

AutoWeek

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75 Cents

New Mustang/Capri Debut

By Jim Plegue

DATELINE: New York City, April, 1964—One hundred newsmen converge on this city for the long-awaited preview of a new car from Ford Motor Co., a special car that for months has been the center of coast-to-coast hype. Ford execs dole out keys to 50 of the sporty cars, some hardtops and some convertibles, and the newsmen depart on a 750-mile test drive. The car and its intro are an unprecedented success. Retail orders for the first sales week hit 47,000—Ford's total factory output of the car for an entire month. The car, of course, is the 1965 Mustang.

DATELINE: Romeo, Mich., June, 1978—Another group of newsmen, many of them too young to remember the '64 preview, meet this time at Ford's rural proving ground here. They have been invited to preview all of the company's 1979 models, but two cars in particular are stealing the show. A cold drizzle continues for both days but the newsmen are persistent; they wait, sometimes impatiently, to get behind the wheel of

one of the two cars—a 1979 Ford Mustang or 1979 Mercury Capri.

The dates are different. The location has changed. It is mostly a new generation of writers and some of the Ford execs have moved up, down, or out of the company. But the two events are similar in one way—the level of excitement generated by the debut of an all-new sporty performance car.

The redesigned 1979 Mustang and Capri are two of the most significant cars from Ford Motor since the 1965 Mustang gave birth to the "Mustang Generation." All hyperboles aside, these two cars should help Ford regain its foothold in the domestic sporty car market, something the company tossed away years ago when the original Mustang was evolving into its tired 1978 shape.

The company is also hoping to conquer some import sales, too, and the Mustang and Capri convince you of that role with your first glance. In sculpting the cars' slippery shapes, Ford designers seem to have added one part aerodynamics and one part "European Flavor" to their



Optional handling packages make the new Turbo a handling experience.



The new Turbo Mustang should have all of the zip and performance that has been missing from sporty cars for the past few years.

recipe for success.

The Mustang/Capri are built off shortened versions of the Fairmont/Zephyr floorplan and use those compact cars' modified MacPherson-strut front and four-bar link rear suspension systems. The Mustang is available in two-door notchback and three-door hatchback, while the Capri is available only in a three-door hatchback body style.

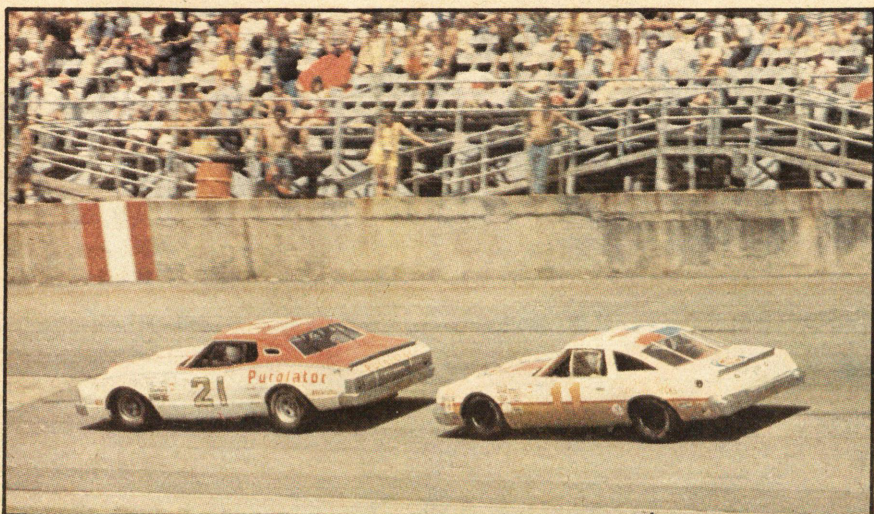
Both cars are built on a 100.4-inch wheelbase and are 179.1 inches long. In the case of the Mustang, the new model is

four inches longer in both wheelbase and length than its predecessor and has 20% more interior room, including an extra five inches of rear-seat passenger legroom. Through expanded use of lightweight materials, the car is also as much as 180 pounds lighter than the old Mustang.

Capri can no longer be touted as the "Sexy European" since it, and the Mustang, will probably be built at Ford's Dearborn and San Jose assembly plants.

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Down To The Wire



David Pearson (21) and Cale Yarborough (11) were running nose to tail in the final laps of the Daytona Firecracker 400. Then Pearson, in a very deft move, used a slower car to block out Cale's slingshot attempt on the last lap, spoiling what could have been a real run for the money. Al Pearce's story begins on page 38.

THIS WEEK

COMPETITION

WELL EARNED VICTORY: The Georg Loos Porsche entry piloted by Fitzpatrick, Hezemans and Gregg ran through the rain and humidity to take top honors in the Glen six hour. Page 40.

ON THROUGH THE NIGHT: Peter Gregg ran what might be called a "Peter Perfect" race to grab the win in the Paul Revere 250 night race at Daytona. Page 17.

PARTING OF THE WAYS: There is a real shake-up going on in the NASCAR stables as the Jim Stacy-Harry Hyde team have come to a parting of the ways. Page 12.

GENERAL

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY: Competition Press has its 20th birthday. Page 3.

A REGULAR WUNDERKAR: Testing the Audi Fox GTI, we find it to be one of the best kept secrets in the auto world. Page 8.

THE BATTLE FOR THE OMNIRIZON: Yes, the controversy continues in the latest report on what some say is the worst car around and others believe is one of the finest. Page 5.