

Mustang, History of a Love Affair

Marc Snyder is a member of the Wiregrass Regional Group. His Mustang was ordered on April 22, 1964; delivery was on June 18, 1964, just two days prior to his sixteenth birthday. Eighteen years and 125,000 miles later, the love affair continues.

First in a Series

by
Marc Snyder



April 13, 1964 was a day of great expectations from one end of the New York World's Fair to the other. Only nine more days until the Fair would open to meet oncoming armies of opening-day crowds. But now, for a few more days, the Fair still belonged to exhibitors and officials . . . more than a few of them still anxious that all might not be right and ready on Opening Day. A swarm of workmen were laying sod, slapping on paint, wiring indoors and outdoors alike. The Belgian Village wasn't finished yet — nor anywhere near it. But Sinclair's big green dinosaurs were ready and so were Pepsi's small pink Disney people.

Over at the Ford Pavillion on the Avenue of the United Nations, the air of expectation was almost overwhelming. For this day, Monday, April 13, would be the biggest day of the Fair for Ford — even though not a single ordinary citizen had yet been admitted. M-Day, some called it. Mustang Day. The day when Ford's new Mustang would be officially unveiled for the press. And this was just one of a whole series of press introductions that took place in twelve major cities — eleven of them European — on this very same day.

The New York introduction was hardly a sneak preview, far from it. There had been talk of the Mustang long before it even bore its name. There was bound to be. Dearborn lies next to Detroit, and Detroit is second only to Washington as a great all-American gossip center.

But where Washington's gossip centers on government, Detroit's is built around automobiles. From the neighborhood bars where UAW men gab over Budweiser to the Detroit Athletic Club where industry big guns chat over Gibsons, the talk is all cars. And as far back as 1961, a lot of Detroiters knew that something was brewing at Ford, something that wasn't called Fairlane or Falcon, T-Bird or Galaxie.

From Detroit, the talk always spreads. The rumor and speculation gathered from a hundred sources. All becoming, as introduction day rolls closer, ever more accurate.

Thus it was with the Mustang. Aided, in the final moments, by a Ford-backed barrage of ads, commercials and press releases not seen since the days of the Edsel.

The focus of all this attention was indeed worth talking about — as those who saw it unveiled on that April day in 1964 can remember. And as history has already proved, few Fords since the Model A have had such an effect on Ford's future.

Ford has had some big unveilings in the two decades since World War II. There was the famous '49 Ford, first of the post war Fords to be anything more than a face-lift of the pre-war models. The first of the great two-seater T-Birds, model year 1955, personification of an unusual idea among American car makers: the personal car. The Edsel — ah, the Edsel. The four seater '58 T-Bird, the car that made a thousand T-Bird purists weep, and a million unprejudiced motorists sigh with desire. Falcon — the compact of questionable popularity.

But the Mustang topped them all for pure suspense and importance. For this car was the summation of many trends that had been brewing in the American automobile market. And, as it turned out, it was more than a summation. For it was not a "me-too" car, but one that galloped off in quite a new direction.

Research of data from "Mustang Guide", by Bill Stone, published by the Benson Printing Co. 1965; and "The Mustang Story" by The Ford Motor Company, Educational Affairs Department, number 5.

Marc is shown with his 1964 Vintage Burgundy Mustang with white interior and top, 289, power steering, brakes and top, automatic transmission, factory air, left hand remote control mirror, standard hubcaps with spinner knock-off. Recent wins include Merchant's First Choice at Dothan, Alabama show.