



JAGUAR OF Britain objected to this original emblem, so Lincoln-Mercury's new plaque will spell out plainly: C-O-U-G-A-R.

a cat called COUGAR

Canaries (and Horses) Beware!

FOR THE PAST 12 months or so, Lincoln-Mercury personnel have gone around Dearborn wearing that certain self-satisfied, cat-who's-just-swallowed-the-canary smile. "Just wait 'til next year," they've said—"We've a really keen surprise coming up." And so they have; a cat called Cougar, which, if it doesn't deplete the canary population, at least may take a few bites out of the wild horse herd.

The really big surprise about the Cougar is that it didn't come along a

year sooner. It's almost as if the Lincoln-Mercury Division couldn't believe that Ford Division was serious about marketing those odd little cars—right up until the time that Ford dealers started delivering them to the first customers.

Because two years is the minimum gestation time for any new car, the decision to go ahead on Mercury's version of the Mustang must have come just a few months after the Mustang rolled onto the streets in mid-1964.

However, when the decision was made, someone at the head of the table must have said, "As long as we're going to do it, let's do it better." And, so Lincoln-Mercury did.

The best way to describe Lincoln-Mercury's new baby is to simply call it a Mustang with class. There's a gracefulness and shapeliness about the Cougar that its progenitor doesn't have; there's a faceted, jewel-like quality that gives it an appearance of richness and luxuriousness. And, there are

certain refinements of riding and handling qualities that should make it acceptable to a wider spectrum of consumers. In short, it goes just far enough above and beyond the Mustang to make it a very real, very tough competitor in the 1967 automotive marketplace.

THAT THE COUGAR forever will be compared with the Mustang is to be expected. The Mustang came first, the Cougar two years and 1.5 million units later. The Mustang and the Cougar share a good many components and body panels as well as basic concept. Manufacture will be in the same plants. They will share the same marketing philosophy as Mercury and Ford; i. e., the Mercurys are aimed at a slightly higher price bracket, and thus can offer somewhat more on a standard-equipment basis.

The Cougar will be available in only one body style, at least for the time being. That model is the notchback 2-door hardtop in the long-hood, short-deck idiom established by Ford Styling for Thunderbirds and Mustangs. A decision to make fastback and convertible models, too, probably depends upon public acceptance of the notchback.

Basis for the Cougar, of course, is the platform chassis created by Ford Engineering for the Mustang. A meld of Falcon, Comet and Fairlane unitized construction techniques, this platform chassis provides maximum rigidity with minimum weight. It uses the stamped floorpan, with its drive-line tunnel serving as a backbone from engine bulkhead to rear axle kickup, as a major longitudinal member. Torque

box areas tie front and rear side-rails into the rocker panel boxes. The rear suspension connects to the rear side-rails, while the front rails form the base of a deep box which supports engine and front suspension. A total of six crossmembers, integral with the platform, give a ladder-type reinforcement to the basic structure. Galvanized steel is extensively used in the construction and the finished car is entirely undercoated against corrosion.

The Cougar's suspension follows accepted standards for domestic light passenger car design. It has coil spring and A-arm independent in front, and live axle Hotchkiss drive at the rear. Several refinements incorporated into these designs may give the car some distinction for its riding qualities. Certainly the results achieved blend well into the "luxury/sports" mood of the product.

THE MOST RADICAL innovation is the use of an articulated drag strut as the trailing arm of the lower A of the front suspension. Where Mustang and other users of this type of suspension arm have merely rubber bushed it at its front (frame) end, the Cougar's arm has an "elbow" in it. This hook-and-eye joint is also rubber bushed to allow even more wheel recession on bump impact. Total fore/aft movement, with the two rubber-bushed joints, is 0.3 in. Engineers say this double-jointed lower arm lessens ride harshness by absorbing impact energy directly into the rubber bushings, which, because there are two of them, can be of softer "rate" material. The remainder of the front suspension is conventional, with the

coil springs located between upper A-arms and the chassis and enclosing the telescopic shock absorbers. Ball joints are used for steering knuckles and a link-type anti-roll stabilizer is used.

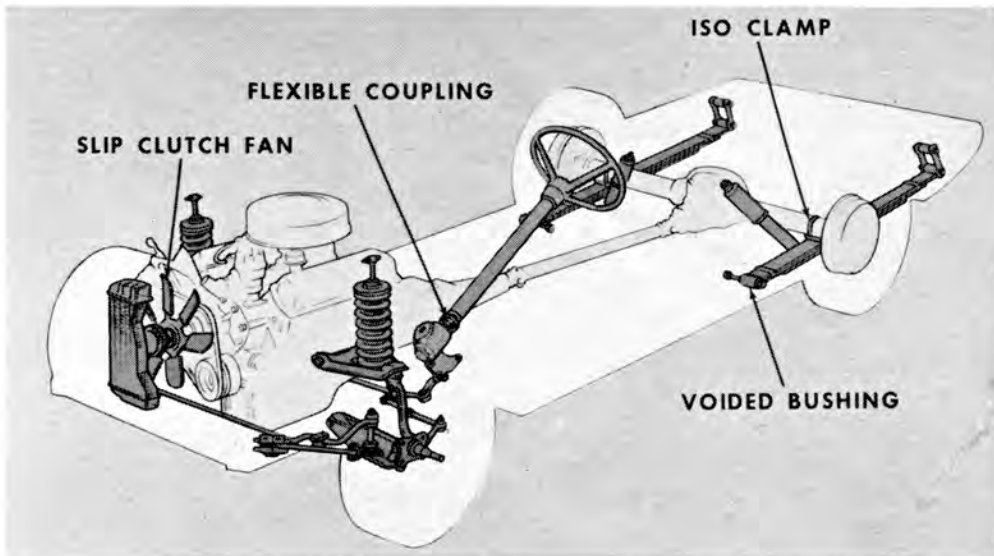
THE REAR SPRINGS also incorporate some degree of compliance for reduction of bump harshness. This is accomplished by the use of voided rubber bushings in the front spring eyes. The bushings are solid except for voids molded into their front and rear faces, and these allow fore/aft movement without vertical compression. The movement is only 0.05-0.06 in., but that's enough, according to the engineers, to noticeably reduce the harshness. The springs themselves, at 59 x 2.5 in., are 6 in. longer than those in the Mustang—for both softer ride and wheelbase extension. Graphite-impregnated polyethylene tip liners are inserted between the four leaves to reduce friction. "Iso-clamp" insulators are located at the spring and axle housing attachments to damp noise and vibration. As in all Hotchkiss drive systems, the rear springs both support the car on the axle and locate the rear wheels. The driveshaft turns in two cross-type, needle-roller-bearing universal joints and does nothing more than transmit power from engine to drive axle.

Lincoln-Mercury claims for its Cougar a 15% better "ride" over the Mustang and, with all the added rubber in the suspension, this doubtlessly is true, even if the comparative Mustang has the same spring rates. Handling, always a compromise factor when additional rubber, or softer bushings are squeezed into the suspension, ►





"LET'S DO it better," said Lincoln-Mercury designers.



SUSPENSION LAYOUT features coil springs and A-arms in front and live axle Hotchkiss drive in the rear. Special bushings soften ride.

COUGAR

seems quite good—at least on the prototype models *CAR LIFE's* editors drove in a brief preview at Ford's Dearborn Proving Ground.

A firmer suspension will be available for the Cougar with an optional GT equipment package. The GT group also will include power disc brakes, the 390-cu. in./355-bhp V-8 engine

and low restriction exhaust. The GT suspension replaces the voided rear bushings with solid ones, uses higher rate (stiffer) springs front and rear. 1.1875-in. shock absorbers in place of the standard 1-in., and a 0.84-in. anti-roll bar instead of 0.72 in. It also puts Firestone's new "Wide Oval" 6.50/8.95-14 tires on 6-in. wide rims instead of 7.35-14s on 5-in. rims. The GT, despite the additional weight in its nose from the much-larger engine, comes off much better than might be expected in the handling department.

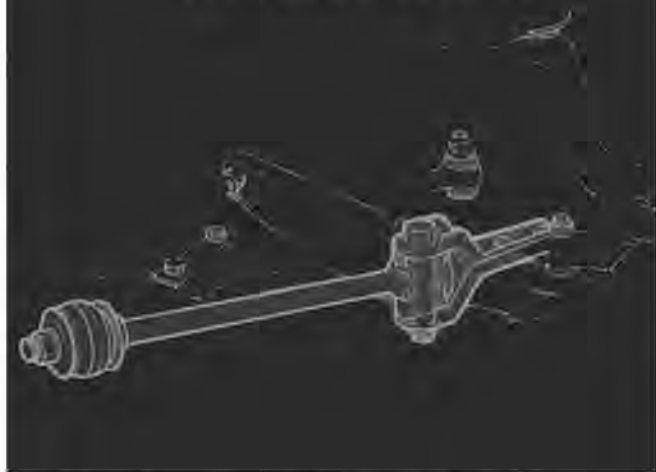
Steering is straight Ford: A 15.5-in. deep-dish wheel works a recirculating ball and nut gear for an overall ratio of 25.3:1 or 4.6 turns, lock to lock. The optional power steering is the link-assist type, but reduces the ratio to 20.3:1 and the number of wheel turns to 3.7, lock to lock. According to Mercury, this latter ratio eventually will be available in manual steering, for the performance-minded buyer. An interesting, non-performance option here is Mercury's new "Tilt-Pop" steering wheel, which combines the



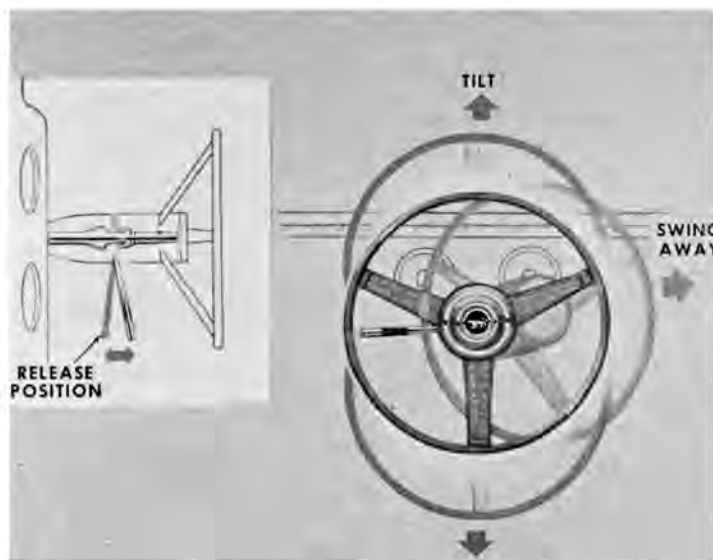
LONG HOODED notchback coupe is the only Cougar body style now available. Though car is 190 in. in overall length, its lowness makes it appear considerably smaller.



ARTICULATED STRUT



BUSHED HOOK and eye elbow in drag strut allows cushioning wheel recession on bump impact.



TILT-POP steering wheel combines both normal tilting and Thunderbird-like swing-away functions.

normal tilting mechanism with the entry/exit convenience of a swing-away wheel. The feature lets the steering column swing 45° toward the center of the car when the engine is off and the left front door is opened, but cannot be moved unless they are off and opened. Pulling the wheel back in front of the driver, when the door is shut, locks it into place again.

The Cougar has drum brakes as standard equipment, but will have a disc/drum combination as an option for all models and as standard equipment on the GT package. The drums are 10 in. in diameter with 2.25-in. width shoes (2.5 in. with 390 engines) for a swept area of 251.3 sq. in. (267.1 for 390s). The disc option gives a swept area of 330 sq. in., with the disc fronts contributing 219.2 sq. in. of the total. The discs are 11.4 in. in diameter with radial vents in the cast-iron rotor and four pistons in each caliper (two on each side).

STANDARD power for the Cougar is the lightweight 289-cu. in. V-8 in 2-barrel carburetor, 200-bhp form. A 6-cyl. engine will not be available. Two engine options are offered, the Comet-Fairlane-Mustang 289 V-8 with a 4-barrel carburetor and 225 bhp, and the big, 390-cu. in. Ford-Mercury V-8 in its 335-bhp variation. All three are quite familiar to Ford fans, their having been offered in previous years in several different lines. Conspicuous by its absence is the 271-bhp version of the 289, the High Performance special engine which has had considerable success in Mustangs.

The 335-bhp probably will be depended upon to establish the Cougar's performance image. And, with a power-to-weight ratio of around 10:1,

it should be able to something better than just hold its own. The 390/335 is a hydraulic-lifter engine with fairly mild camshaft and valve timing. A compression ratio of 10.5:1 will require premium fuel, while carburetion is a Holley C70F unit with four 1.562-in. barrels. The secondaries are vacuum operated. It develops maximum horsepower at a fairly low, 4800 rpm, and maximum torque, a husky 427 lb.-ft., at 3200 rpm.

Any of the three engines can be ordered with any of three transmissions—all synchromesh 3- and 4-speed manuals, or 3-speed Merc-O-Matic. The Merc-O-Matic now has manual shift capabilities, so that the car can be downshifted to second gear (below 71 mph) or first (below 20 mph)—or held in gear for maximum engine usage. The Merc-O-Matic has geared ratios of 2.46 and 1.46:1 and a stall torque ratio of 2.02:1 (2.10:1 with the 390 V-8).

Actually, there will be two sets of manual transmissions: The 289 V-8s get a 3-speed with 2.99 and 1.75:1 gears, where the 390 gets 2.42 and 1.61:1 ratios. The 4-speed for the 289s has 2.78, 1.93 and 1.36:1; that for the 390 has 2.32, 1.69 and 1.29:1 ratios.

FINAL GEARING for the Cougar is a bit sparse. Preliminary specifications list 2.80, 3.00 and 3.25 axle ratios only. The 289/200 gets a 2.80 ratio with any transmission choice, the 289/225 gets a 3.00, as does the 390/335. However, the 3.25:1 is optional for the 390/335.

Marketing of the Cougar will fall happily to Lincoln-Mercury dealers. Pricing hadn't been completely structured as *CL* was going to press, but most L-M officials said that the base

price would be "only slightly more than a Mustang with the same equipment. Thus it would seem that Cougar falls readily into the \$2700 category, where it would compete, head-on, with the sportier versions of the General Motors A-body series—Pontiac Tempest, Oldsmobile F-85, Chevrolet Chevelle and Buick Special. With a lower base price, Mustang had no trouble out-selling all the various divisional A-bodies, but can the richer, costlier Cougar do it, too? Time will tell.

AT ANY RATE, the Cougar arrives at the marketplace an impressively new car despite its Mustang parentage; it presents the Mustang concept couched in more luxurious surroundings. When we asked one Lincoln-Mercury official to characterize whom the car would sell to, he replied, "It's for the man on his way to a Thunderbird. . ."

COUGAR vs. MUSTANG Comparative Specifications

	'67 Cougar	'67 Mustang
Wheelbase, in.	111.0	108.0
track, front/rear, in.	58.1/58.1	58.0/58.0
Overall length, in.	190.3	183.6
width	71.2	70.9
height	51.8	51.6
Front seat head room, in.	37.5	37.4
maximum leg room	41.8	41.8
shoulder room	53.8	53.4
hip room	54.2	53.9
Rear seat head room in.	35.9	35.9
minimum leg room	30.7	28.8
shoulder room	53.2	53.9
hip room	51.7	50.9
Standard engine	ohv V-8	ohv I1-6
cu. in./bhp	289/200	200/120
Top engine option	ohv V-8, 390/335	
Standard transmission	manual 3-speed	
opt. transmissions	automatic and 4-speed manual	
Brakes	all drums; disc/drum optional	
Curb weight, lb.	3119	2696