhausts are included in the 275-horsepower parcel. Displacement is the oversquare product of a 4-inch bore, 3½-inch stroke. Valve action is by hydraulics, carburetion by 4-barrel Carter. There are no engine options. All that remains for those who *must* have a "powerpack" would be to experiment with Packard's bigger bore and higher compression or Caribbean's dual quad intake manifold.

**Other options:** Studebaker's usual option list applies to the Hawks with few exceptions. (Air conditioning is available in V8 sedans—not Champions or station wagons, and not in the coupes.) Unusual safety belt setup is offered at about \$25; belts are anchored to doors, with inside belt sections attached to floorboard.

Golden Hawk is offered only with Ultramatic as an option; 3-speed transmission

with overdrive is its standard equipment. (Heavy-duty clutch is used in this setup.) Transmission choices found in the other Hawks include 3-speed standard transmission, with or without overdrive, and Flightomatic, '56 name for Borg-Warner-built automatic transmission. Ultramatic comes only with the Packard engine.

Because all Hawks have the same chassis, the same body, and nearly-the-same interior dimensions (hardtops have an inch more headroom, front and rear), your choice in series options is limited only by your preference in interior trim and engine power. Flight Hawk is a 5-passenger coupe powered by the 101-horsepower, L-head 6 found in Champion sedans and Pelham station wagons. Next is another non-hardtop coupe, Power Hawk, with a 259.2-cubic-inch V8 in 2 forms: 170 hp, and 185 hp (4-barrel carburetor, dual exhausts). Power Hawk's engine conforms to Commander sedan and Parkview station wagon specifications. Sky Hawk, a hardtop, has a 289-cubic-inch Studebaker V8 putting out 195 horsepower with 7.8 to 1 compression ratio, 210 with powerpack (4-barrel carburetor; dual exhausts are standard with or without large carb). This V8 is found in 116½-inch wheelbase Pinehurst wagons and President sedans, and larger President Classic sedan. Power Hawks and Sky Hawks may be ordered with 8.3 to 1 heads at no extra charge; 7.8

to 1 is standard compression on those.

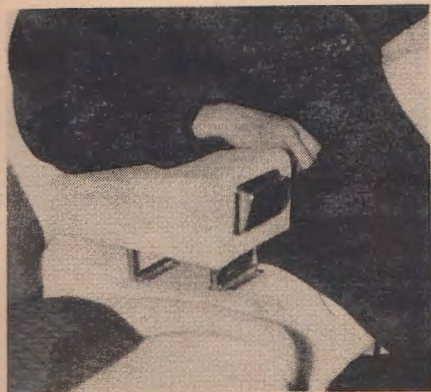
## WHAT THE CAR IS LIKE TO DRIVE

**Exit and entry:** People who are used to low, open sports cars will have the right approach to getting into the low, closed Studebaker; but that's where some of us have trouble—top is low, and door sill is conventionally high, with an overall reduction in entry space not found in a sedan or "full-size" hardtop coupe.

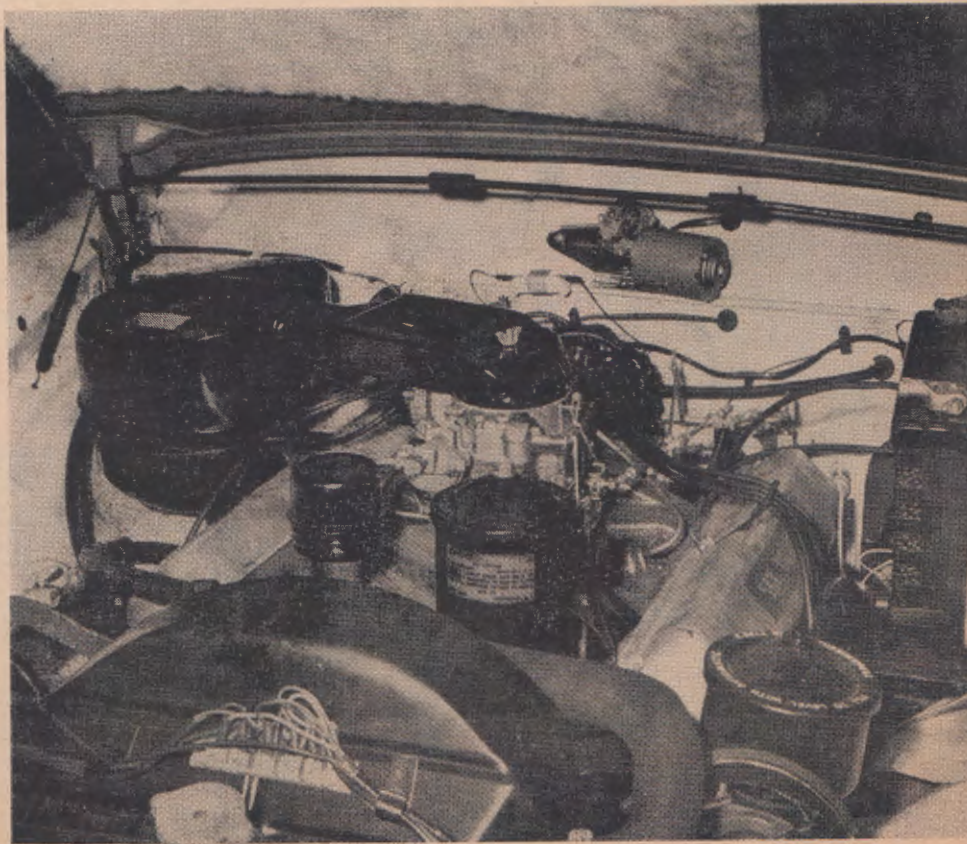
Getting into the Hawk from the driver's side, you come up against a very low-set steering wheel, and it'll be a tight squeeze for 175-pounders (or over). But 6-footers (not too much over) will find they can move their limbs around freely once inside. After you've lived with the car awhile, you won't find any of the space restrictions too bothersome.

**Driving position:** We termed it good, found that faults could be laid to personal dislikes, physical makeup. Hawk's seats are low, very comfortable. Steering wheel actually sits right in your lap, can be too close for some drivers, even with seat all way rearward. On the other hand, wheel position dictates absolute control; you don't have to reach far out for the wheel, which is large enough to keep your elbows from digging into your ribs. (Continued)

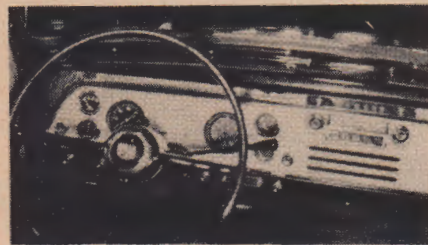
photos by Jim Lodge



Driveshaft won't let folding armrest go completely flat. Clipper engine is easier than most V8s to get at for tinkering. Heavy hood includes grille, is awkward







Golden Hawk dash (top) includes vacuum gauge (center) and tachometer. Clock, out of picture on Golden Hawk, substitutes for tachometer on lesser models

**Vision:** Basically good, but suffers from dangerously poor wiper sweep toward cornerpost. Test car was bad in this respect, some coupes we saw were better, but none were good. Studebaker has wide, high, curving windshields, and rake of non-wraparound gives a greenhouse effect, for it sweeps rearward at top to put you under a lot of glass (but without causing too much discomfort from the sun). It's hard to get used to the Hawk's wide windshield cornerpost, but you sit far enough from it to alleviate serious blindspot trouble.

Hood doesn't drop off as sharply as in '55. Simulated airscoop, plus higher grille, gives hood a longer, squared-off appearance; but road vision is excellent unless you're behind a higher (and most are) car. Hawk's chromed parking lights, high on the front fenders, serve as fender guides, look Jaguar-ish from driver's seat.

Vision to rear is good; altho rear roof quarter panels remain wide, inside mirror circumvents most obstructions to ease right-side blindspot. Fiberglass fins move rear fenders up to your line of sight.

**Instrument panel:** Customizers' and hot-rodders' demands for Stewart-Warner instruments aren't unfounded; one look at Golden Hawk's instrument panel tells you why: They're handsome, extremely legible, blend nicely into any styling situation. Hawk's lineup of gauges includes temperature, ammeter gauges at left, big 160-mph speedometer, multi-colored vacuum gauge at center, a 6000-rpm tachometer matching the speedometer, and fuel, oil pressure gauges on the right flank. Beyond center-mounted radio is a clock (same size as speedometer and tach) with

red sweep-second hand. Only Golden Hawk has vacuum gauge and tach; others fill tachometer's spot with a clock.

Round-dial S-W instruments have black background, white needles and numbers. There's no reflection from any of the instruments onto windshield at night; but we'd like to see a full-range rheostat for better lighting than present too-dim or too-bright.

**Operation of controls:** We were happy to see Studebaker retain desirable toggle switches for headlights, instrument lights, windshield wipers, defrosters, heater blower. Spread out along lower edge of instrument panel each side of steering column, they're easy to reach, easy to use. Heater control is limited to a single sliding knob, was very critical in amount of movement required to change amount of heater output. T-handled, pull-out parking brake is below heater control at driver's right, held firmly in all situations.

Hawk's Ultramatic quadrant is a conventional plastic dial atop steering column. It was hard to read (nighttime green light behind figures made it better than daytime sighting), for there's no definite pointer. DRIVE range positions are too close together, with little or no definition of feel between HIGH and DRIVE ranges, or between DRIVE and LOW.

**Ease of handling:** Only in a particular instance was handling ease strained: when the car was thrown into a hard, tight turn at relatively low (20-45 mph) speed. It was here that heavy Packard V8 made itself apparent, for front end became sluggish as the stressed wheel rolled under, a feeling not common to past Studebakers—coupes or sedans—that we've tested.

If handling ease to you means "how much work is involved?" we have to say that without power steering, Golden Hawk is a man's car; but you'll be pleased at how relaxed any driver can be behind the wheel. Prime reason is exceptionally accurate, steady steering, which, in MT's test car, eliminated all need for steering correction on the highway. Some of this

solidity is due to increased weight on the front end; some to Studebaker's stability (see Roadability section).

**Acceleration:** Our stopwatch board showed that few cars will keep up with the Golden Hawk in passing-speed power. It's a heavy car (actually heavier than the President Classic sedan), but with a high-displacement engine putting out torque in these proportions, let's face it—something has to give. In the case of 50-80 acceleration times, it was our old test car records; in the case of standing-start runs, it was rear tires.

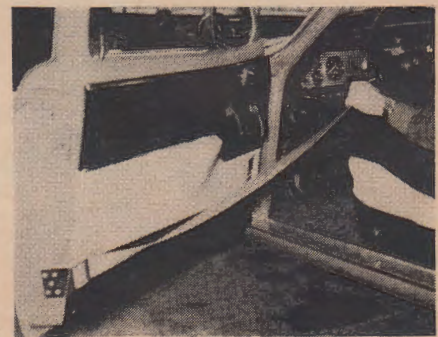
While we tested the car, we rued the fact that Ultramatic doesn't take full advantage of the car's potential; but we still had trouble trying to get off the mark without leaving black lines on the test strip. And exhaustive testing it was: Ultramatic supplies a 2-speed HIGH range, a 3-speed DRIVE range (like normal drive range but with option of low-gear start or kickdown), and a LOW range which does not shift to a higher gear.

In HIGH, you move out in non-g geared torque converter, shifting once to direct-drive lockup. Our average time in this range was a full 2 seconds slower to 60 mph, one second slower and one mph slower to the quarter-mile mark. Test figures (see page 23) were obtained using the lower DRIVE range (automatic low-gear-and-converter start, a shift to torque converter only, a final shift to direct drive). It was necessary to shift manually out of DRIVE range or back off on the accelerator, for test car's Ultramatic would not upshift automatically from low gear under full-throttle operation. We stayed in low gear to 4800-5000 rpm.

Passing-speed acceleration was done in the same manner, using both ranges. HIGH, with its automatic kickdown to "2nd," produced 30 to 50 mph times of 4.4 seconds, 50 to 80 times of 11.0 seconds. In DRIVE, with kickdown to low gear, we tried shifting (manually or by lifting accelerator) from low gear at 60, 65, 70, 75, and even 80 mph, brought 50 to 80 times down from 9.8 (Continued on page 52)



Golden Hawk has true exhausts, unlike the sorry situation above. This is a sedan with dual "exhausts," but as any detective can see, the left one goes nowhere



Power Hawk (note different trim) displays novel safety belt attachment. It clips into door panel when not in use, helps safety doorlatches to do work in a bad spot



# P E R F O R M A N C E

## '56

(275-bhp Golden Hawk)

**ACCELERATION** From Standing Start  
0-30 mph 3.4 0-60 mph 9.2  
Quarter-mile 17.3 and 80 mph

Passing Speeds  
30-50 mph 3.3 50-80 mph 8.5

**TOP SPEED** Fastest run 118.1 Slowest 116.3  
Average of 4 runs 117.2

**FUEL CONSUMPTION** Used Mobilgas Special  
Steady Speeds  
20.1 mpg @ 30 19.0 mpg @ 45  
16.7 mpg @ 60 15.5 mpg @ 75  
Stop-and-Go Driving  
11.0 mpg over measured course  
12.2 mpg tank average for 838 miles

**STOPPING DISTANCE** 171 feet from 60 mph

**SPEEDOMETER ERROR** Read 31 at true 30, 46 at 45,  
61 at 60, and 76 at 75

**REAR-WHEEL HORSEPOWER** Clayton chassis dynamometer showed:  
76 road hp @ 2000 rpm and 52 mph  
88 road hp @ 2500 rpm and 64 mph  
104 road hp @ 3000 rpm and 80 mph

## '55

(185-bhp Speedster)

From Standing Start  
0-60 mph 12.5

Passing Speeds  
50-80 mph 13

(The above are the only available comparative figures, obtained in a driving impression of the Studebaker Speedster. No road test of that model has been conducted by MT.)

# S P E C I F I C A T I O N S

**ENGINE:** Ohv V8. Bore 4 in. Stroke 3.50 in. Stroke/bore ratio 0.875:1. Compression ratio 9.5:1. Displacement 352 cu. in. Advertised bhp 275 @ 4600 rpm. Bhp per cu. in. 0.781. Piston travel @ max. bhp 2683 ft. per min. Max. bmep 162.8 psi. Max. torque 380 lbs.-ft. @ 2800 rpm.

**TRANSMISSION:** Standard transmission is 3-speed synchromesh and overdrive with planetary gearset. Automatic transmission is Ultramatic, 4-element torque converter with planetary gears and direct-drive lockup.

**REAR-AXLE RATIOS.** Standard (overdrive) 3.92. Ultramatic 3.07.

## DIMENSIONS

**A** FRONT OVERHANG 34.8  
**B** WHEELBASE 120.5  
**C** REAR OVERHANG 48.6  
**D** OVERALL HEIGHT 56.3 (loaded)  
58.1 (unloaded)  
**E** MINIMUM GROUND CLEARANCE 6.5  
(@ pillar crossmember, front)  
**F** FRONT LEGROOM 45.75

**STEERING:** Turns lock to lock 5.25. Overall ratio 24.0:1. With power steering 4.25. Overall ratio 20.0:1.

**WEIGHT:** Test car weight 3810. Test car weight-bhp ratio 13.85:1.

**TIRES:** 7.10 x 15.

**PRICES:** (Including suggested retail price at main factory, federal tax, and delivery handling charges but not freight.) Flight Hawk \$1809, Power Hawk \$1909, Sky Hawk \$2257, Golden Hawk \$2800.

**ACCESSORIES:** Ultramatic \$100, power brakes \$38, power steering \$108, power windows \$54, power seat \$45, radios \$74 and \$97, heater \$68.

**G** REAR LEGROOM 36.0  
**H** FRONT HEADROOM 35.6  
**I** REAR HEADROOM 34.0  
**J** OVERALL LENGTH 203.9  
**K** OVERALL WIDTH 70.4  
**L** FRONT SHOULDER ROOM 55.0  
**M** REAR SHOULDER ROOM 53.0

# MT ROAD TEST



**'56 STUDEBAKER**  
Golden Hawk  
with Ultramatic

