



had done the same thing earlier with a 1936 Ford sedan, and would repeat it later with a '67 Continental.

Tom McCahill paid the "Squarebird" a rather backhanded compliment in his final road test of the model in 1960: "...the middle-aged

clubwoman may feel that this piece of transportation gives her a lift, a touch of glamour, perhaps even a distant recollection of arriving at New York's old Central Park Casino in a Duesenberg to hear Eddie Duchin play the piano. For many people, owning a

new T-Bird is a last backward look at their fleeting youth—and if they get a bounce out of it, I'm all for it." *Motor Trend*, however, viewed it as something more than a nostalgia trip: "What it does have is originality, freshness, and newness of concept. This is its secret. It has, more than any other current domestic car, the spirit and quality that made the classic roadsters and tourers of the 1930's such memorable favorites." For the growing number of "Squarebird" partisans, that says it all.

perhaps a bare unit body is available as either NOS or reproduction from a number of companies specializing in these models. A big plus is plentiful supplies of soft trim and rubber parts, usually the first things to become scarce once a model leaves production. Everything from headliners and dash pads to carpets and floor mats is available and reasonably priced. The same is true of exhaust system components and replacement body panels, as well as the front ball joints, a weak spot on these cars. Major running gear components can still be found through salvage yards and auto rebuilders, though used transmission cases bear watching as they are prone to cracking. One other caution involves reproductions of some trim items originally offered through Ford dealers, some of which may be of inferior manufacture.

Though original-condition "Squarebirds" are about as scarce as hen's teeth

now, be sure to check any potential purchase for signs of rust, which can be more damaging—and more costly to put right—than with a body-on-frame car. The four-seater, of course, introduced unit construction to Ford (along with its Lincoln linemates) in the post-war era, and is a known "ruster." Construction quality, more important on an original specimen, was quite variable, particularly on the '58s. Besides the obvious electrical system and mechanical inspections, your condition check should also include the front end, which was prone to premature wear (especially the aforementioned ball joints). Pay particular attention to the steering and front-end alignment. It's also a good idea to check transmission operation, particularly if the car in question has a cracked casing, because some internal components for both the manual and the automatic are hard to come by.

Clubs for 1958-60 Thunderbirds

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