

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1971 Mercury Cougar Restoration Guide

Read these pages exactly as they appear in the full guide.
Nothing here is rewritten or summarised — it is the product itself,
so you can judge the depth before you spend a dollar.

The full guide: <https://restoreessentials.com/product/RE-GD-MERCURY-COUGAR-1971>

RestorationEssentials — instant PDF download after checkout.



RESTORATIONESSENTIALS

1971 Mercury Cougar

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

Key facts at a glance

Wheelbase	112 in — redesigned; exposed headlights; Eliminator dropped
Engines	351W (240 hp); 351C-4V (285 hp); 429 CJ (370 hp); 429 SCJ (375 hp)
Transmissions	3-speed manual, 4-speed manual, 3-speed automatic
Production	62,864 total Identifier VIN 1T91_/1T92_/1T93_/1T94_ — first year of the big Cougar Single-year coverage. Factory-correct specifications. No guesswork...

restorationessentials.polsia.app

Single-year coverage. Factory-correct specifications. No guesswork.

SAMPLE EXCERPT — full guide available at the link on the cover sheet



About This Guide

This is the RestorationEssentials factory-correct restoration guide for the 1971 Mercury Cougar — one model, one year, nothing else. Every specification in this guide was checked against marque references, factory literature excerpts, and enthusiast documentation before it was written.

Our operating ethic is simple: we don't lie and we don't steal, we offer value. That means three things for this guide. First, no invented specifications — every number has a source. Second, where reputable sources disagree, the disagreement is disclosed in the text and in the Sources, Conflicts & Omissions section rather than papered over. Third, where a detail could not be verified, it is omitted and the omission is recorded — an honest gap beats a confident fabrication.

How to use this guide: start with the VIN and fender-tag (or door data plate) decoding sections to establish exactly what your car was when it left the factory. Use the engine, transmission, axle, paint, and casting sections to verify that what is on the car today matches what should be there. Use the rust and restoration-sequence sections to plan the work. And keep this guide in the shop — it is a working document, not a coffee-table book.

A final note: these cars are sixty years old. Parts have been swapped, tags have been lost, and memories have faded. Trust

the metal — casting numbers, date codes, and stampings — over stories. When in doubt, photograph everything and verify against the factory service manual for your year.

1. Manufacturer History: Mercury

Mercury was founded in 1938 by Edsel Ford to fill the gap between Ford and Lincoln — a medium-priced car with a little more style and a little more power than a Ford. The first Mercury used a 239-cubic-inch flathead V8 (95 hp to Ford's 85) and promptly became the darling of the nascent hot-rod scene; a chopped '49 Mercury remains the definitive custom car.

The 1950s and early 1960s saw Mercury yo-yo between identities — briefly pushed upmarket, then back down — but the mid-1960s gave it a genuine performance voice. The Comet, Mercury's compact, grew teeth: the Cyclone package turned it into a credible performance car, and when the Comet moved to the intermediate Fairlane platform for 1966, the Cyclone GT's 390-cubic-inch V8 made Mercury a real player in the muscle market. The 1967 Cougar gave Mercury its own pony car.

Mercury's muscle cars were always Fords underneath, which is a gift to the restorer: engines (small-block Windsor, FE big-block, 385-series 429), transmissions (Toploader four-speed, C4/C6 automatics), and 9-inch rear axles interchange across the Ford corporate parts bin, and Ford's Master Parts Catalog plus Marti Reports (built from Ford's own production database) make documentation unusually solid for a 1960s brand.

The 1970s turned Mercury toward personal luxury (Cougar XR-7, Marquis), and the brand gradually lost its distinct identity, becoming a slightly dressed-up Ford. Ford discontinued Mercury in 2011. But the 1964-1971 Cyclones — from the Comet-based originals to the aero-warrior Spoiler II — remain some of 1971 Mercury Cougar

the most distinctive and underappreciated muscle cars of the era, and correct restoration rewards the owner with a car that stands out at any show.

2. Model History: Mercury Cougar

The Cougar was Mercury's answer to the Mustang — but it was never a rebadged Mustang. Built on a 111-inch wheelbase (three inches longer than the Mustang), the 1967 Cougar was positioned as the



Mercury's pony car: more refined, more luxurious, and more distinctive, with the two features that defined it from day one — vacuum-operated concealed headlamps and full-width sequential taillamps. It was an immediate hit: nearly 151,000 sold in its first year.

The XR-7 trim made the Cougar's luxury case with its woodgrain dash, toggle switches, and overhead console, while the GT package made its performance case. The one-year-only specials — the 1968 XR-7G (Dan Gurney's signature edition) and the GT-E with the 427 — are the blue-chip early Cougars. For 1969 the Cougar added a convertible and the Eliminator performance package (including the Boss 302), and for 1970 it carried the muscle formula to its peak with the 351 Cleveland and the 428 Cobra Jet. For 1971 the Cougar was redesigned on a 112-inch wheelbase with exposed headlights — the hidden lamps were gone — and the Eliminator was dropped. The 1971 cars are bigger, heavier, and more luxurious, with the 429 Cobra Jet topping the lineup. The 1967-1970 cars in this series are the classic Cougars: the hidden-headlamp, sequential-taillamp cars that defined Mercury's pony-car identity.

3. What Makes the 1971 Unique

The 1971 Cougar is the redesigned car — bigger, heavier, and more luxurious on a 112-inch wheelbase, with exposed headlights replacing the signature concealed lamps and the Eliminator dropped from the lineup. It was a different philosophy: the Cougar grew into a personal-luxury coupe, and the performance story moved to the big-blocks. The 1971 cars are the most affordable classic Cougars and the most usable — but they are not the hidden-headlamp cars, and the market prices them accordingly.

The 1971 engine lineup: the 351 Windsor two-barrel (240 horsepower), the 351 Cleveland four-barrel (285 horsepower), the 429 Cobra Jet (370 horsepower), and the 429 Super Cobra Jet (375 horsepower). The 429 cars are the blue-chip 1971 Cougars — verify the VIN's engine code (J for the 429 CJ, C for the SCJ in Ford practice; verify against 1971 Mercury literature), the data plate, and the Marti report before paying any big-block premium.

The XR-7 continued as the luxury trim and the GT as the performance trim, with Ram Air available. The 1971-only styling — the new nose, the revised interior, the bigger body — is the restoration trap: 1971 trim and details do not interchange with 1967-1970 in their specifics, and the 429's installation details are 1971-specific.

Production totaled 62,864 cars. For the restorer, the 1971 Cougar's verification points are the VIN's engine code, the 91/92/93/94 body codes, the door data plate, and the build date. The 429 cars are rare enough 1971 Mercury Cougar

that every claim needs documentation — verify before paying.

Year-to-year changes at a glance.

- Redesigned on a 112-inch wheelbase; exposed headlights; Eliminator dropped.
- 429 Cobra Jet (370 hp) and 429 Super Cobra Jet (375 hp) top the lineup.
- Production: 62,864 cars.

4. VIN Decoding

1971 Cougar VINs read 1T91H (shown with the 351 two-barrel). Verify the 429 engine-code positions against 1971 Mercury literature.

Position

Meaning

Codes / Notes

Position 1

Model year

7 = 1967, 8 = 1968, 9 = 1969, 0 = 1970, 1 = 1971