

1960-1965 Ford Ranchero -- The Falcon Years



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Call it what you will – pickup car, passenger car with a pickup bed, pickup built like a passenger car or even a topless station wagon. Ford called it a Ranchero ...

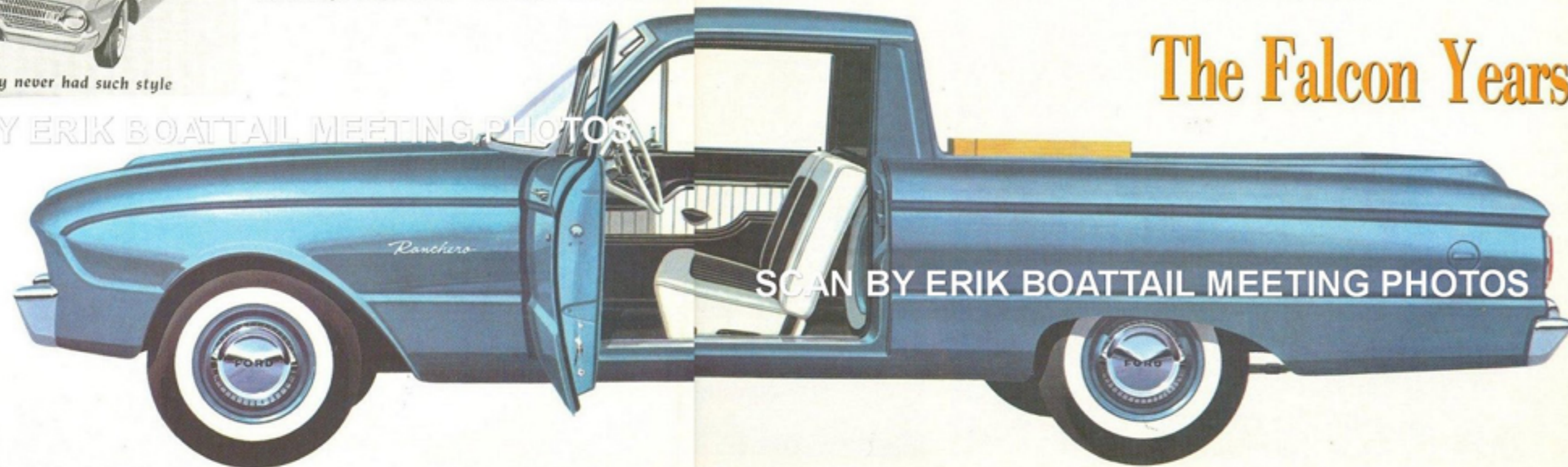


1961 FORD Falcon RANCHERO



Economy never had such style

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best of both. Interestingly, while the Ranchero had more in common with its passenger car siblings, it was still handled by Ford's truck people. It couldn't be found in Ford's car catalogue, but was found in the truck brochures.

Like most good ideas from Detroit, the Ranchero idea was soon picked up by the competition. General Motors first offered its comparable vehicles, the Chevrolet El Camino and GM Sprint in 1959.

The 1958 and 1959 Rancheros were also built off the full-size Ford passenger cars, but there was a big change in store for the Ranchero for model year 1960.

1960 FALCON RANCHERO

The big automotive news in 1960, actually it hit in the fall of 1959, was the introduction of the big three's compact cars aimed at stemming the ever increasing flow of imports especially the tremendously popular VW Beetle. Ford's entry in this new market segment was the Falcon. For 1960, Ford would continue the Ranchero as part of the Falcon series.

While the Falcon was introduced to the public in October 1959, the Ranchero made a mid-year debut in April 1960, about the same time as the station wagon versions of the Falcon. This was logical since the Falcon Ranchero shared a lot of features with the station wagons. There was also a panel truck based on the Falcon called the Sedan Delivery.

The Ranchero like the rest of the Falcons rode on a 109.5 inch wheelbase and had an overall length of one hundred and eighty nine inches. While the 1960 Ranchero was nineteen inches shorter than the full-size 1959

model, the cargo bed was still six feet long. The Falcons rode on thirteen inch tyres and used unit body construction. The cab could accommodate three in relative comfort on the bench seat.

Unlike the 1957-1959 Ranchero which could be ordered with a variety of engines including Ford's hottest V-8s, all the Falcon Rancheros were powered by a 144 cid (2.4 litre) six cylinder engine that produced a mere ninety horsepower. This engine with its 8.7:1 compression ratio and single carburettor was developed specifically for the Falcons. Transmissions were limited to a standard three-speed manual and an optional two-speed Fordomatic. The new Falcon Ranchero was aimed at the economy minded.

Indeed, Ford advertised it as 'America's lowest priced pickup.' Ford also boasted of the Ranchero's 30mpg fuel economy and minimum maintenance requirements. The latter was achieved by such features as bolt-on front fenders, four thousand miles between lubes and oil changes plus the very simple design philosophy found in the whole Falcon line.

The Falcon Ranchero's accessory list was also rather meagre, major items were limited to the Full tone Radio with manual tuning, Fresh Air Heater and a Safety Package that consisted of seat belts, fully padded Lifeguard sun visor, and padded instrument panel. Air conditioning was not available, nor were power steering, power brakes, power seats or power windows. Electrically operated windshield wipers were even an option, the standard ones being vacuum powered.

Only one Ranchero model only was offered in 1960, but a dress-up package was available as an option and included bright metal exterior mouldings, tail light ornamentation, cigarette lighter, white steering wheel with a chrome plated horn ring, dome light door switch and deluxe seat trim. To further drape the Falcon Ranchero, Ford offered whitewall tyres and full wheel covers as options.

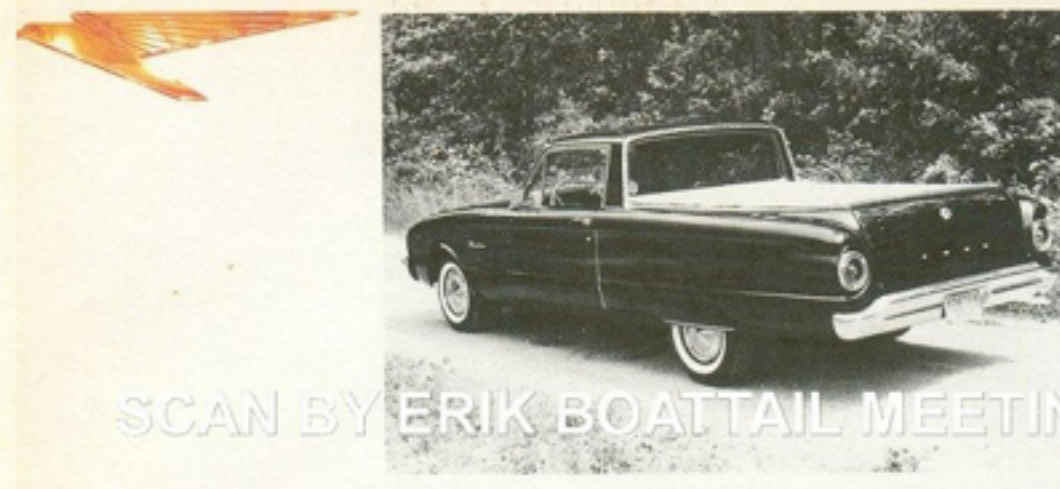
Like the Falcon itself, the Falcon Ranchero was a success and a money maker for Ford. The little truck with its eight pound capacity sold better than its full-size predecessors. For one thing the price was right. You could buy your basic Falcon Ranchero for less than \$2,000.

1961 FALCON RANCHERO

There were very few changes made to the Falcons for 1961. The most noticeable exterior changes were a new convex grille and minor differences in the trim. A 170 cid (2.8 litre) Special six was now an option. The added displacement was achieved by



increasing the stroke of the 144 cubic inch powerplant. Like the smaller Falcon engine, it had a single carburettor and a 8.7:1 compression ratio so it could burn regular gasoline. This optional engine produced one hundred and one horsepower. The standard 144-cubic-inch Economy Six was now derated to eighty five horsepower. The base engine and a three-speed gearbox, could push the two thousand four hundred pound truck to a top speed of just under 90mph. When equipped with the High Performance Special Six, a manual transmission, and 3.50:1 rear-end, zero-to-sixty times of under twelve seconds were possible. The Rancheros were very nimble cars



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with a turning circular diameter of 38.8 feet and it took only 4.6 turns lock-to-lock on the manual steering.

1962 FALCON RANCHERO

Falcon sales remained strong so Ford didn't change the Falcon much. Outside there was a new grille with vertical bars, a dummy air scoop on the revised hood and new front fenders. The Ranchero's list of options was pretty much as before without any power equipment. Air conditioning was added as an option during the model year. Still there was only one version and the deluxe trim package remained as it was in 1960 and 1961.

1963 FALCON RANCHERO

1963 was really the beginning of the performance car image for the Ranchero, an image that would grow to huge proportions by the muscle car era of the late 1960s. Thus the big news for the Ranchero in 1963 was the addition of an option V-8 engine. The V-8 used in the Ranchero was Ford's

new 260 cubic inch (4.3 litre) eight cylinder powerplant. The V-8 was introduced at mid-year along with a new Falcon convertible and hardtop. It produced one hundred and sixty four horsepower, had a two-barrel carburettor, and with a 8.7:1 compression ratio, could still run on regular fuel. Like all V-8 powered Falcons, the Rancheros equipped with V-8 engines had a beefed up chassis to handle the additional weight and power.

Appearance-wise the Ranchero got minor changes such as the convex grille with both vertical and horizontal ribs and the taillights were slightly revised with additional chrome around the inside of the lens.

There were now two Ranchero versions, a standard and a deluxe model. On the deluxe model you got bright metal mouldings around the top of the pickup box and back of the cab plus chrome frames on the door window. Inside there was a colour co-ordinated black or red steering wheel with horn ring, cigarette light-

er, and dome light operated by a door switch. On the deluxe model you got your choice of either black or red vinyl upholstery. The standard model used a two-tone beige vinyl combination with a Western Motif. More creature comforts were creeping into the Falcon line including the Ranchero line. Power steering was now available as an option with the V-8 and air-conditioning could be ordered. Seat belts, padded dash and visors, backup lights, heater/defroster, windshield washers, and two-speed windshield wipers were still optional equipment items.

A three-speed manual was standard and a two-speed Fordomatic was optional. For the enthusiast there was a Ford of England – built four-on-the-floor manual transmission. Besides the V-8, two six cylinder engines were available. The 144 cubic inch eighty five horsepower Falcon Six was the standard engine and there was the 170 cubic, 101 horsepower high-performance Six.

1964 FALCON RANCHERO

The Falcon including the Ranchero was restyled in 1964 and was squarer with highly sculptured body sides. The front end had a more aggressive look in keeping with Ford's new Total Performance image. Underneath, the 109.5 wheelbase was still used and the overall length was one hundred and ninety inches, only an inch longer than the 1960 model.

In 1964, there were three Ranchero models, the Standard, the Deluxe and a Deluxe with bucket seats. This was the first year bucket seats were offered in the Rancheros even though bucket seats were available on certain Falcon car models in previous years. Only two hundred and thirty five Rancheros were so equipped.

The Falcon Ranchero came with the 144 cubic inch, eighty five horsepower six cylinder engine and three-speed manual transmission as standard equipment. Optional engines included the 170 cubic inch, 101 horsepower six cylinder and 260 cubic inch, 164 horsepower V-8. Optional transmissions included Fordomatic and a four-speed manual unit.

1965 FALCON RANCHERO

This would be the last year for the Falcon Rancheros. Performance was king in Detroit and the Ranchero was taking on a definite performance



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image, and thus not all in keeping with the Falcon's economy in the marketplace. Like all the 1965 Falcons, the Ranchero got a minor facelift with the most obvious changes coming in the grille design with its thin horizontal bars divided by a central vertical bar on which there was a tricolor crest.

There were some significant changes under the Ranchero's hood. Biggest new were the two optional 289 cid V-8s. The two-barrel carburettor version produced 200 horsepower and the four barrel version gave a sizzling 225 horsepower. For the economy minded, the 170 cid, 105 horsepower six cylinder now standard. A 200 cubic inch, 120 horsepower six cylinder was option. In 1965 an alternator replaced the generator. These power plants could be teamed up with the standard three-speed transmission or dual range Cruise-O-Matic. This three-speed automatic was available on the Falcons for the first time in 1965. A four-speed manual transmission was available only with the V-8s.

For 1965, there were four different Ranchero models: the Standard, the Standard with bucket seats, the Deluxe and the Deluxe with bucket seats. The Standard model with bucket seats is the rarest Ranchero model of all times with only sixteen known to have been made.

In 1965, nine inch brakes were used on the six-cylinder models and ten inch brakes were used on the V-8s

to handle the added performance potential. The brakes used a Duo-servo and the brakes were self adjusting and of course they still were drums all around. Fourteen inch wheels were standard on the Rancheros compared to the thirteen inch wheels that were standard on the rest of the Falcon series. The options available on all 1965 Rancheros included power steering, air conditioning, padded dash and visors, seat belts, three different types of wheel covers, push button radio, two-speed electric windshield wiper and washers and white sidewall tyres.

Even though the redesigned 1966 Ranchero was based on the Falcon it no longer was called the Falcon it was called the Ranchero. Ford chose to delete the Falcon designation on the Ranchero because the name Falcon had become associated with a small car and Ford wanted the Ranchero to be thought of as big. During its years as a Falcon, the Ranchero was a consistently decent seller.

PRODUCTION OF FALCON RANCHEROS BY YEAR

YEAR 1960 1961 1962 1963 1964 1965
No. made 21,027 21,027 20,842 18,533 17,316 19,279

While the Falcon Ranchero was no longer marketed by Ford in the US, it was far from the end of a pickup truck based on a Falcon compact car. Ford of Australia still offers a Falcon based



The Falcon Years

pickup that is now a very attractive and luxurious vehicle. This is not surprising since the idea for Ranchero originated Down Under. For years before the 1967 Ranchero Ford, as well as General Motors, produced pickup cars which the Australians called Utes. The first Utes appeared in the 1950s.

