



The Abbi

Text by Richard Schafer
Photos by Mary Jean Wesche

My Abbi is a 1966 Mustang Nightmist Blue convertible that has been restored and competes in the Mustang club of America's Concours Trailered Class. The story behind "our car," and I call it our car because of all the friends who have made this possible, is quite unique.

I was a Ford-Lincoln-Mercury dealer in the small community of Mullins, S.C. I had been searching for a promotional vehicle to display on my showroom floor for the 40th year celebration of the Mustang. On a trip to North Myrtle Beach, I noticed a little Mustang convertible sitting for sale on a lot that specializes in Classic Cars. I stopped in to take a closer look at it. It appeared

to be in fairly good shape, so I began negotiations with the salesman to buy the Mustang. At that time, all I wanted was a car to display at my dealership. I was not looking for a Show car, and had never even heard of the Mustang Club of America or my local club, the Eastern South Carolina Mustang Club. I purchased the Mustang and drove it home the next week. I had no idea what shape or real condition the car was in. To me, the Mustang looked really good.

After my service department serviced the Mustang convertible, I placed it on the showroom floor for public viewing. That's really when the love for this Mustang and the MCA and Eastern SC Mustang Club started.

One day soon after the Mustang went on display in the showroom, a gentleman came in the dealership to discuss having my dealership sponsor

a Mustang car Show. His name is Gene Turner, and he's from Florence, SC. In that meeting we decided the dealership would sponsor his club's Mustang show, as it was a widely known event. I thought it was a great idea, as it would help us promote the 40th anniversary of the Mustang and our dealership.

That launched my "Mustang Fever." Little did I know what changes would take place in my life because of that meeting.

I soon learned that Gene was an avid collector and restorer of Mustangs. He, his wife Pam, and their son Scott were all into the Mustang Mania that I was soon to become a part of! As I became friends with the Turners, they began to prod me to have a frame-up restoration of the convertible on the showroom floor. Eventually they convinced me, and the restoration of my Mustang, soon-to-



Life is good these days.

be dubbed Abbi, began.

In July of 2004, another good friend of mine named Don Martin and I started the Mustang's restoration. Two of our good friends also assisted us with this project. Together we did a complete tear down and began the body preparation. At that time, I had no idea just how much work would be required to do a rotisserie ground up restoration.

Some months later, we completed our portion of the restoration. Gene and Scott Turner worked on the engine compartment and undercarriage. The Mustang was then taken to a local body shop in Dillon, SC, to be painted. I had lined up someone to complete the Mustang from there, but that didn't quite work out. Fortunately, Scott and Gene were available to pick up the Mustang and complete the total restoration.

This restoration took nearly two

years to complete. My Abbi won its first award at an MCA National in Pensacola, FL, in 2006 in the Concours Trailered class. I came home with a Gold. Since that show, the Mustang has placed in every show we've taken it to. Currently, I am working toward my Blue Grille Medallion.

Gene says that the Abbi is one of the most solid convertibles he's seen. Hardly any exterior work had to be done to the Mustang and the only piece replaced on the exterior was the taillight panel. The interior was totally redone. It has a Deluxe Interior and a power top.

The Mustang is powered by a 289, C code, 2bbl. It has power steering, power brakes, air conditioning, and a console. It was a highly optioned Mustang. Gene explained to me that for someone who knew nothing about vintage Mustangs, I was fortunate to have picked up a

Mustang in such good condition.

Soon after the Mustang's first show, my first grandchild was born and guess what her name is—Abbi. I named my Mustang after her and from that day forward "Abbi" has competed quite well and has become a consistent gold award winner.

Many, many thanks go out for the hard work done by both the Turners and the Martins. I could not have done this without them.

Friends make life possible, and I am quite thankful to the Turner and Martin families for helping me make my Mustang Abbi and my granddaughter Abbi such a big part of my life. We now have two grandchildren. My next project will be named Austin. Can you guess whose name that is?

Life is good!

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SIDEBAR:

Richard Schafer sold his automobile dealership in 2006 and joined his family's business. His father, Alan Schafer, built a widely known tourist stop on the East Coast. Dating back to 1950, South of the Border has been a stopping point on I95, mostly due to the billboards strategically placed northbound and southbound along the highway. Pedro, the spokesperson of South of the Border, had much to say on these billboards.

Richard took over totally running the facility a few months ago. A quiet, unassuming gentleman, Richard is still sponsoring the Eastern South Carolina Mustang Club's South of the Border shows.

I was fortunate to photograph his Mustang twice, once at his Mustang's first outing in Pensacola and again recently at South of the Border. Just imagine the look on his face when I asked him to drive his freshly restored, Concours Trailered Mustang to be photographed in Pensacola. Never one to complain, Richard did just that, and promptly got his tires all dirty. Nevertheless, his Mustang won a Gold in its class.

The MCA and the Eastern South Carolina Mustang Club are fortunate to have Richard as a member. He has developed a deep love of Mustangs and the people involved in the hobby.

—Mary Jean Wesche





RICHARD SCHAFER • DILLO



ON, SC



The Abbi

