

MUSTANG

DRIVING: PASSING BY EYE



Tune it, tame it and tease it! Take it to Shelby-American and turn it into a wild stallion! Take a look at how it got here... and where it's going! Read "MUSTANG, a complete guide" by the editors of CAR LIFE.

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COMPETENT PASSING is the key to easy driving over long distances. Poor passing can leave you in the wrong lane at 80 miles an hour facing an oncoming truck.

The easy, safe, simple way to pass is on momentum. You're on straight, level, clear road and approach a slower car. A swing into the left lane and a swing back finishes the pass and if your engine died halfway past the other car momentum would finish the maneuver for you without an anxious moment.

The trick in all other passing is to get as close to that ideal momentum pass as possible.

If you have to follow a slower vehicle for awhile, you can't just pass on momentum... you have to accelerate. But at least you can start accelerating before you pull out, so by the time you've moved up on the car ahead and are in the left lane, you're moving fast enough that the rest of the pass is done on momentum.

To do that, you have to start well back of the car you plan to pass, so you can accelerate without getting into his trunk. And if there's traffic on the road, you need to watch a half-mile or more ahead, so that when the gap you'll use for passing approaches you can start your acceleration in advance. Then, when the last car passes and the gap is open, you have speeded up and have moved up on the car ahead. All that's left is to move out into the left lane, coast past and get back in line. Again, you could finish safely even if the engine died.

Winding, hilly roads make the momentum passing method difficult to use. You can't spot a passing space coming very far away and you have to depend

on acceleration alone to get you by.

For that situation, you have to move in closer. But not right on the bumper of the car in front... it is too hard to see past him from there.

As soon as you suspect an opening is coming you can pick up a little speed, so you'll be less dependent on acceleration during the pass.

When you know there's an opening, and start to pass, don't dawdle. Full throttle from start of the pass until you're back in your lane is the general rule, unless the road is too slippery. Most cars change handling characteristics between full throttle and overrun, so save the troubles for straight line travel in your own lane. Anyway, a fast pass cuts chances of someone coming out of a side road you didn't see while you were in the wrong lane.

One exception... it is foolish to pass with a speed difference of 50 or 60 mph on a narrow road. You arrive on the other driver's elbow so fast you may startle him and if he swerves you need a mighty responsive car and fantastic reflexes to stay clear of him.

THE LONG look ahead helps find passing spots on winding and dip-plagued roads. If you can see a broad curve half a mile ahead continuously, when cars you've seen rounding that curve pass you know what is behind them. And when you know there's a long gap behind a car that just went by, you have a chance for a passing spot.

Now if you can find a place where you could see any slow moving trucks you may not have accounted for, and it is clear, you're ready to go.

—Martin Allan Jackson

