# The *Lynx* Project

***PROJECT HISTORY:***

An enduring mystery in the history of the Ford Motor Company – why the Lincoln-Mercury Division didn't have its own concept car program in the early Sixties to match the Ford Division's famous *X-Car* program – was answered by the discovery, in 2009, of a vintage 1964 Ford corporate film that revealed a tantalizing, if brief, image of previously-unknown Mercury concept car code-named *Lynx*. Intense research by a dedicated cadre of automotive historians uncovered the tantalizing history of the "suppressed" *Lynx* concept car program as well as the discovery of the four actual *Lynx* prototypes that were built by Dearborn Steel Tubing and Carrozzeria Bertone. The discovery and restoration of the three *Lynx* prototypes (as well as the personal version built by Lincoln-Mercury chief Ben Mills) triggered additional research that eventually uncovered a remarkably comprehensive corporate record (buttressed by the diary of Lincoln-Mercury Division chief Benjamin D. Mills), styling studio drawings, and photos that revealed the rich and unexpected history of the "lost" Lincoln-Mercury concept car program from 1962-65.

Because the full size cars are now held in private hands, a group of forty-two scale vehicle modelers from the United States, Finland and Turkey have gathered together to replicate, in scale, the full history of the *Lynx* prototypes so that the story could be known. Their efforts include building exquisite scale miniatures of the three initial *Lynx* prototypes, the personal *Lynx* built for the chief of the Lincoln-Mercury Division, plus other vehicles built for the Ford and Lincoln-Mercury Divisions in the 1962-65 period and, later, in 1969 when the Pantera was being developed, and still later when an entrepreneur decided to build a limited number of "revival" cars. Scale models of other vehicles of that time, dioramas and other artifacts have also been recreated - - in scale -- to tell the tale of this bit of Ford Motor Company history, hidden from the public for five decades. A full-length book is being written that will tell the comprehensive and, until recently, virtually unknown history of this lost chapter of Mercury's history. The scale models, dioramas, and other reproduced ephemera, will support the eventual unveiling of this concept car program at a future GSL Championship.

***DESCRIPTION OF THE LYNX PROJECT SCALE VEHICLES:***

This exhibition presages the full presentation of the project at a subsequent GSL Championship. You can visit The Lynx Project website at **http://thelynxproject.org/**

Please read the following text indexed to the numbers placed by each of the scale vehicles presented in this exhibit:

1. **Lynx X-7.** The first *Lynx* prototype was the "pilot" car in the program to create a Lincoln-Mercury "response" to the Ford *X-Cars* (*Mustang II, Allegro, Cougar II*) from the 1962-63 era. Lincoln-Mercury chief Benjamin D. Mills secured funding to build the first three prototypes of an intended series of performance-oriented two-seater cars to spark up the otherwise prosaic Mercury product line. *Lynx-1*,

designated the *X-7*, was built by Dearborn Steel Tubing based up a much-modified 1963 Comet unibody platform and featured an early production 5-bolt 289 Fairlane "K" motor and a four-speed. This car was built at the same time that DST was constructing the *Super Cyclone* for the Lincoln-Mercury Caravan of Stars (a response to the Ford Division's Custom Car Caravan) and while completing the Thunderbird *Italien. Lynx-1* debuted in February 1964 Chicago Auto Show, where it was greeted by a very enthusiastic public. That reaction led to the corporation's approval of the construction of the next two versions of the cars which, when completed in late summer of 1964, were widely promoted before the entire program fell into disfavor. Knowledge of the program, and the reason so little is known today, was effectively suppressed until being rediscovered in 20014. **This scale replica of the first *Lynx* prototype was built by Randy Derr.**

2. **Lynx-GTA.** The third *Lynx* prototype, designated the *GT-A*, was built to show what a two-seater convertible might be like, and to gauge its appeal to a "sporty car"-hungry public. Again built on a modified Comet platform (based upon early unibody platform work by DST on the first two prototypes), the third Lynx featured a 289 and a C-4, with interior details that strongly echoed the interior designs of *Lynx-1:* The first and third prototypes were intentionally production-oriented and were built concurrently at Carrozzeria-Bertone. This *Lynx* prototype featured a removable hardtop with storage under the rear deck accessible from the interior. **This scale replica of the third prototype is being built by Vince LoBosco.**

3. **Lynx X-R.** The second *Lynx* prototype, the X-R, was built to demonstrate the prototype design's capability of competing in SCCA B-Production competitive events: for marketing purposes, it was critical to exhibit competitive competence. Changes nearly identical to the mechanical modifications made to *Lynx-1* were made to a '64 Comet unibody platform prior to construction of the body at the famed Italian Carrozzeria, Bertone, when it was built at the same time that the *Lynx-3* was constructed. Many of the mechanical and aesthetic elements later appeared on the Shelby Mustang 350R cars: enhanced "K" motor, relocated upper front control arms, over-rider traction bars, trunk-mounted battery and other details including the incut hood to enhance cooling during road racing and a partial backlight were featured. *Lynx-2* was never entered into formal competition (it didn't qualify for technical reasons), but was widely campaigned in promotional efforts for the Lynx prototype series. **Mark S. Gustavson is building the scale replica of the "competition" Lynx prototype.**

4. **Lynx XR-7.** The fourth *Lynx* prototype, the *XR-7*, was not part of the "official" *Lynx* prototype series, which official concept car program was aimed at promoting two of the Lynx cars: the high-performance Lynx *X-7* and the more leisurely Lynx *GTA*. Frustrated by the design compromises that Gene Bordinat and other members of Ford upper management imposed on his prototype program, Lincoln-Mercury Chief Ben Mills decided that he would build, for himself and at his sole personal expense, a *Lynx* that would much more closely match the design and mechanical appointments of the prototype series as it was originally conceived. The *Lynx-4* benefitted from early conversion work at Dearborn Steel Tubing, where a Stroppe-designed, crank-supercharged, inline Ford six was custom built and installed in a much-modified '64 Comet unibody to which '60 Ford Galaxie upper and low control arm front suspensions were installed, together with a prototype independent rear suspension. The body design, too, radically departed from the three "program" prototypes: it had a louvered hood, vents cut through the front fenders, and no trunk. The interior reflected some Ferrari-influenced details. This car was built along side the so-called *"Bertone Mustang"* that original *Automobile Quarterly* editor Scott Bailey commissioned from the Italian coachmaker. Both finished cars were displayed in Europe after construction concluded in mid-1965; the display of *Lynx-4* (sitting under the L-M banner) caused considerable consternation at corporate

headquarters and led, in part, to the "suppression" and elimination of the *Lynx* program from production consideration. **Mark S. Gustavson is building this scale miniature replica.**

5. **Super Cyclone**. As part of the effort to spark up the 1964 Mercury product line, the Lincoln-Mercury Division created the L-M Caravan of Stars and populated it with small number of modified production cars. One of those cars was the Dearborn Steel Tubing-built Mercury *Super Cyclone* (based upon a production 1964 Comet) that used the same kind of fiberglass-bonded-to-steel construction technique that DST used to build the Thunderbird *Italien.* This car also debuted at the February1964 Chicago Auto Show not far from where the *Lynx-1* was also displayed, after which it was campaigned across the United States and appeared, alongside the *Italien*, at the New York World's Fair. **This replica of the *Super Cyclone* was constructed by Juha Airio**.

6. **Super Cyclone**. To properly depict the story of the cars constructed at Dearborn Steel Tubing at the same time that Lynx program-] specific cars were being built, a "primer-stage" model of the Cyclone is being constructed by George Layton.

7. **Super Marauder.** The Lincoln-Mercury Caravan of Stars campaign commenced with the unveiling of the famed Mercury *Super Marauder* – a dramatically-shortened '64 pre-production 1964 Mercury convertible built to Mercury's design specifications in George Barris' shop in California. This car featured a 427, flared wheel wells, a modified hood, a unique steering wheel, slotted chrome wheels and bright candy/pearl persimmon paint. Also featured were space-age head rests, rocker panel mounted exhaust and a full-width taillight. This car shared the dais with *Lynx X-7* at Cobo Hall in early 1964 as the Caravan of Stars program debuted. **Based on some preliminary work by Bob Downie, Steve Perry completed the construction of an authentic scale replica of this famous car**.

8. **African Safari Comet.** A series of 1964 Comets were built by Bill Stroppe &Associates to compete in the East African Safari Rally. Modifications included roll bars, beefed-up suspensions, skid plates, extra fuel tanks, and extra lighting. Six cars were entered in the rally, and four were used as service vehicles. The rough unpaved roads took their toll on the powerful, but large and relatively heavy, Comets – especially the suspensions – but two managed to finish in the allotted time. This car was the final classified finisher in 21st place. **The model of the number 80 car driven by Joginder and Jaswant Singh was constructed by Steve Roullier.**

9. **Comet Endurance.** As part of Ford's effort to demonstrate the performance and toughness of the revised Comet, Dearborn Steel Tubing prepared a series of 1964 Comets to run at Daytona in the fall of 1963. These cars featured HiPo 289 engines, heavy-duty suspension components, roll bars and other safety features, but were otherwise essentially stock. After forty-two days of around-the-clock running, more than 100 World and National records were established. The lead car completed 100,000 miles at an average speed of 105 mph. **Steve Roullier built this scale vehicle.**

10. **1963 Prototype Fairlane Thunderbolt.** After building a 406-powered 1962 Fairlane, Dearborn Steel Tubing was commissioned by Ford to build a 427-powered Fairlane in 1963. This car was campaigned as an A/FX car by Tasca Ford from Rhode Island, driven by first by Bill Humphrey and later by Bill Lawton. The Fairlane made its debut at the 1963 NHRA Indy Nationals and later set an A/FX Record of 121.29mph.

This car served as a test-bed for many of the features that were later incorporated into the 100 1964 Fairlane Thunderbolts that DST also built. It is reported that the car was crushed after the season. **The model is built "two-sided" by Steve Roullier to represent the car as it might have looked nearing completion at DST, and as it appeared later in the racing season**.

11. **Mustang Vivace.** The Mustang *Vivace* was built at Dearborn Steel Tubing in late 1963. It was designed by Vince Gardner and built for DST owner Andy Horton, and was intended by Hotton to be a participant in the Ford Division's famed Custom Car Caravan. The car was built using Kirksite panel stampings welded to a Falcon platform and then heavily modified. The sweeping roof design created by Gardner was used by Lincoln-Mercury chief Mills as general inspiration for *Lynx* prototypes one and two, but most explicitly for *Lynx-4*. Mills purchased the car and displayed it in the styling studio so the *Lynx* stylists could be inspired by the *Vivace* roof. The *Vivace* featured a front grille design that would later be mimicked in the Bertone Mustang, (the *Vivace* spent a few weeks at Carrozzeria Bertone in early 1964) and which grille design was also used (in general style) for late Sixties Mercury designs. Mark S. Gustavson is completing this model.

12. **Bertone Mustang.** The *Bertone Mustang* was constructed, on commission from Scott Bailey, at Dearborn Steel Tubing in 1965. Based upon an early production 1965 Mustang fastback, the car was rebodied to Bailey's specification at Bertone's facility in Italy, and was constructed alongside *Lynx-4* in mid-1965. The *Mustang* was the subject of a major article in Volume 4, No.2 issue of *Automobile Quarterly*. After being shown in Europe, the car appeared in at a few car shows in the United States, after which if was offered for sale by Bertone for $10 K. However, the car was apparently stolen– never to reappear. *AQ* founder Bailey searched for decades for the car before his passing in 2013. Mike Felix started this model, and John Teresi is finishing it.

13. **Mustang Pegasus.** The Pegasus was built at the famed Alexander Brothers shop based on a design submitted by Vince Gardner. Performance oriented, DST chief Hotton expressed to Ben Mill his interest in placing *Pegasus* into the last Ford Division's Caravan. Mills took Jacques Passino to lunch and expressed his interest, and that of Hotton, to placing their two restyled Mustangs in the final Ford Caravan. Eventually, Mills purchased the car as a companion piece to the Vivace; it was found in the Indiana warehouse. **Mark S. Gustavson built the model.**

14. **Bertone wood styling buck for Lynx X**-7. The Bertone Carrozzeria used a time-tested approach to building the second *Lynx* prototype. Referring often to the first *Lynx* prototype that was shipped to Bertone for reference, the craftsmen built a wood buck over which aluminum sheetmetal was hand-hammered. As each panel was completed, it was removed and heli-arced to the Bertone-built metal framework of the 1:1 car. **This wood buck, and workbench, built by Jim Fernandez to match vintage photographs, exhibits how wood was used to establish the shape of the body**. **The "aluminized" fender was created by Andy Kellock.**

15. **Bertone wood styling buck for Lynx GTA.** Bertone also built a wood buck over which the exterior metal shapes for this *Lynx* prototype were hammered. Forming the large flat rear deck of the *Lynx* convertible was more difficult than the more complex shapes of the hardtops because it was difficult to prevent "oil-caning" when mounted to the body. **This wood buck was also built by Jim Fernandez.**

16. **Bertone wood styling buck for Lynx XR-7.** The last *Lynx* built by Bertone was presaged by another wood buck, this one for L-M Chief Ben Mills' car *(Lynx XR-7)*. To match the unique design of the fourth *Lynx*, this wood buck was importantly different from the bucks built for the second and third prototypes. The rear hatch created a special problem for the fabricators because the body needed to be re-engineered to keep the body from tweaking out of shape. **This wood buck was built by Jim Fernandez.**

17. **Bordinat Cobra**. The *Bordinat Cobra* was built for design chief Gene Bordinat, in-house at Ford, in late 1965. The body was made of Royalex and mounted to Cobra chassis CSX 3001. Bordinat drove the car for a few years, after which it was retired and placed into storage. Inspired by the *Cougar II Ford-X* cars and third *Lynx* prototype, the car was a stunningly beautiful roadster and survives today. **This scale replica of the *Bordinat Cobra* is being built by George Layton.**

18. **Lynx X-R bare body.** This *Lynx-3* model depicts the aluminum body being assembled at Bertone, where *Lynx* prototypes 2, 3 and Mill's personal Lynx coupe were built. **This model was started and substantially completed by Andy Kellock with mechanical details to be added by Mark S. Gustavson.**

19. **Mustang II – under construction**. The *Mustang II* was one of the three Ford "X-Cars" in 1963 (the other cars were the *Allegro* and *Cougar II*) and was commissioned by the Ford Division. The *Mustang II* amounted to a highly-styled version of the production car that was first offered for sale in April of 1964**.** This version, depicts the car under construction in the famed Dearborn Steel Tubing at the same time that the Mustang Vivace and the early days of the construction of the first Lynx prototype. Model built by Don Berry after early work by **built by Dan Booker.**

20. **T-Bird Italien**. The *Italien* was built at Dearborn Steel Tubing for promotional use in the Ford Division's Custom Car Caravan. *The Italien* played a role in the design of the fourth *Lynx* prototype and the *Mustang Vivace* – the sweeping roofline directly influenced the two other cars and probably influenced Gardner when he designed the *Mustang Vivace*. **Based upon some early work by Steve Boutte, the model was completed by Juha Airio**. **Bill Geary is building an "under construction" version for one of the Lynx Project diorama of the Dearborn Steel Tubing shop.**

## Additional Craftsmen and Consultants

Of course, The Lynx Project also relies upon the scale historical work of a wide array of talented craftsmen that stretch half way around the world. Please enjoy this further list of skilled builders whose dedication to The Lynx Project is also celebrated.

**Tim Ahlborn:** Models of 1964 Mercury COE, and two matching trailers;
**Steve Allemand:** 1/25 factory decals for engines in *Lynx* prototypes;
**Paul Anagnostopoulos:** Book production, design;
**Dale Angell:** Restoration of vintage Lincoln-Mercury 35mm film;

**Mark Benton:** Website creation and management, consultation
**Dan Booker:** *Mustang II* model;
**Bill Bozgan:** Historical Research at Ford, historical consultant
**Jim Devine:** Model of *Lynx*-Comet styling and mechanical mule;
**Bob Downie:** Early work on replica of Mercury *Super Marauder*
**Wayne Egbert:** Construction of Project exhibition tables;
**Jim Fernandez:** Diorama of Carrozzeria Bertone, and wood styling bucks of *Lynx* prototypes 2,3, and ;
**Bill Geary:** Model of Thunderbird *Italien*, depicted as under construction in Dearborn Steel Tubing;
**Phil Gladstone:** Management of future presentation of project;
**JJ Gladstone:** Photo restoration;
**Ric Golding:** Resin cast parts for diorama;
**Cody Grayland:** Machined parts;
**Mark S. Gustavson:** Project management, coordination, financial, restoration of *Lynx* prototypes;
**Ken Hamilton:** Early work on Indiana warehouse diorama;
**Paul Hettick:** Builder of factory production Mercury Comets;
**Bill Helm:** Historical consult, "continuity check" review, general review;
**Charlie Henry:** Historical consultant (Dearborn Steel Tubing), general review of Ford history in early Sixties;
**Don Holthaus:** Resin casting of Lynx bodies for conversion to scale miniatures;
**Mark D. Jones:** Decals for use on scale vehicle miniatures
**Gary Kulchock:** Digital processing of photoetch art from Bob Wick, model of *Lynx-2* as initially built in Dearborn Steel Tubing;
**Dave McGaughey:** Machined parts;
**Harold Oswald**: Diorama of Ford Styling Studio (circa 1964-65);
**Mike Napoleon:** Construction of equipment and artifacts for Carrozzeria Bertone diorama;
**Don Strong;** Dioramas of Detroit's Cobo Hall, Dearborn Steel Tubing, Indiana warehouse where *Lynx* prototypes were found in 2009
**Alan Raab:** Resin casting
**Replicas and Miniatures Company of Maryland (Norm Veber)**: resin casting
**Steve Roullier:** Historical consultant, Builder of master parts for five-bolt 289 and Super Six 250 for *Lynx-4;*
**Mike Smith**: Supervisor, restoration of Lynx prototypes;
**Mike Swan:** Research re: Alitalia cargo jet that delivered *Lynx* prototypes to the United States;
**Korkut Varol:** Diorama of Alitalia DC-7 cargo jet;
**Doug Whyte:** Restoration of vintage photos for book and presentation;
**Bob Wick:** Photoetch artwork, project consultant, design of presentation, book editing; and
**Roger Yu**: Decals for Mercury COE, production of 1/625 scale IMC kits of *Lynx* scale models