

Production Dates, Serial Numbers Raise Questions

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With JIM SMART

Of all the questions this project receives on Mustang production issues, one of the most frequent revolves around the relationship between scheduled production dates and serial numbers at the three assembly plants.

Many want to know if their Mustang was the "earliest" or "last" or most unique for a given model year. Others desire confirmation that their Pony was assembled on the same day as another Mustang they have read about, since the consecutive unit codes are close together. Still others wonder why there weren't any Dearborn Mustangs produced with serial numbers in the 400,000 to 600,000 range. And finally, there's always the question such as, "How many Mustangs were made after mine?"

The purpose of this update is to help readers understand exactly when Mustang production started in 1964 and ended in model year 1966. Actually, some data is provided for the 1967 model year startup since certain enthusiasts like to examine the time span between ending and startup dates at each assembly plant.

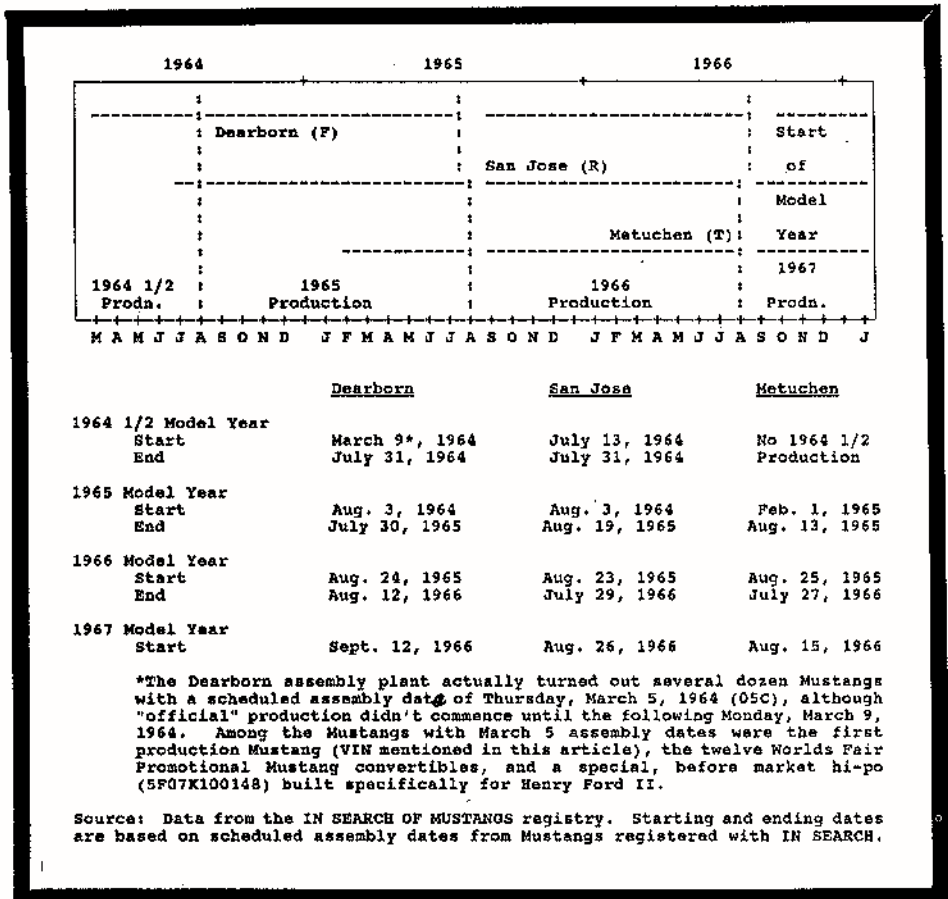
Mustang production officially began at Dearborn on March 9, 1964 with the consecutive unit numbers beginning with 100001.

The Dearborn plant was already assembling Fairlanes at that time, which were consecutively numbered as 1964 models (an example being 4F31C122873). In contrast, the Mustangs were serial numbered as 1965 models even though they were assembled on the same line as the Fairlanes. Therefore, the first production Mustang off the Dearborn line carried a VIN of 5F08F100001.

Mustang and Fairlane production continued on the same line at Dearborn until June 15, 1964, when Fairlane production was dropped and added to the Fairlane assembly already taking place at Kansas City. FoMoCo had previously realized that Dearborn alone could not keep up with the surging demand for the new Mustang and had made plans to tool up the San Jose, CA assembly plant (also a Fairlane plant) for Mustang assembly. San Jose began Mustang production on July 13, 1964 with a consecutive unit number of 100001, just as Dearborn had done four months earlier.

Fairlane production also ceased at San Jose, so Mustangs assembled there were numbered separately as well for the balance of the 1964½-65 model year run.

It may be just ironic that consecutive unit numbers for Mustangs at Dearborn reach-



ed 200001 at the same time San Jose production started with 100001.

By January 15, 1965, Dearborn assembled Mustang consecutive unit numbers had reached 600001. An important point here: Consecutive unit numbers for the 1965 model run at Dearborn jumped from 399999 to 600000 because the 400000 and 500000 series unit numbers were used by the Lincoln-Mercury Division. The Ford Division consecutive unit numbers therefore jumped over those two series to 600000. That's also why Dearborn consecutive unit numbers reached over 806000 before the end of the '65 model Mustang run.

During the time Dearborn and San Jose were turning out new 1964½ and 1965 Mustangs, the Metuchen, NJ assembly plant was assembling 1964 Falcons. Since Dearborn and San Jose could not keep up with Mustang demand, Ford decided another plant was needed — and Metuchen was the choice.

Metuchen began assembling new 1965 Falcons in the fall of 1964, beginning with consecutive unit number 100001. So when

the Mustang production occurred in February of 1965, the consecutive unit numbering system did not start over. Thus the earliest built Mustang did not have a low consecutive unit number. When Mustang assembly started there on Monday, February 1, 1965, the plant's consecutive unit number system was already nearing the 133000 point.

At the end of model year 1965 in July and August, 1965, Dearborn consecutive unit numbers had reached the 806000 area, San Jose 258000, and Metuchen 202000.

Model year 1966 is easier to understand. All three plants started assembly during the week of August 23, 1965 and all with consecutive unit numbers of 100001 (the VINs now started with a "6", of course). Falcon production was moved back to Dearborn to join Mustang assembly already in progress, while Metuchen and San Jose continued to produce Mustangs.

Dearborn again reserved the 400000 and 500000 consecutive unit series to the Lincoln-Mercury Division and ended the 1966 model run at around 745000. San

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Jose ended in the 241000 range and Metuchen around 286000.

While not covered in detail in this update, Mercury's new Cougar joined the Mustang at Dearborn in the 1967 model year and a much higher proportion of Mustang production for 1967 took place at Metuchen and San Jose.

Because the Mustang assembly plants started each year's production at different times, and since occasionally other Ford vehicles were being assembled on the same line, much confusion is created in trying to relate consecutive unit numbers to build dates.

One must keep in mind that just because one Mustang's build date is close to or identical to another, it doesn't mean their consecutive unit numbers are also close together.

“ Many Mustang owners want to know if their car was the earliest, last or most unique for a given model year. Information from the In Search of Mustangs data bank helps readers understand exactly when Mustang production started and ended in model years 1964-1966 and gives them some insight as to where their Pony fits into the Ford production schedule. ”

A pair of factory GT's, both of which are HiPo convertibles owned by Allen Stewart of New Jersey, illustrates this point. One has a VIN of 5R08K216631 and the other 5F08K714666. Interestingly, the scheduled

assembly date of both Mustangs was May 3, 1965 (03S).

It's also possible to have consecutive unit numbers quite close together (or even identical) but a long time period between production dates. In 1964, to cite one example, 5F07U103899 had a scheduled assembly date of March 25th (25C) in Dearborn. Several months later, the San Jose assembly plant turned out 5R07F103899 with a scheduled assembly date of July 31 (31G).

There are numerous Mustangs listed in the registry with identical consecutive unit numbers but with widely varying build dates.

The accompanying chart and table illustrate the startup and ending Mustang production dates for 1964½-66 and startup dates for 1967. All of this data and information comes from the tens of thousands of Mustangs registered with *In Search of Mustangs*.

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