

SHOW WINNING TIPS

“

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NEXT TO GODLINESS.
THIS IS PARTICULARLY
TRUE WHEN THE
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NATIONAL HEAD JUDGE

Wally Short (10576)
12825 Cedarbrook Avenue
Albuquerque, NM 87111
505.299.4573
ShortStang@Integrity.com

**HEAD JUDGE -
1ST & 2ND GENERATION**

Charles Turner (36894)
4208 Belnap Drive
Apex, NC 27539
919.363.6190
Caspian6@BellSouth.net

**HEAD JUDGE -
3RD-5TH GENERATION**

Allen Stewart (2607)
305 Red Oak Drive
Lenoir, NC 28645
828.726.0701
ajstewart6@bellsouth.net

TECHNICAL ADVISOR TO MCA

Bob Perkins (16859)
North 3123 State Road, 16-26
Juneau, WI 53066
920.696.3788
PerkinsRestoration@Hughes.net

You may have read articles on how to prep your Pony for the picky judges at MCA shows. Seriously, most all MCA judges sincerely hope that you, as a show entrant, will win! Actually, all who go out on the judging field and compete are winners. Not only that, in most cases show entrants will volunteer to judge other classes. Now that's dedication and is really appreciated!

If you are a veteran winner at major shows, this article is definitely not for you. However, beginners and novices—please take note! What I am passing on to you may make the difference in winning a trophy.

Most newcomers to National & Grand National Shows usually enter their Mustangs in various Daily Driven or Occasional Driven Classes, depending on the year of their car. However, if your Mustang is two years old or less you may be subject to participant voting and your Mustang may not be judged.

I'm sure that you all heard the saying "Cleanliness is next to Godliness." This is particularly true when the judges rate your Mustang. They will find dirt, grease, smudge spots, water spots, fingerprints, etc. in the most unlikely locations that sometimes the owners overlook. I suggest that you have a good friend inspect your car closely. In all likelihood they will find areas for point deductions that you would have never imagined to look. I cannot stress strongly enough that excellent cleanliness is one of the most important factors in judging a winning car.

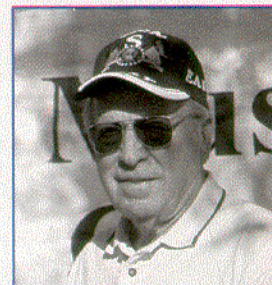
Some Mustang owners may disagree with me on the following point. I never use wax on my show cars

because there is no need for it as they are always kept in a covered area or a garage. Wax is notorious for leaving a white residual powder in fittings and grooves. These areas need to be completely cleaned out or they will stand out like a neon sign. A toothbrush will do the job of removing the dried white wax. Personally, I use a good polish, in lieu of wax, before a show, as it doesn't leave telltale wax powder. If your Mustang is out in the sun daily then, of course, I do recommend a good quality wax job, but remember what I said about wax powder left in the cracks!

Are you ready for a story? Years ago, I had the formidable task of judging just over 100 Mustangs. There was only one, repeat only one, lonely award to be given. I was challenged beyond compare; there were so many Classic Mustangs all in top-notch condition. My wife, Janice, was assisting me and, after much anguish, we finally settled in on an original gorgeous '65 GT Convertible, black with black interior and black top. To you beginners, that is called black on black, on black (or triple black -ed). The car did have one serious problem to prevent it from winning against other great Mustangs. The black sidewalls of the tires were coated with a product that gave them the appearance of looking dripping wet and shiny. The owner happened to be passing by and I casually mentioned that I judge the cars the way they rolled off of the assembly line. I added that his tires didn't meet the criteria. I hadn't made up my mind on the four top Mustangs and later on while viewing that black convertible, lo and behold, the owner had cleaned his tires and prepped them to look like new tires should. Needless to say, that Mustang

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Wally Short



WALLY SHORT
National Head Judge
ShortStang@Integrity.com

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Mustang won the one and only first place award. I hasten to point out that I wasn't using MCA judging sheets and because so many classes were lumped in together, I was compelled to review the top cars more than once.

All of us at one time or another have owned a Mustang that had a leak in either the engine rear main seal, power steering system, automatic transmission, cooling system, etc. If you are a good shade tree mechanic, please fix the leak before you take your Mustang to a show. Otherwise, bite the bullet and pay a reputable mechanic to repair the leak. A judge usually will not miss a leak and you will lose valuable points.

Another common area that judges take off points is a lack of sound deadener on the firewall of the early Mustangs. Sound deadening is ugly and many new restorers neglect to put it on in proper amounts or leave it off completely. Try to look at an unrestored Mustang and use that as your guide.

Another area to note, particularly on the early Mustangs, is bad body alignment, i.e. hood misadjusted,

doors hung incorrectly, trunk deck improperly mounted, and even on the best of Mustangs, usually the rear bumper is not always aligned correctly. Most of us old timers know very well that many of the early Mustang's were assembled rather poorly and fittings of some body components just didn't line up properly. Ford has made great strides in the assembly of newer models. I would dare anyone to find poor assembly of body parts in the newer Fords.

A common mistake made by beginners is in the interior. Many dash boards and dash pads are too shiny. Remember, they are supposed to be dull to not impair the driver's vision.

I judged a beautiful early Mustang in New Mexico a few weeks ago. This car was beautifully restored; however, I mention again "cleanliness." This Mustang was extremely clean, with exception of the radiator which was full of bugs and butterflies. The young owner, in my opinion, thought that this is a normal occurrence of driving and didn't bother to clean the radiator. He was politely informed that the car must be 100-percent clean. This Mus-

tang was still the best in his class and did win a first at this Regional show. Alas, in a highly competitive National or Grand National, this car wouldn't stand a chance of winning as it was shown.

I could go on and on covering show-winning tips, but space doesn't permit the multitude of things that show entrants can do to increase their opportunities to win a National award. What have been covered are some major items observed in my judging of Mustangs since the 1980's. The main thrust of this article is to create an awareness of the need to put your special Mustang in the best possible shape.

One last suggestion that will probably be more helpful to you than anything is this. Go to an MCA National show. Enter it, observe and discuss details of your favorite Mustangs and ask good honest questions. Beginners will find that experienced participants are more than willing to share their vast knowledge and experience. Do this and you will be a winner in more ways than one!

wally



**Quality
Time**
the greatest gift

Those hands stay small for such a short time. Now's the time to lead a child down a path that could expand into a lifetime of enjoyment. Going to a car show is a history lesson, a social event and storytime all wrapped up into one!

Life is full of choices for kids. You can help them make the right ones by showing them your appreciation for cool old cars. Your passion for collector cars today may even nurture a shared interest for years to come...when those hands are as big as your own.

For more information and a list of upcoming automotive events, visit our website:

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909/396-0289 • tkcs@sema.org



Take a Kid to a Car Show is a program of ARMO, the Automotive Restoration Market Organization, a SEMA Council.

