

**P**sst: Do you want to get the scoop on one of the best pickup lines of all time? One that's guaranteed to get you noticed?

No, we're not talking about some witty phrase that'll guarantee lure of the opposite sex. We're talking about the F-series line of Ford pickup trucks, an icon of North American culture, work ethic and rough-and-tough play.

For nearly a quarter of a century, Ford has been selling more pickup trucks than anyone in the universe. Not Dodge, not GMC and not Chevrolet (although you could make a case if you combined all of GM's truck nameplates).

Overall, truck sales — including sport-utility vehicles, vans, minivans and pickups — now exceeds passenger cars in North America, with full-size pickups making up the single largest segment of that market.

Trucks have been part of the automotive landscape since people began converting bicycle and metal-works shops into places that hammered out crude four-wheeled instruments of travel.

Originally, the truck was built as a working man's vehicle and an absolute necessity for rural life. Nothing fancy, they were rugged workhorses, built to last.

Forget about comfort. Pickup trucks were made for prowling the 'back 40' in search of stray cattle. They were made for hauling hay bales on dusty Prairie roads and for fixing fences, just like you see in today's TV commercials.

That all began to evolve with growth of commuter cities and urbanization following the Second World War. Suddenly, it wasn't just cowboys, construction workers and farmers who were driving pickups, but doctors and lawyers city slickers.

Urban cowboys with new horses.

Once pickups began to appeal to a wider cross-section of the motoring public, it wasn't long before manufacturers began applying car styling and comfort to them.

In Ford's words, to make them "drive like a car — work like a truck."

Today, pickup trucks are bigger, faster and certainly more luxurious. Many offer four doors and they're as likely to be hauling family members as loads of drywall.

And no one has been able to ride the winds of change — or change the direction they blow — better than Ford, which introduced its first factory-assembled pickup in 1925.

The first F-series truck made its debut in 1948 as the F-1, the same year Ed Sullivan first appeared on a new gizmo called the TV, and the Cleveland Indians won their last World Series.

It would become the most successful vehicle line in North American history and the only vehicle — car or truck — listed by Money magazine at the close of the 20th century among the 99 things that we make best.

The F-1 was followed by the F-100 in 1953, marking the company's 50th anniversary. The F-150 arrived 1984.

In 1995, the F-series became the most popular vehicle nameplate worldwide when it surpassed the Volkswagen Beetle in sales.

To keep things fresh, the Ford boys bring out a new F-series design (the last one was in 1996) every decade or so. In between major remakes, the company creates specialty vehicles, such as the current Harley-Davidson model and SVT Lightning.

What drives the F-150's popularity today is that it can be built to suit just about any need or taste.

Thanks largely to Ford, the pickup has come of age and been transformed into a do-anything-for-anyone vehicle. In fact, the combinations border on the infinite.

If you want to be noticed, these vehicles will do it, guaranteed.

Where will the next F-series lead us? It seems hard to image considering the leaps and bounds the brand has made even in the last 10 years.

From its humble beginnings as a work-only vehicle to becoming a dominant force on the automotive landscape, as long as the F-series stays adaptable and in touch with North American values, it can't fail.

Oh, and as for those other pickup lines? Well ... you're on your own with them.

■ **Otto Stein specializes in classic cars as a writer with Wheelbase Communications, a world-wide supplier of automobile news, reviews and features.**



# F-SERIES

P I C K U P

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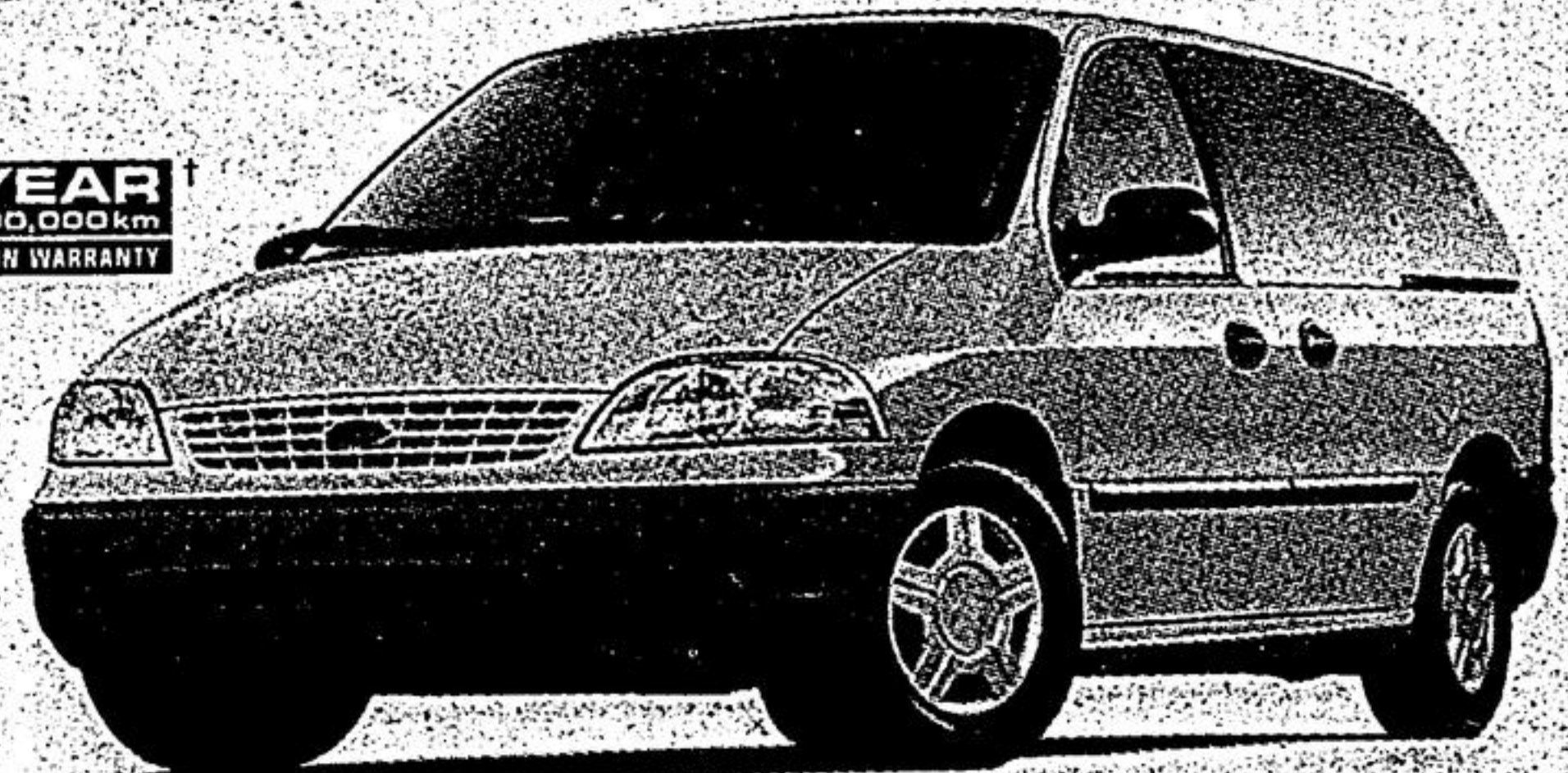
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Freight, administration fees and applicable taxes apply.



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POWERTRAIN WARRANTY



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5 YEAR  
100,000 km  
POWERTRAIN WARRANTY

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Security Deposit  
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