



DETROIT LISTENING POST

By Art Railton

ARE WE JUST going over the hump? Could be. This may be the year of the Big Switch. There's something different in the air.

True, there hasn't been any stampede yet, but there's more sales emphasis on economy than in many years.

George Romney, president of American Motors, and Crown Prince of the Compact-Car Dynasty, recently predicted that 350,000 imported cars will be sold in 1958. If true, that will cause pencil sharpening in Detroit.

In 1950, there were only 16,336 foreign cars sold here (most of them sports cars). In that year 6,326,000 American cars were sold.

In 1958, Romney predicts that there will be 350,000 foreign cars sold (21 times as many) and, he says, only 5,800,000 American cars (500,000 fewer than in 1950).

When American-car sales sag and import sales skyrocket, something's going to be

THE 1958 CARS

done. That you can bet your money on.

Rambler's new American represents the first time in memory that a company has reincarnated a discontinued car (the smaller Rambler of 1955). This is the equivalent of heresy in the automobile business. "Americans will never go backward" has been the Detroit slogan for years.

But Romney feels certain that now is the time to test that slogan. He plans to build 20,000 of these small cars in 1958. The sales will not, AM feels, cut into Rambler sales, but will be all-new business. Rambler, incidentally, virtually alone in the industry continues to sell in sharply increased volume.

Mercury is considering a revival of its Medalist. Another indication of the Big Switch. This low-price line was dropped to make room for the Edsel between Ford and Mercury. But Mercury sales apparently are soft enough to cause talk of reviving the price leader.

Oldsmobile reduced horsepower and increased economy of its 1958 Eighty-Eight model (only slightly, to be sure, but an indication of the trends of the year).

Ford is pushing its lowest-price model in

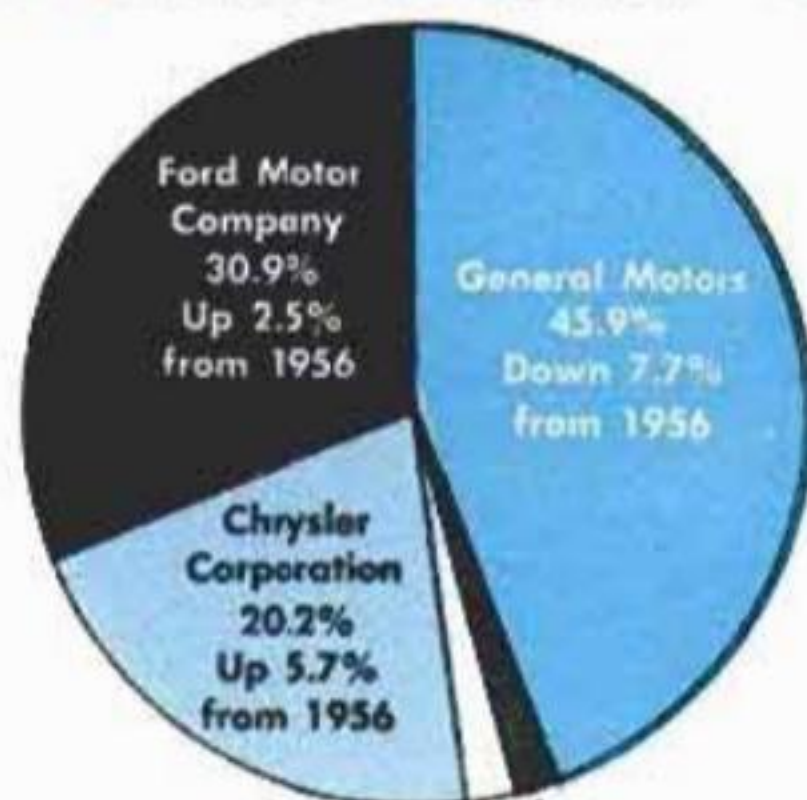
(Continued to page 284)

PRODUCTION OF PASSENGER CARS DURING 1957

1. CHEVROLET	1,488,606	Down 6.9%
2. FORD	1,488,606	Up 10.5%
3. PLYMOUTH	649,718	Up 46.2%
4. BUICK	398,978	Down 24.1%
5. OLDSMOBILE	381,420	Down 10.5%
6. PONTIAC	335,340	Up 2.4%
7. DODGE	291,763	Up 40.3%
8. MERCURY	273,131	Up 13.1%
9. CADILLAC	150,512	Up 9.2%
10. CHRYSLER	118,001	Up 26.7%
11. DE SOTO	117,834	Up 15.9%
12. RAMBLER	105,068	Up 35.0%
13. STUDEBAKER	66,663	Down 17.8%
14. EDESEL	54,013	No 1956 production
15. IMPERIAL	37,814	Up 225.3%
16. LINCOLN	36,707	Down 21.5%
17. PACKARD	5,244	Down 60.9%
18. NASH	3,561	Down 79.9%
19. HUDSON	1,345	Down 79.7%
20. CONTINENTAL	444	Down 64.9%

TOTAL FOR INDUSTRY: 6,005,655 passenger cars—Up 5.3% from 1956

PERCENTAGE OF THE INDUSTRY



Production period covered is from January 1 to December 31, 1957. Total production for 1957 is expected to be about 6,100,000 cars. Estimates by courtesy of Automotive News

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE '58 CARS?

STYLISTS TRY to make cars attractive—and tempting, too. But they also must provide easy identification so each car on the street becomes an advertisement. Usually this identification is worked into the front or rear. It's more visible there.

How many of these identification devices do you recognize? Name over 15 and you're expert, 8 to 15 you're average, 0 to 7 you're below average and need to study the following pages.

For photos of the cars
turn the page:



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



16



17



18



19

To find out how
many you identi-
fied correctly
turn to page 160.

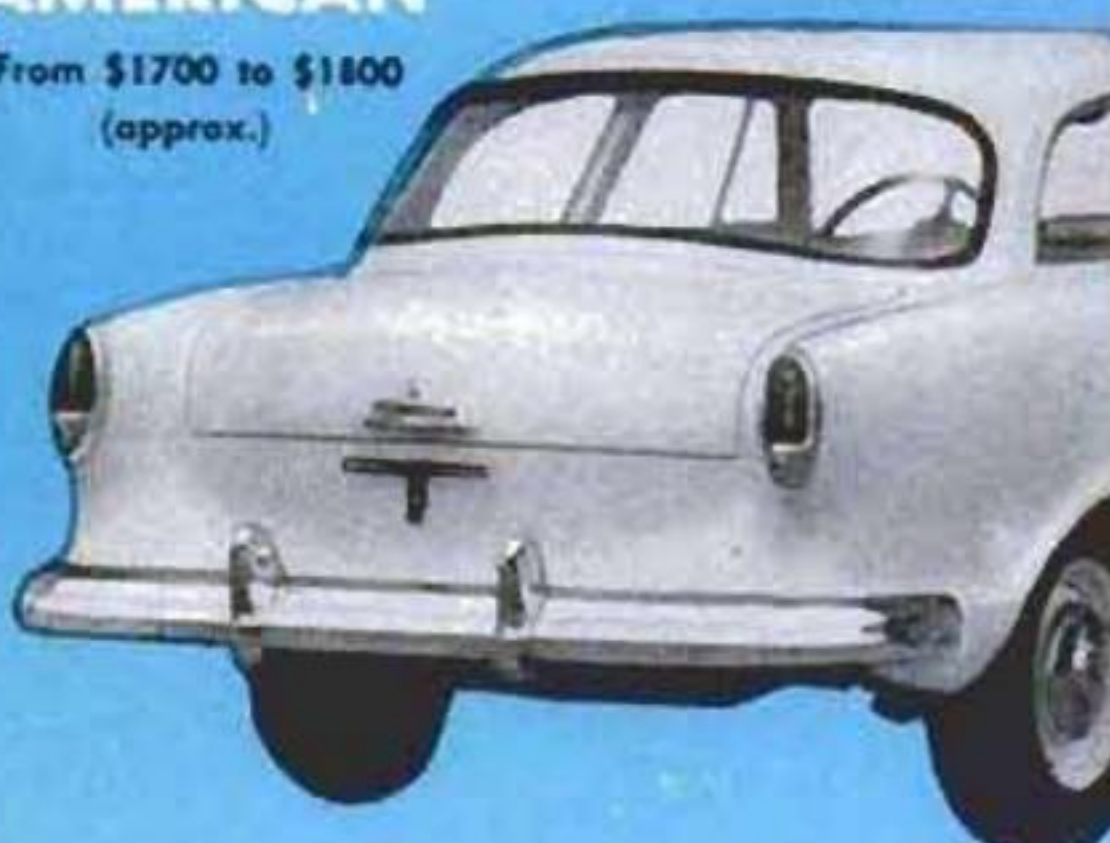


From \$2587 to \$3116



AMERICAN

From \$1700 to \$1800
(approx.)



BUICK

From \$2636 to \$5125



CADILLAC

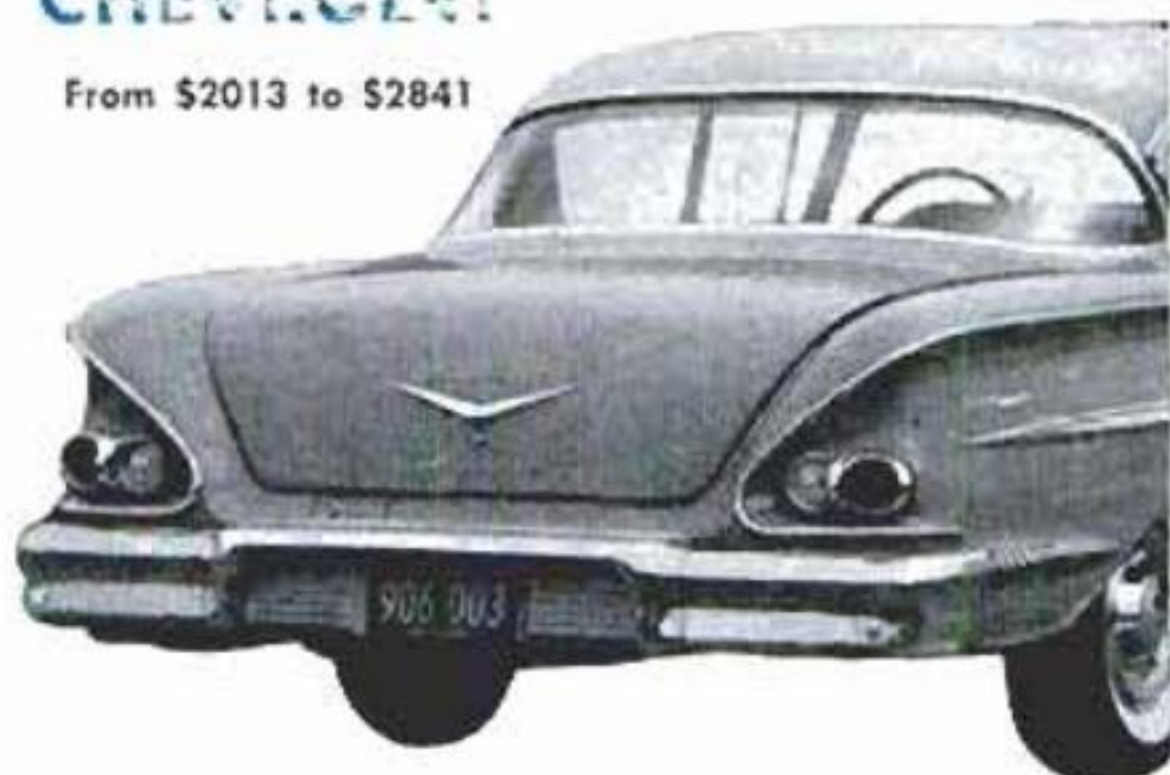
From \$4784 to \$13,074





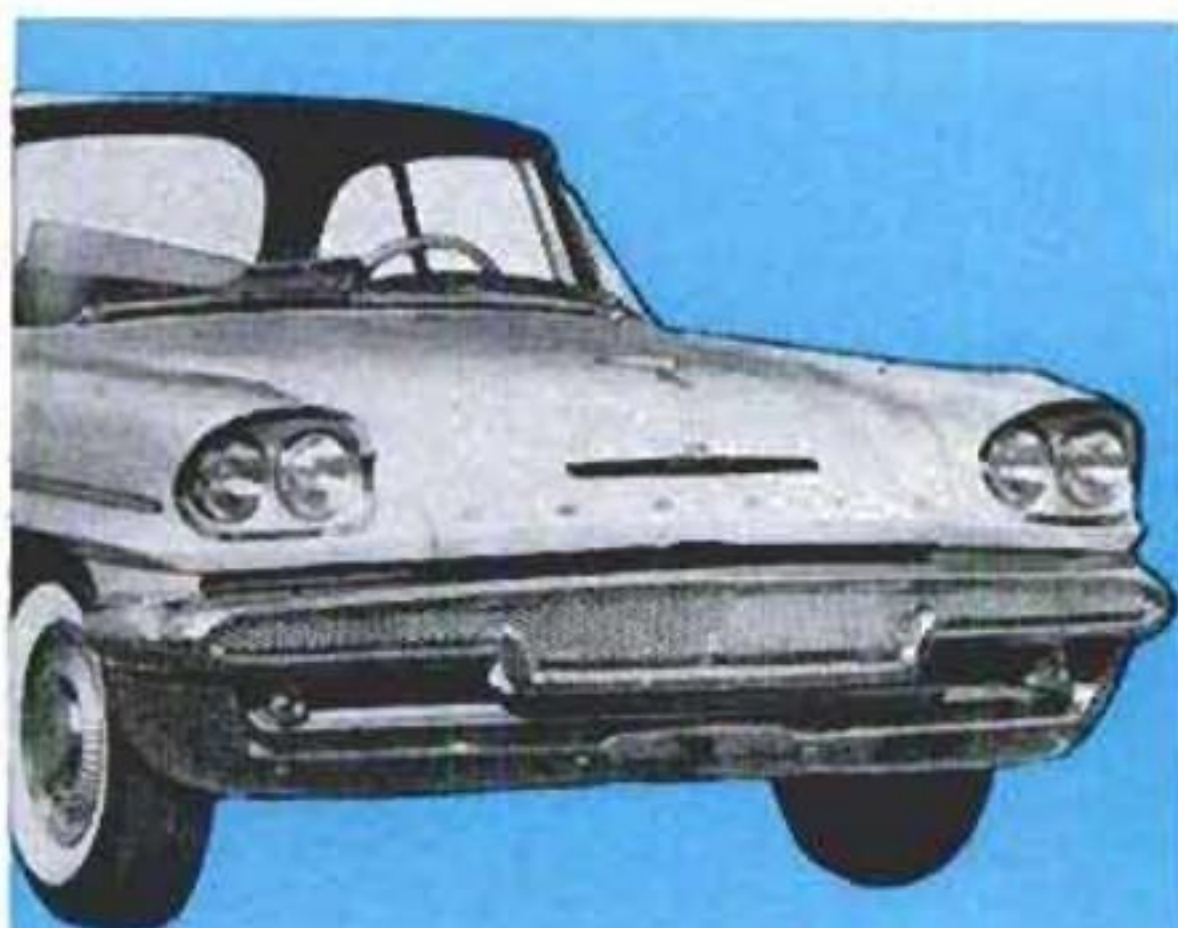
CHEVROLET

From \$2013 to \$2841



CHRYSLER

From \$3129 to \$5083



DE SOTO

From \$2819 to \$4369



DODGE

From \$2449 to \$3354





EDSEL

From \$2519 to \$3801



FORD

From \$1977 to \$3173



IMPERIAL

From \$4839 to \$5969



LINCOLN

From \$4803 to \$6283





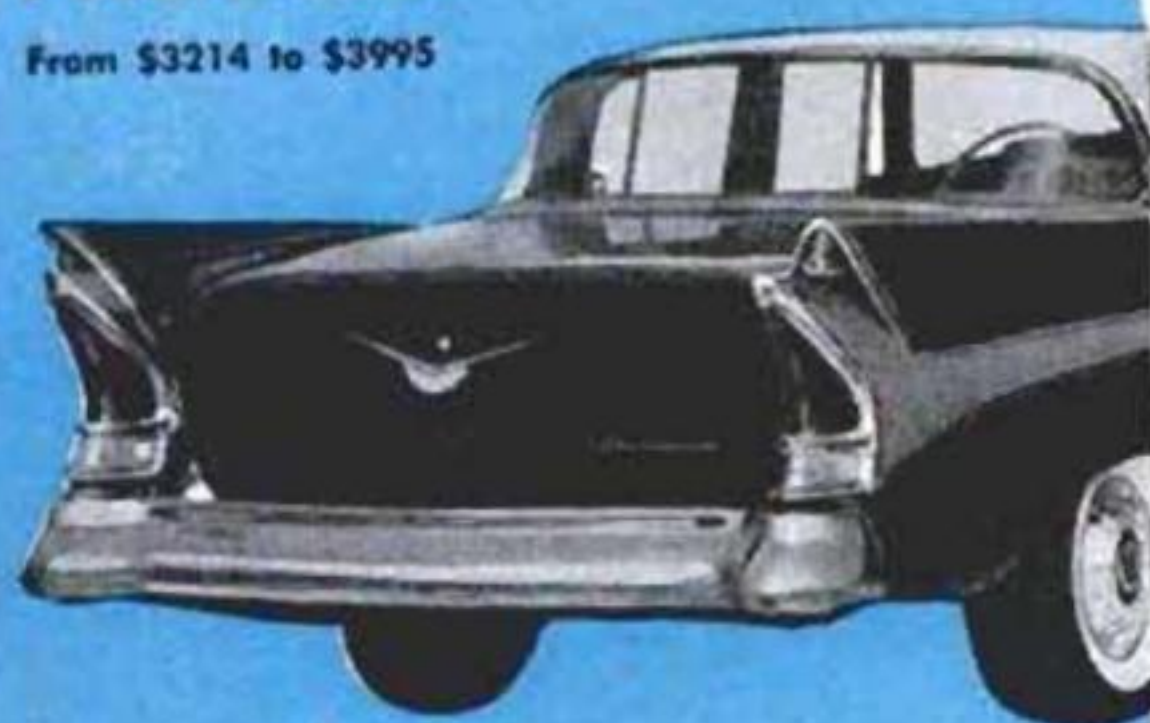
Oldsmobile
From \$2652 to \$4118



OLDSMOBILE
From \$2772 to \$4300

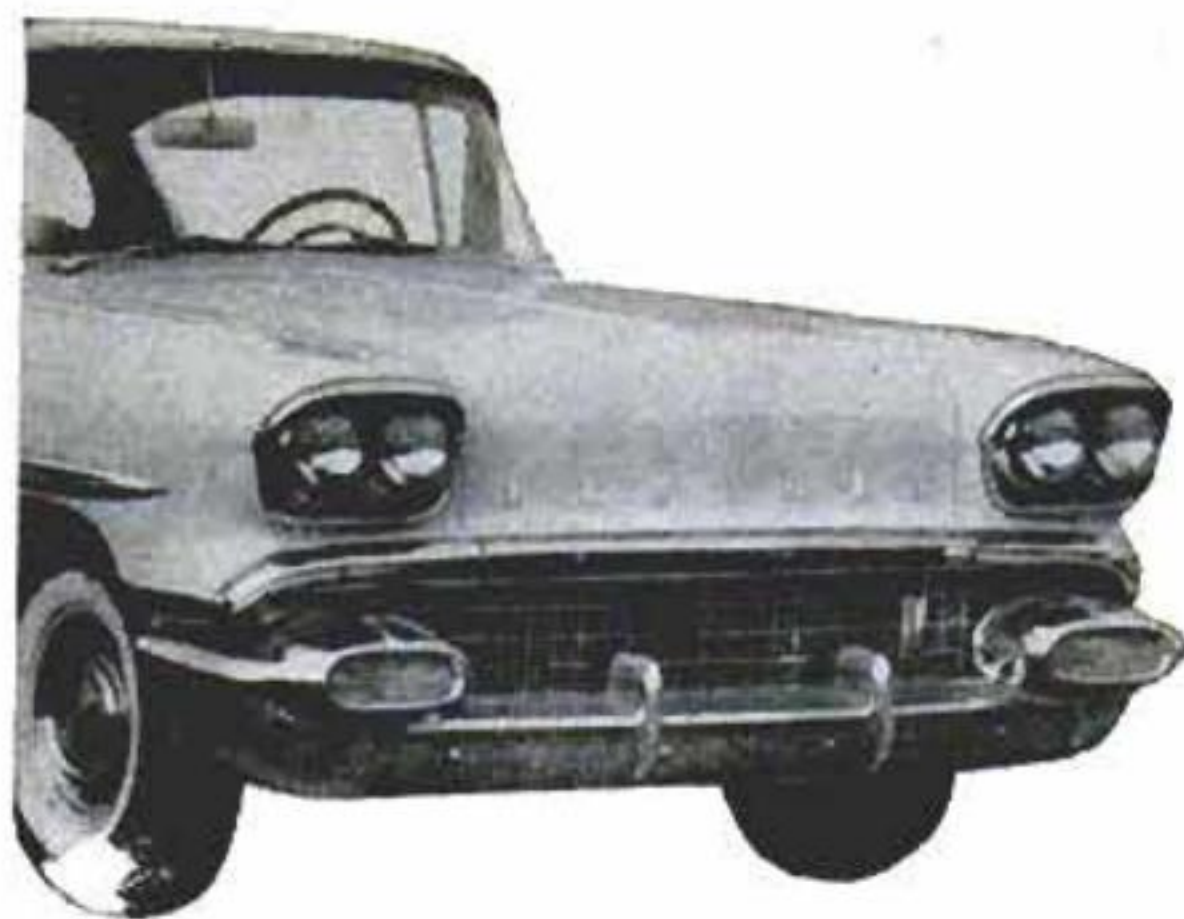


PACKARD
From \$3214 to \$3995



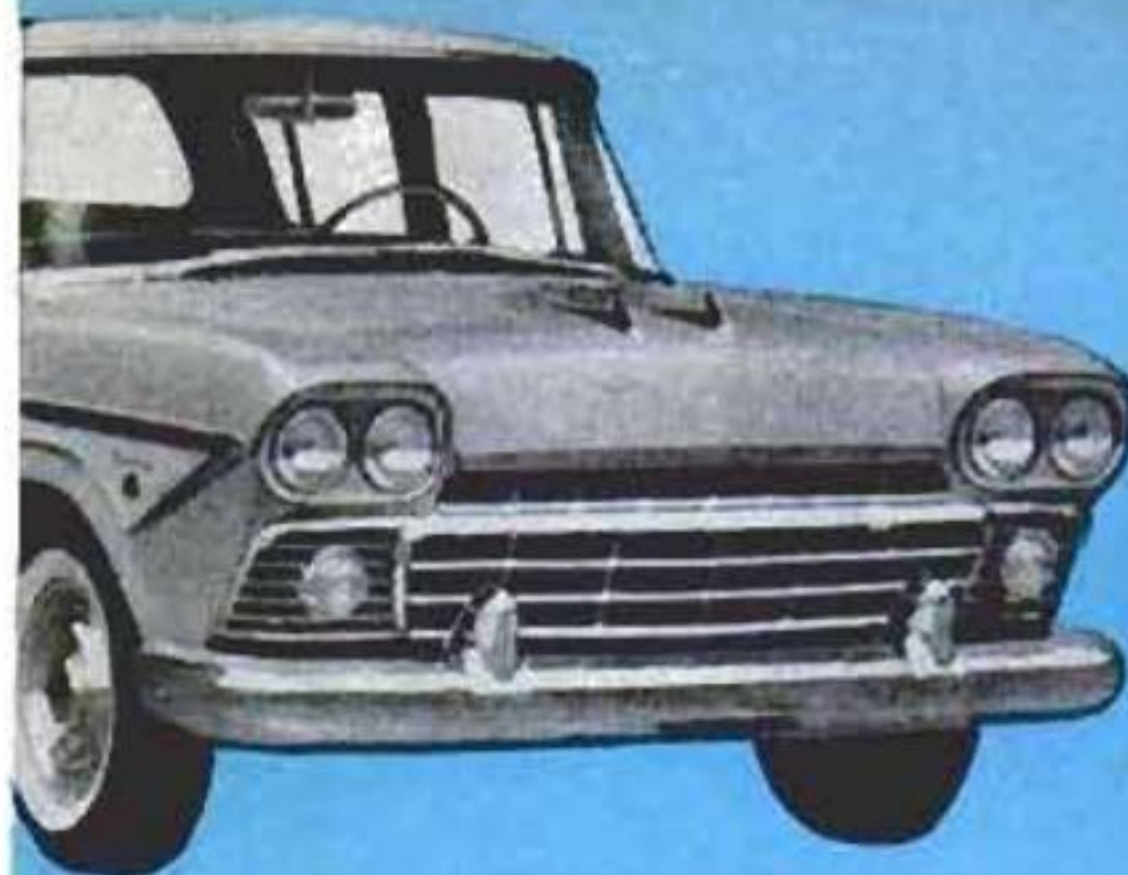
From \$2028 to \$3067





PONTIAC

From \$2573 to \$3586



RAMBLER

From \$2047 to \$2751



STUDEBAKER

From \$1795 to \$3282



Recognition-Test Answers

If you haven't taken the test, turn back to page 155 before looking at the answers



1. OLDSMOBILE



2. MERCURY



3. PACKARD



4. BUICK



5. DODGE



6. LINCOLN



7. IMPERIAL



8. DE SOTO



9. PLYMOUTH



10. CHRYSLER



11. AMERICAN



12. STUDEBAKER



13. RAMBLER



14. CADILLAC



15. EDELL



16. FORD



17. PONTIAC



18. AMBASSADOR



19. CHEVROLET

party Type—These Are for You

About two feet longer (it is 205.4 inches over-all), the new Thunderbird is a four-seater. Its V8 engine puts out 300 horsepower. Displacement is 352 inches, compression 10.2 to 1. For more about the car and specifications, see page 178. Here is the new hardtop model. Not announced yet, but rumored to be coming out early in the spring is a soft-top convertible body style



THUNDERBIRD

Few changes have been made in the new Chrysler 300D, except in horsepower. This model develops 380 horsepower in the standard engine, 390 with optional fuel injection. Displacement is 392 cubic inches in the hemispheric-head V8. It continues to be a fast, heavy road car that will cover miles quickly and willingly. Highly tuned, it is no car for inching along in city traffic



CHRYSLER 300-D

Still the only American entry in the sports-car category, the new Corvette remains a cozy two-seater. Weighing just 2800 pounds (thanks to lightweight plastic), it is an uncontradictable bomb when powered by a 290-horsepower V8 and four-speed transmission (both optional). Inside are changes also: Instrument panel has all dials where driver can read them, for example



CORVETTE

PACKARD HAWK

Not stampeded by the industry's big switch to four of a kind, Packard retains single headlights in its Hawk series. Also retained is the classic nonwrap windshield. Again this year, horsepower is 275 and displacement 289 cubic inches. Standard is the supercharger that cuts in on demand to ram pressurized air through the two-barrel carburetor for power surges

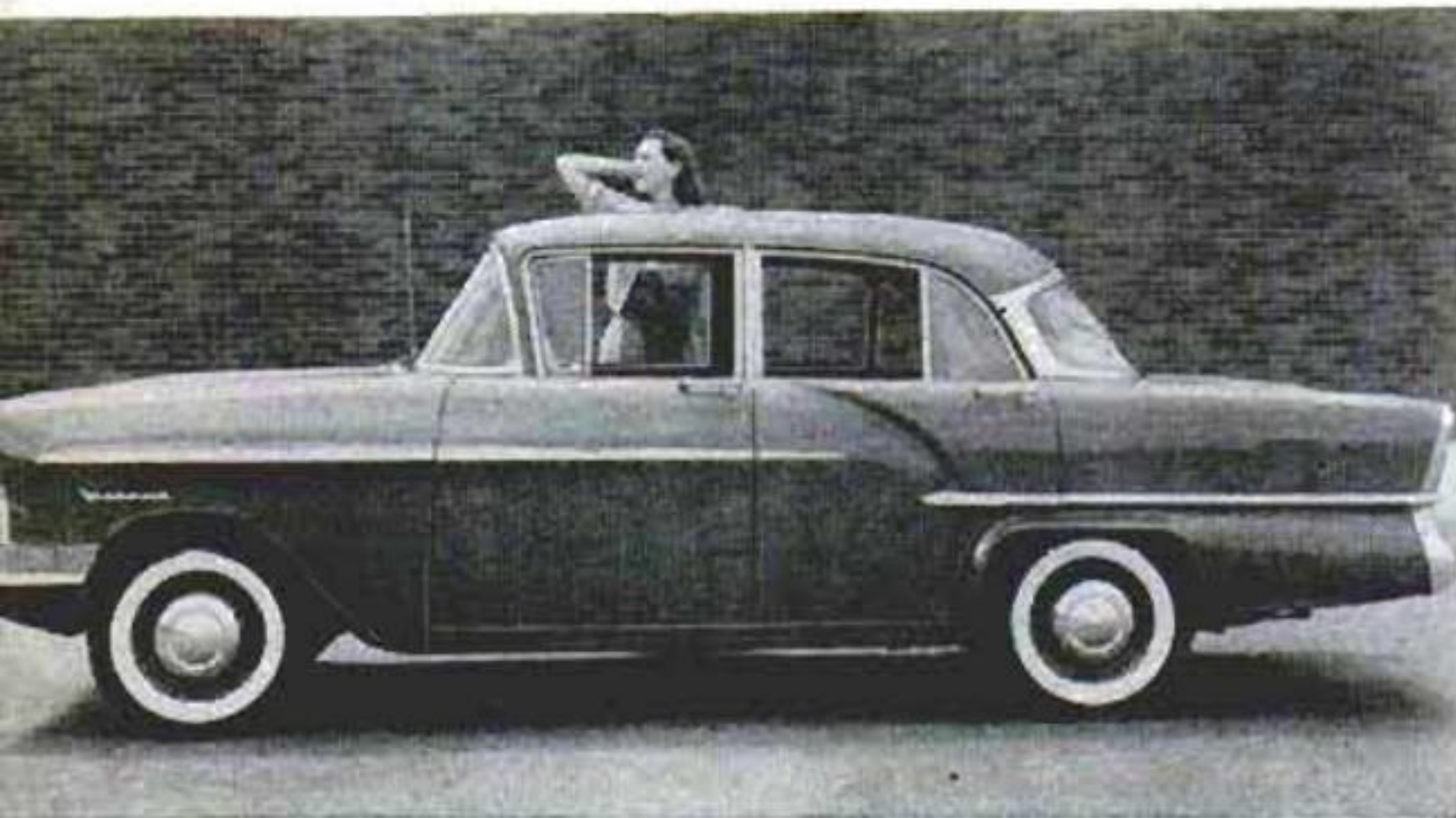


THE IMPORTS:



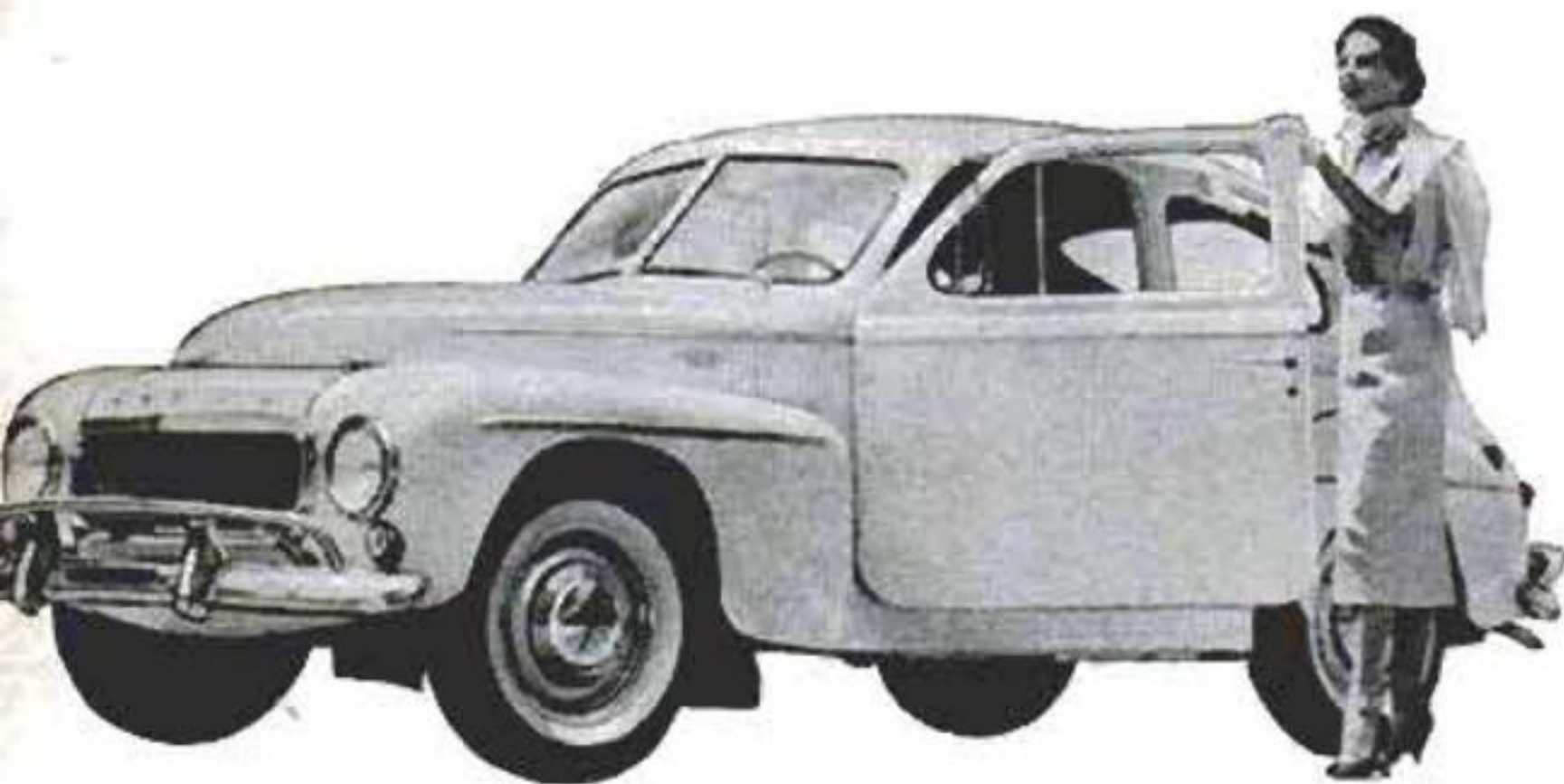
◀ FIAT from Italy

It comes in three sizes: A "big" 92-inch-wheelbase sedan (left); a smaller 600, featuring the roomy Multipla design; and an even smaller 500. Prices from \$1000 to \$2500



◀ VAUXHALL from England

General Motors now admits that a few in America will buy small cars. To satisfy them, it imports this trim sedan and sells it through Pontiac dealers. Price is \$1850



◀ VOLVO from Sweden

Favorite with performance lovers, the Volvo is a comparatively high-power family car. Fast and solid, it corners like a racer. Comes as a two-door only. Price is \$2200



◀ MERCEDES-BENZ 190SL from Germany

Like a micrometer, the 190SL is a joy to handle. Despite its modest engine (four cylinders), it's alert, responsive under a good driver. Expensive, though. Price is \$5200

VOLKSWAGEN from Germany

Not beautiful like the VW Ghia shown here, the standard VW sedan outsells all other imports because of reliability. Air-cooled, rear-engined, it's truly a workhorse. Prices: \$1545 up to \$2450



FORD from England

Styled in America, made in England, British Fords come in several sizes. This one is a big Consul four-door. All look more American than most imports. Prices: \$1539 to \$2900



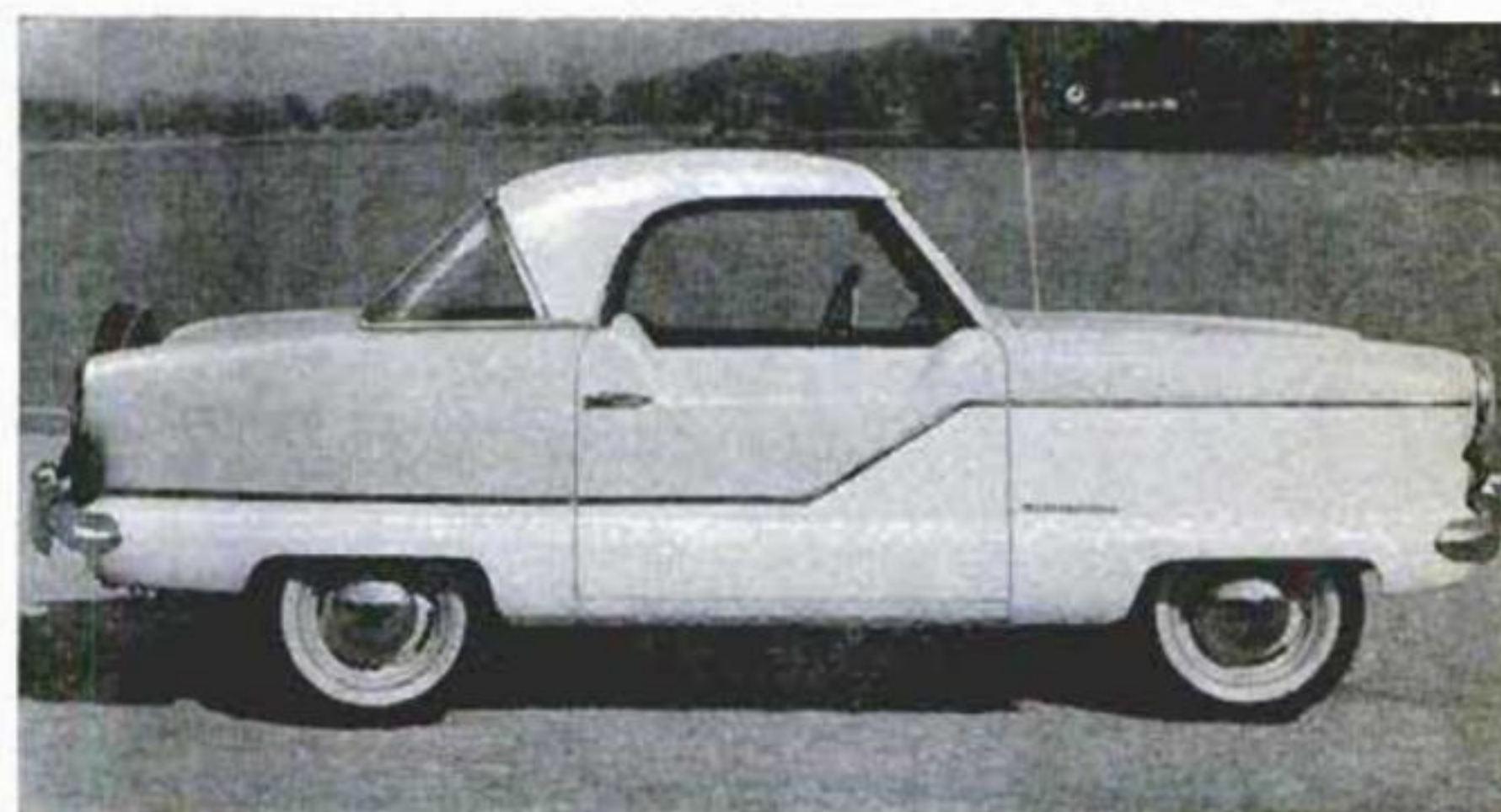
RENAULT from France

Pleasant to drive and economical to own, the Renault Dauphine is a roomy (for its size, that is) four-door sedan. It has a water-cooled rear engine and a reasonable trunk space under the hood. Price: \$1645



METROPOLITAN from England

Part of the American Motors family, this car is a British-American hybrid. Actually just a two-seater, it is smaller than other cars on these pages. Peppy. Price is \$1567



(Continued on next page)



◊ OPEL from Germany

GM also sells its German Opel over here through Buick dealers. This wagon has a six-foot-long cargo space. Sedan model is also available. Price: About \$2000



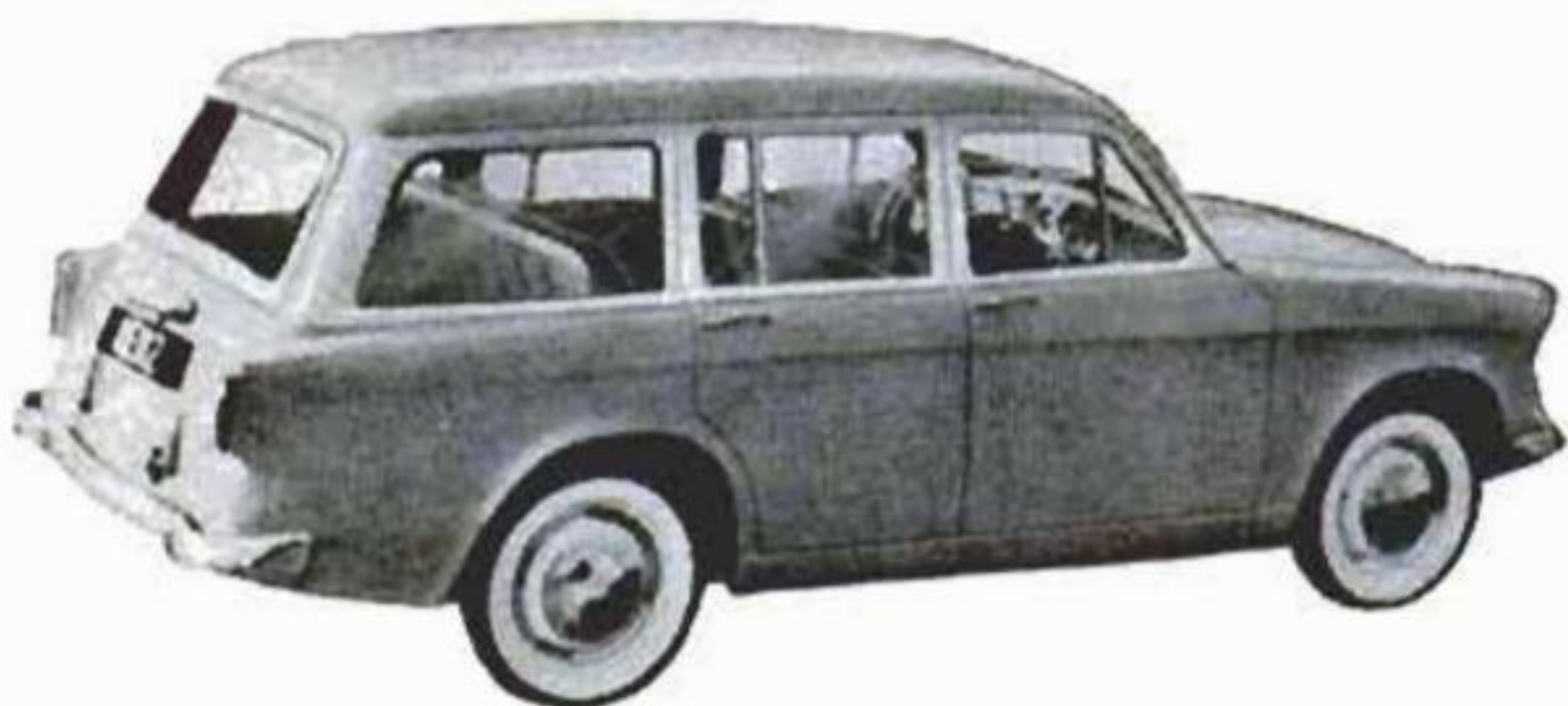
◊ AUSTIN from England

Although this A95 station wagon is not available yet over here, Austin has two smaller sedans that are. Both are good economy cars. Price is \$1545 to \$2100



◊ MORRIS from England

Another neat wagon is the Morris Oxford Traveller, too new to be available here yet. Other Morris cars include the excellent Morris 1000. Prices: From \$1629 to \$1900



◊ HILLMAN from England

Also new and now being sold here is the four-door Hillman wagon. Other models are sedans, a sleek convertible, an austerity wagon. Prices: \$1535 to \$2299