

1967

It's been said that sincerest form of case, Ford's face stiff domestic sports



anticipated entry of the Firebird from Pontiac, Chevy's Camaro, and a close cousin, the Mercury Cougar. This trio would soon be joined by American Motor's Javelin and AMX.

imitation is the flattery. That being the Mustang was about to competition in the car market with the

Moreover, Mustang management realized it couldn't rest on its laurels. The Mustang's first 2+ years had been an unprecedented success, but human nature clamors for the newest, the best and the brightest.

Planning for the next generation of Mustang fell to the leadership of product planning chief Hal Sperlich who, along with Don Peterson (who would become Ford's president in 1980) were part of the original team of thinkers and planners assembled by Lee Iacocca back in the early 60s.

To offset competition that was sure to follow Mustang's early reception, Sperlich felt the next edition of the ponycar should address some of the refinements and engineering considerations overlooked in rushing the original Mustangs to market. The new model would have to handle and perform better; give greater comfort and efficiency and run quieter and smoother -- while still being rich in options. But how do you change a winner while not changing it...assuring that it will be readily identifiable with the more than one million Mustangs already on the road?

Key to the evolution was a bigger engine -- 390 cubic inches worth. And, to accommodate that muscle and the additional 130 pounds, the basic platform was slightly enlarged. To improve weight distribution, the wheelbase remained 108 inches but the front end moved forward an additional two inches; width grew from 68.2 to 70.9 inches and half-an-inch was added overhead. Serendipitously, the increased dimensions also allowed for a bit more leg room for those sitting in the rear seat. Overall, the effect would give the '67 a slightly heavier, more solid look.

Up front, the rectangular mesh grille, trimmed with chrome, became wider, taller (stretching from hood lip to bumper top) and was thrust forward to provide a longer, lower appearance. The pony remained in its corral, but the chromed horizontal bars of 1965 returned with vertical accent bars above and below. The simulated vertical gills flanking the grille opening were deleted; the headlights were swept back to the outside of the car and appeared larger thanks to the additional of color-keyed bezels; and clear parking light/turn signals were recessed further into the valance panel below the front bumper. The hood, sloping slightly downward in front, retained the familiar windsplit crease down the center; the block letters F O R D were retained on the hood lip; an improved latching mechanism was added; dual windshield wipers/washers became standard, and a "breather" feature (functional louvers) with recessed turn signal indicators were offered as part of the "Exterior Decor Group" package. Other

improvements included reversible keys and a keyless locking system; improved window and door seals to cut down wind noise, and regulators that improved side window stability and cranking.

Along the sides, the optional rocker panel molding (standard on the fastback) is smooth, not ribbed as in former years. The non-functional rear quarter panel scoops, die-cast dual units that were deeper and keyed to the body color, were standard on all models. The running pony atop the red, white and blue vertical bars logo was followed by "M U S T A N G" in block letters on all models. For V-8 models, the engine size (289 or 390) was stamped into a chromed block atop the tri-color bars.

The roof design of the hardtop and convertible were unchanged from '66, but the fastback was changed dramatically. It described a continuous gently-sloping profile from the top of the windshield to the edge of the rear deck, rather than breaking at the junction of the back window/rear deck. The five-gill side louver assembly on the roof pillars was replaced by a 12-louvered vent and the windsplit feature of the hood was carried across the roof and onto the rear deck. Five-ply vinyl convertible tops, available in black or white, used a conventional zip-out rear window but a 1967 option was a folding tempered-glass window hinged with translucent silicone that folded with the roof when lowered. Hardtop roofs were available in black or parchment, but a bright metal trim edging the vinyl at the base of the roof was a featured option. Tinted glass all around, or in the windshield only, was another option while the fastback's rear window employed tinted glass as a standard item.

The rear deck was concave with what appeared to be three taillights flanking each side. Individual bezels give the appearance of three units but, in fact, each assembly is a single unit. Center mounted gas caps, wired to the body, featured three-blade "knock-off" bars extending from the pony/tri-color emblem on the ceramic center. Among the options available in the Exterior Decor Group were chromed rear deck moldings, pop-open gas cap, and on the 2+2 fastback, a ribbed aluminum grill that covered the entire concave panel. The trunk lock was placed above the gas cap instead of in the trunk lid as on previous models. One other difference between the fastback and hardtop/convertible models was the treatment given the MUSTANG lettering. On the 2+2, a line embossed across the end of the fenders and trunk lid curved upward over the chrome lettering, inboard of the taillights' location. On the other two models, the embossed line dropped below the lettering, inboard of the taillight assemblies. The rear valance held the back-up lights and license plate bracket as well as painted rear bumper guards, color-keyed to the exterior paint, with rubber facing inserts.

Interiors in the '67s were refined to retain the sporty look and provide greater functionality. Vinyl upholstery and steering wheels were available in seven vibrant colors, matched to carpeting. Safety padding was added to the steering wheel hub, windshield pillars and dashboard.

The federal government was starting to play a bigger role in terms of automotive safety, thanks in no small measure to the publication of Ralph Nader's indictment of the American automotive industry in his book, Unsafe At Any Speed, published in 1965.

As a consequence, there were a number of federally-mandated regulations aimed at car manufacturers. Ford complied with these requirements and initiated a number of its own. In addition to the safety padding mentioned above. The Mustang introduced dual hydraulic braking, safety handles on doors, seat belt reminder lights, improved latches that kept doors closed on impact, corrosion resistant brake linings and shatterproof glass.

The steering wheel was a one-piece, three-spoke affair with horn buttons at the top of each spoke. 1967 was the first year for tilt-steering that allowed for nine different steering positions and moved to the side out of the way once the driver's door was opened. The turn signal lever had lane-change signaling capability; a four-way emergency flasher was relocated from the glove compartment to the steering column and a seat belt reminder light was a safety option. The Rally-Pac accessory package was dropped. Instead, the dashboard instrument panel incorporated two large circular dials --- a speedometer and oil pressure/ammeter gauge or optional tachometer -- straddling the steering column with three smaller dials -- fuel gauge, clock and temperature gauge -- evenly spaced above the larger pods. Above the three small gauges were a wiper switch and the brake warning light. Standard transmissions carried a four-speed shifter with chrome handle that curved backward toward the driver, topped by a black knob with engraved shift pattern. Automatic units used a T-handle with a push button on the driver's side to allow gear selection when depressed, as well as a square chromed mounting plate with semi-circular selector. Automatic transmission consoles were designed to extend from the instrument panel to the back of the front seats. Radios were mounted at the top of the console and below was a vertical sliding door that opened to a lighted storage compartment. The entire console was enhanced by a brushed aluminum finish framed by black strips. Radio options available were standard AM, AM/FM stereo or 8-track tape/AM.

The optional air conditioning system was placed behind the instrument panel with appropriately placed outlet vents to cool the interior. Controls were located at the extreme left side of the dash where the standard heater/defroster controls were placed. Gone were the galloping pony inserts on seat backs. Standard, adjustable deep-foam bucket seats appeared deeper, thanks to a pleated pattern enclosed in wrap-around vinyl-covered padded cushions. Bright metal side shields on the outboard edges completed the effect. Seat belts with front retractors and push-button release were standard.

The option-rich nature of the 1967 Mustang was never more apparent than in the car's interior. In addition to brushed aluminum door panel inserts and instrument panel bezels, the Interior Decor Group included a roof console with twin map-reading lights; molded arm rests with pull-back door handles mounted forward of the arm rest;

chromed trim strips that ran up the sides and across the top of front seat backs; bright trim on brake and clutch pedals, and a vinyl grip on automatic shift lever; among others.

More interior options included fold down rear seats in the fastbacks; full-width bench seats with fold down armrests in hardtops and convertibles; speed control capability; electric clock; a seat belt for a third passenger, and a deluxe seat belt system with front shoulder harness.

In terms of power, the prospective Mustang owner had a range of 13 engine/transmission combinations. These encompassed the standard 200ci six-cylinder with standard three-speed manual transmission to the new 390ci, four-barrel Holley, 320hp GT V-8 with four on the floor and a dual exhaust system. Power plants in between included the 289, 200hp, two-barrel V-8; the 289, 255hp four-barrel V-8, and the 289ci four-barrel High Performance V-8 rated at 271hp.

Dubbed the "Thunderbird Special," the 390 was the first of Ford's big-blocks that would find their way under the hood of the Mustang.

The Select Shift Cruise-O-Matic, which permitted both manual and automatic operation, became available in 1967. Three-speed and four-speed manual transmissions were other choices.

The front suspension was widened and redesigned resulting in a better ride. Rubber bushings at all chassis attaching points reduced friction; the lower arm was made two and one-half inches longer and the A-frame was lowered; rear suspensions continued using four leaf springs and angle-mounted shock absorbers; the parallelogram steering system with cross link and idler arm was carried over from '66 models; polyethylene-filled ball joint reduced friction and steering effort; optional front disc brakes came with a power assist and, as mentioned, the 1967 Mustang was the first to incorporate the dual hydraulic brake system with separate chambers in the master cylinder controlling front and rear brakes.

As a measure of improving overall performance, 390ci Mustangs were clocking 0-60 mph in 7.3 seconds and the quarter-mile in 15. Fully loaded with AC, stereo and electric windows, the '67 could turn in a top speed of 120 mph.

AS BEFORE, MORE SPECIAL EDITIONS

The premier performance Mustang remained the GT. The 271hp, 289ci "Hi-Po" V-8 was mandatory with the GT Equipment Option Group. When equipped with an automatic transmission, the car received special GT/A designation (which was duly noted on the red, blue or white racing stripe along the rocker panel). Other options included fog lamps mounted at each end of the horizontal grille bar; wide-oval white sidewalls; power front disc brakes; low restriction chromed dual exhaust outlets; a GT emblem on the pop-open gas cap; and a special handling package with higher rated springs and shocks, and a larger front stabilizer bar. Added to those bells and whistles was the

potential for customizing with the special ribbed back panel grille; tinted glass; rocker panel molding (that was standard on the fastback); rear deck luggage rack; front and rear color-keyed floor mats; door edge guards, and license plate frames.

Meanwhile, Carroll Shelby had even more innovations in mind when designing his special edition of the more muscular 1967 Mustang. The '67 Shelby, while maintaining outstanding handling and performance, also captured the essence of this second generation of Mustang in both styling and appearance. In a radical departure from the two previous editions, the Shelby depended heavily on fiberglass parts to dramatically insinuate an aggressive, macho machine -- taking lessons learned from in competitive racing and adapting them to road and highway.

Matching Ford's introduction of the 390ci V-8, Shelby introduced a big block 428ci engine with dual quad carburetors that produced nearly 50 more horsepower than its Mustang counterpart, while having the same physical dimensions. Called the Shelby GT500 and teamed with the GT350, 289ci V-8 carried over from 1966, the pair represented a formidable entry for sports car enthusiasts. A limited number of HT350s were factory-equipped with a Paxton supercharger that advertised a 46 percent increase in power.

Working closely with Ford designers, both the front and rear body sections were replaced with fiberglass.

The front end was pushed three inches forward giving the hood a bit of an overbite. The extended hood created a deep cowl surrounding a unique grille that featured a pair of center-mounted, seven-inch fog lights. Since the center mount caused some cooling problems and certain states enforced a minimum distance between front lights, the fog lamps were located to the outboard edges of the grille later in the model year. Stock Mustang bumpers were used without bumper guards and the front valance cutouts were enlarged to allow better radiator cooling.

The molded fiberglass hood featured a dual-channel air scoop separated by a molded windsplit that ran the length of the hood. The standard Mustang hood latch was retained and racing style pin locks added to security. Cars equipped with factory air benefited from a pair of functional louvers mounted on either side of the scoop.

Along the sides, bolt-on functional scoops (mounted behind the door and replacing the Mustang's simulated air scoops) ducted air to the rear brake assemblies. LeMans-type air extractors on roof pillars replaced the fastback's ventilation louvers. Rocker panels stripes announce either the GT350 or GT500 in lettering placed along the lower front fender. Wide racing stripes running from the hood, across the roof and over the rear deck, were dealer-added options.

The rear deck was outfitted with a "ducktail" spoiler created by fiberglass deck lid and quarter panel extensions over large horizontal Cougar taillights without chrome trim. The pop-open gas cap featured a redesigned coiled cobra at its center. The new Cobra

GT 350 or 500 emblem was found on the front grille, front fenders and rear deck. The rear valance contains back-up lights as well as cutouts for large, low-restriction, chrome-trimmed exhaust pipe extensions.

The '67 Shelbys were outfitted with larger wide-tread Goodyear tires on 15-inch steel rims with a mag-style hub cap. A 15-inch Kelsey Hayes "Mag Star" aluminum center with steel rim and 15-inch, 10-spoke cast aluminum wheel were options. Limited-slip differential, traction bars and Koni shocks were eliminated, replaced by Gabriel adjustable shocks and a thicker front stabilizer bar. Power front disc brakes and power steering were standard.

Inside, a padded racing-type roll bar was fitted with attachments for inertia-reel shoulder harnesses. Front bucket seats were complemented by an optional sculptured folding rear seat that provided a carpeted luggage deck; front and rear seat belts; a padded dash, and sun visors. Interior decor was basically Mustang's Deluxe package. An 8000 rpm tachometer and 140 mph speedometer were standard items and oil and ammeter gauges were a special Stewart Warner unit housed below the dash. The steering wheel was wooden with three spokes, round horn button and Cobra insignia on the horn cap.

Production of the Shelbys began in October, 1966 at the company's Los Angeles plant but midway in the cycle, manufacture was shifted east and by August, 1967 all assembly was being done under Ford's supervision at the A.O. Smith Company in Michigan.

Built on the West Coast or in the Midwest, Shelby sales for 1967 were 1,175 GT350s and 2,048 GT500s. The former retailed for \$3,995, while the base sticker price for its big brother was \$4,195.

It is interesting to note that Ford, in addition to the popular Gran Turismo and Shelby specials, also offered a limited edition Indy Pacesetter Special in conjunction with the 1967 Indianapolis 500 race, even though Mustang was not the official pace car. The car was a hardtop with a special dual side stripe that ran the length of the car just below the upper body line. Research does not reveal how many were produced. Also, in a special promotion by Playboy Magazine, Ford built a few Mustang convertibles in "Playboy Pink," but the special shade didn't prove that popular.

THE BOTTOM LINE

With option upon option, on top of option and base sticker prices in the \$2,500 to \$2,700 range, one would think that the Mustang would have maintained its feverish sales pace.

Records show sales of 325,853 standard hardtops, 22,228 luxury hardtops, 8,190 hardtops with bench seats, all base priced at \$2,461.46 -- 53,651 fastbacks and 17,391 luxury 2+2s carrying a \$2,592.17 sticker -- 38,751 standard convertibles, 4,848 luxury convertibles and 1,209 ragtops with bench seats selling for \$2,698.14 -- for a grand total

of 472,121 units. But, 1966 sales had been 607,568 units, so 1967 sales fell by 135,447 cars -- nearly 25 percent.

Part of this drop-off is attributable to a general automotive industry sales slowdown that year. Part was attributable to competition from spin-off entrants into the ponycar field, including an in-house contender, the Mercury Cougar. Nonetheless, despite a drop in overall sales, Mustang still outsold its closest competitor, the Chevrolet Camaro, by a 2 to 1 margin.

But a number of forces were gathering that would have a profound effect on the direction Mustang would take in the ensuing years.