

# 1938 FORD DELUXE FORDOR SEDAN

1938 Ford Deluxe 81A, Fordor Sedan

Owner: Bernie and Janice Taulborg Collection

Original cost: \$710.00 (In 1938: Average car cost \$763.00; average household income, \$1,730.00; average home cost \$3,900.00; gallon of gas, 10 cents)

Previous owner(s): Owners, 1986 -2001, were from Omaha

Number made: 30,287

Engine, etc.: 8 cyl.; 221 cid; 85 hp; 112 in. wheelbase; 2,697 lbs.

The 1938 recession hurt Ford's sales, as did their continued use of most body panels from their 1937 cars. Competition had been fierce in the 1930's and Ford was losing ground to Chevrolet in the latter part of the decade.

The company made one significant but subtle change in its product line for 1938, creating separate Standard (82A; V-8, 60 hp) and Deluxe (81A; V-8, 85 hp) models and making their external appearance distinctly different and instantly recognizable. "Standards" in 1938 models did not look very different from 1937 models but "DeLuxes" had a different, new look. Ford wanted to position the Standard in direct competition with the base Chevrolet and move the Deluxe up to compete with Pontiac and Dodge.

The 1938 Deluxe models were substantially revised. The new instrument panel featured a centrally located radio speaker grille and recessed control knobs. They had dual windshield wipers, window molding of walnut wood grain, and a "banjo" steering wheel. Options included fender skirts, heater, cigar lighter, and seat covers.

In response to styling changes made by GM, Ford adopted all-steel welded construction for 1938 closed models. More importantly, crisp new bodies with headlights nestled in the fenders and a sharply vee-shaped grill (Deluxe models) composed of fine horizontal bars were introduced. Ford also

maintained its "safety of steel from toe to wheel" in its mechanical brakes in which cables replaced rods that had been used through 1937.

The roadster was no longer made and the old-fashioned phaeton was in its final season (as was the closed rumble-seat style). Both body styles had long lost favor with the public but Ford was far behind its rivals in realizing this.

As an indication of the popularity of the Ford V-8 engine, by May, 1938, Ford produced its 5 millionth V-8 model. The V-8 was originally introduced in 1932 and the engine was economically built.

Edsel Ford was president of Ford in 1938.

Sources: Standard Catalog of American Cars, 1805 -1942. Beverly Rae Kimes, et al. 3rd ed. Krause Publications, 1996.

<http://auto.howstuffworks.com/ford2.htm>

<http://automuseumonline.com/1938-ford-deluxe-convertible-club-coupe.html> (Scroll down.)

<http://www.bonhams.com/auctions/15566/lot/79/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1937\\_Ford#1938](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1937_Ford#1938)

See

also: [http://www.oldcarbrochures.com/static/NA/Ford/1938\\_Ford/1938\\_Ford\\_Folder/dirindex.html](http://www.oldcarbrochures.com/static/NA/Ford/1938_Ford/1938_Ford_Folder/dirindex.html) (Original 1938 brochure; pdf)