

Zephyr remake OK

WINFRED B. CROSS

Test Drive



Sometimes when history repeats itself it's not such a bad thing.

Ford Motor Company sold a Zephyr way back in the late '70s, maybe early '80s. It was an ugly, awful thing, prone to breakdowns and devoid of any cool points.

Not so for the new Lincoln Zephyr. It's stylish inside and out. It's part of a set of triplets which also include the Ford Fusion and the Mercury Milan. All are based on a modified Mazda 6 chassis. It differs because of the classic Lincoln waterfall grill, more stylish rear end and abundance of standard equipment.

The shape is nearly the same as the Fusion. The grill

gives the car a more upscale appearance. The classy tail-light treatment is also a plus.

The interior is done right. There is real wood, or what I think is real wood everywhere. The blond color was perfect for the sand interior. The same for the nickel-look controls. The leather is soft and chrome accents abound. The dash is certainly modern and stylish.

The Zephyr uses the same 3.0-liter DOHC V6 used in the Milan and Fusion. It makes 221 horsepower and 205 pounds-feet of torque. Coupled to a six-speed transmission, the combination is a formidable pair. Acceleration is more brisk than expected. This is no speed demon, but you can weave in and out of traffic stylishly and easily.

The four-wheel independent suspension absorbs bumps graciously and has a modicum of handling prowess. You can get aggressive and not get embarrassed

so long as you don't push the car real hard. The clientele for this automobile will appreciate the firm but comfortable ride more than any handling attributes.

The Zephyr is packed with gaggles of stuff. Ten-way adjustable passenger and driver seats, dual zone electronic climate control, leather seats, traction assist, speed sensitive wipers, rear window defroster, cruise control, side curtain airbags, ABS, keyless remote, message center, heated power mirrors and heated front seats are standard. Extras include a navigation system, HID headlights and cooled front seats.

At \$33,145, the Zephyr isn't cheap, but it's also a nicely finished sedan that doesn't feel cheap. There are bigger and less expensive sedans in this class, but they will not have the Zephyr's pinache.

East guard to play at WSSU

Continued from page 1C

Johnson has signed a national letter of intent with East Carolina.



Johnson

East Mecklenburg point guard Jason Smith has signed to play at Winston-Salem State. The senior has led the Eagles to a 21-1 record and the Southwestern 4A regular-season championship.

Another Eagle, shooting guard Max Funderburke, scored his 1,000th point recently.

Know of a high school athlete who has signed a collegiate letter of intent or earned an honor? E-mail herb.white@thecharlottepost.com with the information, vital statistics and a photo, if you have it.

ALL HANDS



PHOTO/CURTIS WILSON

Charlotte Bobcats guard Raymond Felton (left) swipes the ball away from the Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant last week in Charlotte. The Bobcats' win started a modest two-game streak going into Wednesday's game against Philadelphia.

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