



K FASTBACK

MERV AND PAT REGO'S '66 SAT FOR 20 YEARS

Text and photos by Mary Jean Wesche

A little more than 20 years ago, Merv and Pat Rego saw a classified ad for the 1966 K Fastback shown here in a newspaper. They were living in New Jersey at the time. The Mustang was owned by a young man who used it as his daily driver. After using the car as his main transportation, he decided to sell it after he graduated from college. His father was the original owner. Merv and Pat decided to go take a look at the car and Merv told the owner right then and there that he wanted it. He made an offer and the next day received a phone call saying that some clown had upped his offer. This bidding war went on for nearly a week. It turns out that the man referred to as "some clown" was really a professional clown. In the end, the owner sold the car to Merv because he knew the Mustang would be in good hands and would be restored. Merv said that the "clown" would show up in his restoration shop in New Jersey dressed in his full clown outfit!

When Merv and Pat moved to Lakeland, Florida, they brought the '66 with them. It's been sitting at their resto-

ration shop, Classic Creations of Central Florida, ever since.

About a year ago Merv finally began the restoration process. Since purchasing the Mustang, Merv and Pat have been buying NOS parts with the specific purpose of restoring the Mustang the "right" way. Nearly all the sheetmetal was replaced on the car with the exception of the hood, decklid, and doors. There was hardly any rust on the Mustang, but some sheetmetal had been replaced with an aftermarket reproduction product. Merv used FORD NOS sheetmetal and parts for anything replaced on the '66.

The date code on Merv's K Fastback indicates it's an early production model. Ford introduced the 271hp Cobra (or High Performance) 289ci V-8, (optional, Code K) at the near end of the 1965 production run. The option included 4:00in bore x 2.87in stroke, 10.0:1 compression. (Ford initially claimed that the Code K had a 10.5:1 ratio, but it was later confirmed that the 10.0:1 ratio was correct after mid-1964.) The remaining options were super premium fuel, four-barrel carburetor, manual choke, solid valve lifters, and dual exhaust. The initial rating was 271hp @6000rpm with 312 lb-ft torque at 3400rpm.

Merv's had the motor in the Mustang rebuilt by Thompson Machine in Plant City, Florida. The four-speed Top Loader transmission was built by Mike Ulrey. The manifold is still the original as is the 9-inch posi rear. Merv did have a Magna Flow Performance Exhaust installed. He kept as many original pieces of the Mustang as possible, everything else is NOS.

One major decision was to have the wheels and brakes updated. Vintage Venom brakes from Ford Racing offers late-model cobra four-wheel disc brakes. Combining the best of both worlds, this option provides the braking power of the SVT Cora, yet it still gives the Mustang its vintage look. The 1-inch front and 11-inch rearbrakes are partnered with Bullitt wheels. While this was a good choice esthetically, it also was also necessary as 17-inch or larger wheels are required to clear the Cobra brakes. The wheels are shod with 245-45-ZR17 Proxes performance Toyo tires.

Merv handled the paint himself. He opted to paint the exterior and engine compartment Wimbledon White, which was its original color. He did opt to paint the stripes with 1967 Candyapple Red. The body-color matching engine bay replaces the original black paint, gives

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the car a super clean look, and shows off the expert installation done by Merv.

The largest modifications made to the K Fastback are in the interior. While it does retain the original Rally-Pac and the console, the original Ford shifter was replaced by a Hurst. Merv opted to upgrade to a Pony interior, and change the interior color from the original black to red. The interior complements the red stripes and the white interior beautifully. A Custom Auto Sound AM-FM system was installed, which maintains the Mustang's vintage appearance while utilizing modern-day technology.

We must not be the only enthusiasts who are enamored with Merv & Pat's '66. They have taken the Mustang to three shows in Central Florida since its completion. They came away

with first-place trophies at each. Most recently, they attended the 22nd Annual Mustang & Ford Roundup hosted by the Mid Florida Mustang Club at Waterford Lakes Town Center in Orlando, FL. Judged with modified MCA rules, Merv and Pat's '66 garnered a Gold.

Merv said that the next restoration, sometime in the future, are a pair of 1967 Mustangs for Pat. Both Mustangs have a big-block. One is a Fastback, the other a Convertible, which was originally ordered with every option available. Merv and Pat have already begun collecting NOS parts for those cars.

In the meantime, they are pleased with the results of this restoration. They will keep the '66 as an Occasional Driver, gathering awards everywhere they go. **MT**





MERV AND PAT REGO • LAK



WAKELAND, FL



K FASTBACK

