

March
Third
1925

Mr. Edsel B. Ford,
East Jefferson Avenue,
Detroit.

Dear Edsel:

Many thanks for your letter of Feb. 25.

Please be assured that irrespective of your own plans for a medium sized car I repeat my invitation and sincerely want you to see my designs and satisfy your curiosity. There isn't any doubt but what your organization can and will turn out a very wonderful automobile with many pleasant surprises and there is every reason why you should, but nevertheless I dare to believe my layouts include a number of ideas you should either have in your car or else know about.

My position has been unique inasmuch as I have been able to work as an idealist and study the whole matter of design from the sidelines without hurry and with no board of directors to answer to nor a going concern to tie my hands and limit my dreams of car perfection. When I tell you we have used in the neighborhood of a half mile of drawing paper in developing plans for my car you may guess how very carefully every item has been thought out -- I believe strongly in having things as nearly right as humanly possible on paper first before starting experimental work. Granted there is no real finality nor is there 100% perfection in anything man may touch, but Edsel, I am of the firm conviction there are certain principles incorporated in my car entirely unlike and SUPERIOR to anything on wheels.

Of necessity I must elucidate a bit and paint the picture a little clearer. You've entrusted certain inside information to me and I'll do the same with you -- I'm only too glad to give it to you -- a light under a bushel does no one any real good.

My determination has been to eventually either give the world a distinctly BETTER automobile or else none at all. Not being a manufacturer myself but only an artist-engineer, I have hoped when I completed my plans to interest some good manufacturer in taking it on as a new product, believing that the world makes a beaten path to the door of anyone who produces a decidedly BETTER article. I admit I picked a rather hard row to hoe especially as most concerns are more or less satisfied with what their own pet engineers turn out for them and its unusual to purchase a design from the outside. However -- my terrific desire to create what I knew in the back of my head to be the LAST WORD in automobiles drove me on and on to at least work out my ideas on paper -- the rest could come later.

Relative to my principles of car design I believe in placing my passengers on board FIRST and in their proper position and then to build the chassis and mechanism AROUND then, never permitting mere mechanism to dominate the design nor to intrude itself up through the floors etc as so much careless plumbing does through some ceilings.

The natural desire now is for low cars, but low cars usually mean very low cushions and one's knees up under one's chin. The answer of course is a low floor and I ACTUALLY have the LOWEST FLOOR of any car of decent size in the world (road clearance normal) with the exception of the Lancia Lambda model -- but in their case there is a tunnel down the center and above the floor over the drive shaft while my floors are absolutely clean with NO tin covers bumped up for axle clearance etc..

The very low floor may sound too sporty on the face of it but I use it entirely toward a sane and dignified seating arrangement. If there is one element necessary in a good car it is an atmosphere of DIGNITY and refinement. I have exactly that. There are many new departures but nothing of a radical nature to accomplish the desired results. If ever a car had a general appeal this job has -- it will satisfy a woman driver, meet the requirements of the younger generation who want snap, the business man or elderly gentleman and his lady who desire real ease of getting in and out of a car and who wish to sit on a seat of decent height and in fact

the face
is Edsel
at the
Zephyr
a big
tunnel

Mr. Edsel B. Ford

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it easily might be termed another Universal Car. If ever a car possessed CHARM -- that intangible something that makes a man reach down in his pocket and want to buy whether it is an automobile or a Rembrant -- my little car possesses it.

The very fact that you admit an interest in a car of the type under discussion certainly justifies and warrants your being acquainted with unique and attractive sales features included in my drawings. I understand and appreciate perfectly your attitude in not wishing to see what I have because naturally once seen you cannot easily erase from your mind ideas, especially if they are good ones and you'd hate later to feel guilty of plagiarism. Its very kind of you to feel that way but I'll gladly take a chance on the outcome knowing that when you do see what I have I am sure a few features at least will so appeal to you that you will not be content without them. I've asked you to call my bluff and the offer still stands. You certainly know me well enough to know that my CHIEF ambition is to see the car produced as soon as possible and enjoyed by the public -- the monetary side of it while a necessary evil really is secondary with me -- true I do feel entitled to a fair return for my long painstaking efforts, but that is incidental and were you to take any real fancy to what I have you would find me most reasonable and easy to deal with, rest assured.

When you finally present a new car to the public you will want it to incorporate the very nicest and harmonious collection of features yet built into ~~any~~ car -- it must be le dernier cri. Here and there in most every car will be found certain commendable characteristics but to combine in a moderate size vehicle practically everything of a desirable nature is very UNUSUAL indeed. I have that harmonious combination and Edsel, I also claim to have the most ADAPTABLE chassis extant -- in other words at last there is a chassis to really meet body builders needs and dreams in a way that has NEVER been done before -- not forgetting the popularity of Lincoln at the recent Salon either. Bodies and lines sell cars nowadays so I have provided a chassis which will easily take any five passenger type fashion may dictate five years hence.

Mr. Edsel B. Ford

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To put it another way, the foundation determines the house above it -- you cannot have a good looking car unless the foundation (chassis) has been planned to meet body requirements and not just to satisfy the whims of the mechanical fanatic who forgets that primarily a chassis is really built to carry passengers comfortably -- that's why I place my passengers on boggy first. This is a long story but I've spent years toward this one job and there's lots to be said -- you understand my predicament I know and will excuse my longwindedness.

Edsel, again in your position is entitled to an acquaintanceship with everything commendable, creditable or cultural so you see there is nothing left for you to do but come and have a friendly look as soon as possible. If you don't instantly appreciate what you see I'll miss my guess. You likely are not so far advanced with your own car or have come to such iron clad decisions regarding it as to prevent your being interested in adding a new thought or two --- and who knows, maybe you'd even want to make a substitution. You never can tell. My enthusiasm won't stay chained up much longer -- I've already put some fifty thousand into drawings and I may put another fifty into getting cars on the road if you didn't feel interested. I am planning on having Louis Chevrolet build sample motors at least and possibly the whole car because I can't continue to do all my riding on paper even though I have to stretch a point to get a car.

Many thanks for patiently hearing my story and anticipating the pleasure of a real visit, with kind regards, I am

Yours very truly