

2008 Mustangs

IT IS A GREAT TIME TO BE A MUSTANG ENTHUSIAST

By Austin C. Craig

Photos Courtesy of Ford Motor Company

Ever since Ford put the 5.0L engine back in the Mustang in 1982, times have been great for Mustang enthusiasts. For the 2008 model year the term "the good old days" do not apply to the Ford Mustang. Unlike other pony car enthusiasts who can only look back when their favorite car was being produced, Mustang Enthusiasts know that the present is indeed the "good old days." For 2008 Mustang remains one of the greatest automotive sales success stories of all time. The Mustang convertible is the best-selling convertible in America, plus between Ford Division, Shelby Automobiles and any number of aftermarket tuners, the selection of Mustangs is staggering. From mild to wild there is Mustang for every taste and budget. There is not a vehicle lineup on the planet that can compete with Mustang in terms of models and performance choices.

When Team Mustang was developing the current Mustang one of the criteria's was that the car be aftermarket friendly. Led by Chief Program Engineer Art Hyde, who captained the team from the Mustang's ideation to production, the Team Mustang engineers together with the Ford Division Mustang Marketing Team spent a lot of time and energy researching what enthusiasts wanted in the first new Mustang since the fall of 1978. The fact that Mustang remains one of the hottest selling brands in America is testament to the sensational product these dedicated people developed.

For 2008 Ford Motor Company is not sitting on its laurels. New features abound including:

- Side air bags are now standard on all Mustang models
- Available interior ambient lighting and HID headlamps add desired features
- 18 inch premium wheels are available

on the V6 coupe

- The Shelby Modern Mustang Magic continues to grow with the 2008 Ford Shelby GT convertible while the most powerful Mustang ever produced- 2008 Ford Shelby GT500KR join the Shelby Automobiles lineup.

- The limited-edition Warriors in Pink Mustang joins Mustang's extensive lineup.

This year marks the 40th Anniversary of the original "King of the Road" GT500KR. In an astute marketing move Carroll Shelby introduced the GT500KR, when he heard a Camaro of similar name was going to be launched and beat Chevrolet Division to the punch. They were going apply the KR name the 396 CI 375 HP Camaro. Once again Shelby beat Chevrolet—usually it was on the racetrack, this time it was in the marketplace.

2. To mark the 40th Anniversary, the return of the Shelby GT500KR will again be on sale during 2008. This Mustang is the most powerful production Ford Mustang ever produced with a 5.4L supercharged V8 with a Ford Racing Power Pack, 3.73:1 rear axle ratio, short throw shifter, and special suspension tuning. The GT500KR is uniquely styled with Shelby designed 18-inch wheels, model specific carbon composite hood and special 40th Anniversary badging and unique striping. The GT500KR will be available in the spring of 2008.

The 2008 Mustang Shelby GT, unveiled at the Mid-America Ford Performance and Shelby Meet in Tulsa last June, offers enthusiasts a new Vista Blue exterior color with silver stripes and the choice of two body styles, coupe or convertible. Powered by a 319 horsepower 4.6 L V8 modified with Ford Racing Performance Parts, the Mustang has the power to keep the competition in the rearview mirror.

Special Shelby suspension components/struts and shocks drop the overall ride height by a inch-and -a-half and make Shelby GT one road hungry, fun to drive, Mustang. A Hurst short throw shifter makes gear selection a sure thing.

For a number of years Ford Motor Company has been a sponsor of Susan G. Komen for the Cure®. For 2008 Ford is building a limited-edition Warriors in Pink Mustang. Produced in celebration of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure's 25th Anniversary, the Mustang features unique exterior and interior design accents.

Sales from the Warriors in Pink edition will help raise funds for the Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

One of the many attributes Mustang offers is the car's appeal to a wide audience. A couple of years ago I asked one of the automotive industry's all time great marketers, Jim Wangers, why he thought Mustang was such a successful brand. Jim Wangers for those of you who do not know was the advertising and marketing force of Pontiac's success from 1959-70. He also won the NHRA US Nationals along the way and is a credited with promoting the successful Pontiac carlines including the GTO, creating a performance image for Pontiac that lifted the brand to number 3 in sales during the 1960s. Jim told me, "I believe the success of the Mustang can be traced to the fact that every model or variation of the Mustang is cool, there are not any bad Mustangs. Whether a person selects a V6 coupe with a five-speed or top of the line GT with every option known to Ford, the image is that he/she drives a Mustang. Competitive brand might have some very fast models but their total lineup did not have the universal appeal of the Mustang." "Credit Ford Motor Company for understanding the Mustang's DNA and never losing site of it."

Like Jim stated, Ford has recognized this appeal and offers a number of V6 and GT packages for 2008. From the first Mustang produced on March 9, 1964 to the present, Mustang owners like to accessorize and make their Mustang in their own image.

3. The Pony Package, first introduced in 2006 is available on the V6 model. You get a GT-handling package that includes a large front stabilizer bar, rear stabilizer bar along with P235/55ZR17 tires mounted on special cast aluminum wheels with unique tri-bar center cap.

Other nice touches include fog lights reminiscent of the 1966 Mustang GT driving lights, Pony front fender badges, side stripes, rear spoiler and Mustang floor mats.

The California Special returns on the GT Premium models and is nicely contented with 18-inch wheels, side scoops, special stripes, rolled bright exhaust tips, large air intake, and a chin spoiler that is 1 1/2-inches lower than the GT. Rounding out the California Special exterior are unique front and rear fascias. Nice interior updates include black

leather seats with "Cal Special" contrasting Dove or Parchment inserts.

Whatever your taste or style you will find it in the 2008 Mustang lineup. It is indeed a great time to be a Mustang enthusiast. **MT**



The limited edition Warriors in Pink Mustang. Designed exclusively in support of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure®, the Mustang is produced in celebration of the Susan B. Komen for the Cure's 25th Anniversary.



The new for 2008 available ambient lighting package lets Mustang owners illuminate the front and rear foot wells and cup holders with any one of seven colors. The driver or front passenger can choose from red, orange, blue, indigo, green and yellow.



The Hurst shifter is standard on all Shelby GT models equipped with a five speed gearbox. Like its famous predecessor of the 1960s, the Hurst Competition Plus, the shifter delivers short precise gear selection.

The 2008 Mustang Pony Package delivers both style and function for V6 buyers. It continues to offer high content that adds to the fun-per-mile handling with the GT handling package as well as being the first V6 Mustang to be offered with a 17inch wheel tire combination.



The 2008 Mustang Shelby GT shown in a new Vista Blue exterior color with silver stripes. The car is the perfect balance of power and handing resulting in a road hungry GT from Ford and Shelby Automobiles.

