

A REAL HARDTOP CONVERTIBLE

A 1957 Ford car offering the advantages of both the hardtop and the convertible represents the first revolutionary new idea in automotive design since the development of the closed car 40 years ago. To change the hardtop into a convertible, the driver simply presses a button and the all-steel top automatically slides into the trunk where it is completely concealed. It is equally simple to raise the top. The center picture shows the top in operation. Production of the car, a Ford first, will start in January.

Revolutionary Convertible Developed By Ford Co.

The first revolutionary new idea in automotive design since the development of the closed car 40 years ago was unveiled today by Ford Division of Ford Motor company. It is a hardtop model with a fully retractable

steel top which at the touch of a button slides automatically into the car's trunk, according to Vel Miletich, of Oscar Maples Ford Agency, Torrance.

The functional design of the first automatic all-weather car has resulted in a distinctive appearance previously unattained by any hardtop model. The new car combines the advantages of both a hardtop and a convertible.

Publication today of photographs of a finished model of the Ford Retractable ended nearly five years of secrecy. In that time, Ford's stylists and engineers perfected a design which has been a long sought goal of the auto industry. The six passenger two door car is scheduled for production starting in January, and it will be sold by Ford dealers. It will be the featured car at the New

York Automobile show opening December 8.

Simple To Operate

Operation of the retractable is deceptively simple. An instrument panel button is touched to raise or lower the steel top. Electric motors do the rest in a matter of seconds. But years of research were required to perfect the design. In the testing program, the top mechanisms have been operated approximately 10,000 times, equivalent to 30 years of normal service.

When the driver touches the top button, electric locks are released in the trunk lid and rises up and back out of the way. Then locks are automatically released in the top, which swings up, back and down into the trunk.

The trunk lid closes and locks

itself. In 40 seconds, the car has been converted from closed hardtop sedan to an open-air vehicle. To change it back again, the top button needs only to be moved in the opposite direction.

For complete safety, the mechanism will operate only when the car's transmission is in neutral and the ignition key is turned to the "accessory" position with the engine stopped.

Miletich said the retractable was "another example of the type of advanced engineering, product improvement, and customer benefits which the public can continue to expect from Ford." He cited the introduction of the Thunderbird as a similar advancement.

Top-Secret

Only twice during the long development period has Ford officially acknowledged that the retractable hardtop was being developed. During 1953, the company showed the press a dream car scale model of the design idea. Three years later, during Ford's national press show last September, a full scale prototype was shown to newspapermen in Detroit but the company maintained the tight secrecy lid which prevented photographs.

The revolutionary car bears definite family resemblance to Ford's Fairlane and Fairlane 500 series sedans. However, it is three inches longer over-all than are Ford's Fairlanes. The extra length provides rear deck space for the car's flat, streamlined roof which is literally swallowed in the trunk.

To permit nesting a full width, rigid steel top nearly 90 inches long into the trunk, the designers moved the spare tire under a floor plate in the rear deck, and relocated the gas trunk forward in the deck. Luggage space is in the center area of the huge rear deck.

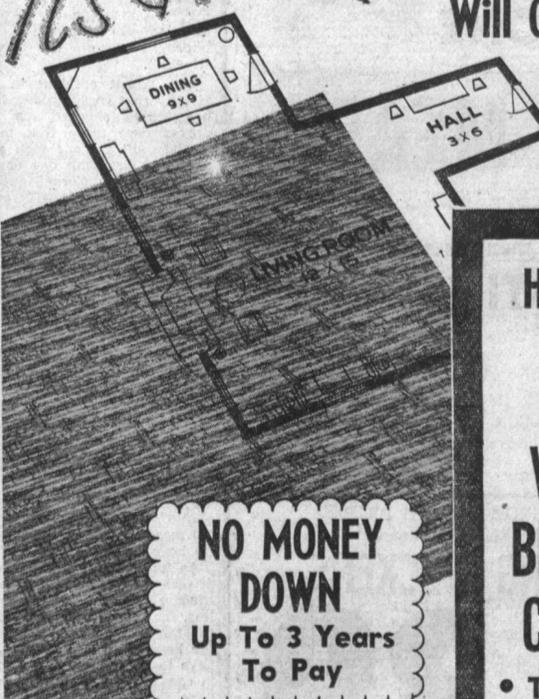
One design features that make the device workable is a special linkage extending to the front section of the roof. This permits the forward ten inches of the roof to swing back like a flipper, shortening the total length to be stored in the deck.

Another innovation is the counterbalancing that has been built into the entire top mechanism. It works as easily as the regular Ford's hood and deck lid, which are spring balanced for easy opening. Small fractional horsepower motors that drive the retractable top require the same amount of current needed to operate a conventional canvas convertible top.

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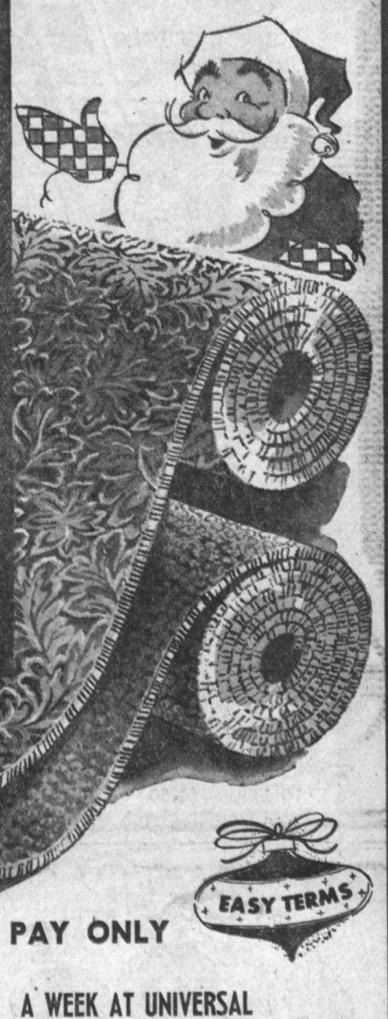
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