

50 Years of Ford Mustang Milestones

- 1965 Ford Mustang unveiled at New York World's Fair on April 17, 1964
- More than 9 million Mustangs have been sold since

From concept to reality, 1960-1963

- Ford Motor Company decides to develop a fun-to-drive “personal car” that will appeal to post-World War II baby boomers. Ford’s still-unnamed personal car is to be derived from the Ford Falcon. Gale Halderman’s sketches and subsequent clay model win an in-house design competition and establish the classic pony car proportion – a long, sweeping hood, short rear deck and sharply sculpted flanks
- A two-seat, mid-engine sports car concept becomes the first car to wear the Mustang name – initially suggested by designer John Najjar as an homage to the legendary P51 Mustang fighter plane from World War II and further inspired by the [small, nimble wild horse](#) of the American West. The concept debuts in October 1962 at the United States Grand Prix at Watkins Glen, N.Y., where race car driver Dan Gurney drives it around the circuit
- In October 1963, a second concept known as Mustang II is shown at Watkins Glen, providing the first public preview of the design direction for the upcoming production Mustang

Generation I, 1965-1973

1964

- 1965 Ford Mustang is officially revealed to the world at the [New York World's Fair in Flushing, N.Y.](#); goes on sale Friday, April 17, 1964
 - Standard equipment includes a 170-cubic-inch six-cylinder engine, three-speed floor-shift transmission, full wheel covers, padded dash, bucket seats and carpeting. It weighs just 2,572 pounds. Price at launch is \$2,368
 - At launch, the company expects annual sales of about 100,000 units. But 22,000 Mustang orders are taken that first day, and sales reach an astounding 417,000 in car's first 12 months
- First known retail customer to buy a [Mustang](#). [Gail Brown](#) purchases her blue convertible from a Chicago dealer two days early on April 15. Nearly 50 years later, Gail and her husband Tom Wise still own the car
- Earliest preproduction Mustang, serial No. 1, is a Wimbledon White convertible with a 260-cubic-inch V8 that rolls off the assembly line in early February 1964. While on a promotional tour of Canada, a Ford dealer in St. John's, Newfoundland “mistakenly” sells the car to [Capt. Stanley Tucker](#), a pilot with Eastern Provincial Airlines. Ford reacquires the car from Capt. Tucker in 1966 in exchange for Mustang No. 1,000,001; the original car is now on display at The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Mich.
- After going on sale in hardtop and convertible bodystyles in April, the fastback joins the lineup in June
- Mustang's [long movie career](#) begins almost immediately, with an appearance in the James Bond film [Goldfinger](#)
- One of the earliest known references to the Mustang in song is written and recorded by Mack Rice in 1965. [Mustang Sally](#) comes to fame a year later when Wilson Pickett releases his version of the song

1965

- By April 17, 1965, 418,812 Mustangs had been sold, the best first year ever for an all-new model
- Shelby GT350 is introduced, with its 306-horsepower, 289-cubic-inch V8
- In October 1965, Ford engineers dismantle a 1966 Mustang convertible into four sections that can fit into the elevators of the [Empire State Building](#) in New York, then reassemble it on the 86th floor observation deck

1966

- By March 2, 1966, Ford has sold more than 1 million Mustangs since launch. [Capt. Stanley Tucker](#) returns Mustang No. 1 to Dearborn in exchange for the 1 millionth car, also a white convertible
- Ford partners with Shelby American to build a limited run of GT350H “rent-a-racers” for Hertz. Based on the stock GT350 fastback but equipped with an automatic transmission, many of these rental cars find their way to local drag strips on Friday nights before being returned to Hertz rental offices on Monday mornings

1967

- 1967 is considered by many to be the high water mark for Mustang design in the 1960s. 1967 2+2 model goes from a semi-notchback to a sweeping full-fastback roofline. Separate triple taillamps, a longer nose and a bigger grille are added for a more aggressive stance
- Shelby adds a GT500 model powered by the big-block 428-cubic-inch V8 producing 355 horsepower

1968

- Slightly larger 302-cubic-inch V8 replaces the “289” midyear, and a medium-riser version of Ford’s premier race engine – the 427-cubic-inch V8 (rated at 390 horsepower) – is offered as a \$622 option
- On April 1, the 428 Cobra Jet engine is introduced as part of an option package aimed at enthusiasts
- On Oct. 17, [Bullitt](#) premieres with a 10-minute live action car chase sequence featuring a Highland Green Mustang GT 390 fastback that sets a new benchmark for the genre

1969

- “Steed for every need” mindset yields 11 different powertrain combinations. New models to the lineup include the 290-horsepower Boss 302, 375-horsepower Boss 429, Mach 1 and Grande luxury model. Also offered for the first time is the 351-cubic-inch “Windsor” V8 engine producing 250 horsepower with a two-barrel carburetor, or 290 horsepower with a four-barrel

1970

- Ram-air “Shaker” hood scoop can be ordered on any Mustang equipped with a 351-cubic-inch or larger V8

1971

- 1971 cars are the biggest Mustangs ever – nearly a foot longer and almost 700 pounds heavier than the originals. Gone from the lineup are the Boss 302, Boss 429, Shelby GT350 and GT500. Boss 351, with its 351 “Cleveland” V8 and Cobra Jet heads, debuts.

Mach 1 is available with a variety of powertrains, topped by the 370-horsepower 429 Super Cobra Jet

1972

- Styling is unchanged from 1971, and the only new model offering is Sprint – a special red, white and blue exterior paint-and-tape package with coordinated interior

1973

- The impact of gasoline shortages, rising insurance premiums and emissions controls brings the muscle-car era to a close. 1973 is the last model year for the original Falcon-platform Mustang. The convertible is discontinued

Generation II, 1974-1978

1974

- The completely redesigned [Mustang II is introduced](#). Compared with the 1973 model, Mustang II is 19 inches shorter and 490 pounds lighter. It is available as a notchback, including a luxury Ghia model, and a 2+2 fastback. There are only two engine choices – an 88-horsepower 2.3-liter inline-four or a 109-horsepower 2.8-liter V6. For the first time, there is no V8 engine and no convertible

1975

- V8 power returns to Mustang. But the 302-cubic-inch engine produces only 133 horsepower and comes only with an automatic transmission

1976

- Cobra II package joins the lineup, replete with nonfunctional hood scoop, racing stripes and front and rear spoilers. Available in white with blue stripes, blue with white stripes, and black with gold stripes, Cobra II is intended to recall the famed Shelby Mustangs

1977

- In an attempt to appeal to convertible fans, fastback models are now available with T-top removable glass roof panels. A new Sports Performance Package finally adds a four-speed manual transmission to the 302-cubic-inch V8

1978

- New King Cobra model is the first Mustang to wear a “5.0” badge – the metric equivalent of 302 cubic inches

Generation III, 1979-1993

1979

- New “Fox” platform Mustang makes its debut. The new model is longer and taller than Mustang II yet 200 pounds lighter. A sleek, European-influenced design replaces many traditional styling cues. Engine choices are a 2.3-liter four-cylinder (including a 140-horsepower turbo version), a 2.8-liter V6, a 3.3-liter inline six and a 140-horsepower 5.0-liter V8

1980

- 302-cubic-inch V8 engine is dropped, replaced by an economy-minded 119-horsepower 255-cubic-inch V8

1981

- Performance heads to the back burner, as the turbo four-cylinder is dropped from the Mustang engine lineup, and new emissions controls drop the 255-cubic-inch V8's power to 115 horsepower

1982

- As gas prices subside and new competition arrives, Mustang GT returns after a 12-year absence. Also back is the 5.0-liter V8, rated at 157 horsepower with a two-barrel carburetor. Optional T-tops return

1983

- After 10 years, a convertible model returns to the Mustang lineup, complete with power operation and a tempered glass back window. A Holley four-barrel carburetor boosts Mustang GT's 5.0-liter V8 to a healthier 175 horsepower

1984

- New Special Vehicle Operations group that also runs Ford race programs creates the Mustang SVO. It features a front fascia with integral fog lamps, an off-center functional scoop and a polycarbonate dual-wing rear spoiler. Power comes from a turbocharged and air-to-air intercooled 2.3-liter four-cylinder producing 175 horsepower and 210 lb.-ft. of torque. Also available is the 20th Anniversary edition Mustang, a special V8-powered GT model painted Oxford White with Canyon Red interior. It can be had in coupe or convertible form

1985

- Mustang gets a revised 5.0-liter high-output V8 producing 210 horsepower when mated to a manual transmission. New Quadra-Shock rear suspension with two extra horizontally mounted dampers helps provide better acceleration by reducing wheel hop on hard takeoffs

1986

- Mustang's V8 trades its carburetor for new sequential multiport fuel injection

1987

- Mustang is heavily restyled, with a new "aero-look" body including faired-in headlamps. The 5.0-liter V8 now produces 225 horsepower

1989

- For Mustang's 25th anniversary, all cars produced between April 17, 1989 and April 17, 1990 sport the familiar running horse on the dashboard with "25 years" inscribed underneath

1990

- Mustang now sports a driver's-side airbag as standard equipment

1991

- Entry-level Mustangs receive an improved 105-horsepower, twin-plug 2.3-liter four-cylinder with distributor-less ignition. All V8 models now come with new, five-spoke 16-inch cast aluminum wheels – the first time a 16-inch wheel is offered as a factory option on Mustang

1992

- Stealthy Mustang LX 5.0 develops a cult following, outselling all other models combined. Wire-style wheel covers and whitewall tires disappear from the options list

1993

- Ford's new Special Vehicle Team introduces limited-production SVT Mustang Cobra with subtle but distinctive styling cues and performance upgrades. The low-volume, track-oriented Cobra R sells out prior to production

Generation IV, 1994-2004

1994

- For its 30th anniversary, Mustang is dramatically restyled to evoke the car's heritage and performance tradition. Fully 1,330 of the vehicle's 1,850 parts are changed. The new Fox-4 platform is thoroughly re-engineered and structurally stiffer. The hatchback bodystyle is discontinued, leaving the semi-fastback two-door coupe and convertible. The GT's 5.0-liter V8 engine produces 215 horsepower. A new SVT Mustang Cobra launches midyear, producing 240 horsepower from its upgraded 5.0-liter V8

1995

- Final model year for the venerable 5.0-liter V8, which began life in 1962 as the 260-cubic-inch V8 in Falcon, later growing to 289-cubic-inch, 302-cubic-inch and 351-cubic-inch variants

- The second SVT Mustang Cobra R is introduced, with only 250 units to be built. Cobra R is street-legal, but meant for racing in popular “showroom stock” classes with a 300-horsepower 5.8-liter V8 and five-speed manual transmission

1996

- Classic small-block V8 is replaced in Mustang GT and SVT Mustang Cobra with Ford's new 4.6-liter modular V8. The new engine is the first production Ford V8 to use overhead camshafts in the valvetrain. Mustang GT uses a single-overhead-cam layout with two valves per cylinder for 215 horsepower and 285 lb.-ft. of torque. Cobra uses dual-overhead cams and four valves per cylinder to generate 305 horsepower and 300 lb.-ft. from the aluminum V8

1997

- Ford's Passive Anti-Theft System becomes standard on all Mustangs

1998

- Output of Mustang GT's 4.6-liter V8 increases to 225 horsepower

1999

- Redesign gives Mustang sharply creased lines and pronounced wheel arch flares, plus a new hood, grille, fascias and lamps. Base 3.8-liter V6 gets a 27 percent increase in horsepower, to 190 horsepower, and comes with 35th Anniversary badging
- SVT Mustang Cobra becomes the first Mustang with a fully independent rear suspension. The car's 4.6-liter DOHC V8 now produces 320 horsepower

2000

- The third SVT Mustang Cobra R is produced. This lightweight, street-legal racing model has a 385-horsepower 5.4-liter DOHC V8, and features the first six-speed manual transmission ever in a Mustang. Production limited to 300 units

2001

- Inspired by the 1968 Mustang GT390 driven by Steve McQueen in the movie classic “Bullitt,” Mustang Bullitt GT debuts. Finished in the same Highland dark green as the movie car, it has unique side scoops; 17-inch, five-spoke Bullitt-style aluminum wheels; and lowered, specially tuned suspension

2002

- Mustang stands alone as production ends for its two closest competitors – Chevrolet Camaro and Pontiac Firebird

2003

- Mustang Mach 1 returns with a 305-horsepower V8 engine and signature ram-air “Shaker” hood scoop. It includes 17-inch, five-spoke heritage wheels inspired by 1969 to 1973 Mustang Mach 1 wheels and 1960s-style “comfort weave” seats trimmed in black leather
- SVT Mustang Cobra gets an Eaton supercharger for its 4.6-liter V8, which ups output to 390 horsepower and 390 lb.-ft. of torque. This makes the 2003 Cobra the fastest, best-performing regular-production Mustang to date

2004

- Ford Motor Company produces its 300-millionth car – a 2004 Mustang GT convertible 40th Anniversary edition. The Anniversary package, available on all V6 and GT models, including convertibles, features an exclusive Crimson Red exterior with Arizona Beige Metallic performance stripes on the hood, lower rocker panels and decklid
- 2004 models will be the last cars built at Ford's fabled Dearborn Assembly Plant, which produced Mustang every model year since its inception

Generation V, 2005-2014

2005

- All-new fifth-generation Mustang debuts as a 2005 model. Riding on a six-inch-longer wheelbase than the car it replaced, the 2005 model features an all-new platform, the first in the car's history that is unique to Mustang. Styling draws heavily on Mustang heritage from the 1960s, with a forward-leaning grille, side hockey stick contours and tri-bar taillamps. Power comes from a choice of either a 210-horsepower 4.0-liter V6 or a 300-horsepower, three-valve-per-cylinder 4.6-liter V8
- Production of all-new 2005 Ford Mustang begins in fall 2004 in Flat Rock, Mich.
- Ford introduces the first of a series of turnkey Mustang-based race cars, the FR500C, which goes on to win two consecutive Koni Challenge Championships in the Grand-Am Sport Class

2006

- Forty years after the GT350H, Ford, Shelby American and Hertz partner again for a run of 500 automatic transmission-equipped Shelby GT-H coupes. Like the original, all are painted black with gold stripes, and feature custom side scoops, grilles and badging

2007

- SVT collaborates with Carroll Shelby to develop the most powerful production Mustang built up to that time, the 2007 Shelby GT500 Mustang. Available as either a convertible or coupe, GT500 is powered by a 500-horsepower supercharged 5.4-liter V8 derived from the engine in the 2003 Ford GT

2008

- Ford returns to building turnkey factory drag racing cars with introduction of the 2008 [Cobra Jet](#). Forty years after the original Cobra Jet won in its debut, the new model uses a supercharged 5.4-liter V8 to repeat the feat. Customers are able to order complete ready-to-race cars directly from Ford dealers
- Mustang Bullitt is revived for another two-year limited run. Available in either Highland Green or Black with leather seats and aluminum interior trim, the subdued-looking Bullitt is widely regarded as one of the best street Mustangs up to that time thanks to its excellent balance of power and handling

2009

- Introduced in early 2009, the 2010 Mustang is redesigned with more sculpted haunches, chamfered rear corners and trapezoidal grille

2010

- Entire Mustang lineup receives new updated powertrains for 2011 model year
 - Standard engine is a DOHC 3.7-liter V6 generating 305 horsepower and 280 lb.-ft. of torque and returning an EPA-estimated 31 mpg on the highway
 - All-new DOHC 5.0-liter “Coyote” V8 generates 412 horsepower and 390 lb.-ft.
 - Upgraded supercharged 5.4-liter V8 for Shelby GT500 now features a lighter aluminum block with plasma-coated cylinder bores. GT500 now produces 550 horsepower and 510 lb.-ft. of torque, the most ever in a production Mustang
 - All engines are now paired with six-speed automatic or manual transmissions

2011

- [Mustang Boss 302](#) is revived as a track-oriented model for a two-year limited-edition run. 5.0-liter V8 is upgraded to produce 444 horsepower and features Ford’s first launch control system

2012

- [2013 Shelby GT500](#) is upgraded with the world’s most powerful production V8 – a supercharged 5.8-liter unit generating 662 horsepower and 631 lb.-ft. of torque, enough to push the coupe to a top speed of just over 200 mph

2013

- Flat Rock Assembly Plant celebrates production of its [1 millionth Mustang](#), a red GT convertible on Mustang’s 49th birthday, April 17, 2013
- On June 10, DreamWorks Studios and Ford announce a modified Mustang will be the hero car in the upcoming film adaptation of the long-running video game series [Need for Speed](#)
- On Dec. 5, the all-new sixth-generation Mustang is simultaneously revealed in six locations around the world

2014

- On April 16-20, 2014, Mustang fans from around the world will gather for massive celebration of 50 years of Mustang at Las Vegas Motor Speedway and Charlotte Motor Speedway