



FOUR HEADLIGHTS AND LIGHTNING-STREAK SIDE TRIM IS QUICKEST WAY TO DISTINGUISH 1957 NASH FROM CORRESPONDING 1956 MODELS.



SYMMETRICAL LAYOUT of instrument panel is still favored by Nash Stylists even though it stands alone in this respect. Glove compartment in center of panel, below dash, is augmented by carrier made of netting, running across the car above the windshield. Note air conditioner.

# NASH ROAD TEST

**I**T WAS no big surprise when the 1957 Nashes appeared with bigger versions of the American Motors V-8 engine introduced last year. The difference this engine makes in performance is news.

This engine is smaller in overall size and cubic inches than the Packard V-8 it replaces; lighter, too. It displaces 327 cubic inches vs. 352 in the big V-8 used in '56. It is rated at 255 hp (vs. 220 last year).

Most everyone knows all this, but until the new Nash turned an average of 10.3 seconds in 0-60 mph runs it didn't mean much. That puts it in the "average" class as defined in Special Reports (MOTOR LIFE, January, 1957), true—but just in it. The "hot" category was reserved for cars which turn 0-60 in eight to 10 seconds and the Nash was just above that. But hear the rest of the story:

The Nash Ambassador tested was a brand-new model and had less than 500 miles on the odometer when acceleration runs were made. With more break-in time, this Nash would be sure to break the 10-second mark and enter the "hot" class.

Another factor that made the 10.3 average time more amazing was that the test car was fully equipped; even had air conditioning. The added weight and power-robbing qualities of all the accessories certainly didn't add to performance. Elimination of air conditioning alone would probably have reduced 0-60 times enough to put the Nash in the "hot" class even without further break-in.

There was much less change in roadability, handling and ride than in performance. This was to be expected, since there were no major chassis changes.

Ride is very soft and comfortable—just the thing for long-distance driving over good roads. It definitely would not be smart to attempt very high cruising speeds over twisting roads or highways with which you aren't familiar. The Nash doesn't take too kindly to being barreled around tight turns at high speeds. Its soft springing—by coils all around—makes it mushy and it tends to wallow badly in such cases.

Fortunately, however, Nash drivers probably won't be tempted to do much of this sort of thing. The very width and impression of bulk you get from behind the driver's seat is an inhibiting factor.

There have been no major complaints against Nash quality in recent years, nor have drivers felt compelled to voice any. The same is true for '57. Workmanship in the test car was generally very good.

One thing most drivers are eager to try out is the dual headlight system. (Nash is one of the two 1957 makes which offers true duals as standard equipment.) There is no mystery in operating them. You pull out a knob on the instrument panel to turn parking and head lamps on, just as in conventional single lamp systems. There is also a conventional foot switch for high and low beams.

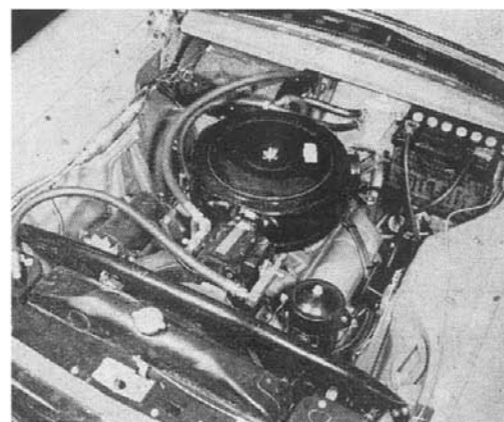
On low beam, the upper set of headlights operate alone. When you switch to

high beam, the two lower lights join them.

Experience recorded in this test showed that there definitely is more and better illumination on high beam with the dual lamp system. There was no appreciable difference from standard systems on low beam. To check dazzle and glare, one of the test crew drove another car toward the Nash. At long range, before the two cars were close enough to require dimming, the driver of the car approaching the Nash reported no glare problem. He added that seeing the four lights heading toward him was a rather odd sensation at first, however.

The test car was two-toned in black-and-white and had a jazzy interior to match. The result was not conservative, but attractive, and materials used appeared to be practical from a wear and cleaning standpoint.

Nash continues to offer the convenient netting carrier for odds and ends just



OIL FILTER location is most convenient of any on the market. Engine compartment is not too cluttered even with power equipment.

over the windshield. This makes a good spot to carry maps, letters to be mailed, extra cigarettes, etc. It's surprising something like this isn't offered on more cars. It's a minor thing, perhaps, but a handy one and shouldn't be too costly.

The center-mounted, drawer-type glove compartment is another handy feature. It's easy for the driver to reach. Don't pull it too hard, however, or you'll pull it completely off its slides and drop its contents on the floor. Seems like there should be a stop or safety catch to prevent that.

Nash styling is familiar by now since it has remained basically the same for several years. The '57s are slightly lower, due to a thinner, flatter roof and 14-inch tires. The switch to dual headlamps caused grille design to be revised somewhat, since lights were mounted in the grille prior to this year.

Side body trim has been changed, now follows a "lightning streak" motif. It changes the side view appearance slightly from last year, but that's about all you can say for it.

Nash has been proud of its interior roominess for some years. Its seats measure 65 inches, widest in the industry. There certainly is ample room for three to sit abreast both in front or rear seats. There is less crowding with six aboard than is true of many other makes for '57. Headroom is more adequate than in some competing cars also.

Basically the American Motors V-8 used by Nash offers easy accessibility and was designed so that parts which must be reached often for servicing are conventionally located. The situation was complicated by the many accessories under the hood of the test car, however.

When you stuff air conditioning components, power steering and power brakes

under the hood with the engine, it's going to make any engine hard to get at. The test Nash was no worse than other similarly equipped '57 cars and, actually, better than most. A bright spot is the sensible location of the oil filter, at the upper left front of the engine where it can be reached easily for changing.

Nash has cut prices substantially this year, a move counter to the industry pattern. Drops ranged from \$250 to more than \$400. This should attract some new customers, although the price cuts might not result in significantly lower actual delivered prices in some areas where Nash dealers were giving large discounts last year.

American Motors has been putting out publicity releases of jubilation over early sales, however. Obviously Nash has qualities which have won it a not large but very loyal following over the years. Perhaps those qualities, together with added performance and price cuts, will add to the following in 1957. ●

## NASH TEST DATA

Test Car: 1957 Nash Ambassador four-door sedan  
 Basic Price: \$2940  
 Engine: 327-cubic-inch ohv V-8  
 Compression Ratio: 9-to-1  
 Horsepower: 255 @ 4700 rpm  
 Torque: 345 @ 2600 rpm  
 Dimensions: Length 209 inches, width 78, height 60, tread 59 front 60.5 rear, wheelbase 121.25  
 Dry Weight: 3700 lbs  
 Transmission: Fluid-Shifting Hydra-Matic  
 Acceleration: 0-30 mph 3.8 seconds, 0-45 mph 6.4, 0-60 mph 10.3  
 Gas Mileage: 13.9 mpg average  
 Speedometer Corrections: Indicated 30, 45 and 60 mph are actual 30, 43 and 57, respectively

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