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The opening pages of

1960-1977 Mercury Comet & Ford Maverick Buyer's Guide

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1960–1977 Mercury Comet & Ford Maverick Buyer's Guide

Model Year 1960–1977

Models	Mercury Comet (1960–77) / Ford Maverick (1970–77)
Coverage	Edsel-era Comet through Grabber; all body styles
Market	Cheapest classic-Ford entry; verify Grabber claims
Authentication	VIN + data plate + Marti Report
Key check	Rust map (torque boxes, cowl); cold start; Marti on Grabbers

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

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Chapter 1 — Why Buy a Comet or Maverick

The Comet and Maverick are the affordable front door to classic Fords: simple, light, honest cars with the deepest economy-car parts support in the hobby. The early Comet (1960–65) is the elegant compact — Edsel-born, Mercury-refined, with the S-22's bucket-seat sportiness. The Maverick (1970–77) is the value play — Mustang-inspired styling over Falcon mechanicals, the Grabber's budget-muscle legend, and prices that remain the hobby's floor. Both are bought to be driven: cheap to buy, cheap to run, easy to fix.

The market reality is the buyer's friend. Volume production (over 2.1 million Mavericks; hundreds of thousands of early Comets) means supply is deep and prices are rational. Condition dominates: a solid six-cylinder Maverick driver is a better buy than a rusty 'Grabber' with a story, because the Grabber premium only pays on documented cars (Chapter 13). The buyer who wants classic-Ford experience — the styling, the simplicity, the V8 soundtrack where applicable — at the lowest entry cost finds it here.

Chapter 2 — The Comet Line: 1960–1977 at a Glance

The Comet's story is Ford's most unusual: launched in March 1960 as a badgeless 'Comet' — developed for the dying Edsel division, wearing canted taillights with 'E' part numbers, selling over 100,000 in its first year on Edsel momentum. 1961 brought the S-22 sport package (185,000 sold); 1962 brought Mercury branding, the Villager wagon, and 165,000 sales. The 1964–65 Comets grew sportier (the Caliente, the Cyclone's arrival); 1966 moved the Comet to the intermediate Fairlane platform (98,545 sold) with big-block availability; and 1971 rebodied it onto the Maverick platform for the run through 1977.



The buying map: 1960–63 for the Edsel-era curiosity (the badgeless 1960s and the canted taillights are the conversation pieces); 1964–65 for the sporty compact (Caliente, Cyclone — the collector Comets); 1966–67 for the intermediate muscle option (big-blocks, rarest, thinnest parts); 1971–77 for the Maverick-based value (same mechanicals, Mercury trim, lowest prices). The early Comet's Falcon-family mechanicals mean the parts pipeline is deep; the intermediate years are the parts challenge. Buy the era that matches your intent and your mechanical confidence.

Chapter 3 — The Maverick Line: 1970–1977 at a Glance

The Maverick arrived April 17, 1969 as a 1970 model at \$1,995 — 2,411 pounds, 22 advertised mpg, Falcon chassis in Mustang-inspired clothes. The short first year sold 127,833; the full 1970 year set a record at 451,081. The Grabber appeared mid-1970 as an appearance package, became its own model for 1971 (38,963 of 271,697) with the 302 V8, and ran through 1975 with the scoops deleted for 1973. The later years brought the big bumpers (1974), catalytic converters (1975, 302 down to 129 hp), the Stallion dress-up package (1976), and the final 1977s before the Fairmont replaced the line.

The buying map: 1971–72 Grabber 302s are the collector pick (documented budget muscle, rising values); 1970–73 six-cylinder cars are the value drivers (cheapest entry, delightful simplicity); 1974–77 cars are the maximum-car-per-dollar plays (bumpers and cats discount them, but the mechanicals are the same). The four-door (1971+, 73,208 in its first year) is the family classic at the lowest prices. The Maverick's Falcon/Mustang parts interchange (this series' restoration guide, Chapter 24) means no Maverick is a parts orphan — the decisive advantage over most economy classics.

Chapter 4 — What They Cost: Market Ranges

Comet and Maverick prices are the classic-Ford floor. At the bottom: six-cylinder drivers and projects — honest cars at entry prices, the cheapest classic motoring with parts support. In the middle: solid V8 cars and clean six-cylinder examples — presentable, usable, needing nothing urgent. At the top: documented 1971–72 Grabber 302s (the budget-muscle premium is real and rising), early Comet S-22s and Cyclones in top condition, and low-mileage originals. The early Comet's Edsel-era cars carry curiosity premiums when documented; the intermediate Comets are thinly traded but genuinely rare.

The Grabber premium is the market's sharpest edge: a Marti-documented 1971–72 Grabber 302 commands multiples of a standard Maverick — but only documented (Chapter 13). An undocumented 'Grabber' is a standard car with stripes until proven otherwise, because the reproduction stripe and scoop kits make clones easy. The price discipline: condition first, documentation second, stories never. The volume means comparison shopping is always possible — there's always another Maverick.

Chapter 5 — VIN and Data-Plate Decoding

The 1970–77 Maverick VIN: first digit year (0 = 1970 through 7 = 1977), second assembly plant, third and fourth body series, fifth engine code (U = 170 six, T = 200 six, L = 250 six, F = 302 V8), final six sequential. A documented 1970 example — 0X91T119124 — decodes as 1970, St. Thomas plant, Maverick 2-door sedan, 200 six. The fifth character is the Grabber check's first step: a 'Grabber 302' with a T engine code was born a six-cylinder car. The data plate (driver's door) carries body (62A = 2-door sedan), color, trim, date, axle, transmission — the build specification.

Comet VINs follow the Ford/Mercury systems by era — verify against a year-specific decoder, because the 1960–65 Falcon-family Comets, the 1966–67 intermediates, and the 1971–77 Maverick-based cars each use their era's conventions. The data plate's date anchors every casting date; the axle and transmission codes record the born-with gearing. Photograph the VIN and plate on first inspection — and on any Grabber-priced car, the Marti