1946 Ford Super Deluxe Sedan

Typically, the launch of a new car is met with lukewarm anticipation from the public, but in 1946 things were much different. On July 1st, 1945, just two months prior to our victory over Japan, the War Production Board gave a green light to all automobile manufacturers to resume vehicle production for civilian consumption. Due to the war efforts, it was over three years since the public had the ability to buy a new vehicle. At 10:51am on July 3rd, 1945, the first postwar vehicle, the 1946 Ford, was produced. But it wouldn’t be until October 26th, 1945 that the public got a glimpse of this new product. Demand would, of course, be astounding.

Customers responded like bees to honey with over 300,000 orders taken on the first day. By the end of the model year, 467,536 cars were be sold. Ford, like the other domestic manufacturers, didn’t have time to develop a new postwar product so the 1946 Ford was simply a slightly massaged 1942 Ford with only subtle changes. Outside, a new, a more aggressive grille and revised hood provided a fresh look and in the rear, twin stainless steel trim spears were added to the deck lid. A new hood ornament finished off exterior changes.

Ford simplified things by dropping one model, the Special, from its lineup. Only the Deluxe and Super Deluxe remained. Customer could still order a coupe, two-door sedan, four-door sedan, woody convertible or woody station wagon within those two models. List prices increased three to four hundred dollars from 1942 based on the model ordered, but the public didn’t seem to care about it.

It was a fact that Henry Ford hated change. But his grandson, Henry II, was now the new President of Ford Motor Company, replacing his 80-year-old grandfather. It was, however, clear the 1946 Ford was still all Henry’s doings. Its suspension was old school. Ford Motor Company was the only major manufacturer at the time to continue using transverse front and rear springs and a straight front axle. Other low cost companies including Chevrolet and Plymouth had already moved to independent front suspensions and longitudinal rear springs for a more comfortable ride and improved handling.

Inside, much of the Ford was carryover with the exception of several new seat materials. Customers could order mohair, broadcloth or imitation leather material
for seat cover selection. The rest of the interior remained the same as the 1942 model.

Ford’s famous flathead V8 was known as a potential powerhouse for the masses. Displacement increased to 239 cubic-inches and horsepower rose to 100. The dependable six-cylinder engine produced 90 horsepower and was considered nearly as fast as the V8 from the factory. Only a three-speed column shift manual transmission was available.

By the end of the model year, Ford managed to sell over 70,000 more vehicles than Chevrolet, yet posted an 8.1 million-dollar loss. Ford Motor Company however, had put into place a new team to run the company. Henry Ford II. hired a group of ten army officers known as “The Whiz Kids”. The group included a man named Robert McNamara who later went on to become a president of Ford Motor Company. While the group had little to do with the 1946 Ford, the team would set the stage for the next generation of exciting Ford products. This months feature car is owned by XXXXXXXXXXXX.