

Mustang Production Figures Can Be Misleading

By **JIM SMART**
 With **JIM HASKELL**
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One evening recently I was thumbing through our files when I stumbled upon Mustang production figures from 1965-69. The numbers left me scratching my head, wondering what has moved people to buy Mustangs through the years — and what has kept them out of the showrooms at times.

The 1972 model year has long had the distinction of being the worst Mustang sales year on record, that is, if you've never looked beyond 1973. When you look at the 1966 model year, Mustang sales figures give an adrenalin rush — 607,658 units from three Ford plants. That's especially impressive when you compare it to the competing Plymouth Barracuda sales figures that same year — far less than 100,000 units. The Valiant-based sporty compact didn't stand a chance.

Mustang sales figures after 1966 become more humbling. With Chevrolet Camaro, Pontiac Firebird, Mercury Cougar, and even a revised Barracuda for 1967, the Mustang's market was shrinking at an alarming rate.

By 1972, Ford showrooms were decidedly depressing — with only 125,093 Mustangs sold.

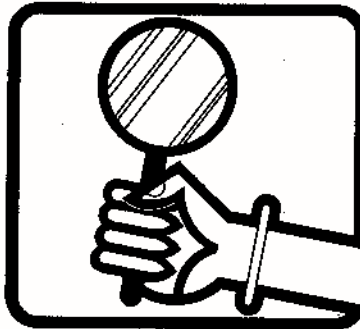
Believe it or not, Mustang sales picked up for 1973, especially when word hit the streets that the convertible had been given last rites and the Mustang would change dramatically for 1974. People bought nearly 10,000 more Mustangs in 1973, a great number of them convertibles.

Contrary to all the hate editorial that has been written about the 1974-78 Mustang II, Ford had some of its best Mustang sales years during the 1970s. When Dearborn and San Jose balanced out at the end of 1974 production, some 385,993 Mustang IIs had been assembled.

Production fell for 1975, with 188,775 units sold. The worst Mustang II sales year was 1978 with 141,212 units sold, including 4,971 limited edition King Cobras.

Even the completely redesigned 1973 Mustang didn't outsell the 1974 Mustang II. Some 332,024 units were sold in the year of the Fox. Passion for the Fox Mustang faded quickly, however.

In 1980, during the energy crisis and building economic recession, Mustang sales fell to 241,064. Mustang sales were the worst ever in 1981-83. Just 127,093 were sold in 1981 and 119,314 in 1982. If you think these figures were bad, consider 1983



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

— with just 108,438 built and sold.

The economy and the Mustang both dramatically improved during the mid-1980s. Sales inched upward during 1984-85. In 1986, Mustang sales galloped to 224,410 units, including 50,465 5.0 liter GTs.

Contrary to traditional sales patterns, Mustang sales fell for 1987 with a restyle — 159,145 units were sold. Some 211,225 were sold in 1988.

Fluctuating sales figures aren't always a reflection of the Mustang's appeal in the marketplace. You must also consider cold and often cruel economic conditions, competition (look at the sheer number of Pony car competitors today!) and the Dearborn plant's ability to build to meet demand.

Mustang sales have been declining since 1990, according to Ford insiders. The decline is due, in part, to the economic downturn we've all been experiencing since 1989, and the Mustang's styling stagnation since 1987.

Ford has been producing limited edition dealer promotional "feature cars" in special colors since 1989. These are often introduced mid-year to spur sales, but the public is looking for a change.

We'll never see the big Mustang production numbers we witnessed in 1965-66 because competition has become greater, sticker prices have escalated, and the youth market is transitioning into the "gray" market. Baby boomers are growing older. Yesterday's Mustangers are gradually becoming today's Taurusians. Sporty sedans, like the good looking Taurus SHO, have replaced the smaller Mustang in most garages and carports because baby boomers have grown up and have families to think of.

When you get right down to it, the Mustang has been a lesson in demographics. The youth craze was at its peak during the mid-1960s when the Mustang had center stage and there wasn't the threat of competition. Today, the Mustang has matured, as have the marketplace and Mustang buyer.

Regardless of how many Mustangs Ford sells, we're here to document every single one of them at *In Search of Mustangs*. It doesn't matter what your favorite year is, we want to hear from you. If you would like to know more about *In Search of Mustangs* and the *Mustang Production Guide Series*, we invite you to contact us at:

In Search of Mustangs
P.O. Box 727

Paris, Tennessee 38242

Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope if you desire a response. For a faster response call the Mustang Help Line at (901) 642-0064.

The Mustang Times/May, 1993

Judging Sheets Available From MCA Nationals

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

Owners desiring their judging sheets must send a written request, along with a self-addressed, No. 10 envelope with three first class postage 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.

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

All requests for National and Grand National judging sheets must be made within 30 days of the close of the show.

Judging sheets can be helpful in determining what specific areas of your Mustang need improvement to make your entry more competitive.

MCA Is Now Seeking More Gold Card Judges

Have you judged at an MCA-sanctioned National or Grand National Show?

Are you interested in becoming an MCA Gold Card Judge?

If the answer to both of these questions is "yes," you are invited to contact the Mustang Club of America's National Head Judge Ricky Simmons, by writing him in care of MCA at P.O. Box 447, Lithonia, GA 30058.

MCA is interested in expanding its list of Gold Card Judges for various Mustang models and years.

NEW ITEM! MCA STICK-ON AND MAGNETIC DECALS!



Now you can show your support for the Ford Mustang and the Mustang Club of America with these large-sized stick-on and magnetic MCA decals for your car or trailer.

Stick-on decals are available in 25-inch and 11-inch sizes.

Prices for the 25-inch decals are \$17.50 each or two for \$30.00. The 11-inch stick-on decals are \$8.00 each or two for \$15.00.

Also available is an 11-inch magnetic decal, which is priced at \$12.00 each or two for \$20.00.

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Send check or money order made payable to MCA to:

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The Mustang Club of America
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Lithonia, GA 30058