

# The 9th Annual Gulf Coast Region Mustang Roundup

text by Teresa Vickery  
photos by Gary Stein



Spring and summer brings an abundance of Mustang shows and events to all areas of the country. At any given time during the show season at least one Mustang or all-Ford show can be found somewhere in the nation. These events usually last well into the fall months but how or where does it all begin? Does a magical alarm clock awaken us all to the sights and sounds of freshly restored pony cars? The answer to that, at least in the south, is an emphatic "yes!" The show hosted by the Gulf Coast Regional Mustang Club of Pensacola, Florida, in March of each year serves as this alarm clock.

The Mustang Round-Up has earned the well-deserved reputation of being a *must* for all serious show enthusiasts. Each year

more and more ponies make their way from all across the nation to Pensacola. And these cars are far from average; each one is a work of art from the trailered concours beauties to their street driven counterparts. You see, this has become the perfect show to try out your latest restoration and the newest MCA judging rules; if your favorite 1971 flatback passes muster here, you're ready for the national shows.

Friday was a cloudy and mostly rainy day — a tradition at this show — with many ponies, as well as their owners, going under cover. Although this made it extremely difficult for show participants to take care of the last-minute preparations on their cars, it did give friends a chance to catch up on the latest news and happen-

ings from across the nation.

Friday evening the rain cooperated by halting its downpour long enough for the host group to provide a hungry crowd with some of the best fried fish and trimmings (hushpuppies, barbeque beans, cole slaw, and homemade desserts) you could possibly imagine. A rumor has been circulating that many folks attend the show solely for the fish fry.

Later in the evening officers and members of visiting regional groups had the opportunity to meet with John Manners from Switzerland. This organizational wizard is the brains behind the 1989 American Pony Drive. During the trek across the southern portion of our nation (from Jacksonville, Florida, to California, and back to Balti-

more), 150 European Mustang enthusiasts will be meeting with various clubs along a pre-selected route. The primary purpose of the meeting in Pensacola was to work out some of the details with these club officials. Tom Corcoran, editor of *Mustang Monthly*, also attended the meeting and pledged the support of his magazine and your editors restated their enthusiasm for the cause. Of course all the groups want to be involved in the history-making event by including the visitors in a local show or some type of Mustang-related activity. "There is only one weekend in a week," stated Mr. Manners indicating that some visits will take place on weekdays. There is optimism that fellow US pony car enthusiasts will accompany the drive along each portion of the route. Although there are still numerous details to work out plans have already been made for back-up vehicles to make the journey in case of a breakdown or emergency (when the cars are shipped from Europe they must be completely empty — no spare parts, no tools, etc. — only manufacturer equipment is allowed) and numerous hotel rooms have already been booked. With the assistance of MCA members this drive is destined to be an unforgettable event; watch for upcoming details in future issues of *Mustang Times*.

Despite the rain on Friday, all 221 cars were in place, spit-polished, and ready for the judges inspection by midday Saturday.

Out of this large selection of cars, 7 were entered in the special interest class and 36 were in the pony corral (the term "pony ranch" seems to best describe the size of this gathering of "for sale" vehicles). Included in the special interest category were an Edsel, a Cougar convertible, a Falcon convertible, and a Falcon Futura Sprint owned by singer/songwriter Jimmy Buffet.

Just about every model of Mustang was represented in the pony corral; convertibles, Mustang IIs, Shelby, coupes, and fastbacks — a virtual smorgasbord for the hungry pony car consumer.

The vendors outlined the event area at University Mall and served as retaining walls for the sea of show cars. Old and new, stock and modified made up this impressive gathering. Spectators could get an eyeful of everything imaginable from a pristine Boss or Shelby to a bright yellow four-wheel-drive fastback.

Ticket sales for the raffle car, a red 1972 Senior Division Mach I, and the large Mac tool chest were brisk during the afternoon. Proceeds from the raffle will benefit the Ronald McDonald House, Shrine Hospital Fund for Children, and Sacred Heart Children's Hospital.

A new record time was probably set by the judges at this show. Within a few short hours all cars had been judged using MCA rules. Considering the size of the show this was no small task.

The awards ceremony Saturday evening

was quite a treat. Not only do Pensacola folks know how to put on a great show, they know how to keep you laughing. Before a standing-room-only crowd, members of the Gulf Coast group put on several mini-skits (no, not mini-skirts) involving the Florida Raisins, the Harlem Globetrotter Cheerleaders, and several others. Folks, you had to be there to believe it. This was the best and most unusual entertainment we've seen at a Mustang show. By the end of the evening all the awards were presented and Shannon Cory of Pensacola was announced as the lucky winner of the give-away car. Christine Key of Eatonton, Georgia was the winner of the very nice and heavy Mac tool chest.

Sunday morning everyone was ready to head home with their favorite toy and begin preparations for the next outing. Before everyone got away we managed to snag a few ponies and their owners for several photo sessions; watch for some terrific feature articles in the near future.

This event was a great way to begin the 1988 show season; if you missed this one be sure to attend the 10th Annual Gulf Coast Region Mustang Round-up. It promises to be even bigger and better. **MT**



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