

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1964 Ford Thunderbird Restoration Guide

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Factory-Correct Restoration Reference

1964 Ford Thunderbird Restoration Guide

Model Years 1964

Model year	1964
Generation	Flair Bird (fourth generation)
Engine	390 cu in FE V8
Output	300 hp
Transmission	Cruise-O-Matic automatic (3-speed)
Production	Flair Bird generation opens (236,000 across 1964-66)

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 1964 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 1964 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 1964 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	1964
Engine (standard)	390 cu in FE V8
Output	300 hp
Transmission	Cruise-O-Matic automatic (3-speed)
Chassis	Unibody; 113.2 in wheelbase
Original list price	Hardtop, convertible and Landau offered
Production	Flair Bird generation opens (236,000 across 1964-66)

The 1964 Register - What Makes a 1964 a 1964

- GENERATION BREAK - Flair Bird begins. A squared-off restyle: the Bullet Bird's pointed nose, recessed headlights, blade fins and round taillamps are all deleted. The hood lengthens, the greenhouse shortens, and sharp body-side creases with horizontal 'skeg' lines give the longer look.
- The grille keeps quad headlamps in a design related to the Bullet Bird's - a deliberate carryover cue in an otherwise new body.
- Hardtop, convertible and Landau all offered from the generation's first year.
- The 390 FE continues at 300 hp as the standard and only engine - the mechanical story is continuity, the body story is total change. Parts interchange across the 1963/1964 line is minimal.

Engines - the 1964 Specification

Engine	Output	Notes
390 FE V8	300 hp	Standard and only engine; single four-barrel

FE practice carries over; specification tables are the 1964 tables. Do not let the carryover engine talk you into carrying over body, trim or electrical parts - they are new-generation parts.



Year-Correct Procedures

New-generation body: panel, glass, weatherstrip and trim procedures all start from the 1964 manual. The unibody inspection discipline (structure first) is unchanged in principle and new in detail.

No sequential turn signals yet (1965) and no standard front discs yet (1965) - a 1964 car with either has later hardware fitted.

Finishes and Trim - 1964 Only

- Flair signatures: fake hood scoop retained, formal roofline, body-side skeg lines running through the doors into the rear fenders, and squared rear styling with full-width lamp treatment.
- No front-fender 'waste gate' chrome on the 1964 cars - that trim is a 1965 addition and a 1965 deletion the year after; its presence dates a fender.

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 1964 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 1964 Ford Thunderbird the way it was built - one year at a time. - RestorationEssentials