



# LINCOLN CONTINENTAL ROAD TEST



by Bob McVay, *Assistant Technical Editor*

**LUXURY IS DEFINITELY** the big thing the Continental has to offer — not flashy, startling luxury but quiet, tasteful luxury that the driver and passengers notice the first time they ride in the car. It's a distinctive automobile. Its relatively low production (33,717 new Lincolns were registered in 1963) and its overall appearance make it that way, especially in the case of our test car. Continental makes the only four-door convertible in this country.

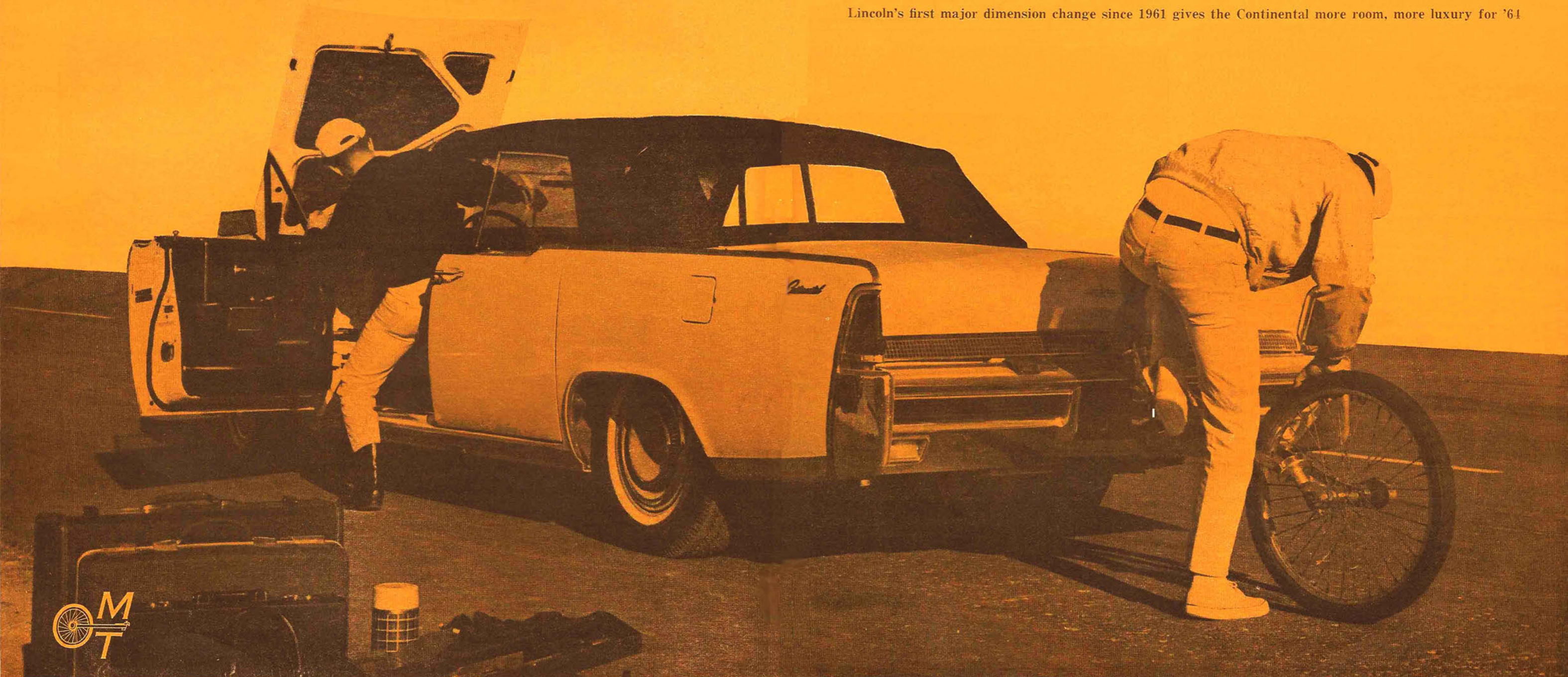
Lincoln doesn't go in for a radical new look every year. Subtle changes in the grille and ornamentation can be noticed

on 1964 Continentals, but you have to look closely to tell a '64 model from a '63 unless they're parked side by side.

Here's where the biggest difference would make itself readily apparent: The 1964 is longer; its wheelbase and overall length are greater by a full three inches, making this the first major dimension change since 1961. The added length gives back-seat passengers noticeably more leg-, hip-, knee-, and head room. The rear doors are three inches longer, providing easier exit and entry. The return to flat glass side windows has added 5.4 inches in head room width. Even luggage space has been increased by 15 per cent, which means an additional two cubic feet of storage area.

From the driver's seat, we had excellent vision in all

Lincoln's first major dimension change since 1961 gives the Continental more room, more luxury for '64



directions. Even shorter drivers will have no difficulty seeing all four fenders. Our Continental was easy to maneuver and park, despite its size and bulk. We immediately noticed another change for 1964: The entire dash has been redesigned, with a larger, easier-to-read speedometer replacing last year's smallish unit (which we felt was *too* small). Nice, legible gauges are furnished for oil pressure, battery charge, water temperature, and fuel level, while a warning light comes on when the gas tank gets dangerously low.

Driving position is comfortable. The leather seats are soft and luxurious, yet firm enough to give good leg-, hip-, and back support, even on the longest drives. A comfortable center arm rest's provided in both front and rear. All controls are easy to reach from the driver's seat. The new dash incorporates integral air outlets for the car's heater/air-conditioning system, and the ignition switch's relocated at the right of the steering wheel. Passengers can direct the flow of air either up, down, or to either side via the adjustable vents.

Our test car was fitted with top-grain leather upholstery, with expanded vinyl door trim panels and wood-grain door inserts. Individually adjustable front seats with a center console can be ordered for an additional \$281.40.

Out on the highway or around town, the Continental was an extremely pleasant, well-mannered car. It handled around-town trips with ease and, despite its size, was easy to maneuver in tight situations. Sharp dips taken at above-average speeds wouldn't bottom the suspension. Everything from railroad tracks to the roughest dirt roads was absorbed quietly and well by the Continental's refined suspension. Big, heavy coil springs up front and semi-elliptical leaves at the rear do their job exceptionally well. No matter how rough the road surface, passengers have to look outside to be aware of it.

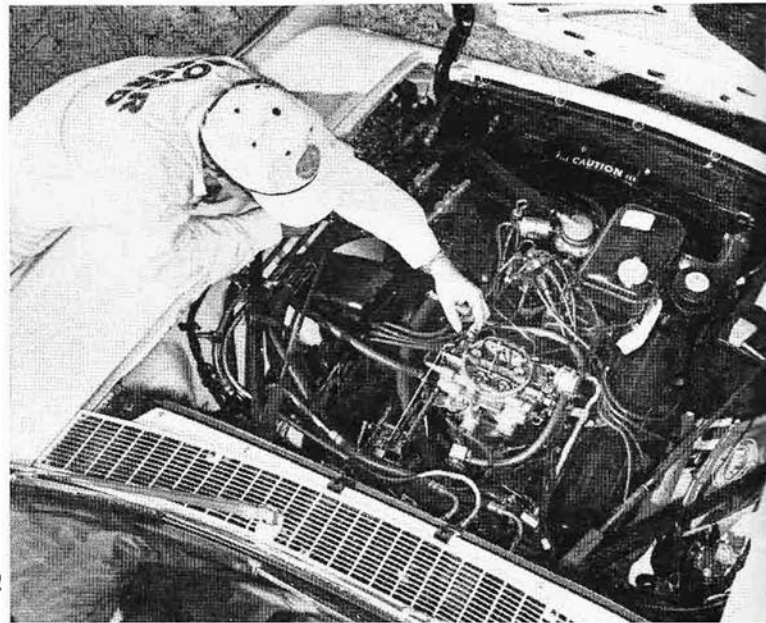
Out on the highway, the Continental really comes into its own. This car is a luxury cross-country cruiser. Except for an ever-so-slight wind whistle around the windows and top, the car's dead silent at any speed. Certainly the wind noise wasn't objectionable — it just let us know we were whistling along. At any speed up to 100 mph, the car seems to be loafing. Even at its top speed of slightly less than 110 mph, it wasn't turning fast enough to make the engine work hard.

The Continental's right at home charging around winding mountain roads. For a car of its ponderous size and weight, it handled very well on the twisty stuff. Body lean was never great, while traction and stability were quite good. Even on long downhill grades, the brakes refused to show more than a slight amount of fade.

Lincoln's twin-range Turbo-Drive three-speed automatic transmission is smooth in operation, with quick, solid, almost inaudible gear changes. It also proved handy for climbing or coming down steep grades. The INTERMEDIATE range held



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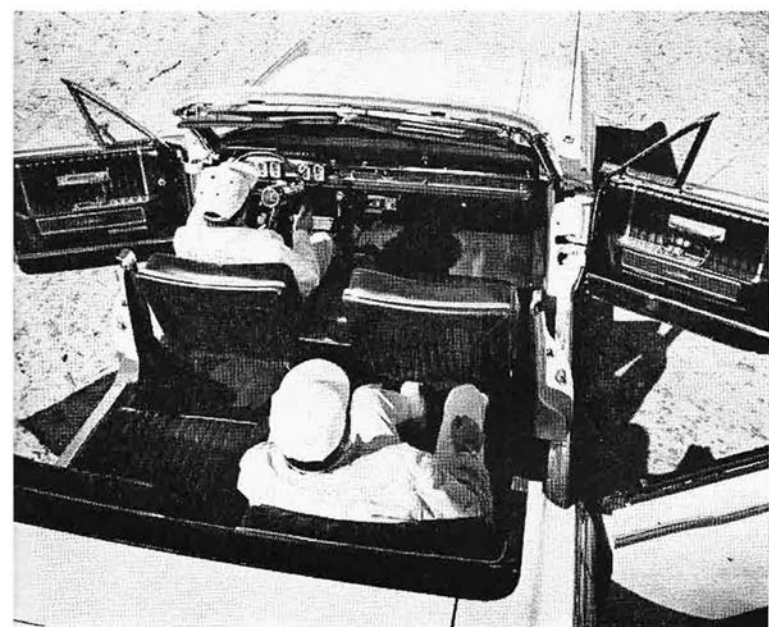


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- 1) *The Continental's crisp, straight-edge styling is apparent from any angle. Car always gets admiring glances from passers-by. With top down, longer body profile is more noticeable. Three-coat, acrylic-base enamel paint is hard and resists chipping.*
- 2) *Powerful 320-hp V-8 is unchanged from last year. It loafs at speeds below 100 mph, has plenty of power for every situation, and is extremely smooth and quiet. The maze of plumbing necessary for extensive power equipment makes all but routine maintenance hard. Air-conditioned cars use 52-ampere battery.*
- 3) *On mountains or winding roads, the Lincoln handles very well for its size and weight. With 30 psi all around, handling is practically near dead neutral, with excellent stability and control.*

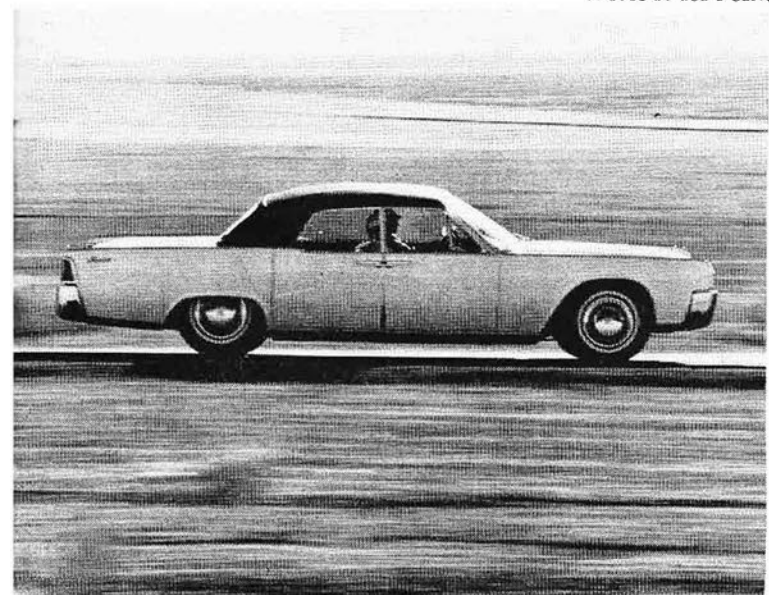


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PHOTOS BY BOB D'OLIVO



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the car's progress down on inclines and kept the revs up at a usable level on long upgrades.

Our test car's engine was the same as the 1963 Continental's — a big, 430-cubic-inch V-8 that puts out 320 hp. It does its job quietly and smoothly under all conditions. Using a four-barrel carburetor, the engine puts out 465 pounds-feet of torque at a low 2600 rpm. As mentioned before, its stresses are low at any speed. It's designed for long years of smooth, trouble-free performance, and even in so heavy an automobile, performance is nothing to be ashamed of.

Our acceleration figures, with two staff members and all our test equipment on board, were slower than the 1963 sedan's. The convertible weighs 700 pounds more to start with, but it still turned zero to 60 mph in 12.1 seconds and hit 30 and 45 mph in 4.1 and 8.0 seconds on the way up. Our clocks stopped at 19.1 seconds as we crossed the end of our quarter-mile test strip, with the fifth-wheel electric speedometer showing just a shade over 70 mph.

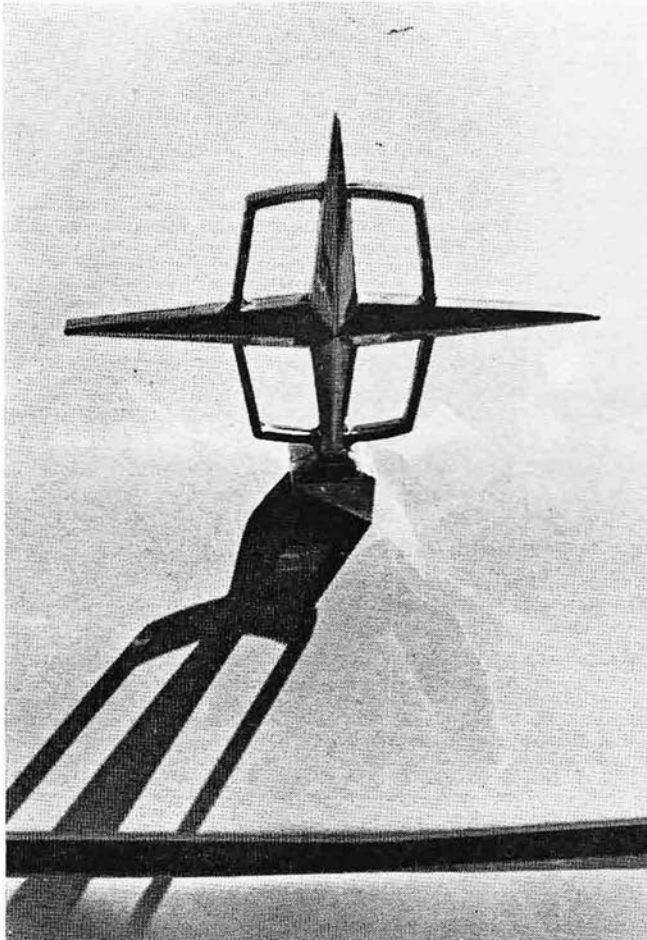
A big engine powering a heavy automobile is hardly an economical combination, but taking the car's size and weight into consideration, our best mileage of 11.8 wasn't bad. This we got during moderate highway driving with two people and no luggage on board, at speeds of 50-65 mph. Around-town driving averaged from 8.7 to 9.5 mpg, with fast highway cruising between nine and 10 mpg. Our overall average for nearly 1000 test miles was 9.9. Naturally, the Continental's 10.1-to-1 compression ratio demands premium fuel. Lincoln engineers have provided owners with a big, 24-gallon fuel tank, which gives a 240-250-mile cruising range.

On close inspection, owners will notice something new about the tires. They're bigger, 9.15 x 15-inchers of a low-profile design that puts more tread on the road. They give less rolling resistance than former tires, resulting in less tread wear and longer life. Besides, the bigger, 15-inch wheels allow more air around brake drums for better heat dissipation. The new tires have a contoured safety-shoulder design for better directional stability and handling on corners. Wheels are mounted on precision-machined hubs for truer running.

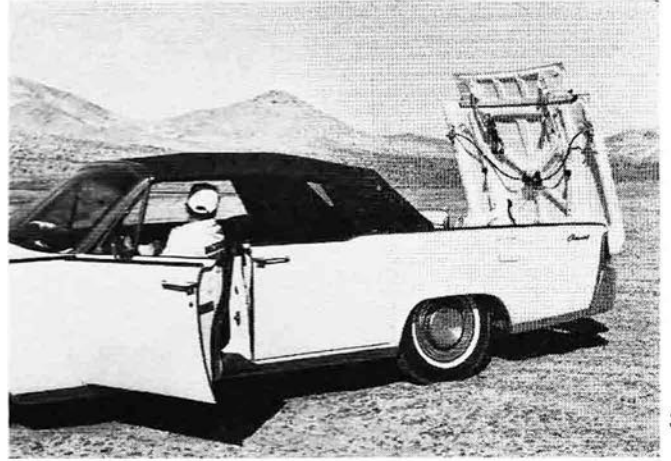
Continental engineers have gone all out to look after the smallest detail. Owners are among the most pampered drivers in the world. A few examples are the dash warning light that signals the driver when a rear door is open. Since the rear doors are hinged at the rear, driving off with one ajar could be catastrophic. As you open the rear doors on the convertible, the side windows automatically open slightly, then roll up again when the door's closed. The fuse box is located in a panel just to the left of the glove compartment for easy replacement of fuses. These are only a few of the many little details that give Continental owners that extra pampered feeling few others get.

With a base price of \$6919, our convertible ranks as one of the highest-priced cars on the American market. Add \$504

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- 4) Heavier by 700 pounds, convertible took more feet for 60-mph stops than last year's sedan. Brakes always feel strong, give good stopping power under all conditions, without undue wheel lock-up or swerving. Overheating is never a problem.
  - 5) America's only four-door convertible is also the only U.S. car with rear-hinged rear doors. All passengers enjoy spacious seating, with lots of leg room. The door latches use a rubber-cushioned double safety design. Wood-grained door panels are standard equipment, along with nylon yarn pile-cut carpeting.
  - 6) The convertible top doesn't billow out much at high speeds, although it makes for more wind noise than sedan over 70 mph. The sedan's lighter weight gives it an edge in acceleration.



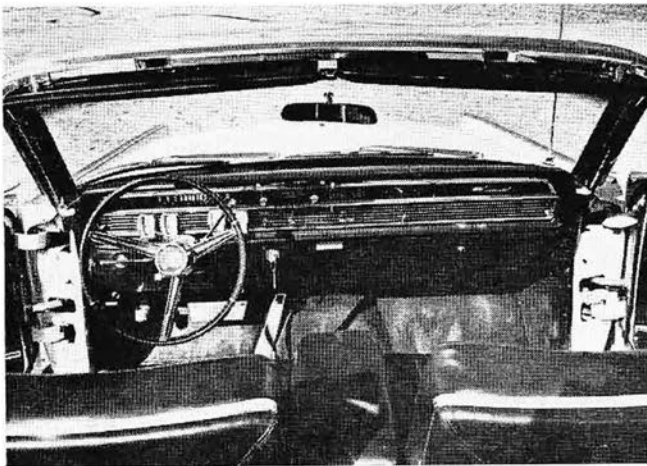
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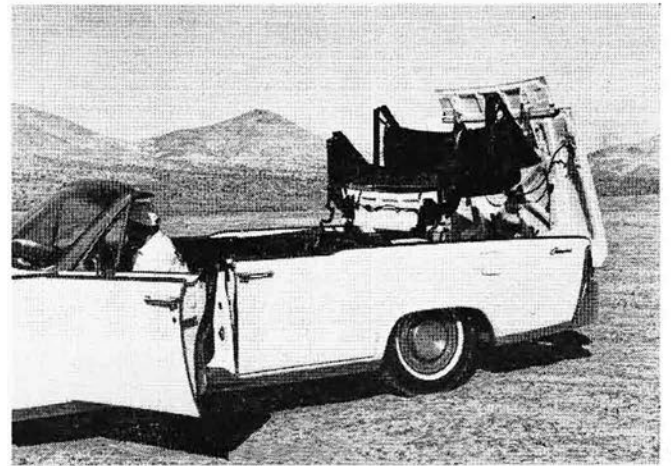
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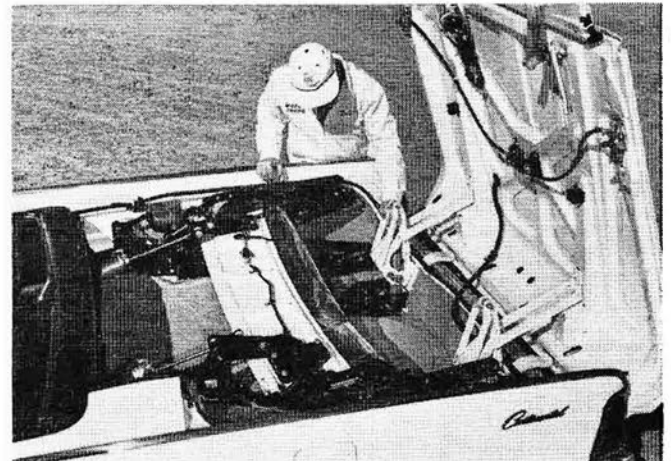


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1) Familiar hood ornament, Continental trade mark, adds to the overall appearance of quality and tastefulness of design.  
 2) Newly designed dash, with integrated air outlets and new steering wheel, are 1964 features. The visors and dash are padded, mirror is bonded directly to windshield. Hood is wide, flat for good driving vision, and easy-to-see fenders aid parking.  
 3) One dash-mounted lever does the entire job of raising or lowering top. There's only snaps to snap and top hoot to attach.  
 4) Once rear deck has opened, the top electrically unfastens itself and heads for deck area. Rear window can be unzipped.  
 5) Top folds itself neatly in place and disappears into the trunk.  
 6) With top down, there's very little space for anything else. Two small bags or a briefcase could be carried. Of course, the top must go up in order to remove spare tire from its nest. Electric screws in deck lid fasten it securely in place. The driver never has to leave his nice, comfortable leather seat.



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**LINCOLN CONTINENTAL** *continued*

for air conditioning, \$53.65 for tinted glass, and \$6.90 for door-edge guards, plus \$205 for transportation, and the total comes to \$7686 before tax and license. A luxury price tag indeed.

But, where optional equipment costs extra on lesser cars, it's standard on Continentals. Full power: brakes, steering, windows, seats, vents, door locks, antenna, deck lid, and top are all standard. Turbo-Drive three-speed automatic transmission, AM radio with rear speaker, four-ply whitewall tires, undercoating, center arm rests, electric washers, and hydraulic wipers are also part of the basic package. New standard items for 1964 include an automatic parking brake release, trip odometer, fuel warning light, and map and reading lights.

The option list is relatively short, but it does include a limited-slip differential, speed control, automatic headlight dimmer, and a deck lid release for the sedan. Standard axle ratio is 2.89, but a 3.11 ratio can be ordered for towing or mountain driving. All Continentals have a 24,000-mile/24-month warranty.

We couldn't find any major complaints with the Continental. Luggage room in the convertible is almost non-existent with the top down, and the heater/air conditioner seems more complicated to operate than units on cars in the same price range (although our unit did an excellent job of keeping temperature where we wanted it).

The car's unit-construction body proved completely tight and rattle-free. Ride, comfort, and luxury are above reproach. Lincoln engineers still insist on testing each and every car before it leaves the factory to make sure all components work properly. We always felt relaxed during and after even the longest trips.

Lincoln Continental owners pay a premium price for their transportation, but our opinion is that they get their money's worth. It's a fine automobile in every way. /MT

**LINCOLN CONTINENTAL**

4-door, 6-passenger convertible

**OPTIONS ON CAR TESTED:** Air conditioning, tinted glass, door-edge guards

**BASIC PRICE:** \$6916

**PRICE AS TESTED:** \$7686.15 (plus tax and license)

**ODOMETER READING AT START OF TEST:** 4250 miles

**RECOMMENDED ENGINE RED LINE:** 5200 rpm

**PERFORMANCE**

**ACCELERATION (2 aboard)**

0-30 mph.....	4.1 secs.
0-45 mph.....	8.0
0-60 mph.....	12.1

Standing start 1/4-mile 18.4 secs. and 71 mph

Speeds in gears @ 4000 rpm

1st.....	45 mph	3rd.....	110
2nd.....	77		

Speedometer Error on Test Car

Car's speedometer reading.....	35	51	56	68	78	90
Weston electric speedometer.....	30	45	50	60	70	80

Observed miles per hour per 1000 rpm in top gear.....26 mph

Stopping Distances — from 30 mph, 40 ft.; from 60 mph, 196.5 ft.

**SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER**

**Engine**

Ohv V-8  
Bore: 4.30 ins.  
Stroke: 3.70 ins.  
Displacement: 430.0 cu. ins.  
Compression ratio: 10.1:1  
Horsepower: 320 @ 4600 rpm  
Torque: 459 lbs.-ft. @ 2600 rpm  
Horsepower per cubic inch: 0.744  
Carburetion: 1 4-bbl.  
Ignition: 12-volt coil

**Gearbox**

3-speed automatic; column-mounted lever

**Driveshaft**

1-piece, open tube

**Differential**

Hypoid, semi-floating  
Installed ratio: 3.11:1

**Suspension**

Front: Independent ball joint, with coil springs, upper and lower control arms, direct-acting tubular shocks, and anti-roll bar  
Rear: Rigid axle, with 7-leaf, semi-elliptic springs, direct-acting tubular shocks

**Steering**

Recirculating ball and nut, with integral power  
Turning diameter: 45.7 ft.  
Turns lock to lock: 3.8

**Wheels and Tires**

5-lug, steel disc wheels  
9.15 x 15 4-ply rayon tubeless whitewall tires

**Brakes**

Hydraulic, duo-servo, with integral power assist; self-adjusting  
Front and rear: 11.09-in. dia. x 3.0 ins. wide. Front, aluminum with cast-iron liner; rear, cast-iron  
Effective lining area : 227.0 sq. ins.

**Body and Frame**

Unitized, with torque-box underbody construction  
Wheelbase 126.0 ins.  
Track: front, 62.1 ins.; rear, 61.0 ins.  
Overall length: 216.3 ins.  
Overall width: 78.6 ins.  
Curb weight: 5700 lbs.