

CLEVELAND EXPRESS

By Tommy Brookshire

I have not had many cars and I've always been a Chevy man; that is until two years ago when I bought my first Mustang. It had been about seven or eight years since I had tinkered with a hot rod or anything close. All my friends who used to build cars were either married or stopped building or were still building Chevs.

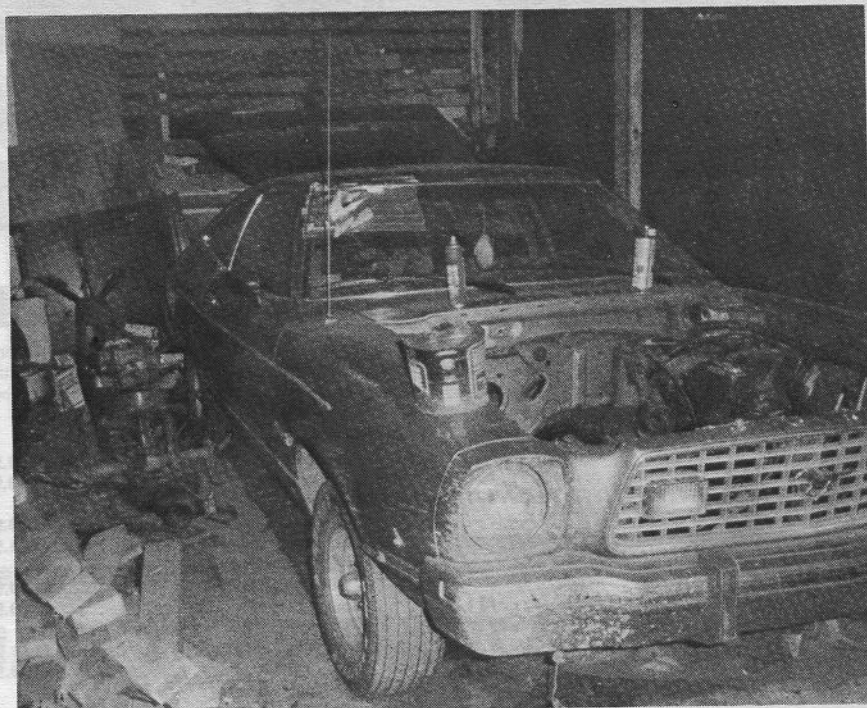
I started with a 1976 Mustang II but the A-frame separated from the uni-body. Since I worked for a local fire department it was easy to look for parts.

In May of 1986 I spotted a Mustang sitting behind an old house. It looked like it had been there for quite some time. I decided to stop to ask someone about it and luckily, found the original owner. The car was a 1975 Mustang II Mach I, but the four cylinder engine had been blown. Since the car had been sitting for about five years I got the car cheap and towed it home.

I started out by changing the stock four cylinder suspension with the addition of heavy duty V8 coil springs. I then changed the rac and pinion section and repacked the front wheel bearings and other minor things since the car had been sitting for some time. Then came a 302 4V engine along with a C4 transmission and B&M shift kit. I also installed a 1971 Mustang 9" rear end which had been shortened. L60 14 Goodyear tires were installed on the rear with A78 14's on the front and Gold Nugget rims, but something still wasn't right.

I took the car to the local dragstrip to see what it would do. I made the time trial passes but on the second pass I blew the intake gasket and burned two intake valves. I limped back home. I took a good look at the car and felt something was missing.

I had the engine rebuilt and while the engine was out I painted the engine compartment. I then selected the exterior colors (Canary yellow,



Before . . .

. . . After





The first showing of this modified 1975 Mustang II.

bright red, and bright blue). A friend of mine in the fire department painted the car for me and I painted the underneath bright blue.

I found out about a show the Georgia Regional MCA and John Bleakly Ford were hosting, so I finished painting my Mustang on Friday night and entered it in the show Saturday morning with no intention of winning. This was the first car show I had ever entered, but I still won third place in the Modified Conservative class. I was very proud of the third place award but this just wasn't good enough. I have since invested in and installed a 1970 351C 4V and C6 transmission in my Mustang. After several attempts the engine is finally in along with custom-fitted headers.

Don't get me wrong, third place was great, but first place will be even better!

MT



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