

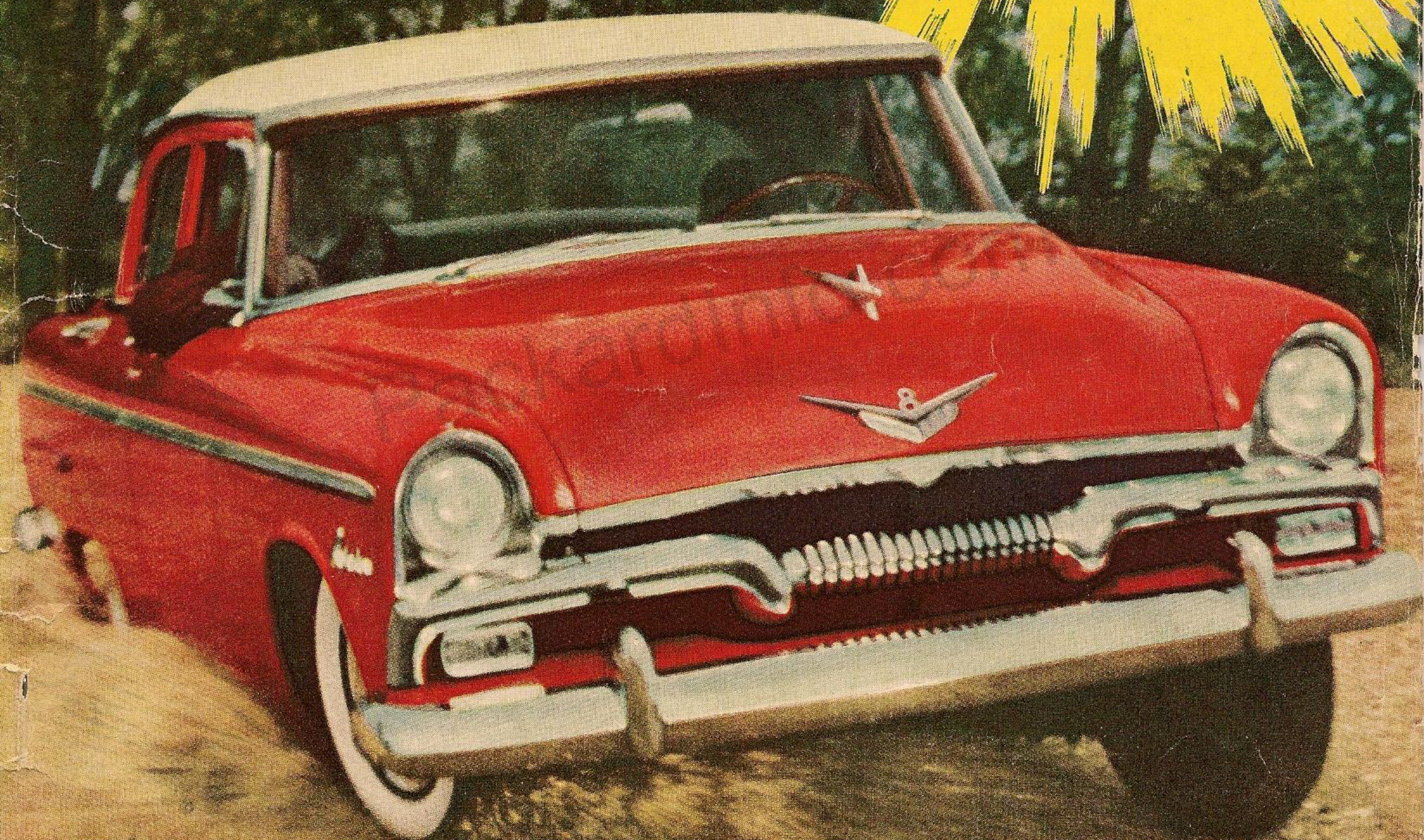
MOTOR TREND



FEBRUARY 1955 25c

'55 PACKARDS
New RIDE, *New* LOOK,
New V8 ENGINE!

'55 FORD Fast and
Roadable!



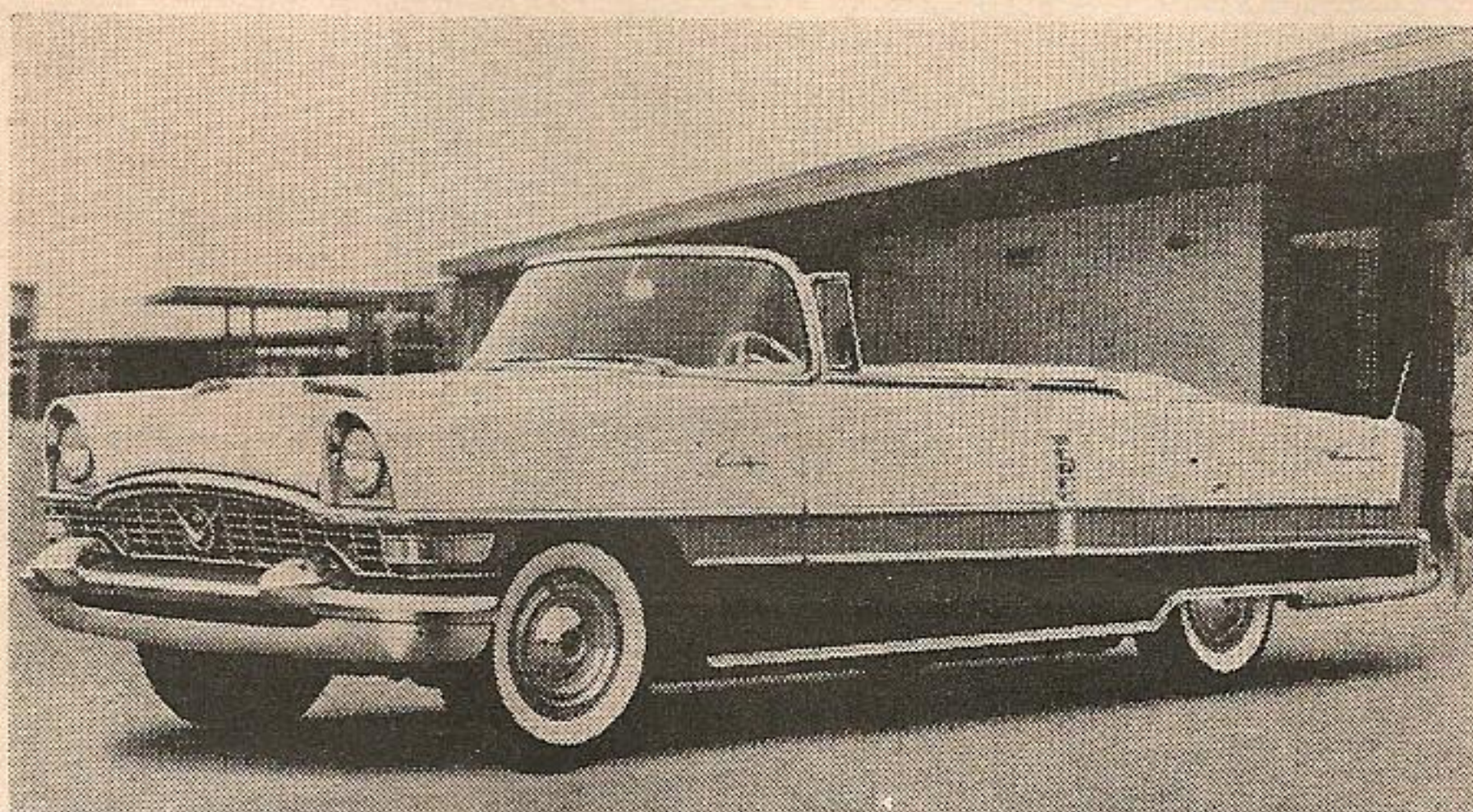
'55 PLYMOUTH V8 ROAD TEST

HOW NEW TAX LAWS CAN SAVE YOU MONEY page 18

One of Packards featuring "Torsion-Level" ride, the '55 '400' hardtop is powered by the new 260-horsepower V8 engine



In convertible styling, the new Packard has competitive appeal; chrome and color add to its lengthy, low appearance



Spotlight on Detroit

By Don MacDonald



Patrician sedan also uses 352 cubic inch engine which drove Packard at nearly 105 mph for 25,000 miles at track



Clipper V8s come in 225 hp (Super, Deluxe series) or 245 (Custom series). Custom line has torsion bar suspension

YOU HAVE HAD HINTS of the new Packard starting in July MT, when we showed the front end of a '55 model peeking out from behind the styling curtain on our cover, and then again in October when we previewed their revolutionary torsion bar suspension. Now it's here, and all the build-up was well worthwhile. Never within our memory has an independent come up with so many engineering *and* styling innovations crammed into one model announcement. Those that claim President Jim Nance is primarily a washing machine salesman (he moved to Detroit from Hotpoint) had best go to the nearest showroom and see for themselves.

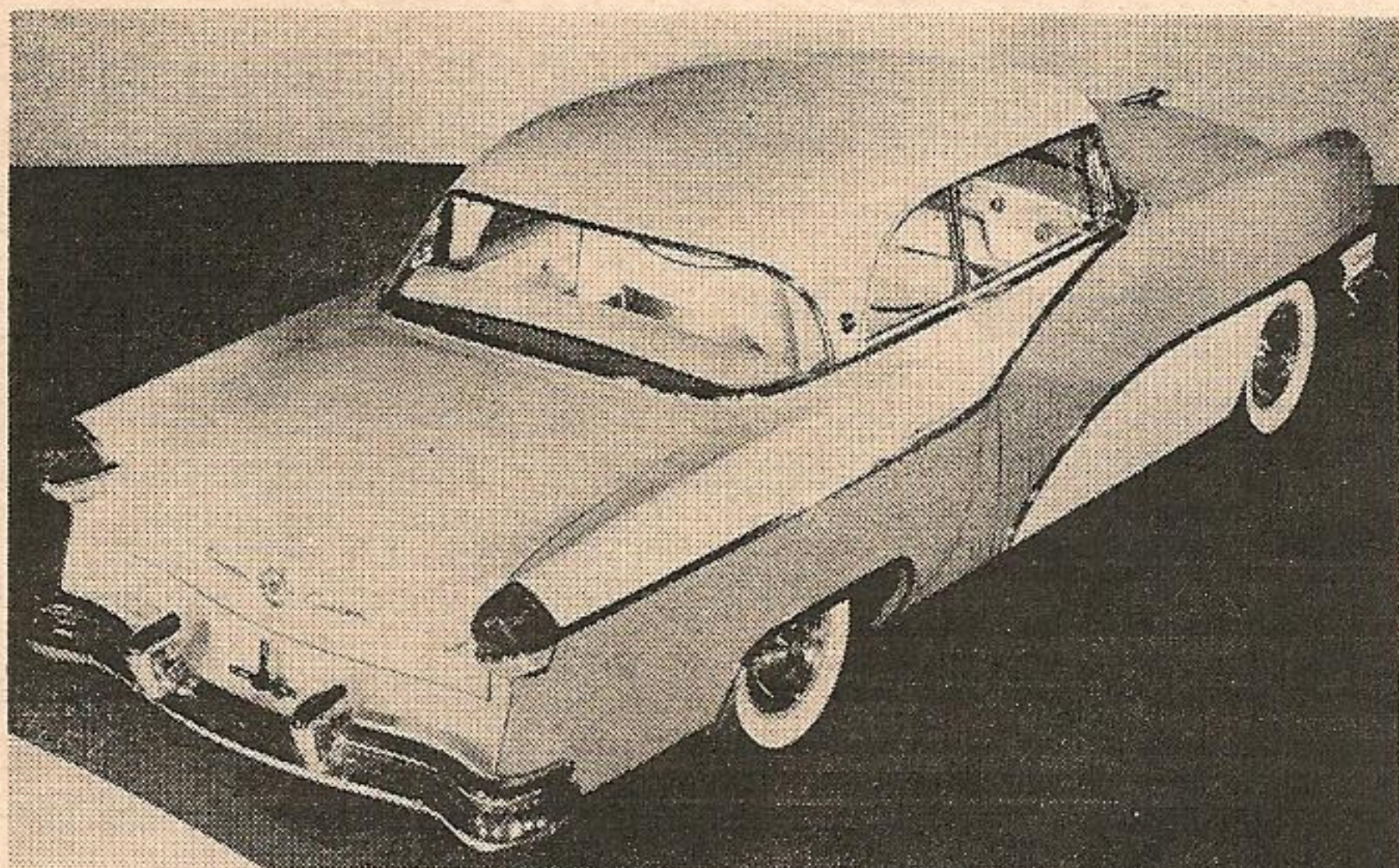
TORSION-LEVEL RIDE is the prime feature of Packards and top-level Clipper Custom models. The principle of the torsion bar is certainly not new in the industry, but the idea of interconnecting parallel sets of wheels is. On a new Packard, if the left front wheel, for example, is deflected by a bump, the left rear wheel actually anticipates this bump due to the wind-up of the torsion bar. It literally tenses itself against the oncoming jar and transmits it throughout the suspension instead of to you. The system automatically compensates for rear seat or trunk load via a "levelizer" device, essentially consisting of an electric motor working through a system of gears that wind or unwind the

torsion bars according to the load imposed. A delayed-action switch distinguishes between heavyweights in the rear seat and ordinary humps in the road. The system also automatically forestalls over-eager compensation when brakes are applied. As we said in our original article (Oct. '54 MT), it is as though the car had a set of educated springs that intuitively maintained a constant resistance to flex. Lesser Clippers have Packard's comfortable and conventional coil front and leaf rear springs. (For more details, see page 52.)

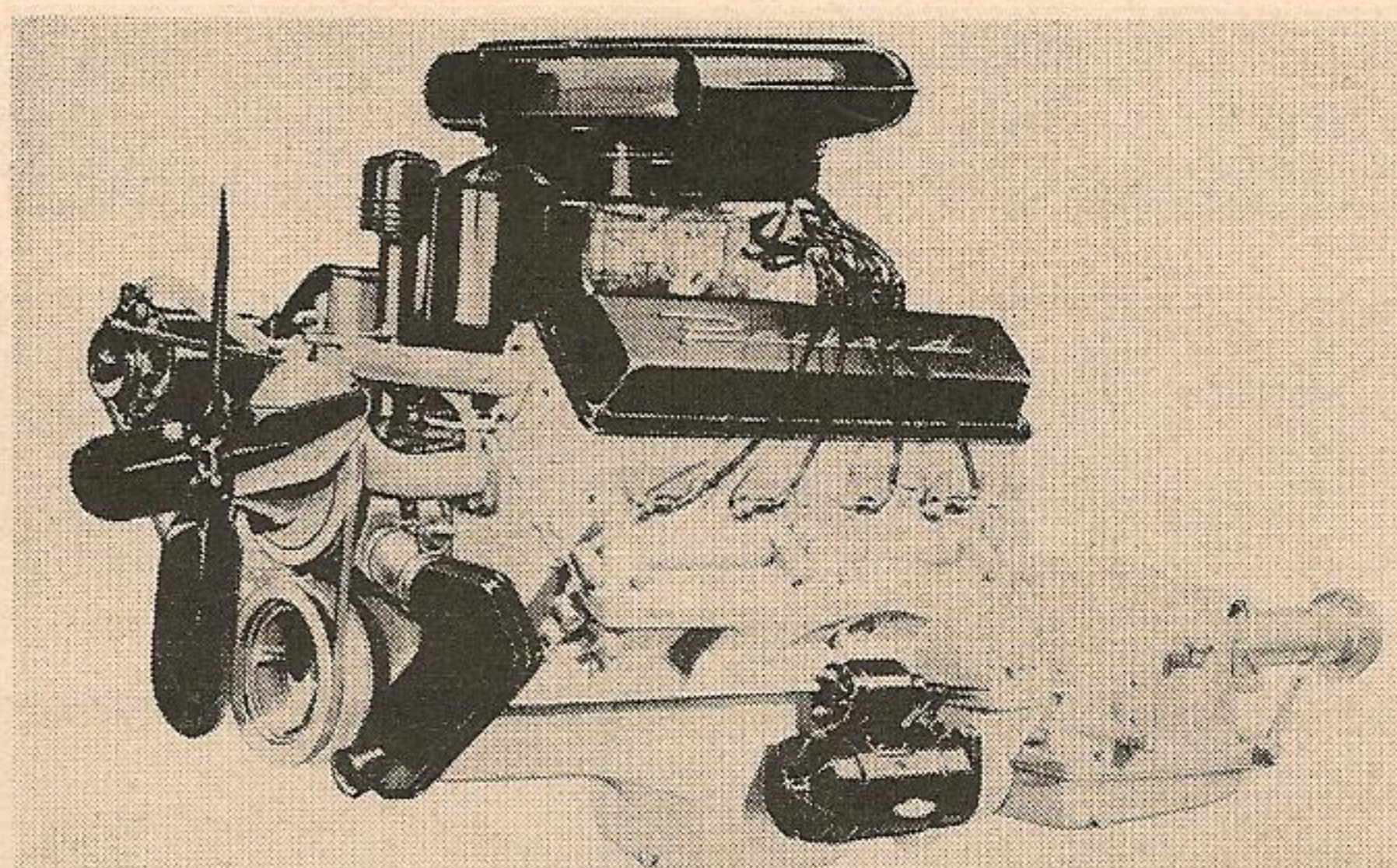
BRAND NEW V8 ENGINES are standard in all models. Packard is convinced that there is no substitute for cubic inches, so their premium models (400, Patrician, and Clipper Custom) have 352, putting out 355 foot-pounds of torque where it counts, in the passing range of 2400-2800 rpm. Due to differences in four-barrel carburetion, Packard cars check out at 260 horsepower, with the Custom Clipper rated at 245. The Caribbean convertible leads the industry with 275 horsepower and twin four-barrel carburetion. Clipper Super and Deluxe models are at the "lower" end of the scale with a 320-cubic-inch V8 credited with 225 hp and a torque rating of 325 foot-pounds at the same moderate 2400-2800 rpm. It is interesting to note the sharp distinction between Packards and Clippers.

They are different cars, engineering-wise, style-wise, and registration-wise.

CLAIMS AND CERTIFIED RECORDS are two different breeds of cat, especially when the American Automobile Association confirms the latter. In this case, the "record" is really just a certification of fact, as it applies only to automobiling on Packard's high-speed oval at the proving ground in Utica, Mich. No competitive car can challenge Packard on their own ground unless they are so willing. Nevertheless, 25,000 miles at an average of nearly 105 mph is an achievement defying description on anyone's highway. This is 98 miles more than the circumference of the world! These figures include 49-second pit stops about every 65 to 70 minutes during the run, which make them the more remarkable. Firestone Champions (tubeless) were changed about every fourth stop, mainly as a precautionary measure and never because it was really necessary. Indianapolis pilot Troy Ruttman was on hand and did his share of the driving, but the major credit for the near-week of grueling grind is due a nameless crew of Packard Proving Ground drivers who to a man had fun proving a point—that Colonel Jesse Vincent (who retired as elder engineer within a week after the run) is a master designer of engines and Packard can build them.



Hardtop in Clipper line retains semblance of '54 rear end, but its overall appearance complements Packard styling



Packard's V8 has three output variations, two displacement ratings. Four-barrel carburetor is standard on all models

FULL DETAILS: '55 PACKARD (Cover Story)

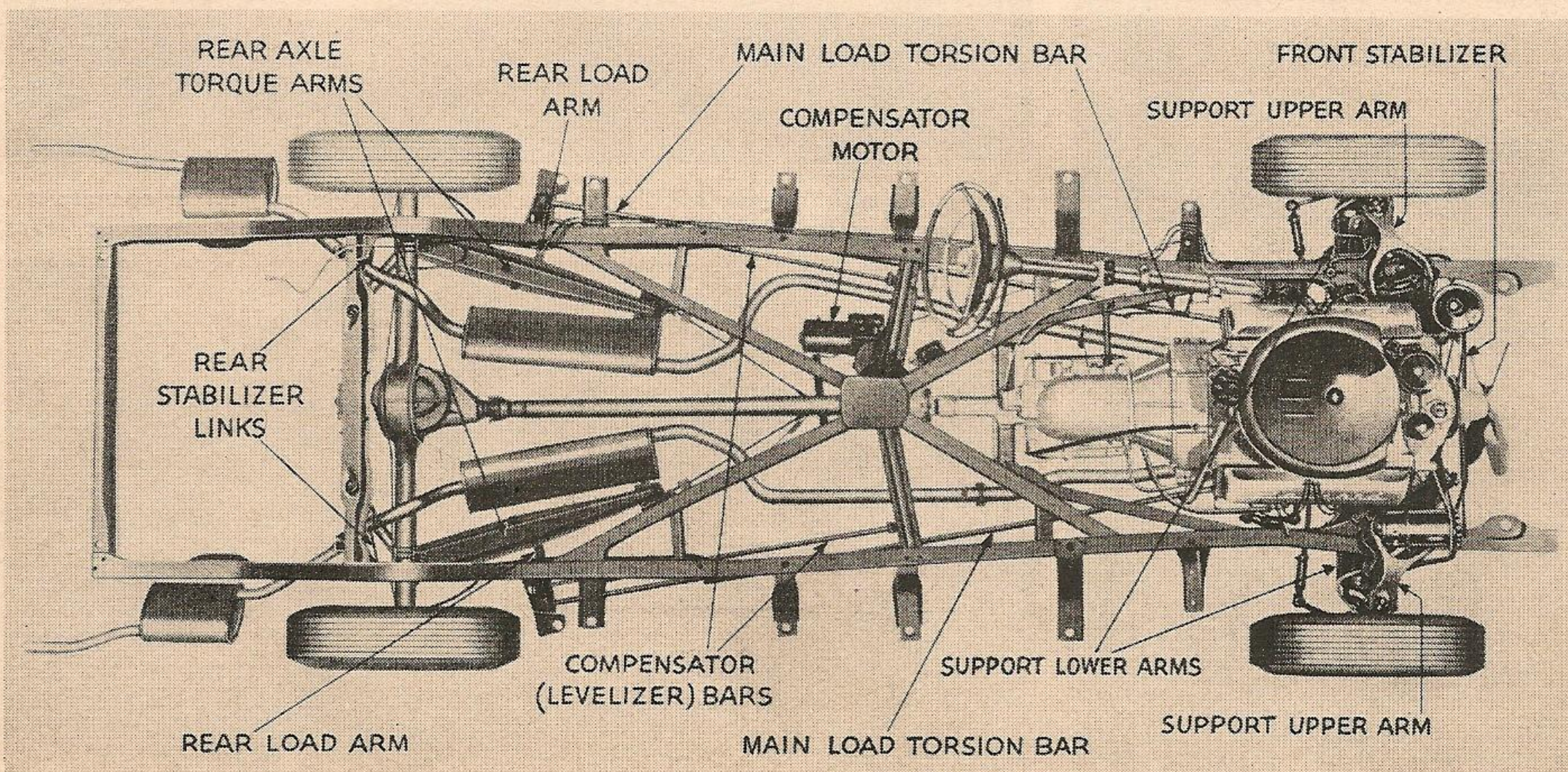
A **REDESIGNED ULTRAMATIC** is another little goody thrown in for extra measure. Always a smooth transmission, Ultramatic now offers lightning-quick acceleration either at the stoplight or in a passing emergency. You will note that the new range on the quadrant is aptly labelled DART. LOW range, in combination with the 2.9 to 1 of the converter alone, still provides the highest torque multiplication of any converter in the industry. A direct drive clutch locks up the converter for economy reasons during normal highway driving. This transmission is mandatory on all Packard models, and optional on Clippers. Borg-Warner overdrive is also a Clipper option, with three-speed synchromesh standard.

PACKARD AND CLIPPER STYLING is as different as you can get and still

keep the elements of the old body shell. The new windshield is truly wrap-around, a major engineering feat when grafted onto existing structure. Front ends of both Clipper and Packard, and rear ends of the latter, have been completely restyled with a touch of Michigan modern that is straightforward, even though it leans forward. Much attention has been paid to integration of two-tone colors, and on plush models three shades are neatly separated by tactful chrome striping. An unusual first on Packards only is the exterior courtesy light which glows when the doors are opened or when headlights are on. Another Packard (not Clipper) safety item is wrap-around front parking lights.

YOUR WIFE may have had a hand in designing Packard and Clipper interi-

ors. Product planner Roger E. Bremer spent 30 months surveying the wishes of an assortment of 400 women from every walk of life (at least those walks encompassing the ability to purchase high-priced automobiles) and coordinated his findings with those of an outside research firm as well as a number of professional female consultants already on hand. Interiors will consequently hold their own in luxury and practicality with anything the competition has to offer. These women also dictated that every push-button accessory in the book be available, and hang the extra cost. We can't help but agree that whether your wife or yourself (or, as most likely, a combination of both) dictates your choice of a new car, at least a look-see at the sedans, hardtops and convertibles that your Packard dealer has to offer is indicated.



Components of newly designed Packard chassis and suspension system are shown here; for complete explanation, see page 57