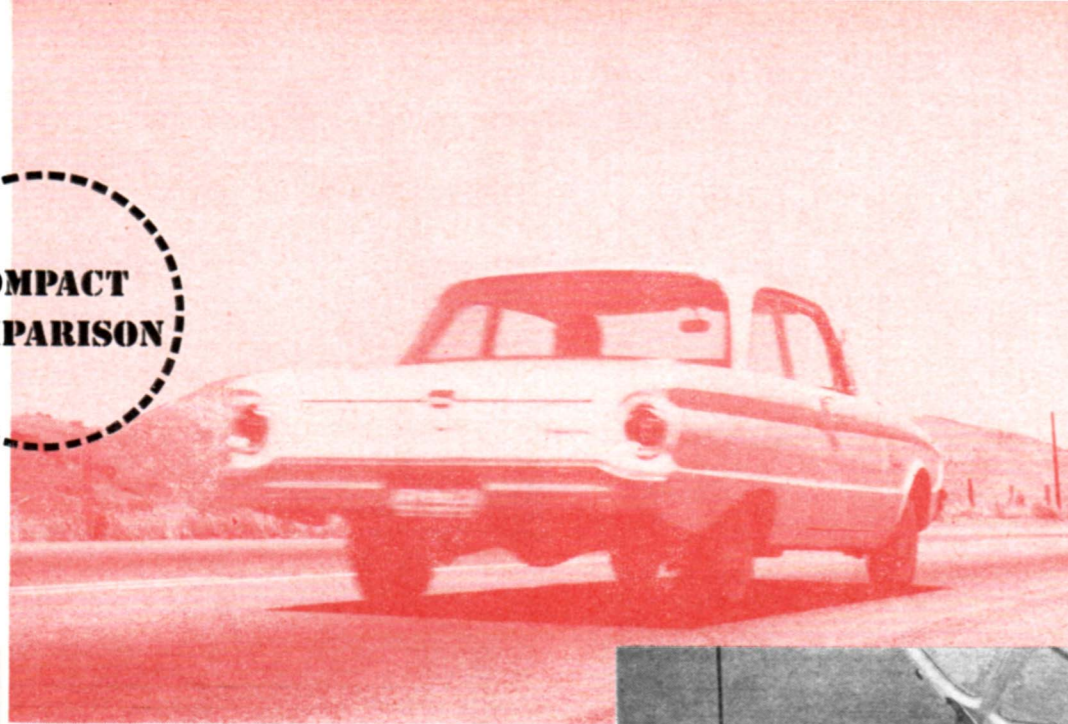


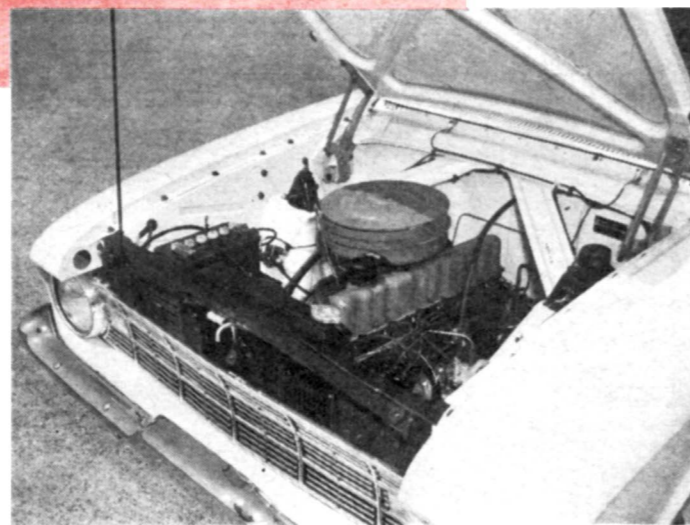
**COMPACT
COMPARISON**



Road Test

FALCON

**solid construction stands
out in this
conventional but well planned package**



SOUND transportation was the key to Henry Ford's success. With the Model T and Model A, he gave the public simple, reliable cars that were as inexpensive as he could make them.

The Falcon is a long-awaited return to that concept by his successors. It may not be as low priced as many people had expected but it is not as austere, either. And, certainly, it is one of the most practical vehicles built in this country since the Model A itself.

It is an extremely easy car to drive, responding smoothly and precisely.

Because of its light weight, 2380 lbs. as tested, power assists are neither required nor available. The steering is light at all but parking speeds, though its 4.6 turns from lock to lock is not quick enough for ideal maneuverability. The brakes, operating on nine-inch drums, stop the car quickly with moderate pedal pressure and show no appreciable fade under hard use.

The only control that is at all difficult is the parking brake, which must be pulled really tight to hold. Everything else works with a minimum of effort.

Cornering is excellent. The suspension is quite conventional, front coil springs and rear semi-elliptics, but the car will take turns at speeds well beyond the capabilities of most American-made sedans. The tendency to understeer is within limits that can be controlled, body lean is slight and tire squeal occurs only on fast, tight curves.

All this has been accomplished without sacrificing a comfortable ride. The springing is firm, not as harsh as many imports but with less bounce and float than the big Ford. It does shake on rough surfaces, partly because of the unit structure. Without the usual insulation between a separate body and frame, severe road shock is bound to be more noticeable.

Economy, of course, is one of the Falcon's greatest virtues. During the test period, the average fuel consumption was 24.6 miles per gallon, the best figure recorded by any of the new compacts. Even the hardest city driving brought it no lower than 22.5.

The engine and gearing have been set up for just such results. The carburetor is a single barrel, valve timing is conservative and the rear axle ratio is a high 3.10-to-1.

Unfortunately, performance suffers. It is not even as peppy as the 0-to-60 time of 17.2 seconds might indicate.

Because of its economy tuning, the engine does not produce much power over a very wide rpm range. At most speeds, the throttle response is flat. Accelerating from 50 mph, for example, second gear is useless because it is already near its top speed while third does not provide enough torque to gain speed quickly.

In other words, passing another car on the highway takes quite a stretch.

Much the same is true of hill climbing. On long, steady grades, one gear will often be too low and another too high to maintain

a normally comfortable cruising speed.

The problem is that the high axle gearing has forced the transmission ratios to be too widely spaced and the engine is not flexible enough to make up the difference. Desirable power is simply not available for every condition.

A four-speed gearbox would be the ideal solution. But simpler and more logical for Ford would be a lower axle ratio combined with overdrive. This would permit broader gearing without reducing economy at cruising speeds.

If the high ratio frustrates acceleration, it provides a good cruising speed. The car will maintain 70 or 80 mph with ease on level roads.

The engine is a simple, short stroke design intended to be as trouble-free as possible. When something does need attention, it is within easy reach. The engine compartment is unusually accessible. There is not even a permanent structural member to obstruct the pan. As a result, the labor portion of repair bills should be cut by a considerable margin.

The only complaint from a mechanic's point of view is a heavy, non-counterbalanced hood.

At the other end of the car, there is actually 23 cubic feet of luggage space. However, it is proportioned so poorly that a pair of normal suitcases have to be juggled to fit.

The passenger compartment is finished with attractive upholstery and trim, except for Ford's usual sloppy floor mat, and there is plenty of leg and head room for four. Any more than that would be cramped by the bulky transmission and driveshaft humps.

At first, the seats seem hard but they prove comfortable on even the longest trips.

The driving position is good with everything well placed. Across the bottom of the dash is a row of pull-out control knobs, including a heater control that is much easier to operate than the horizontal lever used in the big Ford. One minor fault is the lack of illumination for knobs not directly below the instrument cluster.

The interior light is in a bad spot just above the center of the windshield. Not only does it leave rear seat passengers in the dark, it glares right in the driver's eyes.

The windshield has a subtle compound curve that is distortion-free except at its very edges. In wet weather, the center is kept clear by wipers that work together, instead of in opposite directions.

Overall, the Falcon is a common sense car. It will carry people from A to Z in comfort with little expense. It is a kind of car that has been missing from the Ford line for too many years. ●



NOTHING ABOUT FALCON'S interior indicates that Ford engineers cut corners to save money. While not luxurious, the fabrics are good and were selected in pleasing combinations.

MOTOR LIFE TEST DATA



1960 FALCON

Test Car

TEST CAR: Ford Falcon
BODY TYPE: Two-door Sedan
BASE PRICE: \$1912

Maneuverability Factors

OVERALL LENGTH: 181.2 inches
OVERALL WIDTH: 70 inches
OVERALL HEIGHT: 54.5 inches
WHEELBASE: 109.5 inches
TREAD, FRONT/REAR: 55 and 54.5 inches
TEST WEIGHT: 2380 lbs.
WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION: 54 per cent on front wheels
STEERING: 4.6 turns lock-to-lock
TURNING CIRCLE: 38.8 feet curb-to-curb
GROUND CLEARANCE: 5.9 inches (rear suspension)

Interior Room

SEATING CAPACITY: four to six
FRONT SEAT—
HEADROOM: 33.9 inches
WIDTH: 57.1 inches
LEGGROOM: 43.3 inches
TRUNK CAPACITY: 23.7 cubic feet

Engine & Drive Train

TYPE: ohv six
DISPLACEMENT: 144 cubic inches
BORE & STROKE: 3.5 x 2.5
COMPRESSION RATIO: 8.7-to-1
CARBURETION: single barrel
HORSEPOWER: 90 @ 4200 rpm
TORQUE: 138 lb.-ft. @ 2000 rpm
TRANSMISSION: Three-speed manual
REAR AXLE RATIO: 3.10

Performance

GAS MILEAGE: 24.6
ACCELERATION: 0-30 mph in 5.2 seconds, 0-45 mph in 10.1 seconds and 0-60 mph in 17.2 seconds.
SPEEDOMETER ERROR: Indicated 30, 45 and 60 mph are actual 29.5, 44 and 58.5 mph respectively
POWER-WEIGHT RATIO: 26.4 lbs. per horsepower
HORSEPOWER PER CUBIC INCH: 625

**the Falcon hits the highway
with adequate handling
and power...it
returns home with a fine
record of economy**



ON THE OPEN ROAD NOTHING ABOUT THE FALCON INDICATED A COMPACT CAR, ROADABILITY WAS GOOD AND FATIGUE LEVEL LOW.

Cross-Country

FALCON

By BOB AMES

WHEN I first saw the Falcon there was one question that simply studying engineering fact sheets could not answer. How would it stand up in a seat-of-the-pants test on a vacation trip?

I made no attempt to find ideal driving conditions to answer this question. I left Los Angeles on U.S. 101, a divided highway carrying fast traffic to San Francisco—an ideal high speed road. At Salinas I cut over to Monterey and stayed overnight. My return trip was California's two-lane Coast Highway 1. It winds through pine and redwood forests, balances high over the ocean, and climbs mountains past magnificent views—a typical sight-seers' road.

On the highway the Falcon picked up traffic momentum quickly. Like many others, I suppose I had expected a "small" car, but nothing about the Falcon seemed diminutive.

Inside, both of us had plenty of room. The steering wheel at first felt awkward but after a few miles became natural and seemed to be in an attitude which promoted comfort on long trips. One thing which I couldn't get used to was the height of the window sill. I change the position of my arm frequently to relieve fatigue. The arm rest was fine but the window sill threw my arm unnaturally high.

The first leg to Monterey is always a grind. The terrain is monotonous and I always concentrate on driving. On the first stretch of open highway I drove between sixty and seventy. The steering, which in town had seemed stiff, eased up at high speeds and showed no under- or over-steer tendencies. At highway speeds the car felt so natural that I kept up with traffic easily.

I noticed little difference in the ride compared to a standard size car. It was firmer and occasionally I felt the car respond to bumps that a longer wheelbase would have smoothed out. But this was the exception rather than the rule.

Inside the noise level was surprisingly low. The radio was easily understandable with the windows down. When the

windows were up the unitized body absorbed much of the road noise even deadening the sounds of huge diesel trucks.

Although high speed performance was good the Falcon showed little passing potential around 50 and 60 mph. I found myself waiting in line occasionally to find a clear spot to overtake another car.

At Salinas I had my first chance to check whether this concession to power performance paid off in better mileage. The speedometer showed 320 miles. Total elapsed time was seven hours and since this included an hour stopped for lunch our average speed was nearly 53 mph. Adding in small towns and slow coastal traffic for a few miles it is plain I didn't give the Falcon a break by driving ideal gas economy speeds. The tank took 11.8 gallons of gas. A few scribbles with pencil showed the Falcon averaged 27.1 mpg.

In Monterey I came up against some of the Falcon's shortcomings as a touring car. In the motel parking lot it steered slow, making parking gymnastics awkward.

But the thing most vacationists will complain about is something I should have noticed at first. When leaving we had been in a hurry and I loaded part of our luggage in the back seat to save time. Now, I wanted to get all the luggage in the trunk so I wouldn't have to lock the car each time we stopped.

When I tried to fit our pullman suitcase into the highly touted 23 cubic feet of space I discovered there was no easy way to get it in. The gas tank filling tube shortcuts through the trunk canceling out several inches. Even trying to find room to put my camera cases was a problem. On either side is a fairly large recessed space behind the wheel well and covered by the rear quarter panel. But the full space cannot be used since the taillight comes straight back several inches. Even alongside the spare tire, which takes up a lot of usable space itself, is a hump that precludes laying anything flat. Another disadvantage in loading were the wide doors. It was practically impossible to jockey a suitcase into the passenger compartment when parked near another car.

It was chilly when we got ready to leave and when starting the Falcon I found a feature which I personally like. On the dash is a manual choke lever. For drivers in different climates and altitudes on their vacation Ford's choke lever is a big plus feature.

The early morning sun soon became a glare and when I turned the visor down I found another item that fits in the

category, small ideas that do much good. The sun visor has a plastic clamp that holds the free end in place. Sun visors are notorious for gradually becoming loose and dropping down to block vision at inopportune moments. With this simple addition the Falcon's visor should stay in place.

Compared to the speeds I clocked the day before our return trip was leisurely and restful. I had noticed earlier that the windshield was big, but on this section of our trip where every turn unveiled a dramatic scene I could really appreciate it. The rear vision of the Falcon is also excellent, a good advantage in any kind of country.

When I first began the 60 miles of short, sharp curves that wrap around the mountains on Highway 1, I knew that the Falcon had been designed to corner well. As the curves became tighter I overtook bigger cars that were having trouble navigating without tires squeeling in punishment. When I got out in front where my speed could be increased I found out just how well the car could corner. On mountain roads the Falcon has a sports car-like quality and clings to the road as if it had been

painted on the paving—something that those who drive in the mountains only on their vacation will find more than just helpful.

That night when I turned the lights on I mentally thanked the Falcon's engineers for forgetting quad lights and using two high powered sealed beams. They actually provide more light.

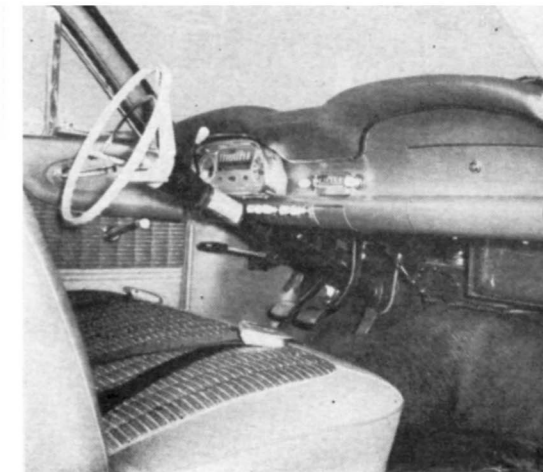
It was late when I turned the ignition off and before I got out of the car I asked myself how I felt. It had been a long twelve hour trip and still I could not honestly say that my physical weariness was greater than in a standard size car. Perhaps the most surprising thing in this personal analysis was that my back and shoulders didn't seem to have suffered much for the long grind. Falcon upholstery padding feels firmer than what I've experienced in past models of American cars, but it hits me in all the right places.

I was anxious to see how much lower the gas mileage would be on the second day. There had been more small towns, stop and go driving, and low speeds uphill in the mountains. I had logged 718 miles and used 26.2 gallons of gas. The overall average for the trip was 27.0 mpg. •



BACK SEAT is comfortable and roof angle leaves ample headroom. Big rear window is an advantage in cross country travel.

GAS TANK filling pipe, spare tire, tail-lights and rear wheel wells all encroach on the usable space available in the trunk.



ON LONG TRIPS the hump would interfere with third passenger's comfort. For two, however, front seat is more than adequate.