



FORD LTD

Here is the most silent,
most luxurious—and possibly
the best—Ford ever built

The Ford Motor Company is far and away the least predictable of all the major automakers. While Chrysler and General Motors forge ahead at reasonably steady rates, Ford seems to be alternately rocketing toward the stars with a sales bonanza like the Mustang or plunging earthward with a burden like the Edsel or the Continental II for ballast.

This capricious nature of that great company makes the introduction of each year's new models a tantalizing trip into the unknown. For some reason, the mere fact that one year's Ford or Mercury was a smartly styled vehicle with great sales appeal seems to have no bearing on what its successor will look like or how it will perform. Therefore it has become our annual custom to await Ford's new cars with a certain amount of friendly concern. We always *want* Ford to come up with a real bell-ringer, because their great leap into automobile racing and their general responsiveness to the wants of our American enthusiasts has created for them a great deal of sympathy within our ranks.

Fortunately, sympathy plays no part in our reaction to the new Ford Galaxie LTD. Our most pertinent comment is the one every driver made when he first took the wheel and drove it away: "I'll be darned, it just doesn't *feel* like a Ford!" The difference between this year's Galaxie line and the '63 or '64 offerings is both great and good. The LTD feels most like a medium-priced General Motors sedan. It doesn't even sound like a Ford. It may well be quieter than a Rolls-Royce, but better than that, it seems noticeably more quiet than its arch-rival, the Chevrolet Impala.

Produced as an unabashed luxury vehicle, the LTD is not, as some cynics suspected, just another Ford dressed up to delude the masses. It is a very fancy car in any context, complete with \$18.50-per-yard seat coverings and a massive list of accessories that elevated the price of the test car to \$4560.10. Despite our positive impressions of the automobile, the feeling persists that this is a great deal of money to pay for any Ford, and one is led to wonder exactly what market the LTD is intended to penetrate. Company officials say it is aimed at a "step-up" market, in which buyers of the regular Fords and Chevrolets are looking for added prestige. The concept is apparently valid, because the LTD has been a hot item so far this year. We only wonder what it may do to Mercury sales.

The base price of the LTD we tested was \$3313.00—a more realistic figure—and it was the 16 optional items—including a \$363.80 air conditioner—that boosted the price to four-and-a-half grand.

We first entered the LTD with the full expectation of finding a car that owed its boulevard ride and interior silence to ultra-soft spring rates and anemic shock absorbers. For the first few miles this seemed to be the case; the car was extremely quiet and glided along on a suspension system that seemed to promise all of the suspected evils. It was then, however, that we loaded aboard a wife, three children and a great batch of luggage and departed on a 325-mile journey into upstate New York. The route is one of C/D's standards for car testing and includes everything from turnpikes to twisty secondary roads. A comfortable, relatively brisk run from midtown Manhattan with a good automobile will take about six-and-a-half hours, though we didn't plan to make that sort of time with the LTD.

After an hour or so of getting acquainted with the car, we found the speedometer needle making persistent efforts to ride on the 90-mph mark. The LTD felt perfectly at home at this supposed velocity, though we attributed all of it to a wildly inaccurate speedom-

eter. An educated guess placed the actual speed at 75 mph, but a subsequent check of the instrument's calibration revealed that an indicated 90 mph was an actual 82 mph. Rolling along at this speed, we made three brief stops for gas and arrived at our destination in a rather surprising six hours and thirty-four minutes (49.6 mph average). The fastest we ever made it was 5:32 (55.6 mph) in a pedigreed sports car, driving like there was no tomorrow.

The LTD was not what we had expected. It handles very well for a 4000-lb., 119-inch wheelbase automobile and gobbles up distance at a deceptively rapid rate. The Ford's good road manners can be credited to the new rear suspension, which utilizes coil springs (replacing the ineffective longitudinal leaf springs used since 1949) located by a well-engineered pair of parallel trailing arms, a torque reaction member, and a panhard rod. We found all of the old Ford habits of wheel hop and poor adhesion under braking and acceleration to be missing and were thoroughly pleased with the new setup.

The front suspension, which is nearly identical to the Lincoln's, features an upper wishbone, a transverse lower control arm and a diagonal drag strut in conjunction with traditional ball-joints and coil springs.

The performance of this front-end layout is markedly inferior to that of the rear. Bumps caused the front-end to hunt, in a kind of corkscrewing motion, so that every substantial bounce-rebound cycle caused a mildly unpleasant circular movement around a longitudinal axis that roughly paralleled the car's center of gravity. One very capable suspension engineer—not employed by Ford—checked this out and said that it was the result of a change in toe-in/toe-out characteristics on bounce and rebound (toeing in on bounce, toeing out on rebound). It also caused the car to lunge into turns at normal highway speeds, giving the driver the impression that he had over-steered. This mannerism is shared with the T-bird, and it begs for improvement.

Everywhere we traveled with the car, we found a general scepticism about the newspaper and television campaign in which Ford announced that their 1965 models are quieter inside than the fabled Rolls Royce.

There is no question that this is true. The tests which arrived at this rather startling conclusion were carried out with utter impartiality (two *new* Rolls were bought for the experiments) and the results, as some Ford men will candidly admit, are not exactly what had been hoped for. The original basis for the project was to in- (Text continued on page 82, Specifications overleaf.)



STANLEY Z. ROSENTHAL

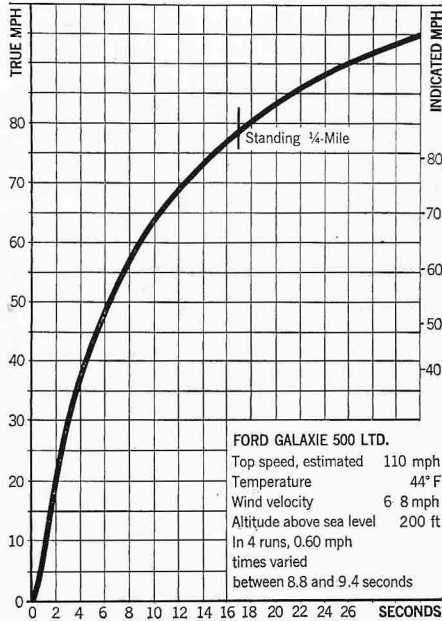
FORD GALAXIE 500 LTD

Manufacturer: Ford Division
Ford Motor Co.
Dearborn, Michigan

Price as tested: \$4560.10

ACCELERATION

Zero to	Seconds
30 mph	3.1
40 mph	4.8
50 mph	6.6
60 mph	9.1
70 mph	12.7
80 mph	18.0
90 mph	25.0
100 mph	38.0
Standing 1/4-mile	79.6 mph in 17.7



ENGINE

Water-cooled V-8, cast iron block, 5 main bearings
 Bore x stroke.....4.05 x 3.78 in, 104 x 96 mm
 Displacement.....390 cu in, 6396 cc
 Compression ratio.....10.1 to one
 Carburetion...Single downdraft four-throat Ford
 Valve gear: Pushrod-operated overhead valves
 (hydraulic lifters)

Power (SAE).....300 bhp @ 4600 rpm
 Torque.....427 lbs-ft @ 2800 rpm
 Specific power output.....0.77 bhp per cu in,
 47 bhp per liter

Usable range of engine speeds...600-5000 rpm
 Electrical system...12-volt, 65 amp-hr battery
 Fuel recommended.....Premium
 Mileage.....13-16 mpg
 Range on 20-gallon tank.....240-400 miles

DRIVE TRAIN

Clutch.....Cruise-O-Matic hydraulic torque
 converter
 Transmission.....3-speed planetary automatic

Gear	Ratio	Over-all	rpm/1000	Max
Rev	2.00	6.00	13.8	65
Low	2.40	7.20	11.5	50
D ₂	1.47	4.41	18.8	88
D ₁	1.00	3.00	27.7	110
Final drive ratio	3.00 to one			

CHASSIS

Perimeter frame with torque boxes, all-steel
 body.

Wheelbase.....119 in
 Track.....F 62, R 62 in
 Length.....210 in
 Width.....77.5 in
 Height.....55.5 in
 Ground clearance.....7.0 in
 Dry weight.....3588 lbs
 Curb weight.....3736 lbs
 Test weight.....4060 lbs
 Weight distribution front/rear.....53/47%
 Pounds per bhp (test weight).....13.6

Suspension F: Ind., lower transverse link and
 drag strut, upper A-arm, coil
 spring and stabilizer bar.
 R: Rigid axle, radius arms and
 torque reaction member, pan-
 hard rod, coil springs.

Brakes.....11-in drums front and rear,
 330.2 sq in swept area

Steering.....Recirculating ball
 Turns, lock to lock.....4.0
 Turning circle.....41 ft
 Tires.....8.15-15
 Revs per mile.....755

CHECK LIST

ENGINE

Starting.....Good
 Response.....Good
 Noise.....Excellent
 Vibration.....Good

DRIVE TRAIN

Clutch action.....—
 Transmission linkage.....—
 Synchromesh action.....—
 Power-to-ground transmission.....Very good

BRAKES

Response.....Good
 Pedal pressure.....Fair
 Fade resistance.....Good
 Smoothness.....Fair
 Directional stability.....Good

STEERING

Response.....Good
 Accuracy.....Fair
 Feedback.....Good
 Road feel.....Poor

SUSPENSION

Harshness control.....Excellent
 Roll stiffness.....Good
 Tracking.....Fair
 Pitch control.....Poor
 Shock damping.....Good

CONTROLS

Location.....Good
 Relationship.....Good
 Small controls.....Good

INTERIOR

Visibility.....Good
 Instrumentation.....Poor
 Lighting.....Good
 Entry/exit.....Good
 Front seating comfort.....Excellent
 Front seating room.....Good
 Rear seating comfort.....Very Good
 Rear seating room.....Good
 Storage space.....Good
 Wind noise.....Excellent
 Road noise.....Excellent

WEATHER PROTECTION

Heater.....Good
 Defroster.....Good
 Ventilation.....Very Good
 Weather sealing.....Good
 Windshield wiper action.....Good

QUALITY CONTROL

Materials, exterior.....Good
 Materials, interior.....Good
 Exterior finish.....Very Good
 Interior finish.....Very Good
 Hardware and trim.....Good

GENERAL

Service accessibility.....Good
 Luggage space.....Good
 Bumper protection.....Good
 Exterior lighting.....Good
 Resistance to crosswinds.....Very Good



dicates that the Ford is *almost* as quiet as the Rolls—which might appear creditable to the general public—and there was enough displeasure at the actual results that the advertising campaign was nearly cancelled.

Ford attributes all of its sound-deadening success in the 1965s to a new method of mounting the body to the frame whereby contact points which might resonate road noises were studiously plotted and then avoided. This is a much more valid approach than just packing in more insulation.

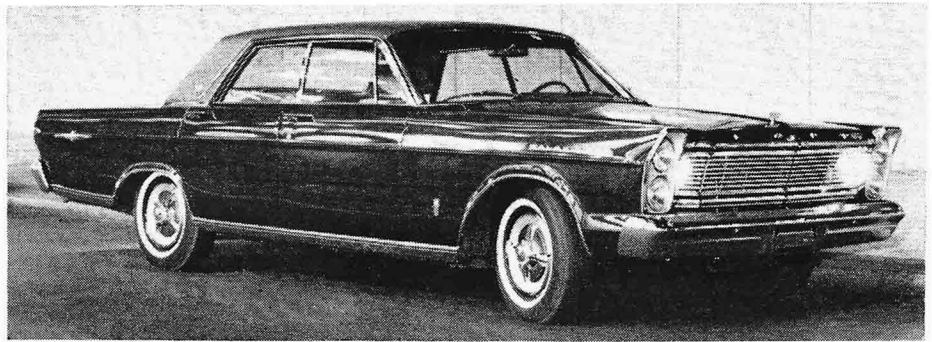
Make no mistake about it, the 1965 Ford is an exceedingly quiet automobile, but the most pertinent fact about the whole Ford-Rolls comparison is not the former's silence, but the latter's relatively high interior noise level. In fact, there are probably a number of domestic cars—certainly the Lincoln, Cadillac and Imperial—that are better sound-proofed than the Rolls Royce. After seeing the test results, one observer who is well-acquainted with the venerable English status symbol quipped, "they say the only thing you can hear in a Rolls at 60 mph is

the electric clock. Hell, at 60 mph you'd have trouble hearing Big Ben."

Though Ford can claim to have jumped on the three-speed automatic transmission bandwagon long before Chevrolet (which still persists with the two-speed Powerglide), their Cruise-O-Matic lacks the overall smoothness of the new General Motors' three-speed Turbo Hydra-Matic (used on Pontiac, Olds, Buick and Cadillac) or the flexibility of the Chrysler Torque-Flite. Upshifts with the Cruise-O-Matic are accompanied by a noticeable forward surge that somehow seems out of place in such an otherwise smooth and silent automobile. The throttle linkage which permits

the driver to downshift to second gear below 88 mph for bursts of passing acceleration was out of adjustment on our test car (a not-uncommon Ford malady) though the same result could be obtained by moving the control lever into the Low range.

The position of the driver's seat and steering wheel are beyond reproach and all the controls fall easily to hand. Our only complaint centers on the utilization of warning lights to a point where only the fuel gauge remains to provide any sort of measurable information. We managed to cause several impromptu window openings by accidentally brushing our left knee against the power but-



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CAR and DRIVER, July 1964



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SPECIFICATIONS:

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tons mounted on the driver's door and found night-time gear selection difficult because the selector panel but not the indicator needle is lighted, but these are niggling complaints when the overall quality of the car is considered.

We found that the radio in our test car was terribly weak-kneed, even when the antenna was extended to full length and the volume turned up full. The tone and quality of reception of the few stations it would receive were excellent, but the selection was so meager that we turned it off in disgust on several occasions. We have had no previous complaints about Ford radios and can only hope that our experience was an exception to the rule.

Our LTD was powered by the optional (\$137.60 extra) 390 cubic inch, 300 hp engine that is standard in the Thunderbird and we would recommend its purchase. It is a big, steady powerplant that supplies the kind of torque (427 lbs-ft) that is needed to pull a car of this size around in proper fashion and with reasonable economy (13-16 mpg).

The exterior appearance of this Ford was the subject of widely varied opinion among the staff. Several grumped about the multitude of graceful, flowing lines that terminated in sharp, rather conspicuous sharp edges, while others found the overall crispness of the shape appealing and a vast improvement over the paunchy look of the 64's. The response by the general public seems to be decidedly positive, and several casual bystanders were prompted to come forth and tell us how impressive they thought our LTD looked.

With the General Motors setback caused by the October strike, Ford was able to leap into the 1965 model year with an increase in market penetration. That their initial advantage will be narrowed as time passes is obvious to even the most starry-eyed Ford man, but hopes remain high that FoMoCo will continue to make inroads on GM sales superiority throughout the year.

If this is done, there can be no other explanation except that the public has recognized the fact that the Fords are better than they were last year.

As far as sheer quality and luxury are concerned, the LTD marks a zenith for the Ford Division and any showroom success that comes its way is deserved. Not only is it a vast improvement over earlier Fords, this automobile is good enough to hold its head up in any medium-priced car comparison.

c/p

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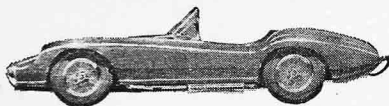
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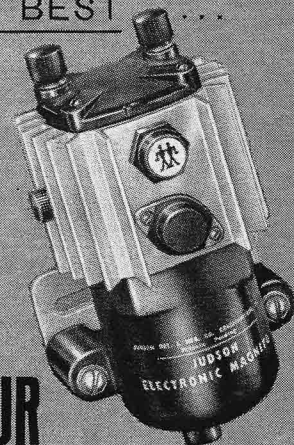
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