

# MUSTANG MAGIC

## 2011 Woodward Dream Cruise Week



Text and Photos by Austin C. Craig

**W**hat started as a fun idea in 1996 has grown into a week-long celebration of America's performance cars and trucks, the Annual Woodward Dream Cruise is a must-attend event for any red blooded Mustang enthusiast. During the late 1950s and 1960s, Woodward Avenue, the six-lane-wide thoroughfare that stretches from downtown Detroit to Pontiac, became a non-official test track for the Big Three. It was here that their latest performance offerings would go head to head for bragging rites. For the hardcore street racers, a trip on I-94 would settle the score and many a pick slip traded hands during this time. Serious performance lived nightly on Woodward Avenue.

Today, more than 1.5 million people and 40,000 participants make the Woodward Dream Cruise Week in mid August a festival of fun. This year Mustang owners, including many MCA members, enjoyed a variety of activities including a tour of the Mustang assembly plant in Flat Rock, Michigan, a short 40 minute trip down I-75 from the Detroit suburbs. This state-of-the-art plant is always fun to tour and watch Mustangs of all kinds being assembled.

MCA Board of Directors member Rick Umberger ordered his 2012 Boss 302 last spring. He had been very anxious to

take delivery of his Boss and with Boss 302 production slotted between all the Mustang models his order had finally come up. What Rick did not know was that Ford Performance Car Marketing Manager, Steve Ling and Steve Denby, Mustang Marketing Coordinator arranged for the Umberger Boss 302 to be built while Rick was in the assembly plant! This is not an easy assignment and Rick would have to be in a tour that reached a predetermined location exactly at a certain time. MCA VP Ed Hockaday made sure Rick was in the first tour so he would be in the right spot at the right time. When our guide called out, "Is there a Rick Umberger?" to our small group, Rick backed up not sure why he had been signaled out! The look on his face when our guide pointed out that the Competition Orange Boss 302 was his was priceless! All of us in the group, which included Steve McCarley, Tim Hahn, Ed Hockaday, and me, knew about the surprise in advance. Thanks to Steve Ling, Steve Denby, and Ed Hockaday, Thursday—August 18, 2011, was a very happy day for Rick Umberger.

The week's activities continued with the MRT Open House on Friday, where Scott and Lisa Hoag and their friendly staff welcomed Mustang owners from all over the country. MCA members, Tim Hahn and Linda Stacy, Shorty and Patsy Brown, Steve McCarley, Ed Hockaday, Rick Umberger, George Valeri and Rose, my wife Barbra and I attended the open

house. There were prizes, food, and lots of good camaraderie as well as a large number of Mustangs.

On Friday evening, the Team Shelby Banquet at the Henry Ford Museum was a fun event with excellent presentations by Shelby American President John Luft and long-time Mustang enthusiast, Robert Parker, Ford Small and Midsize Vehicles Group Marketing Manager.

Saturday morning came early as our MCA group headed to Mustang Alley on Nine Mile Road in Ferndale, the epicenter of all Ford and Mustang activity on the official day of the Woodward Dream Cruise. Both Steve McCarley and I parked our 2012 Mustang GT's (both enhanced by MRT) next to the MCA booth in the Ford Motor Company exhibit. Tim Hahn parked his 2007 GT500 40<sup>th</sup> Edition in the Shelby American display. Tim drove his Shelby from Houston, Texas, had MRT upgrade it, and drove home.

More than 600 Mustangs of every vintage were showcased in Mustang Alley this year. Since the first Mustang Alley in 1999, Ford's presence and the number of Mustangs has grown considerably and now features exhibits from Ford, Shelby American, Roush Performance, MRT, and Classic Design Concepts with Ford Racing's Mustang garage.

The Woodward Dream Cruise Week is an event that celebrates everything that is great about the Motor City; it is an event not to be missed. **MT**



▲ During The Woodward Dream Cruise Week, Mustang owners enjoy the good weather and fun times.



▲ Mustangs and performance cars of every vintage are seen on Woodward Avenue.



▲ Mustang enthusiasts including a number of MCA members were able to tour the Mustang assembly plant in Flat Rock, Michigan, during Woodward Dream Cruise Week.



▲ After the Mustang assembly plant tour, (L-R), an MCA contingent of Steve McCarley, Shorty Brown, Patsy Brown, Jim Buehler, Tim Hahn, and Barbra Craig gathered for a bite to eat. Everyone pictured drove their Mustang from as far away places like Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Georgia.



▲ After waiting a long time for his Boss 302, Rick Umberger saw his Competition Orange Boss on the assembly line.



▲ Scott Hoag welcomes everyone to the MRT raffle during the company's open house.



▲ Patsy and Shorty Brown drove Patsy's Mustang GT convertible from North Carolina for the MRT open house and the Woodward Dream Cruise.



▲ The award-winning MRT SEMA Show Mustangs were on display at the company's open house.



▲ Pictured at the Team Shelby Banquet are left to right, Steve Ling Ford Performance Car Marketing Manager, Jordan Parker and Robert Parker, Ford Small and Midsize Vehicles Group Marketing Manager and a keynote speaker at the banquet.



▲ The 2012 Shelby GT350 convertible and the DC3 aircraft made for a nice Team Shelby Banquet display. The Banquet was held at the Henry Ford Museum.



▲ More than 600 Mustangs filled Mustang Alley along with exhibits from Ford Motor Company, MRT, MCA, Shelby American, Roush Performance and Classic Design Concepts.

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▲ George Valeri MCA Membership Committee Chairman and his friend Rose set up the MCA display in the Ford Motor Company display with help from John Farmer.



▲ Ed Hockaday, left, Rick Umberger, and Tim Hahn man the MCA display.



▲ The Ford Racing Mustang Garage, where technicians from a local Ford dealer installed Ford Racing parts.



▲ The 2012 Boss 302s were a point of high interest in Mustang Alley.



▲ Rick Umberger, Steve McCarley, and Steve Ling enjoy a light moment at the MCA display.



▲ The Mustang II contingent in Mustang Alley. The Mustang on the right is equipped with a 351 Cleveland and sounded lethal.



▲ Aerial view of Austin Craig's 2012 Race Red Mustang GT and Steve McCarley's 2012 Kona Blue Mustang GT next to the MCA display. Both Mustangs feature performance and styling enhancements, including the front splitters from MRT.



▲ Mustang Alley attracted enthusiasts from all over the country and was the climatic event of the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Woodward Dream Cruise Week.