

Mustang Memories - 1965
by Rick Feibusch

SAN FRANCISCO: I was a car crazy sixteen-year-old, growing up in the San Francisco suburb of Menlo Park, when Ford introduced the Mustang in the summer of 1964. I read all of the car magazines, built the AMT 3-in-1 models kits of my favorite rides, and even pumped gas and worked the lube rack at the corner Shell station.

My best buddy, Barry, was a bit older and came from a family that had the financial means to supply him with a new convertible as an early graduation present. The two of us went car shopping immediately.

First stop was at the Plymouth agency, where there was a big white Fury in the showroom with a monster 426, short ram, dual-quad V-8 bolted to an industrial strength four-speed gearbox. Save for the tach and a two-foot-long floor shifter with a knob as big as a cue ball, this was your basic plain vanilla sedan - white with a blue interior. We "wuz gonna" be the Kings of the El Camino Real!

This is when Barry's folks dropped the big one. You know, one of those strings that always seem to be attached to such magnanimous a gift. Barry's younger sister Terri was to not only going to be driving the car a few days a week, she was to be included in the process of selecting it. Very bad news. The white Fury was dismissed as a banal "taxicab," as was a really cool, dark turquoise Tri-power GTO. The girl just had to have a Mustang, or promised to whine incessantly 'till Daddy bought her a car of her own.

Now Barry and I had looked at Mustangs at their introduction. Most had wimpy little Falcon sixes or a 260 cube version of the Fairlane's 221 V-8. Cruisi-matics abounded, except on the "loss leader specials" that were powered by an inline six and three-speed transmission - stuff that performed like an Econoline van. Many were painted white, turquoise or poppy orange and had white tops. There it was, the ultimate "girls car". The local Ford salesman admitted that the first cars had been rushed to the dealerships in pretty much Falcon spec but told us to come on down and check out what options had become available since the first deliveries.

Upon re-examination, it looked as though there were a number of new and interesting additions in the performance department - so Barry decided to order the fastest one he could slip past his dad. By the time specifications of the new car had been negotiated, the 1965 models were in the showrooms and we had won, at least, some concessions. Barry could have a V-8, stick shift and a Rally-Pac, but the car HAD to be red with a white top. Not a bad trade off. It was delivered with a 225 horse 289 and a sturdy little four-speed.

Now this was a car with real pick-up - - No, not the kind to be found in the 426 Fury or the GTO - We could go to any of the myriad teen clubs on the San Francisco Peninsula and leave with a careful of giggling blond schoolgirls. It was amazing! Girls that wouldn't have given us the time of day in a classroom found us as appealing as Sean Connery and Tony Curtis in the red Mustang ragtop. Who needs a REALLY fast car anyway? This

was great !!

The car was no slouch as a street racer either. Though not competitive with big-blocks, it would go toe-to-toe with a 283, four-speed powered '55 or '56 Chevy, the standard issue kid-rod of the day. Sister Terri hated to shift so she would start off in third and leave it there all day. The car never complained. It was lucky that she only used it two days a week.