

Frank McKnight's Azure Blue Mach1...

Article and Photos Submitted by:
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About two and a half years ago, I heard about the new Bullitt Mustang that was coming out in the Spring of 2001. I wrote to *Team Mustang*, asking if the Bullitt will come with an automatic transmission? The answer was "no". I then heard that a special Mustang was being made right after the Bullitt. I saw an article at *MustangWeekly.com* talking about *Team Mustang* testing a prototype called the Mach1, at Atlanta Drag Strip in Commerce GA.

Team Mustang was testing the prototype with a bit of help from *Classic Design Concepts*. The car had the shaker hood scoop and close to 300 hp. I was hoping this special model would have an automatic in it as an option.

By late June *Team Mustang* was at the Mid-America Ford Performance and Shelby Meet (Tulsa OK), showing off the prototype. For four days it was the most exciting thing at the show. *Team Mustang* asked Mustang owners and future Mach1 owners what they would like to see in the new Mach1 when it came out. Most of the readers of the *MustangWeekly.com* and *Stangnet.com* said "horsepower first, looks second". I suggested they put in an automatic transmission.

In September at the MCA 25th Anniversary Show, guest speakers from *Team Mustang*, Donald Farr and Scott Hoag, spoke at the dinner and showed slides of the making of the Mach1 in their studio (and the Bullitt slides also). After the dinner, former MCA club President, Bill Dillard, introduced to me Scott Hoag, from *Team Mustang*, and Bill said to Scott Hoag about me, "Here is another club member who wants an automatic transmission in the next special addition Mustang. After I talked to him, and expressed that people like myself (physically handicapped) cannot drive a standard transmission, he replied, "you got it!"

By April 2002, the Mach1 was at the New York Auto Show. It was a hit. I soon went to the local Ford dealer and asked my friend Steve Parsons (General Manager), when he could take orders. May 14th was the earliest date but he would be out of town, so I went back to order my Mach1 on May 17th.

During this time, Dave Waggoner and myself discussed that we should start a Mach1 registry website. We started the Mach1 website in May 23, 2002, for 2003 Mach1 owners, as well as 1969-1978 Mach1 owners.

I knew the prototype Mach1 was coming to Youngstown OH, to the MCA National Car Show. I heard that an 'azure blue' Mach1 (like I had ordered) was coming to the show. Sadly, at the Tulsa show, that Mach1 was in an accident which damaged the driver's side of the car.

I was worried that I would not get to see a car like mine at the show, but Scott Hoag and *Team Mustang* got the car fixed before the show. When I finally saw the color of the car, I was 'very' happy with my choice. I looked at the stripes on the car, and they looked very familiar to me (I have the same type stripes on my 1999-35th Anniversary Mustang). I remembered the Atlanta show in September, 2001. A couple of Ford people were looking at my 1999 Mustang, and told me how sharp my stripes looked. I thought at the time...maybe they were getting some ideas for the new Mach1... because they were writing notes in a pad. Now I know why...they really were getting ideas for the new Mach1.

After seeing the prototype in Ohio, I was very happy with the seats, the sound of the motor, and the looks of the car in general. I was surprised when I saw the blue Mach1 at the Grand National Show in Charlotte, North Carolina (Lowe's Speedway), at the *Classic Design Concepts* booth in the Nascar garage. I noticed the blue Mustang and Scott Hoag talking with a club member from the Mach1 Registry, Jim McElhinny. I introduced myself and asked Scott if I could start the Mach1. He said sure, and after I started up the car, my friend, Jim McElhinny asked me to push the gas peddle a little harder, to see what it sounded like, so I did. Then I hit it a little too hard (on purpose), everyone in the garage jumped when they heard the sound of that motor. At that instant, I knew I had picked the right car, and I gave Scott the 'thumbs up', meaning, 'Scott, you did a great job on this car'. Later that night at the dinner for the MCA, when Scott was talking about the Mach1, he said, "you will love this car", and I already knew I did.

With all the rumors about Mach1 production being delayed until after the first of the year, I was getting worried. After a Christmas party I attended in Charleston WV, I drove by the local dealership and saw a blue Mustang that looked like a Mach1, coming off of a truck about midnight, on December 13th. The car was

covered with salt! I saw one of the guys I know who works there and asked him, "was that my new Mach1"? He said he wasn't sure. Once the car was off of the truck, I walked over to see if this was my car. I opened the door...it was an automatic! Then I looked on the window sticker at the vin number and the date the car was built, and sure enough, it was my new Mach1. I got in it to see if everything was okay and checked to see how much gas was in the car. There was a half tank of gas so I started it up to see how it sounded. Talk about happy!!!

The next day we got a call from the dealership, saying the Mach1 was in. We went up to get the car, but a bad storm was brewing and we decided to pick the car up on Monday morning. Plus, it was 'Friday the 13TH'. There were also three 6's in my vin number. When I added all of this up I decided it was not a good time to bring the car home. It took me approximately 7 months to get my Mach1 after it was ordered. The car was built on December 6th and shipped to the dealership on the 13th. Another day or two of waiting was worthwhile.

Ford will make 10-15% automatic transmission Mach1s for 2003. I ran into Scott Hoag at the All Ford Swap Meet in Columbus OH, in April, 2003, and I told him how great the car was. He autographed the inside of my trunk. Scott was happy about some changes I had made to my car, like switching the silver antenna to a black antenna and putting a honeycomb panel on the back of the trunk (which Scott had recommended, and Ford had criticized). He offered to put a decal on the back window of my car with his company's logo (MRT).

I would like to say this model of Mustang is the last of Dearborn's Mustang run, and the best platform Ford made on the Fox Platform for the Mustang from 1979 until mid 2004, and, in almost 25 years of production, the Mach1 is probably the best Mustang to come out of the Dearborn Plant.

We have owned seven Mustangs on the Fox Platform, and this is the best yet! Also, I would like to say thank you to Scott Hoag and Team Mustang for building the 2003 Mach1. By the way, I got 2nd place at the World of Wheels Show in Huntington WV.

My 1999-35th Anniversary Mustang

Mine was one of the first orders to go out for the new 35th Anniversary

Mustang. The dealer's brochure (which the public cannot see), showed a bright green Mustang with clear coat paint which stood out from the rest of the colors. The color was called 'Electric Green'. It was new for 1999. The first time I saw the color was at a dealership on Christmas weekend in 1998, also with the new body style. My car has a beige interior, which I had ordered, and it is a five speed. I was really stunned looking at the car. I could hardly wait until my own 1999 Mustang came in.

On March 31, 1999, I went over to the garage area at the dealership, as my new car was being serviced and cleaned up. Everyone asked, "Why did you buy a plain-Jane V-6"? I explained I had found out that Ford raised the Horsepower of the V-6 from 145 to 190 horsepower...almost the same horsepower as a 1985 Mustang GT V8, plus, the car had better handling than the heavier 260 horsepower Mustang GT. A lighter car with that much horsepower makes it more nimble on curves. That is the reason why! Also, the 6-cylinder only cost \$16,000.00!

The next day was April's fools day, and everyone told me that if you buy a car on April Fool's Day, the joke is on you. They also said a green car could never win at car shows. Well, the joke was on them, because two weeks after I bought the car, it was time for the 35th Anniversary show at Lowe's Speedway. As we started from Charleston WV, in a caravan...every stop along the way, I had people around my car, asking what color it was. I proudly said 'Electric Green'!

At the 35th Anniversary show, I won in the class for my Mustang. I won a beer mug. Since then, I have taken home over 25 awards with my V-6. I have won two 'excellence' awards with Mustang Club of America, at the Commerce GA Show in 2001 (the Mustang Club 25th anniversary) and in 2002 at the Grand National Show.

My V-6 has the 'Boss' hood scoop stripe on it, and 35th Anniversary 350GT side stripes. It also has the 35th Anniversary trunk badge. I changed the 15 inch standard wheels and tires to the 17 inch silver polish Bullitt wheels and B.F.Goodrich KDW tires to make the car handle better. I also added GTS headlight covers and a GTS solar wing. This is what I feel the 35th Anniversary Mustang should look like.

—Frank McKnight, Jr., Hurricane, WV MCA#29082

...And Electric Green Dream



Scott Hoag (left) and Frank McKnight