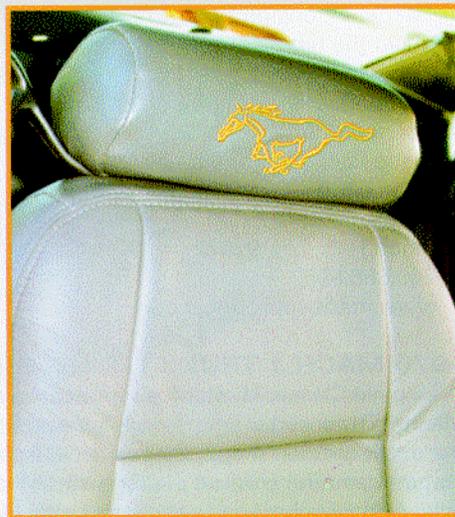
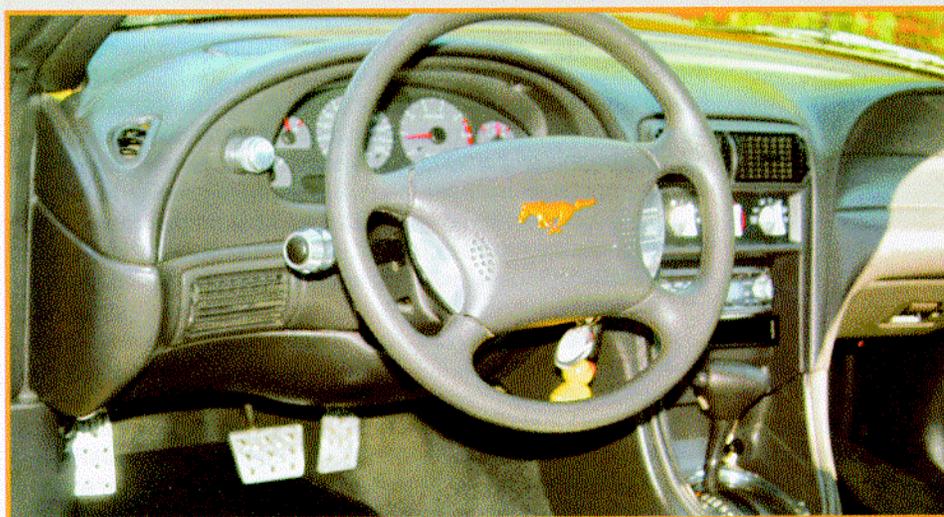




HANNAH'S INSPIRATION

ROBIN ORR'S MUSTANG GAVE HER INDEPENDENCE, AND HER DAUGHTER INSPIRATION.

Text and photos by Mary Jean Wesche





In 2003, Robin Orr's husband, David, was going to attend training for the Sheriff's Department and would be away from her and their children for about 16 weeks. He wanted to get something for Robin to play with while he was gone—something that would remind her of him! So, he found this "cute little yellow Mustang" at a local Ford dealer. Robin had no idea what David was up to, instead he told her that they were going to look at horse trailers. Their daughter, Hannah, and the rest of the children stayed with their grandfather while David took Robin out shopping.

He drove Robin to the Ford dealership to show her the Mustang he had found. They took it for a test drive. The test drive included a stop at grandpa's farm where the kids were playing. The previous year Hannah had turned 11; all she wanted was a ride in a Mustang. Robin had a friend who owned a 2001 GT and was kind enough to take Hannah for that special ride. Robin says, "From the moment Hannah got out of the car, we knew we were in trouble. The look in her eyes said she was hooked."

So, you can just imagine the confusion at seeing the Mustang pulling into the driveway, and then the total elation when her dad and mom stepped out of the Mustang. She was begging them to buy it. They discussed the purchase with Robin's dad, and he also agreed it would be a great car for Robin to "play" with and it was a sound car.

Back to the dealership, a hesitant Robin (she didn't want to make payments) heard her husband proclaim, "What Momma wants, Momma gets." The next day that "Little Yellow Mustang" became Robin's.

Being the only girl in a family of four children, and the youngest by 12 years, Robin's older brothers took her to car shows, cruise-ins, drag races, stock races, and everywhere that involved engines! Knowing Robin's penchant for "things that MOVE," her husband knew she'd never be satisfied with the 2002 6-cylinder Mustang the way it was. Before leaving for his 16-week training session, David gave strict instructions to all the local parts stores and to the guys at PowerHouse Performance and Bonnell's (who handles body work) that Robin wasn't allowed to do anything to the Mustang until she spoke with David, her Dad or his friend Rick.

Although she was annoyed at the time by the "restrictions," Robin readily admits that she's now quite thankful that David set some ground rules.

Robin began by making minor changes

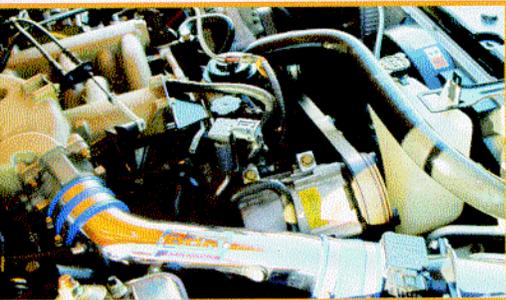
such as tires, rims, lowering springs, etc. She and Hannah went to different car shows and local cruise-ins to see what they liked and what they didn't like. During this adventure, Hannah was becoming quite interested in the automotive hobby. She began to become more involved in the decisions regarding upgrades on the Mustang, also designing what she'd like to see the Mustang look like when it was completed.

When it came to some of the major changes such as the Stalker hood and the Roush Racing front end, Hannah took the lead by talking to the guys at PowerHouse and Bonnell's, seeking their opinions on different hoods and bumpers, what they thought would look best in keeping with their quest for a sleek and stealthy look. The guys began to teach her about the car's body lines, and coached her on what direction to take to keep her and her mom's goals of a sleek and clean look, and to keep that overall picture in her mind so that everything stayed in sync. Robin says, "It's such a pleasure to see your child grasp on to something and become passionate about it. Cars are Hannah's passion!"

To Robin, the Mustang signifies independence. For years she felt she had lost who she was. She's a wife and mother of four beautiful children (Hannah who loves cars, Paul who loves drag racing and has a Camaro, and two others who just love playing). Robin keeps up with all the activities they're involved in. For 18 years she also cared for her mother who was stricken with Alzheimer's (she recently passed away), keeps involved with Special Olympics, runs a business with her Dad, and so on, and so on! She says she needed something that was hers, and the Mustang is it! "There is nothing like taking this Mustang out to a show and having people appreciate it and being recognized as the person driving the hot, little gold Mustang," Robin explained.

The "Work in Progress" list increased after entering the Mustang in the Flagship Nationals last summer in Erie, PA. That's where I spotted Robin's Mustang—in line at registration. It certainly peaked my interest. The Custom Gold color is difficult to capture with a camera. Also nearly impossible to capture are the discreet ghosted graphics (in almost the same color as the paint) on the sides, hood, and deck lid of the Mustang. There are outlined horse graphics on the sides, and extremely subtle stripes on the hood and deck lid. These are quite beautiful and only a couple of shades lighter than the Mustang's paint. But, in person,





especially in the sun, the graphics stand out beautifully—simple but high in the “Wow” factor! Robin and Hannah’s goal was to create something that people would see and not notice right away. They wanted people to look at the Mustang and then suddenly see something and say, “Wow, check this out. I’ve never seen this before!” or “Check this out, did you notice that? Pointing to different areas of the Mustang.” Well, they’ve accomplished their goal.

The interior seats were recovered in Katzkin leather. Robin even obtained permission from Ford Branding to reproduce the Mustang logo on the headrests in gold, and had the pony on the steering wheel painted in the exterior color. Billet pieces helped complete the interior trim on controls, locks, door handles, etc. Even the pedals were replaced. (See the sidebar for a list of modifications.)

After being awarded a 2nd Place in the Modified '74-'04 Street Driven class (exclude undercarriage) at the Flagship Nationals, Hannah and Robin discovered areas in which they felt the Mustang is weak, and their intention is to improve those areas. Their wish list consists of a Turbo charger, Tinted windows, a “little” chrome to be added to dress up the engine compartment (but nothing over the top), Air ride system, bigger brakes, Customized trunk with more electronics, paint the motor and engine compartment.

Robin says she’d recommend other contemplating purchasing or restoring a Mustang to “Go For It!” Keep in mind the time and cost involved. Be sure to budget. They plan one big project yearly and possibly a small project. Robin says, “Remember the old adage... ‘Pay as you go, it will save you in the end.’ Take your time.” Robin is the first to admit that she’s not the most patient person around. But, she’s also quick to explain that you must take your time and plan your project. Make sure to use quality parts and to work with quality craftsmen! They went to cruise-ins and car shows looking at everything, not just Mustangs. She says, “There are a lot of ideas out there! Take a camera with you and take pictures of the cars. Take detailed pictures of specific things that you like on certain cars. Then, keep a notebook with your ideas and write down what you liked. Some ideas are the type of exhaust, cold air intake, what kinds of seats, etc.” And, Robin recommends keeping a scrapbook of this information. Then, when you get ready to start working on your car, pull out that scrapbook and review it, choosing the things that

Robin's MODS

EXTERIOR:

- Custom gold with ghost graphics
- Horse head with mane down the side as the pin stripe (each side)
- Rally stripes on hood and trunk
- Stalker Hood
- Roush Racing front bumper with lights
- 99 Cobra rear bumper
- Sequential rear tail lights

TRUNK:

- Lid finished
- Built in box housing a power base 10 inch sub-woofer

INTERIOR:

- Katzkin leather interior
- Headrest embroidered with Ford Mustang logo in the color of the car
- JVC CD player

UPR BILLET INTERIOR TRIM

- Heater controls
- Power window controls
- Locks
- Cruise control
- Door handles
- Pedals
- Shifter outline
- Headlight knob
- Tilt wheel control
- Pony on steering wheel painted in color of the car

UNDERCARRIAGE:

- Mac dual exhaust
- Eibach 2 inch lowering springs
- Halibrand Cobra III deep well rims with spinners
- Sport tires: 20 inch rear - 18 inch front

ENGINE:

- BBK Cold air intake
- SCT Custom Tune by PowerHouse





appealed to you the most. And, Robin states, the most important thing is to talk to Professionals that you can trust! She feels blessed to have two wonderful establishments to work with. PowerHouse Performance employees have been wonderful in helping Robin pick out the mods she wanted. They were even honest enough to tell her that from their experience they didn't think that something was what she would want to do, and encourage her to try something different instead. The technicians at Bonnell's did all the bodywork on Robin's Mustang and were more than helpful when it came time to choose the color paint for the Mustang. They even mixed and sprayed samples for Robin and Hannah to see, and helped the ladies lay out the ghosted horse graphics. "Ghost graphics are difficult at best, but these guys pulled it off flawlessly," states an enthusiastic Robin.

She also encourages people from being afraid of purchasing a V6. She states that so many people look at just the motor of a car or numbers from a dyno test. She explains, "Don't get us wrong, we love GTs, Cobras, Mach 1's, etc, but we wouldn't trade our V6 for

anything. It has as much personality as the other cars and we get better insurance rates and gas mileage (as she winks)." The Orr's feel that a V6 can be just as much fun, but also recognize that whatever people do, they should be happy. Not everyone likes the same things. So, she recommends matching the car to your personality.

Robin says she and her husband, David, encourage people to bring their kids to car shows and cruise-ins! There are great groups of people there that love cars and are very knowledgeable. You never know what will spark a child's interest. The automotive world has plenty of opportunities. Robin explains that they feel it's a great way for a family to spend an afternoon explaining to a child, "When I was your age this is what I grew up with..." and share a story with them. What a great way to connect.

For Hannah, Robin says this has helped her to grow in many areas of her life and to become more dedicated. She went from doing poorly in school to an All-American Scholar, working diligently to achieve good grades so she'll be

accepted to the colleges of her choice. Hannah has decided that she wants to get her BA in Mechanical Engineering and her Masters in Automotive Engineering Design and Customization. Robin says she hears that Illinois and Berkley are in the picture. Robin and David couldn't be more proud of their daughter, and will do everything in their power to help her succeed. They also feel that networking with people in the Mustang community is a tremendous help.

As for Robin, she says she gets to be a kid again, reiterating that her Mustang defines her independence. She's remembering riding with her brothers to the drag races and cruise-ins. Memories return of listening to those motors and seeing the beautiful cars, knowing that the middle seat in her brothers' cars were reserved for her! She says, "Yep, I was between my brothers and the girlfriends! Told 'ya I was spoiled!"

I wouldn't say Robin is spoiled. I'd say she's a woman full of love, fun, spunk, and, most importantly, pride as she watches her daughter Hannah prep the Mustang at a show with cotton swab in hand—and loving every minute of it! **MT**