

## He's Enjoying His Pony — 9 Years Later!

Rick Richter purchased his Mustang in 1981 while serving in the Navy at Portsmouth, VA. Nine years later he began to really enjoy it.

"My wife and I were looking for a second car and we came upon the idea of a convertible Mustang because I wanted more than just a means of transportation."

But the Pony Rick wanted had to be "a special car."

"I had been interested in antique and special interest cars for about 10 years. I had a Model A Ford Sedan and a '50 Chevy five-window deluxe cab pick-up back home in storage. So basic transportation just wouldn't cut it."

Rick and his wife looked at several Mustangs, but found none that interested them.

"Finding just the right car was difficult, because I was a resident at the Navy Hospital and worked all the time."

But on his way to work one morning a friend handed Rick a newspaper and suggested he scan the classified ads to see if he saw anything interesting.

"Right away I spotted a '66 convertible. The price, year and condition all sounded good, but the car was located in Sandbridge, VA, a small beach community 50 miles south of Virginia Beach."

Later that day, Rick called his wife and asked her to phone the owner to get more information about the Mustang.

"She called back later and filled me in on the details. Since I was on overnight duty, I gave her a long list of questions and things to look for and suggested she drive out to Sandbridge and take a look at the car.

"She called me about 10:30 that evening with the results."

After a lengthy conversation about the Pony, Rick and his wife decided to "jump on it."

"She called the owner back and told him she'd drop off a deposit on the way to work the next morning."

The decision made, Rick had those inevitable second thoughts.

"I had just agreed to purchase a car I had never seen and my wife had seen only in the late evening hours. What a feeling!"

Rick's anxiety got worse before it got better.

"Saturday we drove out to the house in Sandbridge. Warning number one: they lived on the beach — the house was on stilts with the car parked under it. I had to wonder how much damage that salt air had done."

Then came warning number two:

"The owner of the Mustang was a Navy



**Rick Richter spent some time looking for "just the right car" as a second family vehicle, but finally he spotted what he thought he wanted in the classified ads. A short time later he had agreed to purchase a '66 Mustang convertible, even though he had never seen it. When he arrived at the home of the owner, what he learned made him a little apprehensive. The car was parked under a beach house where it could get the full effects of the damaging salt air. He didn't feel a bit better when he found out the owner was a Navy jet-jock named Ace Driver!**





**Nine years after Rich Richter purchased his 1966 Mustang convertible, he is now finally enjoying it. "It took a while, but now we're going to drive, show and pamper this baby."**

jet-jock named Ace Driver! I swear, that was his name! And his 16-year-old son had been driving the car for almost two years. That didn't make me feel a bit better."

But Rick examined the car "as close as any Mustang novice could without being enlightened about rust in cowl vents or torque boxes. Everything looked pretty good. There was a little floor pan rust here and there, but I didn't see any sheet metal damage. It started right up and sounded pretty good for a six cylinder. It ran fine. Everything seemed to work, including the power top. So, a few formalities and \$2,500 later, I drove our 'new' car home."

For the next eight months, the Mustang ran flawlessly.

"That bought me some time to find parts and catalogs and 'How To' books."

In April Rick received transfer orders. "Since we were going overseas only one car could be exported abroad, so we shipped our Toyota and our Mustang became our only transportation for the next two months."

In June Rick loaded up the Mustang with suitcases, non-shippable items and two black Labs and headed home to San Antonio, TX.

"We had to remove the back seat to make room for the dogs on the trip. The Mustang

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ran almost worry-free all the way home to San Antonio, and we enjoyed riding with the top down much of the way."

At home, Rick prepped the car for two years' storage and promised to begin working on it as soon as he returned from his overseas tour of duty.

Though Rick completed his overseas assignment 25 months later, he says the Mustang was a relatively low priority when his family arrived back in the States in July of 1984.

"In December we rescued the Mustang from storage and drove it home. On this drive we rediscovered many of the old 'conditions' the car had. When I got it home, I did a close inspection and decided the needed repairs were just too extensive and expensive. I decided it would be best to plan on a full restoration for later."

But more than two years passed before family finances permitted Rick to begin the project.

The car was disassembled in January of 1986, but it would be another four-and-a-half years before the process was complete.

"I know this sounds like an excessive amount of time, and it was. But a lot of other things were going on, including the birth of a second child and the opening of my own dentistry practice."

During that four-and-a-half years,

however, the Mustang slowly but surely began to take shape.

"The body was completely stripped and sandblasted, needed parts were located, the rear end was replaced with a 9" Lincoln Versailles disc brake model, front spindles were replaced with a disc brake set from another Versailles.

"All suspension parts had to be replaced with V8 items, a parts car was found for \$425 and a rear sway bar was added."

Rick rebuilt the V8 himself from the parts car with a few modifications, "including screw in rocker arm studs, .030 bore, and a competition camshaft."

"Later a toploader four-speed was installed, a power steering quick-ratio gear box was found, rebuilt and installed, and an air conditioner and rally pac added."

Rick painted the car Candy Apple Red with white GT stripes and a new top and upholstery were the finishing touches.

"I took the car out on Labor Day Weekend to a Model A campout about 90 miles away and it performed flawlessly. I've since put about 800 miles on it and I figure it's about 95 percent complete now — needing only the addition of a remote mirror, Mustang fender letters, hubcaps and driver's door upholstery."

So, nine years after purchasing his '66 convertible, Dr. Richter now had a restored Mustang for "fun, transportation and club participation."

A member of the San Antonio Mustang Club, MCA and the Model A Ford Club of America, Rick says after nine years of owning a true classic he now has only one goal:

"We plan on really enjoying it!"

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