

1980

As it entered its 15th experience little change, undergo rather highest level. Henry and stepped down. In was elected chairman member of the original in the early 60s, was named president.



year, Mustang would but Ford corporate would extensive changes at its Ford II decided to retire his place, Philip Caldwell and Donald Petersen, a Mustang task force back

For the Mustang, minor changes in styling were incorporated in 1980. For the first time halogen headlights, P-metric radial tires and a maintenance free battery were available. Recaro reclining front bucket seats with adjustable thigh and lumbar supports, first used on the '79 Indy Pace Car replicas, were a fairly expensive option at \$531.

The special Cobra option also benefited from the Indy experience. The 1980 Cobra inherited the front and rear spoilers; simulated hood scoop; standard 2.3 liter turbo engine; TRX wheels and tires; sport-tuned exhaust system; a grille with two horizontal, downward sloping plastic slats in place of the crosshatch pattern; CORBA window decals, and the snake decal for the hood retailing at \$88.

Ghias continued the luxury theme with color-keyed seatbelts, mirrors and bodyside molding. The hatchback added C-pillar trim; bucket seats with headrests; luxury steering wheel,; thick-pile carpeting; roof-mounted assist handles and leather or cloth-and-vinyl upholstery in six colors.

Two-doors were provided with a Carriage Roof option that resembled a convertible roof. Hatchbacks were given the "Sport Option" that meant a sporty steering wheel; styled steel wheels with trim rings; black rocker panel and window moldings, and bodyside moldings. Roof-mounted luggage carriers and cargo covers were also available for hatchback installation.

The trusty 302ci engine probably reflected the biggest change. It was downsized to a 255ci capable of a mere 199hp and only available with automatic transmission. This new block did enable Ford to comply with CAFE regulations. Other engine choices remained the same, with the 2.3 liter, four-cylinder as standard or turbocharged, or the 3.3 liter six-cylinder.

In its 15 years, the Mustang had proven the adage of what goes around comes around -- it went from a smart little four-seat sports car, to an overweight muscle machine, back to an efficient, economical car with flair. What would the future hold?

One significant indication was a decision by Ford President Donald Peterson to establish a Special Vehicle Operations unit . SVO would be instrumental in developing Ford's role in racing and bringing performance technology to future production models. Another indication that Ford was contemplating a return to competition was its IMSA (International Motor Sports Association) "concept car" that toured the show circuit that

season. Finally, a McLaren Mustang was introduced toward the end of 1980. Only 250 were hand built at a hefty \$25,000 a copy, so its appeal outside the racing community was extremely limited. Obviously something was in the wind at Ford Motor Company.

Turbulence in world oil markets conspired to impact industry sales for 1980. Mustang output fell to 271,322 units while sticker prices continued to rise. The two-door sedan topped the field at 128,893 units; followed by the hatchback Sport - 98,497; the two-door Ghia - 23,647, and the Ghia hatchback at 20,285. Prices ranged from the basic two-door at \$5,338 to the Ghia hatchback at \$5,935.