



THE NEW YORKER IS AN EXTREMELY HOT CAR, POSSIBLY THE QUICKEST ACCELERATOR OF ALL THE STANDARD-ENGINE 1957 MODELS.



STYLING MAKES THE CHRYSLER LOOK BIG, BIGGER THAN IT ACTUALLY IS, WITHOUT SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASING THE INTERIOR ROOM.

## CHRYSLER ROAD TEST

**I**F THERE were such a thing as a "car of the year," the 1957 Chrysler New Yorker would be a top-drawer candidate for the honor.

The new Chrysler—virtually all-new except for its V-8 engine—obviously is one of the current leaders in automotive styling. Added to this are exceptional handling and riding qualities. And a big plus is its accelerating ability—the figures obtained in this road test showing that it ranks with the quickest standard models, those that do not carry special engine options for spectacular performance.

Like everything else in this sorry world, the car is not 100 per cent perfect. Such faults that it does have are relatively minor and are more appropriately classified as weak spots. Most buyers will consider the only really bad point the fact that the price tag with normal equipment will be in the neighborhood of \$5,000.

That's a lot of money—but the New Yorker is a lot of car. If the outlay is to be viewed objectively, however, it must be admitted that many of the Chrysler's strongest features—looks, roadability and (to a lesser degree) performance—are available in its lower-priced sister corporation makes. What it all amounts to is the high premium on ultra-luxury. And that immeasurable item called prestige.

The car tested for this report was spanking new two-door hardtop, just two days off the assembly line. Most of the optional items were present: power steering, windows, seat and brakes, plus dual

headlights and a rear-seat radio speaker.

During the entire test period, which covered nearly 1,000 miles, the car functioned perfectly and required no mechanical attention whatsoever. The quality control, on this car's assembly, was almost excellent. All doors, windows, locks and lids opened and shut satisfactorily. Only one minor rattle, in the righthand door, developed and this could have been eliminated easily in regular dealer servicing.

A break-in period of 500 miles, including driving through snow and blizzards at high mountain elevations, was allowed prior to the performance checks. These checks were made in mild temperatures at sea level. The overall gas mileage was 14 mpg, not as much as an owner would like but the figure is near the average for all of Detroit's current V-8 equipment.

The new three-speed Torqueflite, incidentally, is a vast improvement over the former two-speed automatic box. On downgrades and on icy roads, the low and second-gear selections brake the car effectively.

While driving in low temperatures, the superiority of Chrysler's heater system became quite apparent, as it distributes the heat evenly and without annoying drafts. And the controls have been limited to a simple single lever and a blower switch.

Instruments are near-perfect in arrangement, consisting of two simple round clusters easily viewed. No gimmicks have been used; needles indicate

speed, charging, oil, fuel and engine temperature. The rest of the dash is less ideal, since the glove box is at the far right, rather than centrally located; radio knobs and ash tray are a long reach for the driver; switches for lights, wiper, etc., are rather formidable projections on a level with the driver's knees, suggesting possible contact on impact. Something new is a foot bellows for the windshield washer, in place of the former vacuum-operated type, which probably will prove to be more durable and fool-proof.

The seating and steering position, as in the other corporation makes, is absolutely unsurpassed. Comfort, visibility and close-to-the-road feeling are present to a degree not previously attained by any Detroit product. Ease of entry and exit has not been sacrificed, despite the reduced overall height. Only limitation is comfortable front-seating for two persons, instead of the traditional three, especially if adults are involved.

Since the test car was a hardtop coupe, seating in the rear lacked legroom—a characteristic common to the body type. Most novel feature here is that passengers, by leaning their heads back slightly, can look directly overhead at the sky through the rear window that boasts positively enormous glass area.

Acceleration of the Chrysler puts it clearly in the hot class by a wide margin. This, however, is not surprising, since the car has been one of the most potent for several years. It takes some delicate footwork to wring the maximum out of

the front-end heavy New Yorker; simple floorboarding of the throttle or winding the engine up with the brake on, results in excessive wheel spin and substantially slower times.

By careful feathering of the throttle until the tires get a good bite on the pavement, a good second can be chopped off the more careless 0-60 mph times. This method produced 0-60 figures that averaged out to 8.7 seconds. For comparison, the 1956 New Yorker reported upon in MOTOR LIFE a year ago averaged 9.2—so there has been a reduction of half a second.

It should also be noted that the most favorable 0-60 times were achieved with second gear selection. When drive or third gear was employed, an upshift just over 50 mph held the result down to 9.5 seconds, almost a full second slower. The Chrysler will not wind up to 60 mph in low gear.

The Chrysler is a big car but its ability to move so quickly should astonish no one who takes the time to review rated outputs of current engines. The New Yorker's V-8 is a positive brute, outranking practically everything else in the standard category. A whopping 325 hp and 430 foot pounds of torque apparently are delivered quite efficiently through the new, and very good, three-speed transmission. It's things like this that make the stick shift obsolete, if driving ease alone won't do it.

Despite this 392-cubic-inch bomb under the hood, the New Yorker's engine noise amounts to not much more than a whisper. More surprising in light of the fact that the test car had not one shred of sound-absorbing padding attached to hood or wall. The idle was as smooth as silk, none of the roughness of a too-radical cam.

In the handling department, the Chrysler rates another A-plus. Nothing else in its class will take the corners flatter, maneuver easier or offer greater straight-away stability. Outside its price bracket, if it yields anything, it is only a smidgen to the corporation's lightweights, the Plymouth and the Dodge. But the point of difference is so fine that it is splitting hairs to find it at all—it would take many test cars to settle the matter conclusively.

A few of the New Yorker's minor features are sufficiently unconventional, or at least uncommon, to rate special comment. The exterior door handles are new and of questionable value, but those on the inside—big pull-back levers—are definitely an improvement. The electric window lifts operate with the key off, not too good where children are involved. On the other hand, the horn will not sound with the ignition off and the reason for this is difficult to determine. The trunk lid could stand some good counterbalancing for improved accessibility to the enormous luggage space.

The Chrysler was the second test car to be equipped with dual headlights. On the first (DeSoto) no significant benefits could be distinguished by the unscientific human eye. The driver reaction with the Chrysler was similar. The advantages apparently are chiefly in the area of styling or novelty.

There is considerable difference of opinion in Detroit over the question of the public accepting drastic or revolutionary improvement in cars. The advances embodied in the Chrysler test car are all sound and worthwhile improvements which the drivers not only want but will accept, and gladly at that. It's a beautiful car, one built to ride in and enjoy, as well as admire. There should be more like it. ●

### CHRYSLER TEST DATA

Test Car: 1957 Chrysler New Yorker two-door hardtop  
 Basic Price: \$4200  
 Engine: 392-cubic-inch ohv V-8  
 Compression Ratio: 9.25-to-1  
 Horsepower: 325 @ 4600 rpm  
 Torque: 430 @ 2800 rpm  
 Dimensions: Length 219 inches, height 55, width 78, tread 61 front 60 rear, wheelbase 126  
 Dry Weight: 4300 lbs.  
 Transmission: Three-speed Torqueflite torque converter  
 Acceleration: 0-30 mph in 3.3 seconds, 0-45 mph 5.4 and 0-60 mph 8.7 seconds  
 Gas Mileage: 14 mpg average  
 Speedometer Corrections: No error. Accurate up to 60 mph



EXCELLENT DESIGN of front body posts make Chrysler easier to get in and out of, despite low roof. Instrument layout and the forward seating position also are excellent.