

HOW WE SERIALIZED THE MCA EDITION MUSTANGS

By John M. Clor

As MCA members, we love Mustangs of all vintages and versions. But it's hard to deny that the specialty models—you know, either the high-performance or low-volume special editions—are the ones many of us tend to prefer collecting. From Sprints to HiPos, Shelbys to California Specials, Mustang GTs to Mach 1s, Cobra IIs to King Cobras, Pace Cars to LX 5.0s, SVT Cobras to Bullitts and everything in-between, those “feature” models and co-branded versions seem to get the most attention from enthusiasts.

Beyond the unique appeal generated by the features, styling and / or performance of each special edition, one universal area of interest always rests in the total number that was produced. Understandably, the lower the build number, the higher the collector interest or higher perceived value. It's that relative rarity that helps put some of the “special” in a special-edition Mustang.

When you trace back through Mustang history, most of the so-called special-edition Mustangs that Ford created were developed to fill a particular customer interest or marketing goal, and their names were carefully chosen to connect unique product messaging to a specific target customer. But a few times, a sales goal was identified and a product package chosen first, before Ford marketers had decided what the specialty model would be called. While that practice from 35 years or so ago seemed harmless at the time, it actually served to dilute some model names we've long associated with performance. For example, purists had a problem using the Cobra name on a four-cylinder Mustang—even after the four-banger was available with a turbo.

Thankfully, repeats of such naming controversies have been few and far between. That's because some car-guy Ford marketers had voiced objections to putting established Mustang model names on special editions that somehow didn't live up to the sub-brand's heritage. This very fact has been an interesting sub-plot in why the Boss name had not re-appeared until now—so we made sure that the reasoning behind that was well-documented in Donald Farr's new Boss 302 book. Similarly, it was that careful consideration on how a name needs to “fit” the attributes of a specialty model that gave us the “Bullitt” badge on a Mustang.

But in the case of a special edition that is near and dear to the hearts of MCA members—the Mustang Club of America package—the story behind both the car's name and how they eventually became serialized for collectors rests completely on enthusiasts, both in the club and within Ford. In fact, the close relationship that the MCA enjoys with Ford Division and Team Mustang is what brought the idea of an MCA Edition model to the forefront in the first place.

Allison Revier was the Mustang product marketing manager back then, and was looking into a way to get the Mustang Club of America recognized with its very own Mustang specialty model. At the same time, Mark Wilson (who now manages the Boss 302 program at Ford Racing) was putting together the components for a sporty Mustang variant coming out in the 2011 model year to help boost interest in the 305-horsepower,



V6 model. (You'll recall Ford marketers have tried to drive similar specialty model interest in six-cylinder Mustangs from the very beginning, starting with the “Sprint.”)

After discussions with MCA officials, Allison's plan was to have this new “Mustang V6 Sport Appearance Package” that Mark was working on become known as the “Mustang Club of America Edition.” One problem though, the car had already been too far along in the production process to add the things needed to externally identify the car—like tooling up some special exterior badging, then having it durability tested, entering it into the Ford system as a part number and developing an assembly step to include it in the 2011 build. So, for the big reveal at the 2009 L.A. Auto show, only an MCA logo windshield cling could be added for some club identification. What's more, the club had no way of knowing how many were ordered or built.

The good news is that enthusiasts close to the program got involved again to help remedy some of these issues for the 2012 model year—and we at the Ford Performance Group pitched in, too! As we noted in our Newsroom story on www.ford.com,



FordPerformanceGroup.com, both a clever way to add external identification AND a plan for numbering the build of Mustang Club of America cars were put in place for the 2012-model run.

It's extremely rare that a car company makes a special edition model and names it after an independent vehicle club, but that's precisely the case with the MCA Edition Mustang. Of course, the car's big selling point is its V6, which has taken the base-model Mustang to a whole new level. Mustang's latest DOHC V6, displacing 3.7 liters, produces 305 horsepower and 280 foot-pounds of torque. That's as much horsepower as the top-line 1996-98 Ford SVT Mustang Cobra! Perhaps just as exciting as the power figures, this V6 also returns a stunning 31 miles-per-gallon on the highway!

The new engine achieves these impressive numbers using a number of sophisticated new technologies. Variable valve timing (which Ford calls Ti-VCT) on both the intake and exhaust helps it run optimally in as many situations as possible. Improvements from this system can also be measured at the pump, with up to a 4.5-percent increase in fuel economy. They can also be felt by the seat of your pants, with up to a 7-percent increase in peak horsepower and up to a 5-percent increase in peak torque! What's more, the Ti-VCT system also aids in reducing emissions, especially after a cold start.

To address the desires of customers looking for even more style and performance in the V6 model, Ford is again offering the Mustang Club of America (MCA) Edition for 2012. The MCA Edition is available exclusively on Mustang V6 Premium models. Like in 2011, this package aims to give Mustang owners a chance to set their vehicle apart from the pack, and hence features a number of aesthetic enhancements.

This special Mustang honors us!—members of the largest Mustang enthusiast club in the world, the Mustang Club of America. Up front, a unique dark stainless-steel billet grille features a classic tri-bar Pony badge, and the front fascia-mounted fog lights give the nose more "street" presence. Along the car's flanks is a special "Mustang" tape stripe, which is unique to the MCA Edition.

This year, the words "Club of America" have been added

underneath the "Mustang" nomenclature in the stripe, finally externally identifying this unique Mustang as the MCA Edition.

Also part of the MCA package is a set of 18 x 8-inch Sterling Gray Metallic painted aluminum wheels, wrapped in P235/50R-18 All-Season tires. Around the back, the unique tape stripe appliqué continues between the taillights and a rear decklid spoiler is also included. Rounding out the deal are automatic headlamps and a set of specially embroidered "Mustang Club of America" front floor mats.



Looking for even more performance? An optional V6 Performance Package will help to bridge the gap between the standard V6 and higher-performing V8 models. The V6 Performance Package is exclusive to V6 Mustang coupes equipped with a manual transmission and includes a bevy of components aimed at improving the driving dynamics of your V6 Mustang.

A front strut-tower brace adds additional rigidity to the front suspension system, and unique front springs offer a lowered ride height and sharpen your car's handling. Additionally, larger front and rear stabilizer bars help to reduce body roll and ease transitions in and out of corners. The V6 Performance Package also addresses your Mustang's brakes with unique front and rear calipers, using special Performance Friction brand brake pads for increased stopping power.

Key elements of the package upgrades include a stouter 3.31:1 rear axle ratio, which helps to improve acceleration, and power being put to the ground via beefier 19 x 8.5-inch painted aluminum wheels, shod in 255/40R-9 summer-only



tires. Finally, the V6 Performance Package receives a unique calibration of its stability control system, and to give onlookers a subtle hint of the hardware that lies beneath, the side mirrors get a gloss-black finish.

While the base-model Mustang hasn't always been the top of the class in performance, the same certainly cannot be said of the 2012 version. Making 305 horsepower and returning 31 miles per gallon, the 2012 V6 powered Mustang now offers something for everyone. Having another year of the Mustang Club of America Edition means buyers can get the unique style they want with the specialty model collectability that Mustangs have long been known for.

In an attempt to add to that collectability, the Ford Performance Group got involved to pull the data on the 2011 MCA build, then assign an MCA number in production sequence for each MCA Mustang built, then offer our Certificates of Authenticity via Ford Racing. That means, if you or someone you know owns a 2011 MCA Edition V6 Mustang, you can now find out just how "rare" these cars are and where it ranks among the car's final build numbers.

A lot went on behind the scenes between the Ford Performance Group and the Mustang Club of America to serialize 2011 Mustangs with the "MCA Package," and you can get that official Ford build info in the "Vehicles" section of our FordPerformanceGroup.com web site. What's more, Ford Racing offers a 2011 MCA Edition "Certificate of Authenticity" package that includes a Welcome Letter, Official Ford Certificate of Authenticity (with Edsel Ford III and MCA President Steve Prewitt's stamped signatures, along with Ford and MCA logos), owner-specific VIN build data, plus a full Production Data Sheet including Color, Trim, and Options breakdown. All you need is your VIN and a valid credit card. Cost is \$45, but members of the MCA or other clubs in the Ford Performance Group get a 15-percent discount.

We're also planning to add numbered MCA Edition sill and dash plates wearing the MCA logo and specific build number, so check our FordShowParts.com web site for news on our MCA Edition Mustang serialization package. And yes, we plan

to do the same for the 2012's, once production comes to an end and the numbers are finalized.

All in all, the MCA Edition Mustang is a cool salute to one of the greatest vehicle clubs on the planet—and a fine specialty model in its own right. Thanks to the efforts by, and interest from, Mustang enthusiasts, the MCA Edition will certainly find its rightful place among the many unique "special editions" that have brightened Mustang's colorful history for almost a half-century!

Editor's Note: *Veteran automotive journalist John Clor has owned, raced, worked on or written about Fords and Mustangs for nearly 30 years. After a 15-year career at The Detroit News, Clor shifted to automotive journalism with stints at AutoWeek and later Edmunds.com. He joined the Ford Special Vehicle Team in 1995 and spent the better part of the next decade working on SVT communications, PR and Marketing. Today, he manages the www.FordPerformanceGroup.com enthusiast outreach program for Ford Racing, and is also editor of SVT Enthusiast magazine and author of the hardcover history book, Mustang Dynasty. A member of several Ford-based car-clubs, Clor is the proud owner of three '70s-era Mustangs, including one that he calls "a long-term project."*

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