

Mustang gallops into the next decade

Latest word on 25th anniversary edition, production through 1992, successor due in '93

Ford laid some official good news on lovers of the Mustang, the pony that wouldn't die, by announcing July 14 that it is investing \$200 million to upgrade the car's home plant, Dearborn Assembly, and will install airbags in 1990 models to assure its continued production so long as sales warrant it.

Although *AutoWeek* reported these decisions months ago, the official announcement ensures Mustang's survival beyond its 25th birthday. And unofficial word is that Ford will definitely build a limited-edition 5.0-liter Mustang to commemorate the anniversary in '89.

An informant says the genuine 25th anniversary 'Stang is an in-house project using the heads from a 351 cid V8 for better breathing and the 5.0-liter block. Target output is 275 hp, the production volume projected below 1000 cars. Information from another source suggests 2500 heads from the 351 have been ordered for the project—enough for 1250 engines, or the projected production volume, plus test vehicles and spare parts.

The project has yet to receive a final okay, so some elements are not firm. For instance, our source reports discussion of Ford building the car in-house. Small volume seems to make that impractical; the project will likely be farmed out to a smaller



Roush-built 400 hp Mustang (above) didn't make it, but there is a 25th anniversary edition in works; Regular Mustang (right) survives, gets driver's side airbag to meet rules for 1990



firm—perhaps race car builder Jack Roush's operation, which tested a 400 hp, twin-turbo 351 Mustang last year that was touted as a potential anniversary car.

That project is reportedly dead, but Roush's partner Bob Korn said this: "The anniversary Mustang is something that Ford has done, but it is not something that we could not do on our own ... There have been discussions between the two companies, but I am not at liberty to say where they stand."

As for the normal Mustang, sales through June totalled 99,430, up a bit from the 96,273 sold in

the same period last year. And the Dearborn plant, Ford's oldest (it opened in 1918 to build boats for use in WWI) and part of the famed Rouge complex? Improvements planned include a new paint shop so the Mustang's coat from 1990 onward will match the best from overseas, and structural and equipment upgrades to keep the current generation car in production through 1992.

After that? We hear the new Mustang is a '93 model (our report last week got the debut date a year early), may continue to be built in Dearborn, will boast independent rear suspension and rear-drive, four-wheel disc brakes (with ABS on GTs), may have a six-speed manual gearbox, and still cost under \$19,000 loaded. ■

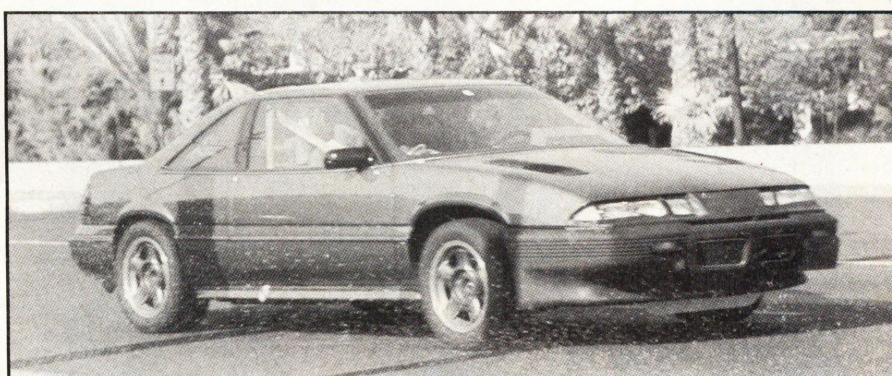
Grand Prix runs away with McLaren turbo work

Special-edition Pontiac for '89 scoots, automatically

If there's one thing the slick, hot-selling '88 Pontiac Grand Prix lacks, it's horsepower. The GM10 coupe was introduced this year with a 130 hp 2.8-liter V6—marginal for its market segment, and disappointing in light of Pontiac's aggressive styling and suspension tuning.

But, as we reported April 4, Pontiac has openly touted two remedies for '89, one incremental, the other monumental.

This photo of a more muscular Grand Prix is, we think, representative of the limited-edition (a 5000-car run) Grand Prix SE Turbo expected to sell for up to \$23,000 in 1989, its powerplant tweaked up to 205 hp by McLaren Engines of Livonia, Mich.



Insiders expect 0-60 mph times of about 8.0 seconds for Grand Prix SE Turbo

Note the fat Eagles on 16-inch wheels, new and larger front air dam, and cooling louvers let into the hood. Intercooler intake, or just an outlet for the heat? We don't know yet. We do know the Getrag five-speed's not up to the job, so it's a four-speed automatic only. If you want to shift for your-

self, stick to the standard powerplant.

And what powerplant is that, you ask? The 3.1-liter version of the ol' 2.8 that debuted in '88 in Pontiac's own 6000 AWD, boasting a significant torque gain (the better to drive all four wheels with) but only mild horsepower improvement. ■