

Mustang Performance Guide Must Reading For Restorers

By **PATRICK REAVES**

Suncoast Mustang Club

"Mustang Performance & Handling Guide: 1964-65," by Peter C. Sessler. Motorbooks International, Osceola, WI. 54020. © 1985 ISBN 0-87938-197-3 (pbk), softcover, \$6.95.

Peter Sessler has created a book that should fall into the category of "must read" for the serious Mustang enthusiast.

First published in 1985, the book is just beginning to make the rounds and be recognized for its valuable, time-saving answers to questions involving mechanical restoration of a performance Mustang.

Sessler avoids the basic fundamentals that he assumes every Mustang owner knows, and concentrates on the differences between a factory performance car and standard production features.

For those wishing to upgrade and improve the performance of their Pony, Sessler covers all, and I mean all, aspects of the necessary modifications. His recommendations are practical, well explained, and often inexpensive.

He has neatly broken this book down to basic systems, beginning with the ignition, induction, exhaust, valve train, right on through the complete drivetrain to suspension.

I was amazed at the questions he answered quickly, but thoroughly, concerning engine block and head combinations, such as the 289/302 with 351 Cleveland heads, its advantages and problems, with a similar description of its sister, the Windsor series.

Sessler also goes through the complete but condensed history of all Ford engines from the 260 to the 460, with recent information on the small sixes, 200s and 250s, as well as the 2.8 V-6, 3.8 V-6 and the 2300 OHC four. All big blocks — which includes the 390, 427, 428, and 429 with their special CJ and SCJ models — are well explained also.

He recounts Ford's successes and failures with these engines and the pitfalls a restorer should watch for in dealing with these power plants.

He doesn't stop there. Suspension and handling recommendations are covered from every model from 1964 through 1985, with a complete rundown on the Saleen and similar improved suspensions.

Modifications, which can be done to im-

prove any Mustang without downgrading its show qualities, seem to be Sessler's specialty. Of particular interest is his section on 1967-70 handling recommendations. Invaluable tips on what to do and what to avoid when dealing with the big blocks in these cars could save a restorer a lot of headaches and costs. Information on proper sway bars and strut and front shock improvements are time proven and effective, and can save a lot of time-consuming research.

Some old theories are discounted and others enhanced. For example, Sessler states, "It's hard to resist the allure of dual quads or some other exotic-looking intake setup, but if you are interested in impressive street performance, the least expensive and most effective induction system is still a single four-barrel carburetor on a performance intake manifold."

He gets into detail, if you desire, on fuel flow CFM, engine RPM, and torque on every common Holly and Torker combination possible.

The section that impressed me the most is the Appendix 2 section that covers two full pages of fine print on every engine Ford has produced since 1964. He lists horsepower, bore/stroke, torque, RPM, carb, with its Ford engine code for easy identification. For a Mustang owner buying an engine, this section will tell him exactly what he is getting, what family class engine it is derived from, parts interchangeability, and performance capability. He also goes into detail on rear axle codes in the same manner.

This book is rated four stars and highly recommended. I wish I had read it years ago, but it's still not too late to let Sessler save every Mustang owner much time, work, mistakes, and research. If the book is read carefully, Sessler can map a complete performance restoration project for you that will guarantee you success. For education and easy reading, it's a "can't miss" also.

(Editor's Note: The Mustang Times welcomes book reviews from its members. If you have discovered a particularly helpful book involving the history of the Mustang, restoration tips, or other information of interest to fellow Mustangers, why not share it with us. Send your book review to: The Editor, Mustang Times, P.O. Box 447, Lithonia, GA.)


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