



Power to accelerate is what Oldsmobile owners like most. Some complain about the three-piece rear window

## Power Is Oldsmobile's Top Feature, Say Owners From Coast to Coast

By Oldsmobile Owners

OLDSMOBILE IS STILL a "rocket," the PM survey shows. Owners of the 1957 Oldsmobile place power and performance at the top of the best-liked list.

Second best-liked feature is handling ease, followed by riding comfort and exterior styling in that order. Fifth on the list is roadability.

"Has tremendous power from a dead stop and a wonderful pickup at high speeds."—Indiana attorney.

"It has plenty of power. I believe the Rocket engine is responsible for the rise in Oldsmobile popularity. I like the speed, but I don't abuse it. It could have less speed and I would like it just as well."—Illinois salesman.

"It's a big car, yet it handles as well if not better than a smaller car."—New York owner.

"I like its ease of handling and its feeling of balance."—Wisconsin attorney.

"Olds is as easy riding as anyone could want."—Nebraska businessman.

"Just returned from a trip to Florida. Traveled about 500 miles a day. Car rode wonderfully, never tired from riding."—New York superintendent.

"It has eye appeal. Oldsmobile has not gone overboard in body styling."—Ohio elevator manager.

"Looks nice. Modern lines, but avoids extremes in fins."—Florida store owner.

"Holds the road well. Exceptionally good in cornering."—Washington foreman.

"When driving fast, the car is under my control at all times, even around curves. I have tried this at 70, so I should know."—Massachusetts electrical worker.

### But They Complain, Too

Although Oldsmobile has the highest "Excellent" rating of any 1957 car to date (and, incidentally, the second lowest

Lowness is stylish, say owners, but at times like this, it is an accomplishment to get in or out gracefully



## THE OWNERS' OPINION OF THE OLDSMOBILE

### Had trouble with engine?

No trouble	82.2%
Some trouble	14.7%
Considerable trouble	3.1%

### What was engine trouble?

Carburetor	4.9%
Transmission	2.2%
Valve troubles	1.8%
Power steering	1.3%
Poor idle	1.3%

### Performance

#### Would like faster acceleration?

Yes, would	14.4%
No, would not	74.0%
Undecided, no answer	11.6%

#### Would like more top speed?

Yes, would	5.1%
No, would not	68.4%
Undecided, no answer	26.5%

#### What is car's horsepower?

Knew horsepower	61.7%
Did not know it	38.3%

#### Have checked gasoline mileage?

Yes, have checked it	75.3%
No, have not	17.8%
Don't care about it	6.9%

### Styling

#### Best-liked exterior feature?

Simple lines	18.1%
Grille, front bumper	16.7%
Low body	12.8%
Side trim	10.1%

#### Least-liked exterior feature?

3-piece rear window	15.4%
Front grille and bumper	7.0%
Wrap windshield	4.4%
Fender ornaments	4.0%

#### Best-liked interior feature?

Dash and instruments	23.8%
Upholstery	17.2%
Colors	6.2%

### OVER-ALL RATING

Excellent	Average	Poor
75.0%	22.1%	2.9%

#### Least-liked interior feature?

Dashboard design	5.3%
Glove box	4.8%
Floor mats	4.8%

### Miscellaneous

#### What car will buy next time?

Oldsmobile	69.6%
Other GM make	4.0%
Ford Motor make	1.8%
Chrysler Corp. make	5.7%
Other make	0.4%
Undecided	18.5%

#### How is dealer service?

Excellent	51.7%
Average	37.9%
Poor	10.4%

#### Would buy from him again?

Yes, would	41.4%
No, would not	13.5%
Undecided, no answer	45.1%

#### What make of car was traded?

Oldsmobile	62.6%
Other GM make	19.4%
Ford Motor make	7.5%
Chrysler Corp. make	2.2%
Other make	1.8%
No trade, no answer	6.5%

#### What about "strut" dashboard?

Like the design	69.9%
Don't like it	6.4%
See no advantage	23.7%

#### What about power-heater controls?

Like the controls	77.2%
Don't like them	9.1%
Undecided, no answer	13.7%
Had trouble with them	19.2%
Have had no trouble	80.8%

### Why did they buy Olds?

Previous ownership	27.2%
Exterior styling	20.9%
Resale value	4.7%
Performance	5.2%

### What should be changed?

Nothing at all	33.5%
Improve gas mileage	12.0%
Better heating system	5.8%
Easier to get in, out	5.8%
Front grille	4.7%
Rear-view mirror	4.7%

### Best-Liked Features

Power, performance	44.0%
Handling ease	34.6%
Riding comfort	34.0%
Exterior styling	31.4%
Roadability, cornering	12.6%
Rocket engine	7.9%
Sturdy body	7.3%

### Most-Frequent Complaints

No complaints at all	23.6%
Poor gasoline economy	23.6%
Poor assembly work	14.1%
Poor paint, chrome	12.6%
Body noises	9.4%
Hard to get in, out	8.4%
Heater operation	6.3%
Hydra-Matic	5.8%

### Olds is very low

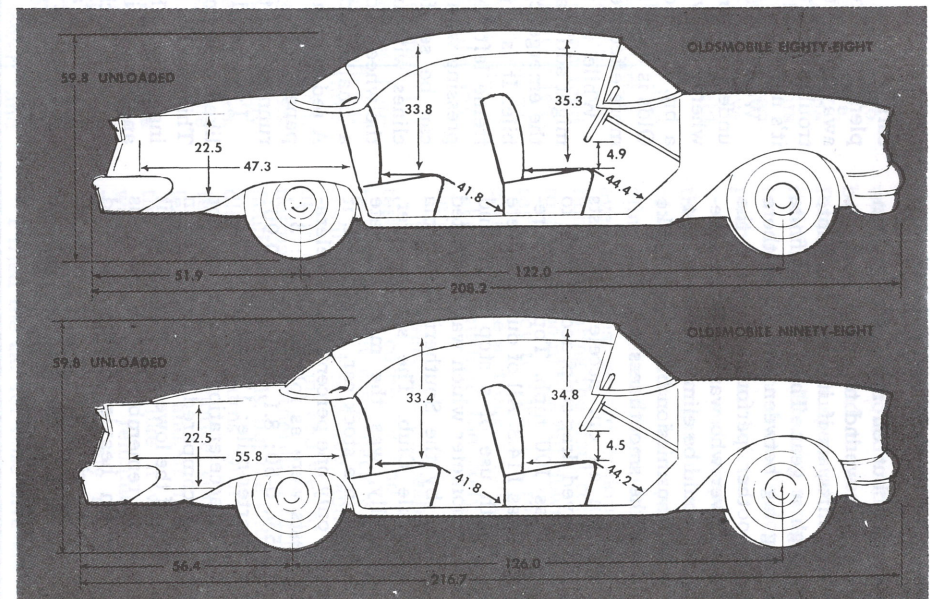
Like this lowness	81.4%
Don't like it	15.8%
No answer	2.8%

### Olds is very long

Like this length	87.1%
Don't like it	6.2%
No answer	6.7%

### Olds is very fast

Like this speed	87.4%
Don't like it	5.8%
It's not fast	0.9%
No answer	6.1%



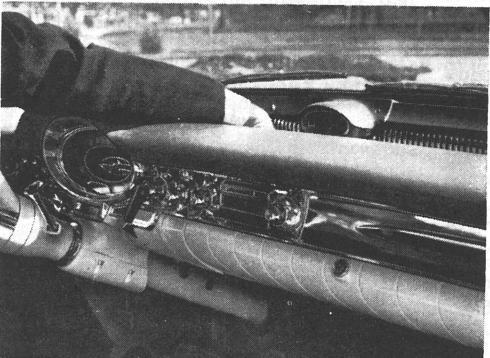




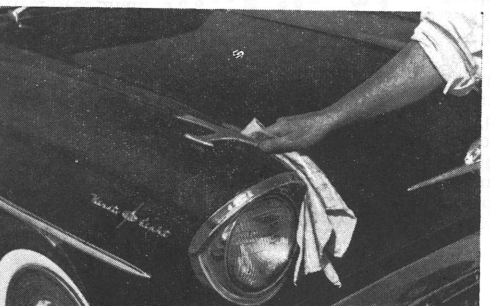
In a year of smallish glove boxes, Olds has one that is two feet long, but height and depth are restricted



Rare indeed is this example of poor assembly, but it did occur on the test car: incorrectly spelled name



Above, hand reaches into opening between dash and windshield. Some owners like this feature, others do not. Below, miniature jet planes on front fenders make it more difficult to wash and polish the car



"Poor" rating), it does have owners who complain. In fact, only 23.6 percent of the owners make no complaints at all and this is a comparatively small percentage.

What do Olds owners complain about? Tops on the list is poor gasoline economy. The owners like the fast, exciting performance, but they don't seem to like the lowered fuel economy that goes with it.

Second on the complaint list is poor assembly work; third is poor paint or chrome; fourth, body noises and rattles.

"When I first purchased the car it was getting only five to seven miles per gallon so they changed the rear end which did help a bit. It still uses too much."—Illinois radio engineer.

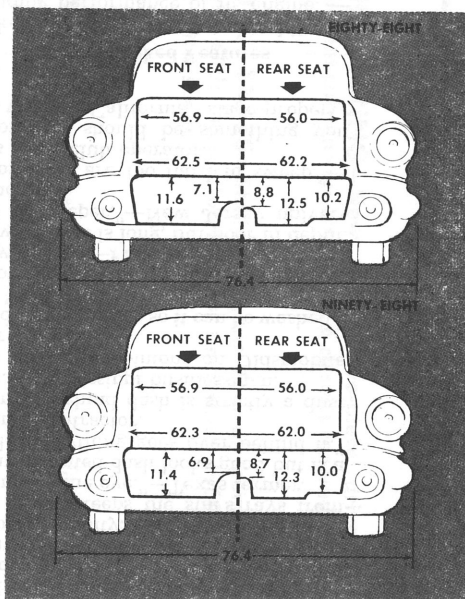
"I and many like me who travel 20,000 miles a year must pay through the nose for a comfortable ride. With gas more than 32 cents a gallon, I average about 9½ miles over-all."—California sales representative.

"Cars are not inspected properly. There were at least 25 faults. We are still trying to get corrected such faults as defective places in paint, car higher on one side than the other, one shock missing, and others. When one pays over \$5000 for a car I think he is entitled to a perfect machine."

—California sales manager.

"Of the three Oldsmobiles I have owned, (Continued to page 90)

Drawings show how the 88 and 98 differ. Virtually all the added length of the 98 is in rear overhang



## An Engineer Analyzes the 1957 Oldsmobile

By Dale Kelly, SAE, Registered Professional Engineer

**MODEL TESTED:** Super 88 four-door sedan with J-2 carburetion (three two-barrel carburetors, two of which open at three-quarter throttle or beyond), dual exhausts, automatic transmission, power steering and power brakes. Rear-axle ratio: 3.42 to 1. Wheelbase: 122.5

inches. Tires: 8.50 by 14. Weight: 4335 pounds with gas tank half full (57 percent on the front wheels, 43 percent on the rear). Mileage on car at time of test: 400 miles. Barometer: 29.10 inches. Temperature: 55 degrees F. Payload: 200 pounds.



### ACCELERATION TIME FROM STANDING START IN SECONDS

	0 to 20	0 to 40	0 to 60	0 to 80	1/4 mile
Ignition timed for regular gasoline, 90 octane (Research)	2.7	6.6	10.7	18.5	18.6
Ignition timed for premium gasoline, 97 octane (Research)	2.4	6.1	10.2	17.5	18.2
Ignition timed for super fuel, 105 octane (Research)		5.9	10.0		

All acceleration runs made with transmission in "Drive" range.



### FUEL ECONOMY IN MILES PER GALLON

	Steady 30 m.p.h.	Steady 50 m.p.h.	Steady 70 m.p.h.	Traffic Route
Ignition timed for regular gasoline, 90 octane (Research)	21.6	14.8	13.6	9.6
Ignition timed for premium gasoline, 97 octane (Research)	21.6	14.8	13.4	10.1

On the traffic route the car makes 10 full stops per mile and is driven fast enough to average 15 miles per hour. Estimated average ANNUAL GASOLINE BILL: \$202 for 10,000 miles.

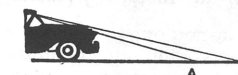


### SPEEDOMETER ERROR (miles per hour)

	20	30	40	50	60	70	80
Speedometer speed	20	30	40	50	60	70	80
True speed	22	31	39	48	58	69	80

### ODOMETER ERROR

Odometer registered 104 miles when car traveled an actual 100 miles.



### DRIVER'S VISION (for an average driver—5 feet 9 inches tall)

Distance at which part of road in front of car could be seen (A in sketch)	16 feet
Distance at which full width of road in front of car could be seen (B in sketch)	21 feet



### GROUND CLEARANCE (unloaded car)

Radius of worst dip that could be crossed (solid line)	24 feet
Radius of worst hump that could be crossed (dotted line)	21 feet
Deepest rut car could be driven in	6.5 inches
Curb clearance for door opening	12.5 inches

### STEERING

Steering-wheel turns from straight ahead to steer outside front wheel in a circle with a 100-foot diameter: 0.85 turns.

Diameter of the smallest circle in which the wheels could complete a circle (curb-to-curb): 43.25 feet.

Diameter of the smallest circle in which the entire car could complete a circle (wall-to-wall): 45.5 feet.

Steering-wheel turns, lock-to-lock: 4.4 turns. Steering-wheel diameter: 17.0 inches.

### TRUNK CAPACITY

Number of standard cartons (1 cubic foot each) that could be packed into trunk: 10 cartons.

CENTER OF GRAVITY (unloaded car): 23.6 inches.

### WATER RESISTANCE

Fair. In the splash-pail test, brakes and ignition were not affected and no water entered the body. In high-pressure car wash, water came in around the right ventilator pane.

### OBSERVATIONS

Instruments: Excessive chrome on instrument panel makes instruments hard to read. Worst offender is the chrome in the center of speedometer. Because the speedometer (and clock,

### MISCELLANEOUS

also) is elliptical instead of round, every five-mile-per-hour interval between 30 and 90 is compressed into ¼ inch or less, further reducing readability. On the clock, 6:30 is easily misread as 7:30. The water-temperature gauge, like the ammeter and oil-pressure gauges, has been replaced by signal lights. A green "cold" light is supposed to go out when the water reaches 113 degrees F., and a red "hot" light comes on if the water reaches 232 degrees F. The 113-degree mark is too low for good engine life and the 232-degree mark is higher than is normal or safe.

Transmission: Hydra-Matic has a simple fluid coupling instead of a torque converter and torque multiplication is obtained with planetary gears, four ratios being available. Shifts from first to second and from third to fourth are made by filling an auxiliary fluid coupling and were almost imperceptible in the test car, but shifts from second to third are by mechanical clutch and were quite noticeable.

Headroom: Good in front, poor in rear.

General: Gas tank holds 20 gallons and could be filled at more than 15 gallons per minute when empty. Brake vacuum-reserve tank provided four to five full applications with engine dead. Parking brake held on a 14-percent grade.

## Power Is Oldsmobile's Top Feature, Say Owners From Coast to Coast

this is by far the least mechanically perfect. Many bugs were apparent in the car after only a few weeks of driving, such as poor printed circuit in the dash, poor shocks and an inadequately strengthened radiator for the high pressures involved."—Indiana Air Force man.

"I paid \$65 extra for my special paint. It is more metallic. It is showing through on the roof struts and not from polishing as it has not been polished, only washed."—Ohio union representative.

"Door glasses rattle."—Texas pastor.

"Has more rattles and squeaks than any car I've had and I've had 10 new cars since 1949."—Michigan attorney.

### What About Styling?

Because Oldsmobile has been completely restyled for 1957 and because it retains much of the general appearance of previous years, we asked several specific questions about styling.

Oldsmobile has developed a reputation for clean, simple styling with a minimum of frills and it is not surprising that owners rank this characteristic tops on the list. On the don't-like list, the feature most frequently mentioned is the three-piece rear window. Here are quotations to illustrate the likes and dislikes in order of frequency of mention by the owners:

"I like its simplicity, its clean lines."—Illinois diemaker.

"The simple, but well-built design with no exaggerated fins."—Michigan sales manager.

"Modern front bumper and grille design."—Tennessee service manager.

"Low, streamlined."—Indiana salesman.

"I like the red stripe on the chrome side trim."—Wisconsin owner.

"Rear-window dividers cut down the vision through rear-view mirror."—Michigan state policeman.

"Front grille too hard to wash and polish."—Indiana plasterer.

"Wrap-around windshield makes it too hard to get in and out."—Oklahoma dentist.

"Chrome airplanes on front fenders collect extra dirt."—New York salesman.

### Interior Likes, Dislikes

Strangely enough, the best-liked interior feature and the least-liked interior feature are the same: the dashboard. Oldsmobile has an unusual dashboard design this year. It is called a "strut mounted" dashboard. There is an opening between the base of

the windshield and the top of the dashboard. Here are the good and bad features of this design, as seen by the owners:

"Strut dash adds strength and gives good radio sound quality."—Missouri retailer.

"The design keeps the sun's rays from hitting me in the eye."—Texas farmer.

"Strut-mounted dash looks good but is a catchall. Everything goes over behind it."—Virginia contractor.

"Opening behind dash is strictly a dust catcher."—Mississippi businessman.

Here are more opinions on Oldsmobile interior design:

"Headlining is made so it can be washed."—New York clerk.

"Colors of interior are subdued. This is a safety factor."—Florida retailer.

"Glove pocket is long, but poor in depth. Should be deeper."—New Jersey university student.

"Floor mats are too hard to sweep."—Kansas night-club operator.

"Floor mat should be something you could wash."—California stage-property man.

### More Best-Liked Features

"I like most the fine, quiet, durable and outstanding performance of its engine."—Illinois corporation executive.

"Sturdy construction."—New Jersey salesman.

"Hydra-Matic changes from first gear to second quickly and smoothly. Has a quick getaway."—Maryland well driller.

"Large window area."—Wisconsin retailer.

"Lots of vision."—Michigan farmer.

"I like the dual exhausts below the bumper, throwing fumes down instead of through bumper."—Nebraska contractor.

"As an auto mechanic, I prefer Olds to any other make due to its general accessibility."—New York mechanic.

"I like the heater controls—no levers to pull or knobs to turn. Just push the buttons."—Maryland foreman.

"My dealer service could not be beat."—New York fire chief.

### More Complaints

"When you open the rear door, space is too narrow to get your feet out of the door."—Illinois retired farmer.

"Too low. Hurt my back getting in and out, as I am six feet tall."—Colorado salesman.

"Heater control does not work right. When not on Hot, it throws all cold air. No way to get warm air."—California owner.

"Heater vents vibrate at over 60 miles per hour."—California Navy man.

"Jetaway is not as fast from a standing start as plain Hydra-Matic."—California steel worker.

"Some road ice struck the rod which operates the transmission control and I could not shift. The car could not even be towed. This important rod should be in a more protected location if the car is to be given such low clearance."—New Jersey dentist.

"When driving fast in rain, wipers fail to hold against the windshield."—Indiana farmer.

"Windshield-wiper mechanism uses cables that are too loose and result in poor window coverage."—California executive.

"Front fenders overlap front bumper and the wheels throw all the mud and road dirt over the chrome."—Illinois merchant.

"Window cranks are too low and work too hard."—New York distributor.

"Have to slam trunk lid almost through the rear end to close it."—Connecticut owner.

"Should move dimmer button two inches to the right as emergency-brake pedal is in the way."—New York engineer.

"Too much of the underside of the front fenders shows."—Ohio housewife.

### General Comments on Industry

We ask the owners who take part in our Owners Reports to tell us what they think about the current trends in the automobile industry. Many of their comments are of unusual interest. While they do not necessarily apply to Oldsmobile, they are interesting enough, we feel, to be quoted. Here are some of them:

"Why have all cars gone overboard in horsepower? Power, power, power. Laws don't begin to allow the use of all the power so we use more gas for power we can't use. I'm not an engineer, but it all sounds pretty silly to me."—Massachusetts housewife.

"They have lowered the cars too much. It isn't as convenient getting in and out as the 1956 models."—Michigan assembler.

"My reaction to body styling of several of the 1957 cars is that changes are too drastic. I like more conservative styling. Also I think extreme fins and such add to the cost."—Texas business manager.

"I don't mind the lowness, but I do not like the windshield protruding in the way of getting into the car. It is also dangerous as to getting fingers caught in the door."—Michigan owner.

"I sell direct to homeowners. I would have bought another make which is more stylish, but it looks too much like a 'brag' car. Some people resent obvious prosperity and the big-shot appearance. The conserv-

ative lines of the Oldsmobile are the main reason for my buying it."—Missouri salesman.

"This car is air-conditioned which I have not used to date. There is some question in my mind as to the value of this in this part of the country. It may turn out to be more of an expense to maintain and operate than the advantage it offers."—Michigan salesman.

"If speedometers were more nearly correct, the highways would not be cluttered up with slow drivers. Also gas mileage would be different."—California retired owner.

And that is the assembled opinion of the Oldsmobile owners who took part in this month's Owners Report. For the engineering analysis of the car turn back to page 126.

