

1979-81 Mustangs Found An Enthusiastic Market

By **RANDY CHURCH**

Late Model Gold Card Judge

The 1979 Mustang emerged on the scene after years of development. The Bordinat Advanced Corporate Design studio, Ford Ghia studio in Italy, and Jack Telnack in Dearborn were each working on their own concept of the new Mustang. After much testing and discussion, the Telnack Mustang concept was chosen.

What followed that selection can best be described as a Herculean effort on the part of all those involved in the transformation and development of the "new" Mustang.

Every aspect of the car had to be tested, then re-tested under the most adverse conditions, before it could be approved.

Emphasis on safety and fuel economy were coupled with a demand for performance and styling. This new Mustang would need to create a mania similar to that of the 1964½ Mustang when it first arrived at dealership showrooms.

In 1979, purchasers could choose among the standard Mustang available in fastback or coupe, Mustang Ghia, Mustang Cobra, and Mustang Pace Car.

The standard Mustang offered a large range of options, including drivetrain and comfort options. The Mustang Ghia was a more luxurious model of the standard Mustang. The Mustang Cobra was designed to entice those interested in the sporty look and performance.

The 1979 Mustang Cobra used the regular Mustang front end cover. The eye-catching Cobra hood graphics were optional, with some cars having only side emblems to designate the Cobra option. All Cobras had a dash insignia, a distinctive black engine-tun design instrument panel, and special interior door trim inserts with Cobra insignia.

Some of the options available on the top-of-the-line Ghia featured interior refinements including leather and vinyl trim, low-back bucket seats with European style headrests, a woodtone control panel, and a 4-spoke steering wheel with optional fingertip speed control.

Standard features of the Ghia included a door trim package with a unique Ghia badge, right hand visor vanity mirror, Ghia sound package, carpeted luggage compartment available on two-door models, and the light group with map light, ashtray and glove box light, and engine and luggage compartment lights.

The Ghia was designed to combine the sporty features of the Mustang with the lux-

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A Large Field Of Late Model Mustangs Competed At Kingsport MCA Grand National

Late Model Ponies Well Represented At '91 Kingsport Grand National Show

By **RANDY CHURCH**

Late Model Gold Card Judge

The 1991 MCA Grand National Mustang Show was held in Kingsport, TN, August 16-18 and late model Mustangs were well represented.

Entries came from Indiana, Virginia, Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Alabama, New Jersey and several other states.

The cars were judged carefully and thoroughly in accordance with the newly-adopted late model rules. Judging of the late models took longer than the evaluation of models in many other classes.

Owners were out at the crack of dawn washing and cleaning their cars. Excitement and tension was in the air as judges crawled over and under cars that were so well-detailed they could have come off the showroom floor. Even those with high mileage were hard to distinguish from those with low mileage.

There was a fine assortment of late models present, representing a wide range of years and body styles.

Fortunately, there were many certified late model judges in attendance who eagerly volunteered to share their knowledge and help judge one of the toughest classes represented at the show.

Throughout the past year, each MCA-

sponsored national show has attracted growing numbers of late model participants. At some shows this past year, the late model class represented up to 25 percent of the total Mustangs entered in competition.

Those interested in becoming certified late model class judges are invited to contact Randy Church, in care of The Mustang Club of America, at P.O. Box 447, Lithonia, GA.

The enthusiasm of the participants and judges reflects the growing interest in owning, driving and showing late model Mustangs.

Regional Group News Welcomed!

The Mustang Times welcomes news, feature stories and calendar items from its more than 100 affiliated regional groups.

Results and photos from local and regional Mustang shows is especially welcomed. Black and white photos are preferable, but good quality color prints can generally be used.

Please send all material on a timely basis and please include a self-addressed return envelope for the return of photos.

urious refinements people expected to find on more expensive sports cars.

The 1979 Mustang had introduced a new breed of Pony cars that would change very little through the next decade. The body style was well received, as was the new emphasis on handling and performance.

The 1980 Mustang was a refinement of the 1979 Mustang. Ford still offered a standard two-door coupe, three door hatchback, Cobra and Ghia models.

New for the 1980 models were P-metric steel-belted radial ply tires, high-illumination halogen sealed beam headlamps, and maintenance-free battery. New options included a 4.2 liter V-8 engine and a Carriage Roof that looked very similar to a convertible top.

The list of options available for the standard and Ghia models made designing your personal Mustang a real challenge. You could opt for a flip-up, open-air roof, back liftgate louvers, roof-mounted luggage carrier, dual remote control styled mirrors, full vinyl roof, sport option, tape stripes, pin stripes, hood scoop, rear window washer/wiper, or distinctive, orthopedically designed Recaro seats with adjustable headrest, backrest with side support, and adjustable thigh supports.

Performance options included the 2.3 Turbocharged engine, the 3.3 Liter 6-cylinder engine, 4.2 Liter V-8 engine, a higher axle

ratio, sport-tuned exhaust, handling suspension, and a choice of tires from 13- and 14-inch-sized radial ply tires to metric 390 mm low-profile TRX tires.

The 1980 Cobra had bold new graphics featuring Cobra decals in quarter windows, optional Cobra hood decal and body side stripes, new race-style ground effects emphasizing integral spoiler complete with dual fog lights, unique rear-opening hood scoop (non-functional), rear deck spoiler, and blackout moldings around windows.

The combination of the long list of standard options and the customer-chosen variations made the Mustang Cobra a sports car in the tradition of the classic sports cars.

The 1981 Mustang continued the momentum started by the 1979 Mustang. It offered

improvements and enhancements in the four basic body styles — the two-door coupe, the three-door hatchback, the Cobra and the Ghia. The list of options available in 1981 continued to include those introduced in 1979 and 1980, along with some new additions.

New for 1981 was the T-roof, which was introduced to add panache to a sporty success for Ford. The theory at Ford seemed to be "why mess with success — if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

The success of the 1979-81 Mustang was indisputable. The late model Mustang had arrived and found an eager market of new Mustang owners filled with enthusiasm and dedication to their cars.

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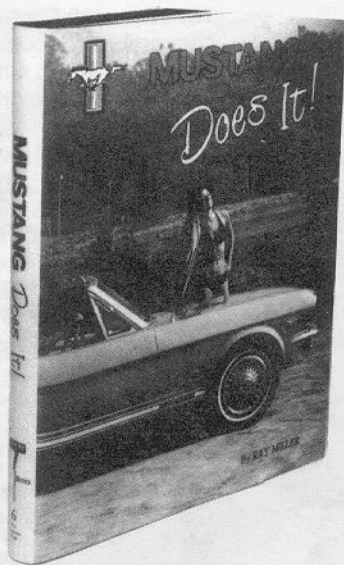
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