POPULAR MECHANICS MAGAZINE
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Owners Turn Designers in This

REPORT TO DETROIT

A Nationwide Survey of What Car Owners Want

Is Detroit making the kind of automobile the public wants? To find out, Popular Mechanics *asked 5000 owners of all makes what they want in a car. This is their reply.*

By Floyd Clymer

LISTEN, DETROIT, the public is talking about your product—the American automobile. This article was written by the men and women who own and drive automobiles — all makes and styles of automobiles. *Popular Mechanics* asked 5000 owners what they think about the cars Detroit is building. Their responses brought out some amazing points.

Apparently, the manufacturers and the owners don't agree on some important matters. For example, the owners don't want more horsepower! Yet there is hardly a 1954 model on display today that isn't bragging about its increased power.

The survey shows that 70 percent of the owners were emphatically against continuing "the trend toward greater horsepower." Only 19 percent —less than one in five— approved of the trend. The other 11 percent were noncommittal.

"I believe they have gone too far overboard with this horsepower race. Cars are too powerful to be safe these days." —Jonesboro, Ark., coach.

"I do not agree with the race for more horsepower. The human element in drivers certainly cannot safely handle the speed which the high horsepower produces."—Portland, Ore., engineer.

"Pure nonsense. If a person wants horsepower he should drive a truck. Performance, in my estimation, does not depend upon horsepower." — Casper, Wyo., oil worker.

"It's suicidal. We are all too brave behind the wheel."—Barrington, Ill., advertising director.

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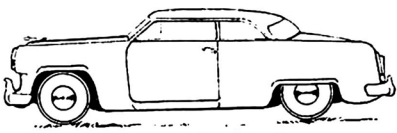
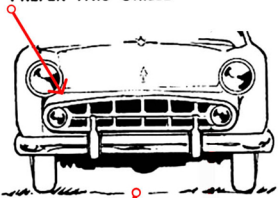
VOX POPULI

Here is the composite car that American motorists "designed" for themselves - its body features combined by our artist from the choices marked on the style ballots sent to 5000 car owners

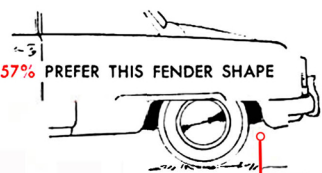


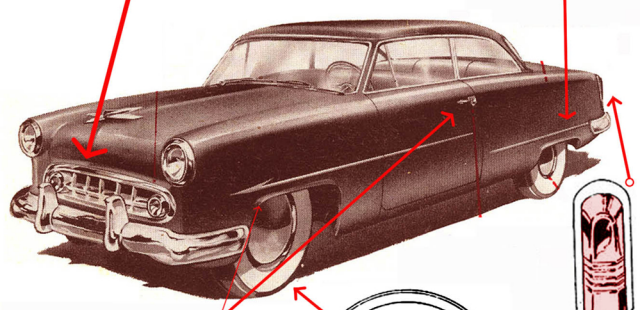
44% PREFER THIS SILHOUETTE

63% PREFER THIS GRILLE



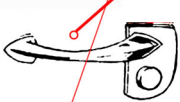
57% PREFER THIS FENDER SHAPE

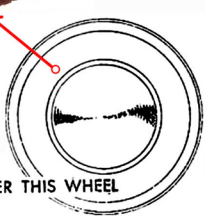




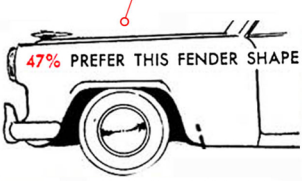
62% PREFER THIS TAILLIGHT

68% PREFER PUSHBUTTON HANDLES



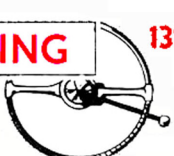


54% PREFER THIS WHEEL



47% PREFER THIS FENDER SHAPE

STYLING



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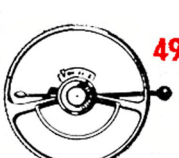

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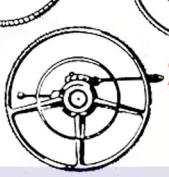
STEERING WHEELS: The horn ring seems here to stay with only 13% of the owners not wanting any at all

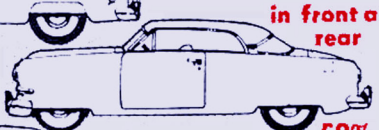


38%

WHEEL OPENINGS:

27%

It is surprising to note that so many owners would like full openings in front and rear



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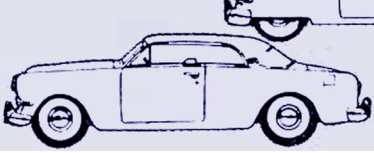
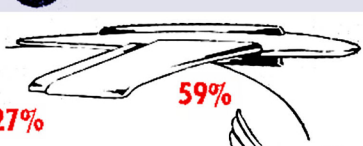


14%

HOOD ORNAMENTS:

27%



59%

The ornate swan appealed to very few; less than one percent wanted no ornament at all

14%

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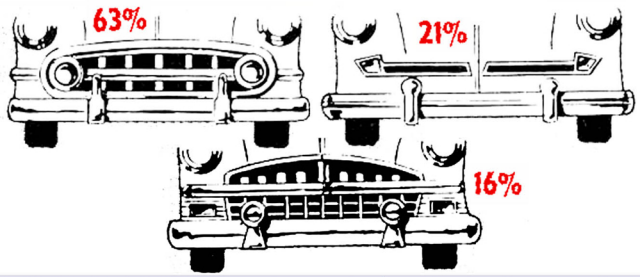
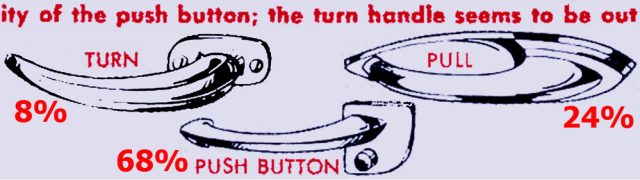
VOX POPULI

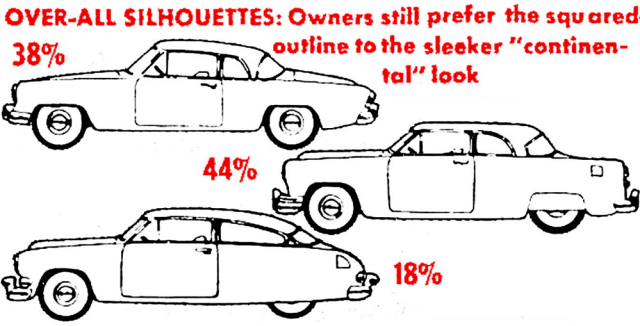
FRONT GRILLES: Surprising result here was that the most ornate grille was the least popular with owners



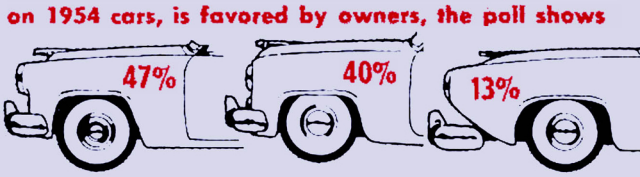
DOOR HANDLES: There's no doubt about the popularity of the push button; the turn handle seems to be out



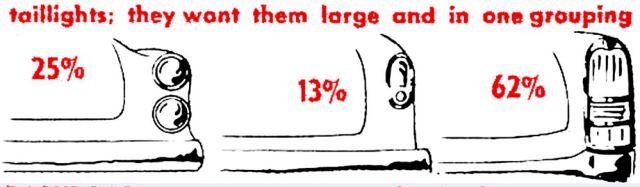
OVER-ALL SILHOUETTES: Owners still prefer the squared outline to the sleeker "continental" look



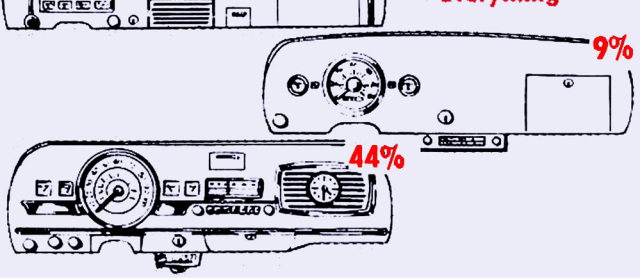
FRONT-FENDERS: The extended front headlight, common on 1954 cars, is favored by owners, the poll shows



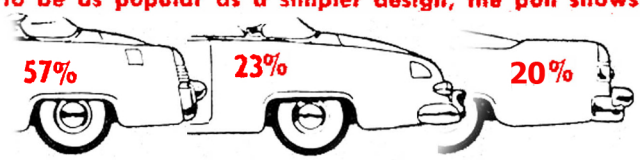
TAILLIGHTS: There is no doubt among owners about taillights; they want them large and in one grouping



DASHBOARDS: Few owners want the simple, uncluttered dash; a large number want it loaded with everything



REAR FENDERS: The upturned "fishtail" doesn't seem to be as popular as a simpler design, the poll shows



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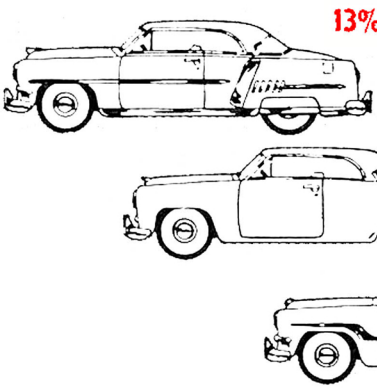
CHROME: Owners are definite about chrome; many don't like it at all, most want it used with moderation



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