

RED '65



SALLY

MIKE AND KAY GARRETT REVIVE MIKE'S HIGH SCHOOL RIDE.

*Text by R. Shorty Brown & Mike Garrett
Photos by R. Shorty Brown*

In early 1971, when Mike Garrett was in high school, his Dad came home with the red '65 Mustang. He paid about \$500 for it. Mike thought it was ugly.

The car was built on August 21, 1964, at Dearborn and delivered to a Charlotte, NC, dealership. The interior was a faded red and the dash pad was cracked. The Rangoon Red exterior looked like a tiger's stripes thanks to a detailer who burned the paint. The car came from the factory equipped with a 289 2bbl engine and C4 transmission. The other particulars included AM radio, heater, backup lights, seat belts (front only), exterior appearance group and no outside rear view mirrors. After 47,000 miles, the rear springs were weak, causing it to sit low in the rear. It had hub-caps and skinny Firestone whitewalls. It was not cool. Mike recalled his Dad's comment, "If you don't want it, I'll drive it. You can keep driving the '62 Fairlane."

"I think I hurt his feelings, so I drove it. One day, a buddy of mine talked me into putting my chrome reverse wheels on the Mustang to see what it looked like. Whoa! It looked much better! My dad let me swap the Mustang's tires and wheels with the Fairlane, and I was ready to ride. Some rubbing compound and a lot of elbow grease took care of the tiger stripes. I waxed it every week. It became one of the nicest and fastest cars in the school parking lot, and was actually a sharp looking ride."

During his teen years, Mike raised the rear end with a helper spring, added headers and dual exhaust, a Holly 500 cfm 2bbl and some ignition mods. The car was pretty fast when he raced it on the strip (Formula 3 F Stock).

Mike changed the interior to black, which was purchased from the junk yard. While at Myrtle Beach in '72, he saw a pretty blue '65 Mustang with a rear spoiler, possibly from a Camaro, and high-back seats. Mike liked the look. When he got home, he bought the front seats from a wrecked '70 Mustang and installed them. He also tried to make a rear spoiler but it didn't work out.

Mike said, "I put a lot of miles on the car while cruising back in the day. My wife Kay and I dated in the car. In 1974 my Dad, fearing I would ruin his insurance rating, had the title transferred to me and put me on my own insurance policy, as kind of a late graduation present."

Mike continued, "I was at Myrtle Beach during the summer of 1974, and went riding with a friend of mine in his new Cutlass Supreme. It was quiet, rode smooth, had a/c, reclining seats and a great 8 track stereo. I began to dislike the hot, noisy, rough riding Mustang. A few months later, I bought a 1974 Cutlass Salon. The Mustang, with 103,000 miles on it, was abandoned and rarely driven in the following few years. It was then parked; first, in an old shed, then out in the elements. The tires went flat and weeds grew up around it. Leaks in the windshield and cowl vents rusted out the floor pans. Door rust and fender rust appeared and the paint died. The car languished for years in the cruel outdoors and was only occasionally started up."

One day Mike's wife looked at the Mustang and said, "Why don't you either get rid of that old car or fix it up?" That was the motivation he needed. Someday became that day. Mike joined the Gate City Triad Regional Mustang Club of Greensboro, NC, in 1996 and MCA in 1997. Originally, he was just going to make a driver out of it, but after some discussion, the members convinced him it would be easy to go all the way with the restoration.

Since the car was just a '65 C code coupe and nothing special, a decision was made to do a restomod, and create the car Mike had wanted as a teenager. He recalls, "I had always wanted a '67 Shelby convertible or '68 California



Special but couldn't afford one then or even now, so I decided to incorporate some features from the California Special, such as side scoops and rear deck spoiler.

I disassembled the car and took the body to Ingram's Auto body and Restoration in Level Cross, NC. In addition to the doors and floors, there was rust in the inner and outer quarters. I bought a fiberglass deck lid with spoiler from Maier Racing Products in California. Warren Ingram replaced the bad metal and put on a beautiful Rangoon Red paint job."

The engine was sent for overhaul to Bob Stanley at Triad Engine Exchange where it was bored .30 over, with high compression 10.5:1 pistons, oversize valves, double valve springs, and Competition 282 hydraulic cam kit. Mike added a chrome dress up kit, 4-pass radiator, ceramic coated tri-y headers, '65 Ford 4 bbl intake, Holly 600 cfm carburetor, and Pertronix ignition. The original C-4 transmission went to B&G Transmissions in Thomasville, NC, for rebuilding and beefing up with '69 truck drums and extra clutches. B&M shift kit and '67 Select-Shift valve body was also added.

Crown Auto Carpets of New York made a set of covers for the '70 high backs using '65 pattern vinyl and stitching. Rick Kennedy of Greensboro installed the front and rear seat covers. Mike added a Grant wood steering wheel. Final assembly and replacement of all chrome and script was his job with

a lot of advice from fellow members of Gate City Triad Mustang Club. He bought a '66 parts car to get the power steering unit, and rebuilt the unit before installation. He changed the rear gear ratio from 2.80:1 to 3.00:1. A set of Cragar S/S chrome five spoke wheels and BF Goodrich white letter tires allow it to roll.

Since Mike's work was in 'fits and starts' spread over 8 years, the car was finally about ready in 2003; just in time for the MCA Grand National in Charlotte. Being uncertain if he would finish in time, Mike had not pre-registered for the

show. Unfortunately, when he got there, the show was full, and he didn't get judged. Since then, Kay and Mike have shown the car (we named her Sally) at several shows around the region, and she always takes a top award and even a best paint award occasionally.

Mike states, "My wife and I are both in our 50's now, but once in a while we still go cruising like we did 35 years ago. Sally will not sit in the rain or weather again as long as I'm alive! Kay says the Mustang is my first real love, but she doesn't mind being second fiddle to Sally."



