

## 1969 Ford Falcon Futura

### Introduction: A Legacy of Ford Falcons

My relationship with the Ford Falcon began long before I owned my own. My grandpa had always driven these classic Fords, and they were a significant part of my early memories. For years, the Falcon was his car of choice, with its simple yet reliable design. As a kid, I never thought much about the car beyond the fact that it was a part of his daily routine. But as I got older and started to drive, I began to appreciate the history behind these iconic vehicles, especially when I inherited a 1969 Ford Falcon Futura from my uncle. It was a special moment – a piece of family history passed down, but also a project car waiting to be revived.

### From Grandpa to Uncle, and Then to Me

When I received the 1969 Ford Falcon Futura, it had seen better days. The body was a bit beaten up, and it was clear that this wasn't a car you'd just take for a Sunday cruise without some work. Still, it had character. This particular model had been handed down to me from my uncle when he was done with it, and by the time it came into my possession, it was no longer in the prime condition it had once been in. Still, I knew that with some love and elbow grease, it could once again become a vehicle worth admiring.

### The Ford Falcon Futura vs. The Mustang

The Ford Falcon Futura was a nameplate that stood out during its time, especially when compared to its more famous counterpart, the Ford Mustang. While the Mustang became an icon of American muscle and speed, the Falcon was often seen as its more practical cousin. However, there's an interesting connection between the two that often gets overlooked.

The Falcon was Ford's entry-level compact car that first appeared in 1960. The Futura trim, introduced later, was the sporty version, offering more performance and style than the base model. By the time the 1969 Falcon Futura rolled around, the Falcon had already become a well-established name in the Ford lineup, but the arrival of the Mustang in 1964 would dramatically change its trajectory. The Mustang's success was so overwhelming that it overshadowed the Falcon, which was soon discontinued in favor of newer, more modern designs. Still, the 1969 Falcon Futura retained many of the same underpinnings that made the Mustang so successful. In fact, the Futura and the Mustang shared a number of components, such as the same chassis and engine options.

When it came to the engine, the Falcon Futura had a lot in common with the Mustang. It offered a range of engine options, including the 302 V8, which would later become the standard in many performance-oriented Mustangs. The Falcon Futura's performance wasn't as extreme as the Mustang's, but it was still a solid performer with decent power for its time.

### Restoration: The Journey Begins

After receiving the Falcon, I set out to restore it, starting with a fresh coat of paint. A friend of

mine, who had painted my motorcycle earlier, agreed to help out in exchange for some trade work. We settled on a gorgeous "burgundy metallic pearl" finish. This paint job was not only going to make the car look fantastic, but it would also give it a modern touch while still retaining its vintage charm.

In addition to the paint job, I enlisted the help of a friend who owned an upholstery shop. We worked out a trade deal, and soon enough, the interior was looking better than ever. The seats, once worn out and faded, were reupholstered in a rich, comfortable fabric that complemented the exterior perfectly. The dashboard was also refurbished, giving the car a much-needed facelift. Every time I looked at the Futura, I saw a car that was coming back to life – not just as a vehicle, but as a part of my personal history.

### Engine Woes: The 351 Powertrain

While the aesthetics were coming together nicely, the engine was a different story. The car came with the reliable 351 Windsor V8 engine, which had been a workhorse for many Ford vehicles during the era. The 351 was a solid engine known for its durability and power. However, when I inherited the car, it was clear that the distributor was having issues. The car would run but not as smoothly as it should, and the engine would sometimes sputter or stall, especially at higher speeds.

Despite these issues, the car still had plenty of power. The 351 V8 provided a solid amount of horsepower, allowing the Falcon Futura to cruise effortlessly at speeds of 80-85 mph on the highway. It wasn't a drag racer, but it had plenty of punch when I needed it. I used it as my primary commuter vehicle, driving 35 miles each way to my job. Even with the engine's quirks, it was a fun ride. But the real problem came when it was time to stop.

### Stopping Problems: A Workout for the Legs

The braking system on the Falcon Futura was... well, let's say it wasn't the most advanced for its time. In order to bring the car to a complete stop, I had to use both feet on the brake pedal and pull the steering wheel towards me with all my strength. It was a bit of a workout, but it got the job done. The problem was, there was no modern braking system, no power brakes, and no anti-lock systems. It was all manual, and if you didn't have strong legs, you were in trouble.

### The Incident: Chased by a Minivan

One of the most memorable moments with the Falcon Futura occurred when an intoxicated woman in a minivan rear-ended me while I was driving down the road. She slammed into my car and then proceeded to drive off, leaving me with a damaged rear end and no real way to stop her. I wasn't about to let this woman get away with it, so I decided to chase her. I honked the horn and flagged down every cop I passed. After several miles, the woman finally pulled over, and I was able to get her information. I later sued her insurance company and ended up with enough money to get a newer, nicer car. The Falcon Futura, despite its quirks, had been good to me, and I was ready for a change.

### The Falcon Futura's Legacy

Although the Ford Falcon Futura was discontinued in 1970, it remained a classic piece of Ford history. Its role as the compact alternative to the full-sized cars in Ford's lineup gave it a lasting legacy. It might not have been the powerhouse that the Mustang became, but it had its place in the history of the American automotive industry. The Falcon Futura, with its blend of practicality, performance, and vintage style, became a symbol of an era of cars that were designed for everyday use but still offered something special for those who wanted to add their own personal touch.

### Differences Between the Ford Falcon and Falcon Futura

There's often confusion between the Ford Falcon and the Falcon Futura, as they were part of the same family. The Ford Falcon, introduced in 1960, was available in multiple trims, with the Futura being the sportier and more upscale option. The main differences between the two models lay in the design and features.

The Falcon Futura came with more standard features than the base Falcon, including upgraded upholstery, trim, and a more stylish dashboard. The Futura also came with the option of a V8 engine, while the standard Falcon was mostly equipped with inline-six engines. This made the Futura a bit more of a performance-oriented vehicle compared to the standard Falcon, which was designed primarily for economy and practicality.

### Conclusion: A Memorable Ride

Ultimately, the 1969 Ford Falcon Futura was a car full of memories and adventures. From its powerful engine to its quirky braking system, it was a car that never failed to impress in its own way. Although it met its end in a somewhat dramatic fashion, the Falcon Futura left me with a deeper appreciation for Ford's legacy, and the experiences I had with that car will stay with me forever.