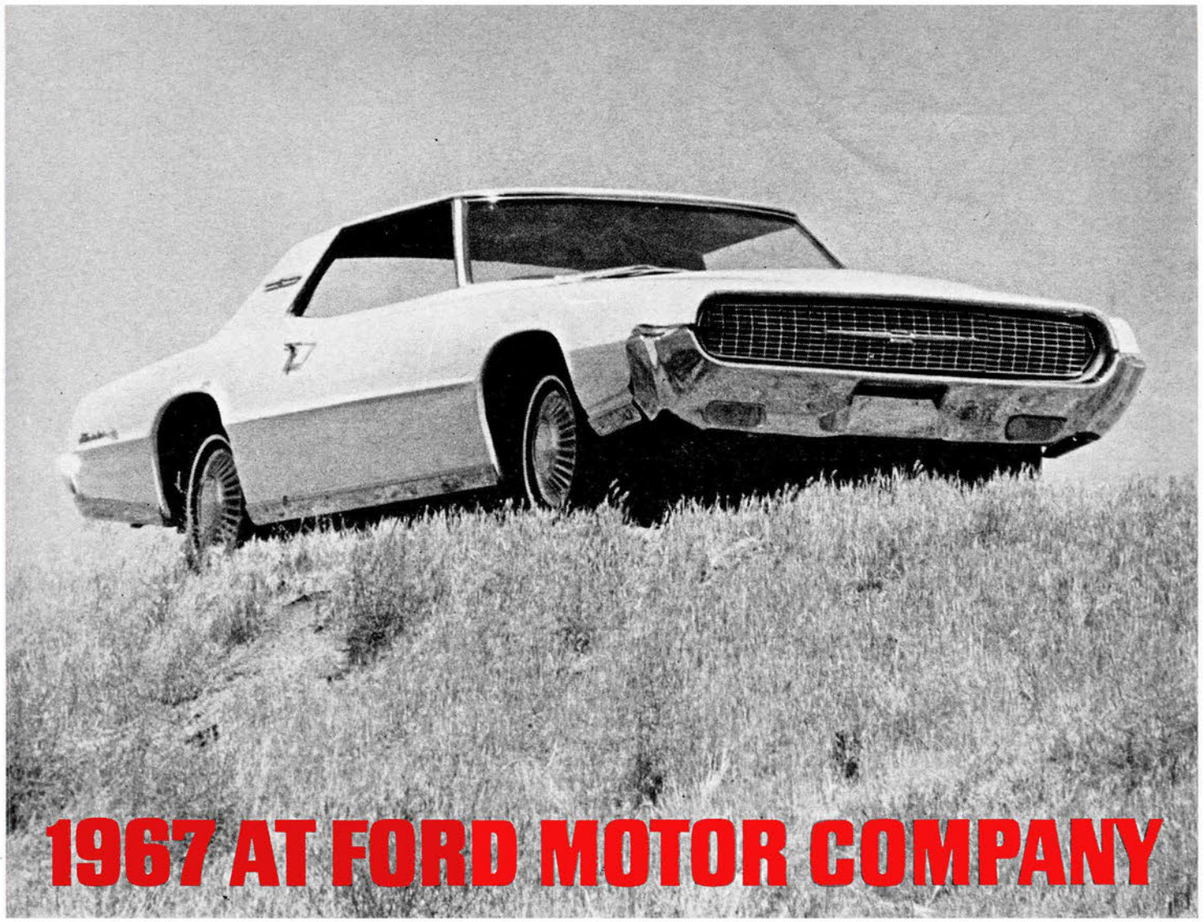


CHAN BUSH

1967 AT FORD MOTOR COMPANY

Thunderbird Sprouts another Pair of Wings, Mustang gets 390 cu. in. and a Face-Lift

FOR THE THIRD time in little more than two calendar years, Ford Motor Company's planners have injected a new product concept into the automotive marketplace. And, for a third time, they apparently have caught all their competitors off-guard.

The Thunderbird itself has been around a good many years and, in its own way, always has been very much a trend-setting car. Whatever it was, or wasn't, in its performance abilities, sporting characteristics, or styling refinement, it has had a pronounced effect on the overall aspect of the American automobile. The current vogue of short decks and long hoods can be traced as a Thunderbird influence; the idea of a personal, semi-4-passenger, high-style car of moderate size also was advanced by the 'Bird.

What Ford has unveiled for '67 may be yet another pacemaker—the 4-door Thunderbird. Where Thunderbirds of the past decade have been both 2- and 4-passenger vehicles, they have all followed the 2-door hardtop concept. Now, the 4-passenger idea has evolved into a 4-door concept for the same type of vehicle.

The difficult trick, of course, was to maintain the Thunderbird's image while fitting it with a second set of doors. That is, it had to look more like the sporting, luxurious Thunderbird sort of car than a family conveyance. Has Ford achieved this separation of the utilitarian from the romantic? Preliminary observation and driving of Thunderbird prototypes drew an emphatic "Yes" from the automotive press.

The long hood, short deck proportioning of the Thunderbird preserves the appearance of an athletic type of car. The long front overhang emphasizes it. The initial appraisal reveals a low, thrusting shape nestled around four big wheels. The frankly gaping snout is followed by an acre of hood. The passenger compartment looks close-coupled yet comfortable enough for extensive driving. The rear end clips off bluntly and smartly, in the manner of a racing sports car. Size is deceptive; it is neither a big car nor a small one. In all, it appears as a sporting sedan, in the tradition of the European sporting sedans—the Jaguar Mark II, the Facel-Vega *Excellence*, the Maserati *Berlina Quatrroporte*.

While the 4-door version doubtlessly will be the star of the show, Ford has covered all angles by retaining two 2-door hardtop models. Of similar configuration, these utilize a slightly shorter wheelbase and have a shorter "greenhouse" and longer deck areas. Oddly enough, the convertible Thunderbird has been dropped.

Along with impressive new styling, the '67 Thunderbirds boast completely new basic structures. The body and frame are now separate entities, where the 'Bird previously had had a fully unitized construction. Also new are front and rear suspension systems.

The '67 Thunderbird borrows heavily from the regular Ford line for its chassis components. Its separate frame, of the perimeter type, is directly from the Ford. The shorter wheelbases (115 in. for the 2-door, 117 in. for the 4-door) are achieved by the use of shorter side-rails; front and rear sections are identical. The semi-unit body "floats" on the frame on 14 computer-tuned mounting pads. Front and rear suspension components are Ford, too, and use coil springs at all four wheels. Front suspension now has a drag strut braced lower A-arm; rear suspension has 4-link location. As before, disc front brakes are standard equipment.

Other noteworthy styling points for the Thunderbird are the absence of front vent panes in favor of full-length curved side windows, the horizontally retracting rear quarter windows in the 2-door hardtops, disappearing headlights in the massive grille area, and the cockpit-styled interior with overhead warning lights. A lengthy option list augments an equally lengthy standard equipment list.

MUSTANG FOR '67 has received its first major face-lifting. Front and rear ends have been re-created on the same basic body shapes, side panel ornamentation redone and overall length increased 2 in. The fastback version now has a roofline that arcs gracefully from windshield header to chopped-off tail and which should please the styling purists.

The new fronts for the Mustang show an inlet grille both wider and deeper than previous versions. Single headlights are retained. The extra body length is achieved in the hood/grille area. The rear ends are truncated in the current vogue, the rear panels being concave to heighten the effect. Several trim versions, including one which uses a flat-painted plastic overlay on the rear panel, are available.

Contributing as much as any element to the more muscular look of the '67 Mustang are wider front and rear track, and optional Firestone "Wide Oval" tires. The tread increase is from 55.4 to 58.0 in. to coincide with Falcon and Fairlane specifications, and more nearly places the wheels at the outer edges of the wheelwells—a trick the car customizers achieve by reversing the wheel rims on their spiders. The Wide Ovals are new tires that are up to 2 in. wider across the treads than the similar size they replace. Along with visual appeal, the Wide Ovals have greatly improved cornering and tractive powers so should achieve great favor.

The Mustang gets more power for '67, in the form of the 390-cu. in./335-bhp V-8 engine. The wider track and overall width allowed this installation, where earlier Mustangs couldn't have accommodated it. This is the engine that appeared in '66 in the Fairlane and Comet GT and GTA options, and is a more tautly tuned variant of the big Ford and Mercury powerplant. It will be available with 3- or 4-speed manual transmissions or Cruise-O-Matic.

A GT equipment group again will be available for the driving enthusiast. As before, a pair of foglights set just inside the grille opening characterize and announce the package, which will be available for all V-8 engined Mustangs. Power-assisted disc front brakes are included as are racing stripes, Wide Oval tires and a firmer, heavy-duty suspension. The really keen driver, can order a "Special Handling Package" which carries even stiffer springing, adjustable Koni shock absorbers, an extra-heavy front anti-roll stabilizer bar, 16:1 manual steering gear, 3.25:1 axle ratio, limited-slip differential, 15 x 6L wheels and Super Sport tires. ▶

THUNDERBIRDS are the biggest surprises at Ford Motor Co. in 1967; not only have they been completely redesigned from the ground up, but the lineup now includes a 4-door version (above). With perimeter frames, semi-unit bodies and all-coil spring suspension, the new 'Birds are quieter than ever.

MUSTANG gets a face-lift in '67 with 2.7-in. wider bodies, 2-in. longer front-ends and a re-designed rear. Pictured is the GT option-equipped fastback, with its new 390-cu. in. engine.

'67 FORD

The option list for Mustangs has been lengthened by at least 2 ft. for '67 and again aims at creating two separate kinds of cars. The first, performance-oriented type, includes some of the options mentioned; the second, the low-cost luxury car, has the longer list. Air conditioning, formerly a hang-on item, is now integrated into the dash. Breathable knitted vinyl seat trim is available as is a safety /convenience panel consisting of lights to warn of door ajar, parking brake on, low fuel supply and seat belts unfastened.

An unusual speed control system which has its set button on the end of the turn-signal lever can be ordered; so can a "tilt-pop" steering wheel that swings away (inboard) to ease entry and exit, and tilts up and down for the best driving position. Not an option, but certainly a luxury feature is the all-glass rear window in the convertibles. This has a translucent rubber hinge-line in its middle, to let it fold flat into the small top well. Stereophonic tape equipment, which has proved so popular, is continued as an option.

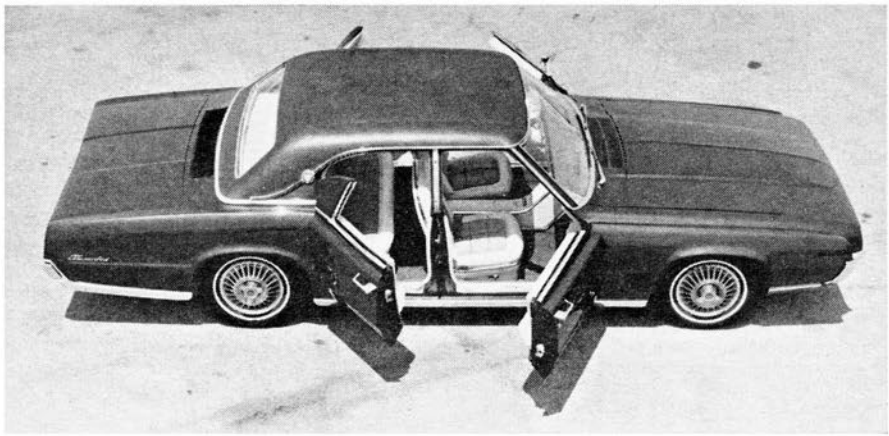
BIG FORD styling has undergone a minor evolutionary change, again more of a face-lifting than a radical departure. Side-panels are a little more wrought; creases and accent trim seem to commingle in near excess. A new hardtop roofline shows a graceful concave swoop. Taillights are rounded rather than square-cornered.

Chassis and drive-line refinement have made the '67 Fords smoother and quieter, though no item can be singled out as a significant achievement. A flywheel type of inertia damper on the front slip yoke of the driveshaft damps out drive-line vibrations. Larger bushings in the front suspen-

sion drag strut decrease bump impact harshness. Larger, softer bushings in the 3-link rear suspension reduce sensitivity to wheel unbalance; the track bar's bushings have slightly more give to better absorb rough road shake. Springs have been firmed slightly and shock absorbers recalibrated to achieve a better ride balance with normal loads. The GTA-type shift control is used on all automatic transmissions.

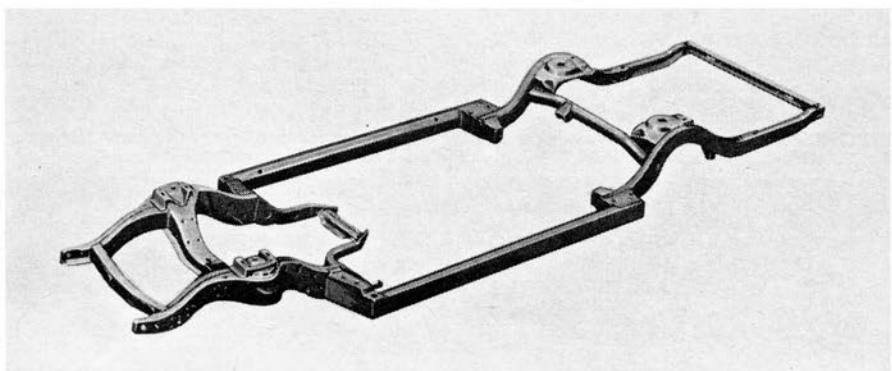
The 428-cu. in. "7 Litre" model of '66 has been made into an option package for the '67 Ford Galaxie 500/XL models. The package includes power-assisted disc brakes, Wide Oval G-70-15 tires, the 428/345-bhp mild performance engine, Cruise-O-Matic transmission, 3.25:1 axle ratio, dual exhaust heavy-duty springs and shock absorbers.

Should that not be sufficient, the enthusiast can order the "7-Litre Power Option Package," which uses the 427-cu. in. high-performance engine and a 4-speed manual transmission, plus the "maximum Handling Package." This particular package is available on all Fords but station wagons and specifies extra-stiff springs, 1.375-in. shock absorbers and a 0.84-in. anti-roll stabilizer. As in '66, power-assisted disc brakes will be available on all Fords.



REAR DOORS hinge at rear in 4-door Thunderbird, just like those on the Lincoln Continental. Thunderbird has long-hood, short-deck proportions.

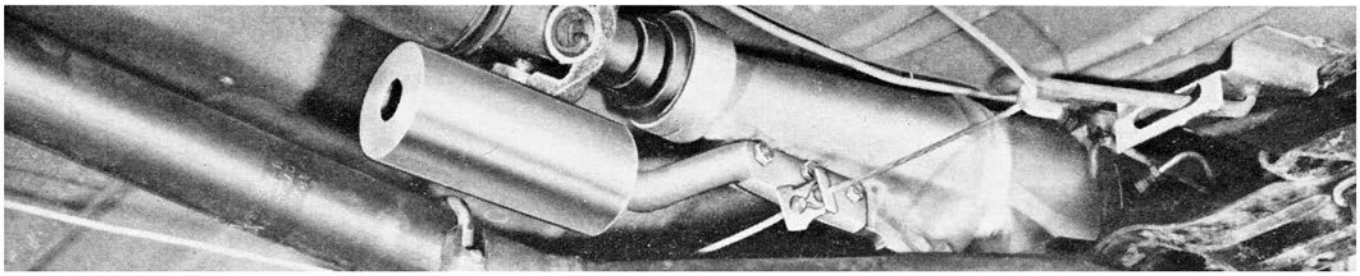
THUNDERBIRD'S perimeter frame is similar to that of Fords; has shortened side-rails to allow 'Bird's shorter wheelbase. Body mounts on 14 pads.



FORD MOTOR CO. PHOTOS

MUSTANG'S NEW shapes for '67 are a true fastback roofline and a concave rear end panel. The fastback line extends from header to cut off trunk lip. Indented rear heightens the sporting look.

CHAN BUSH



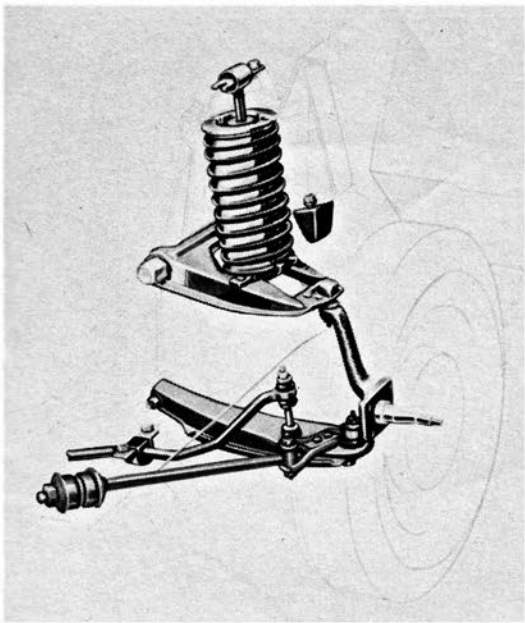
DRIVE-LINE damper is this 7-lb. weight on the end of a foot-long beam. Bolted to the transmission case of Falcon Sixes and Eights, it oscillates at the natural frequency of the drive-line to counteract unwanted vibrations.

'67 FORD

MERCURY's changes, perforce, follow those of the bigger Fords, though Mercury retains exclusivity in certain minor considerations. A new top-of-the-line 2-door hardtop, "Marquis," has been added and a new "Brougham" series will include a 4-door sedan and a 4-door hardtop with luxurious trimmings. But, the long-suffering "Breezeway" reverse-slanted back window models have been discontinued.

Mercury offers several interesting, optional ventilation system substitutes for the extinct Breezeway. One option is a pressure relief system wherein vent inlets are just under the door armrest and exits in the door edge; a simple flapper type of valve keeps the vent closed until a slight interior air pressure builds up. It will be available on all big Mercurys. Another system is standard on Park Lane and Brougham sedans: It lowers, by electric motor power, the back window 1.5

MERCURY hardtops, as well as those of Ford, have a sweeping new concave roofline which lends the fastback look to the bigger cars. Vinyl trim is optional. Marquis is a new Mercury model.

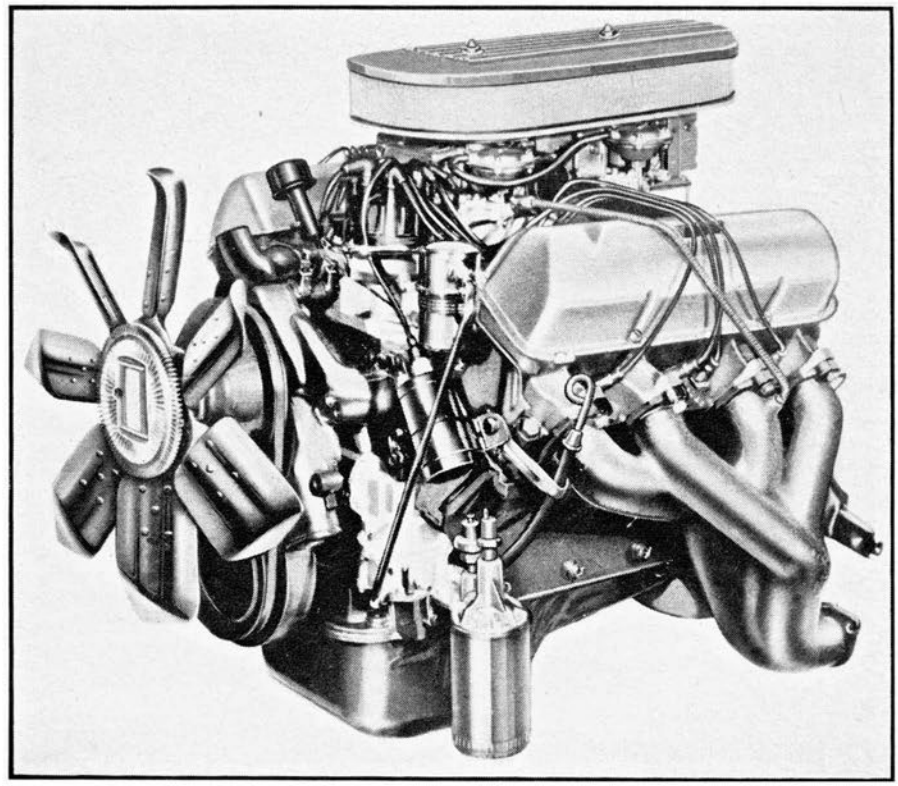


COUGAR front drag link has an extra joint for lessened harshness.

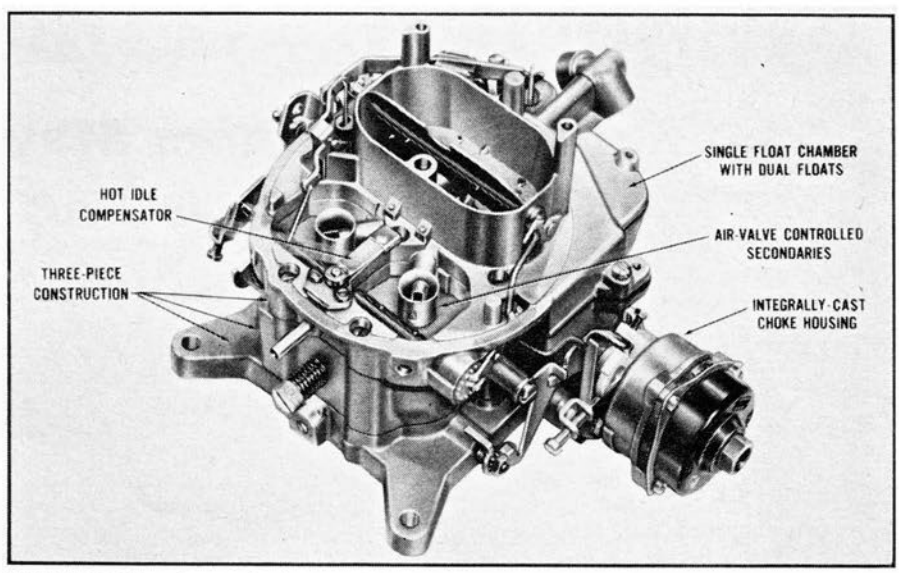
in., thus allowing interior air to escape into a low-pressure area at the rear of the greenhouse. A deeper drop of the window, Mercury engineers explain would let in rain, dust or leaves.

Dominant in the '67 styling is the "powerdome" hood, which ties the Mercury shape to the Lincoln. This bulge extends forward from the cowl to the front edge of the hood and then drops vertically to form a matching bulge in the grillework.

Mechanical changes for '67 are few, mostly following a refinement pattern. The perimeter frame has a new No. 4 crossmember and heavier rear spring mounting plates to stiffen the chassis. Rear springs have been firmed slightly, from a rate of 120 to 130 lb./in., but upper control arm and track bar bushings and front drag strut bushings have been softened for reduced bump harshness. Brakes are now separate front and rear systems via a tandem master cylinder; a shuttle switch lights a dashboard warning lamp if either should fail. While no new regular production power train equipment has been added, a special Police Interceptor version of the 428-cu. in. will be available on a limited production basis. It rates 360 bhp at 5400 and 459 lb.-ft. of torque.



COBRA HIGH-PERFORMANCE, 427-cu. in. V-8 continues to be available as optional equipment for all Fords but station wagons, is rated 425 bhp at 6000 rpm.



NEW 4-BARREL carburetor by Autolite will be used in most Ford and Mercury high-performance applications. It features air-valve secondaries, dual floats.

COMET, FAIRLANE and Falcon have received the least attention of Ford Motor's '67 lines, but then they all got new bodies in '66. Several engine refinements have been incorporated, aimed at improving fuel mileage, performance and reliability.

The 200-cu. in. Six, base engine for all three car lines, has a redesigned combustion chamber. The quench area of the wedge-type design has been reduced from 25% to about 5% of the piston crown area to give a more complete combustion, which in turn lessens the amount of unburned hydrocarbons escaping in the exhaust gasses.

The 289-cu. in. V-8s have a new rocker arm that improves reliability by reducing a need for close tolerances in the pushrod/rocker arm contact area. Smaller capacity carburetors on the 289s are said to improve low speed fuel economy, and those 289s equipped to meet emission control requirements have the air injector system built into the exhaust manifold. New intake valves and larger water jackets on the 390 series engines have reduced the possibility of sticking valves or distorted valve seats.

All Comets and Fairlanes will have link-type front anti-roll stabilizers to allow a 20% reduction in spring rates. Flared and finned drums are used on all Comets and Fairlanes with the 390-cu. in. engines, and disc front brakes are a part of the GT kits. ■