



GENE BOOTH PHOTOS

AWAY OUT WEST, where the mountains poke holes in the sky and it's three days betwixt neighbors, the sure-footed cow pony is as valuable an asset as a man can have. It's small wonder that the horse operas always show The Cowboy a-kissin' His Horse and ignorin' The Girl—the horse probably had just saved the cowboy's hide from A Fate Worse Than Death.

Now, those fancy thoroughbreds and racehorses and quarter-horses are fine playthings for the cityfolk, but for day-in, day-out range-ridin', there's nothing like the half-tame, high-spirited saddle bronc. He can take you across the desert-like alkali flats with nary a whinny for water and climb a Colorado peak without pausin' for a second breath. He can pick his way along a rock-strewn mountain trail like a Bighorn Sheep and can run like a Comanche across the prairies without sticking a hoof into a gopher hole. A man's best friend can be his Mustang.

Descendant of the horses loosed in the west by the Spanish Conquistadores of the 16th century, the mustang is about as hardy a critter as was ever stuffed under a saddle. Stamina and agility are his long suits, gloss and sheer speed his short ones.

Now, it is pretty easy to liken the Ford-produced automotive namesake to such a purposeful animal, particularly the newly-available High Performance Mustang variation. The attributes of the muscle and bone mustang would seem to be those of the steel and rubber Mustang. It's the sort of car a man can become attached to, although he probably won't feel quite as romantic about it as The Cowboy does about His Horse.

We specify the HP Mustang because of its obvious superiority to the more mundane everyday Mustang. Where the latter has a style and a flair of design

that promises a road-hugging sort of performance, and then falls slightly short of this self-established goal, the HP Mustang backs up its looks in spades. It promises, it delivers, and for good measure it does even more than one could reasonably expect.

Car Life had the opportunity of trying out one of the first production-line HP Mustangs and it was a delightful experience to all who drove the car. We put it through our usual paces (see data panel) and added a few hi-jinks just for fun. We took it up and down our favorite mountain road, where it acquitted itself with vigor and nobility, and we took it on some high-speed desert highway runs; then we just pottered around town, commuting through traffic to and from our offices and battling the freeway tides.

For a high performance sort of car, it is unusually versatile; it accepts without fuss any treatment outside of fourth-gear starts. It is docile enough for 2-gear (second and fourth) driving, yet it is fierce enough to achieve under-16-sec. quarter-mile bursts of acceleration and stable enough to challenge and master that twisting mountain road. And in 1500 miles of this now-torturous, now-easy testing, we uncovered only one weakness of structure, a faulty clutch disc spring.

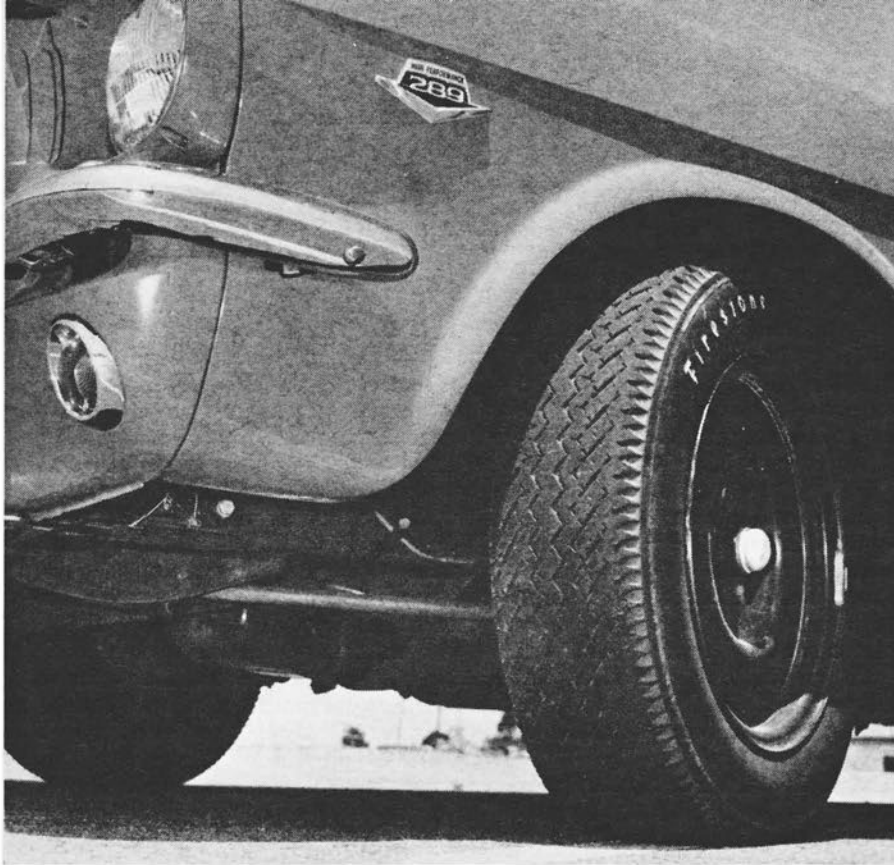
To cope with the power from the HP-289 V-8, Ford equips the Mustang with a 10.40-in. heavy-duty clutch disc and semi-centrifugal cover assembly. This latter makes the clutch grip harder as rpm increase, but also tends to raise the pedal pressure needed to release the clutch at high engine rpm. A weak spring in the test Mustang caused incomplete release of the disc, and consequent "hanging up" of the gears when rapid shifts were attempted. This condition was worsened when the clutch release actuating rod became kinked, and finally the

WILD WESTERN go-pony can be equally at home on the Eastern Ranges. With optional High Performance packages on the basic production unit, the Mustang becomes a high-spirited, sure-footed creature.



Mustang High Performance

Handling and Performance Options
Make the Perfect Hill-N-Dale Car



A HIGH Performance car deserves high performance tires: Optional originally for the Mustang were these Firestone Sports Car Specials, which did a top-notch job.

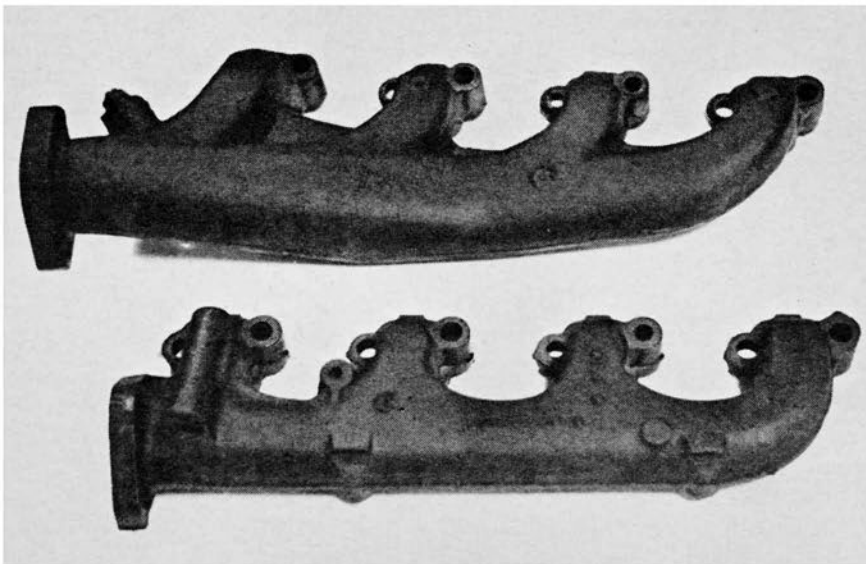
Mustang HP

clutch would not release at all. Some quick service at our friendly local HP dealer (Shelby American, Inc.) put the car back onto the road, the problem apparently cured with the replacement of the spring and the rod.

The key component in the transforma-

tion of the ordinary Mustang to one suiting the HP label is the powerplant. Where the standard engine is an in-line ohv 6-cyl. of 170 cu. in. and 101 bhp, Ford offers optional V-8 power at 260 cu. in./164 bhp, 289/210 and 289/271 levels. Obviously, as horsepower in-

HP HEADERS for the 289/271 engine (top) have more sweep and larger cross-section than do those for normal 289 V-8.

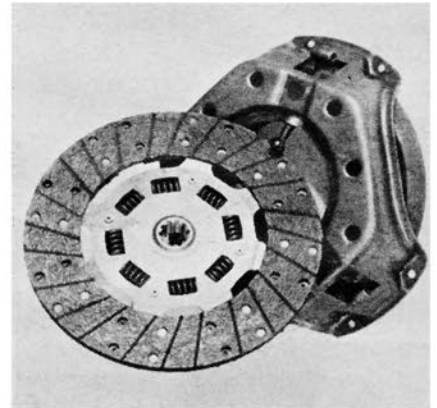


creases, performance rises accordingly. So, the 289-cu. in./271 bhp unit is going to give the highest performance and thus this is the "HP" unit.

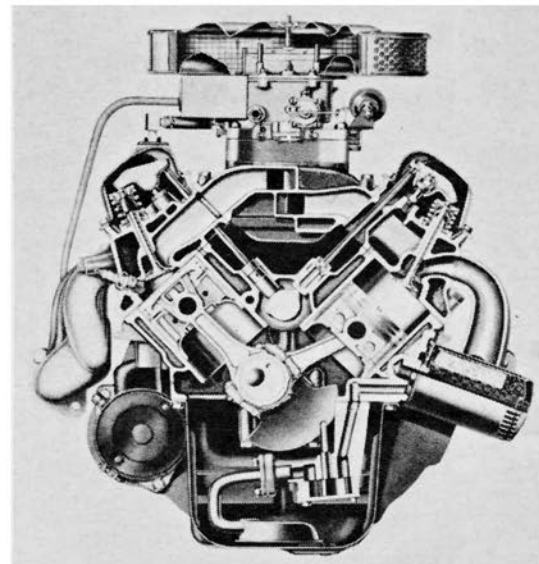
There's more than just a label here, of course, as this is the identical engine to the ones which power the potent little AC Cobras (see Road Test, August CL) and HP Fairlanes. More than just higher compression (11.6:1 vs. 9.00:1), these are HP engines from crankshaft to carburetor. Cranks, bearings, rods and pistons are all of tougher, more durable design and material, the camshaft is of much "wilder" specification, lifting valves higher and leaving them open longer (306°) for optimum breathing at high rpm, the heads have more open ports and the carburetor, a single 4-throat Holley unit, has larger barrels and somewhat richer jetting than would be used in the normal 4-barrel unit.

These improvements over the standard sort of V-8 are aimed at giving the HP-289 a whole new area of operation—over 5000 rpm, where the other engines are flat out from gasping for air. Indeed, we found the optimum shift points for the HP Mustang to be 6500 rpm, where

CLUTCH DISC and cover from HP-289; weak spring hampered test shifting.



CROSS SECTION of the 289/271 shows huskier rods, crankshaft and pistons.

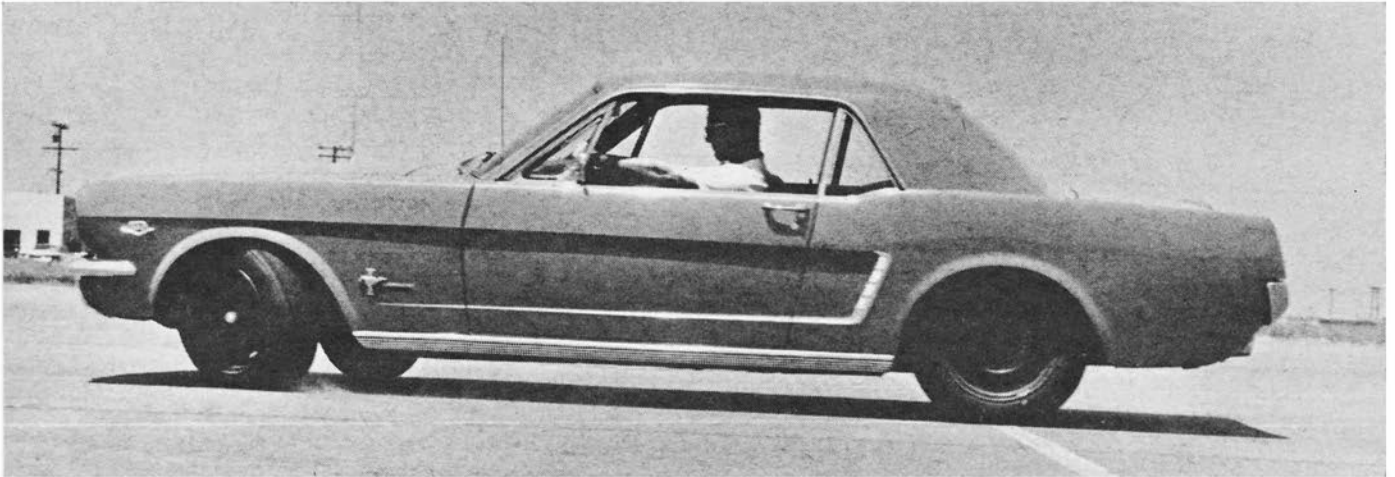


a 289/210 tested earlier had to be shifted at 4800 rpm. In testing the Cobra, however, we found that it could be shifted happily at an even higher point (6800–7000 rpm) because of a more “open” exhaust system—from which the Mustang would benefit, too.

Straight-line acceleration is not the

forte of this engine/axle combination, however. The test car had 3.89:1 differential gears, which were just a little too high (effectively) for good drag racing acceleration (4.11s or 4.56s are available) and a little too low for ground-gulping road-running. The Mustang option list includes a set of 3.50:1 gears and

these, we feel, would give the car a little more room to stretch out in. With the 3.89s, the car just barely pulls 6500 rpm, which works out at 120 mph, top speed. With 3.50s, the mph/1000 ratio would increase from 18.5 to 20.5, whereas with 4.11s it would drop to 17.5 (with the same tires).



STIFFER SPRINGS, thicker anti-roll bar and recalibrated shock absorbers are part of the special handling package available for the HP Mustang.



BILL MOTTA PHOTOS



TIGHT CORNERING still produces some body lean, but considerably less than experienced with standard suspension. Rear springs are stiffened more than fronts, but larger anti-roll bar keeps things under control.





DENNIS SHATTUCK PHOTO

standard components are replaced with units of sturdier specification. Front and rear roll rates are increased with stiffer springs while shock absorbers are recalibrated to provide a firmer damping of spring action. Briefly, the specifications are thus:

	HP	Normal
Anti-roll bar dia., in.	0.840	0.690
Roll rate, ft.-lb., front	438	308
rear	340	260
Spring rate, rear, lb./in.	110	65
Spring jounce, front	230	130
rear	230	140
Spring rebound, front	320	160
rear	370	210
Shock absorbers, cycles/min.	170	n.a.
stroke, in.	3.00	n.a.

The effect of this stiffening is to increase the resistance to body roll during cornering, thus keeping the tires at more desirable angles of contact with the pavement. Although this does nothing to improve the hefty frontward weight bias (56%), it does help combat the strong understeer such a situation creates. Coupled with the ultra-low profile, wide-tread Firestone Super Sport 5.90-15 racing tires, the result is a fine-handling car capable of sticking to any highway at any speed it can attain.

The understeer is still strong and particularly resists any turning of the car off a straight line at low speeds, where the quickest optional steering ratio of 21.0—3.5 turns, lock-to-lock—adds to the muscle-power required. But once a good drifting turn is started, the car's attitude can be controlled with the throttle and most corners can be accomplished in spectacular fashion. At about 80-85 mph the car achieves a "neutral steer" in fast cornering and it is at about this speed that true 4-wheel drifts can be developed.

Heavy-duty brakes unfortunately are not included in the High Performance package and at the time of the test there were no options available except for a power booster. However, the Mustang

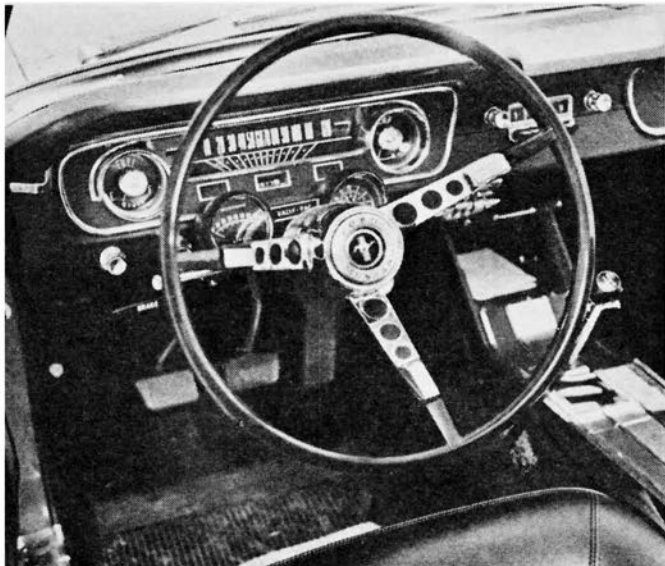
Mustang HP

The transmission is Ford's all-new 4-speed synchromesh unit, which replaces the Warner Gear T-10 box formerly used in Ford products. The newer unit has extremely good gear spacing, 2.32:1 working out well as a starting gear, 1.69:1 being in about the right range to

use for tight cornering, and 1.28:1 making a fine passing gear. The balk-ring synchros make shifting sure and easy.

The other part of the high performance label applies to the suspension, where the Mustang achieves a notable level of cornering and directional stability. Again

RALLY-PAC on steering column consists of tachometer and clock. The small size and low location keeps tach from being really useful.



NO BETTER place to let a man's mount stretch its muscles than over an open road through rolling countryside.



will have a disc brake system option for '65 and this will fill a glaring void. The HP Mustang tested had the same brakes as all other V-8 Mustangs and the results of our stopping tests were about the same: Barely adequate for normal use but too quick to fade for safe high-speed stopping.

The actual body/frame structure of the HP version is the same as other production Mustangs and as such continues the low-priced bargain concept. Indeed, while the HP packages (the stiffer suspension can be purchased with any

engine) add upwards of \$450 onto the base price of the car, it is still possible to get a rip-snorting, big-muscled go-pony for right around \$3000—a real bargain in performance.

Production of the HP Mustangs was at a 40-per-day level shortly after our test, and Ford was hopeful that this schedule would fill the backlog of orders. Once production got underway, however, the company quietly dropped the Firestone tire option and offered instead a new "sports type" tire with dual red-striped sidewalls. Handling charac-

teristics with the new tires probably are affected only mildly since the same 6-in. rims are used. Then, too, it is well known that lower profile tires are on the way.

We can only add that this is the sort of Mustang that Ford ought to build more of; it has the guts of its namesake, the looks of a thoroughbred and the fleetness of a Native Dancer. It's been some time since we enjoyed doing a road test so much; in the words of another, non-automotive (O'Ern') Ford, "It was rode hard and put away wet." ■

CAR LIFE ROAD TEST

1965 FORD Mustang High Performance

SPECIFICATIONS

List price	.....\$2345
Price, as tested	.....3210
Curb weight, lb.	.....3050
Test weight	.....3360
distribution, %	.....56/44
Tire size	.....5.90-15
Tire capacity, lb.	.....n.a.
Brake swept area	.....251
Engine type	.....V-8, ohv
Bore & stroke	.....4.00 x 2.87
Displacement, cu. in.	.....289
Compression ratio	.....10.5
Carburetion	.....1 x 4
Bhp @ rpm	.....271 @ 6000
equivalent mph	.....111
Torque, lb.-ft.	.....312 @ 3400
equivalent mph	.....63

EXTRA-COST OPTIONS

HP-271 V-8, 4-speed transmission, handling pkg., Firestone SS tires, Rally-Pac, back-up lights, radio, w.s. washer, padded visors.

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase, in.	.....108.0
Tread, f & r	.....56.0
Overall length, in.	.....181.6
width	.....68.0
height	.....51.1
equivalent vol, cu. ft.	.....365
Frontal area, sq. ft.	.....19.3
Ground clearance, in.	.....5.5
Steering ratio, o/a	.....21.0
turns, lock to lock	.....3.5
turning circle, ft.	.....38.0
Hip room, front	.....2 x 21.0
Hip room, rear	.....50.6
Pedal to seat back, max.	.....43.0
Floor to ground	.....10.0
Luggage vol, cu. ft.	.....8.8
Fuel tank capacity, gal.	.....16.0

GEAR RATIOS

4th (1.00) overall	.....3.89
3rd (1.29)	.....5.02
2nd (1.96)	.....7.63
1st (2.32)	.....9.12



CALCULATED DATA

Lb/bhp (test wt)	.....12.4
Cu. ft./ton mile	.....161
Mph/1000 rpm	.....18.5
Engine revs/mile	.....3240
Piston travel, ft/mile	.....1550
Car Life wear index	.....50.3

PERFORMANCE

Top speed (6500), mph	.....120
Shifts, @ mph (manual)	
3rd (6500)	.....93
2nd (6500)	.....71
1st (6500)	.....52
Total drag at 60 mph, lb.	.....120

SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph, actual27.3
60 mph56.0
90 mph85.1

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Normal range, mpg13-16
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ACCELERATION

0-30 mph, sec3.1
0-404.5
0-506.3
0-608.3
0-7011.0
0-8014.2
0-10022.5
Standing 1/4 mile, sec15.9
speed at end, mph	.....85

