CAR and DRIVER ROAD TEST

FORD MUSTANG

Who'd believe you could stuff the 390 engine into the Mustang and make it handle?

PHOTOGRAPHY: M. BRADY

You'd think that dropping an anchor like the 390 engine into the Mustang would overload the front end and make it handle like a real dog, wouldn't you? The *puristi* will glance at the specs and hoot derisively at the 60.3/39.7 per cent weight distribution and tell you the rig will never fly, right? In truth, even we expected the Mustang 390 GT to plow like an Ohio farmer. It doesn't. The car we tested had over 400 lbs. more weight on the front wheels than the last Mustang we tested—a 271-hp 289. There have been no basic changes in the Falcon-inherited suspension, yet the Mustang 390 GT has balance and handling.

The idea of stuffing the 390 engine into a car originally designed for an engine less than half that size is pretty wild, and it leaves the way clear for some even hairier engines in the future. The 390 block is the same one used for Mercury's 410 and Ford's 427 racing engine and the 428 street engine. (Would you believe the sohc Hemi?—okay, maybe only on the drag strip. But anything's possible in Motown, so it's best to get it right in the first place.) The bare bones of the '67 Mustang are plenty strong enough to take over 400 horsepower, so a measly 320 hp aren't going to bend a thing.

The 390 is strong, no doubt about it. In a heavy, full-sized Ford it isn't much to sound off about, but in a 3400-lb. compact, it comes on like spit on a griddle. As a matter of fact, the Mustang 390 GT is the fastest of the current sporty-type cars from Detroit—including the Camaro, Barracuda, Marlin and

CONTINUED

The Mustang's chassis has been around long enough that Ford has learned to tune the suspension like a Steinway. Of course, those big fat Firestone Wide Ovals don't hurt. . . .

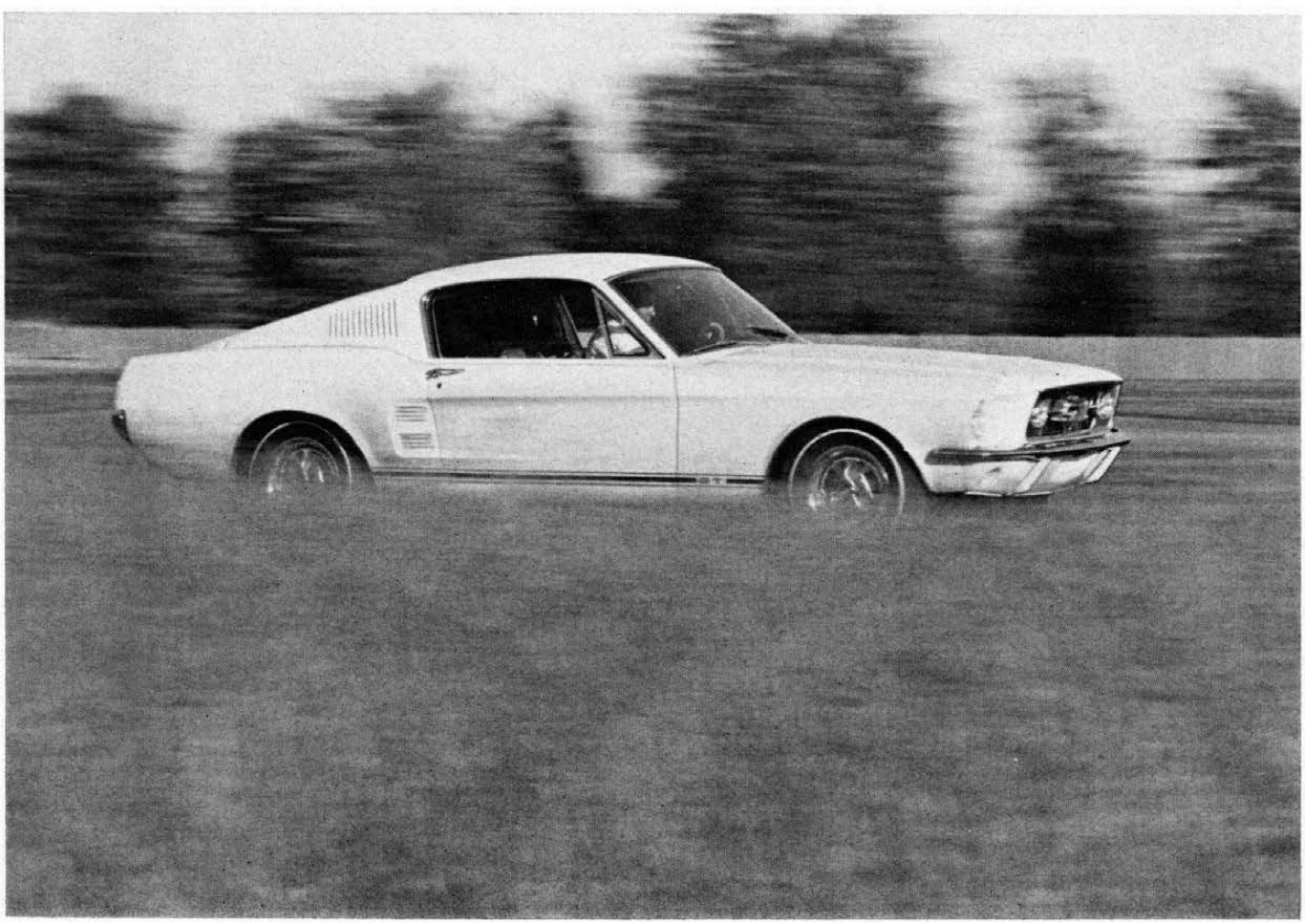
Mustang's heavier brother, the Cougar. Driving as laconically as we ever do in a car like this, we knocked off 15.2-second quarter-miles with the air conditioner and the stereo tape deck going full blast and letting the XPL 3-speed automatic shift when it felt like it. In a car stripped of luxury items, and with a 4-speed, we figure the 390 could easily get down into the mid-14 range (or as fast as last year's Shelby Mustang).

Nonetheless, we enjoyed having those options. Maybe we're getting feeble but we don't think we'd like to own a car like this with manual steering. We could do without the tape deck and the tilt wheel and all that, but we'd hate to lose the power steering and automatic transmission. Manual 4-speeds are keen, but the automatic is keener, even faster out of the hole, too. And this year, the "Sportshift" feature that allows instant 1-2-3 upshifts and 3-2 downshifts comes with the Mustang automatic. Good stuff.

If all this rubber-peeling speed weren't matched by good handling and braking, we'd be a little nervous about this swing toward Watusi engines in Pigmy chassis. The Mustang's chassis has been around long enough that Ford has learned to tune the suspension. And they've tuned it like a Steinway. Of course, those fat Firestone Wide Ovals don't hurt, either.

With power steering, street tire pressures and no limited-slip differential, we felt we were going as fast around Ford's neat little handling loop as we ever have, with no more effort or discomfort than driving a Continental in a straight line. The Mustang corners willingly, if somewhat clumsily. It doesn't seek the right line instinctively, the way a thoroughbred will, but once pointed in the proper direction, it clambers eagerly around the corner. True, initial understeer is there, but oversteer can be induced by a flick of the wheel here, a poke at the throttle there. And it's very hard to throw it off balance or make it come unglued.

The stopping distances weren't exactly dime-sized, but, again, the car responded well. With the optional front-wheel disc brakes, the engineers threw two jokers into the deck: one, a delay valve on the front that doesn't let the discs come on until the line pressure is above a



The Mustang 390 GT is as hot as spit on a griddle. In fact, it's the fastest of the current crop of sporty-type cars from Detroit—including the Camaro, Barracuda, Marlin, and the Mustang's heavier brother, the Cougar

certain value; two, a limiting valve on the rear to prevent wheel lock-up. The front valve is there so that you don't wear out the pads stroking the brakes around town—dabbing at the pedal in city traffic operates only the rear drums. The rear valve has a high cut-off point, but on a high-traction surface, the rear wheels will still lock up during the last few dozen feet of a panic stop. This is true of most American front-disc braking systems, and explains why the less sophisticated European systems are able to produce shorter braking distances under ideal conditions.

Anyone who likes the old Mustang ought to go nuts for the '67. It's a much better looking car than the photographs show, and we think the styling is tougher than last year's. It's heftier, and more substantial looking. The interior sparkles with a new instrument panel layout, and more luxurious hardware. It looks like Ford has decided the Mustang is going to be around for awhile, so why not invest some money where the occupants can enjoy it? The ride has been improved to the point that it's every bit as good as most of the intermediates, except over thank-you-ma'ams and the like. One touch that we liked for its refreshing honesty were those louvers in the hood; they're real! Obviously inspired by the upward radiator ducting on the Ford GT racing cars, these embryonic slits exhaust a small percentage of radiator air, probably improving the cooling plus melting windshield ice.

Last year, the "Super Cars" were the big news. Pontiac's GTO, the Hemis, and Ford's 390-engined intermediates had the power, Oldsmobile's 4-4-2 had the handling, and the Buick Skylark Gran Sport had the brakes. This year, the Super Cars are better than ever, but the sporty cars are grabbing the headlines with their big power boosts. If this class is going to replace the GTOs, it sure is nice to see that they're starting off with all the good stuff instead of trying to paste it on later. Anchors aweigh! **C/D**

SPECIFICATIONS OVERLEAF

FORD MUSTANG GT/A

Manufacturer: Ford Motor Company
20000 Rotunda Drive
Dearborn, Michigan

Vehicle type: Front-engine, rear-wheel-drive, 2+2-passenger sports/personal car, all-steel integral body/chassis

Number of dealers in U.S.: 6200

Price as tested: $ N.A. (Prices for the 1967 models had not been released by the manufacturers at press time. Our unofficial estimate would be ca. $3500.00, as our test car was equipped)

Options on test car: Air conditioning, GTA package (includes tachometer, disc brakes, automatic transmission, handling package, Firestone F70-14 tires, dual exhausts, fog lights, louvered hood, woodrim steering wheel), AM radio, power steering.

ENGINE

Type: Water-cooled V-8, cast iron block and heads, 5 main bearings
Bore x stroke.....4.05 x 3.78 in, 103 x 96.2 mm
Displacement.....390 cu in, 6340 cc
Compression ratio.....10.5 to one
Carburetion.....1 x 4-bbl Holley
Valve gear.....Pushrod operated overhead valves, hydraulic lifters
Power (SAE).....320 bhp @ 4800 rpm
Torque (SAE).....427 lbs/ft @ 3200 rpm
Specific power output.....0.82 bhp/cu in, 50 bhp/liter
Maximum recommended engine speed.....5200 rpm

DRIVE TRAIN

Transmission.....3-speed automatic, plus torque converter
Gearshift position.....Console-mounted (PRND$_2$D$_1$L)

Gear	Ratio	Mph/1000 rpm	Max. test speed
I	2.46	10.3	49 mph (4250 rpm)
II	1.46	17.3	87 mph (5050 rpm)
III	1.00	25.4	124 mph (4900 rpm)
R	2.20	11.5	N.A.

Max. torque converter ratio.....2.10 to one
Final drive ratio.....3.00 to one

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Wheelbase.....108.0 in
Track.....F:58.1 in, R:58.1 in
Length.....183.6 in
Width.....70.9 in
Height.....51.8 in
Ground clearance.....5.9 in
Curb weight.....3414 lbs
Test weight.....3897 lbs
Weight distribution, F/R.....60.3/39.7%
Lbs/bhp (test weight).....12.2
Battery capacity.....12 volts, 45 amp/hr
Alternator capacity.....456 watts
Fuel capacity.....17.0 gal
Oil capacity.....4.0 qts
Water capacity.....20.5 qts

SUSPENSION

F: Ind., upper wishbone, lower control arm and drag strut, coil spring, anti-sway bar.
R: Rigid axle, semi-elliptic leaf springs.

STEERING

Type.....Recirculating ball
Turns, lock to lock.....4.0
Turning circle.....37 ft

BRAKES

F: Kelsey-Hayes 11.38-in vented discs
R: 10.0 x 1.75-in drums
Swept area.....330.0 sq in

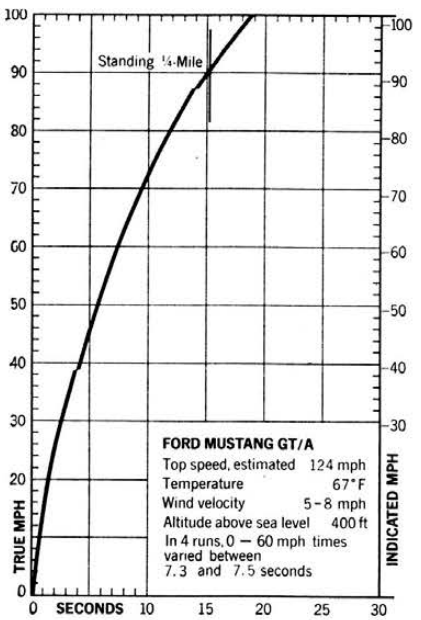
WHEELS AND TIRES

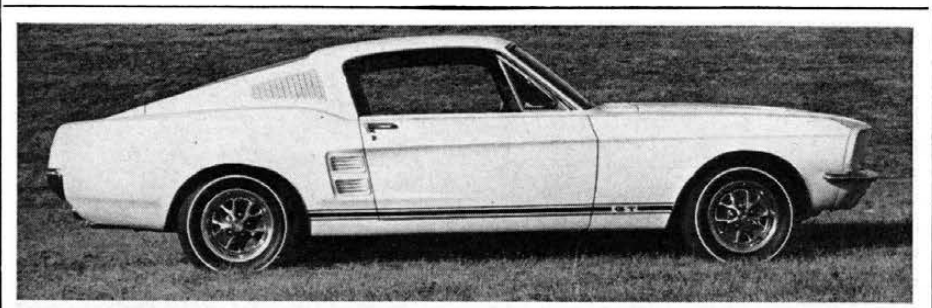
Wheel size and type.....6L x 14-in, pressed steel disc, 5-bolt
Tire make, size and type.....Firestone F70-14 Super Sport Wide Oval (2-ply nylon tubeless)
Test inflation pressures...F: 35 psi, R: 35 psi
Design load capacity.1280 lbs per tire @ 24 psi

PERFORMANCE

	Seconds
Zero to 30 mph	2.6
Zero to 40 mph	4.2
Zero to 50 mph	5.6
Zero to 60 mph	7.3
Zero to 70 mph	9.3
Zero to 80 mph	11.7
Zero to 90 mph	14.9
Zero to 100 mph	18.9

Standing ¼-mile.....15.2 sec @ 91 mph
80-0 mph.....312 ft (.69 G)
Fuel mileage.....10-14 mpg on premium fuel
Cruising range.....170-238 mi





CHECK LIST

ENGINE
Starting.....Very Good
Response.....Very Good
Vibration.....Excellent
Noise.....Fair

DRIVE TRAIN
Shift linkage.....Very Good
Shift smoothness.....Very Good
Transmission noise.....Excellent

STEERING
Effort.....Excellent
Response.....Good
Road feel.....Good
Kickback.....Very Good

SUSPENSION
Ride comfort.....Good
Roll resistance.....Very Good
Pitch control.....Very Good
Suspension noise.....Very Good
Harshness control.....Fair

HANDLING
Directional control.....Good
Predictability.....Very Good
Evasive maneuverability.....Good
Resistance to sidewinds.....Very Good

BRAKES
Pedal pressure.....Very Good
Response.....Very Good
Fade resistance.....Fair
Directional control.....Very Good

CONTROLS
Wheel position.....Very Good
Pedal position.....Very Good
Gearshift position.....Good
Relationship.....Very Good
Small controls.....Good

INTERIOR
Ease of entry/exit.....Very Good
Noise level (cruising).....Fair
Front seating comfort.....Very Good
Front leg room.....Very Good
Front head room.....Very Good
Front hip/shoulder room.....Good
Rear seating comfort.....Good
Rear leg room.....Poor
Rear head room.....Poor
Rear hip/shoulder room.....Fair
Instrument comprehensiveness.....Good
Instrument legibility.....Very Good

VISION
Forward.....Very Good
Front quarter.....Very Good
Side.....Excellent
Rear quarter.....Fair
Rear.....Very Good

WEATHER PROTECTION
Heater/defroster.....Excellent
Ventilation.....Good
Air conditioner.....Good
Weather sealing.....Very Good

CONSTRUCTION QUALITY
Sheet metal.....Very Good
Paint.....Good
Chrome.....Very Good
Upholstery.....Very Good
Padding.....Good
Hardware.....Fair

GENERAL
Headlight illumination.....Very Good
Parking and signal lights.....Fair
Wiper effectiveness.....Very Good
Service accessibility.....Poor
Trunk space.....Fair
Interior storage space.....Poor
Bumper protection.....Good