

1970 Ford Mustang Mach1 – Adrenaline High

A road-racing '70 SportsRoof that's sure to get your blood pumping

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For some, it's hard to fathom a time when a hardworking teenager could afford to go out and buy a Boss 429 Mustang, but for Sunnyvale, California's John Vogler, that was his life.

Having saved a suitable amount of money to purchase the now legendary Boss Mustang, John graduated from high school in June and purchased the Boss in October of the same year. John worked various jobs after high school, and as he preferred to work on cars, he eventually took a position with San Jose Ford as a general maintenance technician. While John would only spend three months at this job, one of the techs there told him about the Shelby American Automobile Club (SAAC) and suggested he check them out.

John became an active member of the club, and when it was suggested that the club run some open track events, John says he was one of the first to raise his hand in favor of this idea. After all, who wouldn't like the opportunity to hang out at world-class road course and get to drive his/her hot rod at speed without worrying about getting in trouble with the law.

Once the events came to fruition, John and the other members got the opportunity to flog their rides on tracks like Laguna Seca and Sears Point. John tells us that despite its nose-heavy appearance, the Boss 429 was a somewhat capable performer, and it didn't hurt that John had hopped up the Boss with full-length headers and a performance tune up. The good times came to an abrupt halt, though, when the Boss dropped a valve while mixing it up with fellow club members at the then Sears Point Raceway.



"I sold the car and I later found out it ended up in New Zealand," John recalls. His next car would be an original G.T. 350 Shelby Mustang, number 515 to be exact.

John open tracked the Shelby, too, but eventually sold it for something with more amenities for the daily drive. The Shelby's replacement was a brand-new '87 Mustang GT that was open tracked on the weekends. By 1989, John decided to get back into a classic Mustang, however, and began looking for a 1970 Mustang SportsRoof to build into an open track car.

A friend told John about a lead he had on such a car, and after talking to the owner, John set immediately off for a closer inspection with a pocket full of cash should the car pan out.

"It had a nice paintjob and a 2V 351C with a four-speed," says John. "It's a good thing I ran right over because as I was laying down the cash, the phone rang four times with people asking about the car." The deal would later prove sweeter still, as John found out that the car was actually an R-code 428 car with the drag pack option. "My friends encouraged me to restore the car, but I had had enough of original cars and at the time, these cars were not worth what they are now. My passion is modifying Mustangs and driving them hard, and that was the plan for this car," John says.

Hey, we're on board with that line of thinking, and John wasted no time in modifying the suspension with Global West suspension components, and Baer brake upgrades. The drivetrain was upgraded with a built, 4-bolt-main 351C that featured Ford Racing C302 heads, 10.5:1 compression, and 450 horsepower.

"This package worked okay, but it was clearly compromised by the antique suspension design with no adjustability for tuning," says John. The breaking point, quite literally, came at a track event at Sears Point where the Mustang suffered a broken strut rod. John could not get the car loaded on the trailer and after some deliberation, opted to leave it in the capable hands of the Griggs Racing staff, which was located at the track at the time. While the Mustang was waiting for its repair, John had the opportunity to drive Don Rostich's '94 Mustang GT that had been equipped with Griggs GR40 handling package. You may remember the Rostich name from our July '11 issue where we featured his '68 Mustang coupe.



"I had never driven a better car and then learned that with half the horsepower, this car ran quicker lap times than mine did," John exclaims. "After discussing options with Bruce Griggs, a simple repair transitioned to the first GR350-equipped Mustang, and I am still a loyal customer and friend 15 years later."

With a limited budget, it took John quite a few years to get the car into the form it is today. It didn't help that on its first track day out with the new suspension, the 351C snapped a connecting rod, but John looked at that as an opportunity to upgrade.

Wanting something that was a little more tractable in case John decided to drive it on the street, the pushrod V-8 was swapped in favor of a '99 Cobra 4.6L DOHC engine. The smooth-running, all-aluminum mod motor benefitted from a Vortech supercharger to boost power output, and the Mustang was once again a track terror until the engine started smoking. Road racing will find the weak links in your combination, so John replaced the aging Cobra mill with a low-compression, Aluminator crate engine from Ford Racing. With a blower-friendly 8.5:1 compression ratio, not to mention forged connecting rods and pistons and better cylinder heads, the overhead cam mill now lays down 602 horsepower at the rear wheels while inhaling a water/methanol spray.

With that kind of horsepower, a sticky tire is essential. To that end, John runs a set of Jongbloed wheels that are wrapped in gummy Hoosier track rubber measuring P315/30ZR18 up front and a massive P335/30ZR18 out back. The front quarters required a little fender rolling, and the rear did need a mini-tub operation to fit the supercar-sized tires.

While you may chalk up the sheet aluminum dashboard to a weight-savings plan, the real reason was that the engine, and subsequently the firewall, was moved back five inches for better weight distribution. The result was 52.9 percent over the front and 47.1 percent in back, with a race weight of 3,260 pounds. The Mustang also features a tubular front end that saves weight, and it provides greater engine access through the use of removable inner fender aprons.

"The current package has proven to be very reliable," says John. Though he only gets to take "the redhead," as his wife, Debra, refers to the Mustang, on track about once a year, the car's confidence-inspiring demeanor has John looking forward to taking advantage of the Griggs suspension's adjustability to fine-tune the setup for greater performance.

The Details: John Vogler's 1970 Mustang Mach 1

Engine

- Ford Racing Aluminator 281ci DOHC modular
- Aluminum cylinder block
- '03-'04 Mustang Cobra dual overhead cam aluminum cylinder heads, four valves per cylinder
- '03-'04 Mustang Cobra camshafts
- '99 Mustang Cobra intake manifold
- Vortech T-trim centrifugal supercharger
- Snow Performance water/methanol injection
- BBK Performance 65mm throttle body
- Custom ram air intake
- 8.5:1 compression ratio
- 602 rwhp

Transmission

- Tremec TKO-600 close ratio manual, 2.87, 1.89, 1.28, 1.0, 0.82
- McLeod RST twin disc clutch and flywheel
- Pro 5.0 billet aluminum shifter

Rearend

- Ford 9-inch housing
- Mark Williams aluminum third member
- 4.11 gears and 31-spline axles
- DPI Gold Track differential

Exhaust

- Custom stainless steel long-tube headers, 1.88-inch primaries, 3-inch collectors
- Custom 3-inch stainless exhaust by Griggs Racing
- Borla XR-1 3.5-inch mufflers

Suspension

- **Front:** Griggs Racing GR350 Open Track SLA with SN-95 spindles, Koni double adjustable coilover shocks
- **Rear:** Griggs Racing torque arm and Watt's link, Koni double adjustable coilover shocks

Brakes

- **Front:** Griggs/Sierra World Challenge disc, 13.5-inch rotors, four-piston calipers
- **Rear:** Griggs/Sierra World Challenge disc, 12.9-inch rotors, four-piston calipers
- Dual master cylinders

Wheels

- **Front:** Jongbloed Racing Wheels 305-Aero, 18x10.5
- **Rear:** Jongbloed Racing Wheels 305-Aero, 18x12

Tires

- **Front:** Hoosier Sports Car D.O.T., P315/30ZR18
- **Rear:** Hoosier Sports Car D.O.T., P335/30ZR18

Interior

Custom rollcage, fabricated aluminum dashboard with Auto Meter Phantom instruments, Kirkey aluminum racing seats, carpet and rear seat deleted, custom switch panel, interior-mounted brake and clutch master cylinders, removable steering wheel

Exterior

Dupont '70 Mustang Red paint by Mike Mossi (Petaluma, CA), Boss Mustang side stripes, Maier fiberglass hood and front spoiler, rolled fender lips, front tow hook