

The Downdraft Carburetor, 1929

The downdraft carburetor, first introduced on the 1929 Chrysler and Dodge models, was one of Chrysler's early "engineering firsts." Before that time, carburetors were usually of updraft design — that is, they were positioned below the engine intake. Fuel tanks located above the intake relied on gravity to fuel the carburetor. Those positioned below the intake used a vacuum tank to feed fuel to the carburetor. Locating the carburetor above the engine intake and relying on gravity to deliver fuel to the cylinders seemed more efficient but required reliable fuel pumps for the system to work. Everitt Shepherd, an engineer with the Holley Carburetor Company, approached Carl Breer with a downdraft design in 1928. Breer was concerned about flooding the engine during cold weather starting, but a float chamber developed by the Stromberg Carburetor Company took care of this problem. The new carburetor design brought increased horsepower and speed from a given engine, while improving starting.