

October 1, 1956 Officially Set as Start of the Mark II 1957 Model Year

A lawsuit in 1964 forced Ford Motor Company and the Office of the General Counsel to make the arbitrary determination that all Mark IIs manufactured beginning October 1, 1956 would be 1957 models. Remember, the Mark II was a series car like Bentley. Originally there was not supposed to be model years, just Mark II then Mark III etc. The page image below left appeared in the Summer 1980 issue of Continental Comments published by the Lincoln & Continental Owner's Club and shows that before 1964 no differentiation was made from 1956 model to 1957 and then clarifies that production number 3418 (C56L**3418**) was the first Mark II for 1957. My Mark II is C56L**3446** and so is clearly a 1957 model.

This designation is further confirmed below on the right from the Continental Mark II Restorers Guide which states:

"THE FIRST 1957 CONTINENTAL MARK II

The Lincoln Continental Owners Club (L.C.O.C) has on file a letter from the Lincoln-Mercury Division of Ford Motor Company indicating that all vehicles produced on October 1, 1956 and thereafter, would be considered 1957 models. October 1956 would be the letter L in coding system, which car is discovered to be serial number C56L-3418. L.C.O.C recognizes this car to be the first 1957 Continental Mark II." (mine would therefore be the 28th 1957 Mark II i.e 3446 - 3418 = 28)"

It wasn't until December 15, 1964 that Ford Motor Company declared a differentiation from 1956 model to 1957. Seems that someone bought a Mark II from a used car dealer. It was represented as being a 1957. Later, the buyer was dissatisfied, mainly that he had paid too much for what was in all respects a 1956 car. He sued. Ford Motor Company was required to declare. The Office of the General Counsel made the arbitrary determination that all Mark IIs manufactured before October 1, 1956 would be 1956 models; beginning October 1, 1956 and thereafter, all would be 1957. The dissatisfied buyer lost his point, his was a 1957. Serial number 3418 is the first 1957 Mark II.

It is interesting to compare specs as they appeared in Press Releases:

THE CONTINENTAL MARK II RESTORERS GUIDE

BODY SPECIFICATIONS CODES

As described in the patent plate information sheet, the first 2 digits are the color; the next 4 digits are the trim; the next group of digits, either 2, 3, or 4 in number are the month and day of production, and the final digit or two digits are the rotation numbers. The color code system and the trim code system are discussed in other sections of this chapter. The date of manufacture is coded numerically by the month and day, i.e., 116 equals November 6, etc.

Occasionally, this will appear, particularly in the later production cars, as "K24", which would equal September 24.

The last 2 digits, the rotation number, indicate in which sequence the Mark II's left the plant. Researchers have found that there are gaps in the rotation numbers between certain serial numbers, indicating that the units did not leave the plant necessarily in serial number order. It is believed that a vehicle would occasionally be pulled off the final assembly line while other units continued into the production and then this unit placed back on the line at a later time, to be placed in a rotation number sequence not necessarily consistent with serial number sequence.

The letters "A, N" etc appears as the last digit in lieu of dates of manufacturing and rotation numbers. We have no knowledge of the significance of these letters.

II-60A This numerical combination means: II equals Mark II; 60A equals Continental 2-door coupe.

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DSO, DEALERS SPECIAL ORDERS.

Many vehicles are identified on the patent plate in the body specs. line with the prefix of "DSO", "S", or code "S", or "Spec.". These are all DSO's, an abbreviation for dealers special orders. These cars all have non-standard modifications, however small.

Example:

C56 B 1026

Aug./

Spec. B 5 G - 88 - X

7
Aug. 8, 1955

This auto is a light green-gray metallic with matching color interior.

C56 N 3539

7Dec

D21 - 1D39 N

/interior

This auto is a gold color metallic with 1D39 interior.

A record of modifications are kept in numerical sequence with the DSO number. The L.C.O.C. has a record of 256 of these DSOs, the lowest known of which is 167 and the highest is 494. Only an examination of the invoice of the particular vehicle can reveal the significance of the particular DSO.

