

American Car Makers Set For Exciting, Important New Model Debut Shortly

By Harry Elliott News Service
American car makers are getting set for what promises to be one of the most exciting and important new model debut seasons in automotive history.

These new offerings mark the culmination of literally years of preparation — the end product of concentrated work by the industry's keenest engineers, stylists and production experts. The stakes are billions of consumer dollars — the greatest buying potential in the world market.

boys are really loaded and going all out to win consumer favor. And the consumer is the favored one right now in dealer showrooms. The cleanup period of '54 models gives John Q. and excellent chance to save himself some money.

Last year many dealers tried to buy all the 1953 models they could, long after the arrival of the 1954's. In some cases during the new car introduction, dealers reported more sales of the previous year's model than of the new one. The consumer is learning that there is, during the clean-up, a big savings advantage in buying rather than waiting for new models which are always hard to get immediately, until production gets into full swing.

The used car market has firmed up considerably, with many dealers reporting low inventories. This also makes for advantageous trading now.

New Features In 1955 Models
On the 1955 cars, overhead valve V-8 engines are expected to be offered by most makers — including some major holdouts, and there is a rumble that a new engine may also be offered by American Motors Corp. (the new consolidation of Hudson and Nash) but that is strictly at the rumor level.

Wrap-around windshields may be expected to be almost standard in the industry, giving improved visibility forward — and, it is hoped — increased safety.

Look for changes in automatic transmissions to give greater oomph on the getaway, increased smoothness and better handling.

If the tooler-uppers win their race with time, you may see transmission developments in General Motors lines, Packard, Ford, Mercury and maybe Lincoln.

There will be fresh emphasis on front-end suspensions and easier rides. Partly in sequel to the hard-hitting advertising of Ford, Mercury and Lincoln on their new ball-joint suspension.

Chrysler Changeover
Chrysler Corporation is expected to be closed down both earlier and longer this year. They are uniting inventory with a giant changeover. The changeover includes new body styling for the whole line — Chrysler, DeSoto, Dodge and Plymouth, plus dramatic and widespread changes. Lots of new equipment is involved, with shifting of conveyors and machines. However, this year's switch is expected to be orderly, with plenty of time for cleanup of present stocks.

Car Output
So far this year, some 3,300,000 passenger cars have been built. The industry is still aiming at a 1954 total of around 5,250,000. The output of new vehicles for the first six months of this year has been topped in a similar period only three times in auto history.

The Gas Turbine Engine
Do not put off purchase of a new car in the expectation of getting a revolutionary gas turbine model soon. There is a lot of solid research and testing going on, but nobody can put a date on when turbines will power passenger cars.

Present piston type engines, year by year, are being pushed to new highs in power and performance, efficiency and durability. And, at the present stage of turbine development, the piston type engine appears to have a tremendous margin over the turbine in fuel economy, particularly at low engine loads — the situation most motorists face most of the time.

As of today, turbine costs are

high. Materials to withstand high beats are costly. But there's a race on — a race of research — which may come up with turbines for 50,000,000 drivers who would like: (1) High power in a light, compact package. (2) Ability to burn any clean fuel from stove oil to airplane gas. (3) Great ruggedness, low maintenance, long life, extreme smoothness, and 80 percent fewer parts. (4) Fast, easy cold-weather starting. (5) No more tune-ups. (6) Top turning power at stalling speeds.

General Motors already has thousands of miles of test driving and more than 1,000 hours of dynamometer testing on two versions of its "whirlfire" gas turbine — one for truck and bus use, and the other for the XP-21 firebird.

The big turbines appear super-smooth, easy to maintain, very rugged, and fast to start. But they use a lot of fuel and are hard on brakes. However, new alloys offer hope in boosting operating temperatures so that heat exchangers can recover some of the exhaust heat — thereby cutting down on fuel.

Meantime, Chrysler engineers

have tested a gas turbine that fits in a Plymouth chassis — the first to go in a conventional passenger car — and which has a heat exchanger that gets heat from exhaust gases and puts it back to work in the turbine.

And Packard has won a con-

DROWNS IN DITCH
SALEM (AP) — Tommy Schwalk, 8, drowned in a ditch a mile east of Salem Tuesday when he stepped into a deep hole while wading. The son of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Schwalk, he could not swim. The body was recovered.

tract to design and develop a gas turbine power plant for the Navy — but is reserving rights for possible adaptation to passenger car use.

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