







## Foreword

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Perhaps "The Continental Story" starts with a chapter that we, the builders of the motor car itself, could never have written.

When the Continental *Mark II* was merely a dream taking shape on our drafting boards, we began to receive letters like this, addressed to William C. Ford:

"May I express my delight in the decision of your company to again produce this beloved masterpiece? I have never had the joy of owning a Continental, and doubt I ever will. This sad

fact has not, and will not, diminish my pleasure in its beauty. All things lovely, though I may not possess them, delight me. May I then, thank you for bringing back this truly beautiful car, not only for those fortunate people able to own one, but also for those of us who must find pleasure without possession. Good luck, and may you keep to your father's inspired design."

This letter is one of hundreds in our files. It tells, better than words of ours, why we are building the Continental *Mark II*.

But, first, the beginning . . .

# 1 A rich heritage

The Continental *Mark II* is born of a proud tradition—a tradition created by the original Lincoln-Continental.

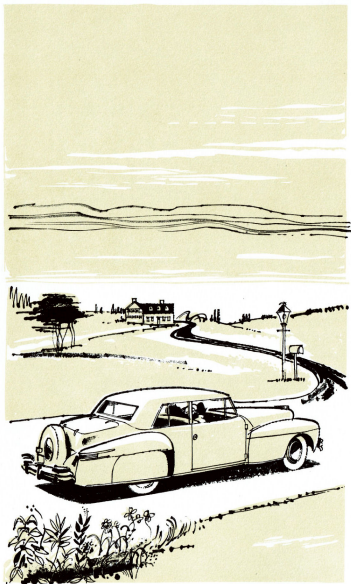
The first motor car of this name was designed and built as the personal car (and the personal creation) of Henry Ford's son, Edsel.

In the several years of its manufacture—both preceding and following the second World War—the number of Lincoln-

Continental was exceedingly small, even in comparison to other luxury cars.

Despite its limited numbers, and despite its discontinuance in 1948, the Lincoln-Continental is, even today, a vital and living legend on the American Road.

Fortune Magazine, for example, recently referred to it in this way: "From used-car dealers on Detroit's Livernois Avenue,

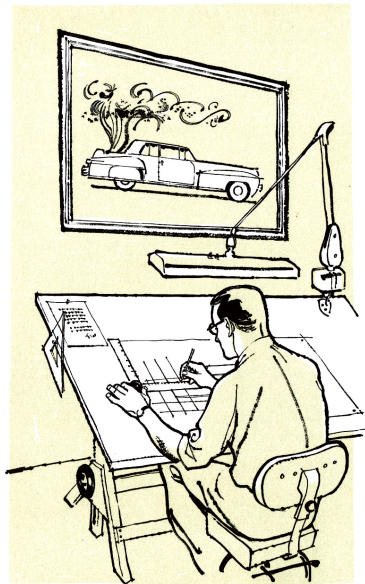


to New York's Museum of Modern Art, there is general agreement that the Lincoln-Continental was one of the most striking U.S. automobile designs of the past 20 years."

Edsel Ford's concept of superlative good taste has withstood the test of time. His creation had the true stature of a classic: the ability to endure. Hardly ever, to our knowledge, has a motor car maintained so much of its intrinsic value for so many years. Even among all the latest models of other motor cars, the Lincoln-Continental continues to present a most distinctive and distinguished appearance.

And now, Edsel Ford's son, William Clay Ford, is carrying on the proud tradition of this fine car. The new Continental *Mark II*, in the manner of the true conservative, takes the best of the past and, with it, combines the best of the present.

It takes its theme, admittedly, from the Lincoln-Continental. And it goes on from there to something even finer. And we sincerely believe that the Continental *Mark II* surpasses even the distinguished car that went before it.



In its design, it captures the formality and authority of the older car, together with a modern feeling of the utmost smartness.

In every detail, the Continental *Mark II* represents the determination of the Ford Motor Company to create a motor car finer than any that America has ever known.





## 2 The dream takes shape

One morning, scores of drawings were set up for inspection in the conference room of the Continental Division of the Ford Motor Company, at Dearborn, which is a short distance outside Detroit.

The drawings were not signed by the artists who had executed them. They represented the work of our own stylists, as well

as that of four of the country's top "free-lance" automotive designers.

The assignment had been simply this: Taking inspiration from the Lincoln-Continental—acknowledged to be the most beautiful car of its day—to design a motor car that will be the most distinguished car in the world *today*.

All of the car designs were submitted in the same color, so that they could be judged impartially, solely on the excellence of line and form. All were drawn to the same size and scale, over a "grid" which automatically controlled the basic dimensions. Thus, no artist could "stretch out" his drawing of the car to make it look longer, or make it seem sleeker by drawing it lower than allowed by the grid.

At various times for several days, five Ford executives, led by William Clay Ford, looked in turn at the sketches. There



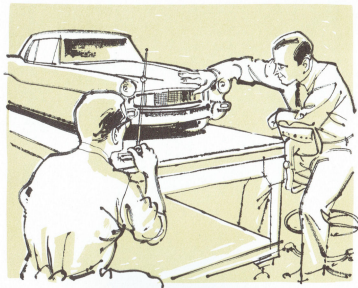
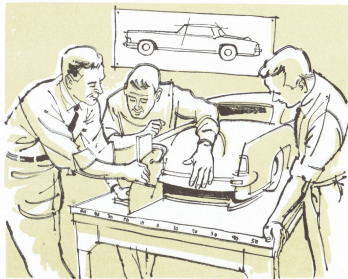
was never more than one man in the room at a time, and the men purposely refrained from discussing their preferences with each other.

Yet, on the following Monday morning, one, and only one, set of sketches received every man's vote. Without knowing who had originated any particular drawing, it happened that each man actually chose the design which had been submitted by the Continental Division's own styling section. The vote was unanimous. "This," everyone agreed, "is what the new Continental should look like."

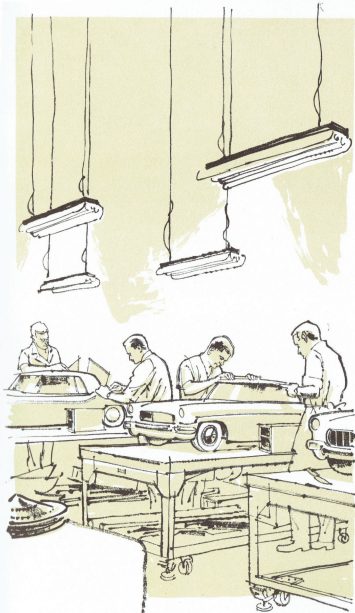
As the dream began to take shape, the practical considerations of the engineers entered into the stylists' plans.

The first drawings of the body (one-tenth actual size) allowed for chair-height seating comfort in a car that is excitingly low. Many other considerations, such as radiator and engine positions, weight distribution and chassis width, had to mesh successfully in one model faithful to the chosen sketch.

A number of models were then created in clay, three-eighths of the full size of the Continental *Mark II*. Refinement after refinement was made until the final model expressed the clean lines and refined character desired of the new car.





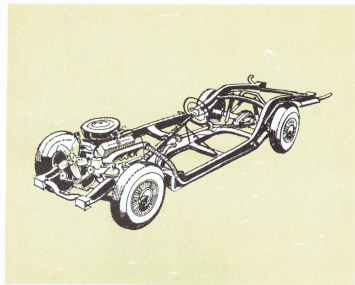
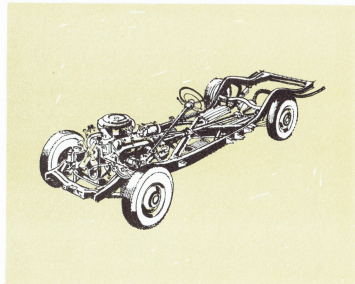


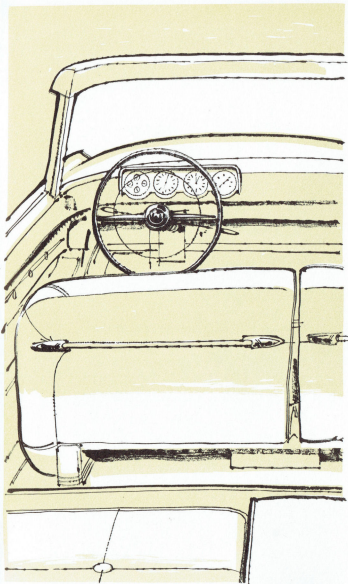
In all this work, stylist and engineer had to be faithful to function as well as to form. For the concept of the Continental *Mark II* is, above all, that of sincere, straightforward design.

For this reason, the hood of the Continental *Mark II* was made dramatically long to achieve maximum seating comfort in a low car.

The lines of the car were made strikingly low, not just for the sake of being low, but because greater comfort, security and an exciting sense of "really driving the car" is gained when the "ride" is closer to the road.

The riding comfort was complemented by the development of the unique Continental *Mark II* chassis *illustrated below*. This features a distinctly new type of frame which has side-rails *outside* the seats, permitting more seating room in a low car, better passenger protection, greater stability and an exceptionally more comfortable ride.





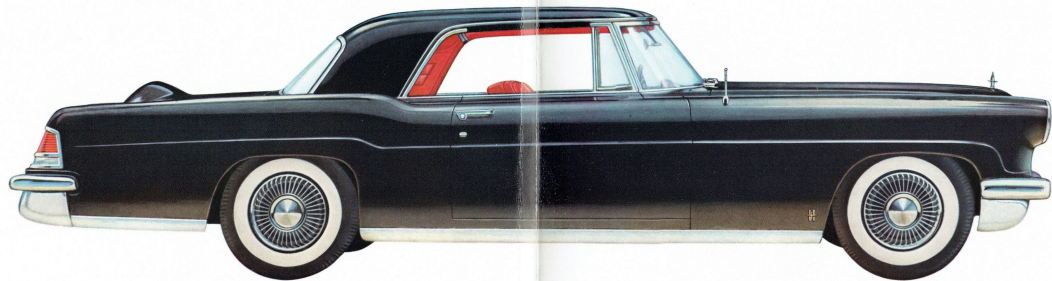
Still another expression of the Continental's true-to-function design is found in the windshield, which is not only wrapped around, but actually moved back for greater visibility. The windshield pillar is one of the slimmest and most unobtrusive that you will find in any motor car. At the same time, it is as *strong* a pillar as you will find, because of its unique design.

Inside luxury is exemplified by the door panel, beside the driver, for easy regulation of seating and ventilating. For example, not only are all regular windows electrically operated from the front seat, but the vent windows can be so regulated, also.

At last, the full-scale model of the Continental *Mark II* was completed. It embodied dozens of improvements, large and small. When all this was done, and all details were adjudged practical, it was agreed that the Continental *Mark II* would fulfill the expectations of its designers in every respect—in short, that it would be a motor car of rare distinction and elegance.

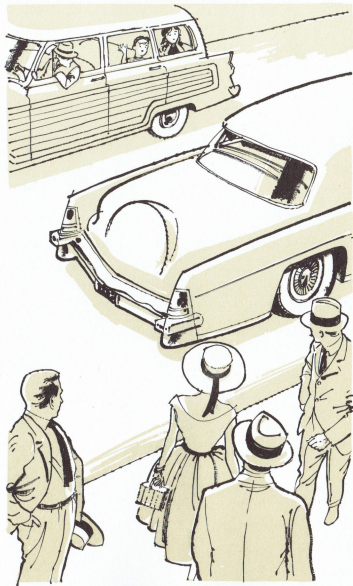








But, there was much more to be done...



# 3

## The secret everybody knew

The very first Continental *Mark II*—the “prototype”—had been secretly assembled . . . by hand.

Its bumpers, hub caps, and other chrome, had been painted black. Its body had been disguised so as to be (we thought) completely unrecognizable.

Then this car, which no amount of external design modification (automotive men call it “cobbling”) could make seem

commonplace, went out on the test track, and then on the highways, for its initial trial runs.

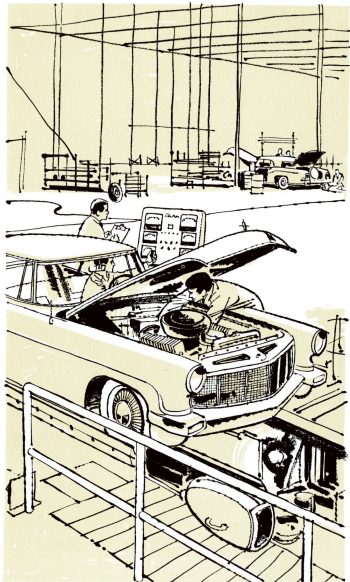
Whenever it passed, necks craned and heads turned.

Even at night, truck drivers leaned out of their high cabs as they shot the question to the test driver: “What’s *that* car, bud—the new Continental?” (Word had already gotten around, you see, that there was going to *be* a new Continental).



Day after day, week after week, month after month . . . both day and night . . . it was driven for tens of thousands of miles through all kinds of road and weather conditions.

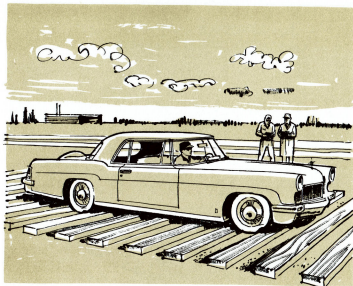
Every week it was brought back in to Continental Division specialists for complete examination of both its parts and its performance.

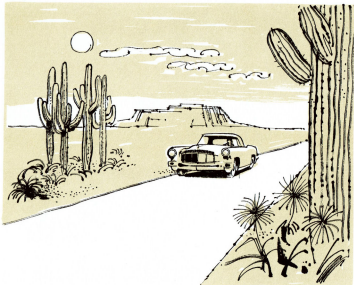


This car was followed by many other Continental *Mark II* "Engineering Prototypes." Although the styling features of these cars were masked as far as possible to prevent recognition, they were essentially and basically true to the actual plans for the actual "production" car. In their day-and-night road testing, the cars were driven for months, because this is the accepted test program that simulates road wear accurately.

Day after day . . . night after night . . . in sleet, rain and desert heat, the tests went on.

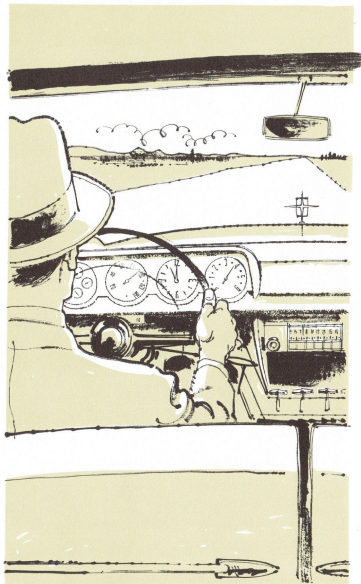
In fact, it would take two thick manuals to describe in detail all of the trials and tests to which the prototype Continentals were put . . . not only on the road, but also at the Ford Motor Company Body and Structure Laboratory. Here, the rugged program included everything from strength and distortion tests . . . to wind-tunnel test . . . and tests for complete assurance against dust and water.





The cars were driven at high speed over railroad ties and cobblestones; they were stopped and then started on their way up mountain-degree grades; they were driven around all manner of curves at all manner of speeds; from Michigan to Arizona and back they were tested in all kinds of temperature, on all kinds of roads, and even in mudpits.

While many of these tests were standard tests, commonly used in the development of *any* new automobile, the Continental *Mark II*, conceived in the minds of its designers as a most *uncommon* motor car, was subjected to still more rigorous and continuing tests . . .



Extended roadability tests were conducted to make sure the Continental would provide a luxury ride both at low and high speeds, and extraordinarily fine handling characteristics at *all* speeds. This program resulted in the invention of a new, self-compensating shock absorber which provides ease of handling and fine car comfort at any point on the speedometer.

Engineers who were responsible for the particular components of the Continental conducted their own particular durability tests. Careful inspections and engineering evaluations were made daily throughout these runs.

To the best knowledge of our engineers, no detail was overlooked to make certain that the styling superiority of the Continental would be matched by the motor car's performance as well.



## 4 The art of craftsmanship

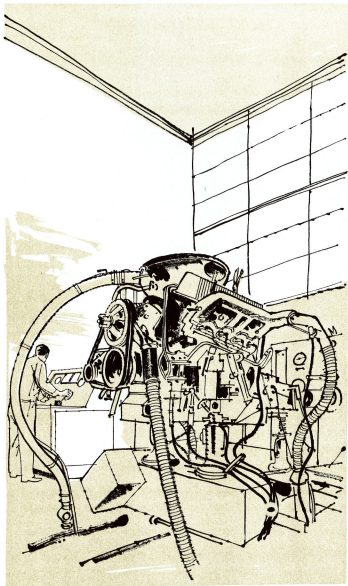
All through the Continental *Mark II* can be found the master builder's touch. For this motor car comes from the hands of craftsmen endowed with exceptional automotive skills.

Many of them have several decades' experience in building fine cars. Although their ages may differ, their most important qualifications are the same: the innate ability that is the mark of the superior craftsman.



Even before the parts and materials reach the craftsman's hands, they have survived a rigid system of checking and double checking which goes on until the time each finished Continental *Mark II* rolls out of its modern new plant which was designed exclusively for the manufacture of this superb motor car.

The engine naturally is given the most meticulous care and attention. First, it is assembled and checked in the manner that all automotive power plants are checked. Then, it is

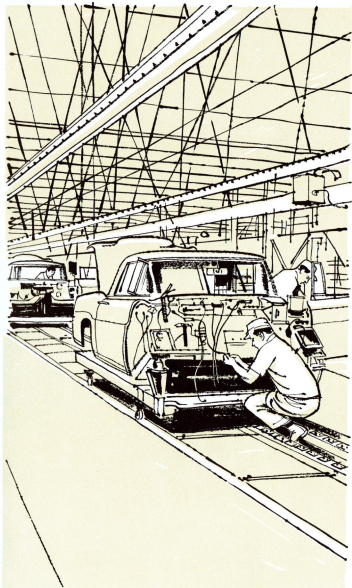


thoroughly checked *again* by dynamometer for idle speed, "vacuum," "peak torque," quietness, and any needed adjustments.

The Continental "quality objective" is achieved by rigid inspections both during and after the assembly of the car. Extraordinary precautions are taken to provide accurate manufacture of detail parts prior to assembly. Upon assembly of all components, another, final, "shakedown" evaluation is made.

From all this, you might say (and rightly so) that the attitude of the motor car perfectionist finds dramatic expression in the Continental *Mark II*.

For example, in designing the chassis and the body of the Continental, engineers recognized that a car made in limited volume can have design details not readily attainable in high volume manufacture.



So, the unique Continental *Mark II* is, by its nature, a limited-volume car. The distinctive characteristics of the body and chassis call for, and receive, the close attention of every craftsman as the car slowly moves along the "line".

This attitude of carefulness, beginning with the design and carried through to the completed motor car, provides the true product integrity of the Continental *Mark II*.

Even when a Continental *Mark II* has been completed, it has not yet seen the last of its inspections. Each finished car is taken over by an inspector-mechanic who puts it through a series of test-track and road tests that are as tough as they are thorough. A combination of performance trials and shop checks goes on until the inspector-mechanic is personally satisfied that the motor car is ready, in every respect, to carry on the proud tradition exemplified by its name.



At time of delivery to the dealer, the Continental *Mark II* is sheathed in a special fleece-lined plastic cover to prevent even the slightest damage in transit.

When a Continental *Mark II* is finally delivered, the owner will notice a distance up to 100 miles on the speedometer. These are the "make-sure miles" driven by the inspector-mechanic.



# 5

## What we found at the Bridge of Weir, Scotland

To Paris to inspect fabric designs and colors . . .

To airplane factories to find inspiration in modern instrument and dial design . . .

These are just a few of the many journeys that were made to gather materials of exceptional quality, and designs of exceptional beauty, for the interior appointments of the Continental *Mark II*.

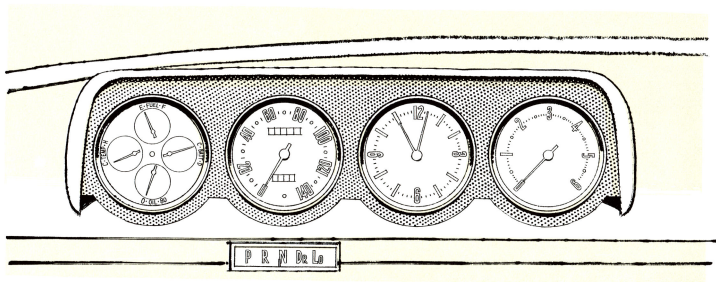


After a long search, we came upon upholstery leathers which had been hand-worked to a rich softness. These leathers have a deeper grain, a smoother and finer texture than other fine leathers we had seen throughout the world. They are the result of secret methods handed down through many generations. We found them at the Bridge of Weir, Scotland; in Denmark, and on the continent. Today, you will find them as upholstery leathers in the Continental *Mark II*.





Textile men agree that the broadcloths used in the Continental have a finer, more luxurious "hand" finish than any other broadcloths. Of all motor cars, only the Continental has this superlative material . . . chosen after an inspection of the finest broadcloths available both in the United States and abroad.



The instrument panel of the Continental *Mark II* again expresses the elegance of simplicity.



# 6

## A proud objective

To assert that the Continental *Mark II* is "the finest motor car in the world" might seem boastful and presumptuous on our part, even though we sincerely believe it to be so.

We prefer to express our pride in the car by clearly reaffirming our objective in building it:

"Every Continental will be produced with utmost care and precision . . . as near a custom-built car as our techniques and

resources will permit. For it is the intention of the Ford Motor Company to make this the very finest motor car America has yet seen."

We hope that you who enjoy and admire fine cars will share the deep sense of satisfaction with which we present the

CONTINENTAL *MARK II*



**Continental Division  
Ford Motor Company**

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*Continental Division, Ford Motor Company, reserves the right to change without notice colors, materials, equipment and prices, and any other specifications without incurring any obligation.*

