

ODDS 'N' ENDS

Studebaker - First By Far With A Post-War Car

A new design for the auto industry was introduced to the public by Studebaker for the 1947 market. The design was credited to the Raymond Lowey Design Studios. The design was quite a radical departure from the preceding, conservative models which had many people at that time suggesting that they did not know which way the car was going. The most likely reason for that statement would be the rear glass of the car. It had nearly as much on the 2 and 4 door sedans and more glass on the rear of the body on the Starlight models than it did on the front windshield. Indeed, there were things within the Studebaker that were coming and going . . .

The '47 Studebaker was a very comfortable riding car for that era. The original plan was for the car to have the torsion-bar front suspension but due to inadequate supply of the high- quality steel necessary, the front suspension kept the single, transverse wide leaf, multi-layer spring. For the 1950 model, this single leaf front suspension system would be replaced with the more modern independent front suspension. For shock absorbers, it used the now obsolete Houde (brand?), rotary, 2- way with linkage using the longer linkage units for the rear suspension and the shorter linkage for the front suspension. These shock absorbers were adjustable for ride control and repairable unlike the ones that they gave way to which is the telescopic type that would be much cheaper to produce than the Houde ones as they were castings and much machine work had to go into their production. The Houde shock absorbers, (Right) would be replaced with the telescopic type in the 1950 model cars which used the independent front wheel suspension with "A" frames. This type of front suspension would be used from the 1950 models right through to the time that last Studebakers were produced in 1966.



Soon to go were the vacuum windshield wipers to be replaced with electric units in the 1951 models. The front grille of the '47-'49 models were made of stainless steel and were the last Studebaker models to have it. Replacements were made of pot metal/chrome or steel/chrome. Even the exterior door handles were made of stainless steel for the '47-'50 Champion models. It seems like that Commanders and Land Cruiser models of that period may have used chromed exterior door handles. They were molded, shinier and heavier than the stainless-steel ones that were fabricated.

While Studebaker cars had many innovations, they were not as quick to change over from the 6 volt, positive ground electrical system to the currently used, 12 volt, negative ground system as other brands of cars. The year of the changeover was 1956.

Were there design shortcomings? "Yes," in the writers' opinion: The trunk lid has nice appeal but when it rains, the water sitting on this rear deck is dumped into the trunk compartment when the lid is lifted. Also, in some models, the glass in the front doors are too floppy after some use. When opening and closing the doors, the glass should be fully raised or fully lowered and not in between when shutting the door. Regardless, it is a beautiful car.