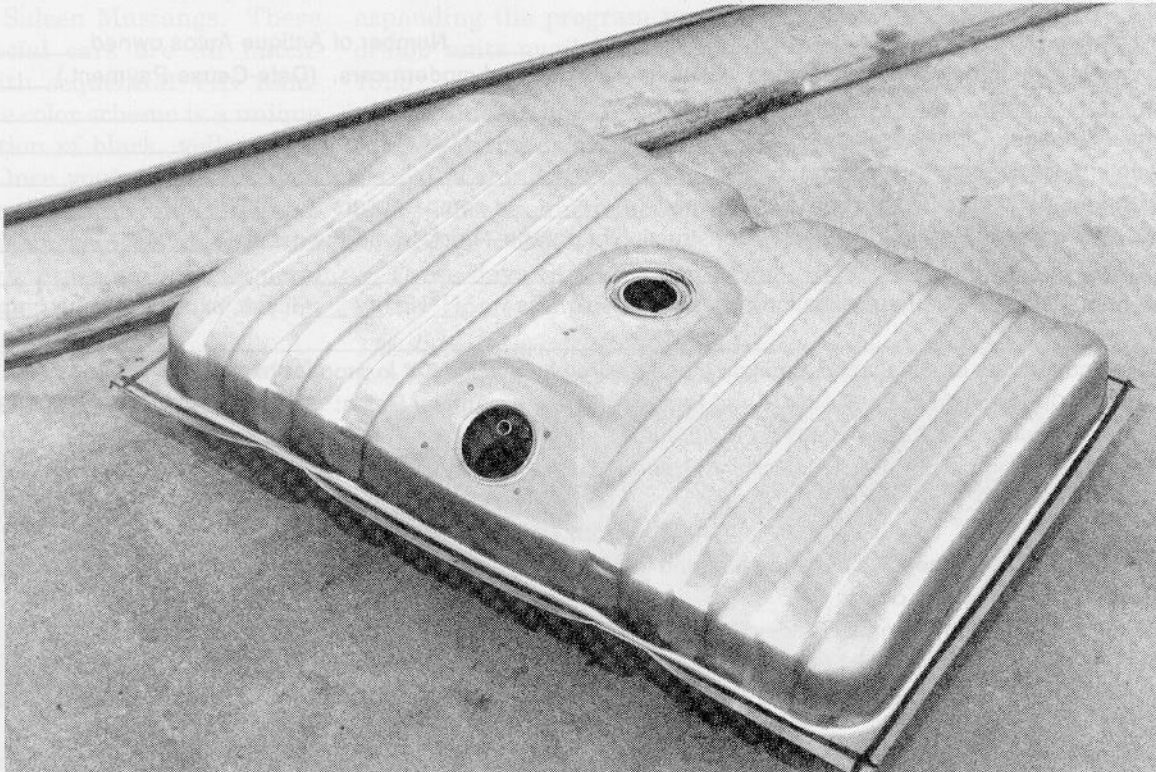


Gas Up Your Pony with a 1971-73 Reproduction Tank

by Bob Vickery
photos by VTC & Co.



The needle on the gas gauge heads toward the "E" -- time for a refill. We obey the message given to us by this gauge without much question. We give our ponies the best gas we can find (or afford) to ensure the performance of that freshly rebuilt power plant. But how often do we really think about the gas tank itself? Even during a restoration project many of us would probably just try to clean up the exterior of the original tank as much as possible and not do much else.

Gravel roads, winter road salt, and 25 years of use can take quite a toll on not only the appearance but also the function of a gas tank. The original tank, constructed of galvanized steel, can develop rust and leaks over a period of time,

even if road conditions or a minor rear end accident haven't gotten to it first. But owners of 1971-73 Mustangs have had little choice in the matter. Either clean up the old tank or try to locate a used tank that looks better than the one lurking underneath your car now. Since these tanks have been obsolete from Ford for several years, locating a decent used tank can be nearly as difficult as locating the NOS version. (If you're lucky enough to find a brand new original tank, plan on skipping a note or two on that new Cobra to pay for it.)

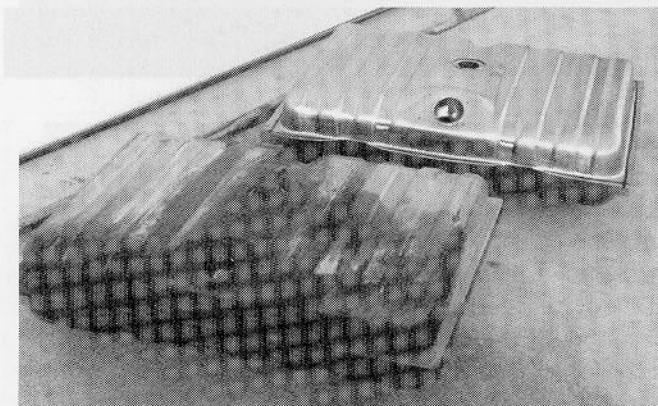
But never fear. Help has arrived.

SEMO Classic Mustang, Inc., has recently added to their ever-growing list of Mustang parts, a

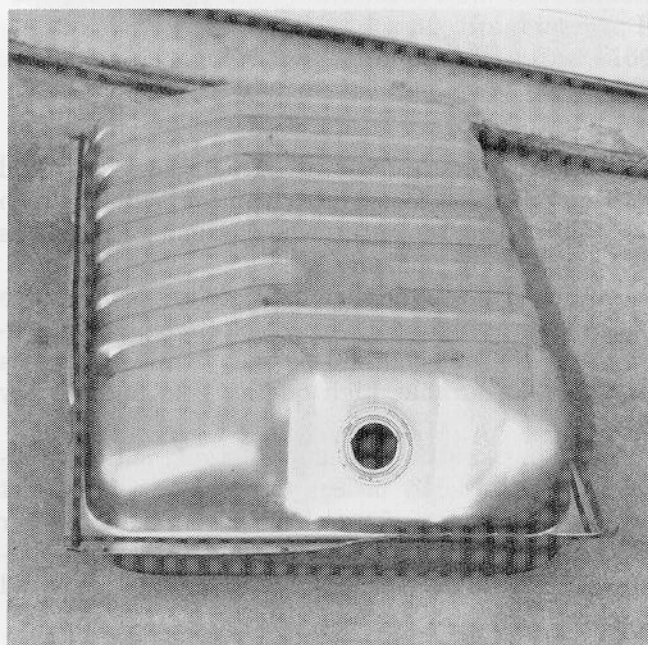
1971-73 reproduction gas tank produced in the good ol' USA by American Designers, Inc.

After spotting this item in the "New Bits" section of the November 1996 issue of *Mustang Monthly*, we contacted Jeff Sneathen at SEMO for information. A new tank, along with the necessary information, arrived the next week for our inspection. (It should be noted at this point that the addition of this tank to the lineup now completes the set of tanks available for first generation Mustangs.)

The reproduction tank is manufactured from new dies made by American Designers, Inc., and are constructed of NITERN. This material is non-sparking for safety reasons and is an industry stan-



Any discrepancies found in the filler neck area of the repro will not be noticed once the filler neck boot has been installed. The vent opening on the repro appears to duplicate the original.



The underside of the gas tank always "hits the judges in the face" when it comes time for a show inspection.

Why settle for the dinged up, slightly rusted original, or an expensive used version that really isn't much better, when a shiny new reproduction unit can be easily installed.

dard. This enables the tanks to be manufactured safely.

The color and texture of the new tank duplicates the original galvanized steel version. There are a few small differences in the repro tank when compared to the original, but these difference are very minor and most will not be visible once the tank is installed. The

over all look and size of the reproduction unit match Ford's tank.

Two openings are located on the top side of the tank; one for the vent and the other for the filler neck. The filler neck opening looks a little different but will not be noticed when the filler neck boot is installed. The vent opening appears to duplicate the original.

The underside of the tank mirrors the original including the opening for the fuel line and sending unit.

The most noticeable difference with the repro tank is the bend in the flange edge at the fuel sender end. Ford tanks have a smooth, clean bend in the flange to clear the wires and gas line while the repro tank looks as if it has been bent by hand. It is not as smooth as it needs to be. For a car that needs a replacement tank for mechanical reasons, this should pose no problem. But for a restoration project, a few minutes with a hammer and body dolly should smooth the bend out to meet concours standards.

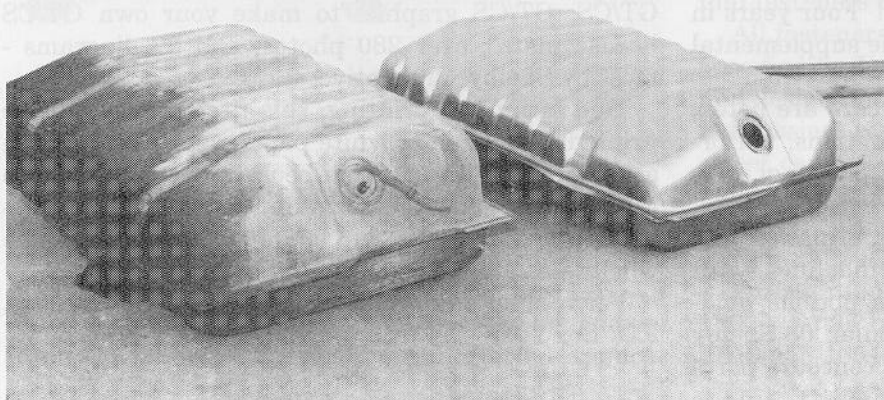
Another difference we noted is in the shape of the flange corners. The Ford original has *slightly* rounded corners whereas the American Designer version has square corners. A restorer can easily replicate the original appearance by using a file to remove the "hard" corners.

Overall, this seems to be a great, and much needed, reproduction part which will no doubt be welcomed by many 1971-73 Mustang owners.

If you would like additional information on this tank, contact SEMO Classic Mustang, Inc.
P.O. Box 78
Gordonville, MO 63752-0078
Phone: (573) 243-7664
Fax: (573) 243-8484.

Judging officials are currently examining the tank for MCA approval.

In our next installment we will take a look at the tank after it has been installed on a 1972 Mach 1.



The bend in the flange of the sender unit end appears to have been hand made as compared to the factory-smooth edge of an original. This can be remedied with a little ingenuity. This bend is necessary to accommodate the exhaust hanger on dual exhaust-equipped models.