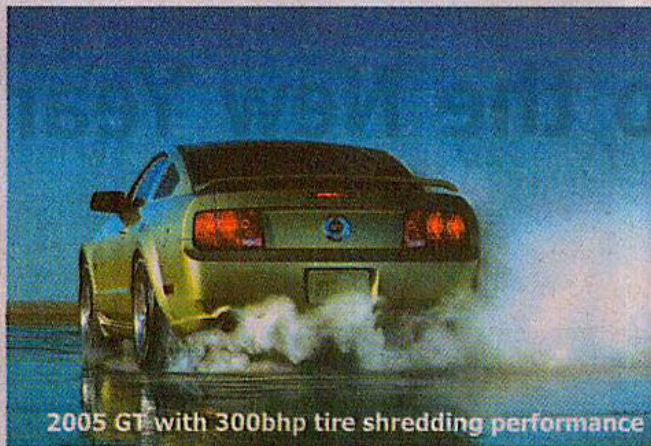


Limited edition Cobra R



2005 GT with 300bhp tire shredding performance



Star of Gone in 60 Seconds



2005 convertible prototype



Shelby GT 350



First '62 Mustang prototype: mid engine & two-seater

## MUSTANG

# THE ULTIMATE CLASSIC

By Mood Dudd

**N**OTHING beats a classic Ford Mustang and the reasons are a plenty. A friend of mine used to complain that the original and super cool '68 Mustang looked like a Toyota Publica. It turns out that the Publica is a feeble copy so may his brain fry for overuse of his company's radioactive cell phone. It's a car that is so cool that ultimately he admitted to its "coolth". We ended up spotting a black one with purple stripes in the streets of Dhaka and went after it with our ancient Corolla. The deal was to try and make a deal with the owner. Unfortunately it was on the other side of the road and by the time we found an opening to make a U-turn the car was gone. Then again, all we had was about 500 taka for the first down payment.

Ford's Mustang was conceived in full knowledge that in the mid-'60s the biggest population bubble in history was coming of age in America. Baby boomers would rule the '60s and there was little reason to think they wanted cars that were

anything like their parents' cars. The production Mustang was shown to the public for the first time inside the Ford Pavilion at the New York World's Fair on April 17, 1964 two months and nine days after the Beatles first came to New York to appear on The Ed Sullivan Show. It went on sale at Ford dealers that same day.

The 1964 1/2 production Mustang followed two Mustang concept cars. The Mustang I shown in 1962 was a mid engine two-seater powered by a V4. The Mustang II was similar and these were real funky looking for the 60's. The production version had to be toned down for matters of cost cutting. It came out as a 4 seater with parts borrowed from existing cars. It looked great even though my girlfriend say it looks like a truck.

Compared to every other American car then in production, except the Corvette, the Mustang was gorgeously sleek. But that's as far as the good points went. It came with really pathetic engine choice the lowest of which had about a 100 horsepower. Not only that the car had drum brakes

which were totally inadequate for stopping. Also the suspension set-up was horrible for anything other than straight roads but since America had miles of straight roads this car was perfect.

In the end the car was affordable, a great looker (totally disregarding opinions of girlfriends) and fun to drive if the roads weren't narrow and twisty. Inside it was a lot of basic material but did the public care? Nope. They bought it in record numbers. Even Ford was shocked at America's appetite for the Mustang during '65. It sold an astounding 409,260 coupes, 77,079 2+2 fastbacks and 73,112 convertibles that year. That's a total of 559,451 Mustangs for the '65 model year. That's more than any other manufacturers sold in a single year.

With that many Mustangs in the nation's automotive bloodstream, it was natural that many of them would be raced. But in order to go road-racing head to head against Chevrolet's Corvette, Ford needed a two-seater. And rules said that Ford had to make at least 100 of them by January 1965.

That's where Carroll Shelby came in.

Shelby, a Texan and long-time racer, saw the potential to slay Corvettes with the Mustang and took 100 of the first 2+2s down to Los Angeles for modification into "GT 350" models. Tossing the rear seats aside, Shelby added such performance items as oversize front disc brakes, a fiberglass hood and a lowered suspension with oversize tires on 15-inch wheels. It looks a lot like the blue car in the pic above. These are some of the most sought after cars fetching prices over 50 thousand dollars. That's about twice the price of the new car.

The car was glorified by Steve McQueen in the movie Bullitt where there was a 12 minute chase scene. It's still considered one of the best chase scenes ever. The coolest version of the Mustang was featured in the movie *Gone in 60 Seconds*. This car my girlfriend loves and surprisingly Nicolas Cage has nothing to do with it. Girls are weird and mine is the weirdest.

The Mustang started losing its charm in the 70's as it grew in size and later the engine sizes dropped to face the oil crisis. This was the time some of the most pathetic Mustangs came out but these surprisingly sold well. This depressing styling continued till the 90's when in 93 an all new shape came out with styling cues harking back to the old days. Special editions came out like the amazing Cobra R with 300 horsepower that came out in only a limited quantity of 250. It was only available in red and was featured in *NFS Hot Pursuit 2*. It's a weird name when you think of it. A Mustang Cobra. Is it a Horse that bites or a snake that gallops?

This year the latest incarnation came out and this is exactly like the original '64 version only cooler. Never thought that was possible. It borrows styling cues directly from the classics and has power and handling to match. 300 horsepower is standard for the GT version and options list reads a mile long. You can have anything you want as well as personalised instrument panel lighting. Interiors has finally been changed to something classy with aluminium highlights. Before it used to have angular plastic surfaces. Optional sound system includes a 1000watt set-up. This is a car I would sell my soul for. It's thankfully not an exotic but definitely an affordable super car offering great value for money. Plus my girl loves it.



The ultimate classic Mustang