

Mustang Boss 351

About this car . . . we have some good news, we have some bad news . . . we also have some terrible news



EVERYTHING THAT IS SUPPOSED to be easy has become so complicated. You call your "spotters," go out and winch the door up, take down the stepladder, unlock the safety latch and climb aboard, go through the checkout and warmup procedure, signal the spotters, put it into reverse, ease it out and down the reinforced concrete apron per your auxiliary-guidance-assistant's direction, swing it around 90 degrees, and there you have it . . . your 1971 Detroit Jugger-Naught is ready to blast off down the street.

It seems like every time we turn our backs to yawn at the new awe-suppressing, small, *practical* creations from the auto industries of the world, the old familiar baseline American sedans grow another few hundred pounds, and another foot, and another cubic liter. We climb out of a Pinto and look up at what used to be a relatively compact Mustang, and wonder what all the BULK is needed for. It makes one wonder if they don't just make the *huge* ones merely to make the smaller line look tiny. But then, everything is relative, so it must depend on the direction we come from. Now, if you own a Lincoln Continental, your outlook might be a little different, but being sporty-car types, we have a hard time imagining anything of that magnitude.

We do have to admit, it *looks* a lot more sleek and flashy than the original, virginal '64 Mustang. Matter of fact, it looks enough like a certain Maserati called Ghibli to be more than distantly related. Hmm, let's see, Ford bought controlling interest in Rowan Corp., which owns De Tomaso, which built the Mangusta, which was designed by Giorgio Giugiaro, who also designed the Ghibli. Close enough? But plagiarism or not, they deserve credit for a rather un-Detroit shape, even if it isn't the most functional from a visibility standpoint. The other Mustang body line has a squared-off or "tunnel" backlight that is far more practical when it comes to maneuvering backwards, or even lane changing. At night or in the rain or any combination thereof, you might as well be driving a panel truck when it comes to a question of what might be off your right rear quarter. Scoff you may, but even a VW hiding there can severely scratch your paint . . . with some effort. In the mirror, the rear window looks like a wraparound letter-slot — inches high and yards wide — and there is no conceivable way of knowing where the body ends beyond that — not even by opening the door and craning.

Front visibility isn't a lot better, when it comes to determining body limits, but it feels as if the seat were positioned to compensate. Perhaps we've gotten so used to backrest reclinability in most of the imports that the bolt-upright seatback is overly noticeable. However, it *does* get your head up where you have a better

HENRY THOMAS PHOTOS

view. Not good, but better. It also means a good view of the control panel. The tach and speedo are huge, legible, and well located, and right between them is the fuel gauge — *fuel* gauge? — while three “lesser” gauges — oil pressure, temperature and alternator — are over in the center of the dash. I suppose that in street use, the most frequent cause of engine stoppage is going to be lack of fuel, at hardly over 10 mpg.

After a spell you begin to get used to all the extra sheet metal outside, and when you consider how nice it looks, and how functional the body shape is at high



speed, it's not all that distasteful. After all, this whole package was put together to provide a starting point for winning the 1971 Trans-Am Championship. It's a real shame it's not going to. Not that it couldn't, but as you and even your great aunt know by now, Ford has decided to stop “improving the breed” . . . on race-tracks at least . . . and so anyone who wants to race a Mustang is fairly well stuck with the “old breed,” the well-developed 1970 version. At the time of this writing, it is rumored that Bud Moore will keep one of Parnelli's *old* cars for him to keep his hand . . . and foot . . . in next season, but hardly anyone is going to build an all-new factory car for the piddly pots in Trans-Am. Good luck for the amateur, bad luck for the spectator.

Anyhow, it probably would have taken some time to develop this new chassis into a winner. The factory had started to look at its potential before the budget hack, and it looked good. All previous lessons were adaptable, plus it has better aerodynamics, and the hot 351 “Cleveland” engine was proven already. The new chassis happens to be over a hundred pounds heavier than last year's, but as everyone but the SCCA rules enforcers knows, you have to ballast these things

anyhow after the bare shell has been fed to the sharks.

But back to reality, and what we have at hand. And *what* we have at hand! O dear mother, this thing goes like hell. Our car was a bit tweaked, but no more than the carport cobbler would do when all the payments were up to date. Since it was used as a press demonstrator at a drag strip, it was equipped with traction boosters and tuned headers with dump tubes. Now, because we aren't a drag magazine, we don't push our cars to the precipice for record low e.t.'s, but still we got a respectable 14.7 seconds, even on the relatively low-coefficient, straight-away strip at Riverside. But *Hot Rod* magazine had this same car at a high-coefficient “well-rubbered” strip and over-ran the rev-limiter, and maybe even speed-shifted, for a reported 13.9 seconds at 104 mph. And then they opened the dumps, and got 13.6 at 107.

So you can see what is hiding within. The 351 Cleveland Boss is docilely waiting to rip and tear on the firing line. And it literally ripped and tore the brakes to bloody pieces.

Sometimes we wonder if our brake test isn't a little too severe, expecting 12 maximum-*g* stops from 60 mph in 12 minutes. But then we happened onto fade in our own old drum-braked Corvette one time just balling down a long, twisty mountain grade, and it struck home what could happen to an inexperienced driver in a *big hog* . . . with maybe a trailer behind. No, we think a car's brakes should be indestructible under any conceivable highway abuse. And this is something that the Trans-Am racing series has caused to be developed.

The Boss brakes worked swell up to a point. As we've hammered home before, stopping distance is mostly a function of tires. The grand F60 x 15 Goodyears hauled it down at a typical 0.85 *g*'s for ten and a half stops. And then, during the eleventh stop, the brakes . . . shall we say . . . faded? “Collapsed” may be a better word. The left-front disc brake-pad lining rotted and fell off. In this case it wasn't catastrophic, since there were three pads remaining up front, plus a small piece of the bad one that kept the backing plate from collapsing onto the disc, but it's not hard to imagine a worse occurrence. To be sure, we've seen the same problem on Chevrolet products under *racing* conditions, but they whipped it by bonding the lining material through holes in the backing plate. See what racing can do for development initiative?

Shortly before that, I had considered running hot laps around Riverside's “short-course” to see how Ford's potential (stock) Trans-Am lap times compared with Parnelli's (racing) lap times, but after one “warm” lap, I decided that only some kind of a fool would drive a production car around a track like that without even safety equipment or chassis set-up. I could have made a very vivid demonstration of the consequences, all

over the highly unforgiving Turn 6 or Turn 9 boilerplate walls.

We continued our handling evaluation on our old-reliable, safe, slow, roomy skidpad.

For being bigger, the Mustang is still a very nimble-feeling machine. Variable-rate power steering and seemingly unlimited power with excellent throttle response means it snaps to your every whim. It also honors our basic handling preference of monster anti-roll bars front and rear. But. On the other hand. In actual fact. At the limit, it can't be handled well. It reaches tolerably high lateral *g*'s thanks to the tires, but precariously, because (a) you can't “feel” the road, (b) you can't see the road and (c) carb cutout leaves you stranded. (A) comes from the feather-light power steering. (B) is from looking out over a vast wasteland of hood without any references to determine exactly what your current instantaneous heading is (one of the alleged original reasons for racing stripes). (C) is because they progressed from Holley the “cornering carb” to Rochester the “low emission” carb to Autolite, their *own* carb; it flows well down the straights, but not in the corners.

So as a “sports car,” it's not much. On the other hand, it is a pretty sporty GT in the largest possible sense of the word. On high-speed straightaways it's comfortable, quiet and quick. The rigid shocks that hammer you around on city streets apply themselves well at speed, and the secure stability of such a large machine makes you feel bulletproof — more powerful than a locomotive, able to leap tall buildings . . . The appearance will probably be a stronger selling point than performance, though, with the notch-back version for those who prefer a feeling of lightness and lively sporting upright lines, while this super-fastback body will appeal to the storming crowd with its preference for mean, dynamic, ultra-forceful lines.

That wraps up the good and bad news. Now for the terrible news. This is probably the last chance you'll ever have to buy a machine of this kind in America. Ford is now diverting *all* its racing talent and dollars into solving safety and pollution problems and trying to satisfy government mandates. We have heard from reliable sources that for the '72 new model release, *all* Ford products will be detuned to run on regular fuel. That means lower compression, folks. The current exhaust-popping 11 to 1 compression will probably be lowered 15 to 20 percent, and the only way to regain the lost power is through expensive internal modifications on your own — which will probably become illegal. Perhaps we'll just learn to live with the situation, like war and disease and income taxes, which we accept as facts of life. But we have a few years left. We might as well take what we can get and live it up while we can. Then we'll all go *underground*.

Power power!



MUSTANG BOSS 351

PRICE
Base\$4100
As tested\$4815
With optionsPower steering, decorations,
radio, traction bars, headers

ENGINE
TypeV-8, water-cooled,
cast-iron block, cast-iron heads
Displacement351 cu. in. (5750 cc)
Horsepower330 hp @ 5400 rpm
Torque370 lbs-ft @ 4000 rpm
Bore & stroke4.00 in. x 3.50 in.
(102 mm x 89 mm)
Compression ratio11.0 to 1
Valve actuationPushrod/rocker arm
Induction systemAutolite 4V
Exhaust systemSteel headers, 4 into 1
Electrical system12-volt alternator,
point distributor

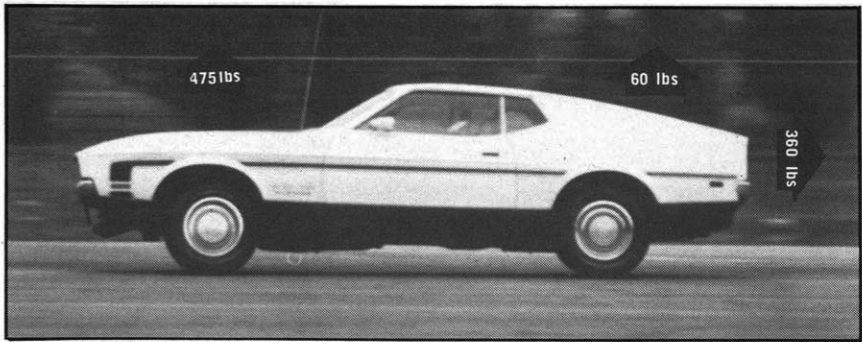
FuelPremium
Recommended redline6500
DRIVE TRAIN
ClutchSingle dry disc
TransmissionGear Ratio Overall Ratio
1st Synchro2.7810.88
2nd Synchro1.937.55
3rd Synchro1.365.32
4th Synchro1.003.91
DifferentialLimited-slip; 3.91 ratio

CHASSIS
FrameUnit construction,
front engine, rear drive
Front suspensionUpper A-arm, single
lower arm with drag strut, coil
springs, tube shocks, anti-roll bar
Rear suspensionLive axle, leaf springs,
tube shocks, anti-roll bar
SteeringRecirculating ball, power assist,
variable ratio,
3.4 turns,
overall ratio 20.2-16.4 to 1,
turning circle 39.8 feet
BrakesFront disc, rear drum,
power assisted, dual systems
10.0-in. dia. front,
10.0-in. dia. rear,
swept area 282.8 sq. in.
Wheels15-in. dia.; 7.0-in. wide
TiresGoodyear F60 x 15,
pressures F/R: 26/26 (rec.), 30/30 (test)

BODY
TypeIntegral steel, 2-door, 4-passenger
SeatsFront buckets, rear bench
Windows2 manual, no vents
Luggage spaceRear trunk, 8.3 cu. ft.
Instruments120 mph speedo,
8000 rpm tach
Gaugesoil pressure, alt, temp, fuel
Lightsbrake-system warning

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES
Weight3630 lbs (curb), 3860 lbs (test)
Weight distribution F/R58%/42%
Wheelbase109.0 in.
Track F/R61.5 in./59.5 in.
Height50.7 in.
Width74.1 in.
Length189.5 in.
Ground clearance6.5 in.
Oil capacity7.0 qt.
Fuel capacity20.0 gal.
Coolant capacity19.6 qt.

MISCELLANEOUS
Weight/power ratio
(curb/advertised)11.0 lbs per hp
Advertised hp/cu. in.0.94
Speed per 1000 rpm (top gear)18.9 mph
Warranty12 months/12,000 miles



AERODYNAMIC FORCES AT 100 MPH



CORNERING CONDITIONS

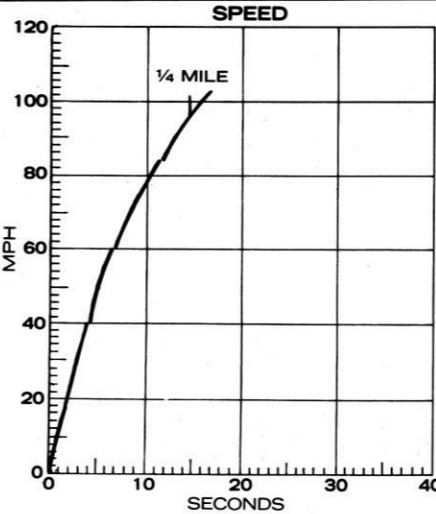
PERFORMANCE

Acceleration	0-30 (2.8 sec.), 0-60 (6.6 sec.), 0-100 (15.8 sec.) 0-quarter mile (14.7 sec., 96.2 mph)									
Top speed	123 mph (est.) at 6500 rpm (rpm limited)									
Braking	Distance from 60 mph: 141 ft. (0.85 g av.) Number of stops to fade: See text Stability: Very good Maximum pitch angle: 1.2°									
Handling	Maximum lateral: 0.69 g right, 0.71 g left Skidpad understeer: 1.5° right, 3.1° left Maximum roll angle: 4.0° Reaction to throttle, full: Oversteer; off: Less understeer									
Speedometer	30.0	40.0	50.0	60.0	70.0	80.0	90.0	100.0		
Actual mph	27.0	37.0	47.0	57.0	67.0	77.0	87.0	97.0		
Mileage	Average: 9.9 mpg Miles on car: 2700-3000									

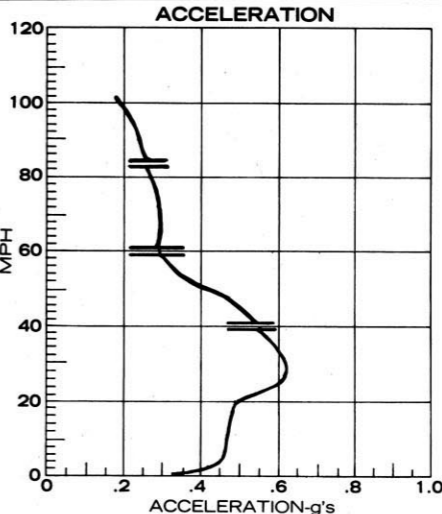
Aerodynamic forces at 100 mph:
Drag360 lbs (includes tire drag)
Lift F/R475 lbs/60 lbs

TEST EXPLANATIONS

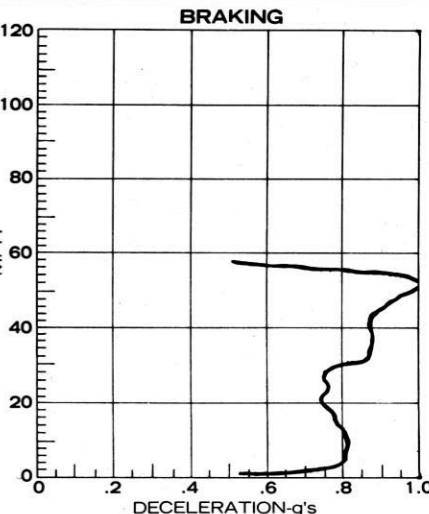
Fade test is successive maximum *g* stops from 60 mph each minute until wheels cannot be locked. Understeer is front minus rear tire slip angle at maximum lateral on 200-ft. dia. Digitek skidpad.



Speed measured from standing start thru 1/4 mile to maximum shown. Shift points indicated by line breaks.



Acceleration measured in “g's” from standing start to speed shown. Shift points indicated by “spikes” on graph.



Brakes applied at 60 mph with maximum force, but using pedal “feathering” technique to prevent wheel lockup.