

MUSTANG MONTHLY - WEIRD SCIENCE ARTICLE
LOST LORE: FORD AUSTRALIAN DELIVERY MUSTANGS
LOST, NO, FOUND - ALIVE AND WELL

ATTN: JERRY HEASLEY

Dear Jerry

Here are the 'facts' for the 'Ford Australia Delivered Mustangs' as best I know. I have been keeping a registry of these Mustangs for the last 12 years. As there are no official records from 'Ford Australia' there are still some strange and unusual questions to be answered. Firstly, there were a few Mustangs brought in as 'personal' imports for Ford executives/friends throughout the mid to late sixties. I have details of a 70 Mach 1 with a 'Ford Australia' ID tag etc. But officially there was only ever the one effort to bring into Australia brand new Mustangs, convert them to RHD and sell them throughout the Ford dealers. And this was throughout 1965-66. The exact number is still unknown but the figure of approx. 160 - 200 cars in total keeps coming up throughout my sources. They were all hardtops, no convertibles or fastbacks.

According to my records it would be safe to say that 99% were C Code 289 C4 auto, standard interior with full-length console Mustangs. I have no knowledge of any six-cylinder models at all. From what I can piece together, the reason for the imports was, to promote the new XR Falcon, or as the advertising went the new 'Mustang Bred' XR Falcon with the power of a V8. The majority of imports (about 80%) were 1966 models. I have a total of 25 Mustangs and their VIN numbers listed in my records for Australia. 19 cars are 1966 models and the rest are 65 models. They are all 289 C code C4 hardtops.

Most of the Mustangs that were imported were pre-sold. One original owner advised me, that he waited for many months after laying down his deposit for his brand new Mustang to be delivered.

Once in Australia the cars were not actually converted by Ford Australia. They were sub-contracted to a firm in one of our Sydney suburbs - Homebush that coincidentally is the home of the 2000 Olympics. Bill Buckle was the name of the man that performed the conversions. The metal dash was cut up and the steering wheel, ignition, cigarette lighter, lights and wiper controls were placed on the right hand side.

The original heater was replaced with a heater from a XM/XP Falcon coupe, which is the Australian equivalent of a US Sprint Falcon, and was connected to the existing Mustang heater controls. The heater controls were left untouched and stayed to the left of the ashtray.

The cardboard glove box insert was dissected to fit around the wiper motor behind the dash, as the windscreen wipers were not converted to swing the opposite direction.

Converting the wipers, as it is commonly done today, would involve a great deal of work i.e. cutting, welding and re-painting of the cowl intake area. The rest of the interior was left as is ex factory USA.

Beneath the front of the car was another story. The steering components were derived from Australian car parts i.e. Steering box was from a XM/XP Falcon; the drag link and Idler arm was from a Compact Fairlane. The tie rod ends varied from Australian Falcon parts to the original Mustang parts. To my knowledge, most of the Australian Mustangs had the Kelsey Hayes front disc brakes fitted as standard. But, either due to the difficulty to service these items in the early years or depending when the conversion was done, I think a lot have been replaced with Australian Falcon discs and single piston calipers. This is why there are so many variations on tie rod ends. For example. My Car has Falcon solid discs, single calipers, Mustang gooseneck inner tie rod ends and Mustang outer tie rod ends.

As there was no room to place a combined dual master cylinder and brake booster, the majority had a remote power booster mounted. It was fitted just forward of the left-hand side front shocker tower or just behind the left-hand side front shocker tower around the same area as where the original steering box would be.

As the cars were specially built from the USA for export they were already fitted with the one-piece export brace with the welded reinforcement plate on the upper fire wall/cowl. Another minor feature taken from the early Shelby Mustangs was the small washer, spot welded to the front shocker tower bracket. (See pic supplied)

Australian laws did not allow the turn indicators to be red, therefore the back up lights were converted to amber lenses and had the dual purpose of back up lights (when car in reverse) and turn indicators, leaving the red brake lights as brake/parking lights.

Finally, once all work was completed a 'Ford Motor Company of Australia-Vehicle Identification Plate' was affixed to the car. Again, like anything Mustang, nothing was ever common. I have seen the ID tag mounted in no less that 3 different places. The majority was on the right hand side upper inner guard (see pic). But I have also seen it on the left-hand side front radiator support and on the right hand side front shocker tower (facing towards the front). Obviously the numbers on the ID tag match the US body buck tag and Ford Australia records of which none are known to exist. Incidentally these tags are the same ones used on XM/XP Australian Falcons of the same vintage.

My car is one of the 160 + Ford Australia Delivered Mustangs. I purchased the car in June 1988 from a fellow Mustang club member. The car had been in storage for a number of years and was in a reasonable state having spent all its life in Australia. As it was my only method of transport, it was driven daily to and from work for 4 years. As the bodywork and paint were in need of attention, I decided to give it a fresh coat of paint. But, once I turned that first bolt and removed the hood I was hooked. Before I could say "ground up restoration" the car was totally stripped to a bare shell. Everything was tagged/bagged, photographed and filed away to be either repaired or replaced another day.

So, in between house renovations, new family member - baby son, Mustang Club of Australia Editorship for local and national magazines and everyday life, five years passed before my Mustang put rubber to bitumen once more. As you can see from the photos the car is built to concours/show standards and is delegated to sunny weekend drives and car shows.

It would be a dream come true to see my car in the full color pages of Mustang Monthly and to inform the readers that, though limited in numbers, these cars really do exist. As you would imagine, like any limited production run model, there is always someone trying to cash in and these Mustangs are no different. Because they are in reasonable demand if the car is in good condition with all the relevant id tags there are many cars advertised as Ford Australian Delivered Mustangs. But on closer inspection or questioning the car is usually a mock up or the owner was just misinformed as to what a Genuine Ford Australia Delivered Mustang is.

I hope this information helps sort out some of the misconceptions about another one of the great Mustang Myths.

Yours sincerely

Colin Falso
MOCA VIC