

THE CONTINENTAL GAZETTE



Newsletter of the North Texas Lincoln Continental Owners Club

SPRING 2010

THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE IT

Kurt Wetterling

Spring. There is nothing quite like it. And nothing puts it in its proper context like floating southward down a long ribbon of blacktop bisecting huge fields of waving indigo, viewing life as God intended it from behind the wheel of a classic Lincoln on the way to the Salado meet. The sunlight gleaming off a hood freshly slathered in a fresh coat of canuba wax, the throaty hum of 460 cubic inches of Dearborn iron singing in your ears as you make your way to the Stagecoach Inn and the weekend that awaits. Granted, you know that throughout the weekend there will be several sessions of wiping the layer of golden pollen off the newly waxed surfaced of your classic Lincoln. But that is a small price to pay for the sharp green colors, the brisk morning air and the inviting rays of afternoon sun that all make this time of year just about the best there is in Texas. The 2010 Salado meet has just taken place in the sleepy, laid back atmosphere of the hill country just north of Austin, and all the details are captured in the article that follows.

As we gather from all over the state to once again enjoy the friendship of other Lincoln enthusiasts, it is a comfort to see that our numbers must be increasing across the country. **HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR** magazine in its most recent issue named the 32 cars it thought most worthy of restoration. Number 5 on the list, ahead of any Mustang, '57 Chevy or Corvette, it listed the 1961-1966 Lincoln Continental. It went on to say, "Rarely will you meet someone who doesn't like early Sixties Continentals. Their upscale, classy shape means they'll never go out of style, so there will always be strong demand for these models. While some body and trim parts have been reproduced, there isn't an overly huge selection, although most mechanical parts can be found fairly cheaply, and pretty easily, too. It's perhaps not a car for the first time restorer, as these were essentially hand assembled automobiles - an experienced specialist may be needed to make it right. But just try to find a more affordable four door luxury car that can be easily located and quickly sold, and that's fun to cruise around in with five of your buddies - we bet you can't."

And so now more and more people will know that which we who have gathered in Salado for over two decades thought was our little secret. And if some of these new followers want to make their way down to Salado in April, well that's okay too. There is always room at the Inn.



**22nd ANNUAL SALADO MEET
APRIL 23 - 25, 2010**

**The Friday Night Party and
BBQ hosted by Doc and Mikki
Ellis and sponsored by the
Lone Star Region of San
Antonio and Austin.**



SALADO 2010: EVOLUTION OF A CLASSIC

Few things signify the passage of winter into spring like preparing for the annual all Texas Lincoln meet held every April in Salado. Lincolns see sunshine that otherwise have been cocooned under car covers in the dusty protection of garages all across the Lone Star state. As they slowly make their way on to the driveways of club members, a ritual begins to unfold. They are washed and waxed. They are polished and buffed. And a thin coating of Armor All is applied to every nonmetallic surface exposed to the human eye.

The obvious question to anyone watching this procedure is: why? "Aren't you just going to get in it and drive it 150 miles or more through questionable weather and dirty road conditions to get to Salado? Doesn't that negate all the effort you just put in to cleaning it?" And the answer to that query is, "Of course it does. But that's what you do before Salado. It's part of the tradition."

And of course, you get to do it all over again in the parking lot of the Stagecoach Inn 2 days later. Long live the tradition.

This year's meet was no different than most in that we were the beneficiaries of a broad range of Texas weather over the three days spent in central Texas. Friday morning brought some spring showers and gray skies, making sure that all the effort in preparing the car would indeed get to be duplicated once on site. Cool temperatures prevailed, 70 degrees during the day, slightly cooler once the sun slipped below the horizon in the evening. Once most everyone arrived in town on Friday afternoon, the clouds departed and auto-centric conversation kicked into high gear. The tall Texas oaks in front of the hotel provided the perfect shady spot to set up lawn chairs and catch up on the latest news from fellow members not seen since the last meet. All the while enjoying the parade of Lincolns and Continentals taking their place on the black top surrounding the grassy area under the trees.

The Salado event is like any other, in that it can't help but evolve as time goes by. This was the 22nd year for the event, and while the venue and weather are fairly constant, the members and cars tend to change over the years. This year set a record for participation with over 40 cars registered. And the bar was set extremely high with the cars that attended. An all time high 10 Continental Mark Vs were displayed this year, followed by an amazing array of slab sided Lincolns from the 60s. Several of this years entries were being shown at Salado for the very first time, and that is always a treat.

Friday afternoon slipped by as topics of conversation changed from cars to military service to jumping out of air planes over Korea to California real estate and then a broad range of topics best not covered in this format. But all were informative, if perhaps embellished to one degree or another. I can only assume that similar conversations were taking place under other shady areas around the Stage Coach Inn as well.

Before long, it was time to take the party up the hill to Doc Ellis'; City Garage. Another time honored ritual. The Lone Star Region (Austin / San Antonio) took responsibility for the Friday night party this year and proved they were up to the task. The evolution of this stage of the meet was most obvious by the addition of a large tent adjoining the garage set up for outdoor dining. While appreciated for the shade it provided, its full value was truly accounted for during a short cloud burst that developed as everyone was enjoying their brisket and potato salad. An occurrence that would have sent everyone running for cover in years past was barely noticed. Hats off to the Lone Star region for a job well done, and innovation proven to be worth the effort.

There are rumors that the use of Doc's garage for the pre-show party may soon be coming to an end. Hard as it is to believe, he is 80 years old now and no matter how much help he gets in setting up and taking down, it is still a big undertaking. If and when the venue for Friday night is changed, the show will go on. But it will never have the ambiance. The character. The tradition that has become Friday night in Salado. It will never be quite the same. And we are forever grateful to Doc and Mikki for the work and effort they have put into hosting this for us for so long.

There were reports of light hail late Friday night in Salado, but those could not be confirmed. There was, however, enough rain over night to form a nasty mix of H₂O, dust and pollen that required a trip to the local car wash early Saturday morning. And a lot of Windex.

By noon Saturday, all cars were in their assigned spots on the show field with all cleaning supplies discreetly hidden away. And oddly, even more classic Lincolns continued to arrive and find a

parking spot. These cars were not registered for judging, but wanted to be displayed, their owners wanting to see all the other cars as well. The odd vintage Ford made an appearance, along with an amazingly restored and rare 1958 Edsel. (After all, when produced, it was part of the MEL Division of Ford. Mercury. Lincoln. Edsel.) And while blasphemy in some circles, I would be remiss to not mention the 1962 Cadillac Fleetwood sedan brought by the partner of one of the Houston members. It was simply beautiful. And to the student of 1960s automobiles, it provided an outstanding contrast to the early slab sided Lincolns on display.

The quality level of cars judged was the highest I've ever seen at Salado. While no one wants to nitpick cars during the judging process, those of us trying to determine the winner of the 70s Mark III, IV & V class were forced to look at the smallest details just to try and determine the best of the best. Each one was outstanding, and fractions of a point separated one from the other. However, the first place trophy went to the 1977 Bill Blass edition Mark V just recently acquired by Houston member Bill Love. With only 21,000 miles on the odometer, it looked like it should still be on the showroom of a Lincoln dealer. It still smelled brand new, and when all was said and done, it was judged to be 100 points.

It is always a treat to see new entries. But it's also a treat to see how cars you've seen before evolve and get better with each show. Tommy Glazener's 1970 Continental coupe is a case in point. The first time the car was shown in Athens in 2007, it was a very nice and rare car. But with a new paint job and an incredible amount of detailing work that Tommy and Tim have put into it, it is truly stunning now. Likewise, I can remember the first time Paul Youngjohn displayed his 1977 Lincoln Town Car. It was a well preserved, clean Lincoln from the 70s. But in the years since then, it has slowly morphed into a nearly flawless example worthy of winning top honors in the hallowed Bluebonnet category (the best of all the winners from last year.) The black Mark II that showed up last year without a windshield was complete this year, and had reached the point of perfection that enabled it to take home the award for Best of Show. Watching these cars evolve from ordinary to incredible provides inspiration for the rest of us with a less than 100 point Lincoln in our garage.

For the 22nd year in a row Earl Zimmerle made the trek to Salado in his 1953 Lincoln Capri convertible. He was recognized for a record that will probably never be broken. Jake Fleming, who shared that record with Earl up until last year was missed this year. National LCOC President Glen Kramer was not in attendance, having to tend to his obligations at the Eastern National Meet in Florida going on the same weekend. (It's not ALWAYS good to be King.) The loss of his particular brand of wit and humor was felt. (But then the bar was opened at Doc's place and we forgot all about it.)

The Texas Gulf Coast region and the Lone Star region combined their efforts to put on another great show. It continues to improve and evolve. But the tradition continues, making it something that those attend continue to look forward to every spring. And if that means having to wash the great beast that is your classic Lincoln two days in a row, then so be it.



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Continental



PREMIERE







AHHH, SPRING
It's that time of year when a girl's thoughts turn to . . . picking up her new Lincoln MKX from the dealership. Our Ford Motor Company correspondent, **Kendra Clayton** (formerly Kendra Wetterling) picked up her latest company supplied ride and reports it's everything you could want, And more. An all black 2010 MKX with every available option makes those road trips through Wyoming not seem quite as desolate as they otherwise might be. And it makes getting around Denver more comfortable year round.

While we haven't had an article from our roving Ford reporter for a while, it can be reported that she has been promoted to the Vehicle division and finds it to be a lot more challenging and rewarding than her former post in Parts, Service & Warranty.

Meanwhile, our Icelandic member, **Simonarson Adalsteinn** who came over to this country last year and increased the size of his Lincoln collection by four was met with the challenge of how to get them all back home. Solution: stack all four into one 40' container for shipment across the pond. While it looks like quite the project, he reports he was able to accomplish the mission, all four made it home. Just in time for the volcano that erupted and spread ash all over Europe, halting flights out of Europe for over a week and wreaking chaos.

Whether new or old, is there a better way to celebrate the beginning of spring than by acquiring a new Lincoln? Probably not.



Ford Now Has Industry's Highest Customer Satisfaction With Quality, New Survey Shows

PR Newswire, United Business Media

DEARBORN, Mich., April 19 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Ford Motor Company (NYSE: F) now has the highest customer satisfaction with vehicle quality among all major automakers, a new consumer research study shows.

Eighty-four percent of customers who purchased 2010 model-year Ford, Lincoln and Mercury cars and trucks are satisfied with the quality of their vehicle, a 4 percentage point improvement since the fourth quarter of 2009, according to the first quarter Global Quality Research System (GQRS) study conducted for Ford by RDA Group of Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

With the improvement, Ford's customer satisfaction scores are now significantly higher than all other full-line automotive manufacturers, including Asian and European automakers, according to the study.

The study also showed Ford has the fewest number of vehicle defects or "things gone wrong" among all full-line manufacturers in the first three months of ownership. Owners of 2010 model Ford, Lincoln and Mercury owners reported 1,107 TGWs per 1,000 vehicles -- an 8 percent improvement compared to last year.

"To become the No. 1 automaker in terms of customer satisfaction with vehicle quality is amazing accomplishment and testament to the whole company's commitment to quality," said Bennie Fowler, Ford group vice president, Global Quality. "All the third parties studies are showing the same thing -- Ford now has world-class quality."

As Ford's quality has improved, it has reduced warranty repair rates on vehicles in their first three months of service by an average of more than 40 percent in every major business region around the world in the past three years.

"Ford has proven its commitment to quality by demonstrating steady improvements through consistency and discipline," said Donald Pietrowski, president, RDA Group. "Those improvements are clearly reflected in rising customer satisfaction with its products."

Ford captured eight segment leaders in customer satisfaction, TGW or both. Notably, Fusion Hybrid owners now report 93 percent satisfaction with the quality of their vehicle while 92 percent of Taurus owners are satisfied.

The following models led their respective segments in the survey:

- Taurus -- Satisfaction leader D/E car.
- Fusion Hybrid -- Satisfaction leader C/D car
- Milan Hybrid -- TGW leader C/D car
- Focus -- Satisfaction leader C car
- Mountaineer -- TGW leader Medium Traditional Utility
- Expedition -- TGW and Satisfaction leader Large Utility
- Navigator -- TGW and Satisfaction Leader Large Premium Utility
- Ranger -- TGW and Satisfaction Leader Compact Pickup

These dramatic gains in quality have also contributed to a 23 percent year-over-year improvement in the resale values of Ford vehicles with one to five years on the road -- outpacing the industry average by 4 percentage points.

"While we are proud of the progress we've made, we know how important it is to keep the momentum going," said Fowler. "We can never be satisfied."

The GQRS study is conducted on a quarterly basis with scores assessed from survey responses collected from owners of vehicles purchased within specific time frames.

New vehicle owners are asked to report any defects or issues as well as rate their satisfaction with vehicle quality on a scale of 1 to 10 across an array of vehicle systems and features.



LINCOLNS TOP LISTS OF IMPORTANT CARS

In two recent MSN studies to determine lists of most significant automobiles, famous Lincolns scored at or near the top of each list.

In determining the **most iconic automobile in all of television history**, the Batmobile (the redone Lincoln Futura of the 1950s) was ranked number one.

Other famous TV cars that made the list (though not the top spot) were 'Kit', the 1982 Pontiac Firebird from the *Knight Rider* series, the 1986 Ferrari from *Miami Vice*,



the 1951 Ford F1 pick up from *Sanford and Son*, the 1975 Ford Torino from *Starsky & Hutch*, the 1983 GMC Van from *The A Team*, the 1983 Ferrari from *Magnum, PI*, the 1969 Dodge Charger from *Dukes of Hazard*, the 1975 Pontiac Firebird Spirit from *The Rockford Files* and the 1969 Oldsmobile Cutlass Vista Cruiser station wagon from *That 70s Show*. No doubt some interesting choices. But the decision to put the Batmobile at the top was a solid one, both for fans of Lincoln and the Caped

Crusader. Holy Special Lincolns!

In determining the **most infamous automobiles of all time**, the 1961 Lincoln Continental limousine in which JFK was riding at the time of his assassination was ranked the fourth most infamous vehicle in history.

Among some of the other infamous vehicles: the Porsche James Dean was driving when killed, the Buick Electra that Jane Mansfield was riding in when killed, the 1927 Bugatti Isadora Duncan was riding in when the scarf she was wearing around her neck became entangled in the rear wheels and strangled her to death. Also on the list was the 1993 Ford Bronco O.J. Simpson was riding in when dozens of California Highway Patrol cars were following him down the freeway and the Rover P6 3500 that Princess Grace was driving when she suffered a stroke and drove the car off the road and down a mountainside. The 1994 Mercedes that Princess Diana was killed in made the list, as did the 1938 Cadillac that General George S. Patton was riding in when he was involved in a freak accident that led to his death 12 days later. And who can forget the 1934 Ford that Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow were killed in?

FORD KEEPING MERCURY AROUND FOR THE LONG HAUL

By Ted Reed in Charlotte, N.C.

DETROIT -- **General Motors** may be shedding brands, but **Ford** (F) has no plans to dump the 70-year-old Mercury brand, despite lagging sales. After all, without Mercury, what would Lincoln-Mercury dealers do?

Mercury sold just 93,000 vehicles last year -- about half of what Pontiac sold and only 20,000 more than Saturn sold. Moreover, Mercury accounted for just 5% of Ford sales, while Pontiac was 9% of General Motors sales. Still, Mercury will likely remain, even though Pontiac is gone, Saturn is gone, and **Toyota** (TM) and **Nissan** continue to focus on two brands, one aimed at the broader market, one at the luxury market.

Ford pursues a differ strategy, primarily to buttress its distribution structure, which pairs Mercury with Lincoln. "We have a great distribution channel, we have many Lincoln-Mercury dealers, and they make a reasonable return," said Ford CEO Alan Mulally, in a recent interview. "It's a good brand in the U.S. and it's been a good brand for a long time.

"The main focus is on Ford, absolutely, but we're also focused on Lincoln, and we repositioned Mercury -- we are focusing on the smaller vehicles in the Mercury brand (because) it's a very good compliment to Lincoln," Mulally said.

Analyst John Wolkonowicz of IHS *Global Insight* said Ford would like to build Lincoln into a stand-alone luxury brand, but that is a work in progress. In fact, in 2009, Lincoln sold 83,000 vehicles, fewer than Mercury and significantly fewer than the 109,000 vehicles sold by Cadillac, which supports its own dealership structure. "It's not a good idea to combine Lincoln with Ford, to sell a premium car in a high volume store with cars and trucks," Wolkonowicz said. "So as long as Lincoln volume remains insufficient to be a standalone brand, there will be Mercury."

Ford created Mercury in 1939 as an effort to squeeze a brand in between mass-market Ford and high-end Lincoln. "It has always been Ford-plus, with a bigger engine, more chrome, more trunk space," Wolkonowicz said. Sales topped out at 580,000 in 1978 and reached 480,000 in 1993, but have been in decline since. Today, Wolkonowicz said, "It is a brand that is a favorite of the Depression generation, people who bought it when they were kids in the 30s and 40s." The pool of these buyers is not increasing.

Mercury currently sells four models -- Milan, Grand Marquis, Mariner and Mountaineer -- as well as hybrid models of the Milan and the Mariner. In the coming year, it will add a smaller car, not yet named, that will be built in Wayne, Mich., using the same platform as the Ford Focus.

Mercury spokesman Mark Schirmer said the Grand Marquis has older buyers, but many buyers for other models were born in the 1950s. "Some consumers are looking for something not as mainstream as Ford," he said. "Mercury ends up attracting more female buyers, with a slightly higher education and slightly higher income. We have a lot of Mercury customers, who will replace their vehicles, and they are customers we are not willing to walk away from."

Schirmer said that the new, smaller Mercury will have a different look than the Ford Focus -- different colors, different materials and more standard equipment.

Industry analyst Jim Harbour, founder of the Harbour Report, said retaining Mercury is a low-cost venture, given that its vehicles use Ford platforms. "You create a platform for Ford, you have one for Mercury too, and I have more features and I get a higher price," he said. "It's not a bad idea. You do have people who want to buy Mercurys."

But Ford's recent success has raised new questions about continuing Mercury, said analyst Jesse Toprak of TrueCar.com. "Mercurys are rebadged Fords, but it is almost cool to own a Ford now, so Ford is cannibalizing Mercury," Toprak said. "Ford's success makes Mercury less relevant."



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