

Ford and TriStar Pictures Team Up to Promote "The Mask of Zorro"

Has Zorro replaced his trusty horse, Tornado, with a black Ford Mustang GT convertible? Yes, at least until the new movie, "The Mask of Zorro," makes its debut this summer.

Ford Motor Company and TriStar Pictures have formed a partnership to market the movie which highlights both the new movie and the Mustang brand.

Zorro and the heroine Elena escape an evil villain in a TV commercial for the movie by driving off together in a black Mustang GT convertible, leaving the mark of "Z" in the dusty terrain. The joint ad campaign broke in late April.

"We hope that Zorro will be identified as much with his new Mustang as he was with his jet black horse," said Bill Lenn, media and ethnic marketing manager for Ford Division. "The campaign is sure to be a winner with movie fans."

The TriStar Pictures/ Amblin Entertainment Production "The Mask of Zorro" is a sweeping romantic adventure set against the Spanish conquest of Mexico. The film which debuts in theaters nationwide July 17, stars Antonio Banderas, Anthony Hopkins, and Catherine Zeta-Jones.

Ford introduced Mustang 34 years ago on April 17, 1964. Mustang has been the best selling car of its kind for 12 consecutive years. Nearly 7.5 million Mustangs have been sold.

Mustang Buyers Heating Up Ford Showrooms; Sales up 30%

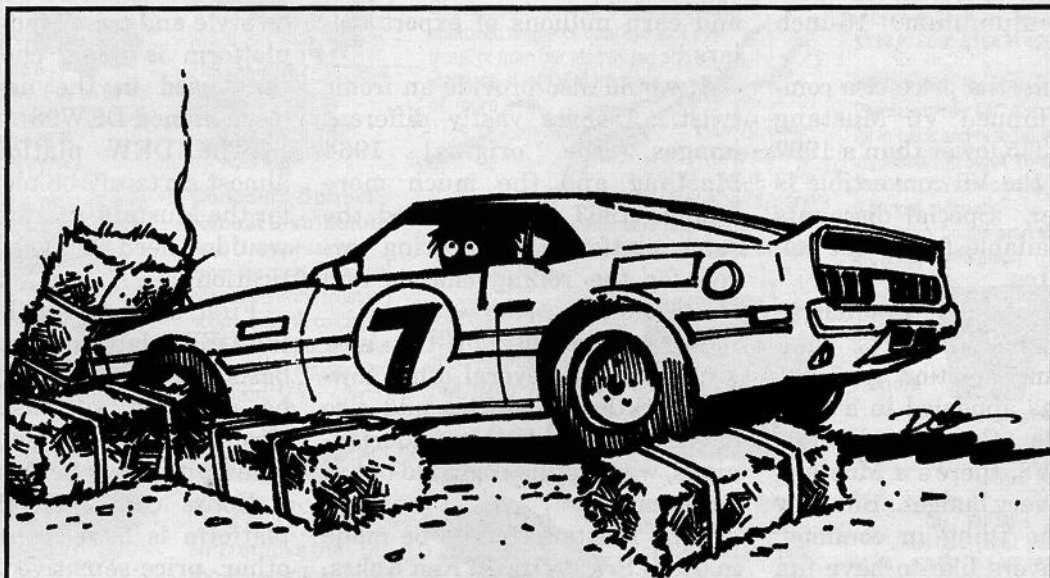
Spring weather and graduations have equaled higher Ford Mustang sales. This model year, even as fall and winter thermometers dropped, Mustang buyers were heating up Ford showrooms.

Mustang sales have increased more than 30% since the beginning of the 1998 model year in October. With that kind of sales performance, Ford dealers flooded the Dearborn Assembly Plant with orders anticipating "convertible weather" and graduation celebration sales.

Why are Mustang sales so hot? "It's a simple formula," said Ross

LOOSE BOLTS

by Don Bolt MCA 36888



"What a time for my Mustang to decide that it was hungry."

Roberts, Ford Motor Company vice president and general manager, Ford Division. "For 1998, we offered the customer more Mustang for the money. The customer response was almost immediate, but the magnitude of the response was greater than we expected."

Mustang's value has been enhanced for 1998 with several popular items added as standard equipment, including:

- Air conditioning
- Premium AM/FM stereo with cassette and compact disc player
- Power windows and door locks
- Remote Keyless Entry System
- Polished aluminum 15-inch wheels

In addition, Mustang GT models include:

- Power driver's seat
- Fog lamps
- Rear spoiler
- Leather-wrapped steering wheel
- Cast aluminum 16-inch wheels.

As a result, the price of a comparably equipped V6 Mustang coupe is \$1,345 lower than a 1997 model, and the V6 convertible is \$1,680 lower. Special discounts also are available for recent college graduates.

"A lot of people are graduating to a Mustang," Roberts said. "Since its introduction in 1964, Mustang has appealed to a variety of people. Coupe or convertible, V6 or V8, there's a Mustang for almost every budget. But they all have one thing in common: Mustang buyers like to have fun and their car is perfectly suited to their lifestyle."

Information about America's favorite pony car can be accessed at Ford's Web site: <http://www.ford.com>.

From Down Under

A fellow Mustang enthusiast recently sent us the following information purportedly from the Sydney (Australia) Morning Herald and obtained off the Internet. While we can not at this time verify the validity of this information, it makes for interesting reading.

"Detroit's latest each-way bet goes back to the future. Ford's Falcon and pony car shared running gear 30 years ago," writes Gavin Green.

Ford has ditched plans to use Australia's next Falcon as the basis for a big new European model - but is moving quickly to share much of the car's technology with a new American Mustang coupe and convertible.

Ford's global president, Jac Nasser, is due in Australia in July to make a final decision. If the go-ahead is given - and it seems likely - the deal will lift production of major components at the Broadmeadows factory in Victoria and earn millions of export dollars.

It would also provide an ironic twist. Despite vastly different images, the original 1964 Mustang and the much more humble 1963 Falcon shared the same platform, engineering jargon for the rolling chassis and suspension.

Final assembly of the new Mustang, and several other low-cost U.S. Fords which could also be based on the Falcon underpinnings, would still be carried out in America.

"The Mustang has to be made in the U.S." confirmed Ken Kohrs, Ford vice president of large and luxury car programs worldwide. "It's one of the reasons Americans buy it."

Pairing the Mustang and Falcon model development programs has other benefits for local

car buyers. Access to the latest American engines and transmissions is made easier. It also seems a foregone conclusion the Mustang could be manufactured in right-hand-drive for export to Japan, the U.K., and Australia.

Ford was considering the Falcon's platform and underbody mechanical parts as the building block for a new European Ford, to replace the unloved Scorpio which bows out in July.

However, recent director-level meetings decided the Falcon was too unsophisticated to compete against the likes of the BMW 5 Series and Mercedes E Class. Instead Ford will sell a new Lincoln, the LS6, in Europe.

"It just didn't make sense, in view of the competition in Europe, to use the Falcon as a donor vehicle," Kohrs said at the New York Motor Show.

But he confirmed the Falcon platform - code named EA169 - could be perfect for the new Mustang. "The Mustang is a different matter. The Mustang sells on style and price, and the Falcon platform is much cheaper than that used in the new Lincoln (code named DEW98).

"The DEW platform would almost certainly be too expensive for the Mustang market. You just wouldn't need that level of sophistication."

First used on the Lincoln LS, the DEW platform also forms the basis of a mid-sized Jaguar due to be unveiled at this October's Birmingham Motor Show. It competes with the 5 Series.

Kohrs confirmed the Falcon platform is being considered for other price-sensitive rear-drive American models. The new Falcon will be modified to use independent rear suspension on the forthcoming model, due in September, which further improves its international appeal.