

Me and My Mustangs: Fifty Years and More

By Philip Williams

Fifty years ago, in April 1969, my parents and I went to Brondes Ford in Toledo, Ohio, and found a gray 1965 Mustang 2+2 with a black interior, an AM radio, and a heater. It had the 289 V-8 with a three-speed manual transmission, no power steering, and no power brakes. They paid \$1,500 for it. Somewhere in my box of pictures I have one of me standing next to it, but for now this stock photo of one will have to do.

Thus began my fifty-year love affair with the Mustang. In truth, though, I was smitten five years before when they were introduced with great fanfare at the New York World's Fair on April 15, 1964. They took the world by storm, selling over 600,000 in their first model year, and when they introduced the 2+2 in September 1964 to go with the coupe and convertible, they made an impression on this twelve-year-old car-crazy kid: I wanted one.

By April 1969 I'd had my license for all of six months and drove either my mom's 1967 Ford Country Squire (the seed of my affection for wood-grain-sided wagons) or my dad's 1965 Ford LTD. But I'd been bugging my parents for my own car and by April I'd worn them down to the point that even Mom liked the idea of me with a Mustang (although I can't remember if she ever drove it). Ostensibly the car was to be shared with my older brother and sister, but they were away at school, so for the first few months it was my car, and when I went off to college in Miami in 1971 (and thanks to an inattentive clerk at registration who didn't notice that as a freshman I wasn't supposed to have a car on campus), I took it with me to Miami.



1965 Mustang

In August 1973, in a fit of stupidity, I sold the Mustang to some kid for \$300 and bought an F-150 pick-up. Meanwhile,



1995 Mustang GT convertible— RIP

Ford kept making changes to the Mustang, including making it bigger and, to me, less attractive, and when they brought out the Pinto-based 1974 Mustang II, the love affair, as they often do, turned to indifference and even derision. For the next thirty years I stayed away, dallying, as it were, with other cars including a Ford Granada, a Jeep Wagoneer, a Subaru wagon, and finally settling down with the Pontiac in 1989. But the siren call of the Mustang was still in the back of my mind. In 2003, when my mom, who had traded her 1979 Volvo for a 1995 Mustang GT convertible, V-8 5-

liter Laser Red with white leather interior, sold it to me so she could acquire a Mini Cooper (which she still drives), all was forgiven and I was back in a Mustang. The Pontiac went into the garage for a well-earned rest after 250,000 miles.

I happily drove it from August 2003 until one fateful afternoon in March 2008 when another driver in Coral Gables tried to test the theory that two molecules can occupy the same space at the same time by making a left turn in front of me. His theory was disproved, and the Mustang was totaled.

I drove the Pontiac for a year, and then in March 2009 I took the insurance payout and, utilizing the internet, found a 2007 Mustang convertible, Wind Veil blue with gray interior and a black top and a V-6 at Maroone Ford in Fort Lauderdale. It had 34,000 miles and a full warranty.



2007 Mustang: an antique in 2032.