

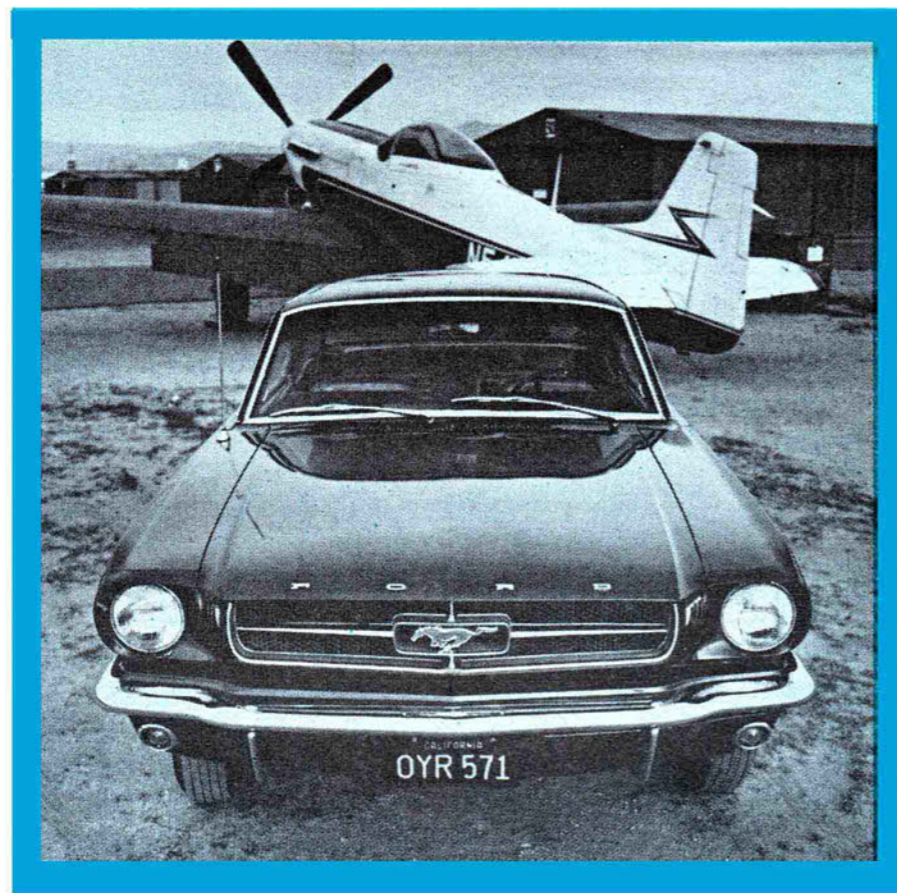
DISC-BRAKE MUSTANG

MUSTANG HAS everything going for it except exclusivity. It's impossible to drive more than a few miles without spotting one or more. They've grown so commonplace that Mustangs don't bother to wave at each other. Not that they could expect recognition from those who remember the precise art of waving, but some sort of camaraderie might have been hoped for. Anyway, it didn't happen and now there's discouragement in numbers.

It's a shame, in a way, that Mustangs don't wave. They would have every justification, were it not for multiplicity. Some of the cars that used to wave were less qualified. One recalls the pitiful plight of a Volkswagen trying to elicit some response from a proud Porsche, or the more gruesome memory of a Nash Metropolitan indiscriminately flagging at any and every non-domestic machine in hopes of some slight flick of recognition. The pecking order among MGs was, like all things British, impeccable and as rigid as upper lips. Delicious daydreams surely assailed more than one Healey at the tempting effrontery to flail away, heartily and with the whole arm and completely unbidden, at a parading Bentley. Tut, tut!

Indeed, the Mustang should have been around in those days. It would have taken a certain amount of brashness for it to shoulder its way into the club, but then brashness is an American trait which the Mustang owns in great gobs. It could have managed it, alright, without too much discomfiture at the bruised egos edging aside to leave it room. There would have been, naturally, some concern over its proper position within the club hierarchy. But one remains confident that Yankee ingenuity and manifest destiny would have insured quick adaptation. Its very brashness would have kept it comfortable next to either a K-2 Allard, where it might be considered to fit, or a Jensen, with which it might confuse the XK-150 Jaguar.

That was another era. Certainly it was a rare wave which commanded an annual production rate approach-



A Year-Later Look at the Rouge River Range Pony

ing a single month's output of Mustangs. That was basic to the ritual, and dearness in price served as another criterion. But few, very few, were more unadulterated automobile than the range pony from the Rouge River Valley.

It has been almost one year since the first of the thundering herd pounded over the horizon. It was an epic scene: News magazines reported the event in depth, corporate medicine men rhythmically beat the tom-toms, crowds of the curious and the enthusiastic inspected the all-too-rare specimens in some dealer's corral. There

were scoffers and doubters aplenty; there still are. But there were also those of us who detected the bloodlines of a thoroughbred, the sinewy stock of the tough cactusland cayuse, and the nimble balance of a polo pony all blending in this hybrid breed. Those who saw this apparently numbered thousands and so began some of the most spirited horse trading ever seen inside this country's sales barns.

During that year, Mustangs have been bought and branded in such ever-increasing numbers that only three other breeds can claim more action, if not reaction. This automobile in 12

months' time has outdistanced at least a dozen other major domestic brands—including, it should be noted, some other potent and racy machinery—though it had handicapped itself by a few years in the sales race. Hardly a recognized measuring point passed that the Mustang didn't surpass some record in its breakneck overhauling of its competitors. At the end of its first nine months, it had surpassed the unthinkable 250,000 landmark in sales and was still running strong. Is not popularity in itself some measure of the machine?

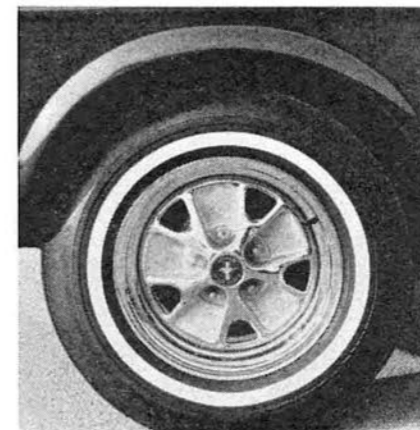
Of the three brands still ahead of Mustang, none could be considered more than a mere appliance devised to pamper man's lethargy, strangle his rapidly dwindling road space, and satisfy his acquisitional instincts for largesse. Few could perceive that man possessed another instinct, that American motorists, like their English cousins, could transfer affection toward a responsive and servile beast of steel, glass and rubber just as once they had done toward faithful hound and familiar horse. It is almost ironic, in view of American automotive insouciance, that this bond should be engendered in a vehicle named for a horse.

A Mustang is that way. Its master cannot avoid a rewarding pat on the flank or brow after spirited exercise of the beast. He doesn't begrudge the cost of feeding, grooming or maintaining his mount. Its shape is show ring correct, with only minor deficiencies, and this gives the owner pride. It wants to run and its natural habitat is open range land, far removed from the restraints which man has devised to regulate himself. Its natural gait is the gallop; with the long-legged gears in the test steed, great stretches of time and distance are rapidly crossed.

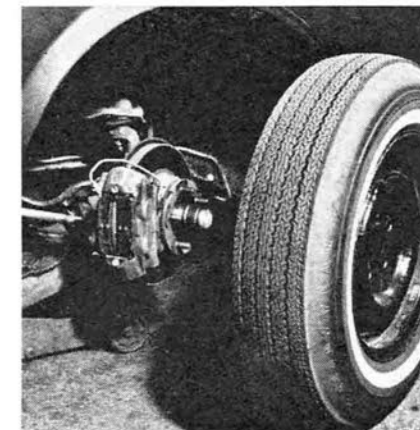
It enjoys running most short errands at a canter, and even when held to a trot it remains fairly content. Reined back to a walk, however, it impatiently urges its master to relax the reins so as to get on with the job of reaching the corral quicker. The 4-barrel adrenal gland keeps trying to work its function and directs the muscular automatic gearbox haunches into pushing a little harder, a little faster.

This stallion is not built for plow pulling, nor is it bred for the explosive nature required of a short-track sprinter. True, it will submit to such treatment when properly bitted, in the case of the former, or sufficiently spurred as in the latter example. But its happiness lies amid the rolling plains and winding trails of open country. And it lets the master know this.

Standing just under 13 hands high, this mount is built for nimbleness and quick reaction to the master's touch. Too much exuberance or enthusiasm



STYLED STEEL wheels are most recent option, tougher than standard type.



BRAKE PADS slip into caliper with removal of two set screws from plate.

during the thrill of a rapid chase involving the back and forth of the broken field run, though, will reveal some weakness in the hind quarters. Firm footing can elude this mount as it churns its hind legs in obedience to the wheeling and turning commands of the master. This is not too distressing, however, and most of the time the Mustang manages to plant its flashing hooves where it aims them.

Shod as it is with low profile and oversize rubber, this mount's nimbleness is enhanced and its long-legged stride is deceiving. The territory it covers is greater than the rider is led to believe, and the time it takes is shorter. One finds in stopwatching this Mustang through the traps that its gallop is actually an illegal gait and the canter is actually at gallop velocity. Before this was discovered, however, our mount reacted to a tight reining-in in a manner that turned out to be startling—assisted in part by those fat rubber hooves.

While making typical stopping tests from 80 mph, the Mustang hauled down in excellent fashion at a 23 ft./sec./sec. rate. It took a firm foot in the stirrups, since there was no powered assistance and the beast isn't one to heed a shouted "Whoa!" But its willingness to stop was in direct pro-

portion to that firmness; and there was no evidence of fading, slipping cinch buckles. What the riders didn't know, though, was the Mustang had been moving much faster than the 80 mph, at a rate which would have sent the whole group through an existing, end-of-the-spread fence with lesser brakes.

True to form, the front discs performed a remarkable job in pinching off speed when the rider stood on them. But as the stopping indicator reached the 23 mark, those hind haunches just stopped working. The resultant paralysis of the rear, lightened even further by the weight transfer accompanying the stops, shifted the full load to the fore parts which fortunately were up to the demands. Stops were completed well short of the fence and it was only after the compiled figures were corrected that the potential danger of the situation was realized. We suggest that Mustangs be fitted with pressure limiting equipment like that of its larger stablemates.

Despite such imperfections as these, the Mustang offers less to be wary of than some other, similar stock. It is built of sturdy stuff and, perhaps because of its muscular tone, shows fewer signs of sagging lines and creaking joints after rough handling and bone jarring usage. Its price at any sales



DISC-BRAKE MUSTANG

barn is reasonable, mostly because it is such an abundant breed and not because of any inferiority in breeding.

We have heard complaints from some riders of saddle soreness after relatively short workouts with their Mustang, claiming that the riding position is uncomfortable. None of our riders found anything to complain

about on this score, but the rounded corners of the rear seat—a sort of high cantle—and the absence of a saddlehorn in the form of an armrest to hang onto tended to allow passengers to slide around a bit.

But in the final analysis, we find ourselves growing attached to the Mustang. Those feelings it awakened in us

when it first appeared have stayed with us and, if anything, intensified as we have saddled up successive specimens of the breed. This latest one, though it snorts to life with a quick whinny the instant the key is touched, was a quiet one whose pounding heartbeat could seldom be detected. To our way of thinking, it's right nice to see so many other folks riding and enjoying theirs, every time we ride into town or gallop through the countryside. You reckon those neighbors would notice if we waved at them? ■

CAR LIFE ROAD TEST

1965 FORD Mustang Hardtop

SPECIFICATIONS

List price	.....\$2372
Price, as tested	.....3152
Curb weight, lb	.....2890
Test weight	.....3220
distribution, %	.....56/44
Tire size	.....6.95-14
Tire capacity, lb. @ 24 psi	.....3680
Brake swept area	.....328
Engine type	.....V-8, ohv
Bore & stroke	.....4.00 x 2.87
Displacement, cu. in	.....289
Compression ratio	.....10.0
Carburetion	.....1 x 4
Bhp @ rpm	.....225 @ 4800
equivalent mph	.....117
Torque, lb.-ft.	.....305 @ 3200
equivalent mph	.....78

EXTRA-COST OPTIONS

289/225 V-8, smog device, radio, auto. trans., console, power steering, 6.95-14 wsw tires, rocker molding, padded visors, disc brakes, back-up lights, tachometer & clock, tinted windshield.

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase, in.	.....108
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	.....21.7
turns, lock to lock	.....3.7
turning circle, ft.	.....38.9
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

3rd (1.00) overall	.....3.00
2nd (1.46)	.....4.38
1st (2.46)	.....7.38
1st (2.46 x 2.02)	.....15.1



CALCULATED DATA

Lb./bhp (test wt)	.....13.8
Cu. ft./ton mile	.....128
Mph/1000 rpm	.....24.4
Engine revs/mile	.....2460
Piston travel, ft./mile	.....1180
Car Life wear index	.....29.0

PERFORMANCE

Top speed (4500), mph	.....110
Shifts, @ mph (auto.)	
3rd ( )	.....
2nd (4300)	.....72
1st (4000)	.....40
Total drag at 60 mph, lb.	.....144

SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph, actual	.....32.9
60 mph	.....62.5
90 mph	.....98.9

ACCELERATION

0-30 mph, sec.	.....3.5
0-40	.....4.5
0-50	.....6.1
0-60	.....8.5
0-70	.....11.7
0-80	.....15.8
0-100	.....26.8
Standing 1/4 mile, sec16.8
speed at end, mph84

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Normal range, mpg15-18
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