

Lincoln's Bon Voyage to Switzerland  
*By Eydie McDaniel*

October 9, 2011: On a sunny Sunday afternoon, fresh yellow leaves settled by my feet. My friend drove around the corner at last. A mellow horn greeted me and the Lincoln farewell began. One or two at a time about 30 admiring fans arrived. They slowly circled again and again, clicking and dotting on exquisite details. Passing strangers cooed "They don't make 'em like that anymore". "That's quite a car". "She's a beauty." "Do you drive it around?" A near reverent admiration exuded. No church ever inspired a more obvious adoration. So much impressive design stood there in pure stately class. No modern show room could compete.

Pridefully crafted metal parts inspired respect as new fangled plastic rattle traps vanished from the mind. Wing windows moved like silk at the touch of a shiny chrome button. Seven shiny chrome buttons on the long drivers arm rest brought silent glide to door windows, one quarter pie back seat windows and the wide chrome edged rear window. The mighty hood moved from front mounted hinges to reveal the largest polished black air filter in memory. Even the bolt tops on the 430 cubic inch V8 engine were shiny. Three gas filters with glass tubes, two hefty hood latches, and all the motor parts sat there spread out for hands to easily reach. "Mark V" and "Continental" graced the sides in sparkling gold. The oft repeated Lincoln star motif gleamed from the hood, each wheel, and in glistening gold embroidery to flank the soft white top. Blue sky reflection danced in curved windshield glass, and human forms copied clearly in heavy chrome bumpers. In one of the four, four inch round dials affront the steering wheel the second hand quietly swept in perfect time.

This immaculate show piece of thoughtful engineering art takes more parking space than any new fangled plastic rattle trap. It is 19 feet long. It has a wheel base of 131 inches. It weighs 5700 pounds. In 1960 careful workers welded the body and the frame into one single unit with the newly introduced Unibody construction. Never before or since has a car this large been build in that way. Fifty one years later this ride remains a rattle free, rock solid, sure footed travelers dream. The radio station changed with a tap of toe. The padded floors cushioned the feet. Precision stitched tan leather tightly draped tush-worthy seats, and line the internal door panels and visors. Switches raised the compartment cover and soon the lovely soft white roof top smoothly folded its way in and the cover gently closed to protect it. Two strong heaters made top down, moon lit drives, a comfy experience.

Never was so much chrome so beautifully expressed. Never did forest green, AKA Deerfield Green Matallic, marry more sweetly with gold and white and tan and black. Passionate artist, Jere precisely perfected every detail in this marvel of American design and craftsmanship. Each contrasting black detail he painted by hand. Every possible adjustment received 36 years of dedicated care for the Swiss gentleman soon to take the wheel.

Too soon our neighbor Jere DeBacker drove the lovely 1960 Lincoln Continental Mark V Convertible, around the corner as the perfect rear lights faded into the gentle autumn evening.