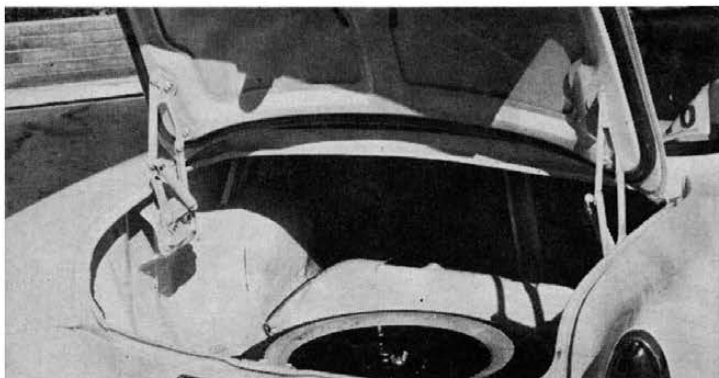
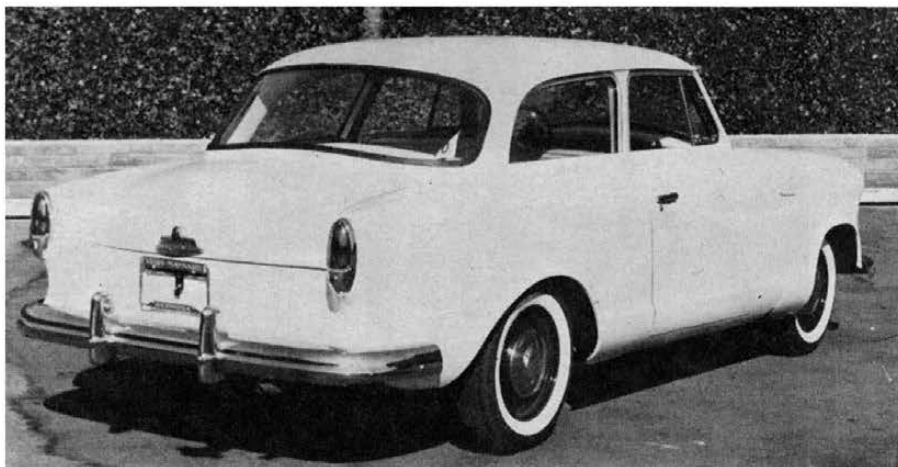




RAMBLER *continued*



*Only a basically well proportioned and properly styled car could look so good with so little of the chromium that passes for styling along the shores of the Great Lakes. You can't have your cake and eat it, too; a larger trunk would be nice but is impossible without great overhang, which is pleasingly absent.*

tank, of course. This weight is not remarkable for unit construction, but at least the structure is extremely rigid and durable.

The ride will seem, to those used to larger U.S. cars, on the firm side. We liked it very much, for the roll in a turn is negligible and the general handling qualities are excellent. The steering is very nearly neutral; only vigorous cornering produces any evidence of understeer, or ploughing, as the professional drivers call it. Our only objection to the car in this respect was an occasional tendency to pitch over a sharp dip in the road, but this action was very well damped and might easily pass unnoticed. As mentioned earlier, the brakes are excellent, with light, progressive action and no power boost of any kind. The drum diameters are only 9 in., but there is ample width and area (139.5 sq in.) for the weight.

The unit-construction (frameless) body is free from rattles or signs of drumming. In general the interior sound level is very satisfactory, though perhaps not so "velvety" as some of our more luxurious V-8's. The indirect gears are quiet, and even under full throttle the 6-cylinder engine emits only a very modest power roar.

The over-all quality throughout the car is good, even excellent in comparison to most of the sculptured '59 models we have examined. Doors and sheet metal fit well, but the extruded window frames showed some minor fit discrepancies. The interiors are well done; neither so plain as to be "chintzy" nor so overdone as to be flamboyant. The simple instrument panel (like that of the first Nash Rambler) is functional. A shift lever coming out of the dash (instead of being attached to the steering column) is a touch that others could copy. The front bench seats three adults and the 1 x 2 split of the back is an interesting feature, though a 2 x 1 split might be even more convenient. The rear seat is narrow and designed for two adults only, due to rear wheelhouse encroachment. Our only serious objection to the seating was that the shape

and/or padding around the driver tends to cause him to slide gradually over toward the left door. We also missed a left-hand arm rest, though one can be ordered.

Technically, the most advanced feature of the American is certainly the unit construction, which eliminates the conventional frame. Advantages claimed for this construction, which is now almost standard European practice, include greater rigidity with less weight. In practice, the year-to-year beefing-up process tends to reduce the weight savings. Also, most foreign designs are somewhat lighter than American ones for their size, on either a pounds per square feet or pounds per cubic feet basis. Nevertheless, the Rambler is a very sturdy structure, and service experience has been very good. Even the old bugaboo of collision damage has proved to be no problem, for a crash which would result in expensive repairs on the Rambler would prove equally costly on a "frame" chassis, simply because frame straightening is also an expensive process.

Another outstanding technical feature of the American is the very large, low-speed engine, mentioned earlier. In terms of probable life and mileage before overhaul, the American will be good, even in an era when short-stroke engines and economy axle ratios are common practice. A wear factor of 48.6, as quoted under calculated data, indicates that there's still plenty of life in the old flat-head. And it's simple and easy to service.

The American is an excellent, practical all-around automobile, yet we still wonder why the 127-bhp overhead-valve version of this engine is not available as an extra-cost option. This would make an interesting high-performance package, far more sensible than trying to squeeze a V-8 under the hood. That alternative (the V-8) is one that would ruin the car. Finally, the American with optional automatic transmission is the only sensible no-shift car on the market today. That one exclusive feature alone should do much to make the Rambler American extremely popular with some of us lazy Americans. 