



TOO MUCH?

When I decided to buy an old Mustang convertible to drive to work, I had no idea I was getting into the "Car Collector" hobby. I had no idea what old Mustangs were worth, or how to go about finding one. I had never heard of the Mustang Club of America, and certainly wouldn't have believed anyone who told me in four years I would be a member of the Board and Editor of the club magazine.

I just wanted an old Mustang convertible because I had wanted one as a kid and figured it would be fun to drive one through mid-life crisis — much cheaper than a Porsche! It seemed to me the Mustang convertibles got more attention on the road than Ferraris or Porsches, and for me a nice car is an ego trip. The fact that the value would probably go up instead of down didn't hurt, either.

Needless to say, I was in for a surprise when I started shopping. The number of over-priced rust-buckets available was amazing! I decided I needed a little help, so I found a *Hot Rod* MUSTANG Magazine that offered to show me "How to buy a Mustang!". I got my criteria from that article — 1965 or '66 GT convertible, 4-speed, no rust, good original or restored condition, mileage not really important. This really made shopping easier — I only went to look at over-priced '65-'66 GT convertible rust-buckets.

I finally found "MY65GT" (my tag number) about 40 miles south of Atlanta — an over-priced '65 GT convertible, but at least it wasn't a rust-bucket.

I talked the owner down several hundred dollars, but still paid what I thought was too much for the car — but it was just what I wanted, and it did look and drive great, so I left satisfied I had made a good deal for my first pony.

That feeling was reinforced some months later when my wife, Suzy, and I drove to a small Mustang show about 75 miles north of Atlanta. We went strictly looking for parts, but the host club talked us into entering our car in the show. We weren't prepared for a show at all (wouldn't have known HOW to prepare for a show), so we took a fairly clean grease rag out of the trunk, wiped the dust off the Mustang, and sat down on the curb to see what a Mustang show was all about. We were both very surprised to win a Third Place Trophy in the 1965-73 convertible class. Suzy really started to worry when I asked her if it would look too tacky if I mounted the trophy as a hood ornament.

Since my pony was a genuine SHOW car now, I decided to have it professionally appraised — as much for my ego as for insurance purposes. When the car appraised 30 percent higher than my purchase price, I be-

came a certified Mustang nut.

A lot of people agree with me about Mustangs. Lately I've seen classic Mustangs used to advertise everything from "American-made" beer to blue jeans, from tires to suntan lotion. It's a crazy cycle — the more visible the early Mustangs become the more popular they become, the more popular they become the more visible they become, etc., etc.

With this increased popularity and visibility comes increased value — a blessing to some, a curse to others. It is becoming more and more difficult to buy a "starter" Mustang, and the value of some completely restored Mustangs tops most new car prices.

When the latest appraisal of my Mustang came in 60 percent higher than the purchase price, I had mixed emotions. I was really glad the car was appreciating — that was one of the reasons for buying an old Mustang. I was also a little frightened — maybe the value of old Mustangs is going up too fast. Maybe it won't be too long before all classic Mustang owners belong to that very special group — people who's cars are just too valuable to drive! What a awful waste of fine machinery THAT would be.



Jessica Leigh Harrell

October 8, 1985 9 pounds, 7 ounces