

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1960 Ford Thunderbird Restoration Guide

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Factory-Correct Restoration Reference

1960 Ford Thunderbird Restoration Guide

Model Years 1960

Model year	1960
Generation	Square Bird (second generation)
Engine	352 cu in FE V8 (430 MEL optional)
Output	300 hp (430 MEL: 350 hp)
Transmission	3-speed manual or Cruise-O-Matic automatic
Production	92,843

Every specification in this guide was checked against factory literature, marque references, period road tests, and documented survivor vehicles. Where sources disagree or the record is silent, this guide says so rather than guessing.

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How This Guide Works

This is a **single-year restoration** guide for the 1960 Ford Thunderbird - one model year, given its own guide because the year changes are the restoration: specifications, finishes and procedures that differ from the year before and the year after are called out in the 1960 Register below, and shared platform material is labeled as shared. Ford factory shop manuals 1958-1966; Vintage Thunderbird Club marque references; period road tests; Motor Trend Car of the Year record.

Scope. This guide covers the 1960 Ford Thunderbird as built. Neighboring years appear only where a change boundary must be drawn - a part or procedure belonging to another year is named as such, never silently applied to this one.

Platform Snapshot

Fact	Detail
Model year	1960
Engine (standard)	352 cu in FE V8 (430 MEL optional)
Output	300 hp (430 MEL: 350 hp)
Transmission	3-speed manual or Cruise-O-Matic automatic
Chassis	Unibody; 113 in wheelbase
Original list price	Hardtop class carried; sunroof a premium option
Production	92,843

The 1960 Register - What Makes a 1960 a 1960

- Final Square Bird year: a new grille (a main horizontal bar bisecting three vertical bars over a fine grid), detail trim changes - and one headline option.
- The sliding steel sunroof returns to an American production car for the first time since before the war: the 'Golde Edition' hardtop with a manually operated sunroof. 2,536 limited-edition gold-roof hardtops were built within the year's run.
- Triple taillight units replace the 1958-59 dual round lamps - three per side is a 1960-only Square Bird tail.
- Engines are unchanged: 352 FE standard, 430 MEL optional. Judge a 1960 on its trim, lamps and roof options, not its engine list.
- Sales climbed again to 92,843 - hardtops outsold convertibles nearly eight to one.

Engines - the 1960 Specification

Engine	Output	Notes
352 FE V8	300 hp	Standard; unchanged from 1959
430 MEL V8	350 hp	Optional; unchanged from 1959

Engine service carries over from 1959 practice for both families - the 1960 story is body and trim, which is exactly why this guide spends its pages there.



Year-Correct Procedures

Sunroof cars: the sliding panel's tracks, drains and seals are 1960 service items - water management is the whole job; a leaking Golde roof is a drain problem before it is a seal problem.

Triple-lamp rear clusters wire and ground as three units per side - lamp faults on a 1960 are chased in that year's cluster arrangement.

Finishes and Trim - 1960 Only

- 1960 grille (horizontal bar over verticals and fine grid) and triple taillights are the year tells - either one dates the end of the car it is fitted to.
- Golde Edition: gold-color roof and special touches on the limited hardtops - verify the roof specification from the car's data, not from the paint alone.

Restoration Sequence Notes

- Photograph and record the car's tags, casting numbers and as-found trim before teardown - on a single-year restoration the as-found evidence is what the finished car is judged against.
- Verify every year-locked item in the 1960 Register before ordering parts; the commonest defect in this model's restorations is a neighboring year's part fitted without malice and without record.
- Keep a build file: sources consulted, measurements taken, and every substitution made, however small.

Recommended for this restoration

Shop exact-fit supplies on Amazon

- Ford FE 352 390 428 engine rebuild gasket set
- 1958-1966 Ford Thunderbird weatherstrip kit
- Ford Thunderbird sequential turn signal sequencer

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Sources Consulted

Ford factory shop manuals 1958-1966; Vintage Thunderbird Club marque references; period road tests; Motor Trend Car of the Year record. Where sources disagreed, the disagreement is recorded in this guide's corrections file and the disputed figure is not asserted.

Thank you for restoring a 1960 Ford Thunderbird the way it was built - one year at a time. - RestorationEssentials