



EDSEL FORD

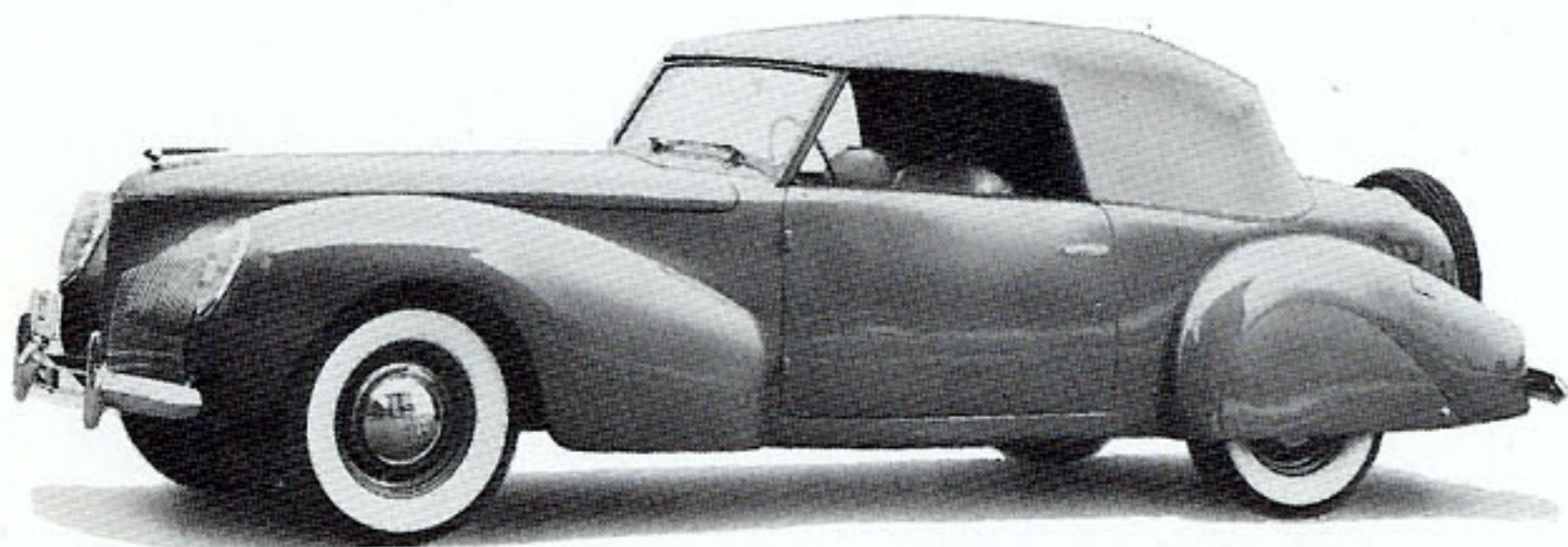
*conceived in the mind of the late Edsel Ford and
dedicated to the discriminating taste
of the American Public, the Lincoln
Continental still maintains a special
place in the hearts of devotees of fine automobiles.*

"she was a real lady"

1939

...was the way one writer described the car. Another wrote: "It had beauty—but more than that, it had personality." Introduced in October 1939, the Continental was lower, longer and wider than its American contemporaries. Its artistic lines quickly caught the public's imagination as no other car had. More than fifteen

LINCOLN CONTINENTAL



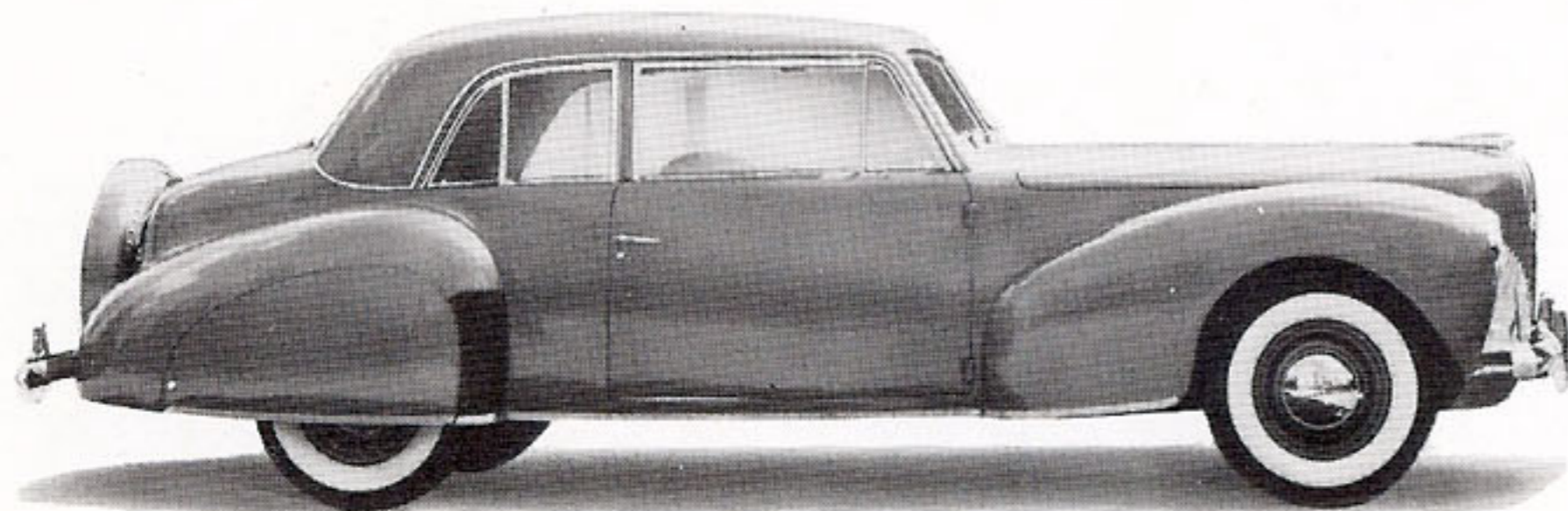
years after it first appeared, this American classic brought prices far exceeding those offered for other fine cars of the same period, and for some models of later years.

One customized Continental is reported to

have sold for \$10,000 shortly after World War II. In 1938, following his return from a trip to Europe, Edsel Ford presented to his stylists sketches for an automobile unlike anything then produced in the United States. Experts in the field of automotive design, the stylists found little to criticize. They did recommend,

however, that the spare tire be placed inside the trunk compartment—a practice generally favored at that time — but Edsel Ford insisted that it remain mounted outside the rear deck. Public opinion subsequently vindicated Edsel Ford's choice; the Continental rear tire mount has become a mark of high style that is found on a number of latter-day cars. It was this feature, along with the long hood, relatively short passenger compartment and rear deck treatment, that distinguished this car from others built in America and led to use of the name "Continental," suggestive of certain European styling characteristics. In the enthusiasm evoked by this styling concept, many lost sight of the fact that Edsel Ford originally intended that the Lincoln-Continental be his personal car. While its panels were being hammered out, he decided to have two more made for his older sons, Henry II and Benson, both of whom were in school at the time. Then, with no thought of producing the car in quantity, he left for a Florida vacation and the first car was shipped to him there. He returned with some 200 orders for an automobile that was not even being made for public sale. Because each car had to be virtually custom-made, it was inevitable that it should cost more than a vehicle produced with conventional mass production techniques. Yet, the die was cast—literally and figuratively. Although the cost exceeded that of typical production models, slightly modified Lincoln-Zephyr parts were used in many areas. Special wood dies with metal surfaces eliminated the need for costlier steel dies, and aluminum castings, for example, were used

for the windshield pillars. Only twenty-five Lincoln-Continental, all cabriolet convertibles, were produced in the first year, 1939. Although 935 were built the following year, each car continued to be virtually hand-made. There were no piles of stampings to be fitted into place as the chassis inched along an assembly line. Many exterior parts were, in fact, improvised as the production process developed. Even the fenders were not available as a single unit. Instead, a special insert was added to the standard Zephyr front fenders and hood to give added



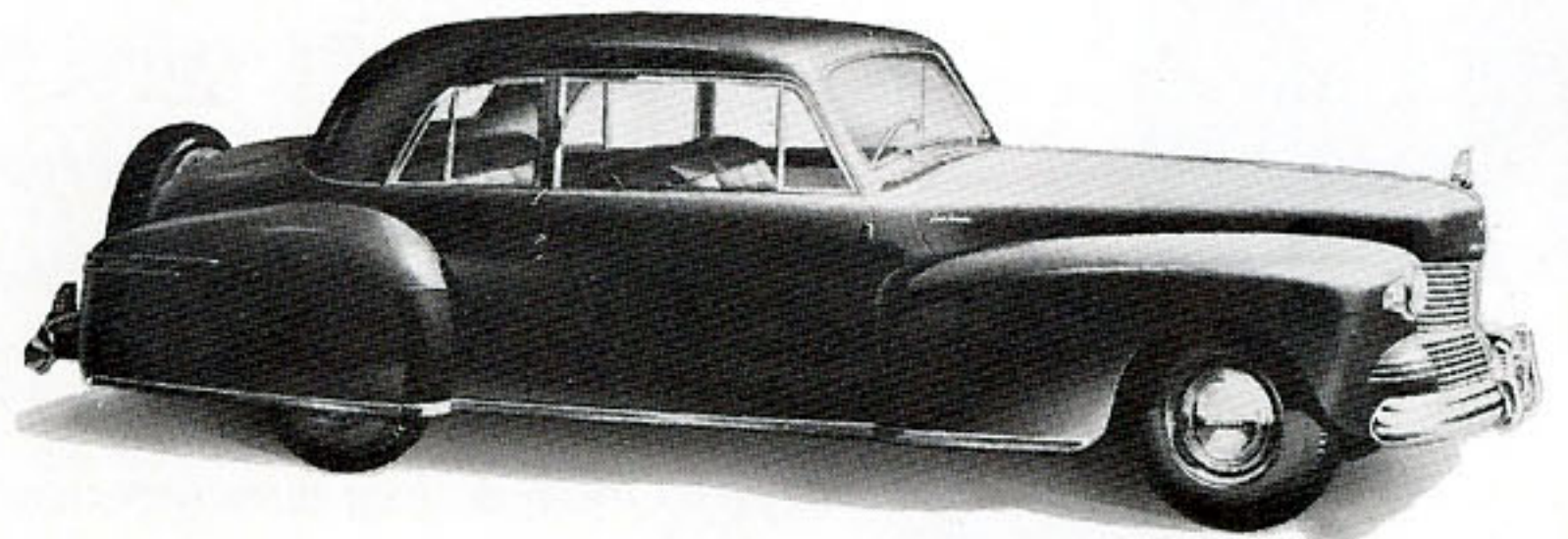
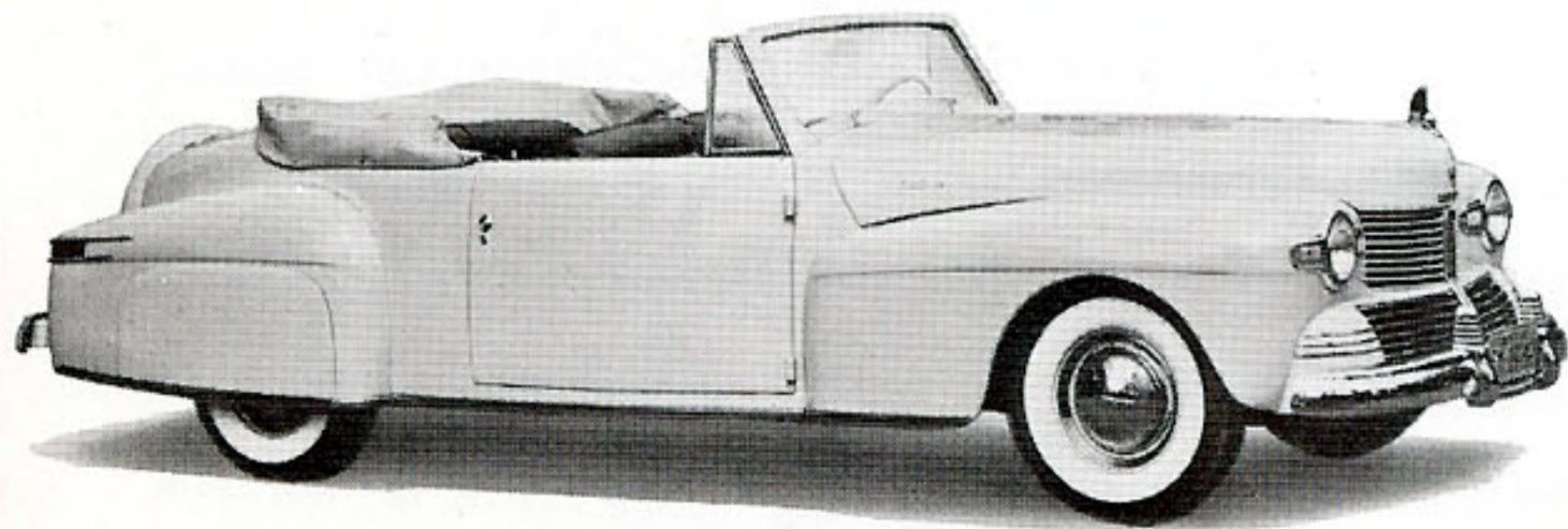
length. The steel-top, two-door coupe, a Continental body style, was the fore-runner of the so-called hardtop convertibles. While the Lincoln Zephyr was unit constructed, the Lincoln-Continental had a sheet steel body with a distinctive chassis. Panels were made

on an arch press, then finished on a hammer form. Peak year for Lincoln-Continental production was 1947, when 1,569 were built. After 1,299 cars were made in the first three months of 1948, the company suspended production in order to concentrate on other lines with greater volume. In the years of actual production between

1939 and 1948, 5,322 units were made — 3,045 Continental coupes and 2,277 cabriolet convertibles. They soon became collectors' items. Set on a 125-inch wheelbase, the Lincoln-Continental was three inches lower and seven inches longer than most of its standard contemporaries, and its V-12 engine was polished like a jewel. The V-shaped grille on the 1940-41 models was identical to that of the Zephyr. The 1941 Continental, with parking lights atop the front fenders and flush-type button latches instead of the standard exterior door handles, was slightly different from its 1940 predecessor. It also had hydraulic window lifts and some changes in the chrome treatment. One contemporary publication said of the 1941 model: "Every line of this new car, every move it makes, tells of far places, and ease of reaching them. The Lincoln-Continental is true to a great heritage. It blends Lincoln precision and care with Lincoln Zephyr leadership in design." The Lincoln-Continental for 1942 again stirred the automotive world. Gone was the Zephyr grille, and in its place was a new, massive array of chrome which, about midway down the front, angled outward to the bumper. The parking lights were placed beside the headlights, a gracefully curved side mirror was added, and all four fenders were squared and lengthened to lend an even lower and longer appearance to the car. This illusion of greater length was heightened by the

1942 LINCOLN CONTINENTAL

addition of chrome strips on the rear fenders. Some of the reasons for the almost unparalleled popularity of the Lincoln-Continental still remain clouded in mystery. Since its weight ranged from 3500 to 4100 pounds, it could not be classified as a sports car. From the side it was the picture of simplicity with less chrome and glitter than most of the cars of the period. It is not enough to say that it reflected the personality of a man who possessed fine taste in automotive design. Yet, as typified by the then unorthodox position of the spare tire, the car was not

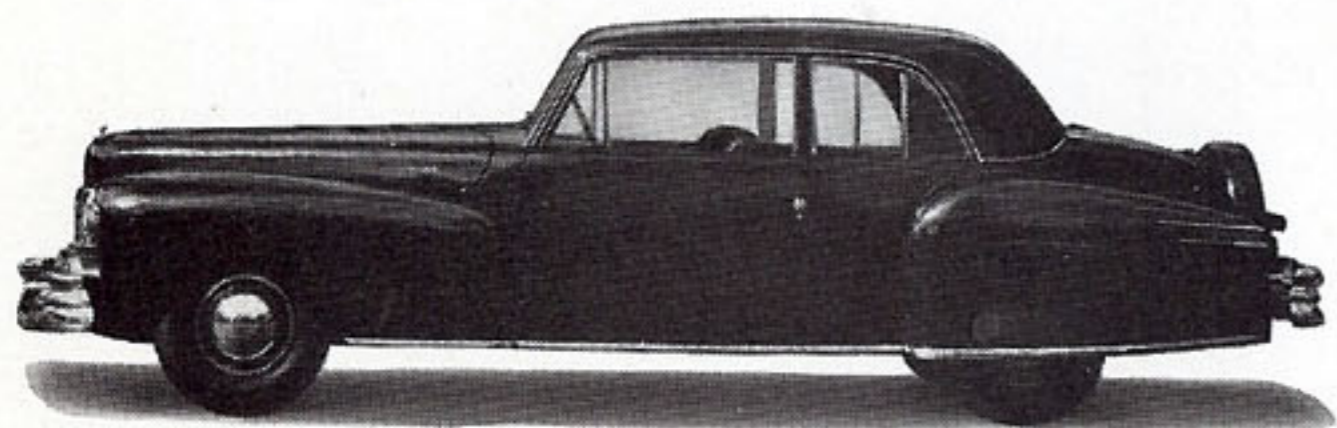


designed to meet carefully tested public preferences. Rather, it created preferences. Perhaps the Lincoln-Continental achieved popularity because it was different without being radical, "clean" without being stripped of important features that were both functional and decorative, and luxurious without breaking with the "family car" tradition.

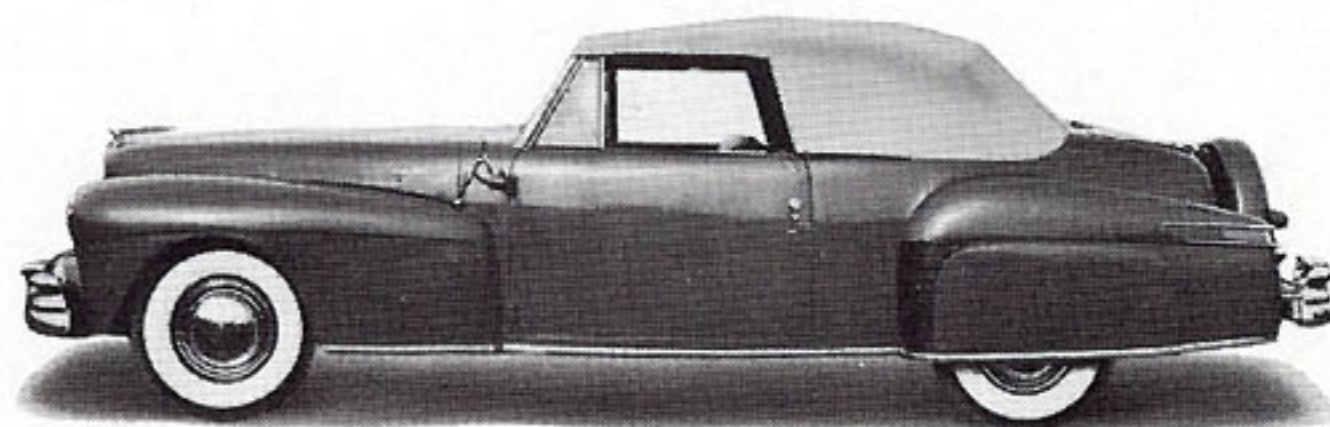


WILLIAM CLAY FORD

In July of 1952, William Clay Ford, youngest son of Edsel Ford, was named manager of the company's newly established Special Product Operations, a small group of engineers and stylists charged with exploring the ramifications of developing a worthy successor to the Continental. Before a single drawing of a proposed new Continental was set down on paper, Mr. Ford and his aides spent many hours attempting to find the answer to one question: What did the Lincoln-Continental have that made it so enduring? "The original Continental," they concluded, "filled a gap in the passenger car market by offering a vehicle whose beauty lay primarily in its honesty and simplicity of line... the concept of the original Continental had withstood the test of time, and this is because of its sound proportions and the functionalism of its design..." Judging from the apparent trend in current automotive design, there appeared to be an almost urgent need for a car with that same quality. The group went on to define the type of design they would recommend for a Continental of the future. They called it "modern formal," and described it as a "functional, enduring design emphasizing an air of distinction and elegant simplicity." When this direction had been confirmed by the management of Ford Motor Company, stylists set to work to recapture the better features of the original Continental and design a series of logical successors to the most recent Lincoln-Continental — the 1948 model. The first result after many months of labor was a design that might well have been a new Continental for 1950. Next was a design that would



1946



1947



1948



1948

have reflected a newer version for about 1953. Then came an even more modern design that the stylists believed would be entirely suitable for a 1956 model. Through this process of evolution, each design retained the basic characteristics of the original, and each emphasized features that were least likely to become timeworn and obsolete. As the program took shape, William Ford's organization was redesignated the Special Product Division in October, 1953. He had been elected a vice president of Ford Motor Company in May, 1952. On October 16, 1954, he disclosed that the company would introduce in 1955 a high-quality, low volume, prestige automobile to be known as the Continental. At the same time, he announced that the name of the Special Product Division was being changed to the Continental Division. It was later announced the new car would be called the Continental Mark II, assuming that its predecessors constituted the first, or Mark I, series. Mr. Ford said this designation would serve to emphasize a basic body style rather than yearly model changes.

on october 21, 1955

the

CONTINENTAL MARK II

made its debut

AND ITS IMPACT UPON THE PUBLIC WAS EVEN GREATER THAN THAT OF THE ORIGINAL CONTINENTAL

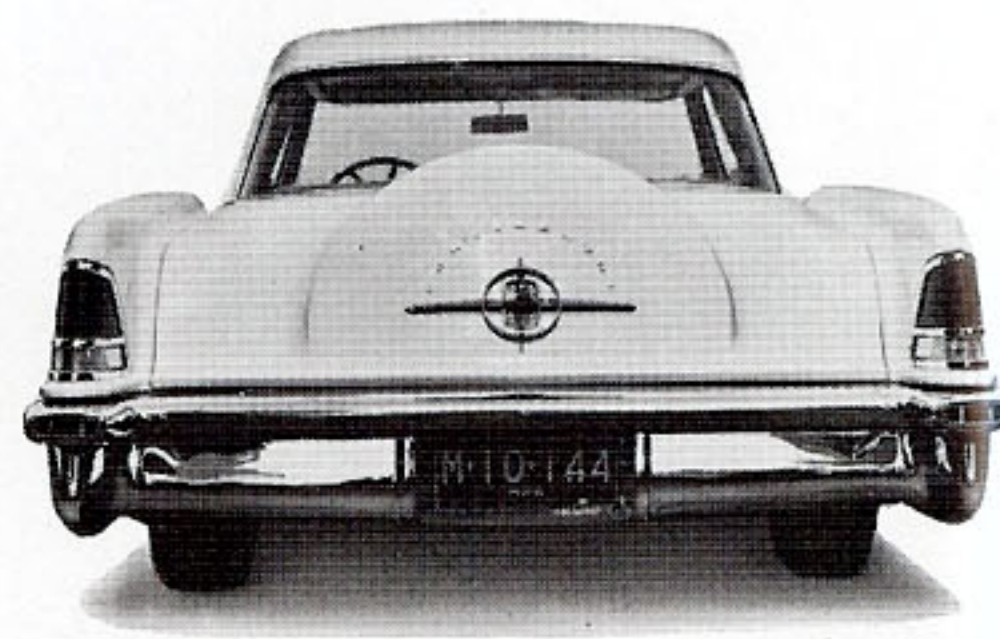
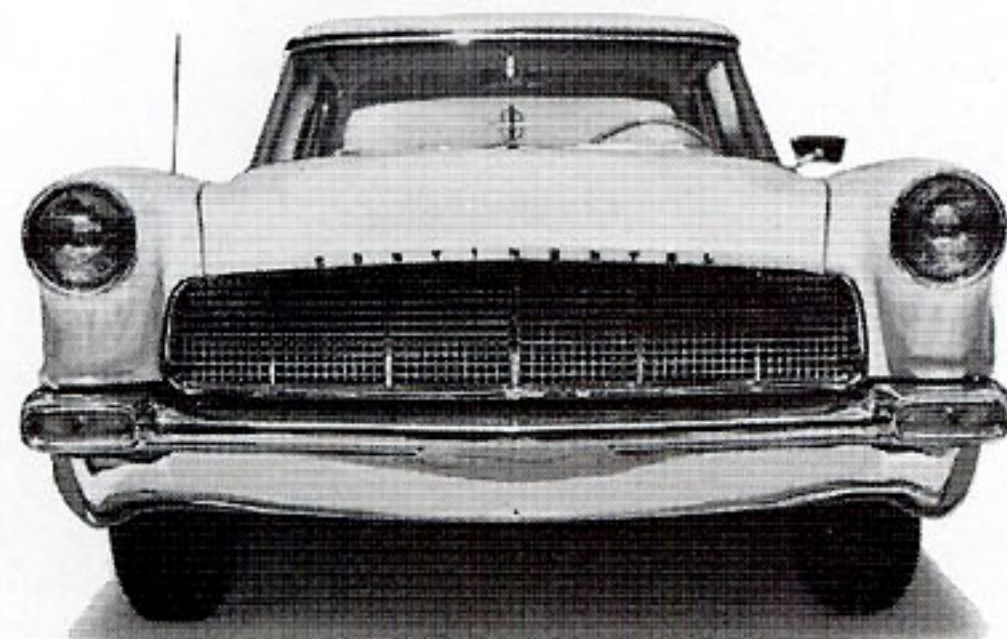


THE *Lincoln-Continental* was 209 inches from bumper to bumper; the *Continental Mark II* is 218½ inches long. The original was 62 inches high — a dimension that surprised the automotive world and established a trend to lowness; its successor stands just 56 inches from the ground. The 126-inch wheelbase of the *Continental Mark II* is one inch longer than that of the *Lincoln-Continental*.

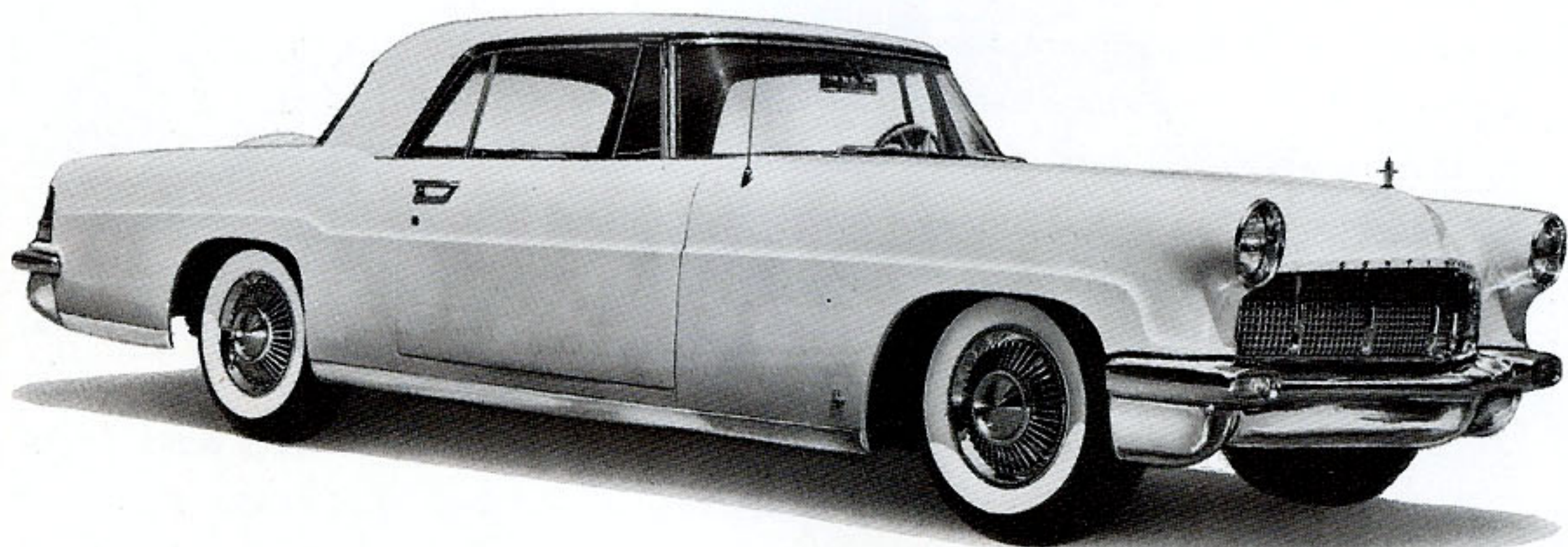
CONTINENTAL MARK II

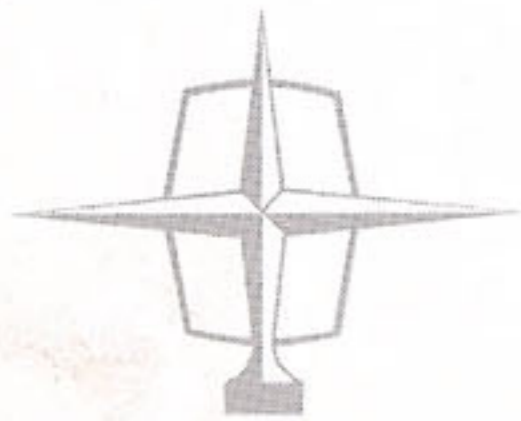


But statistics are only a part of the picture. Perhaps more significant are the conservative lines of the new car, the ingenuity with which certain features of the original have been retained and at the same time brought up to date, and the insistence on functionalism which led to a ban on superfluous ornamentation in the Continental Mark II. The Continental is as carefully built as it appears, for quality in this car begins long before its major components even reach its specially designed assembly plant near Dearborn, Michigan. Sheet metal is inspected in suppliers' plants by Continental quality control



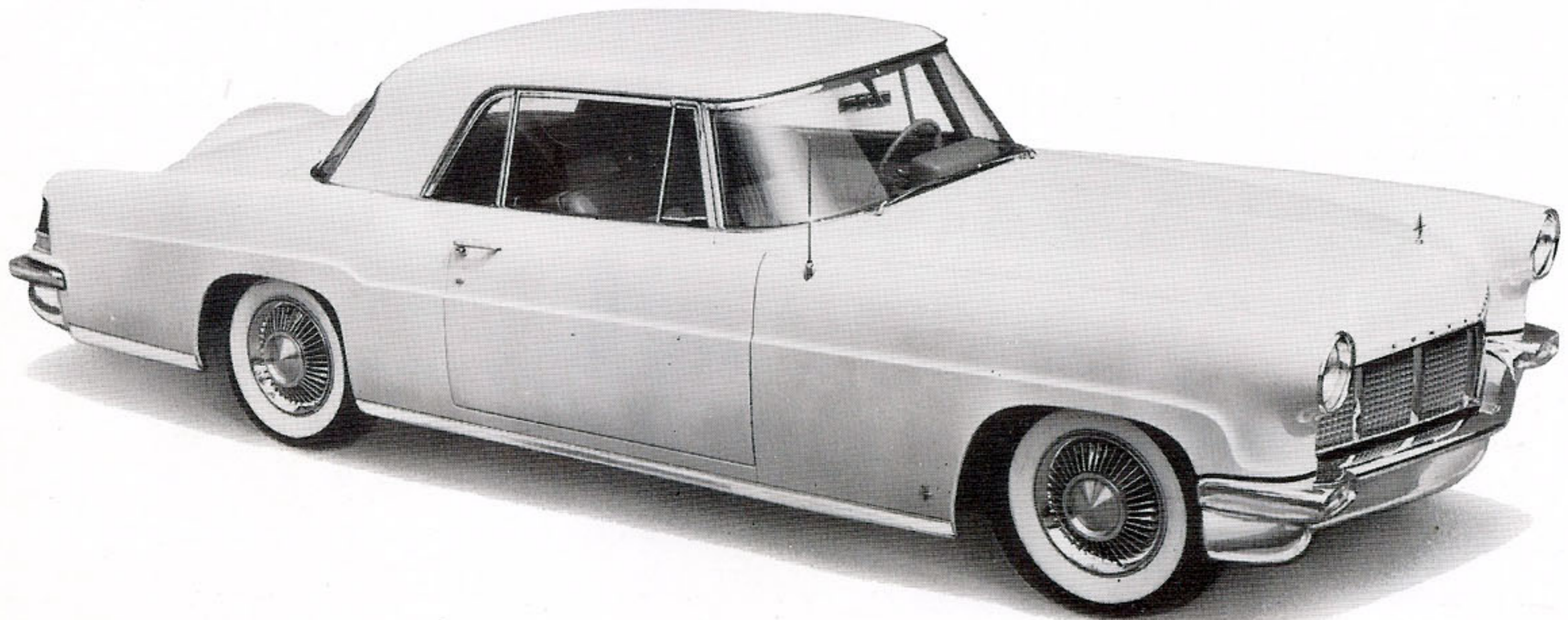
CONTINENTAL MARK II

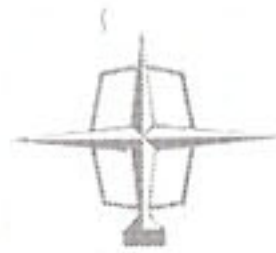
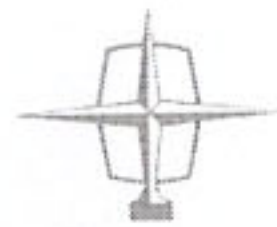




CONTINENTAL MARK II

engineers, stationed there full time. Metal is shipped to the division only when these inspectors are satisfied that it meets Continental's unusually rigid standards. Even then the components are rechecked when they reach the plant. And this is no spot check; every front end, for example, is fitted to fall within tolerances as exacting as 25/1000 of an inch. Only then does it begin the painstaking process which eventually will lead to the production of a complete car. Chrome is another area given strict attention in the assembly of the Continental Mark II. Nickel-plated chrome parts used in this car are subjected to anti-rust salt-spray testing that is three times more severe than is usually required. As bodies, frames, interior parts, and the other components make their way toward final assembly, they are subjected to the careful scrutiny of more than 40 inspectors. Selection of the leathers used in the new Continental exemplifies the meticulous care with which the Continental Division went about planning its product. After a long search, the division found upholstery leathers which had been hand worked to a rich softness, and which had a deeper grain and a smoother, finer texture than any other leathers obtainable. The quality of these leathers, imported from Scotland, results from methods handed down from generation to generation. As soon as they reach the Continental Division plant, they are stored in a special room under strict humidity control and are kept there until needed in the preparation of upholstery. Continental sheet metal is painted with two double coats of lacquer, each followed by baking and hand-sanding to achieve a finish of superior quality and durability. Each automatic transmission is checked in a car before being installed in a production Continental; then checked again after installation. The engine is first tested with its torque converter transmission on a dynamometer, and again after final assembly of the car. Entire wheel assemblies are tested both statically and dynamically. Special road test mechanics drive each car on a test track at the plant, and personally make necessary corrections before the car is shipped to a dealer or released for on-the-spot delivery to a customer.

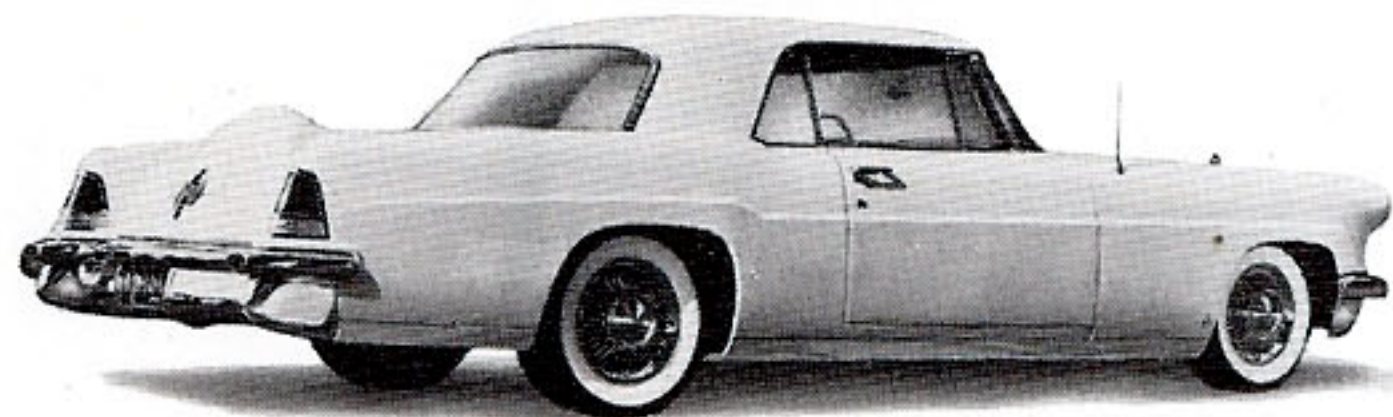




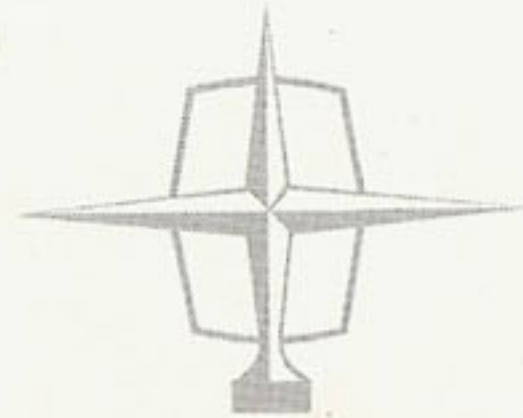
From its star-like hood ornament to the rear mount which houses the spare tire, the Continental Mark II reflects the precept that underlies its design and construction:



...a motor car as fine as America has ever known



Public Relations
CONTINENTAL DIVISION
Ford Motor Company
Dearborn, Michigan



ENGINE

DISPLACEMENT

BORE AND STROKE

COMPRESSION RATIO

TRANSMISSION

FRONT SPRINGS

specifications

REAR SPRINGS

WHEELS

TIRE SIZE

BRAKES

WHEELBASE

OVERALL LENGTH

OVERALL HEIGHT

OVERALL WIDTH (MAXIMUM)

TREAD

SHIPPING WEIGHT

L-HEAD V-12

267 CU. IN.

2.75 x 3.75

6.7 x 1

SYNCHRO-MESH

TRANSVERSE



1939

TRANSVERSE

PRESSED STEEL—DROP CENTER; RIM WIDTH—4"

7.00 x 16

HYDRAULIC, SELF-ENERGIZING

125"

209.8"

62"

73.38"

FRONT—55.5"; REAR—58.25"

3710 LBS.

L-HEAD V-12

305 CU. IN.

2.937 x 3.75

7.1 x 1

SYNCHRO-MESH

TRANSVERSE



1942

TRANSVERSE

PRESSED STEEL—DROP CENTER; RIM WIDTH—4"

7.00 x 16

HYDRAULIC, SELF-ENERGIZING

125"

217"

63"

77.82"

FRONT—55.5"; REAR—58.25"

4020 LBS.

OVERHEAD VALVE V-8

368 CU. IN.

4.00 x 3.66

9.0 x 1

TORQUE CONVERTER

INDEPENDENT COIL SPRING



MARK II

SEMI-ELLIPTICAL LEAF LONGITUDINALLY MOUNTED

DISC DROP—CENTER RIM; RIM WIDTH—6"

8.00 x 15 TUBELESS

HYDRAULIC, INTERNAL EXPANDING, DUO-SERVO, SINGLE ANCHOR

126"

218.4"

56"

77.5"

FRONT—58.5"; REAR—60.0"

4960 LBS.

THE CONTINENTALS

