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**MOTOR TREND IS SOLD ON THE CORVAIR 95 RAMPSIDE PICKUP**

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FOR MEN ONLY

# CORVAIR'S NEW CONCEPT IN PICKUPS

by Bob Ames

**F**OR MEN ONLY is a new department for MOTOR TREND but the subject matter has always been my own particular specialty. Each month this column will report on the type of cars that appeal mostly to men: four-wheel drive, pickups, and specialty vehicles. It will not be limited to cars alone but from time to time will bring up to date the new trends in trucks and cars, sportsman's equipment such as pickup campers and trailers, plus technical tips on mechanical and driving problems.

Of the new compact truck lines, the Corvair 95 models are the most radical and interesting. Many of their features are bound to be copied by other lines, in fact, some already have.

The most unusual Corvair 95 is the truck driven for this report, the Rampside. The new series is powered by the 80-hp, air-cooled Corvair Six and transaxle unit both mounted in the rear. Other radical features for the truck field are unit-frame body, independent suspension on all four wheels and almost equal weight distribution between front and rear wheels.

The Rampside gets its name from its side loading door. This gate is a ramp and loads may be wheeled or carried into the cargo box. Since the engine is in the

rear, it was possible to lower the cargo floor in the middle of the truck to 14 inches. If the Rampside is parked at an eight-inch curb the load must be raised only six inches.

This makes the ramp loading door exceptionally practical and it is undoubtedly the most important single new pickup truck development in twenty years. One man can load or unload a stove, ice box, freezer or similar item by himself. If the load is too heavy he can stop on the ramp and brace the wheels on the ribs of the ramp, another excellent advantage. The importance of the side loading ramp might be overlooked by many persons. But to the small business man who must deliver heavy items such as furniture, it is exceptionally worth while. Ordinarily one man can load an item at the store where a dock is often available — but two men must be sent to get it off the truck. Not with a rampside, however, and delivery charges can be virtually sliced in half.

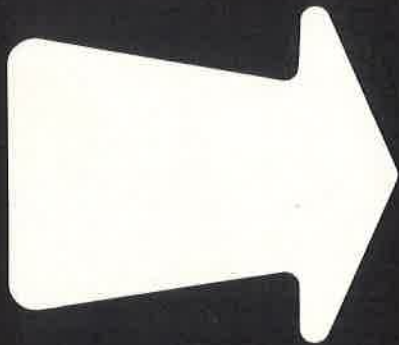
The Rampside has an excellent payload, for a light truck, 1900 lbs., with a GVW of about 4600 lbs. The pickup bed is grain tight and will carry 80 cubic feet. This translates into almost 65 bushels and makes the rampside useful around



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**CORVAIR 95  
PROSPECTS**

an average-size farm. The tailgate is well braced and will take a carton 47.5 inches wide.

The cargo compartment is not level and rises in the rear to accommodate the rear-mounted engine. It is higher than a conventional pickup bed, 26.5 inches, but any loss in capacity is more than gained back by the lower portion in the middle. For those who want it, an optional wooden floor making the cargo compartment flat all the way back is available. This will be ideal for some purposes since the area under the floor then becomes available to store tools, etc., that might be needed before the truck is unloaded.

The overall handling characteristics of the Rampside are superb, loaded or unloaded. This is something that is rarely true of a pickup. Since the weight is divided equally the truck handles as well as a Corvair sedan, although those who have never driven a forward control vehicle will at first swear it doesn't. Loads can be hauled in the center section where they maintain a low center of gravity and keep the weight equally divided between front and rear. Due to the rear engine the noise level in the cab is exceptionally low, quieter even than in many sedans.

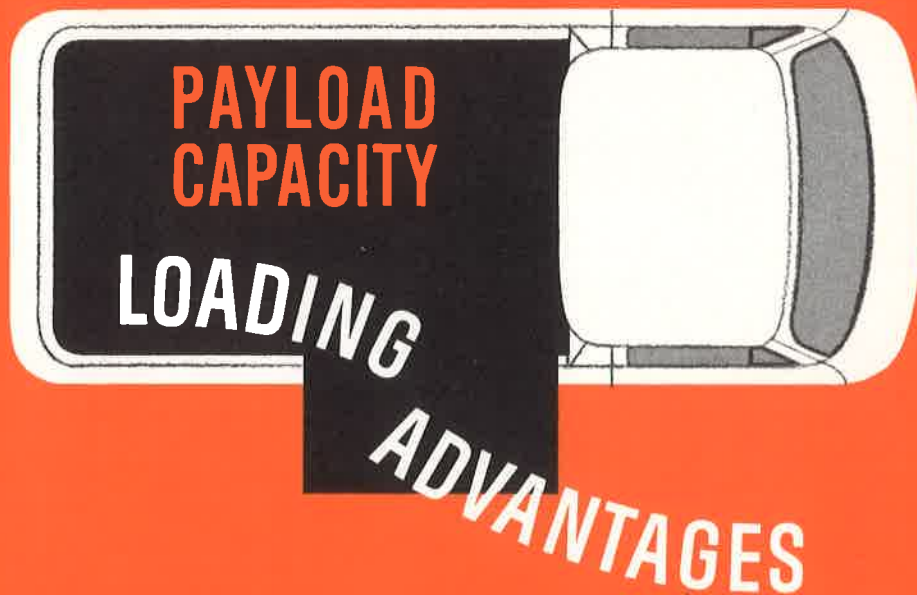
Performance is not outstanding but is ample for normal driving. The automatic transmission with which the test truck was equipped has a higher numerical axle ratio than the sedan but still lacks much of a punch for passing power. With the automatic the Rampside is an excellent stop-and-go vehicle even though it suffers from the lack of a park position and the brake must be set at each stop. For anything but S-and-G the three- and four-speed manual transmissions will be more efficient and economical.

The forward control cab is well furnished with excellent assembly quality. Instruments are at a minimum and it seems that a pickup should have accurate gauges instead of warning lights. The materials are durable but their quality is only average for pickups.

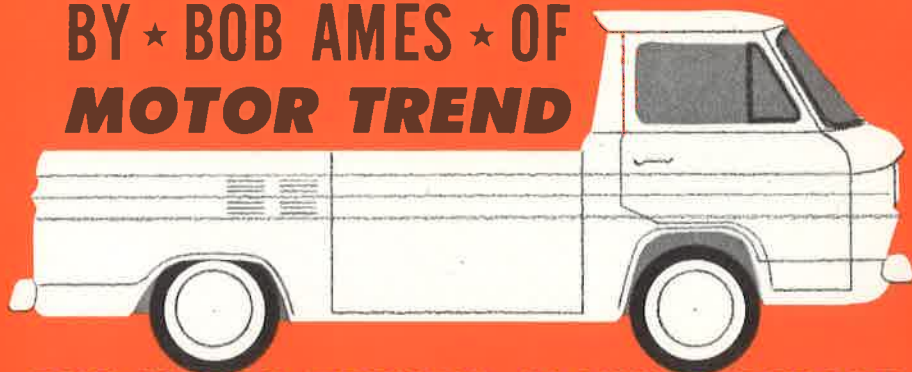
Major service jobs are going to be relatively simple on the Rampside. The complete power package, including engine, transaxle and rear suspension, can be removed as a unit. Similarly the entire front suspension can be removed with the front cross member. For minor servicing the rear cargo compartment floor comes up, and oil changes, etc., can be made through a small door in the rear. The 18-gallon gas tank is located under the seat and the spare tire behind the seat back.

Overall the Corvair Rampside is not just another forward control pickup — it is a whole new concept in pickups. Chevrolet has proved that the rear engine can come into its own in a forward control pickup. There is no pickup quite like the Rampside and for many jobs it is far better than any other domestic truck. /MT

# RAMPSIDE's



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LOW UPKEEP CITED  
BY ★ BOB AMES ★ OF  
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