



This stunning example of a 1957 Mercury Turnpike Cruiser is owned by Bill Konieczny of Carol Stream, Ill.

Mercury's Turnpike Cruiser

THE 1957 MERCURY TURNPIKE CRUISER was advertised as being 'straight out of tomorrow' and it really was. Besides over-the-top styling and pizzazz, it featured the most whiz-bang gadgetry that had ever been put in a Mercury, or even parent company, Ford, before.


The long, low Turnpike Cruiser got its gorgeous, show-car looks from a 1956 concept car, and being the golden age of space aspirations, a projectile theme was prevalent. Sculpted, concave spears laid on the rear fenders, inlaid with anodized gold inserts. They culminated in the unique V-shaped taillights, giving the impression of rockets blasting into orbit. The car's thin roof design, with its front and rear

overhangs and slim B-pillars, was all new and supposed to give the illusion of it floating 'atop a picture-window expanse of glass'.

It wasn't just fabulous looks; designers wanted an 'entirely new concept of motoring pleasure' to be found in the Turnpike Cruiser, incorporating many forward-thinking elements. Great views came from the 'Skylight Dual-Curve' windshield that not only wrapped around the side of the front passengers, but also upwards into the roof. The rear window was nifty, too, featuring the ability to be raised or lowered at the touch of a button. This allowed greater air flow through the cabin, which was only helped by the industry-first 'Breezeway Ventilation.' This was twin, roof-level, fresh air intakes that fed right into the cabin and could be opened or closed.

The front seat was powered but had a 'Seat-O-Matic' memory function, too. Gears on the Merc-O-Matic automatic transmission were selected through 'keyboard control' push-buttons, there was an average speed clock and a rear air cushion suspension. Drivers could check their average speed through an average speed computer clock, located on the dash. The vehicle even had an air cushion rear suspension,

coupled with longer, softer front coil springs, all of which soaked up bumps and road noises.

In spite of the glamor and glitz, the Turnpike Cruiser failed to overwhelm buyers. Quality control issues couldn't be overcome, despite the buzz and excitement of a convertible model pacing the 1957 Indianapolis 500 race. Top Mercury execs expected more and after the 1958 model year, the opulent knock-out was dropped. 

Collectible Insights

A total of 7,291 two-door hardtops were made and today, Hagerty Insurance values one in Concours condition at \$51,500. Convertibles are harder to come by, with only 1,265 being produced. Top examples fetch around \$112,000.

PHOTO: CHICAGO AUTOMOBILE TRADE ASSOCIATION



The concept car is shown at the 1956 Chicago Auto Show.



Matt Avery is an award-winning media producer, with a focus on automotive topics and narrative. As a storyteller, his passion is documenting the memories behind our favorite classic, custom, and collector vehicles. He may be reached at: mattaverymedia@gmail.com.