

## Mustang II: Understanding The Misunderstood Pony

By JIM SMART  
With Jim Haskell

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The 1974-78 Mustang II has gotten a bad rap for too long, and we're here to shed the light and share some information about this long overlooked segment of Mustang history.

Long termed a "re-bodied Pinto," the Mustang II is anything but. The Mustang II shares much of its engineering with the Pinto, including chassis and powertrain, but the Mustang II employed a lot of nice engineering achievements the Pinto missed completely. The Mustang II employed an isolated subframe to isolate engine harmonics from the 2.3 liter four and 2.8 liter V-6 available the first year.

Handling was vastly improved over the Pinto (Mustang II steering and suspension components are very popular with street rodders). It also employed improved sound deadening, interior ergonomics and styling. Many improved manufacturing methods, such as Ford's "E-Coat" electrostatic dipping process, were instituted during the Mustang II generation, which brought us a more corrosion resistant Mustang.

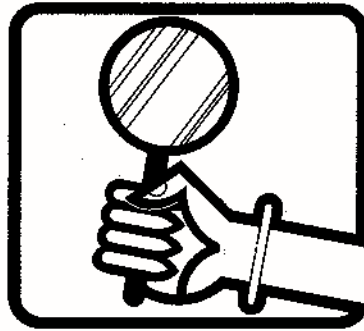
The Mustang II was getting back to the Mustang's original role — an affordable sporty, fun car conceived for a more conservative 1970s marketplace. It was a logical stepping stone on a journey to the current successful Fox platform.

Like the Mustang and Falcon did some 10 years earlier, the Mustang II shared some off-the-shelf hardware with the more economical Pinto. Holler about that if you want to, but it was simply sound business which worked successfully. And with sales figures of 385,993 units that first year (1974), it looks to us like Ford did the job right after all. The Mustang II couldn't have been better timed, with an introduction at the same time as the 1973 Arab Oil Embargo. Cubic inches were out, and more economical "liters" were in.

Our job at *In Search of Mustangs* is to educate you on Mustang II production, not so much about what differentiated it from the Pinto. The Mustang II shared only one production line with the Pinto — San Jose, CA. At Dearborn, only Mustang IIs rolled off the line. The Metuchen, NJ plant never built a Mustang II, but instead, Ford Pintos and Mercury Bobcats.

The two Mustang II plants began with 1000001 consecutive unit numbers at the beginning of each model year.

Mustang IIs were serial numbered liked



## In Search Of Mustangs

By JIM SMART & JIM HASKELL

### IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS

We encourage your participation in "IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS", an international census of Ford Mustangs and Shelby Mustangs 1964-1/2 through 1973. Data from over 40,000 Mustangs are already included in the census. Make sure yours is in there too!

From this project you'll see monthly updates in the Mustang Times that hopefully will answer your particular concerns or questions on Mustang production facts and other interesting tidbits about our ponies. In addition, a series of full-length Mustang production reference books called The Mustang Production Guide(s) are currently in the writing stage.

All you need to do to participate is fill in the blanks below. The information can be found on a metal plate (1964-1/2 - 69) or vinyl sticker (1970-73), found on your driver's door near the latch. If there is no plate or sticker, just the serial number is adequate. Total information is very important. Feel free to enclose the history on your Mustang(s).

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

**MUSTANG #1** Year \_\_\_\_\_ Is it a GT, MACH I, T-5, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Warranty/Serial Number \_\_\_\_\_

Body \_\_\_\_\_ Color \_\_\_\_\_ Trim \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ DSO \_\_\_\_\_ Axle \_\_\_\_\_ Trans \_\_\_\_\_

**MUSTANG #2** Year \_\_\_\_\_ Is it a GT, MACH I, T-5, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Warranty/Serial Number \_\_\_\_\_

Body \_\_\_\_\_ Color \_\_\_\_\_ Trim \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ DSO \_\_\_\_\_ Axle \_\_\_\_\_ Trans \_\_\_\_\_

**MUSTANG #3** Year \_\_\_\_\_ Is it a GT, MACH I, T-5, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Warranty/Serial Number \_\_\_\_\_

Body \_\_\_\_\_ Color \_\_\_\_\_ Trim \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ DSO \_\_\_\_\_ Axle \_\_\_\_\_ Trans \_\_\_\_\_

Thanks for participating in this project. If you desire a reply, please enclose a SASE. Send all information to:

### IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS

Jim Haskell  
P. O. Box 883  
Annandale, VA 22003

or

Jim Smart  
P. O. Box 727  
Paris, TN 38242

their predecessors, with vehicle certification stickers on the left hand door just like the 1970-73 Mustang. For vehicles exported to Canada or beyond the North American continent, this certification sticker was revised accordingly.

Body buck tags, attached to the radiator support, yield plenty of valuable information on Dearborn-built units. The San Jose plant never used body buck tags in its entire history (this plant built its last Mustang in 1981). By reviewing your body buck tag, you can determine special options, if any, and the actual date of vehicle assembly.

Reviewing the broadcast sheet is also an option for the Mustang II enthusiast. Typically found wrapped within the rear seat or front bucket seat spring, the broadcast sheet offers valuable information useful to the enthusiast, including scheduled build date, district sales office (DSO), body, trim, axle and transmission codes.

Collectibility and popularity seem to have passed the 1974-78 Mustangs by, but they are as much a vital part of Mustang history as their brethren. Our objective is to surface as much information as we can on this generation of sporty Mustangs. If you're into the Mustang IIs, we would like to hear from you. We're seeking warranty/serial numbers and data codes from 1974-78, including those which are scrapped, and new car sales records from Ford dealers who still have them. With this data, we can cross-section the forgotten generation of Ford Pony cars.

If you would like to know more about *In Search of Mustangs* and the *Mustang Production Guide Series*, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

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## Judging Sheets Available From MCA Nationals

MCA members who participate in National and Grand National Shows during the 1993 season may receive their judging sheets following these events.

If you would like to have your judging sheet returned to you, send your request, along with a No. 10 envelope with three first class stamps to MCA National Head Judge Ricky Simmons, P.O. Box 387, Demorest, GA 30535.

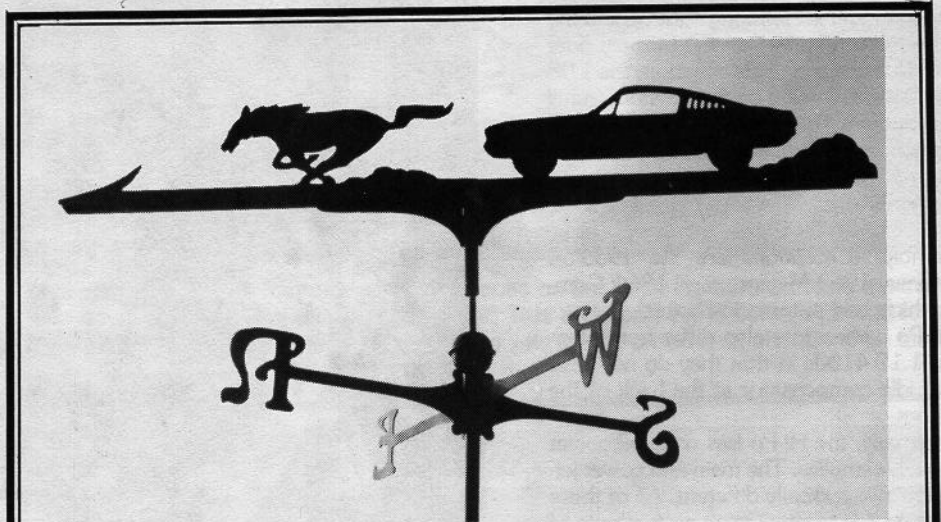
Please note that you *must include your car number* and the location of the show in your

request to have your judging sheet returned to you.

The judging sheets do not include any names, so your car number is essential if your sheet is to be identified and returned to you.

It is recommended that you send your request for your judging sheet to Simmons within 30 days of the close of the show.

Many Mustangers who show their vehicles at national events find the sheets helpful in improving their cars.



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