

# 1957 Ford Fairlane 500

## IS THERE SOMETHING REALLY NEW?

**YES---Ford for '57!** It's low, wide, handsome, and a completely new car from the ground up---and in this case not very far up! Fairlanes and Customs are both less than 57 inches high, or just about eye level for a tiny five-foot girl! The three basic models---Fairlane, Custom, and Station Wagons---are long, too---up to nine inches longer than the '56 Ford.

One of the newest features of the '57 Ford is the fact that for the first time in its 53-year history, the Ford Motor Company will be producing 20 models (21 with the Ranchero later) in three different basic sizes, each with its own body and chassis. The largest, the Fairlane and Fairlane "500" (luxury job), are built on a 118-inch wheelbase, are nine inches longer and four inches lower than last year's models. Station Wagons are built on 116-inch wheelbase, are 3.5 inches lower, and almost six inches longer. Customs and Custom "300s" have a 116-inch wheelbase, are over three inches longer and nearly 3.5 inches lower than the '56s.

Low overall height, along with proper road clearance and satisfactory interior proportions, is hard to accomplish. Ford surmounted this problem by redesigning the frame to accommodate the passenger section within the side rails. In effect, the rails become side bumpers that protect the passengers. Heavier stock here, along with tubular crossmembers, makes the new frame 27 per cent more rigid and saves two inches in height.

A tapered driveshaft and redesigned hypoid rear axle and 14-inch wheels (15 inches in '56) reduce the height another two inches for a total of four inches from ground to top. All of this lowering is without any sacrifice to the interior proportions.

Other new features that become apparent are the deep-dish safety wheel (standard equipment) that is smaller and considerably lower; a repositioned front seat to take advantage of the new angle: and, a new panel with instruments that are easily read, even in bright sunlight. We are especially

pleased with the excellent upholstery detail and hope this is carried out in their production models

Twelve solid and 19 two-tone body color combinations dictate a wide choice in upholstery motif for individual taste; the new Ford



line boast 37 different fabric-color upholstery combinations. Seat cloth is nylon backed with latex for longer wear. Solid vinyl is also available in crush grain or pleats. Floor covering is color matched in vinyl, looped rayon and ribbed linoleum, the latter for Station Wagon models.

**Engine Choices for '57!** Three V8's and a "mileage-maker" six are offered for '57, each with major engineering changes, including higher compression ratios, freer breathing, new ignition and better exhaust flow.

Top muscle man of this group is the **Thunderbird Special V8**, available as an optional engine in any model; it is not standard on any Ford. It's a big 312-cubic-inch engine, with 3.80-inch bore and 3.44-inch stroke. Using a compression ratio of 9.7 to 1, it unleashes 245 hungry horse (at 4500 rpm) that are fed by a special low silhouette four-venturi carburetor.

Next in line is the **Thunderbird V8**, a 292-cubic-inch (2.75 bore and 3.30 stroke) engine 9.1 to 1 compression ratio. When it's used with Fordomatic it's rated at 212 horsepower at 4500 rpm; with a standard box, it rates at only 206. A two-venturi carburetor is used, regardless of transmission. This engine is standard on the Fairlanes and Station Wagons.



The little brother of these power mills is a 190-horse V8 that's used in the Custom and Custom "300" series. It's The smallest V8, being 272 cubic-inch, with 3.62 bore and 3.30 stroke. Compression ratio is 8.6 to 1. A double-barrel carburetor is used.

Though there probably are fewer and fewer buyers looking for economy, Ford still provides a 223-cubic-inch six that gives a healthy 144 horsepower at 4200 rpm. It is available on all models. The new V8's sport a larger intake manifold, bigger and higher-lifting intake valves, and a recontoured camshaft. Each is equipped with a new dry-type carburetor air filter and a redesigned carburetors for more efficient fuel distribution.



wheel. Live rubber mounts are used at 20 places between body and frame.

On rather smooth roads, we noticed a minimum nose dip when braking. The brakes seemed smooth and positive, although we will have to wait until later tests to determine their fade resistance factor. New outboard-mounted rear springs are two inches longer than on the '56 model. This extra length is ahead of the rear axle and materially aids in reducing front end dive on quick stops.

A redesigned ball-joint front suspension boasts single-unit upper and lower arm construction. Hinged with live rubber bushings, these arms are swept back in a modified trailing arm manner. Wheel motion is now upward and reward which, in effect, causes the wheel to be pulled rather pushed over a bump

Violent cornering brought out the advantages of a low center of gravity. This new Ford really sticks. Body lean is modest, and with the built-in oversteer, you get a feeling of confidence in the car's ability to do your bidding. Not that you can't break it loose; we did several times, but it broke reluctantly and a quick correction of the wheel put it back in the groove.

Steering is positive with about average resistance without power advantage. You'll like the feel of the smaller deep-dished steering wheel, and the driving position, with its conduciveness to good control. The four turns from lock to lock could probably be reduced to 3 1/2 turns without creating undue turning resistance. Steering ratio is up from 25.3 to 1 to 27 to 1, "for easier turning," says Ford, but we feel the smaller (14-inch) wheels, with broader rims and more tread surface on the road, may have had something to do with the change.

**The Ford for '57 should be a most interesting car to watch.** There are plenty of Ford fingers crossed and they'll remain until an upward sales trend is established. *The final tally, according to the Standard Catalog (Krause Publications), was 1,522,406 for Ford versus 1,515,177 for Chevrolet, a difference of 7,359 units.*

They think you will like it. We think you may, too.

