



TOPLESS BETTY BLACK'S 1973 CONVERTIBLE

by Betty Black
photographs by Tim Hembree

"There will be no Chevrolets in my family" was a statement that has led to a new interest and time-consuming hobby.

When my husband, Bob and I married 12 years ago, he did not take kindly to my 1970 Impala.

Having driven it on the winter snow and ice, I was not too upset when he came home one spring day and announced that he needed the keys and title to my car. HE HAD SOLD IT!

That weekend we went looking for a replacement.

We found my red 1973 convertible on the corner of a used car lot in the heart of Indianapolis. It was love at first sight for both of us — I had always wanted a convertible and it was a Ford!

It was six months old. The owner had become disheartened when he found the small trunk was certainly not designed for luggage. A few trips to the airport and he opted for a larger capac-

ity car — his misfortune — our good luck.

For the next ten years we drove it rain or shine for over 100,000 miles.

During that time we never pulled into a gas station without the inquiry — "Will you sell it?"

Bob has always been partial to black for the color of his cars. He kept saying that if I ever wrecked it, he would repaint it black.

That never came to be because HE



The work on the Mustang was very
of him on his knuckles, though.

was the one to wreck it. At least he and an ill-fated deer wrecked it.

The damage was to the right side fender and door.

While having it fixed, we decided to have it painted. It had been victim of many, many careless people in parking lots. Since the repainting was not my fault — the original red was chosen.

Several people in town had asked us to join the local Mustang group, The Hoosier Mustang Club.



We joined and the first event of the club was a display of the club's cars at the Commons area downtown.

Pleased with the reaction we got and comments from everyone who saw it, we decided to begin showing it more.

The next show was in Indianapolis. Bob went one rainy Saturday with one of the club members. He came home very crest-fallen. They had him open the hood — HORRORS — that had not been touched.

In the course of the years, we had kept it in good mechanical and body condition — but several things had not been kept stock — SHAME!

The first few shows we entered — we put it in the modified class — that didn't work — we weren't modified enough!

So the only alternative was to return everything to stock and enter that way.

We probably have most of a '73 Mustang in our attic — pieces that are perfectly good — but not good enough to pass the knowing eyes of the judges.

The Cragar wheels had to go — their replacements were not to be bought new — but from a junkyard. Needless to say that meant many hours of grinding, rubbing and polishing.

Other than the paint and body work, Bob has done all the work. He has never removed the engine — he just cleans around it. That has replaced a lot of skin on his knuckles, though.

The work on the Mustang was very timely. Bob had spent 30 years racing and working on sprint cars. He decided that his body had had about all it could stand. It was not an easy decision to make, but having the Mustang to work on and the shows to attend helped fill a void.

He's a tool and die maker by trade, so he enjoys working with his hands.

We have had parts of the car in the living room — the doors and hood for example. The doors when the wires to the speaker needed to be covered, by the accordian-type rubber piece. That piece does not go on easily. The doors had to be removed and holes drilled in each. The hood when the braces were taken off to be cleaned and painted.

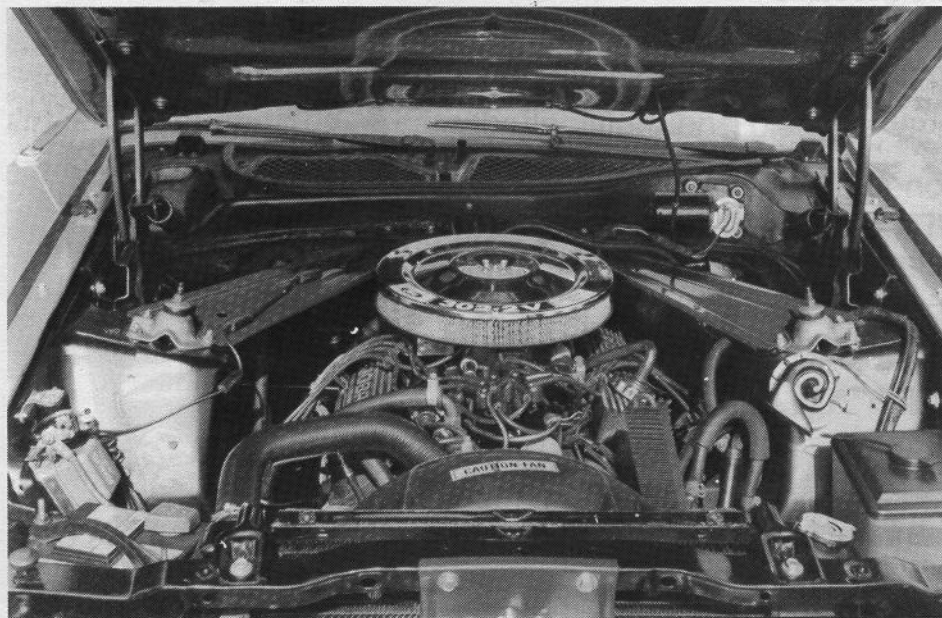
As he did more and more work — I got to drive it less and less. Then last summer, I lost all driving privileges because we were showing it more. If you



Bob Black did most of the restoration himself.

The tag application caused quite a stir.





drive it — you mess it up!

We still drive it to shows — even Pensacola, Florida. We are presently running the big debate — to trailer or not to trailer.

It sure is a lot of work to clean it up when we get to shows, but it is sooooo much fun to drive, too.

The car wears the license plate TOP-LESS. This caused some problem with the state. We requested the plate at the local branch and it was then sent to the state for acceptance. A call returned to our local branch — first asking what kind of car it was to be for and then a call to find out my occupation. When told that it was for a convertible driven by an elementary school teacher — all was well!

Every show seems to have its own judging standards. We send for the judges sheets when they are available. Then we know what needs work. Bob has fixed things that to me look perfectly good. He compares cars at shows, cars in junkyards, new cars — to find how bolts are to be painted — or not to be painted.

Showing the car has led me back to the problem that caused me to have the car in the first place — no car to drive!

We solved that problem last August. We were lucky enough to find another '73 convertible. This one is yellow and black with a white interior and top.

I have already given the word. Hands off this one — no fixing and no showing.

We use it for parades and driving only!
MT



THE PADDOCK[®] - ALL THE PARTS FOR THE GREAT AMERICAN PONY CAR!

Your "One Source" for Mustang Parts!

SEND NOW FOR
the \$1 DOLLAR CATALOG THAT KEEPS ON COMING!

Send your name and address, with **ONE DOLLAR** to the **Indiana Store** and you'll receive our new sale catalog, plus being included in future mailings free! **IF YOU CAN'T WAIT** - call 800-428-4319 and we'll send yours out right away first class and charge your Visa or MasterCard \$2.70. That also puts you on our permanent mailing list. **ACT NOW!**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY & STATE _____ ZIP _____

MUSTANG

INDY STORE
800-428-4319

the paddock inc.

221 W. MAIN • DEPT MT • BOX 30 • KNIGHTSTOWN, IN 46148
INFORMATION LINE • 317-345-2131

CAL STORE
800-854-8532

paddock west

446 TENNESSEE ST. • DEPT MT • REDLANDS, CA 92373
IN-STATE TOLL FREE 800-621-8929 • INFO 714-798-4166

"... it's not easy to keep everyone satisfied, but we try. We never buy an inferior part to increase our margin. Our carpet is the **BEST!** Our soft trim & upholstery line is large enough to give you the best possible delivery (we work a midnight shift when necessary to stay caught up). We keep our 28,000 sq.ft. of warehouse full of parts and maintained by the most up-to-date computerized system available. We can answer your questions fast and satisfy your part needs right away. Give us a try the next time you need something for your Mustang. We're here to satisfy you!"



THE BOTTOM LINE! It all boils down to having what you want in stock, giving good service on your order, quick shipment, and a good return policy. We strive to be dependable with your money and needs for your car. Ask any one of our customers and then call us, we'll work hard at pleasing you.