



USA 1956-1957



NUMBER 55

Continental MARK II

A good way to describe the alluring Lincoln-built Continental Mark II is a reincarnated Duesenberg. Extremely expensive, it was also superbly built and handsome despite its huge size and satisfyingly powerful engine.

Produced by
Lincoln Division, Ford
Motor Co., Detroit



VITAL STATISTICS

Top speed:	112 mph
0-60 mph:	10.5 sec.
Engine type:	V8
Displacement:	368 c.i.
Max power:	285 bhp at 4,800 rpm
Max torque:	401 lb-ft at 2,800 rpm
Weight:	4,825 lbs.
Gas mileage:	12 mpg
Price:	\$9,695



"...effortless to drive."

"Ford wanted the driver to feel special in this expensive two-door coupe, and in that they certainly succeeded. Once settled in behind the typically large steering wheel, your view is superb—a curved windshield opens out onto a hood that seems to go on forever. Fire it up and the V8 rumble is familiar. There is plenty of power, but the best way to enjoy the Continental is to allow the smooth column-shifted automatic transmission to do all the work."

The interior is swathed in leather, has plush carpeting and power seats.



Continental MARK II

William Clay Ford's brain storm, the Continental Mark II, was a brave attempt to outdo even Cadillac. Certainly the car was more expensive than any Cadillac, and Ford lost a reputed \$1,000 on every car sold.

Hand picked mechanicals

The V8 engines in the Continental were hand picked off the assembly line to deliver the best possible performance. The same was true of the three-speed Turbo-Drive automatic transmission and rear axle.



Lush cabin

The styling is simple and engineering-inspired, rather than juke-box glamorous. The gauges are quality crafted and very easy to read. It is garnished with cloth seat covers, or Scottish 'Bridge of Weir' leather.

Hand-tailored build

The bodies of the Mark II were trial fitted to the chassis and then painted, sanded and polished by hand. All cars were given a 12-mile road test followed by an in-depth inspection and tuning as necessary.

Cow-belly chassis

In order to free up as much headroom in the low-roof coupe cabin, chief engineer Harley Copp gave it a unique 'cow-belly' chassis that drops down between the front and rear axles. This allows the seats to be positioned lower in the bodyshell and makes the cabin impressively roomy.

Electric gadgets

The Continental is certainly filled with its share of electrical components such as power seats. The only listed option was air conditioning.



Specifications

1956 Continental Mark II

ENGINE

Type: V8

Construction: Cast-iron block and heads

Valve gear: Two valves per cylinder operated by a single camshaft via pushrods and rockers

Bore and stroke: 4.00 in. x 3.66 in.

Displacement: 368 c.i.

Compression ratio: 9.0:1

Induction system: Single carburetor

Maximum power: 285 bhp at 4,800 rpm

Maximum torque: 401 lb-ft at 2,800 rpm

TRANSMISSION

Three-speed Turbo-Drive automatic

BODY/CHASSIS

Separate chassis with steel two-door coupe body

SPECIAL FEATURES



The hallmark 'Continental'-style spare wheel on the trunk echoed the great Lincolns of the past.



The front uses much chrome, but the design is remarkable for its simplicity.

RUNNING GEAR

Steering: Recirculating ball

Front suspension: Independent with coil springs and telescopic shock absorbers

Rear suspension: Live axle with semi-elliptic springs and telescopic shock absorbers

Brakes: Drums (front and rear)

Wheels: Steel, 16-in. dia.

Tires: 16-in. dia.

DIMENSIONS

Length: 218.4 in. Width: 77.5 in.

Height: 56.0 in. Wheelbase: 126.0 in.

Track: 58.6 in. (front), 60.0 in. (rear)

Weight: 4,825 lbs.

Milestones

1956 The 1956 model year Continental Mark II makes its debut at the 1955 Paris Salon. It is not badged as a Lincoln but is a marque in its own right, reflecting its hand-built nature.



The Mark III couldn't save the Continental marque.

1957 With very few cosmetic changes, the 1957 Continental enters production with a mild power increase to 300 bhp.



By the 1970s the Lincoln Continental had become rather less exclusive.

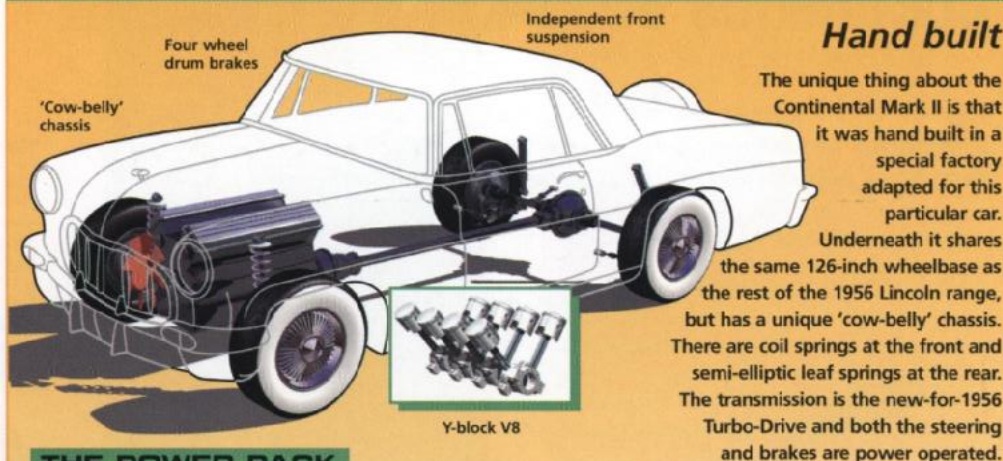
1958 The all-new and rather overblown Mark III replaces the Mark II, bringing the hand-made Continental era to an end.

1959 The Continental marque is incorporated in the Lincoln-Mercury division. The Mark III becomes the Lincoln Continental Mark IV.

VALUE GUIDE

ORIGINAL PRICE	
1956	\$9,695
CURRENT VALUE	\$12,000-\$25,000
PRODUCTION TOTAL	3,000

UNDER THE SKIN



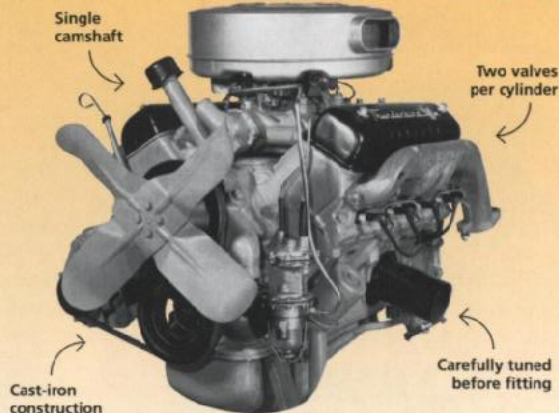
Hand built

The unique thing about the Continental Mark II is that it was hand built in a special factory adapted for this particular car. Underneath it shares the same 126-inch wheelbase as the rest of the 1956 Lincoln range, but has a unique 'cow-belly' chassis. There are coil springs at the front and semi-elliptic leaf springs at the rear. The transmission is the new-for-1956 Turbo-Drive and both the steering and brakes are power operated.

THE POWER PACK

Hand picked V8 power

The V8 engine installed in the Continental Mark II is the same 368-cubic inch motor used by all 1956 Lincolns—an enlarged version of the familiar Ford/Lincoln Y-block but with a bigger bore and stroke. The real difference is engines that were fitted to the Continental were all hand picked off the line, ensuring the best and most powerful units were installed. Additionally, every engine was adjusted prior to being fitted. The power output in 1956 was 285 bhp, which increased to 300 bhp in 1957 due to a higher compression ratio.



The hand-built Mark II is a real collector's item.

Rare 1957

Because it was made for only two seasons, the Mark II is extremely rare, but the 1957 model is by far the more scarce (444 cars compared with 2,556 of the 1956 model). The ideal find would be an untouched original car with air conditioning.

NOSE TO NOSE Cadillac Eldorado Brougham • Oldsmobile 88 • Continental Mark II

TOP SPEED	0-60 mph	POWER	WEIGHT	RIVAL CARS
110 mph	11.4 sec.	325 bhp	5,315 lbs.	CADILLAC ELDORADO BROUGHAM
101 mph	12.1 sec.	240 bhp	4,032 lbs.	OLDSMOBILE 88
112 mph	10.5 sec.	285 bhp	4,825 lbs.	CONTINENTAL MARK II