

From The Top...

by Bill Dillard
MCA National President



There's Never Been A Better Time To Be A Ford Fan...

If you've been around Fords any time at all, you know that Ford has never been "politically correct" in the world of automobiles. What do I mean? I mean "Fix Or Repair Daily," "Found On Road Dead..." and the rest of those "kind" remarks Ford enthusiasts struggle with when Brand X friends and acquaintances come calling.

Ford has always been the underdog, taking a back seat to General Motors in popularity (numbers), and I can't tell you why. Perhaps this stigma began with the failed Edsel in 1958-60, or perhaps the 1971-80 Pinto. Yet, Ford has always been a statement maker despite all this. Ford beat GM to market by three years with the Mustang in 1964. And while GM was watching all those cars drive past their dealers en route to the "Mustang" store in 1964, they held fast - calling their Corvair a Mustang competitor. I hate to muddy the waters, but the Corvair was in a class by itself - literally.

Even the Camaro that ultimately appeared for 1967 didn't follow the same path as the Mustang. It fell short in styling by a wide margin, and it didn't sell nearly as well. Even though 1967 Mustang sales were down from 1966, they still beat the all-new Camaro and Firebird. And Mustang sales have always been ahead of Camaro and Firebird. So why do we take such a hit in enthusiast circles?

In 1994, we're at our pinnacle as Ford enthusiasts. There has never been a better time to be a Ford freak. The 1994 Mustang has hit showrooms, and the media, like wildfire. And the Mustang has good company both in the Ford Division, and at Lincoln-Mercury. The Best Selling car in its class in 1992 was the Ford Taurus, beating out the hot selling Honda Accord. Land sakes, they just did it again in 1993. Ford

Taurus remains the Number One selling car in its class. And if you don't believe me, try something on your next journey down the interstate. Watch the oncoming traffic and take notice of the number of Ford Taurus derivatives that you see. Since the Taurus debuted late in 1985, Ford has sold millions of them. And if you have to give up your sporty Mustang for a more family friendly vehicle, the Taurus is a nice alternative that comfortably seats five, offers good handling and a nice measure of performance. If you can swing a Taurus SHO, you're driving the best Taurus ever.

But the Ford success story is more than Mustang and Taurus in 1994. The Ranger Splash is a hit, as are the F-Series trucks. In 1996, the re-styled F-150 promises to come on like gangbusters because of advanced truck styling and the new 5.4 liter Modular V-8. Later on this year, the new Ford Contour and Mercury Mystique debut as replacements for the Tempo and Topaz which have sold well since their 1984 introduction. Like the Taurus, both have been a mainstay and vital to Ford Motor Company's financial health. The Contour and Mystique are the US equivalent of the European Ford Mondeo which is selling very well.

This spring, Ford's new Windstar minivan will be introduced just in time for our 30th Mustang Anniversary bash at Charlotte. The Windstar is expected to give the Chrysler minivan champs a run for the money. Based on the Taurus platform, the Windstar sports dual air bags, good handling, and 3.8 liter V-6 power. It is expected to do very well.

So you see, being an ol' Ford fan has never been a better experience in the company's 90-plus year history. And you and I will be there to celebrate - together - in April. We hope your plans are cast in stone for Charlotte. **MT**



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