

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1961-1969 Lincoln Continental Restoration Guide

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Factory-Correct Restoration Reference

1961-1969 Lincoln Continental Restoration Guide

Model Year 1961-1969

Model	Lincoln Continental (4-door sedan / 4-door convertible)
Platform	Unibody, 126-in wheelbase, Wixom Assembly
Engines	430 MEL (1961-65) / 462 MEL (1966-68) / 460 (1968-69)
Transmission	3-speed Turbo-Drive automatic
Notable	Rear-hinged 'suicide' doors 1961-1969; ~5,100-5,500 lb

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 - The Continental That Saved Lincoln

By the dawn of the 1960s, Lincoln was a division with a problem. The Continental Mark II program of the late 1950s had burned millions, the lineup had sprawled and then collapsed, and Cadillac owned the American luxury market outright. Ford's answer was radical consolidation: one model, one car, done right. That car was the 1961 Lincoln Continental, and it arrived as a clean break from everything Detroit thought a luxury car had to look like.

The design came from Elwood Engel, and the story behind it is worth knowing because it explains the car's purity. Engel's slab-sided proposal had originally been drawn as a new Ford Thunderbird; rejected there, it found its home as the entire Lincoln lineup. The result was a car with almost no ornament for ornament's sake: flat planes, crisp edges, minimal chrome, and the rear-hinged back doors that would become the car's signature for the next nine years. It was the first Lincoln with center-opening rear doors since 1951, and it remains the defining visual fact of the fourth-generation Continental.

The market heard it immediately. The 1961 Continental debuted as a four-door sedan and a four-door convertible - the only production four-door convertible America built in those years - and it gave Lincoln an identity it had lacked for a decade. Engel himself would leave for Chrysler and echo the Continental's lines across the Imperial