



SEQUENTIAL TAIL LIGHTS — FORD'S TREND-SETTING IDEA

Since its introduction in 1955, Ford's Thunderbird has been a test vehicle for many innovations that were later adopted on the entire Ford Motor Company line of products and eventually imitated throughout the industry. An example of this was the sequential tail light system used on the 1966 Thunderbird.

Dropping the familiar oval tail lights in 1964, the factory continued to expand the "square" styling treatment of the rear of the Thunderbirds until the 1966 models featured wall-to-wall tail lights, but the sequential turn signals were retained. Starting with 1958 models, Ford stylists had concentrated on making the rear view of a Thunderbird dramatic with tail lights that got larger with each new generation of automobiles.

Probably the most notable thing about the styling changes between 1958 and 1966 was the clever, and actually safer, sequential tail light system. Today, this type of system is a common sight on many automobiles not manufactured by the Ford Motor Company.

Another widely-copied Ford engineering innovation of this same era was a high-speed fan they called Flex-Fan. The unit was made from lightweight, flexible materials that allowed it to deflect as much as 1 1/4 inches at high speed, drawing less horsepower and reducing the weight load on the water pump by almost one-half. This seems to show that Ford really does have "a better idea!"

We'll have more on the sequential tail lights in a later issue.



FAMOUS LIGHTS — This sequence shows the three positions of turn signal lights on the 1966 car during a left-hand turn sequence.