



Mercury Park Lane

FORMAL ROOF of 4-door sedan is one of four choices in upper body style. Long straight fender line, extending from simulated waste gate in front to arrowhead taillights at rear, impart a broad-shouldered look to car.

THE BIG M is going to get noticed this year, not just because it really is bigger but also because it is stronger. Its strength is in a new body/chassis combination that lifts it over the threshold between medium-priced and luxury class. Though there is some resemblance to Pontiac in its long crisply tailored lines, there is a lot more of big brother Continental and that's what the Lincoln-Mercury sales people will talk about.

In the top-line Park Lane series (other lines are Monterey and Montclair), buyers have a choice among four different roofs. There is the convertible top which stylists say "has the crisp, thin-roof hardtop look" (now there's a switch); a 2-door hardtop with slantback; a 4-door

hardtop with formal, narrow rear window; and the unique Breezeway roof with reverse slant, retractable rear window. The latter, for 4-door sedans, has received some styling attention to integrate it into the overall design with greater grace.

Mercury's basic powerplant is the 390-cu. in. engine, developing 250 bhp in standard form with variations up to 330 bhp. The NASCAR-bred 427-cu. in. solid-lifter engine, generating 410 bhp with a single 4-barrel or 425 bhp with dual 4-barrels, is still an option though Mercury's greater bulk means it will be seen in the paddock instead of the pits this year.

Increasing opulence is evident in the

use of leather for interior upholstery as an option, redesigned power steering which can be ordered with Saginaw's tilting steering wheel, and the incorporation of air conditioner outlets in the "swept away" (5 in. further forward) dashboard. On hardtops, a ventilator under the rear window performs an air flow function similar to the retracting rear window on the Breezeway.

While front bucket seats are still available, Mercury's main interest is merely the aura of high performance (Comet will continue to be the company's competition car). But the new full-coil suspension and frame and the wider low profile tires assure the Big M roadability as well as ride.

CONTINENTAL influence is visible in grille and front hood edge. Parking lights are tall units in front fender edge. Stylists refined the unique reverse-slant rear window to better integrate it into overall body design.

