

As Enthusiasts, We've Come A Long Way

By JIM SMART
For The Mustang Times

The other day I received my Mustang Club of America renewal notice in the mail, then it occurred to me that I have belonged to MCA going on 15 years. On that note, I want to ask a lot of long-time MCA members, how does it feel?

Most of us who have been watching the hobby for the past 20 years have witnessed an evolution. When Mustang Mania II started catching on during the mid-1970s when the MCA was founded, there was heavy enthusiasm for the 1965-73 models. And Mustang IIs? Forget it. And that's the way it stayed for many years.

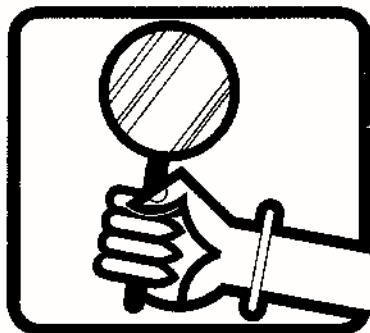
Mustang snobbery existed because Ford wasn't building anything exciting, or so us die-hard early Mustangers felt. Long about 1983, the Mustang started getting exciting again, first with a marine cam and four-barrel carburetion, then better suspension, and larger wheels until the humble Pony was bigger than life itself.

Much of the momentum was gained in 1984 with the 20th Anniversary. A lot of us went out and actively pursued the limited edition 20th Anniversary Mustang GTs to park along side our 1965-73 derivatives of the breed. Suddenly it was okay to be seen driving a Mustang built after 1973.

In the past five years, we've watched a divided Mustang hobby melt into a big, happy family where Ford performance old and new functions in harmony. In my travels, I have seen early Mustangers take an active interest in the Mustangs Ford is building today, and it's exciting. And that brings me to an interesting point — it's time for "In Search of Mustangs" to grow, much as MCA has, and much as the hobby as a whole has.

While we're still in the process of getting our first volume of the **Mustang Production Guide** into print, we realize that this long time census has to grow with the hobby to include all Mustangs from 1964 through 1981 and beyond. Effective with this issue of *The Mustang Times*, "In Search of Mustangs" opens its doors to all of you with Mustangs, 1974 to present.

We are seeking vehicle identification numbers and data codes from the vehicle certification sticker located on the left hand door jamb. We also want to see all of the information from the body buck tag located in the engine compartment of Dearborn-built units. San Jose units were not so equipped.



In Search Of Mustangs

By JIM SMART & JIM HASKELL

We're expanding beyond 1973 because there's a genuine need out there for production information for Mustang II owners and 1979 through present owners. It's a new frontier, much as the 1965-73 Mustangs were 12 years ago when this project started.

Recently, I have had a 1991 Mustang GT in my possession for test purposes. It's no mystery why the Mustang is such a popular car again. Ford is whipping up the same magic it had in the 1960s despite a sour economy and sagging auto sales. The Mustang is fun — *just plain, old-fashioned, gear-slamming, Windsor-revving fun!* The 1991 5.0 liter HO V-8 still plays the same tune from the old 289 HiPo days, and with better road manners and more torque than our old HiPos. What's more, it offers a pleasant 25-30 miles to the gallon — as long as you can keep your foot out of it.

I had to sample the newest of the Mustang GTs to see what still made the Mustang special 27 years later. Ford is still meeting its original objective, building America's favorite fun car, an affordable pocket rocket for the masses.

And truthfully, that's what has driven Jim Haskell and me to begin venturing into census taking of all Mustangs through 1991. The Mustang remains an exciting automobile, with a powerful following of enthusiasts just as excited as we were 10, 15 and 20 years ago. To limit our venture to 1965-73 would be doing the latest from Dearborn a terrible injustice.

Friends, it's time to move forward.

For more information on "In Search of Mustangs," we ask that you send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

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