

Cadillac presents elaborate rear fins, vast windows, plenty of chrome, and numerous lights. The engineers have contributed new V-8 engines with 325 and 345 horsepower.



Lincoln has made little change in its "angular" design. It offers unit construction.



De Soto has undergone a decided styling change; most noticeable: the sculptured two-tone roof. Three series are available this year, Firesweep, Firedome, and Firelite.



Oldsmobile combines a box and "X" construction and smoother, more economical engine.



Mercury's redesigning has reduced the transmission hump in the front compartment and added four inches to the length. It also boasts the largest windshield now available.



Dodge this year is distinguished by its deeply fluted fenders in front. Manufacturer claims new engine will save owner 80 cents on each tank of fuel.

After a disappointing year in 1958, Detroit is banking heavily on its new models, which offer many surprises in beauty, comfort, and economy.

by Donald MacDonald

FOR THE LAST two months auto-laden "haulaway" trucks have rumbled out of Detroit around the clock, supplying the nation's 40,000 dealers with 1959-model cars to demonstrate and (hopefully) sell during the announcement weeks just past. The stakes are great—dollar-wise, almost beyond comprehension—and the industry is worried. Here's why.

With but few exceptions, the longer, lower, wider new cars represent for each maker a record investment in styling change. But what is your reaction as you see them appear, one by one, on the streets of your city? Are

they too long to park? Are they too low to get into? Are they too wide for your garage?

If you answer "yes" to these questions, it's about three years too late for constructive criticism. Paper design work on the cars you see now was finalized in the Fall of 1955. By mid-1957 multimillion-dollar tooling was ordered, which meant the point-of-no-return for the manufacturer. The new crop, in other words, is based on what you seemed to like then.

The market-research people pretty accurately predicted a growing customer distaste for excess chrome. All 1959 cars use it sparingly and with refreshing good taste to highlight

sculptured body contours as typified by the new Buick. More importantly, the designs are worked out so that chrome is placed for maximum parking-lot protection. One auto-company chief, referring with good humor to his relatively disastrous 1957-58 selling seasons, remarked: "Chromed portholes don't help a sinking ship."

Vintage 1955 market research, however, may have missed by a usable year the current public clamor for so-called "compact" automobiles. Even now it is hard to determine whether people really want smaller cars or just want today's car to stop growing.

In any case, the biggest sellers took on noticeable girth for 1959. Except

for Cadillac, General Motors' makes average a five-inch increase in length. All of them are wider than in 1958, particularly Chevrolet and Pontiac, but seating space benefits. Somehow roofs have been lowered again without sacrificing appreciable headroom. Ford Motor Company products have followed a similar pattern; Chrysler Corp. has held the dimensional fort intact, neither growing nor shrinking.

"I know this is contrary to what some people are advocating," Buick head E. T. Ragsdale explains, "but as long as men take pride in their possessions, there will always be people who will want bigger and more luxurious cars."