

# ON LATE MODELS

by  
Randy Church



It has occurred to me that we are calling all Mustangs since the evolution of the Fox Platform "Late Models". This name is no longer valid. Ricky Simmons and I spent some time discussing this, and have decided that the era between 1979 and 1993 could be referred to as "Third Generation Mustang". The 1994 and later Mustangs will then become the "Late Model Mustang". This will make references to different Mustang body styles easier. Also, when you think about the Mustang being 30 years old, you realize that the Fox Platform Mustang at 15 years old is half as old as the original pony car. The Fox Platform Mustang lasted longer than any other body style, and deserves its place in Mustang history.

When the 1979 Mustang debuted, it was a refreshing change from the cars of the gas crunch era of 1974 - 1978. I remember going to Stovall Motor Company right after the new Mustang had been unveiled. They had a bright red Ghia model sitting in the showroom. We joked with my mother, who was thinking of buying a new car, that she should buy it. Well,

the next thing we knew, she had bought it. She drove that car until 1994, when she purchased another Mustang. It is sitting in my driveway right now awaiting restoration.

The 1979 Mustang was reminiscent of the early days of Mustang. Once again, the purchaser of a Mustang could choose from a variety of options that allowed them to design a car suited to their demands. Choices included the range from economy to luxury to performance, or a combination of these options. Not all of the changes were cosmetic. There were five different engine choices, with the availability of a 4-speed or automatic transmission. Also new in 1979, was the sport tuned exhaust with bright dual tailpipe extensions. Wheel covers and wheels included turbine wheel covers, wire wheel covers, cast aluminum wheels, styled steel wheels, and the TRX suspension option which included a rear stabilization bar, adjusted spring and bushing rates, and shock valving. For your listening pleasure, the 1979 Mustang came with five radio or radio/tape options. Unique to the

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1979 Mustang is the interior door handle that was located on the lower part of the door. Advertisements for the 1979 Mustang called it the "New Breed". To quote Ford, "they planned to put the fun back into driving". The 1979 Mustang was available in two specialty performance models. The Cobra, with its original hood graphics, was a breed apart. The Cobra was designed to bring back the excitement of the early model Mustang. Another specialty Mustang was the Pace Car. In 1979, Ford was invited to design a car to be used as a pace car at the Indy 500. Ford designed and built three "real" pace cars and 11,000 Pace Car replicas that were sold in dealerships across the country. These cars also featured optional graphics which would readily identify it as a unique Mustang.

1979 proved to be a good year for the

Mustang. The wide range of options made the Mustang appeal to a broader spectrum of potential purchasers and brought many new Mustangers into the fold. Production of the 1979 Mustang almost doubled over the previous year, this assured Mustang lovers that the Mustang was here to stay. For a third generation Mustang to restore and show, do not overlook the 1979.

If you have suggestions or information that you would like to see discussed in this column, please contact me. We are always looking for new information about the third generation Mustang.

For those of you who tried to contact me without success, my Mustang phone number was misprinted last month. The correct number is 706/776-7379. If you call and get no answer, keep trying.



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