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History of the Stainless Steel Car

In 1935, officials at Allegheny Ludlum Steel Division and the Ford Motor Company collaborated on an experiment that would become a legacy and a tribute to one of the most dynamic metals ever developed.

Allegheny Ludlum, a pioneer producer of stainless steel, proposed the idea of creating a stainless steel car to Ford. The idea took shape in the form of a 1936 Deluxe Sedan. That car became the centerpiece of a campaign to expose the public to the new metal and its many uses.



Allegheny Ludlum and Ford would later collaborate on two more stainless models, a 1960 Thunderbird and a 1967 Lincoln Continental Convertible. Of the 11 cars originally built, nine are still in use.

The stainless steel cars were perfect vehicles for increasing awareness of the quality of the metal. And over the years, this quality has been shown in its stainless performance.

Of the six stainless steel cars that rolled off the Ford assembly line in Detroit in 1936, four exist today as living proof of the durability of stainless steel. One is on display at the Heinz Regional History Center in Pittsburgh, PA.

Each of the original six logged at least 200,000 miles in the hands of Allegheny Ludlum officials before "retiring" to private ownership in 1946. Thousands of additional miles have been logged on the odometers since, and the shiny bodies have outlasted most of their non-stainless steel parts.

The experiment was an unparalleled success on a number of levels. Public awareness of stainless steel's many uses increased with every city and



state the cars visited. Through many years of active use, metallurgists and engineers were amazed at the superiority of the silvery metal.

Since 1960, when two stainless steel Ford Thunderbirds were introduced, they have been displayed throughout the United States and Europe.

The two Thunderbirds came off the Wixom, Michigan production line on July 11, 1960, and each has traveled over 100,000 miles, demonstrating the durability and timeless beauty of stainless steel.

With the exception of the body skin, bumpers and grille, which are made of T302 stainless steel, every other component is standard 1960 Thunderbird equipment. Also included is the first T409 solid stainless steel muffler released on a production vehicle. Both cars still have their original mufflers and T304 exhaust pipes after 25 years on the road!



The 1967 Lincoln Convertible was the last of the stainless steel cars produced by the Ford Motor Company and Allegheny Ludlum Steel.

Once again, the companies proved that stainless steel's enduring beauty is matched by its toughness.

As with all stainless steel there is no need for painting. The corrosion-resistant properties of the stainless eliminate the problems caused by rust.

Except for the vehicle's body, all other parts and equipment on the car are standard for the 1967 Lincoln Convertible. The vehicle's weight is just about equal to one with a standard steel body.

Three stainless Lincolns were built that year. Allegheny Ludlum Steel retains two and still uses them for customer visits and special events. A full set of Stainless automobiles (1936 Deluxe, T-Bird, and Continental) are on permanent display in the Crawford Auto Museum in Cleveland, Ohio.

