



Thunderbird news

SEPTEMBER 2010 VOLUME 12, #9

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NEW CAR NEWS

First Look: 2012 Ford Mustang Boss 302 Laguna Seca

NEW CAR NEWS First Look: 2011 Ford Explorer

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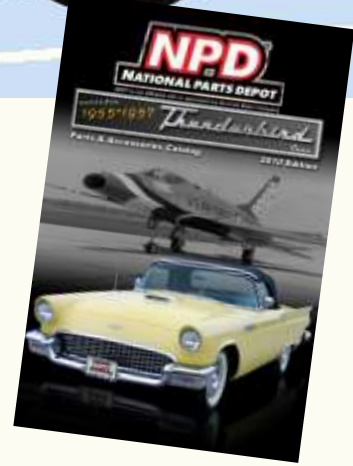
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EDITOR'S REPORT



HILL CLIMB HILL IN SEPTEMBER 24th-25th

On Sept 24th-25th I'm taking my Model A Speedster to Spindale in North Carolina [South of North Carolina] for a Model A "hill climb" race. Last year, I was in second place for 3/10th of a second. At that time I had original, thinner tires and I burned rubber for 20 feet. This year, I had wider tires [non-peeling tires], and I hope to be in first place.

I may be driving a big van with my son in law and my daughter. Felix and Daisy Hernandez are coming with us.

I'll be leaving Miami on Wednesday the 22nd early in the morning, returning on late Sunday the 26th or maybe the 27th.

MORE NEWS ABOUT THE MILLE MIGLIA

An our last meeting, there were several members [8] interested in including a week's tour of northern Italy with the Mille Miglia event. It can be done easily since, I did that seven years ago with all my family [children, grand children, etc.], and I have all bus and hotel contacts.

We could begin in Brescia, after the race's end, visiting the northern lakes, Venetia, Modena [Ferrari cars], Pisa, and Milan. We could do the tour in a week. I could use my travel agent card and all the commissions will be reverted to the members of the tour, we would have a bus just for us, and we won't have to get very early in the morning as those package tours usually do, and we could stop anywhere we wanted.

Race and tour dates will be approximately May 10 to May 23rd 2011. We will have two Italian translators [Leo & Ernie Saladino].

As soon as I get approved for the race I'll make all the arrangements.

ANYONE INTERESTED? If we get 20 to 25 persons we would be able to do such a trip at a very low cost.

Rooms in Brescia are almost impossible to get unless we make the reservations no later than September, because of the race. Please Let me know if you are intereteste now in order to keep count of the number of persons interested, and I'll keep you informed. I can't guarantee the Brescia room reservations if you don't inform me before Sept. 15th.

We will invite other car clubs to join us.

I'm still trying to get a sponsorship from Ford, and also several others companies. I would hope that I could interest some of them as sponsors, it will be the first time in 53 years that an American car races against the European cars in that race, YES 53 YEARS. The only car approved to race against the Ferraris, Maseratis, Mercedes, Alfa Romeos, etc., is the Thunderbird, [in fact, there is another American car that is approved, it is the 1954 Chrysler Saratoga, but I believe there is not a single car of its type remaining in the whole U.S.]

The race will be on May 12th-15th 2011. I'll probably leave for Italy by May 8th in order to pick up the car in Genoa and drive it up to Brescia.

Brescia is a town in north Italy that is more or less between Milan and Venice [45 minutes from Milan and 60 minutes from Venice]

Call me [Felipe 786 554-5200]

CTCI DRIVE

Have you joined the CTCI yet?

We need to have all the members of our club enrolled in the CTCI. Remember that we are a CTCI branch. Please fill out the application and mail it directly.

Felipe Cos

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

Our next monthly meeting will be on September 15th in Daisy's home with a Cuban Night, Miami Lakes 7.00 p.m.]

Dinner is \$12.00 per person, including wine. See you there!

Please call for reservations. Daisy 305 613-6775

CLASSIC THUNDERBIRD CLUB OF SOUTH FLORIDA CTCI CHAPTER #114 SEPTEMBER 2010 VOLUME 12 No.9

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This Newsletter may have some misspellings and mistakes, but it is written with my heart. I could write it without errors in Spanish, but only a handful of you would be able to read it.

Please help me to make it even better.

Felipe Cos Founder & Editor
George Bishopric - Proofing

Photos by Felipe Cos

INTERNET PAGE

Have you seen our internet page? We need to update it. Does anyone know how to do it?

If you can update it call me.

Our page is as follow: **THUNDERBIRDCLUB.US**

You may have your own individual email, mine is as follow: **FCOS@THUNDERBIRDCLUB.US** If you want your own just send a note to me. Please follow the previous format in doing so. It is free, no charge. This is another advantage of your club. Any ideas for the page?

This page doesn't cost the club a penny for yearly subscriptions, I'm doing it through my business company web.

Please call **Felipe** at (305) 661-5170

THUNDERBIRD INFORMATION SUPER HIGHWAY:

Take note that we have changed our web page name, it is now **WWW.THUNDERBIRDCLUB.US** to get there don't look at it with a search engine, look at it only with www.Thunderbirdclub.us

Our Club's web page: _____ **www.thunderbirdclub.us**
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 Ford racing: _____ www.fordacing.com
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HAPPY BIRTHDAYS FOR SEPTEMBER

CECILIA MERANDI	5th
LAURA RUSH	6th
NIVARDO MORA	13th
NORM GABE	15th
CONNIE DANLUCK	17th
JOE CRISAFULLE	20nd

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AACA Ft Lauderdale region-President Ted Plush 954-491-5765

VMCCA Sun Coast Chapter. President David Bobbitt 305- 661-1340
bobbitt@comcast.net

Model A Club: Tom Zannis 305-281-9192

Car show promoter: Russ Gagliano 954-560-5412 merklvr@msn.com

AACA Miami Region President Greg Paiewonsky 305-724-7639

Car show promoter: Gerry Perez. 786 344-4228 email
gerrycarshow@bellsouth.com

Magig Mustang Club, Frank Alonso 305 775-3307, fadatec@aol.com

Muscle Stangs of Miami Luis Rodriguez 305 323-1649



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Second Friday, Hollywood Beach Boardwalk Cruise Night 7 to 10 PM 954 779-1420

Every Friday from 4:00 to 7:00 pm at 8th St. & 30th Ave in front of Home Depot in Miami.

Every Sunday Crabby Jack's

Every Friday night a Cruise night reunion at Towers Shop in Davie (595 & University) This is one of the biggest cruise nights in South Florida. (from 5:00 pm to 10:00)

First Saturday of every month, BETSY (old Fuddruckers) from 6:00 pm to 10:00

First Saturday steak & Shake in Sawgrass Mills mall 6:00 to 9:30

Saturday of every month Steak-N-Shake, Sample Rd. and U.S. 1 behind Wal Mart. Coconut Creek. 8:00 to 12:00.

Second Saturday of every month the Dania Beach Cruise Night. Free admission 6:00 to 10:00 for information 954 924-3626

Second Saturday Car meet at Shorty's 2401 N.W. 87th Ave Jack 305 409-2614

Second Saturday from 5:00 to 9:00 in Homestead at Krome Ave

Third Saturday Denny's Restaurant Bird Rd, between 86th & 87th Ave

Third Saturday Roadhouse Restaurant Sunset Dr. & S.W. 117th Ave

Every Saturday a car show from 6.00 to 11.00 pm at K-Mart in 49th and 14th Ave Hialeah. Only cars 20 yrs or older, No charge

First Sunday of every month: Downtown Hollywood car show, 10:00 to 3:00. Dave 954 926-3377

Every Sunday at Crabby Jacks, 7001 Federal Hwy, 2 miles North of Yamato, Boca Raton. 6:00 to 9:00 pm

Also night cruise at Coral Way & 97th Ave, 5:30 to 8:00 305 553-2228

Third and fifth Saturday of the month from 3:00 to 7:30 at Wall's Ice Cream in 8075 S.W. 67th Ave

Third Saturday of the month, cruise-in at Miami Springs Circle 7:00 to 10:00 P.M.

Third Saturday; at Gotrocks Restaurant, Hillsborough and Wine Rd. in Coconut Creek from 6 to 9

Third Saturday at Dairy Queen Tamarac Square North of McNab Rd. 6:00 to 9:00

Third Saturday OC's Raw at 18415 S. Dixie Hwy 6:00 to 10:00

Also Miami Wings. 19145 S. Dixie Hwy. 5 to 10 Info. Gerry 305 786-344-4228

Second Tuesday at World Ford 15551 South Dixie Hwy 7:00 to 10:00 pm Ford cars only Francisco Mederos 786 229-7361

Third Saturday at the Cove in 10730 NW 25th St Miami. Gerry 786-344-4228

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FUTURE EVENTS

SEPT. 24- 25TH HILL CLIMB HILL IN NORTH CAROLINA

DEC. 4TH HOLIDAY PARTY AT DAISY'S HOME

DEC. 10TH SUGAR TRAIN CLEWISTON

JAN 23RD OUR TROPICAL CAR SHOW

FEB. 12-19, 2011 HEMMINGS MOTOR NEWS CRUISE EASTERN CARIBBEAN

MARCH ??? MISTERY TRAIN

MAY 10TH-22ND MILLE MIGLIA TOUR IN ITALY

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AUGUST 24-28TH 2011 CTCI REGIONAL CONVENTION OMAHA NEBRASKA

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Once the poster child of the traditional-SUV segment, the Ford Explorer is now a front-wheel-drive, four-cylinder, unibody crossover -- at least in base trim. It may be a strange and dramatic departure from the Explorer of yesteryear, but Ford execs are confident the new strategy can halt the icon's cliff dive from 445,157 sales in 2000 to 31,864 through the first six months of 2010. [Fuel economy](#), they say, is the reason the segment has stalled. That explains the four-cylinder base engine, a 2.0-liter turbocharged unit generating 237 hp and 250 lb-ft of torque. The numbers aren't official yet, but a 30 percent increase in fuel economy over last year's V-6 is expected, which should yield 18 mpg in the city and 26 mpg on the highway.

Opting for all-wheel-drive requires stepping up to the 3.5-liter V-6, which makes 290 hp and 255 lb-ft of torque. Fuel economy for that powerplant should come in at 17 [mpg](#) in the city and 23 mpg on the highway. Both engines use a six-speed automatic transmission. There is no V-8, but we anticipate a turbocharged V-6 with up to 400 hp will eventually arrive.

Exploring new segments

[Ford](#) is making no attempt to hide the fact that the new Explorer is a totally different type of vehicle. This fresh Explorer, they say, does everything buyers have demanded from the current model while improving on comfort and fuel economy. "We kind of convinced ourselves that there were two kinds of utility vehicles: body-on-frames and crossovers," said Jim Farley, group vice president of global marketing, sales, and service. "But frankly, a lot of customers don't see it like that. People just want to tow, they want to go off-road, they want to do things they sometimes didn't plan to do."

During the reveal, executives and engineers used the word "capability" almost as often as they did "Explorer," yet the smaller engines and a fuel-economy focus come with undeniable compromises. [Maximum towing capacity](#) drops from 7115 pounds to 5000 pounds while the four-cylinder tops out at 2000 pounds of towing. The low-range transfer case follows the V-8 out the door, but there is a new terrain management system -- essentially adaptive throttle, torque bias,

and stability and traction control -- with settings for snow, mud, sand, and pavement, along with hill-descent control. Compared to the outgoing truck, the Explorer is 5.4 inches wider and 3.7 inches longer, but is 0.9 inches lower, while maintaining about 8 inches of ground clearance. Despite the size

increase, weight has been reduced (by an unspecified amount) with the switch to unibody construction.

A brand-new look

In addition to departing from the traditional SUV formula, Ford has also left behind the classic boxy style of the Explorer. Contrary to [Ford's](#) claims, we don't see a drop of influence from previous Explorers in the new truck's styling. With the rest of the pillars blacked out to blend in with the glass, the thick, slanted, body-color C-pillar creates a cantilevered look for the roof. Darkened rocker panels that wrap around the wheel wells visually lift the Explorer while reducing the height of the body sides. The grille draws inspiration from the Taurus and will come in either a brushed-aluminum look or body color. The shapes and details are all attractive, but taken as a whole, the Explorer's design seems rather unharmonious. Base models ride on 17-inch stand upscale, feature-packed interior [Ford](#) has been aiming for Audi-like levels of fit and finish on its interiors for a while now, but the Explorer is the first product where such a claim has actual credence. Soft-touch materials on the dash provide for tight fits with adjacent panels while details like real metal speaker grilles add a premium finish. The Explorer will be the third Ford product (following the Edge and the Lincoln MKX) to offer the company's new touch-screen infotainment system. Called MyFord Touch, it integrates navigation, audio, climate, and phone functions into an eight-inch touch screen while reducing the number of physical controls. The instrument cluster (when equipped with MyFord Touch) features two small LCD screens flanking an analog speedometer. The left screen shows vehicle information while the right display accesses limited information from the center screen.

Seating for seven is standard with an option for center bucket seats that reduce capacity to six passengers. Options include adaptive cruise control, blind-spot warning, parallel



parking assist, and a power folding third-row seat. A new active [safety feature](#) called curve control is standard. It decelerates the vehicle when understeer is about to send you off the cloverleaf exit ramp. With the Explorer, Ford is also the first s over a larger area. In this case, Ford says the inflatable belts create a surface area that's five times larger than the typical seat belt. The bags are in the shoulder belt while the inflator is in the buckle.

manufacturer to offer inflatable rear seatbelts. Like airbags, the optional seatbelts (for the outboard seats of the second row) reduce trauma by spreading impact forces over a larger area. In this case, Ford says the inflatable belts create a surface area that's five times larger than the typical seat belt. The bags are in the shoulder belt while the inflator is in the buckle.

The Explorer lives another day

The demise of SUVs like the Dodge Durango and Chevy Trailblazer is proof enough that the Explorer's reinvention is critical to survival. However, [Ford's](#) own lineup provides enough competition to call the Blue Oval's product strategy into question. Along with the Flex, the company now has two large crossovers that seat seven and are priced around \$30,000. We'll see how buyers perceive the Explorer's role once it arrives in dealerships toward the end of 2010.





Owner story: Back in the 'Bird

By James Russell

Ron Colerick grew up in Rapid City, S.D., the son of a hobby store owner. His talent on the slot car track took him to New York City, where he won a 1963 Ford Thunderbird Sports Roadster on national TV after competing in a slot car race contest.



Stirling Moss shows off the grand prize in the 1963 Ford/Aurora Grand Nationals: a 1963 Ford Thunderbird Sports Roadster. (Photo courtesy of Bob Beers)

Bob Beers is an avid slot car hobbyist, specializing in Aurora HO cars. He collects anything and everything related to the hobby that he can get his hands on. His passion eventually led him to purchase the same T-Bird won by Colerick in 1963, who hadn't seen the car in more than 40 years.

In 2009, Beers reunited the car and former pint-sized racer.

In the early 1960s, the slot car hobby was sweeping the nation. To capitalize off the popularity, Ford and the Aurora Plastics Corporation, which manufactured the popular HO slot cars, sponsored a series of HO slot car races in hobby stores across the country, with thousands of boys and girls competing for the chance to win a grand prize on national TV.



Johnny Carson congratulates Colerick after the 12-year-old's victory in the Ford/Aurora race final. (Photo courtesy of Bob Beers)

In 1963, the second year of the contest, 12-year-old Colerick was determined to win. "We had races every Friday night and all day Saturday," Colerick told the Rapid City Journal for a 2003 article. He moved through the regional contests, eventually landing a spot in the final race - televised on August 20, 1963, on the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson.

Colerick wound up with the most difficult lane slot, but his practice paid off and he won the 20-lap race by several laps. Stirling Moss, the famous race car driver, handed Colerick the keys to his prize: A brand-new '63 Ford Thunderbird Sports Roadster.

"Neat, man. I'll let my dad drive it sometimes," he allegedly told Moss when he got the keys, according to the book "Aurora Slot Cars," by Thomas Graham.

Colerick eventually sold his white Thunderbird to his father, who later traded it for another Thunderbird.

By the 1980s, the car had made its way to Seattle and it needed a serious restoration. A restorer in San Diego purchased the car to return it to its original glory, but he had no idea about its history.



Stirling Moss shows off the grand prize in the 1963 Ford/Aurora Grand Nationals: a 1963 Ford Thunderbird Sports Roadster. (Photo courtesy of Bob Beers)

"By the time it was in Seattle, all of its history was buried," said Bob Beers, a.k.a. "Mr. Aurora."

The restorer sent the VIN to the Ford Thunderbird registry, and only then was the car's story unearthed after several decades. Intrigued by its history, the restorer wanted to purchase Colerick's contest trophies to go with the car. He contacted the former racer, still in South Dakota, and learned that the trophies had already been purchased by Beers.

The restorer wanted the trophies, but Beers wanted the car. Five years of back-and-forth ensued, with Beers eventually winning out.

"I called him last summer and caught him at Pebble Beach



salivating over a Ferrari," said Beers. Catching him at the right time did the trick, and Beers was able to ship his new T-Bird back to Connecticut.

"I'm an Aurora slot car buff, and this is a unique part of the history," he said.



Bob Beers, right, helped reunite the '63 T-Bird with Colerick, left, in 2009. (Photo courtesy of Bob Beers)

Beers called Colerick, and told him his old car was now in Beers' garage. He talked him into coming east for a slot car show last fall, and Beers had a chance to reunite the two.

"We had a great reunion of Ron Colerick and his car," Beers recalled. "He was able to drive it for the first time since 1966!"

But Beers is quick to note that there's no chance Colerick will take the car back to South Dakota with him.

"It's part of my collection now," he explained. "If I did sell it, I'd be looking to replace it. So what's the point!"

Beers is the author of "The Complete Color Guide to Aurora H.O. Slot Cars," which tells the story of the Ford/Aurora races of the early 1960s in greater detail. To order a copy, visit http://pages.cthome.net/MR_AURORA/orders.html.



Thunderousbird:T-Birds' Racing Past

While Ford mostly played down the two-seat T-bird's sporting nature early on, hot-blooded owners couldn't overlook the performance potential of such a little car fitted with such a big, powerful V-8. As early as February 1955, Thunderbirds started showing up at sports

car racing events like the 12-hour endurance classic at Sebring, Fla., where one finished 37th.

Driver Chuck Daigh, in his factory-sponsored and highly-modified Thunderbird, won the Standing Start Acceleration Run in the Daytona Beach Speed Trials with a speed of 88.779 mph.

A year later, racer Chuck Daigh dropped a bored-out V-8 into a streamlined Thunderbird and took it to Daytona Beach's annual Speed Weeks trials to combat a Corvette team spearheaded by Zora Arkus-Duntov. Daigh's T-bird initially ran faster than Duntov's Vette before both men's cars were disqualified for using engines bored out too far. Daigh then returned to the beach with a stock-spec 312 V-8 fed by dual four-barrel carbs and recorded an 88.779-mph average for the standing-mile.

A truly thunderous four-car T-bird team, specially prepped by DePaolo Engineering in Long Beach, California, went back to Daytona in February 1957, this time with full, unabashed factory backing from Dearborn. Two cars were kept relatively stock in appearance, though they were powered by stroked versions of Ford's optional supercharged Y-block V-8. Known as "Battlebirds," the other two were treated to major modifications inside and out. One was fitted with a big, stroked 430-cubic-inch Lincoln V-8; the other was powered by a 312-cube Y-block stroked to 348 cubes.





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The 1957 Ford "Battlebird" and Driver Danny Eames on the beach at Daytona.

While the Lincoln-powered version was later destroyed, its #98 running mate was restored in the early '90s by classic Thunderbird expert Gil Baumgartner for Ford performance collector Bo Cheadle. Looking every bit as wild as it did when it was kicking up sand in February 1957, Cheadle's seriously streamlined Battlebird features a Hilborn-injected Y-block, a Jaguar four-speed gearbox and a Halibrand quick-change rear-end.

Daigh drove the #98 car at Daytona in 1957 and managed an amazing 205-mph flying mile. But he couldn't make the mandatory return pass due to engine trouble, leaving the other Battlebird to cop the official flying-mile title, averaging 160.356 for its two-way run.

At that point the sky appeared to be the limit for Ford's highest-flying Thunderbirds. But then came the Automobile Manufacturers Association's "ban" on factory racing involvement, a decree that in the summer of 1957 convinced Ford chief Robert McNamara to put the kibosh on experimental engineering shenanigans like the Battlebirds.

Like a Phoenix: A Reborn 'Bird

After 43 model runs and 4.3 million cars, Dearborn's long-running Thunderbird legacy came to an end on Thursday, September 4, 1997. A red LX coupe, the last of the breed, rolled off Ford's Lorain assembly line that evening then was donated to the Classic Thunderbird Club International. Sagging sales said enough, and this time there would be no listening to nostalgic pleas to preserve a historic legend like the hue and cry that had saved the Mustang from an unpopular transformation nearly 10 years before.

"Of course we received a ton of calls when we finally made the announcement," said Ford Division public affairs man Jim Bright. "But once the decision was made, there was no turning back. Ford just let the Thunderbird run its course." The company also opted not to formally bid bye-bye 'Birdie. According to one Lorain source, the moment was marked only by "a quiet affair for the plant workers."



A reborn two-seat Thunderbird appeared first in concept car form during the North American International Auto Show in Detroit in January 1999. It debuted as a production model for 2002.

That Dearborn officials seemingly shed nary a tear had nothing to do with heartlessness; they already were looking ahead to a new beginning. 'Bird watchers were officially informed of a planned

reincarnation in May 1998. "A sporty Thunderbird will once again grace America's roads," announced Ford Automotive Operations president Jac Nasser. "With the new T-bird, we promise to bring back the magic of owning and driving an American icon."

Just how important was preserving this particular icon? "The Thunderbird has an emotional hold on the American public that spans decades and generations," added Nasser in January 1999. "This timeless classic is an important part of Ford Motor Company's heritage and, indeed, this country's automotive history."

A reborn two-seat Thunderbird appeared first in concept car form during the North American International Auto Show in Detroit in January 1999. The work of Ford Design chief J Mays, this concept clearly honored classic roots. "Simple shapes combined with timeless materials and textures convey a relaxed, confident look and a feel that is the true essence of the original Thunderbird," explained Mays. Something old, something new also was part of Mays' plan. "It's not retro," he said. "While the concept is loaded with heritage cues, it is a decidedly modern machine."

When it debuted as a 2002 model, Mays' pride and joy certainly brought back memories. But sales again were limited by its highly personal nature, inspiring Ford to once more bid farewell to the Thunderbird three years later.

A LITTLE HISTORY MILLE MIGLIA

-submitted by Franklin Jones

Felipe mentioned in our last newsletter that it has been 53 years since an American competed in the Mille Miglia. Well as Paul Harvey might say, now for the rest of the story. In 1950 Ak Miller hand built a car, El Caballo De Hierro (The Iron Horse) to compete in the Mexican La Carrera Panamericana. He came in eighth overall in 1953 and fifth in the brutal race in 1954 behind the Ferraris that cost over twenty times to build than his "Hot Rod"

Wanting a more prestigious event and one truly played on the world stage he decided to build a car to compete in the Mille Miglia, at that time one of the biggest races in the world. He fashioned his aluminum bodied car around a Kurtis chassis and used the powerful Chrysler Hemi as a power plant.

El Caballo II was a marvel of ingenuity and very powerful but did not enjoy success in the race. In 1957 he had to retire early due to brake problems. This was the last time an American competed in this famous event.

I admire Felipe's quest and hope with all my pistons that he can find a sponsor so we can once again show the flag at the Mille Miglia. To even compete in this venue is a tremendous accomplishment. I feel that the reason the boys at Ford are not jumping at the chance to get an example of American iron in the race is because they did not have the vision to bring forth the original idea. It will be a great day if once again an American can rub fenders and lay some rubber down on this Valhalla of European racing.



EXCITING NEWS!

At the last meeting plans were made to attend the to Fort Meyer's Mystery Train Tour which includes a weekend getaway package in November and in December to attend the Sugar Tour in Clewiston for another weekend getaway. The annual Holiday Party will be at our house this year. Hopefully we can get Ernie to wear the famous Santa Clause outfit! I have included information on both these activities below.

Holiday Party

The annual Holiday Party will be at our house this year. Hopefully we can get Ernie to wear the famous Santa Clause outfit

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at the Clewiston Inn. A beautifully restored classical revival, the Inn offers a perfect blend of country elegance and modern comfort. Nestled in the heart of South Florida's sugar cane country and on the shore of Lake Okeechobee, the Clewiston Inn provides visitors with a peaceful setting and welcoming retreat. You're certain to feel at home in one of the charming 57 guest rooms or suites. The Everglades Lounge, with its unique wrap-around mural of the Florida Everglades, is an ideal setting for relaxation and conversation.

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During the summer they have this special I am hoping we can get the same special during our November trip: Spend a fun evening on the Murder Mystery Dinner Train (Wed-Sun) and one night at the Courtyard by Marriott (additional nights available) *per person dbl occupancy - includes breakfast buffet at hotel - does not include taxes or gratuities Special Hotel Package Pricing Available for \$99.00.

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A VISIT TO THE PORSCHE MUSEUM

By George Bishopric

So, what do you do when you have two meetings in Europe, one in Hannover, a second in Salzburg, and you'd really like to see friends in Paris... with a couple of days between? This month, I have one special recommendation, another for the next.

As you know, after Thunderbirds, I have a second car passion in my life, Porsche. I think I became aware of the 356 early on, as I remember at about age four asking my father what that funny car was with the odd name that we would see from time to time at the city tennis courts. He said it was French, and pronounce, "Porsshay."

The Porsche museum in Stuttgart houses a very impressive collection of cars. The building is quite dramatic, almost like a flying building of reflective aluminum and concrete, suspended in place. Not only does it house a very impressive collection of cars, but the display is unique. The odd angles of the exterior carry through, and the way the walls and floors are oriented means you always see the displays well, and there isn't the feeling of being in a parking lot. Even better, cars are not displayed in tacky "drive in restaurant" "beach blanket bingo day" or

"Ernie's Fillin' Station Dioramas." What would you do for a 505 speedster, anyway? Stage James Dean's death? It's also interesting to see how Porsche presents its history in relation to current models and company directions. Do you think the Porsche Cayenne is a mistake, that Porsche shouldn't build trucks??? They have a fire truck and a tractor for you. Do you think the four seat Panamera is a stretch? The first 911 prototype is there, and the back seat is far more useful than the production car's.....what you make of the 928 station wagon, with Saturn-coupe half rear doors is up to you. I'd take two.

All Porsche design themes date to a race car built in 1939, and the aluminum body is the first thing you see on entering the display. Right next to it, however, is an electric motor, designed by Ferry Porsche senior in the early 20th century, designed to be recharged by a small gasoline engine. Porsche wants you to call this the first gasoline-electric hybrid, and you can bet they are headed that way. If not, you have to wonder why Toyota had (not kidding) a plug-in hybrid model circling the block.....all it needed was a tail fin....

Enjoy the photos.....more next month.
GEORGE BISHOPRIC



911 Prototype- Note the notched roof, and comfy bigger back seat.



The First Gasoline-Electric Hybrid Drive???



The First Porsche #356



A Pair of Early 356s (last photo)



The Rome Berlin Racer that Started it all.....1939



The Porsche Museum, Stuttgart



Dial your odometer back to 1969, one of the most contentious years in the battle between the original ponycars, the Chevrolet Camaro and Ford Mustang. By that year, Ford president Semon "Bunkie" Knudsen had poached designer Larry Shinoda from General Motors to massage the design that would house the Mustang's GT40-derived, 290-horsepower V-8. The displacement limit in the SCCA Trans Am series was 5.0 liters, which stoked the fire with the General's rival Camaro Z/28 coupe. American collective memory, however, would remember it as the 302, the cubic-inch figure that gave rise to the Boss 302 Mustang.

It was built for the track, with serious anti-roll bars, front disc brakes, and the ability to sprint to 60 in six seconds flat. But Knudsen, formerly of GM, ordered a version be built for mass consumption as a way to smoke Camaro drivers at stoplights. His dictum? "Make it absolutely the best-handling street car available on the American market!" Though the Boss lost to the Roger Penske's Trans Am Camaro team in '69, it took the trophy one year later with Parnelli Jones behind the wheel. The 302, known for its awesome power and sound, as well as Shinoda-designed tape graphics that set it apart from mere Mustangs, had taken its place in the pantheon of ponycars.

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This resurrection of the storied Boss nomenclature is no mere graphics package or marketing ploy. The Mustang team channeled the spirit of that original project to create a true racecar for the road, employing a holistic approach that enhanced, upgraded, lightened and optimized the whole car for the purpose of vanquishing its archrival on race circuits like Laguna Seca. Oh, and that rival? Ford is no longer sparring with the Camaro. It's gunning for BMW's M3.

On paper, the cooking-grade Mustang GT with the Brembo Brake package looks M3-competitive in terms of raw numbers. To improve the odds of its live-axle pony in a full-on track attack, Ford further enhanced the chassis by raking it, lowering the front by 0.4 inch and the rear by 0.04 inch, and fitting old-school, five-position adjustable shocks and struts. Damping alterations are made using a screwdriver on the top of the rod from under the hood and in the trunk, as one did on the Gabriel shocks back in '69/'70. Position 1 is softer than the stock GT, 2 mimics the stock GT, and 3 to 5 are progressively sharper. The electric power steering can be adjusted for three levels of assist from the instrument cluster menu. Traction, stability, and anti-lock control systems are also reprogrammed for the Boss's track-star mission. Special lightweight 19-inch wheels shod in Pirelli PZero summer rubber frame the same 14.0-inch Brembo front/stock 11.8-inch rear brakes, equipped with Boss-tuned friction materials and special vented brake shields. Even the flexible brake lines have been reinforced so they expand 30 percent less than the GT's, to preserve a reassuringly firm brake-pedal feel. While the principal improvement is meant to be in fade resistance and pedal feel, stopping distances from 60 mph are said to shrink by three feet. On the skidpad, Ford claims the Boss is the first non-SVT Mustang to exceed 1.0g lateral grip.



Modifications under the hood are modest, but effective. A new variable-runner-length intake manifold, and new cams controlled by the same variable timing mechanism, conspire to broaden the torque curve and boost power output from 412 to 440 hp, while peak torque actually drops from 390 to 380. But even better than how it goes is how it sounds. Removing 11 pounds of sound deadening material and a retuning of the GT's "sound tube" (which works like a speaker broadcasting induction vibes at the firewall), admit plenty of intake music. A true quad-exhaust takes care of the rest, but we're not talking about four chrome tips out the back. This setup sends most of the exhaust through the typical dual exhaust system, but two additional pipes positioned opposite the crossover pipe lead to just ahead of the rear tires, sending a small amount of exhaust through a series of metal plates. They're mainly tuning elements, but they result in a unique aural experience, and the plates can be removed and replaced with aftermarket exhaust-dump valves for racing when no muffling is required -- or desired.

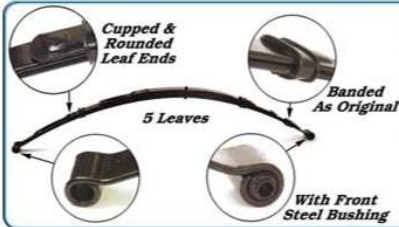
The power flows aft through a racing-style clutch with upgraded friction materials to a close-ratio six-speed manual, topped by a short-throw shifter, and on back to your choice of limited-slip differentials spinning 3.73:1 gearing. There's a traditional multi-plate locker with carbon-fiber plates, or a Torsen torque-sensing unit. Expect 0 to 60 times in the very low fours.

To set the Boss apart visually, chief designer Darrell Behmer took inspiration from Shinoda's '69 production car as well as the Bud Moore/Parnelli Jones race cars. The front fascia and grille include blocked-off fog lamp openings and a splitter, which is credited with trimming front lift considerably, cribbed from the Boss 302R racecar. A spoiler in the rear complements the look and aero effect of the front spoiler. Finally, the C-stripe and roof panel are painted white or black to coordinate with the chosen paint color (Competition Orange, Performance White, Kona Blue Metallic, Yellow Blaze Metallic or Race Red). Inside, there's a unique steering wheel wrapped in Alcantara, cloth seats with suede-like inserts for lateral grip, and optional Recaro buckets designed by the Mustang team for the GT500 that come bundled with the Torsen diff.

There will be two models, the totally streetable Boss 302, and the track-optimized Boss 302 Laguna Seca, of which a small run has been planned. When the Boss 302 hits the streets, the gauntlet will be considered thrown down once again, but this time, it's likely not just the Camaro



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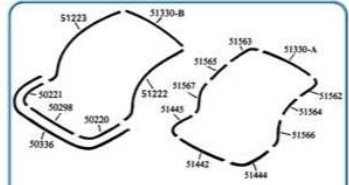
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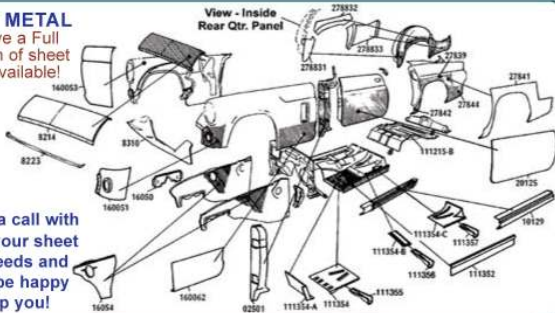
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