



*Midwest*

**TWISTER**



## R-A MOTORSPORTS PRODUCES 96 2008 TWISTER SPECIALS

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Photos by Tom Shaw*

**D**uring the Muscle Car heyday of the mid to late 1960's into early 1970 several Mustang promotional specials were produced. One of those was the Twister Special. This group of 96 specially ordered Mach 1's were to be consecutively numbered and made solely for the Ford Kansas City Sales District Dealers. For this promotion, 90 429 SCJ Torino Cobras and four 351 Cleveland Torino Rancheros were also produced.

The President of American Raceways Inc. contacted Ford's Special Promotion Division. As a close, personal friend of Ford's then-president, Bunkie Knudsen, ARI's president was requesting a pace car for use at five of its racetracks, some of which were still in the planning stages. Ford responded by building ten 1970 Mustangs—five were Mach 1's and five were convertibles. The Mustangs were then shipped to a facility in Dearborn to be balanced and blue-printed, as they were prepped to pace NASCAR races. All were equipped with a 428SCJ and a C6 (automatic) transmission. A notable side stripe and specially designed rear quarter decal had the specific track's logo. Plans were put into place for the Mustangs to be color coordinated with the track's colors. All was going well until ARI went bankrupt. At that time only two of their tracks were actually built, three more were still in the planning stages. Ford executives were devastated; they had made a large investment in the promotion.

While this was taking place, representatives of the District Sales Office in Kansas City, Missouri, approached Ford Motor Company in Detroit to request some special promotional cars. During those days, Ford encouraged the use of District special promo cars for their marketing plans. Kansas City's DSO office must have truly delighted the folks at Ford. All the promotional work done for ARI on the Mustangs became templates to create what we've come to know as Twister Specials. None of the cars built for ARI, however, were converted.

The rest, as they say, is history.

# TWISTER

Fast forward to 2007. Jeff Yergovich of R-A Motorsports in Lee's Summit, Missouri, is a Kansas City native. He remembers well the introduction of Ford's Twister Specials. Jeff is well-known in our hobby as a restoration expert of Shelybs and other special and rare Fords. In the early 1970's, Jeff purchased a 1968 Shelby convertible, and restored it himself. When he began to show his Shelby, he also began to win awards for his car. Not long afterward he was asked to restore cars for other enthusiasts.

Much has transpired since those early days. Jeff now has a reputation as a high-end restorer and is known for his attention to detail. He takes pride in the "forensic" research done on each car he restores, and in the work done by his employees. Each car restored at R-A Motorsports is well documented. Among other vehicles, Jeff has restored both 428SCJ and 351 Twister Specials.

When R-A moved into their new building about one year ago, Jeff was completing a restoration for Carl Todd, owner of the 1970 Cobra Jet Twister seen in this article. The new Shelby GT500 had been introduced, and not long afterward owners of the newer Shelybs were bringing them to R-A for modifications. Jeff had been contemplating getting into the late model Mustang market; this just served to reinforce his decision. Jeff decided to see what he could do with one Mustang. He wondered what could he create that would be "special" and collectible?

When he looked into purchasing new Mustangs to create a special edition, Jeff found that the Grabber Orange color was available. He wanted to build a special collector car, keeping the price less than a new Shelby, but making one that consumer's would want and could afford. The decision was made to recreate a Twister Special. Jeff purchased a pair of Mustangs, one convertible and one hardtop, from neighboring dealership Bob Sight Ford.

Jeff met with George Huisman of Classic Design Concepts to discuss design ideas. George quickly became enthused and helped with some designs and drawings. Jeff decided to work on a new Twister Special utilizing the widow's peak hood CDC was working on. When the first hardtop car arrived, they began to work on the Twister Special stripe design for the new model. The original striping would not work with the new car design. CDC and R-A



worked together to come up with the new version you see on these pages. The first prototype Twister Special hardtop made its debut at the Mid-America Meet in Tulsa in June of 2007.

The Twister Specials of 1970 began with a beefy Mach 1. Thus, the Twister Special package was slightly more than stripes and additional graphics. Jeff's design is slightly more extensive.

The exterior is moderately reworked. A widow's peak hood replaces the standard factory hood. The hood prop rod has been removed and replaced with hood support struts. After the front grille is removed, the radiator support is painted with semi-flat black paint, and then the grille is reinstalled. The center lights are moved to the actual center of the grille, and the emblem added to the grille is actually a 1969 Mustang grille emblem mounted as they were in 1969—on the left side. A chin spoiler is added to the bumper. The mar-resistant paint on the chin spoiler was specially developed with water-resistant urethane paint, which was also used on the hood. The hood stripes were added in a similar fashion to the original. A Shaker Hood Scoop was added and a K&N filter is installed.

Performance on the 2008 Twister Specials has been enhanced with a cold air kit and exhaust package which will give the Mustang nearly 40 more horsepower. The suspension, rearend, mufflers, and exhaust are from Ford Motorsport. All products meet EPA standards, and the car will stay in warranty. Jeff's goal is to have the engine produce roughly 360 hp, a good boost

from the factory-rated 300 hp. Pro-Cal tuning also from Ford Motorsport will add more horsepower. The wheels are upgraded to 20-inch Foose wheels, which means air sensors in the wheels to be changed. The speedo will be reset prior to the Mustangs being completed.

On the exterior, the GT badging is removed. The Twister Special stripe and the Twister graphic is applied then the GT badge is reapplied. Rocker panels are removed and painted with the textured paint, the lower rear bumper is also shot with same paint. This gives the lower half a black-out look, kind of like the lower panels of the '70 Mach 1. Newer, larger diameter pipes change the exhaust tune, the rearend has been upgraded from the factory standard 3.08 in the automatic, and 3.23 in the manual transmissions to 3.73 gearing. A ducktail spoiler is added which is painted body color. A stripe package is applied, which was specifically designed for the 2008 model. The spoiler covers up the third brake light. All hardtops will have Glassback roofs with the third brake light mounted at the back of the glass. Convertibles will have a lightbar installed, which sports custom embroidery of the Twister Special logo.

Twister Special floor mats are added to the interior. The headrests are embroidered with the graphic but no wording. The console and shifter are changed. A Hurst 5-speed shifter is added, along with graphics on the console and dash on the passenger side. An interior ID plate will signify the name of new owner and the serial number for the car. Serial numbers are also hid-

den inside the engine compartment to help identify the car as an original 2008 Twister Special. Few people will know where those ID numbers are located, and those few may not include the owner.

Once the first run of Twisters is completed, the Mustangs will be transported to Kansas City International Raceway where Jeff plans to recreate the Total Performance delivery of the new Twisters. All 96 of the 1970 Twister Specials were introduced to Kansas City District dealers at Kansas City International Raceway after a "Total Ford Performance" day, which included a Tasca Dealer Performance Seminar, by noted Rhode Island Ford Dealer, Bob Tasca. Jeff is hoping to be able to recreate A photo op reminiscent of that day on November 7, 1969. What a great idea!

If you decide you'd love to own one of the 2008 Twister Specials, most Ford Dealers will have the informational brochure. These Twister Specials will not be exclusive to the Midwest. If your local dealer doesn't know about the package, have them contact R-A Motorsports to receive a packet with ordering instructions which include: How to have car delivered to Kansas City, options needed to be purchased such as leather interior, color; options to be deleted, etc. Basically, this ordering information is required to allow the upgrade to be handled. By ordering directly through Ford dealers means Ford Motor Credit can handle your financing, if you wish.

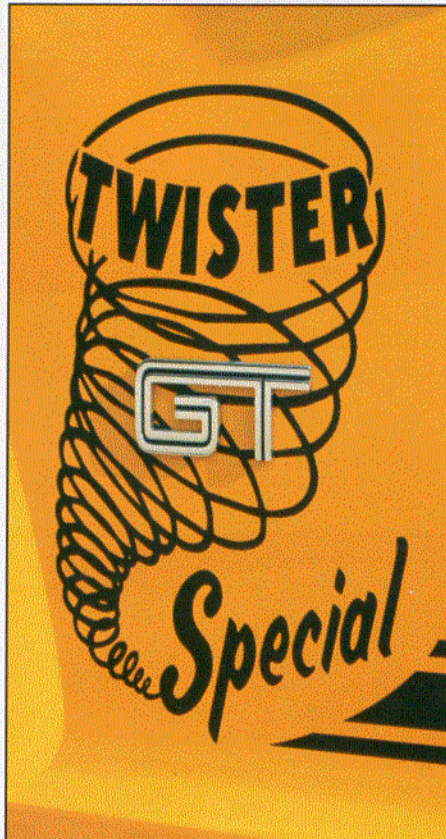
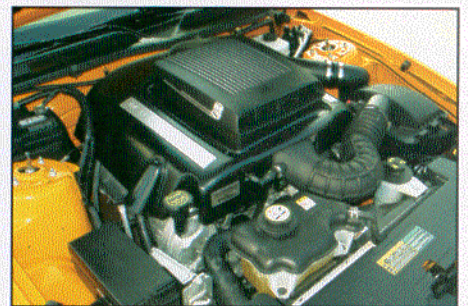
After your Twister Special is completed, delivery is via enclosed trailer to your local dealer. Another option is to make arrangements to pick up your Twister Special from R-A Motorsports directly. Again, these Twister Specials include a full factory Ford Warranty.

Currently, Jeff is discussing the idea of possibly building four Twister R-models with Scott Hoag of MRT. One may be a drag car, striped differently, with a full roll cage, and ready for the road course or street driving. They will have engine changes and other mods.

I guess history really can repeat itself! **MT**

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**TWISTER SPECIAL REGISTRY**

As with most special edition Mustangs, there is always at least one person who is the "holder of the knowledge." When it comes to Twister Specials, Terry Fritts, of Topeka, Kansas, is that person. Terry has created a website, [www.twisterspecialregistry.com](http://www.twisterspecialregistry.com) for those who are especially interested in Twisters. The information on Twister Specials that is shared on the Registry site is phenomenal.

Jeff Yergovich has contacted Terry to ensure the 2008 Twister Specials will be included in his registry. What more could we ask for?





**TWISTER SPECIAL PACKAGE**

- Twister Special Graphics Package
- Glassback Roof (Coupe Only)
- Functional Shaker Intake
- Ford Racing Exhaust
- Foose 20 x 8, 1/2-inch 5-spoke magnesium wheels
- Logo Wheel Center Caps
- Pirelli Performance Radial Tires
- Lowering Kit
- 3.73:1 Performance Axle Ratio
- Blacked-Out Ground Effect
- Widow's Peak Hood with mar-resistant textured black stripe
- Hood Struts
- Front Chin Spoiler with mar-resistant textured surface
- Centered Headlight Grille with '67 tri-bar Pony badge
- Sequential Tail Lights
- Tail Light Panel with mar-resistant textured paint
- Ducktail Spoiler
- C-Pillar Scoops (Coupe Only)
- Detail Corral
- Floor Mats with Twister Special logo
- Embroidered Logo headrests
- Personalized ID Plate
- Lightbar with Embroidered logo (Convertible only)
- Full Factory Warranty from Ford

**TWISTER SPECIAL PRICING**

Coupe/Automatic	\$42,770.72
Coupe/5-Speed	\$42,425.72
Convertible/Automatic	\$45,600.72
Convertible/5-Speed	\$45,505.72

**AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- Satellite Radio
- Heated Seats
- Comfort Group
- Shaker 1000 System, 6-Disc CD/MP3 player w/10 Speaker
- Navigation System
- Mobile Ease Hands-Free
- Connection for Bluetooth
- Ambient Interior Lighting
- PowerCode Remote Starter
- Convertible Soft Boot
- Cloth Convertible Top

