

The Ricky & Randy Resto Review

Imagine how Bud Thrasher felt when his wife, Ann, mentioned that she would like to find the 1969 Mustang coupe that they had sold some 20 years earlier, and buy it. Ann did not just want a car like the Mustang they had owned, she wanted the same one. Add to the odds of finding this car the fact that the car was sold in Kansas, you do not have the name of the purchaser, you now live in Virginia, and you are a Colonel in the U. S. Army, leaving for Germany in a couple of months. The chances of finding this car were certainly slim.

This burgundy 1969 Mustang coupe was special to Ann and Bud Thrasher for several reasons. One is that Bud purchased the car in 1970 on the day of his first date with Ann. He was so excited with the purchase that he stopped to show the car to some friends and was three hours late returning from his home in Hartwell, Georgia, to North Georgia College, in Dahlonega, Georgia, to pick Ann up for their date. Ann remembers sitting in the window of the dorm watching for Bud and seeing him drive up in the Mustang and wave to her to come down to look. The car figures prominently in the memories Ann recalled from the time they dated. She must have forgiven him his tardiness, because she did later agree to marry him. Ann and Bud were stationed in Kansas in 1975, when they received orders transferring them to Germany. At that time, the thought of taking the Mustang with them did not seem reasonable, so they reluctantly sold it. As Ann said, that was probably a big mistake, because the car they bought in Germany to replace the Mustang just did not measure up.

This spring, Ann started thinking about the Mustang, and decided that she wanted to try to find it. She mentioned it to Bud, who did not try to talk her out of her quest. When he had to go to Fort Riley, Kansas, on business in June, it seemed that this would be a good time for him to begin making some inquiries about the car. Bud agreed to go to the tag and title office in Manhattan, Kansas, to see if they had any record of the car. After two hours of searching for information, they came up empty handed. It seems that the car still had a Georgia tag when sold, so they did not have enough information to go on. The clerks at the tag and title office felt that they might have more success if they had

Ricky Simmons, National Head Judge and Randy Church, National 3rd Generation Judge will be making regular contributions on this restoration project. - RJ

the vehicle identification number (VIN). They gave Bud a number in Topeka to call to trace the current owner, if he was able to find the VIN.

When Bud returned to Virginia, it seemed that they had reached a dead end. The movers were coming in four days, and Ann and Bud were headed home to Georgia for a vacation with their families in Hartwell and Toccoa, before heading to Germany for the next three years.

Ann, however, had only begun her search and talked Bud into paying a visit to the tag office in Hartwell to see if they might have a record of the VIN. They said they only had records for two years and could not trace back any further.

Still not willing to call it quits, Ann called the insurance company with whom they had insured the car. Fortunately, they still used the same company, and that may have been a factor in their willingness to search for the records. The insurance company was not hopeful since their records are usually only kept for seven years. However, the clerk must have been moved by Ann's story, because she called back three or four days later with the information. Ann was in Toccoa visiting her family, and Bud had gone to Hartwell to see his family when the call came from the insurance company. At 4:00 that Monday afternoon, Ann was on the phone to Bud asking him to make the call to Topeka to see if they could trace the Mustang. By 5:30, the same afternoon, Bud had called Topeka, gotten the information, and had called the current owner of the Mustang. The lady who owned the car said she drove it every day, but would consider selling it if she could find another car. She did not have any emotional ties to the car, having owned it for only two years.

64 1/2-73
MUSTANG
60-70 1/2
FALCON
62-71
FAIRLANE
63-64
GALAXIE
48-72
PICK-UP

TUES-FRI - 9-6
SAT - 9-4
CLOSED SUN-MON



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On Tuesday, at 5:30 p.m., the owner called to say she had found a replacement car and would be willing to sell. Ann and Bud returned too late on Tuesday to return the call, but spoke with her on Wednesday morning and agreed on a price. They also called a friend at Fort Leavenworth and asked if he would be willing to let them send him the money and complete the transaction on their behalf. He agreed to go to Kansas City to purchase the car for them and to keep it until they could arrange transportation to Georgia. Ann and Bud then spent the next four hours on the phone to their bank, the bank in Kansas City, and the legal office in Kansas City to make sure that the details of the sale were handled in a legal manner, to Darryl, the friend picking up the car, and to Christine, the owner of the Mustang. It seemed that everything was under control and the car would soon be back with Ann and Bud.

Thursday, at 11:00 a.m., just before Darryl was to pick up the car at 1:00, Christine received a call from her mechanic telling her the car she planned to buy to replace the Mustang was not a good choice. The deal was about to fall through. At that point, Bud offered to pay for four days car rental so she could find another car. Christine agreed that that would work. Darryl arrived on time and the deal was completed as planned.

Since Bud had to leave that Saturday for Charleston on his way to Germany, he wanted to finalize arrangements to have the car shipped to Georgia. After calls to eight different auto transport companies, they found one that could pick the car up at Fort Leavenworth on Friday to bring the Mustang home to Georgia.

Bud left as planned on Saturday, leaving Ann to meet the transport in Toccoa on Monday morning. When the truck pulled in to the parking lot, Ann thought they had picked up the wrong car! The car on the carrier had a black vinyl top, and Ann's car had not. As soon as the car was taken off the carrier, Ann checked the VIN and sure enough, it was her car. The fun had just begun.

As Ann walked around the car, she noticed that there was yellow crayon writing on the passenger door. It said that the window was about to fall out, and not to try to roll it down. The driver side door also had a message, it said that the door would not open from the outside. When Ann looked inside the car, she realized that someone had replaced the dash

with one that differed from the original. The driver of the auto transport warned Ann about the brakes not being in top condition. Ann's brother-in-law decided it might be better if he drove it to her mother's house. Just as Ann arrived, the phone rang. It was Bud calling from Charleston where he was catching a flight to Germany. He wanted to make sure it had arrived. Ann explained that it had arrived, but wasn't exactly as she remembered. The fact that she was laughing and could hardly talk was probably not a comforting thought for Bud.

He called me, (perhaps due to my status as MCA Third Generation Judge) and wanted to know if we could go over and help Ann make a list of things that should be done to the car. Since she was leaving the next Saturday for three years in Germany, time was short with major decisions to be made. We went over to look at the car. It had been in Kansas where there is a lot of snow and salt. We agreed that body work and paint would be priorities. Christine had had work done on the engine and the front end and they seemed OK. Since Ann had already determined that the original dash was gone, it was suggested that Ricky Simmons (our club's National Head Judge) had mentioned that he was looking for a project for the winter and he might be interested.

On Saturday morning, before Ann left for the airport, Ricky and I went to Toccoa to look at the car. I had told Ricky the history of the car and how Ann came to have it back. When Ricky first saw the car, he was afraid that Ann would have unrealistic expectations about price and ease of returning the car to the car of her memories. After a short conversation, Ricky was as excited and enthusiastic as Ann about the prospect of making her car "her car". Her enthusiasm was contagious and Ricky left with the promise to pick up the car from her parents' home and move it to his shop for restoration.

Many people have suggested that *Mustang Times* feature restoration and 'how-to' articles for the novice restorer. Also, many people feel that the only cars that get attention are the high performance and high-priced cars. In response to those suggestions, Ricky and I will be writing articles about the progress of this restoration, with pictures and details of the different aspects of the restoration, in upcoming issues. Watch for those articles, and if you happen to be in Germany, look up Ann and Bud, and say "Hi" to some new Mustang enthusiasts.