

1961 FORD Falcon Station Wagon- Berkeley, CA

Written by Double Dragon

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The Ford Falcon was introduced as a 1960 model to combat the foreign imports. Of the 'Big Three' compact offerings the Falcon was the most successful. The other domestic manufacturers produced cars that were theoretically better matched against the import compacts they were competing with because they featured similar advanced engineering.

General Motors went full tilt with independent rear suspension, and an air cooled engine in the Corvair. When other GM divisions worked with the Corvair platform for the 1961 model year they pulled out all the stops using turbocharging, trans axles, V6 engines and so on.

Chrysler extracted more power out of a 6 cylinder engine by angling the engine block and creating room for long straight intake runners. The Ford Falcon stuck with conventional domestic engineering and outsold the compact offerings from General Motors and Chrysler. Mercury created their own stretched version of the Falcon named the Comet.

For the second year of Falcon sales Ford left the car alone except for the addition of an optional 170 cubic inch engine which provided desperately needed additional power. Small changes were made such as adding the stylized chrome 'falcon' bird in front of the chrome Falcon

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lettering on the front fenders plus a front grille revision.

The Falcon's base engine remained the anemic but economical 144 cubic inch straight 6 cylinder. The base transmission was still the 'three on the tree' manual column shift. There were no aluminum blocks, V6s, independent rear suspension or turbos in Falcon land. The Falcon made do with basic bread and butter solid axle with leaf springs, coils up front and drum brakes all round.

One sales advantage of the Falcon was the wide variety of bodystyles available right from the start. Falcon sedans and wagons were built in both 2 and 4 door formats and the car pickup Ranchero was now based on the Falcon platform, too.

This particular Falcon station wagon has the decor group added to it. Decor group placed a chrome accent along the character lines running the length of the body which tied over to surround the rear tail lights.



This ALLEY FINDS Falcon retains its original California 'black plate' and on the left of the bumper a City of Berkeley parking sticker attests to its long term street parking in the hot sun. Note the scorched paint allowing some surface rust to peek through which is typical of California cars that sit under intense sun.