



The Alabama State Patrol has added 31 Mustang LX 5.0L cars to its fleet. The new Mustangs are the fastest Trooper car ever and has no trouble running down Porsches and Corvettes.

Alabama Troopers Add Mustangs

By ROD TIESZEN
For The Mustang Times

The Alabama State Highway Patrol has been made an honorary member of the Heart of Dixie Mustang Club in Montgomery, Ala.

At our monthly meeting held at Ezell's Catfish House Oct. 6, Special Operations Trooper Maschi drove into the parking lot in Car No. 177, one of the 31 Mustang LX 5.0L's the State of Alabama recently purchased to patrol the highways.

Trooper Maschi opened up his car for all of our eager eyes to behold. In no time our trained eyes, especially the Late Model enthusiasts, discovered most of the modifications this coupe had undergone before being delivered to the highway patrol for service.

Among them was a speedometer that registered up to 140 MPH, 15" X 7" aluminum wheels painted glossy black, a primitive oil cooler, special silicon water hoses, metallic brake pads, the unavoidable police radar, 5-speed manual transmission, AM/FM stereo for those lonely radar traps, blue police bubbles on the roof and that menacing special paint job with a milky gray base and a dark blue hood and trunk.

This car was definitely not to be mistaken, but is designed to be a deterrent. Trooper Maschi said the Mustang LX 5.0L is the fastest Trooper car ever. It can catch sports cars like Porsches and 'Vettes and those 2-wheel bullets (motorcycles) much faster.

One of his recent experiences involved a '78 Cutlass that tried to outrun him. His Mustang caught this outlaw with little effort.

The Mustang 5.0L is not new to the country's police forces.

There are approximately 20 states using them locally, both in under-cover work and on highway patrols. The Crown Victoria and LTD are normally used and have a 5.8L (351-M) engine. But that engine only produces about 140 HP. The Trooper's Mustang has at least 225 HP.

Trooper Maschi typically covers about 200 miles a day along highways 231-N, I-85 and I-65 in Alabama. He said the trip is quite comfortable, due mainly to the Mustang's bucket seats which are in contrast to the larger cars' stiff bench seats.

Trooper Maschi answered many questions during our club meeting, including inquiries about the selection process is for drivers of this Mean Machine. He said the Mustang drivers are picked based on their past driving record and most are an average age of 35 and have several years on the force. So don't go running down to your police recruiter hoping for a chance to patrol in a Mustang!

Those selected also have to pass a two-day driving course to learn how to operate this powerful short-wheel-based two-door coupe. This is not surprising when you consider the weight difference of several hundred pounds less, the time-to-speed ratio cut nearly in half, and the immensely improved handling.

The next time you drive on one of Alabama's highways, think twice before you put the pedal to the metal. If you happen to see one of these Trooper Mustangs, you can at least be comforted to know that you have something in common with the driver who is also a member of a Regional Pony Club, The Heart of Dixie Mustang Club.