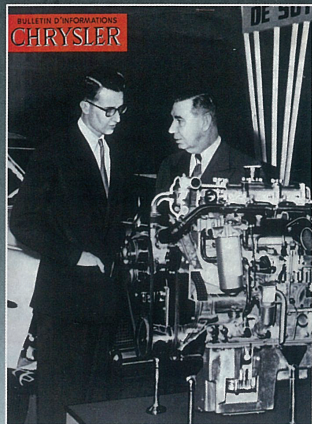


## Auto Oddities

In a letter that ran in our October 2015 issue, reader Mark Holt stated an interest in stories about "American-based cars sold or manufactured in other countries." One example that he listed was the Plymouth Coronado, and it was this mention of the Coronado that prompted a former employee of Chrysler's European operations to send us the images that you see here.

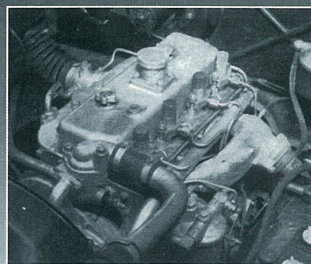
Hans Ensing began a 20-year executive career with Chrysler International SA (CISA) in late 1959, just in time for the transfer of car assembly from Chrysler's long-standing plant in Antwerp, Belgium, to Rotterdam in his native Netherlands. (CISA bought the Rotterdam factory in 1958 from a Dutch company that had assembled Kaisers, Jeeps, and Simcas there.) Among the first American-style cars to be built in

Rotterdam were 1960 Plymouths, which were the root stock of the stretched-wheelbase Coronados. Production of this model ran through 1962 with annual Plymouth body updates, as seen here on the 1961 Coronado in Rotterdam



harbor and the '62 on the tarmac at the Geneva airport.

Says Ensing, the cars were cut in two to accommodate a locally produced insert of 47cm—about 18.5 inches. The floor portion of the unibody design was easily welded in, he tells us, but the roof required quite a bit of metal-finishing work. (He adds that a number of the '60 cars had their sharklike tailfins trimmed off to suit the tastes of more conservative buyers.) Ensing recalls that the long doors from two-door Plymouths were used as the rear



doors on Coronados. A comparison of the 1962 Coronado to a concurrent six-cylinder Plymouth Belvedere shows the 18.9-foot-long Coronado to have been about two feet longer and, at approximately 5500 pounds, about 2400 pounds heavier.

Interiors were trimmed in gray cloth provided by the same Belgian supplier that had served the Antwerp factory. (Eight long-wheelbase cars had been built there at some point in the Fifties, Ensing says.) A number of assist handles and a pair of folding jump seats

behind the front bench were added. All Coronados were painted black.

A 225-cid engine, Chrysler's new-for-'60 ohv Slant Six, was the standard powerplant. However, Ensing reports, many came with a British Perkins P4C four-cylinder diesel engine, which had been a factory option in European Chrysler products since 1956. (The magazine cover reproduced here shows Belgium's King Baudouin [left] inspecting a cutaway Perkins with a Chrysler Antwerp executive at the '56 Brussels auto show.) A popular taxi engine in

Europe, the P4C displaced 99 cubic inches and generated 60 bhp. With either engine we will assume that acceleration was... *stately*.

Though he was not able to find price information about the Coronados, Ensing says the cars were usually purchased for taxi and executive-transport service. One was known to be delivered to the staff of Josip Broz Tito, president of Yugoslavia. A buyer in Israel placed an order for around 100 of the cars, Ensing recalls, but then cancelled before delivery. The cars sat in stock at Rotterdam for more than a year until they could be sold off at discounted prices. Only about 300 Coronados were produced, he notes.

Our thanks go to Hans Ensing for sharing his photos and memories of the Plymouth Coronado.

