

# 1998 AUTO REVIEW



Ford Escort ZX2

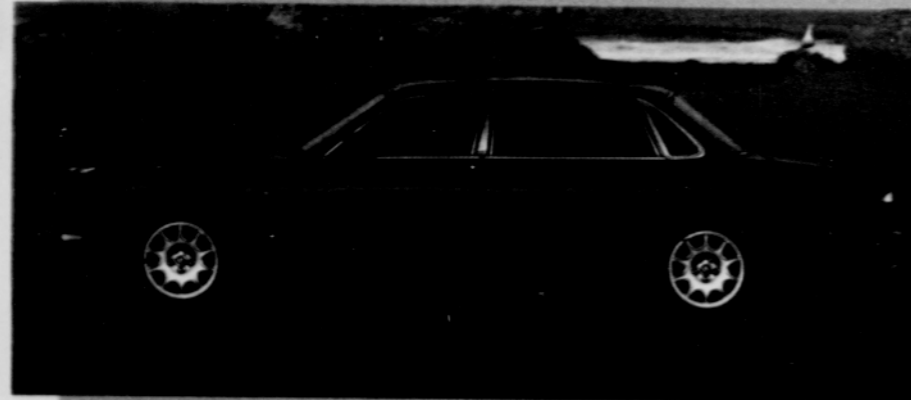
Lincoln Continental



Mazda 626



Interior Mazda B4000



Jaguar XJ8

## FORD

For the past decade, Ford has dominated the truck market. The F150 is the best-selling vehicle in the U.S., beating out all trucks and passenger cars in any category. The Ford Explorer has been a hot-selling sport-utility along with its sister Mercury Mountaineer. And the full-sized Expedition has quickly become popular among the baby boomer segment. Ford continues to improve and expand its family of trucks and sport-utilities in the new model year.

The Ranger compact pickup receives freshened sheet metal, a chassis frame that's full-boxed at the front and a larger 2.5-liter four-cylinder base engine. Ford's Lincoln luxury division introduced this spring an all-new 1998 Navigator full-sized sport-utility. This sophisticated, luxury version of the Ford Expedition has been a virtual sell-out since its introduction. Absent from the 1998 line-up is the rear-wheel drive Aerostar minivan.

On the passenger car side, Ford bids farewell to the Thunderbird, Probe and Aspire models, as the second largest automaker strengthens its car offerings by eliminating lackluster performers. New for 1998, though, is a reskinned Lincoln Town Car and a restyled Lincoln Continental. The Crown Victoria, a favorite among police officers, gets an external face lift and interior upgrade, along with some mechanical enhancements.

## JAGUAR

Jaguar, which is owned by Ford, launches V8-powered sedans in the U.S. this model year. Americans can choose among four models: The XJ8, the long-wheelbase XJ8L, the long-wheelbase luxurious Vanden Plas and the XJR, which comes with a standard-length chassis and supercharged power. These vehicles roll out with 4.0-liter engines pumping 290 horsepower. The bodywork is retained on the XJ luxury cars, but

the interior and V8 engine are both new.

If you liked Jaguars before, you will love these new vehicles. And don't look for the V12 engine; that was phased out of the U.S. line-up in 1997 and most likely won't be available anywhere in the world in 1998.

## MAZDA

Mazda, which is 33.4 percent owned by Ford, introduces a restyled 626 sedan, first revealed at the New York auto show last April. The roomier 626 is a stretched version of its predecessor with increased interior room and slightly more powerful 2.0-liter inline-4 and 2.5-liter V6 engines. It's sleeker and rounder, and bears some resemblance to the larger Millenia. Mazda's B-Series pickup, which is a Ford Ranger pickup wearing a Mazda badge, undergoes the same changes listed for the Ranger, as both models get a facelift for '98.

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