

How to Produce a Wild 'Stang in 1,000 Easy Steps

by Jim Carlton

For the past two years I have enjoyed reading articles in this publication about project cars which were restored and all the problems that were encountered along the line. Some were interesting especially when the owner said "Yea, I restored my Mustang....." but then the statement would conclude with Al's Garage performing the body work, Jim's Engineering rebuilding the motor, and good old Bob applying the paint! "Man", I was thinking, "what did you do to build the car." Allow me to share my war story.

Approximately two years ago, I spotted a 1965 Mustang 2+2 under a tree sporting a for sale sign. Since my brother is into Mustangs, I quickly called him to share the news of the discovery.

Based on our conversation I was certain that he wanted me to buy the car for him so I negotiated the buy. Unfortunately, at that particular time, I couldn't recognize a fastback from a coupe.

All too soon it became obvious that the car was mine. My brother wasn't really interested in the car and didn't have time to help with a restoration project. Not to be outdone, the decision was made to resurrect the pony in my home garage.

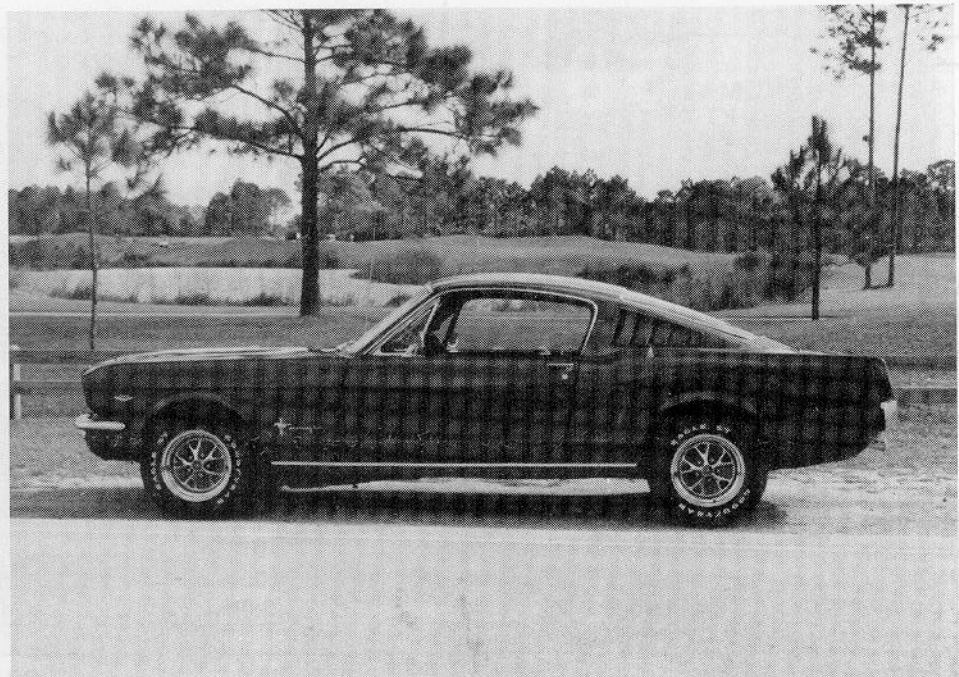
The project began by building shelves and storage areas for the parts that would soon litter the garage floor. I then enrolled in the local community college welding course and purchased a MIG

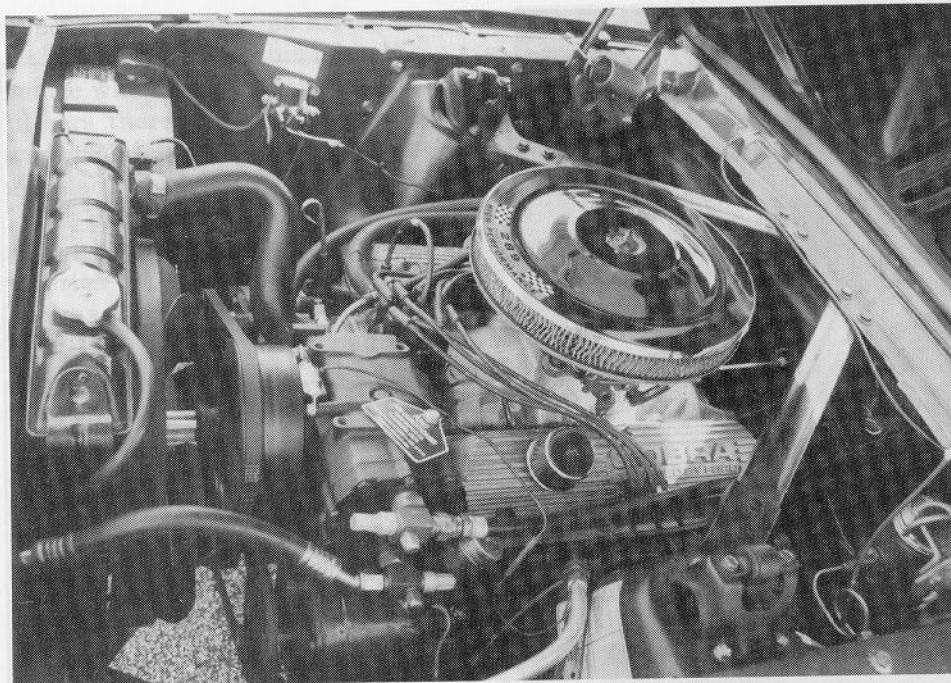
welder with gas. Flashbacks from the television show "Cheers" occurred each time I walked into the local Sears store as everyone called out "Jim" when I purchased new gadgets to stock the garage.

The first clue that I was in *deep* trouble came when the president and vice president of the Space Coast Mustang Club were invited out to see the project. At first glance they both began staring up into the sky. They claimed they were waiting on the Shuttle, but I now know they were trying to save their eyes. The hulk of metal sitting there sure was an ugly sight. I do remember one of them saying that if it wasn't a fastback, they'd shoot it.

Progress was gauged by the number of boxes filled with rust chips and body parts that were carried out as trash at the end of the night. A full time job left only two to three hours a night plus most weekends to bring this neglected rust-bucket back to life. I knew I was seriously hooked when on one occasion I took vacation time just to finish a particular portion of the job!

When all was said and done, the car had received two fenders, a hood, right front frame extension, two full floor pans, both quarter panels, trunk floors, left rear





frame rail, new suspension, new lines, and enough parts to cause Cleveland at G & W Auto Parts in Cocoa to send me Christmas cards each year from his winter home in the Bahamas. Now you can show me just about any part from a 1965 fastback and I can tell you what it is and where it goes.

Although the identification number for the Ivy Green beauty indicates a C code engine, numerous hi-po components were added sometime during the long life of the 289 power plant. Dual

exhaust lends just the right exhaust note for the hopped-up engine. Factory underdash air conditioning, power steering, and a three-speed transmission make driving a pleasure.

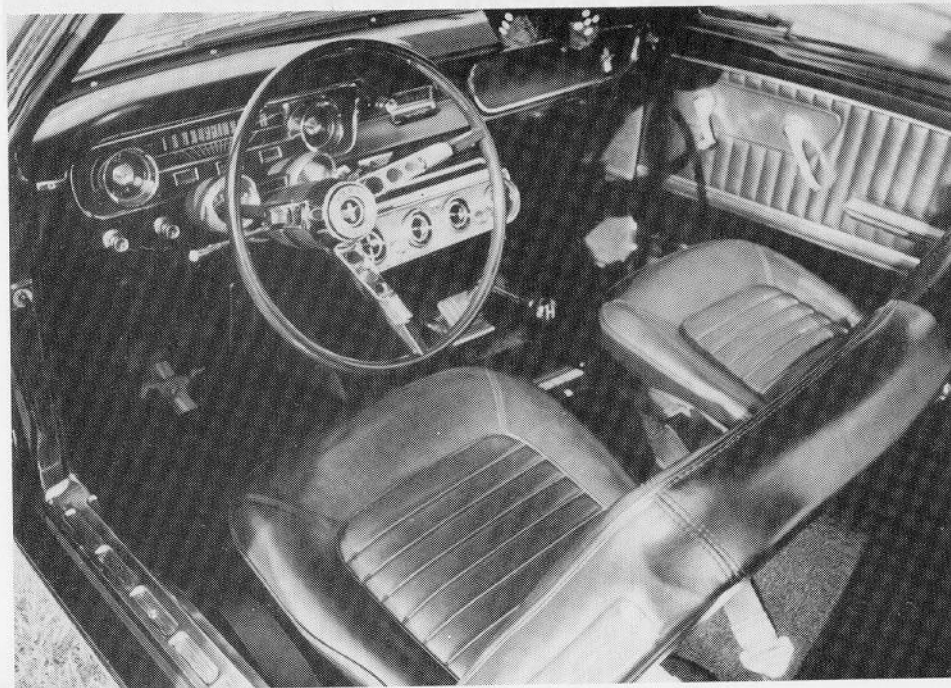
The standard black interior is once again in like-new condition and features an AM radio, Rally-Pac which includes a six grand tachometer, aftermarket floor mats which add just a splash of color via the running horse logo, and a pair of fuzzy dice for good measure.

The greatest part of this project was doing the work myself with help from friend Al and son Bobby. Not to mention all kinds of support from my wife, Susan, who tolerated the living room becoming the inside storage area for new parts. (I thought the dash pad box made a great coffee table and the chrome bumpers lent a certain ambiance to the wall unit they were leaning against.)

To fully enjoy the fruits of my labor, the car is driven almost every day. Hopefully justice was done in restoring the tired pony to the proud car it once was.

I'll do my best to keep it that way.

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We're always looking for "a few good Mustangs".