

Car collectors as a group seem to have an inordinate amount of concern for the classification of their particular car or cars. Perhaps this stems from the competitive aspects, as in "Who will I be judged against?" Perhaps it stems from the urge most car collectors have to see their prides and joys increased in value year after year. After all, isn't a "classic" worth more?

How does all this concern us? We have a letter from member Tom Kabel of Phoenix, Arizona, asking a question. "I am wondering why the 1964½ through 1973 Mustangs cannot be considered classic cars? Of course, I realize some of the criteria that allow an auto to be considered a classic. However, in view of all the interest in Mustangs, and in view of all the publicity and the growing interest in restoring Mustangs, I believe sincerely that they should and could be considered classic cars."

A small history lesson is in order here. In the very early fifties, *Motor Trend* magazine published an article which coined the term "classic car" and attempted to define that label by suggesting a number of cars they considered "classic." These were of the Packard, Cadillac, Duesenberg, etc., ilk. In 1952, the Classic Car Club of America was formed. This club recognizes "distinctive motor cars produced in the period from 1925 through 1948." Though the club originally accepted cars through 1941 only, the ending date was later extended; it is not expected to be changed again. The CCCA calls only certain cars manufactured during the above period "Classic," following the *Motor Trend* lead, cars such as Stutz, Rolls-Royce, Duesenberg, Packard, Lincoln,

Bugatti, etc. To be a CCCA "Classic," your car must be of the proper era and also appear on the list of "Classics" published by this club. The CCCA criteria includes such factors as "F.O.B. prices, production figures, Classic components such as Bijur lubricating systems, power equipment, engine displacement, and other considerations."

In later years, unfortunately, the public press and the public themselves have picked up the word "classic" to describe any car that has appeal to car collectors. "It's a classic and I'll never sell it!" Your editor is one who wishes to consider the hobby not as a diverse group of fragmented clubs, which to a large extent is exactly what it is. He naively wishes to view it as a consortium of cooperating clubs all after the same sort of thing: the preservation, restoration, and enjoyment of obsolete cars. Toward this end, we feel that we should respect the terminology of other clubs as much as possible, especially a term that was written down and defined rigidly *thirty* years ago. We suggest that the term "collectible" will suffice for the uses that "classic" normally sees.

The real problem is with the dictionary definition of the word classic: "1. a: of recognized value: serving as a standard of excellence b: traditional, enduring c: characterized by simple tailored lines in fashion year after year, etc." By these criteria, it is not at all unreasonable to call the Ford Mustang a "classic car." But to do so does nothing for us or the car and can only confuse the public and anger the members of another club. We will not be doing so in the *Mustang Times* and urge you to refrain from it, too.

There is a postwar equivalent to the CCCA which is called the Milestone Car Society of America. The MCS recognizes exceptional cars of the 1945 through 1967 era as "Certified Milestone cars." The Mustang has been considered but rejected due to the relatively simple mechanicals and the large production volume. The MCS's criteria is five-fold: styling, engineering, performance, innovation, and craftsmanship, and a car must pass in three of the five areas to be elected to the Milestone list. This club is unusual in that it polls the membership to decide what cars will be granted Milestone status.

This is the "label" that we as Mustang lovers should go after, if we decide that the labels are that important. Certainly this will mean the same as "classic" to those who know just what the composition of the old car hobby is. Those who do not know will equally certainly continue to call everything that is over ten years old a "classic" or "future classic."

We are hoping that member Kabel will not take this as a personal affront. We have held these views of "classic" for some years, and have unfortunately made some of our Thunderbird owning and Chevrolet owning friends a bit angry by decrying the use of the word "classic" in their clubs' titles. (We refer to the Classic Chevrolet Club and the Classic Thunderbird Club International.) But it seems clear to us that a club chartered before their cars were *even introduced* should have first claim to the term. For MCA and Mustang-lovers to pirate the word yet again would not help the situation at all. We feel that a Mustang is, well, a Mustang and no other adjective is needed!