

Mike Bacon's '68 GT

by Brad Bowling



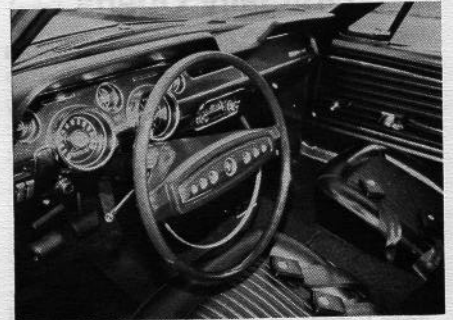
By 1973, America's attention had turned away from the first-generation Mustangs; after all, the 1965-68 cars were anywhere from five to eight years old. Most Americans were not looking to spend their money on a car that would soon be in need of a rebuild or fresh paint.

Besides, the emphasis those days was no longer on 0-60 and top end; performance at the gas pump was the major consideration for the smart buyer. Didn't all those early Mustangs come with big engines and drink a lot of gas? Who could remember back that far, anyway?

The early 1970s saw bargain-basement prices for even the rarest, most powerful Mustangs; legion are the stories of \$600 Shelys and \$800 convertibles sitting on used car lots. For most collectors, this period of waning popularity for the pony-car is a sore spot. To them, it represents the chance they lost to buy a '66 GT or '64½ convertible during a buyer's market. To others, it will always be a source of grins because they *did* buy those cars.

Loyal Mustangers knew, even in those automotive dark-days, that their favorite ponycars would be recognized again as the "classically styled, eternally beautiful designs" that Ford's advertising had claimed. While buyers flocked to new

Detroit sheetmetal (and some from overseas), the hard-core pony fans were telling loan officers, "It's spelled like it sounds, S-H-E-L-B-Y. Yes, it was made in America."



Mike Bacon has been a Mustang enthusiast from Day One. During the automotive lull of the early 1970s (specifically April 15, 1973) Mike spotted a 1968 GT fastback sitting on a small used car lot and knew he had to have it. By noon the next day, \$1,100 had changed hands and Mike was a happy man. Keep in mind this is a highly desirable Mustang GT that we're talking about; that \$1,100 might buy you a clapped-out coupe today.

The black GT was powered by a healthy 302 V-8/4-barrel combination. A three-speed transmission was responsible for sending power to the 9-inch 3.25 ratio rearend.

Mike took the car with him that summer to Mississippi and the five-year-old pony performed flawlessly. That September 29, Mike was married and the GT was there, covered with wax and shoe polish (rice was still being cleaned out of the interior when



Mike tore down the car for restoration in 1980).

The car saw service as a daily driver and not much was done with it until 1977 when Mike heard of the Mustang Club of America and joined the First Tennessee Regional Group. A new enthusiasm took hold of him and the GT went to its first show in Kingsport in 1978. Although he didn't even place, Mike worked over the winter to make improvements and in May, 1979, the car placed third at Chattanooga.

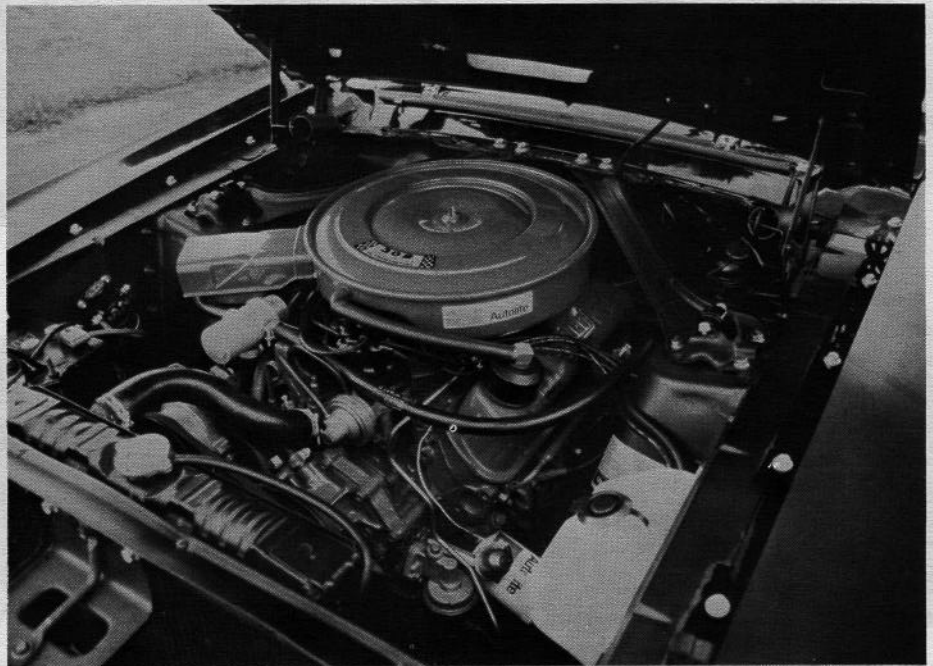
At this point, it was decided that a full restoration would be in order; from March, 1980 to August 1985, the car was completely torn down and rebuilt. Mike was responsible for the acrylic enamel black paint and bodywork; he also took care of the mechanical restoration.

The black interior features the optional fold-down rear seat but is otherwise standard equipment.

The first show for the newly restored GT was the 1985 Grand National in Atlanta where it took home a first place trophy.

When Mike bought the Mustang, it was five years old. Now that it is twenty, would he be willing to get rid of such an old car? Possibly buy a new car?

Look at the picture on the cover of this



magazine (and the 1988 MCA calendar)

and figure it out for yourself.

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