

NEW ADS, BUT AN OLD PASSION MUSTANG PEOPLE KNOW

By John M. Clor

By now, I'm sure you've seen some of Ford Motor Company's new TV ads. You know the spots—the ones that show real owners describing a favorite feature of their new Ford vehicle. These ads should be of great interest to Mustang owners—but not for the reasons you may think. I'll explain in a minute.

If you haven't been aware of the new ad campaign, then you're just not "connected" enough yet. By that I mean you must not be getting our weekly Fast News From Ford Racing e-blast. We've been sending out this cool weekly e-mail update on all the goings-on in the world of Ford performance for about a year now. It brings all the stuff you want to know about at Ford to your e-mail's inbox each week: Ford Racing news, the latest in performance parts and hot, new Ford vehicles—there's even a "Clubs and Events" section that I get to contribute which highlights how and where you can get out and enjoy your own Ford with fellow enthusiasts.

"FORD DRIVE ONE."



If you'd like to get on our Fast News e-mailing list simply get online and go to www.FordRacingParts.com. At the upper-right corner of the home page, you'll see the "Register" link—just click on it, type in your e-mail address in the "Fast News" window at the bottom, as hit "Submit."

If you'd signed up online, or at a Ford-sponsored race or event, and are one of the quarter-million Ford enthusiasts who already read Fast News each week, then you were directed to visit <http://www.TheFordStory.com> a while back to get an advance look at the newest phase of the "Drive one" advertising campaign. The first thing you'll notice is that it's centered on customers sharing all the cool and positive experiences they're having with Ford vehicles. Of course, to MCA members, that's nothing new—everywhere we take our Mustangs, whether its to work or play, we love sharing the stories about our cars with others. But for too many mainstream car owners, especially import buyers—whose level of excitement in the car ownership experience is akin to their affection for their kitchen fridge or some other everyday appliance—it's a real epiphany of sorts.

Ford wants to show those poor souls that when people experience the difference in Ford products, the satisfaction and pride they feel is something they'll easily notice and even want to share. Yes, the company still wants to use its "Drive one" ads to communicate Ford's ongoing commitment to the community, to the environment and to innovation—but it also wants to give us key information on the new Ford products because we, as true auto enthusiasts, are influential voices out there in the

marketplace. Ford knows that our outward expression of pride in our Mustangs—whether at large shows or cruise-ins or simply on our daily commute—can make non-Ford owners take notice. And that's why we were not only given a "sneak peek" at some of the new commercials before they aired, but also easy-to-use communication tools to share the content with our friends and contacts.

But as I said at the beginning, Mustang people should be quite interested in these kinds of ads, because having owner pride and finding an emotional connection with your car is at the very heart of the Mustang hobby. So while Toyota talks about trade-in values in their ads (as if we buy cars just waiting for the day we get rid of it) or shows flowers and trees sprouting out from a hybrid, and Honda uses some cartoon guy to hawk their cars, and VW has some old Beetle talking into a microphone, and GM has its stately CEO saying "may the best car win"—Ford thinks its customers should be the star in these ads.

Oh sure, ANY Mustang owner could easily explain how satisfying it is to own a car that's actually fun to drive—but what's interesting about these ads is that the owners are new to Ford, and come from such domestic-car-hating places as California and Washington, D.C. And yes, there are other Ford messages being promoted, like "Ford has improved the energy efficiency of its U.S. operations by nearly 35 percent since 2000," and another that says, "Ford is the first automaker to develop and use soy-based foam seats."

"DRIVE ONE 4UR SCHOOL"

But perhaps the best idea being employed is a true grass-roots program called "Drive One 4UR School." It's a special promotion through which Ford contributes \$20 to high school fundraisers for each person who test-drives a Ford at an event set up by local dealers. The program began back around our Mustang 45th Anniversary Celebration and is supposed to run through next April. By then, it's a good bet that the company will have put more than 125,000 people behind the wheel of one of its cars or trucks. Better still, at a time when the key to sales is "putting butts in seats," Ford is finding that 75-percent of the people who come through the "Drive One 4UR School" program are conquests—people who would not otherwise have test-driven a Ford. Good stuff.



Mike's Collection



1992 LX



2008 Shelby KR



2006 Shelby



1970 Shelby



1969 Shelby



1972 Sprint Coupe



1984 GT Convertible



1985 SV0



1979 Pace Car



1983 GT

MIKE'S COLLECTION

But for me, and likely for many other Mustang owners, there's another kind of "owner story" that really explains the "Ford difference" best. It's when some owners develop such an attachment to the Mustang that they begin collecting them—and I mean lots of them! I'm sure you know plenty of folks with more than one Mustang. After all, how can you have just one favorite? I really enjoy checking out such personal collections. It says a lot about the car we love.

Over the years, I've come to find out about many such collections—owned by all kinds of great people, from different walks of life, and from all over the country. To me, it means even more when Ford employees develop this kind of passion for the vehicles we build. At that point, it becomes far more than a job—it's a level of dedication that puts one's money where their mouth is. Instead of just talking the talk, these guys walk the walk. That's why when I think of "Drive one," I think of Ford's own Mike Berardi, who directs Service Engineering Operations for Ford Customer Service Division. Mike "drives one" of his more than two-dozen different Mustangs every time he can. To work, on weekends, to shows—Mike simply believes that's what Mustangs are for, both old and new, classic or common.

Mike was kind enough to give me a tour of his collection recently, and like a true Mustang enthusiast, he had a special, personal story to share about each one of his many different Mustangs. From his well-driven Shelybs to his rare Cobra Jets, from his super-clean four-eye Fox Bodies to his "Feature" cars, and from his Pace Cars to SVT Cobras to a new GT500KR—they are all driven and enjoyed, just the way that Ford intended when these cars were first built.

I don't know about you, but it makes me feel good that Ford has owners who love—rather than just like—their cars. So spread the word. And it makes me feel even better that Ford has employees and managers who share our passion for the Mustang, and truly love these cars as much as any of us can.

Drive one, indeed.

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