



# E D S E L

In the 1950's America, a man's success was reflected in the model of the car he owned. Moving up the career ladder meant moving up the model range. Loyalty to a car family would usually result in staying within the Ford, General Motors or Chrysler car family. In the late 1950's the Chevrolet and Chrysler product range allowed customers to trade up easily from a Chevrolet to a Pontiac or from a Plymouth to a Dodge. This was not true for the Ford product range where a 'mid-priced' car between a standard Ford and a Mercury was missing. They needed 'THE CAR FOR THE YOUNG MAN ON HIS WAY UP.'

The Edsel was named in 1956 after the deceased son of Henry Ford (Company President) who died in 1943 aged just 49. Full scale production of the Edsel began in July 1957 with a year target of 200,000 cars. In October 1957, The Edsel Show, a one-hour special hosted by Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Louis Armstrong and Rosemary Clooney aired on CBS replacing The Ed Sullivan Show. The viewing ratings were enormous.

The intense marketing and production activity was not matched by the build quality of the cars. "Doors and bumpers were roped up. The gear shift was in the centre of the steering wheel and if you used reverse, the trunk lid would open." Cars showed up at dealerships with a list on the steering wheel saying which parts were missing. Only 64,000 sold in the first year and in November 1959, Ford Motor Company discontinued the Edsel.

