

If you meet a docile-looking Dodge at a stoplight,
It might be Buckler's...

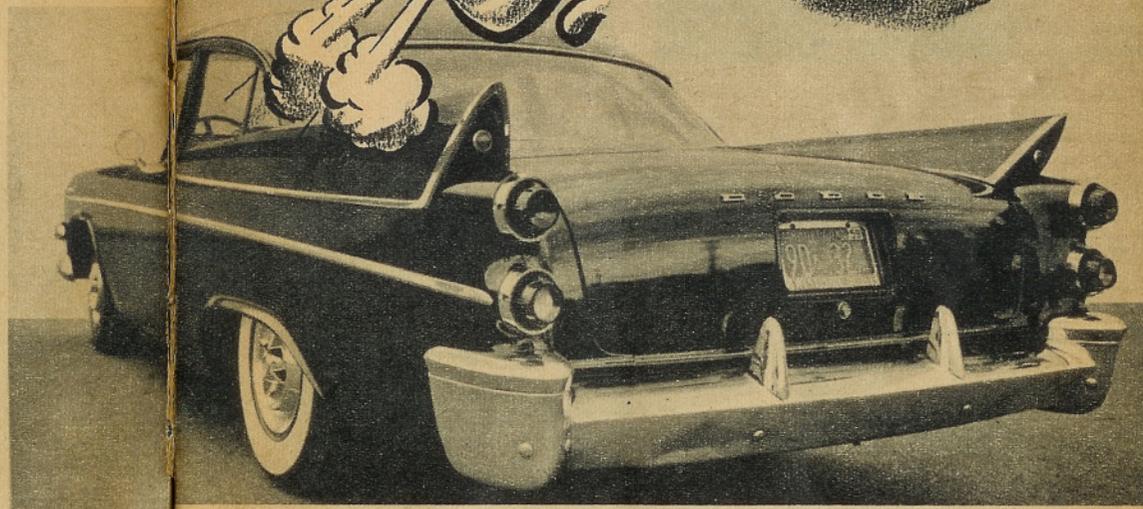
REVAMPED RAM

By PETER SUKALAC

EARLY IN 1957 Dodge brought out a factory rod to challenge all comers on the tracks around the country. The rigs were light, two-door sedans equipped with special shocks, oversized binders and extra-stiff springs. Powered by a Chrysler mill these cars seemed destined for the winner's circle. Unfortunately the cars appeared at a time when Nascar was tightening up its regulations, and with but limited production the D-501 Dodges were barred from the tracks. To make matters worse a wave of anti-racing feeling was running high in the industry. As a result the 501's were dropped out of production after but a handful had been made. The existing cars were sold to dealers and soon dropped out of sight. But, not for long! The first thing Northwest sports car fans knew one of the factory bombs turned up on a road course in the hands of Don Rushlight, an enthusiastic sportsman from Portland, Oregon. With explosive acceleration and terrific braking ability the machine proved to be ready to wax anything in its class. The rub was that Don could find nothing to race, so the car was sold to drag fan George Buckler, Jr.

The $\frac{1}{4}$ mile put the car in its own element, but with speed shifts and rubber-ripping starts being handed out day after day the inevitable weak spots began to show. The gear box was too weak and too slow. If a good shift was made the rear end just couldn't take the torque. Add to this the difficulty of snapping valve stems at high rpm and it spells expensive trouble. A '37 La Salle box was installed in place of the column shift cog mixer. It worked fine, but only added to the rear end woes.

watch out!



Buckler showed the car to Dan Kilcup a top Portland, Oregon builder. Dan's advice was to go through the mill, modify the La Salle box so it would do a better job, install a heavy-duty locked rear end and then hang on extra strong set of torque reaction bars to keep the wheels on the ground. The deal sounded right to Buckler and Danny took on the job of turning an already hot car into a D-501 SSM (Street'n Strip Missile).

The Chrysler mill was pulled and dismantled. The block was bored to 4"

for a capacity of 365 cubes. The 'C Type' cam was left as is with its .444 lift which was plenty adequate. The heads were hogged out and polished to a mirror finish. All valves were lightened as much as safety permitted.

Since one of the main weaknesses of the valve train was acute float in the 5000 rpm range the entire train was modified. In addition to the lightening job the stock valve keepers were given the 'deep six' and the stems machined to accept Buick straight 8 keepers and spring retainers. In addition new push