

very important plymouth



road test

by Robert E. McVay
Associate Editor

Until 1966, a Plymouth VIP was a top executive who worked for the Chrysler Corporation — but now, the privileged few have lost their title to a car. Pronounce each letter separately, and you have Plymouth's answer to Ford's LTD and Chevrolet's Caprice. It's an extra-plush package for a somewhat overdue penetration into the luxury market, aimed especially at those who like their luxury on a 119-inch wheelbase.

Measuring 209.8 inches from bumper to bumper, the VIP felt, at first meeting, like a small limousine. Luxury reigns supreme with special cloth-and-vinyl upholstery, simulated wood trim inside and out, and the VIP medallions that announce to all that this is a Very Impressive Plymouth.

In addition to its distinctive appearance and interior appointments, the VIP has a special new charcoal grey metallic paint not available on other Plymouths, its own fender skirts, wheel covers, and fender-mounted turn indicators. Inside, it has recessed, pull-down arm rests front and rear, twin rear-compartment reading lights, arm-rest ashtrays and a rear-seat cigar lighter.

Standard engine is Plymouth's 318-cubic-inch V-8 with a 2-barrel-carb/single-exhaust setup that uses regular gas. Our test car had a 383 with one 4-barrel carb (the engine preferred by Chrysler engineers for their own cars), plus a host of options tabled in our spec chart.

Performance for this 4240-pound se-

dan was sparkling — more than adequate for the needs of most families. Coupled to Plymouth's excellent 3-speed Torque-Flite automatic transmission, this engine is capable of at least 115 mph, and the busy housewife can zero-to-30 off the supermarket apron with grocery-spilling verve.

Traffic mileage on premium fuel reached a low of 10 mpg, while freeway cruising at 65 mph garnered 15.5, giving an average of 13.4 mpg during 1000 miles of driving. The VIP's 25-gallon tank permits a maximum 375 miles of cruising — a feature, incidentally, for which you can thank Hertz and Avis. These rental people don't want their customers buying gas at retail.

As comfortable as a Plymouth can be aptly describes the VIP. Seating, leg room, head room and general riding qualities were well above average, due in part to the car's optional heavy-duty suspension system that minimizes side-sway, squat on acceleration and nose dive during stops. Those more interested in a soft ride than in better handling and control probably won't order the stiffer suspension, but for us, it makes the VIP, or any Plymouth, a more desirable automobile. Chrysler Corporation deliberately softened its standard ride this year to woo customers away from GM.

The VIP is a fine road car, with good response and quick control on winding roads. There's now adequate stopping power from the bigger drum brakes when they are asked to perform their normal tasks. Wind whistle, even at 75 mph, wasn't at all obtrusive. The VIP is a truly quiet automobile.

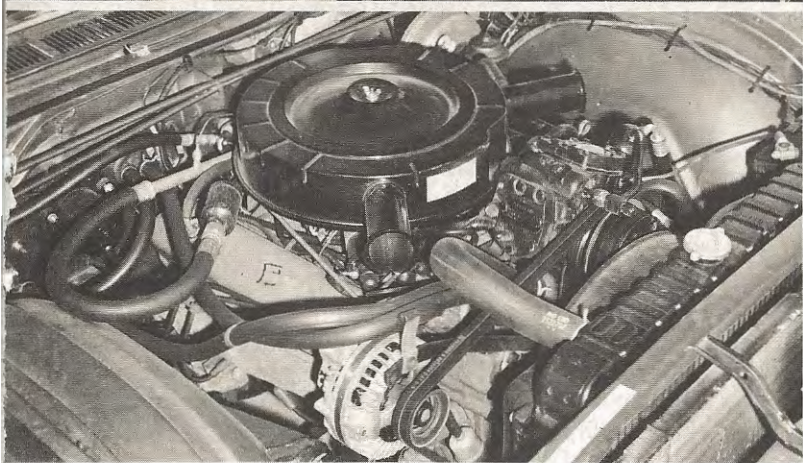
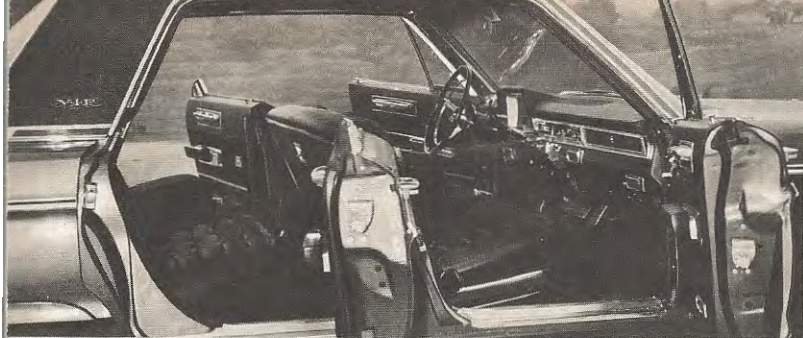
Buyers in the market for a speedy "relaxicisor" can order the 365-hp 440-incher and get Chrysler's biggest engine in the smallest body shell it will fit. In this instance, or on any big Plymouth, we'd recommend the optional front disc brakes for that extra margin of safety needed with high-performance automobiles. Although the VIP's drums will give good, normal straight-line stops, one stop from over 100 mph will fade them completely, and four or five stops from 60 mph will leave them panting. They do, however, bounce right back when given a chance to cool.

Further on the debit side, though the VIP has gauges for temperature, battery charge and fuel level, they have no increments of measurement, only lines, making reading them guesswork at best. We'd also appreciate an oil-pressure gauge. And, if the lady-of-the-house ever has a flat, we don't think we'd like to come home just after she's wrestled the spare out, let alone after she's installed it.

VIPs, the people or the cars or both, will be equally at home pulling up to the country club or to the drive-in. It's a distinctive automobile, inside and out. Our test car had an all-black interior, but either red or blue may be specified.



H-D suspension aids comfort with less lean on corners, less nose dive and less squat.



We also liked the optional bumper guards with their rubber buffers that'll prevent a lot of bumper dinging from those inconsiderate drivers who park "by ear."

A standard VIP costs a little over \$3100; a full complement of accessories

pushes the tab to over \$5000. Therefore, some people undoubtedly will prefer the prestige of a hand-operated Chrysler to that of an automated Plymouth. Both, after all, have fundamentally the same bodies and power train. You can take your choice at these prices. /MT

(Upper left) VIP is as easy to get into as it is to look at; vinyl roof adds class. (Upper right) The new handles work fine, don't snag clothes, like some others do. (Left) A tubing salesman's dream, loaded VIP has crowded engine compartment. (Above) Plymouth's tallish roof line gives excellent vision — front, side and rear.

PLYMOUTH VIP
4-door, 6-passenger hardtop

ACCESSORY PRICE LIST	
Engine options: 270 hp.....	\$ 69.70
to 365 hp.....	233.65
*Automatic transmission.....	198.35
4-speed transmission.....	184.20
Overdrive.....	—
Limited-slip differential.....	48.70
*Heavy-duty suspension.....	15.90
*Whitewall tires.....	54.85
Disc brakes.....	109.70
*Power brakes.....	41.75
*Power steering.....	94.85
*Power windows.....	100.25
*Power seat.....	93.75
Radio AM.....	57.35
*Radio AM/FM.....	126.70
*Air conditioning.....	338.45
*Tinted glass.....	39.50
Bucket seats.....	—
Adjustable steering wheel.....	86.80
*Clock.....	std
Tachometer.....	—
Automatic headlight dimmer.....	—
Automatic speed regulator.....	83.35
*Vinyl roof cover.....	75.10
Head rests.....	—
*On test car	
Dash(—) — Not offered	

MANUFACTURER'S SUGGESTED LIST PRICE: \$3283 (incl. taxes, safety equip't & PCV device)
PRICE OF CAR TESTED: \$4894.90 (incl. excise tax, delivery & get-ready charges, but not local tax & license)

MANUFACTURER'S WARRANTY: 50,000 miles and/or 5 years

SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER

ENGINE IN TEST CAR: Ohv V-8
Bore and stroke: 4.25 x 3.38 ins.
Displacement: 383 cu. ins.
Advertised horsepower: 325 @ 4800 rpm
Max. torque: 425 lbs.-ft. @ 2800 rpm
Compression ratio: 10.0:1
Carburetion: 1 4-bbl.

TRANSMISSION TYPE & FINAL DRIVE RATIO:
TorqueFlite automatic; 3.23:1

SUSPENSION: torsion bar at front, leaf springs rear; direct-acting shocks at each wheel
STEERING: worm and ball nut; integral power assist
Turning diameter: 43.4 ft., curb to curb
Turns lock to lock: 3.8
WHEELS: Disc, steel
TIRES: 8.55 x 14 tubeless rayon
BRAKES: Hydraulic, duo-servo; self-energizing, self-adjusting
Diameter of drum: front, 11 ins., rear, 11 ins.
SERVICE:
Type of fuel recommended: premium
Fuel capacity: 25 gals.
Oil capacity: 4 qts.; with filter, 5 qts.
Shortest lubrication interval: 4000 mi.
Oil- and filter-change interval: 4000 mi.
BODY & FRAME: Unitized
Wheelbase: 119.0 ins.
Track: front, 62.0 ins.; rear, 60.7 ins.
Overall: length, 209.8 ins.; width, 78.7 ins.; height 55.3 ins.
Min. ground clearance: NA
Usable trunk capacity: 17.0 cu. ft.
Curb weight: 4240 lbs.

PERFORMANCE

ACCELERATION (2 aboard)
0-30 mph.....3.4 secs.
0-45 mph.....6.2 secs.
0-60 mph.....9.4 secs.

TIME & DISTANCE TO ATTAIN
PASSING SPEEDS
40-60 mph.....5.5 secs., 401 ft.
50-70 mph.....6.4 secs., 563 ft.

STANDING-START QUARTER-MILE: 17.0 secs., and 82 mph

BEST SPEEDS IN GEARS @ SHIFT POINTS
1st.....38 mph at 4100 rpm
2nd.....64 mph at 4100 rpm
3rd.....110 mph at 4500 rpm

SPEEDOMETER ERROR AT 60 MPH: no error
STOPPING DISTANCES: from 30 mph, 35.5 ft.; from 60 mph, 150 ft.

PHOTOS BY DARRYL NORENBERG

NA — Information not available at presstime