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AN MT RESEARCH REPORT

THE BEST WAY TO START a discussion of MT's 1st '56 test car, a new Lincoln, is to acquaint new and old readers with the things we said about last year's model, the "new era" Lincoln with features that hinted at what to expect in '56.

Aside from a performance analysis, we editorialized about the car's future—namely the '56 models—and came up with the thought that Turbo-Drive would be responsible for a complete shakeup of Lincoln sales outlook (i.e., styling, ride). To quote from the '55 report (May issue), "It reflects challenge to be projected by '56 models."

The challenge? A bid for new recognition in the prestige car field. Let's see how the longer, lower '56 Lincoln meets this challenge.

Test car: Capri 2-door hardtop, formerly most deluxe, now just a deluxe, but less expensive than the luxurious Premiere. Test car comfort-and-convenience extras included Turbo-Drive, power steering (both standard on all Lincolns), power brakes, radio, heater, and easy-does-it items like pushbutton antenna adjuster and a radio that went after distant stations with bloodhound determination.

Engine: Considerably more than just a warmed-over '55 engine, the 368-cubic-inch Lincoln V8 gets its authoritative punch from a brand-new block, new intake manifold, and husky, well-balanced lower-end components. Compression ratio, 8.5 last year, is now 9.0 to 1.

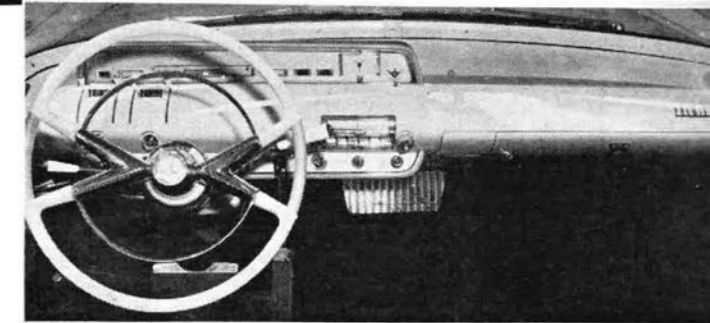
Inside the new block, pistons stroke 3.66 inches thru 4-inch cylinders with a slight increase (240 feet per second) in piston speed over the '55 engine. Peak



Doubly suspended big brake pedal suits itself to all driving techniques. Throttle is hanging, too



Above: Lincoln's new placement of pushbutton window regulators is not just a novelty. You can control all main windows in the car with only the slightest movement of your fingers from the wheel. Left: Extensive road test equipment almost vanishes in Lincoln's capacious trunk. Built-in exhausts have come to be expected, but rear "grille" is unique

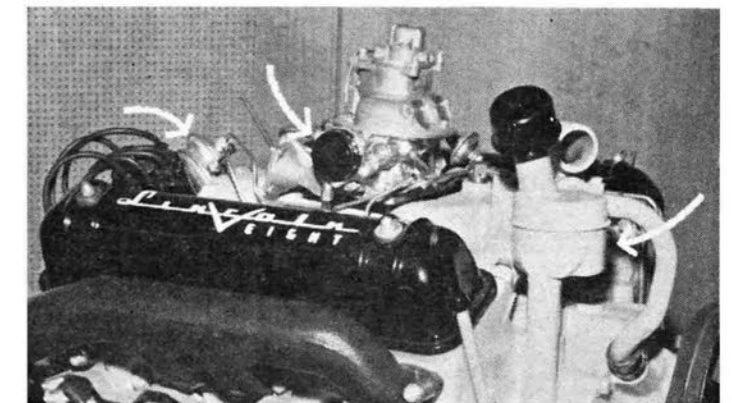


You'll know right away that you're in the front compartment of a Lincoln, but there have been lots of changes. Wheel is dished as on all Ford products, heater controls (left, below instruments) announce what they're up to

a Capri 4-door sedan (besides the 2-door hardtop), and 3 models in the Premiere line: coupe, sedan, and convertible. Lincoln's 4-way power seat and power windows are standard in the Premiere, optional in the Capri; and (here's an interesting offer) all-leather trim is available at no extra charge. Seat belts, tho, cost extra in either series.

WHAT THE CAR IS LIKE TO DRIVE

Exit and entry: For a large car, and one with obvious space to spare, Lincoln reveals a complication—at least to long-legged drivers or passengers getting into the front seat—and that's the protruding corner of the wraparound windshield. One test driver (just over 6 feet tall) bumped his knee "too often" before realizing you can't be in a careless hurry getting in or out of the car. But the error didn't repeat after a day on the road with many driver changes. The hardtop's wide single door gives more-than-adequate entrance space, and getting into the Lincoln coupe's rear seat is very little harder than stepping into a 4-door sedan. Bright courtesy lights mounted at the extreme edges of the instrument panel go on when the door is opened, are positioned to be of real value.



Herculean V8 is new and bigger, has detail features shown by arrows. Left, new vacuum spark advance control for distributor. Center, new choke mechanism, integral with carburetor. Right, new location for air inlet and oil filter means easier servicing

Altho the '56 Lincoln is more than 2 1/2 inches lower at the roofline than in '55, the seats are low enough to save your scalp as you settle into the car. The low seat also keeps the steering wheel out of the driver's lap as he slides under it.

Driving position: Very much different from '55. In Lincolns gone by, you sat high, with the wheel fairly low and close to you, and the cowl and hood were things to look down upon. Now, the seat is low, slanted backward just a little too much for

ROAD TEST

The luxury field's only brand-new car shows its mettle in MT's 1st road test for '56

horsepower rpms are up due to a higher-lift camshaft, stiffer valve springs, and a fully redesigned intake manifold system. Dual exhausts are standard.

Other options: Let your payments be your guide, for available options can create a lengthy list of digits on your sales order. Air conditioning, of course, is the costliest. You won't be bothered with many lesser options, for some, including windshield washers, power steering and power brakes, are "free." Body options include

TEST CAR AT A GLANCE	ACCELERATION	FUEL CONSUMPTION	SPEEDOMETER ERROR	REAR WHEEL HORSEPOWER
	From Standing Start 0-30 mph 4.0 0-60 mph 11.7 Quarter-mile 18.2 and 78 mph	Steady Speeds 20.2 mpg @ 30 18.1 mpg @ 45 15.5 mpg @ 60 13.0 mpg @ 75	Was correct at 30 and 45 mph, but read 58 at true 60, 74 at 75, and 115 at top speed	
'56 Lincoln Capri	TOP SPEED	STOPPING DISTANCE	REAR WHEEL HORSEPOWER	
	Fastest run 108.9 Slowest 104.7 Average of 4 runs 105.5	172 feet from 60 mph	Clayton chassis dynamometer showed: 87 road hp @ 2000 rpm and 46 mph 104 road hp @ 2500 rpm and 70 mph 116 road hp (max.) @ 3100 rpm and 80 mph	



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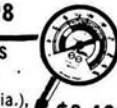
4 JET-MATIC (3 3/4" dia.) dealer price \$7.50 only **\$2.98**

5 JET-MATIC HEAVY-DUTY (3 3/4" dia.) dealer price was \$9.50 only **\$3.98**

6 TEST-MASTER (4 1/4" dia.) dealer price \$10.75 only **\$4.98**



7 COMBINED VACUUM GAUGE & FUEL PUMP TESTER Engine analysis gauge — 34 different tests — (3 1/2" dia.) was \$11.70 only **\$4.98**



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- 8 TEST-X Regular model (4" dia.) was \$8.75, only **\$3.48**
- 9 TEST-X Heavy-duty (4" dia.) was \$10.75, . . . only **\$4.48**

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MT's drivers, and the cowl and hood take on a new appearance. (A 4-way power seat control alleviates this condition.) You're more within this car than before, and the feeling is one of a really big car. And it's just that. The short hood is a thing of the past, yet forward vision remains good, with front fenders visible to any-sized driver.

Instrument legibility is slightly better than previously, mostly because of slightly contrasting background of gold behind white letters, and red needles. Handgrips on inset wheel are positioned comfortably for long trips, but considerable glare was noted from chromed steering wheel spokes.

Vision: With glass area of this proportion, it couldn't be anything but good. Some windshield distortion noticed from the driving position near cornerposts. Posts themselves do not cause blindspots.

It's our thought that Lincoln could well go to a dashboard-mounted rear-view mirror. Our test car had a handy, knob-adjusted inside mirror that was easily inched up or down at the turn of a knob. But it wasn't enough to provide a long-distance view of the road behind. (This foreshortened view is caused by the very low streamlined roofline at the top of the rear window.) The rear window is wide, and its cornerposts don't restrict vision in any way. The inside mirror could be wider to take advantage of the expanse of glass at the rear.

Operation of accessories: Heat and vent controls are similar to Mercury aircraft-type control knobs with a slightly different twist this year: a roll-over indicator moves upward as you pull a knob downward. Heat range is shown by a red indicator filling more and more of a telltale window as you advance the knob.

Other controls (windshield wiper, lights, instrument lighting, rheostat, heat-defroster blower, etc.) are either toggle switches (a notable improvement over push-pull or turn-type controls) or conventional knobs, depending on the action they perform.

Turbo-Drive's quadrant (PARK, REVERSE, NEUTRAL, DRIVE, LOW from left to right) is well marked, with each range within a red circle as you engage it. The shift lever itself is positioned perfectly for a fast, fingertip shift without taking your hand from the steering wheel.

Ease of handling: There's nothing at all awkward or hard about maneuvering the new Lincoln, but let's face it—this year's car is longer and wider (by 7.2 and 2.5 inches, respectively) and you sit deeper inside it, so it's not going to be easier to handle than the compact '52 to '54 models, or even the slightly stretched '55.

A little more than 3 3/4 turns stop the front wheels at their extremes, enough to make parking the test car fairly easy; steer-

ing is still quick enough to make the car respond satisfactorily when you have to move it in a hurry at high speeds.

Pedal positions are good, with a wide, double-shaft, suspended brake pedal that's as convenient for left-footers as right-foot pivoters. With seat forward, upper leg may hit steering wheel when you apply brakes with your right foot.

Acceleration: It's interesting to note the manner in which Lincoln's new power for '56 has been applied. (It's easy to see if you have last year's test handy; if not, here's a quick rundown on what has happened): 0-30 time reduced by 0.2 seconds, 0-60 time lowered by 0.7, 10-30 and 30-50 times each better by 0.5 seconds; the time it takes to get from 50 to 80 mph has been lowered from last year's 13.7 seconds to 10.3 seconds. The pattern is obvious, particularly when you find that top speed is upped by only 1.4 mph over last year's 104.1.

Lincoln engineers deserve a pat on the back for gaining more performance and better fuel economy at the same time. With an improvement of over 3 seconds in 50 to 80 mph time and improved economy, there should be little complaint on what leadfooters might consider a not-too-high top speed.

MT's testers tried to outsmart Lincoln's Turbo-Drive transmission by shifting it at different points from LOW to DRIVE and back again, but the unit always came up with an equally good figure when left to shift for itself. In standing-start 1/4-mile runs, for instance, the Lincoln's time in normal DRIVE range (with the throttle floored to engage the automatic low-gear start feature) averaged out to 18.6 seconds, with a true speed of 78 mph. (In DRIVE, Turbo-Drive shifts automatically from its 1st gear at 38 mph and from intermediate range to high at 75 mph.)

The nearest we could come to bettering this efficient pattern was when we held the unit in LOW range (manually) up to 43 or 45 mph. This shift pattern consistently resulted in slower speeds (74 mph average at the end of the quarter), but dropped our elapsed time down to 18.2 seconds. (See "Time vs. Speed," Sept. MT.)

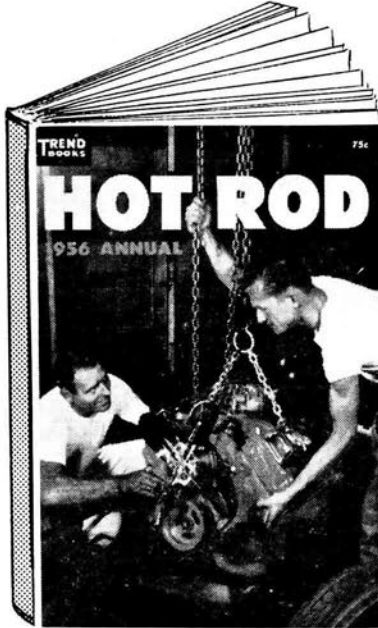
Braking: The 1st of the '56 test cars subjected to our brake-fade test (12 consecutive hard-but-not-panic stops from 60 mph), the new Lincoln came thru with flying colors. Brake setup on this car was particularly suited to non-lockup stops, for the pedal action was such that there was no "grab" (that delicate point just short of wheel lock) experienced. Four complete stops were made with no feeling of fade or uneven pull; 5th stop required a great deal more pedal pressure, but car was brought to a complete stop in about 1/2-car-length greater distance than earlier stops. It was on this stop that the car

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1st showed a tendency to veer to one side.

Uneven stops (pulled 1st to left, then to right as brakes were hit) continued, but Lincoln retained stopping ability right up to 12th and final stop. (Pedal pressure was ineffective until within 2 inches of floorboard at this point.) From 7th stop on, fade did not increase appreciably until 10th stop.

Swerving to one side or the other continued even when the brakes were hit after up to 5 miles of 50 mph driving. But Lincoln never lost its ability to stop. Car was exceptionally free from nose-dive in all brake tests. In a 60-mph panic stop (brakes full-on, just short of locked wheels) after brakes had completely returned to normal, the heavier '56 Capri stopped in about $\frac{1}{3}$ -car-length greater distance than last year's test car.

Roadability: Outlining his impressions of the '56 (as compared to the '55) in a Drivescription in the October issue, MT's Editor, Walt Woron, questioned the ability of the '56 to match the '55 on a roadability basis. Now, after a complete road test, we are able to pin down Walt's feelings about its handling.

He summed it up in one paragraph: "There seemed to be slightly more body lean when taking corners, but it is not uncomfortable. At high speeds the car is stable and sure footed."

A large part of the Lincoln roadability story concerns itself with "seat-of-the-pants" analysis. The new car is not the short-hooded, slight-overhang machine of the past; its bulk discourages the pleasure of literally "throwing it around" as everyone was prone to do with the smaller car of last year and before.

Mechanically, softer-sprung '56 is basically familiar, yet soft enough to be a stranger to anyone who puts many miles on the older versions. What difference does it make on the road? Actually very little, for the '56 is a true road-hugger that's not disturbed by curves banked wrong or by running right wheels onto a low, dirt shoulder at 60 mph.

There's considerably less steering wheel movement on straight and curving roads with rough surfaces; conversely, there's more steering wheel correction on straight roads than in previous models.

Directional stability rates high in every respect but one: We noticed more tendency for the '56 to be disturbed by crosswinds than former Lincolns.

Ride: Not entirely soft and pillowy, '56 Lincoln nevertheless allows a very restful ride; it's a good example of how a car can retain a degree of solid roadability and still provide good passenger comfort.

Seats are on firm side, very comfortable, and support you well enough to make long-distance drives a pleasure instead of the backache they can be in a too-soft car.

There's no unwarranted bouncing, regardless of road surface; vibration thru

body is nonexistent, and road noise doesn't penetrate Lincoln's soundproofing. Even under rigorous conditions, sideway remains low. Recovery thru dips is excellent; initial rebound is swift, but not jarring; there's no bothersome oscillation coming out of a dip or a hump in the road.

WHAT THE CAR IS LIKE TO LIVE WITH

Riding in the front seat: Because legroom is so plentiful, we weren't too concerned with measurements during the test, but a later check revealed $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch more legroom, plus an increase in seat adjustment travel of nearly an inch. Front seat rose $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch in '55, but now rises only half that far.

Riding in the rear seat: Because our test car was a hardtop coupe, it's hard to evaluate the car on a sedan-for-sedan basis. But statistically, here are some changes from '55: Hiproom is more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch greater, shoulder room is just over an inch wider. Legroom is minutely less, and the rear seat depth (from the front edge of the seat to the seatback) is shortened one inch.

ECONOMY AND EASE OF MAINTENANCE

Fuel economy: If you're like a lot of gas-station philosophers, you'll say Lincoln owners aren't overly concerned about economy. But think of the people who consider a Lincoln "it," and who count their money to get a '56 and are concerned with operating costs. They'll want economy—and they'll get it to a greater degree than they did in '55.

Increases over the '55 test car range from 0.8 mpg at 75 mph to 1.7 mpg at 30. Traffic checks on MT's simulated traffic course dropped off this year, but "driving around" mileage (tank average, excluding performance tests) is impressively better.

Is the car well put together? For the 1st time in many test seasons, we had a car that we didn't have to alibi as an early production model. This test car was early production, but its finish bordered on end-of-the-year detailing. All components fitted well; exterior paint was free of imperfections. Interior trim was good appearing, altho close inspection revealed a not-the-best paint job around the door moldings. Upholstery looked neat, no frayed ends apparent.

How did it hold up? This car wasn't babied as a new Lincoln owner might break in his car. We took railroad crossings at speeds we approached them; we criss-crossed over rutted roads, gave the car little reprieve between acceleration runs. Yet nothing came undone; engine noise remained at its low level; chassis,

transmission, and running gear did not complain. Slowing down in LOW gear from a ¼-mile run possibly ruptured a plate in the left-side muffler, for the tail-pipe emitted a few soft explosions not evident earlier; but the normally quiet exhaust system never raised its voice during the test.

There was evidence of staining around the rear bumper exhaust outlets during the tests, but it did not reappear in normal driving conditions. A note of warning: Stay clear of Lincoln's high-set exhaust pipe outlets if you're walking thru a parking lot or working in a gas station. After high-speed running or the dynamometer check, these chromed outlets became dangerously hot—and we mean hot enough to burn our hand.

Servicing: Altho engine changes are among the '56's differences, these won't change servicing, for most components remain where they were in '55. Something that servicemen will find unusual is the carburetor air intake, a tube running from behind the radiator crossbrace up to the aircleaner. In this large hose is a choke-like heat valve controlling air intake to the carburetor. It admits warm air from an exhaust manifold heater when carburetor air temp is 65° F or below, and from cold air intake at 90 and above. This will undoubtedly give quicker and more satisfactory warm-up, prevent carburetor icing and its attendant stalling, and increase engine power due to cooler intake air. A 50° F reduction (not unreasonable) gives about 4 per cent more power.

SUMMING UP

Lincoln is prepped for a prominent spot in '56 fine-car sales picture. And it's not overlooking any of the current pitches; its safety program includes a "deep-dish" steering wheel (designed to keep the driver off the steering column in a collision), a non-glare, covered (not padded) dashboard, safety doorlatches, and optional seat belts. Its low, wide and handsome body drew many admiring glances (and close inspection) wherever we stopped during the test. Prices are competitive, and the big, quiet package offered is attractive in many different ways. We're



inclined to predict that when sales are tallied at the end of the model year, you won't have to look too closely to recognize Lincoln in that gilt-framed picture.

—Jim Lodge

GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS

1956 Lincoln

ENGINE: Ohv V8. Bore 4.00 in. Stroke 3.66 in. Stroke/bore ratio 0.915:1. Compression ratio 9.0 to 1. Displacement 368 cu. in. Advertised bhp 285 @ 4600 rpm. Bhp per cu. in. 0.774. Piston travel @ max. bhp 2806 ft. per min. Max. bmep 164.7 psi. Max. torque 402 lbs.-ft. @ 3000 rpm.

DRIVE SYSTEM: STANDARD transmission is Turbo-Drive. 3-element torque converter with planetary gears. **RATIOS:** Drive 1.47 x converter ratio and torque converter only (2.40, 1.47 and torque converter only, at full throttle thru downshift detent);

Low 2.40 x converter ratio; Reverse 2.00 x converter ratio. Maximum converter ratio at stall 2.1 @ 1550-1750 rpm.

REAR-AXLE RATIOS: Standard 3.07, 3.31 with air conditioning.

DIMENSIONS: Wheelbase 126 in. Tread 58.5 in. front, 60 in. rear. Wheelbase/tread ratio 2.13. Overall width 79.9 in. Overall length 222.8 in. Overall height (empty) 61.2 in. Turning diameter 45 ft. 7 in. Turns lock to lock 3¼ (power steering). Test car weight 4675 lbs. Test car weight/bhp ratio 16.4:1. Tire size 8.00 x 15 (tubeless).

PRICES: (Suggested retail price at main factory; does not include federal tax, delivery and handling charges, or freight.) CAPRI 4-door sedan \$3821, hardtop \$3735. PREMIERE 4-door sedan \$4183, hardtop \$4183, convertible \$4318.

ACCESSORIES: Turbo-Drive, power brakes, power steering standard, radio (with automatic antenna, rear-seat speaker) \$126, heater \$125, power seat only \$74, power seat and power windows (standard on Premiere), \$186, air conditioning \$556.

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