

Poppy Red Fastback Has Won Its Share Of MCA Show Gold

More than a few Mustangs — after diving head-first into the hobby — have eventually found that the fun of restoring, showing, and maintaining a classic automobile can often resemble hard work.

And after several years of washing, polishing, waxing and detailing a show car, even the most avid hobbyist can begin to feel a little "burned out."

Bill Whitman of Ft. Smith, AR was about as excited as any Mustang owner could be when he finished the restoration of his Poppy Red 1965 fastback in the early 1980s and started racking up the trophies at regional, National, and Grand National events.

"You spend a couple of years putting all your energy into taking a car and making it perfect, and then when you finally finish, there's the new excitement of having people admire it and of winning trophies at Mustang shows," Whitman says.

"You tend to forget that keeping a car in perfect condition is a real job — and it takes up a great deal of your spare time."

So several years after he hit the road with his fastback, Bill says he just "got tired" and decided to take some time off.

"I just decided to put my Mustang up during 1987 and 1988, just to take a break from the shows, and the cleaning, and the loading and unloading."



But, like many other Mustangs who think they have gotten over a bad case of the fever, a relapse was as predictable as the sunrise.

"I never lost interest in the cars, I just got burned out on showing them. But after a two-year rest, I was ready for some more trophies."

Bill resumed showing his '65 fastback at the MCA National Show in Lake Charles, LA in 1990, and he's been back on the circuit ever since.

"I mostly show at Nationals and try always to make the Grand National. I was in Kingsport last year and I'm planning to be in Atlanta in September," he says.

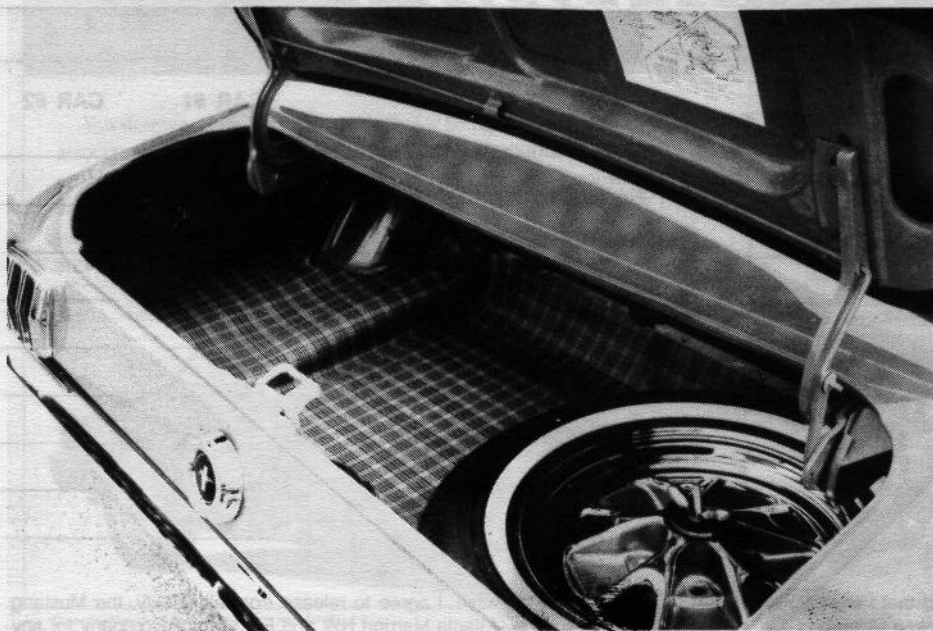
He won a Gold Trophy in the Senior Division at Kingsport to go with two Grand National First Place trophies from Albuquerque and one from Atlanta. He credits fellow club member Irene Bernardo of Corco West for helping win in Kingsport. "She did a super job on the car, especially the interior. A woman's touch on the interior really makes a difference.

"I can't remember how many Nationals and Grand Nationals I've shown at, but I know I've never taken anything less than a second place trophy with the car."

Bill is the second owner of the '65, having purchased it in late 1980.

"It was in good shape, just suffering from a lot of neglect. But I decided to do a ground-up restoration on it anyway."

Bill and fellow Arkansas Valley Mustang Club member Charles Digiacommo did all of the work on the car except the paint. "Mike Frederick of Paris, AR painted it. I figure painting is one thing you leave up to the pros," he says.



Bill Whitman's Poppy Red 1965 fastback has a shelf-full of National and Grand National trophies and the Arkansas native hopes to earn more in 1992.

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Whitman's '65 fastback has a build date of December, 1964, so he found several 1964½ characteristics when he was restoring it. "For one thing, it has a center-off heater. And the bumper under the hood is the 64½-type." The Pony has a 289-2V, full-length console, and standard black interior.

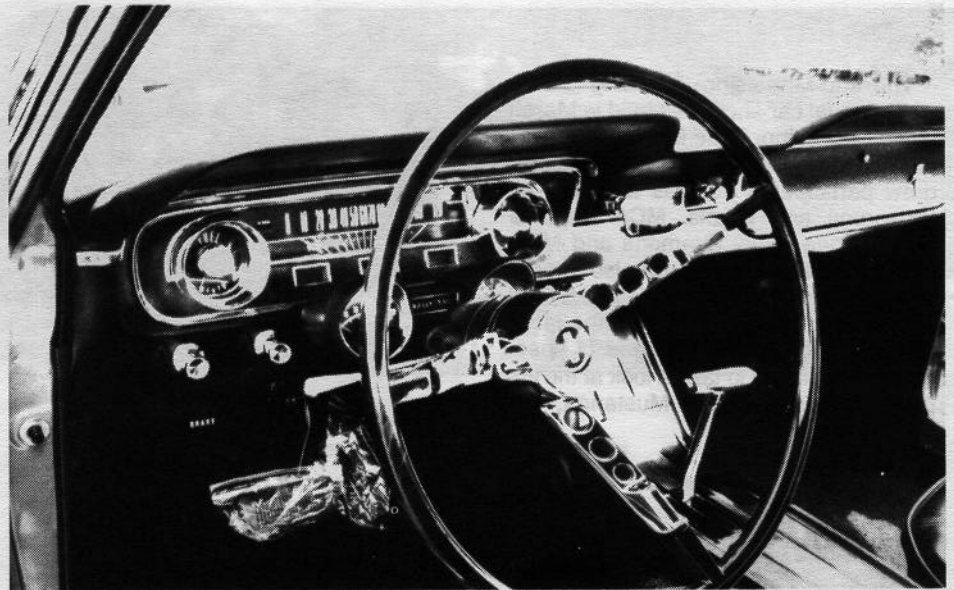
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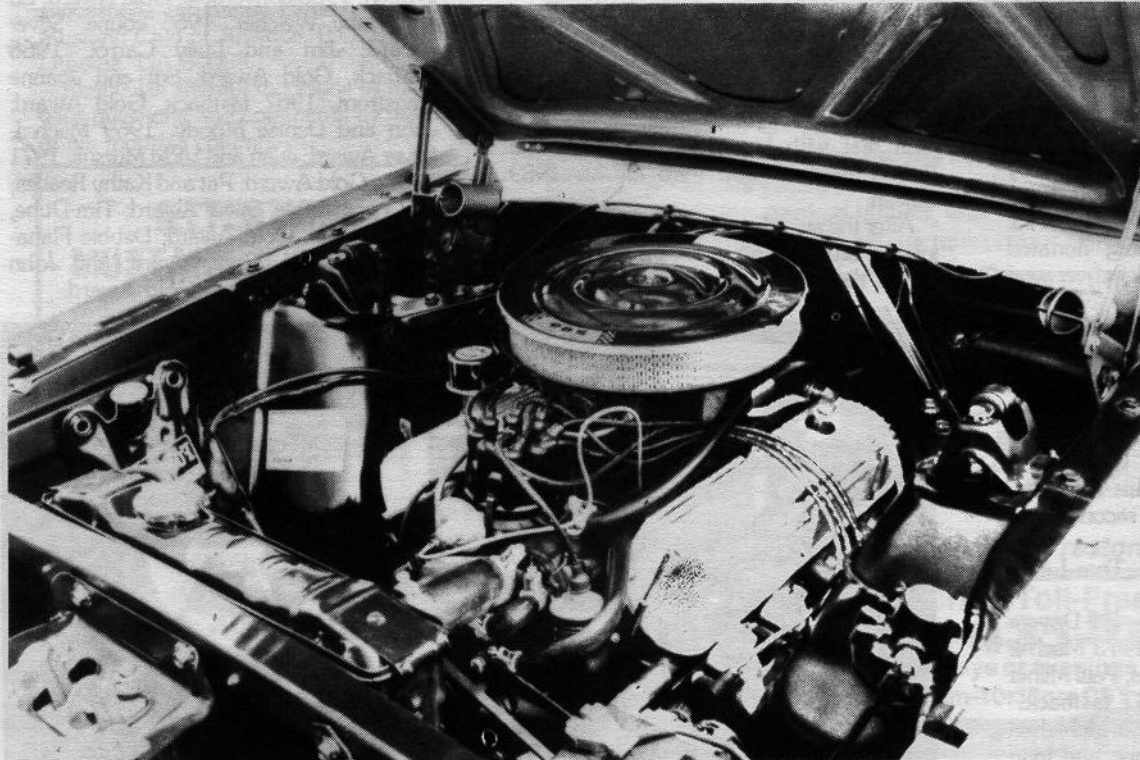
In addition to his Grand National winning '65 fastback, Bill (MCA #14152) owns two other Mustangs, a 1964½ Poppy Red convertible and a 1966 convertible.

"I'm restoring the '66 for my daughter's birthday in October. She'll be 16 and I want to have it ready for her. I plan to give her the keys and say a prayer. But fortunately, I've got a couple of extra fenders for it."

We certainly hope he doesn't need them, but if he does, he'll be relieved to know they are there in the garage waiting!



Though Bill Whitman says he got "burned out" after several years of cleaning and detailing his prized Poppy Red Mustang fastback for MCA National and Grand National shows, a couple of years away from the circuit was enough time for him to suffer a relapse of Pony fever. He's back in 1992 hoping to add more trophies to his collection. Bill is also restoring a 1966 Mustang for his daughter, Valerie, which he plans to present to her on her 16th birthday this coming October. He admits he's nervous about his daughter getting her driver's license, but he says he has a "couple of extra fenders" in the garage just in case!



Bill is the second owner of the 1965 fastback which he restored from the ground up. Bill and a fellow member of the Arkansas Valley Mustang Club did all the work except the paint, which the owner says, "was best left to a professional."