



Imperial Material

Newsletter of the Imperial Owners Association of Sacramento Valley –
Founded 1981

March-April, 2000

Vol. 12, No.2

From Your President

My very best to all of you Imperial owners. Thank you so very much for all your support and encouragement. I look ahead with great enthusiasm to our year! We had a marvelous day January 15 with a total of 29 people attending and our meeting at the Towe Museum was a kick – light hearted and up-beat. I am so happy with all the positive interaction that took place at our meeting. And the support . . . My goodness!!

I asked for volunteers to staff and coordinate our phone tree and just like that John Martinelli, John Weaver, Bernice Hackney, Arlene Hackney, Charlene Quinn and Sherrie Egger stepped up to the plate. As I write this Arlene and Sherrie have already dialed it in and every California member will be telephoned for each event. That will build friendships in the club and make sure all members feel needed to make our events **POP**.

John Tennyson stated that Hemmings Auto News had requested we create a WEB page for them (or whatever it is called). Gary and Robin Stevens stepped forward to coordinate it – others with similar ability will help too. Many Thanks.

I asked for a volunteer to be Club Historian and Charlene Quinn took the challenge. Thank you Charlene. Who better to collate all the pictures, label them, scrap book and maintain them. She will also binder all the past newsletters.

Finally, our tour of the Shriners Hospital was most enlightening, what a facility. John Tennyson came up with an A+ day, from the lovely museum display of our Imperials to Carrows lunch, to the Shriners tour, it was a complete winner. *Thanks John.*

In my last message I asked that we begin the new century with *Vigor*. We have! We welcomed two new members into the club as a result of our display. We are charging ahead. The year looks great. Thanks again for allowing me to serve you.

David

PS Thanks to Jimmy White for our newsletter. Now to some business. We need to raise some money so-

- Buy an Imperial shirt or cap from Bernice Hackney.
- Get those membership dues in ASAP – Funds are critical because we are hosting the State Meet.
- Saturday, March 18 in Chico – Tour of Historical Bidwell Mansion. Lets really rally for a large turnout for this meet.
- Get me those part numbers to build an archive of active Imperial part listings. FAX: (209)578-1994.

**Remember to get those reservations for our next event March 18th in Chico in A.S.A.P.
The deadline for reservations is March 14, 2000.**

I.O.A.S.U. Towe Museum / Shriners Hospital Tour - January 15, 2000



Gary Stevens, Bernice Hackney and Nana Meyer
Enjoying I.O.A.S.V. Imperials on display.



MaryAnn Cargill chats with new member Jerry Barnes



President David Jolliff discusses club business.



Jimmy White, John Weaver, Tom Egger, Don Steger
and Al Bequette discuss Imperials.

There were **29 people attending** our January 15th event which included a tour of the Towe Museum and business meeting, then on to Carrows for our lunch and chatter. We then caravanned on to the Shriners Hospital for Children for a fabulous tour. Everyone had a great time.

See you all at our next event in Chico for another marvelous day!



Left: Some of the Imperial line-up in front of the Shriners Hospital for Children in Sacramento.

Right: Sherrie Egger, our docent "Don", Jim Hudgens, Tom Egger and Gary Stevens looking at doners placks.





Joint-Imperial Clubs

Chico-Bidwell Mansion Tour-Lunch

Saturday, March 18, 2000

- 8:15 a.m. Bay Area & Modesto members should allow at least 3 1/4 hrs. to Chico. Sacramento members may meet near Arco Arena for a caravan. (take Del Paso Rd. exit off I-5, rt. on Relentless Dr., (look for Imperials at curb) Chico caravan leaves 8:30-see map.
- 10:30 a.m. Arrive Bidwell Mansion, Chico – (see map) check in at office 15 minutes early for 11 a.m. tour (\$3 per person pre-paid).
- 11 a.m. One hour tour of Bidwell Mansion
- Noon Bidwell Park and mansion grounds – walk around/ kick tires
- 12:40 p.m. Caravan from Bidwell to Lunch – (see map)
- 1 p.m. Lunch at Cozy Diner – 1795 Mangrove Ave., park in lot or on street, 1st come, 1st serve private section – order and pay individually from menu (\$6 average) – bus. & info meeting
- 2:15 p.m. Orient and Flume Art Glass 2161 Park Ave. - caravan from Cozy Diner (see map) - see world famous glass art and video
- 3:15 p.m. Head for Home

-----clip & return-----

-----clip & return-----

Joint-Imperial Clubs
Chico-Bidwell Mansion Tour
Reservation Form

Check if Caravanning from Arco

NAME _____ (# in party) _____

PHONE _____ \$3 ea. for Mansion Tour x # = Tot \$ _____

Make Checks Payable to : IOASV and send to John Martinelli, 6611 Graham Circle, Citrus Heights, CA 95610

by DEADLINE for Reservations: March 14, 2000

DIRECTIONS From:

Bay Area: take I-80 east to Sacramento to I-5, I-5 north to Hwy 70 (Marysville/Yuba City) split, 79 miles north on Hwy 70 thru Marysville, north of Oroville bearing left on Hwy 99 to Chico.

Modesto/San Joaquin Valley: take Hwy 99 north, merging with I-5 (Redding) in Sacramento, or take I-5 north to Hwy 70 (Marysville/Yuba City) split, 79 miles north on Hwy 70 through Marysville and past Oroville, bearing left on Hwy 99 north of Oroville to Chico.

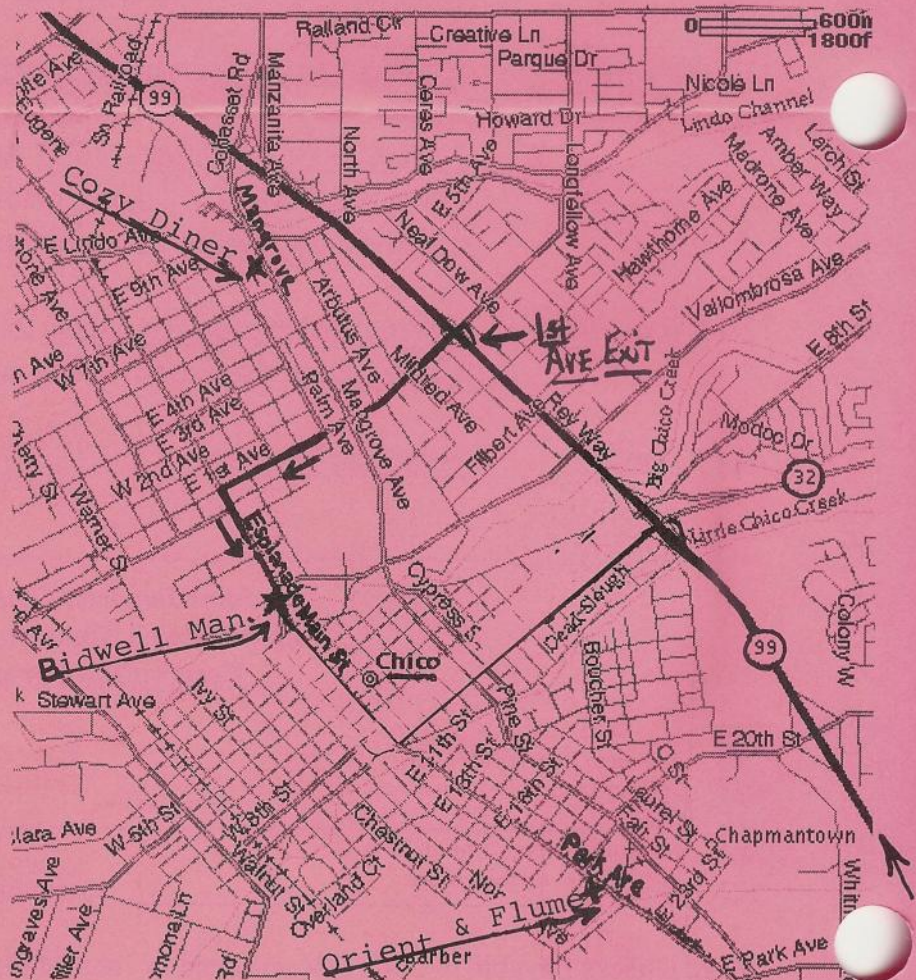
Sacramento Area: take I-5 north (Redding) to Arco Arena, get off on Del Paso Road, right to Renlentless Road, look for Imperials at curb. Caravan leaves Arco area for Chico at 8:30 a.m. Caravan will follow route from I-5, Hwy 70 split as above.

At Chico: Take the 1st Ave. exit from Hwy 99, turn left on 1st Ave 1 mile to Esplanade, left on Esplanade about 8 blocks to Bidwell Mansion on your left.

Overall Map



Chico Map



**Northern California
Imperial Owners Club**

**Imperial Owners Association
Of Sacramento Valley**

2000 IMPERIAL JOINT TOUR/SHOW SCHEDULE

Saturday, March 18th • Chico
BIDWELL MANSION TOUR
Lunch and tour of historic areas
Tour leader: *John Tennyson*

Friday – Sunday, May 5th – 7th • Modesto
**17th ANNUAL IMPERIAL OWNERS
STATEWIDE MEET and SHOW**
Meet Leaders: *Egger, Tennyson, Indihar*

Saturday, June 24th • Rancho Cordova
MOPARS in the PARK CAR SHOW
Imperial Class
Coordinator for Imperials: *John Tennyson*

Sunday, July 23rd • Danville, Newark
BLACKHAWK MUSEUM TOUR and BBQ
At Jett Ranch – Joint with CCPC
Tour Leader: *Larry Jett*

Sunday, August 20th • Antioch
BLACK DIAMOND MINE TOUR
And lunch – Joint with CCPC
Tour Leader: *Norm Frey*

Week, September 16th – 23rd • So. Oregon
OPTIONAL OREGON TOUR
Special week-long Chrysler CCCC tour
Tour Leader: *Tom Johnson*

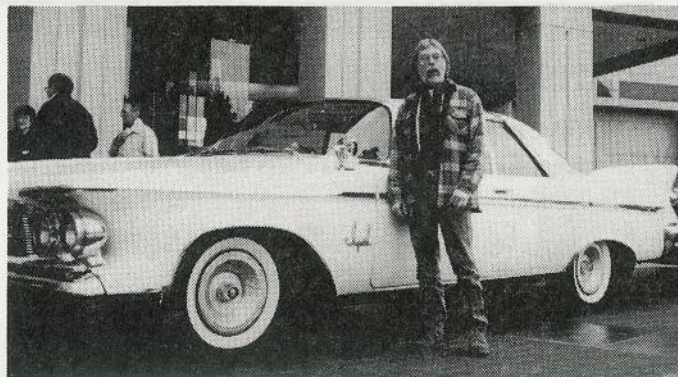
Sunday, October 1st • Fremont
**OHLONE COLLEGE CHRYSLER
FALL CLASSIC CAR SHOW**
Joint with CCPC – Imperial Class
Event Leaders: *Lud and Ad Indihar*

Friday – Sunday, October 13th – 15th • Hwy. 49
ANNUAL FALL CHRYSLER/IMPERIAL
Joint Tour and Overnighter
Auburn to Downieville on Hwy. 49
Tour Leader: *John Tennyson*

Saturday, November 11th
Yet to be announced

Details in future mailings and newsletters

Getting To Know Our Fellow Members

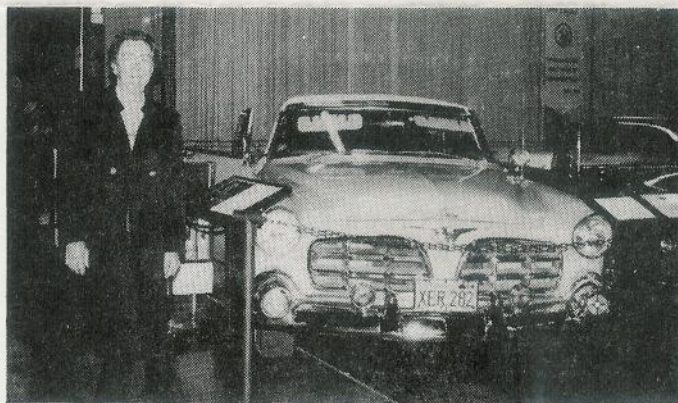


Paul Graveline with his "Original" 1961 Crown Imperial

Paul was most interested in a certain 1961 Crown Coupe but the price was not right. To satiate his hunger he purchased a 1957 Crown 4 door then much to his surprise just three months later the numbers worked out and the sharp white 1961 Crown Coupe was his. Now he owned two Imperials. Somewhat similar to a childless couple adopting a child and becoming pregnant!

Because his father had a 1957 Crown Coupe, Paul says "I always have been a Chrysler man ... I always liked the Big C body cars".

As well as his 1961, Paul has a non-letter 1963 300 coupe, 1963 Newport convertible, 1970 Charger and a 1973 Dodge pickup. Daily he drives the truck, but on sunny days, Paul is in his elegant 1961 Crown coupe.



John Weaver with his rare 1956 Convertible (1 of a kind)

John says he became "Really Hooked" on Chryslers through his tenure with a 1955 New Yorker St. Regis Coupe and a 1955 New Yorker wagon. They were reasonably priced (used), in good condition and affordable to drive. In 1968 he found his first Imperial in San Francisco, a 1956 4 door Embassy car. In 1971 he purchased his "one off" light blue 1956 convertible. Because it is a factory custom John says it has some interesting oddities. For instance, the control arm of the spotlight was too close to the path of the turn signal stack. The factory shortened the lever one inch to make room.

While John has great affection for the 1957 Imperials, he feels that his 1956's were better quality built. As he became a full fledged "Chrysler Nut" his high water mark was twenty cars (Imperials and a few Chryslers). Currently John's "plate is full". That plate holds four cars – A 1956 convertible, 1957 Crown Coupe, 1963 Crown 4 door, and a 1965 Crown Coupe.



CARS FOR SALE

- **1950 Chrysler Imperial 4Dr.** – Solid, straight 8, all original. \$1,500. – also **1958 Imperial Convertible** – Original paint, solid, good restorable and rare. \$13,950. Ed (510) 232-0199 Alameda County. (3-0)
- **1954 DeSoto** – Award winner, all original 4 door sedan. V8 Hemi, clean rust free body, candy apple red with black top. Wide white walls, auto transmission, many original DeSoto items, service and owners manual, promo 45 RPM record of “It’s Delightful, It’s DeLovely, It’s DeSoto”, etc., \$8800. Nan Meyer (916) 422-4664. (1-0)
- **1955 Imperial Newport 2 Dr. HT.** – Cream top with brown bottom, white leather and gold fabric interior. Lots of extra parts frame motor, etc., been garaged for 15 years. \$3,000. Stephen (916) 683-7190. (1-0)
- **1962 Imperial** – rebuild 413 wedge engine, other new parts. Needs transmission work. Great parts car to restore. \$500./BO or will trade. David (530) 283-4636, near Quincy. (1-0)
- **1963 Imperial Crown 4 Dr.** – light blue with blue interior, full power, A/C, auto piolet, new tires, much re-built mechanics and electrical, front end and radiator. Runs and looks good. Free photos. Originally Winston Jones’ car. All offers welcome. Paul (415) 824-3284 SF. (1-0)
- **1964 Imperial Crown 4 Dr. HT.** – Straight body, runs and drives well. \$1,900. or BO. Don (916) 967-3366, Sacramento. (3-0)
- **1966 Imperial Crown Convertible** – Show winner, white with blue interior. \$9,500. Chuck Sinnot (916) 489-7587. Sacramento. (3-0)
- **1966 Imperial Crown Convertible** – Rare, white with light blue interior, wide whitewalls. Easy restoration, straight rust free body. Not running but ran well when parked 4 years ago. Needs new top, interior, exhaust. Have extra green interior and some parts. \$2,500. John (916) 481-3546 after 7:30 PM Sacramento. (3-0)
- **1966 Chrysler 300 Convertible** - Best offer or trade. Gray with white and black interior #3 condition. \$4,995. John Martinelli (916) 728-5523. (1-0)
- **1967 Imperial Crown 2 Dr. HT.** – Maroon with maroon and white interior. Only 49,800 miles. Make offer. Jim Price (916) 789-7865 Roseville.(3-0)

- **1967 Imperial Crown 2 Dr. HT.** – Turquoise w/ white split vinyl top, white leather w/cloth inserts. 133K miles, 2,500 miles on new factory engine. Good condition. \$2,500. or BO. Vic (916) 967-5915. (1-0)
- **1983 Imperial** – Factory conversion to carburetor. 1982 Imperial parts car. NOS exterior and interior chrome trim, lenses for 1983 Imperial (\$2,600. cost for NOS parts). Both cars and parts for \$5,200. Earl (310) 446-0182. (1-0)
- **1988 Plymouth Sundance** – Whole car or parts. Engine N/G. Auto transmission & brakes. A/C and body are all in good condition. Charlene (916) 687-8101. (1-0)
- **Imperial Parts mostly 64 – 66 and 68** –
Glass: 64-66 4 dr. side glass \$15. each, 2 dr. convertible \$30. each, 64-66 Crown Coupe/LeBaron \$30. each, 67-68 windshield \$50.00, 74-75 Coupe, 74-78 New Yorker back light \$30.
Front Fenders: 68 \$25. each, 55 with chrome spear \$25. each.
Grilles: 65 \$75. each, 66 no headlights covers \$40. each.
Seats: 65 black leather front bucket seats with headrests 4 way power tracks, center arm rest and rear seat \$250. for se66LeBaron black leather back seat w/ embossed eagles \$30.
Radios: 64-68 Am \$25. each.
Miscellaneous: 62-68 trim, peak and wheel well moldings, sill plates.
Trunk Lids: 55 DeSoto and Chrysler, Imperial, no dents or rust \$40. each. John Tennyson (916) 481-3546 Sacramento after 7:00 PM. (1-0)
- **Emblems Restored or Reproduced** – Emblemagic Co., 8367 Shepard Road, Macedonia, OH 44056, free catalog (216) 467-8755.
- **Car Wanted** – 1958 Imperial 2 Dr. HT, Bill (205) 426-5256.
- **Car Wanted** – 1970 Imperial LeBaron 2 Dr. Must be mint or nice clean and good running condition. Very serious about finding this model. Call and leave message. Thomas B. Eckert (818) 315-3590.

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

Deadline for the next I.O.A.S.V. newsletter is April 15, 2000. Mail to Jimmy White – P.O. Box 2250 – Citrus Heights, CA 95611 or call evenings (916) 726-2409.

Bob Schmitt of the Southern California club has a new Website with a lot of good information for you to check out. The address is <http://teamchicago.com/imperial/imperial.htm>



R E N E W A L

The Imperial Owners Association of Sacramento Valley (IOASV) is a non-profit club formed in 1981 for the purpose of preserving and promoting the Imperial automobile, once the flagship of Chrysler Corporation, as a distinctive luxury car. The "Chrysler Imperial" was first produced in 1924 and gained its own 'marque' identity as "Imperial" in 1955. The last full-sized Imperial was manufactured in 1975. A 2-door Imperial coupe was also produced 1981-83 and a smaller Chrysler Imperial 4dr sedan in 1990-93.

Club activities include car shows, joint meets with other car clubs, tours of interesting and scenic places, including day trips and overnights. We enjoy caravanning to these activities and the camaraderie of the members who share a common interest in preserving these classic cars. The Statewide Annual Meet is held in different California locales and includes a car show, awards banquet, seminars and tours. The club also publishes a bi-monthly newsletter which includes announcements of and invitations to club activities, topical articles on Imperials, and a for sale and wanted section for cars and parts.

"Imperial" items for sale include a chrome license plate frame with "Imperial" embossed on the bottom half, \$14 postpaid (\$10 you pick up), and 'Imperial' eagle lapel pins, \$6 postpaid. Proceeds help to cover club costs. Contact John Martinelli, Treasurer @ 916-728-5523.

**IMPERIAL OWNERS ASSOCIATION OF SACRAMENTO VALLEY
IOASV**

Application & Membership Form*

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE & ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: (____) _____ - _____

FAX: (____) _____ - _____ Email _____

I own the following Imperials:

YEAR	MODEL	BODY TYPE	COLOR

*information for annual Roster (April publication)

Dues: \$20 annually

**Make checks payable to: IOASV
Mail to: John Martinelli, Treasurer
6611 Graham Circle
Citrus Heights, CA 95610**

**17th Annual
IMPERIAL
OWNERS
STATEWIDE MEET
2000**

Preliminary Information

WHEN: Friday – Sunday., May 5, 6 & 7th

WHAT: Friday Imperial Caravan to Hershey Chocolate Factory
Friday Night Reception by the Pool
Saturday 4 Hour Car Show
Saturday Night Awards Banquet
Sunday Morning Brunch
Sunday Imperial Caravan to Hilmar Cheese Factory

WHERE: Meet Headquarters – Best Western Townhouse Lodge
909 16th Street, Downtown Modesto
behind McHenry Mansion
Reservations: 1-800-772-7261
Rates \$58–60 plus 9% tax

Imperial Car Show - Nearby 16th Street Location

Saturday Banquet - St. Stan's Restaurant, 9th & L, Downtown Modesto

FEATURES:

Easy to reach downtown location minutes from Hwy 99
Most events close together within a few blocks of Meet Headquarters
McHenry Mansion, boutiques, shops, most restaurants within walking distance
Car Wash area available Friday & early Saturday
Peer judging at car show/ no "in-progress" cars allowed for competition
1st, 2nd and 3rd Place awards per category, Hard Luck, and Best of Show
Meet Raffle – winners announced at Banquet

FEES: \$25 per car show entry fee (snapshot of car requested w/ your application)
\$25 per plate – approximate banquet cost

INFO: February, 2000 Mailer with invitation and application forms

SUPPORT: DaimlerChrysler is not subsidizing us this year. Your support in buying raffle tickets, Imperial license frames, pins and IOASV videos will help fund our Meet.

Sponsored Sacramento Valley (IOASV)

1963 Crown Imperial Southampton



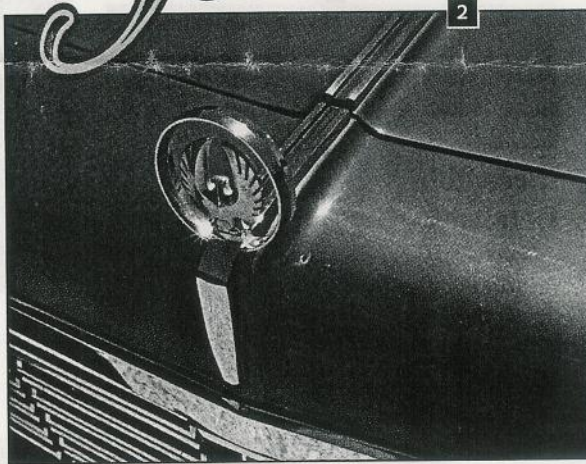
Sand Yacht

by Arch Brown

Commencing when Walter P. Chrysler started building automobiles bearing his own name, back in 1924 - and for many years thereafter - the top-of-the-line bore the name Imperial. Chrysler Imperial at first; for not until 1955 did the Imperial name stand on its own.

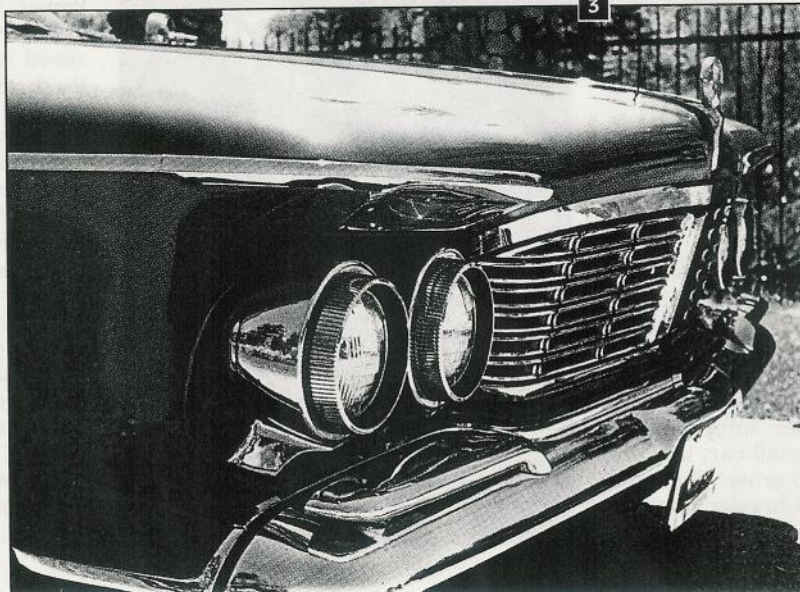
It wasn't a big car, that first Chrysler Imperial. In fact, it was nothing more nor less than a gussied-up version of the \$1,625 Chrysler "70." It came in two guises, both four-door sedans: the Imperial, which cost \$1,895, and the Crown Imperial, priced \$300 higher. Both of them shared the 112 3/4-inch wheelbase of the Model 70, as well as its 201-cubic-inch, 68-horsepower engine; and each weighed 3,090 pounds. And while these figures may not seem particularly impressive by today's standards, in 1924 the Chrysler could claim one of the highest power-to-weight ratios in the industry.

By way of comparison, the 1924 Studebaker Light Six, a relatively popular car whose weight matched almost exactly that of



Photos by Bud Juneau
1. This all-original Imperial Crown Coupe is a large, impressive automobile that sold new for \$6,434 with a variety of optional equipment on board. The "Crown" was the middle of the three trim lines available. It was one of 1,067 produced, and only one of 39 known to remain in the U.S.

2. Up front, the mascot was a stylized version of an eagle.



3. The huge dual headlights were tucked under the hood, next to a new grille design that featured elongated rectangles, a product of Elwood Engel's styling changes for 1963.



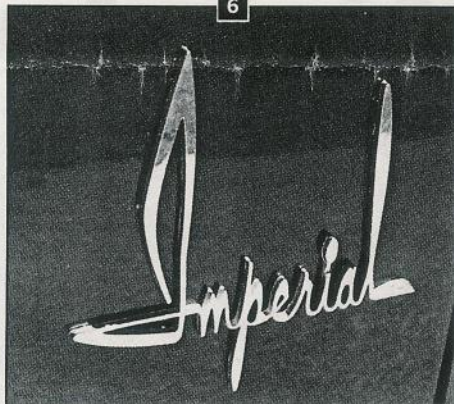
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4. From the rear, one quickly notices that the "gunsight" or "microphone" taillights used in 1962 have been replaced by more conventional lamps. Measuring nearly 19 feet long, the Crown Imperial was one of the Chrysler Corp. products to be styled under the direction of Elwood Engel.

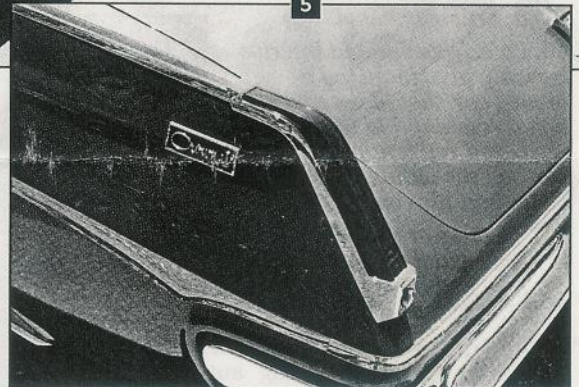
5. Taillights were re-designed for 1963, integrating them into the body design. They replaced ones that looked like gunsights, and were mounted on top of the fenders the previous year.

6. The Imperial name appeared in fancy script on the front quarter panels.

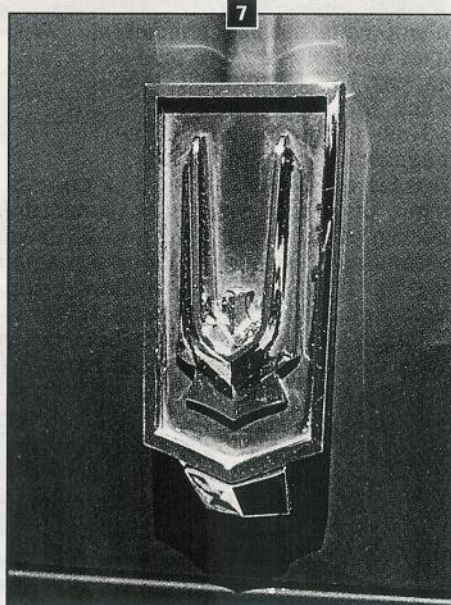
7. Another version of the stylized eagle served as the trunk latch.



6



5



7

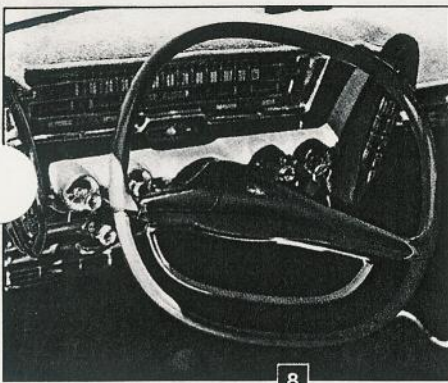
the Chrysler, pulled 40 horsepower from 207 cubic inches. And for stopping power to match its speed the Chrysler, unlike any of its major competitors, was fitted with hydraulic brakes. So if the Chrysler Imperial was smaller and several hundred pounds lighter than, say, the \$2,095 Buick Six, it held a 17-percent advantage over the Buick in power-to-weight ratio.

Although the Chrysler Imperial had been a comparatively small car, initially, by 1926 it had begun to grow. That year saw the coming of the Chrysler Imperial "80," an impressive machine that

weighed well over two tons, rested on a wheelbase of 120 inches - 127 for the custom-bodied jobs - and sold, as a five-passenger sedan, for \$3,395, a couple of hundred dollars more than a Cadillac. Power, in this instance, was supplied by a 289-cid, 92-hp flathead "six." A top speed of 80 miles per hour was advertised; and the truth is, that claim may actually have been modest!

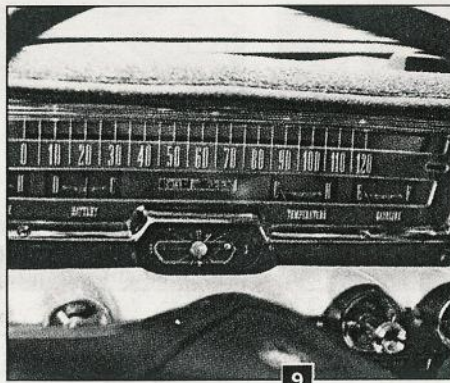
Stylistically, the Imperial 80 was an impressive machine, distinguished by a scalloped effect that ran the length of the hood. Britain's Vauxhall, which had employed a similar feature for a number of years, filed suit for infringement; but nothing came of the action.

By 1928 the Imperial engine had been bored to 309 cubic inches, yielding 100 hp in standard form. But for the performance enthusiast there was an optional "red head," boasting a compression ratio of 6.0:1, a phenomenally high figure by the standards of that day. So-equipped, the Imperial "80" developed 112 hp; and at least the open body types would read-



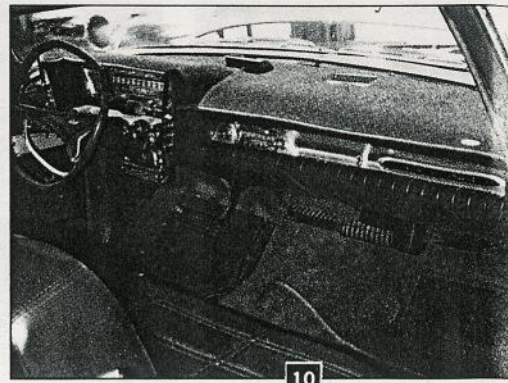
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8. The steering wheel was large, up to scale for a car that was nearly 19 feet long! Note the pushbutton shifting to the left. This car also came equipped with optional air conditioning, as noted by the vent below the gear selector buttons.



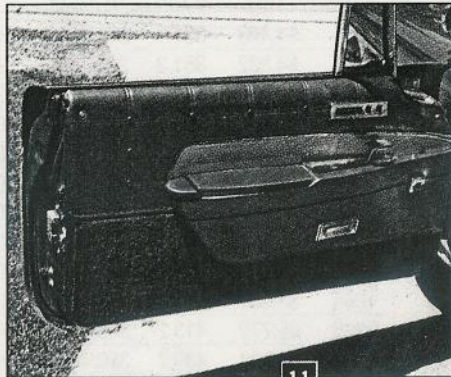
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9. The speedometer read to 120 mph, and was accompanied by gauges for oil pressure, battery, temperature and fuel below. Note the clock in the center of the instrument panel.



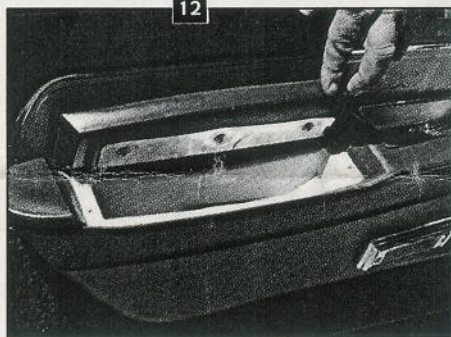
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10. Color-coordinated interior is richly appointed, as a luxury car should be, and has a combination of red cloth and red leather. This car has the optional AM radio and air conditioning.



11

11. Doors were trimmed out in either vinyl or leather, with carpeting on the bottom half. Since our feature car has optional power vent windows and power door locks, all controls were conveniently located on the driver's door.



12

12. Armrests flipped up to reveal a small storage area underneath, handy for carrying small items.

ily do a hundred miles per hour!

All of which was merely prelude; for during July, 1930 a new Chrysler Imperial, the Series CG, was introduced. Priced nose-to-nose with the Cadillac V-8 it was built on a wheelbase of 145 inches, and measured a whopping 210-3/4 inches overall. To this day, the "CG" is widely regarded as the most beautiful Chrysler ever built. Beneath its long, sleek hood was a nine-bearing straight eight of 385 cubic inches' displacement, capable of churning out 125 hp, 30 more than the contemporary Cadillac.

The big Series CG sold comparatively well at first. Production, that initial season, came to 3,228 units, including 95 are chassis supplied to custom coach-builders. But as the depression deepened the numbers fell off, until by 1933 production of the CG's successor, known officially as the Imperial Custom, Series

CL, totaled just 151 units, including six bare chassis. In the meantime, in an obvious effort to be more competitive, during 1932 Chrysler had bestowed the Imperial title (along with the big engine) upon a somewhat more modest car, priced against the Buick "90."

Then came the Airflow, a magnificent automobile, decades ahead of its time but an economic disaster for Chrysler. Naturally, the biggest and most luxurious of these streamliners bore the Imperial name. But by 1937, with the Airflow being rapidly phased out, the Imperial title was shifted to a much smaller and less expensive car, one whose speed and handling qualities made it a favorite with some law enforcement agencies. Chrysler had effectively abandoned the luxury market, except for a limited number of stretched-wheelbase sedans bearing the Custom Imperial (and, later, Crown Imperial) title.

From 1940 through 1948 there were no standard-wheelbase cars bearing the

IMPERIAL VERSUS THE COMPETITION

Here's how our Crown Imperial stacked up against the Cadillac Coupe deVille.

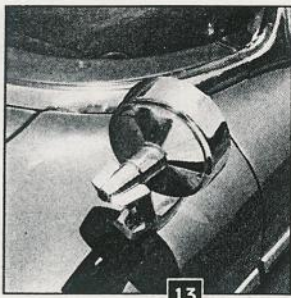
	Imperial	Cadillac
Base price, f.o.b. factory	\$5,412	\$5,386
Measurements and weight:		
Wheelbase	129"	129.5"
Overall length	227.8"	223.0"
Overall width	81.7"	79.7"
Overall height	56.8"	54.8"
Front tread	61.7"	61.0"
Rear tread	62.2"	61.0"
Ground clearance	5.6"	5.3"
Shipping weight (lbs.)	4,740	4,520
Engine displacement (cid)	413	390
Compression ratio	10.1:1	10.5:1
Horsepower @ rpm	340/4600	325/4800
Torque @ rpm	470/2800	430/3100
Automatic transmission	TorqueFlite	HydraMatic
Forward speeds	3	4
Torque converter?	Yes	No
Final drive ratio	2.93:1	2.94:1
Brakes, effective area (sq. in.)	287.2	203.7
Drum diameter	11"	12"
Tire size (as original)	8.20x15	8.00x15
Turning diameter (curb/curb)	47' 6"	43' 0"

Calculated data:

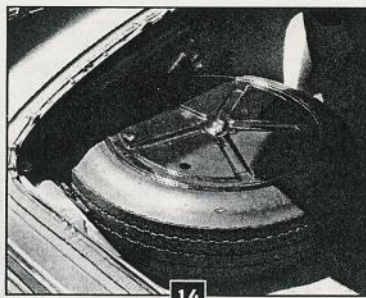
Stroke/bore ratio	.897:1	.969:1
Horsepower per cid	.823	.833
Weight (lbs.) per hp	13.9	13.9
Weight per cid	11.5	11.6
Weight per sq. in. (brakes)	16.5	22.2

Imperial name, although a handful of the big Crown Imperial models were still being produced. But then in 1949 a new Imperial appeared. Basically a modified New Yorker, it featured an opulent interior by the coachbuilding firm of Derham, of Rosemont, Pennsylvania, along with a padded roof. Only 50 of these beautifully appointed automobiles were built, perhaps because they were priced at \$4,690, \$862 more than the Cadillac Fleetwood Sixty-Special.

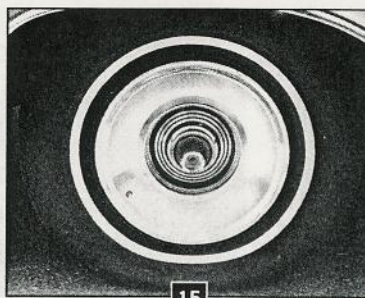
By 1951, the year Chrysler introduced the fabulous 180-hp hemi V-8, there was a four-model Imperial line, priced a few dollars higher than the Cadillac Series 62. Unfortunately for sales, these cars



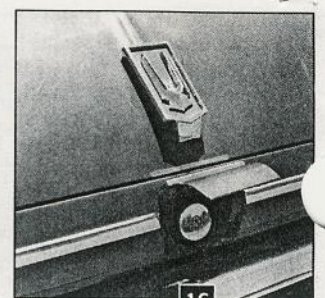
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15



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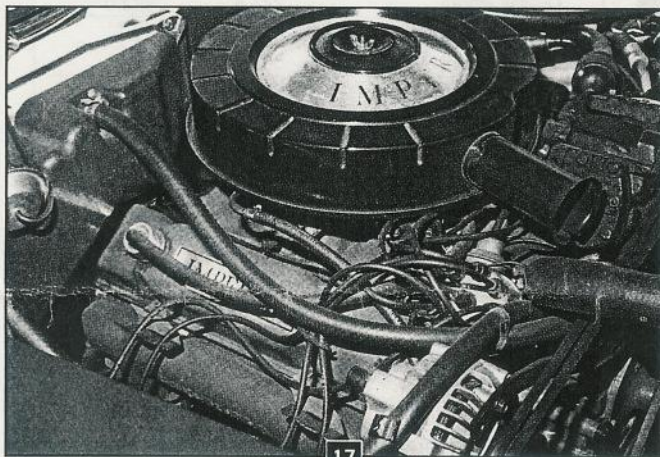
13. These mirrors, mounted ahead of the windshield on both sides, aided rear view vision.

14. Even with a full size spare in the trunk, there was still plenty of room, as capacity was 30.2 cubic feet.

15. These thin whitewall tires (originally 8.20 x 15, now 235/SR15) were an optional extra in 1963.

16. The gas tank filler lid, located just below the trunk handle, flipped up to fill the 23-gallon tank.

17. Power was supplied by a 413.2-cid, 340-hp overhead-valve V-8, which was equipped with a Carter four-barrel carb and coupled to a TorqueFlite automatic transmission.



17

STATISTICAL TABLE: IMPERIAL, 1955-1975

YEAR	PRICE	C.I.D.	HP/RPM	C/R	WB.	WGT.	PROD.
1955	\$4,483	331.1	250/4600	8.50:1	130"	4,565	11,432
1956	\$4,832	351.3	280/4600	9.00:1	133"	4,575	10,684
1957	\$4,838	392.7	325/4600	9.25:1	129"	4,640	37,557
1958	\$4,945	392.7	345/4600	10.00:1	129"	4,590	16,102
1959	\$5,016	413.2	350/4600	10.10:1	129"	4,735	17,262
1960	\$5,029	413.2	350/4600	10.10:1	129"	4,700	17,703
1961	\$5,111	413.2	350/4600	10.10:1	129"	4,740	12,249
1962	\$5,106	413.2	340/4600	10.10:1	129"	4,620	14,337
1963	\$5,243	413.2	340/4600	10.10:1	129"	4,690	14,108
1964	\$5,581	413.2	340/4600	10.10:1	129"	4,970	23,285
1965	\$5,772	413.2	340/4600	10.10:1	129"	5,015	18,399
1966	\$5,733	439.7	350/4400	10.10:1	129"	4,965	13,742
1967	\$5,374	439.7	350/4400	10.10:1	127"	4,830	17,614
1968	\$5,653	439.7	350/4400	10.10:1	127"	4,770	15,361
1969	\$5,770	439.7	350/4400	10.10:1	127"	4,620	22,077
1970	\$5,956	439.7	350/4400	9.70:1	127"	4,725	11,816
1971	\$6,276	439.7	335/4400	8.80:1	127"	4,855	11,558
1972	\$6,762	439.7	225/4400	8.20:1	127"	4,955	15,794
1973	\$7,057	439.7	215/3600	8.20:1	127"	4,778	16,729
1974	\$7,230	429.7	230/4000	8.20:1	124"	4,965	14,426
1975	\$9,046	429.7	215/4000	8.20:1	124"	n/a	8,830

Notes: 1. Price and weight figures refer to base four-door model.

2. Production figures refer to model year, all series.

3. 1972 and later horsepower figures are SAE Net; earlier figures are SAE Gross.

looked almost identical to the New Yorker models from which they were derived; and given the price differential of something over \$300, most buyers opted for the New Yorker.

But then came 1955. This time the Imperial name stood alone; and although the company's prestige car shared the engine and driveline of the less expensive New Yorker Deluxe series, its wheelbase was four inches longer and there were a number of distinctive styling touches, notably a bold new grille. Sales were more than double the previous year's figure.

As every Chrysler aficionado knows by now, Virgil Exner had headed the Chrysler Corp.'s Advance Design Studio since 1950; but his activities had been largely limited to a series of striking "concept" cars. Fortunately, however, Chrysler's ultra-conservative president, K. T. Keller, had let Exner out of his cage in time for him to develop the 1955 stylings for the company's senior cars, DeSoto, Chrysler and Imperial. (Meanwhile the Dodge and Plymouth designs were the work of young Maury

Baldwin, an Exner protege.)

If Virgil Exner's 1955-56 cars were beautiful, and they surely were, the 1957 models were downright sensational! Fins, which had appeared in relatively modest form on the 1956 models, were in full flight on the '57's. The "hemi" engine of the Imperial and New Yorker grew from 353.1 to 392.7 cubic inches in displacement, yielding 325 hp, 25 more than the Cadillac. Torsion bar suspension took the place of the previous front coils, resulting in truly superior handling qualities. And although the wheelbase was reduced from 1956's 133 inches to a slightly more modest 129, it was still a very big car, measuring 224 inches bumper-to-bumper and tipping the scales at just under 4,800 pounds, dry.

During 1957, for the first time, the Imperial had its own body, no part of which interchanged with lesser Chrysler marques. This was an audacious undertaking on the company's part, investing such substantial sums to tool up for what would inevitably be a limited production automobile. But it served to underscore Chrysler's determination to make a place

for itself in the growing luxury market. Nor were Chrysler's expectations entirely unrealistic; for Packard, by that time, was moribund, and Lincoln sales were somewhat disappointing. So it was not illogical to presume that there might be room in the market for a viable rival to the Cadillac.

For a time, the effort appeared successful. Imperial production for the 1957 model year totaled 37,557 units, three and a half times the 1956 figure and enough for the Imperial to outsell the Lincoln for the first time. Unfortunately, that figure proved to be the Imperial's high-water mark, for two problems converged to cut the 1958 figure by more than half: First, there were serious quality control problems throughout the corporation during 1957, and the Imperial's reputation probably suffered even more than that of its less expensive corporate siblings, simply because people had high expectations of it. And second, 1958 brought a severe recession during which the entire industry (with the exceptions of George Romney's compact Rambler and Ford's new four-passenger

Thunderbird) suffered badly. Never again would the Imperial find the acceptance that it had enjoyed during 1957.

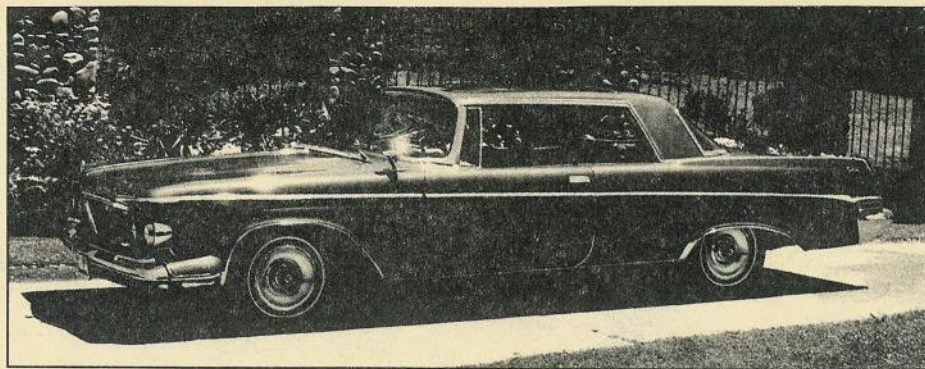
There was a new "wedge" engine for 1959, but the Imperial's styling didn't change much until 1960, when there was a new grille that reminded some people of a locomotive's cowcatcher. A much more acceptable grille was devised for 1961; and - for better or for worse - the rear fender fins were more flamboyant than ever before. Too flamboyant, perhaps; in any case they were trimmed sharply for 1962, at which point a set of free-standing headlamps was added. Not particularly practical, to be sure; one can only imagine what a job it must be to remove the dirt and - especially - the bugs that inevitably accumulate behind them; but the lamps were evidently intended as an echo of the Classic era, and most people seem to have regarded them as an effective touch.

Very little change was seen in the 1963 Imperials, except that the "gunsight" or "microphone" tail lamps that had ridden atop the fenders during 1962 were removed, to be replaced by more conventional lamps, mounted in the fenders. The 413.2-cid, 340-hp engine was unchanged, but an important improvement was made to the TorqueFlite automatic transmission. Ever since 1956 the transmission had been controlled by a set of pushbuttons, located to the driver's left. It was an excellent transmission, and at least as far as this writer was concerned, the pushbuttons were every bit as convenient as the conventional lever. Trouble was, there had been no way to lock the transmission. Chrysler Corp. parking brakes, in those days, left something to be desired in terms of effectiveness; so 1963's addition of a parking sprag was a critical safety feature.

By this time the Imperial had grown to 227.8 inches overall, an enormous automobile, impressive in appearance and surprisingly quick in performance. Fresh styling - the work of Elwood Engel, formerly of Lincoln - would lead to a sales increase for 1964; but then things flattened out again. By 1967 the Imperial once again looked very much like a run-of-the-mill Chrysler; and by 1975 it had disappeared from the marketplace. True, there was another Imperial during 1981-83, a coupe based on the Chrysler Cordoba; but it sold so poorly that corporate officials would prefer to forget it. Chrysler's attempt to break into the all-out luxury market had not been a success.

Pictured here is an incredibly new-looking, all-original 1963 Imperial Crown Coupe (the "Crown" being the middle of three trim lines). Bill Watkins, of Fair Oaks, California, a long-time Chrysler collector, purchased this car in 1997 from the son of the original owner, a Fallon, Nevada woman who had given up driving and stored the car in a barn, some 20 years before her recent death at age 101.

Under the patina of dust, Bill found an incredibly clean car. No dings, no dents,



SPECIFICATIONS 1963 CROWN IMPERIAL

GENERAL DATA:

Body style: Southampton Coupe
 Passenger capacity: 6
 Base price: \$5,412 f.o.b. factory
 Price as equipped: \$6,434
 Options on feature car: Air conditioning, power vent windows, power door locks, AM radio, 3-tone trumpet horns, white sidewall tires

BASIC SPECIFICATIONS:

Wheelbase: 129"
 Length: 227.8"
 Width: 81.7"
 Height: 56.8"
 Shipping weight: 4,740 lbs.
 Front tread: 61.7"
 Rear tread: 62.2"
 Ground clearance: 5.6"

INTERIOR DIMENSIONS:

Leg room, front/rear: 46.9"/38.8"
 Head room, front/rear: 41.1"/40.1"
 Hip room, front: 61"
 Shoulder room, front: 64"
 Trunk capacity: 30.2 cu. ft.

ENGINE:

Type: 90-degree OHV V-8
 Displacement: 413 cu. in.
 HP @ RPM: 340 @ 4600 (gross)
 Torque @ RPM: 470 @ 2800 (gross)

Taxable horsepower: 56.2
 Compression ratio: 10.0:1
 Valve lifters: Hydraulic
 Main bearings: 5
 Carburetor: Carter AFB-3256-S 4-bbl.
 Exhaust system: Single with cross-over

TRANSMISSION:

Torqueflite 3-spd. automatic with torque converter

RATIOS:

1st - 2.45
 2nd - 1.45
 3rd - 1.00
 Reverse - 2.20
 Torque converter, maximum ratio at stall: 2.20

REAR AXLE:

Type: Hypoid
 Ratio: 2.93:1
 Drive axles: Semi-floating

SUSPENSION:

Front: Independent; torsion bars; non-parallel control arms
 Rear: Rigid axle, semi-elliptic springs
 Shock absorbers: Tubular type
 Construction: Body-on-frame
 Frame: Double channel box with X-member
 Body: All steel
 Body type: Hardtop coupe
 Steering: Rack and gear

sector, power-assisted
 Ratios: 15.7 gear, 19.4 overall

Turns, lock-to-lock: 3.5
 Turning diameter: 47' 6" (curb/curb)

Brakes: 4-wheel drum type, power-assisted
 Drum diameter: 11"
 Effective area: 287.2 sq. in.

Tires: 8.20 x 15 originally; now 235/SR15

Electrical system: 12-volt

CAPACITIES:

Cooling system: 17 qts. (with heater)
 Gasoline tank: 23 gals.
 Engine oil: 5 qts. (less filter)
 Transmission: 18 pts.
 Rear axle: 4 pts.

CALCULATED DATA:

Stroke/bore ratio: .897:1
 HP/CID: .823
 LBS/HP: 13.9
 LBS/CID: 11.5
 Weight per sq. in. (brakes): 16.5

PERFORMANCE*

*Source: *Motor Trend* road test of an identically powered 1962 Imperial sedan: 0-30 mph: 4.2 sec.; 0-45: 7.1 sec.; 0-60: 11.0 sec.

no scratches, no evidence that there had ever been any damage whatever. The odometer read 32,000 miles. The foam padding in the seats had hardened and cracked from years of storage, but the leather upholstery needed only a good cleaning. Bill replaced the foam, went through the braking system, boiled and sealed the gas tank, and of course cleaned and polished the Claret Red exterior.

The Imperial bore its original California license plates when Watkins bought it, for the owner had moved to Nevada at about the time she quit driving. And didn't Bill just have a jolly time convincing officials of the California Division of Motor Vehicles that those

plates belonged on this supposedly Nevada car! Eventually, however, Watkins won the argument.

Another vigorous discussion ensued when DMV wanted to register the car as a *Chrysler* Imperial. Watkins insisted, quite rightly, that the proper title for the car was simply Imperial. In the end, he won that argument as well; and this fine Crown Coupe, which now has logged about 36,000 miles, took its place in Bill's garage alongside of another fine '63 Imperial, this one a black LeBaron sedan.

In Memory

Marian Edgett passed away on January 29, 2000. She was the wife of Charles, former owner of the Chrysler - Plymouth dealership in Rancho Cordova And they were former I.O.A.S.V. members. Marian drove a 1967 Imperial. *Bill Knudsen* passed away in the Alaska Airlines crash on January 31, 2000. Although not a member, he participated in a number of shows. He owned several Late 40's and early 50's Imperials and was a partner in Inland Business Machines in Sacramento.



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