

Markham Economist & Sun / Stouffville Tribune Wheels Edition



**MARKHAM KIA**  
 It's about time everyone had a well made car.  
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 WHEELBASE COMMUNICATIONS

**B**efore the end of this year, Ford will push the 'retro' button to create yet another niche number, the Mustang Mach 1, complete with tire-smoking power and blast-from-the-past 'shaker' hood scoop.

The Blue Oval gang is getting good at this rear-view mirror stuff. In 2001, the company trotted out the Mustang Bullitt. The limited-production (6,500 copies) model paid homage to a 33-year-old film classic and to actor/racer Steve McQueen, who, as detective Frank Bullitt, romped up and down the hills of San Francisco chasing the bad guys in a specially tricked-out Mustang GT fastback.

Next, in honor of Ford's 100th birthday in 2003, the company reintroduces the GT40, a modern interpretation of the car that, in 1966, took the top-three positions in the greatest long-distance race of all, the 24 Hours of Le Mans held in France.

Now, Ford will bring the Mach 1 name out of retirement, loading it up with special performance and styling features and turning it loose on the street.

For anyone a bit hazy on their Mustang lore (or too young to remember), the Mach 1 was a muscular fast-back model introduced back in 1969. The car's most prominent feature was a 'shaker' air-intake scoop that was directly attached to the four-barrel carburetor. Sitting at the stop light, the Mach 1 looked alive as the scoop shuddered with every blip of the throttle.

The original Mach 1 was available with either a 250-horsepower 351 cubic-inch V8 or a thunderous 428-cube Cobra Jet motor that delivered 335 horsepower.

In its formative years, the Mach 1 racked up impressive sales numbers. However, ever-tightening musclecar insurance premiums combined with stringent emissions and safety regulations eventually spelled doom. By the

time it had faded to black in 1974, the Mach 1 had become nothing more than a mild-mannered V6 econobox.

The 2003 version bridges the gap between the glorious days of high horsepower and today. It also bridges the gap in the current lineup between the 260-horsepower Mustang GT and the SVT Cobra, another new-for-'03 limited-numbers Mustang arriving this fall. Both the Mach 1, at 300-plus horsepower (the final number hasn't yet been determined), and the 390-horse SVT Cobra will use the DOHC version of Ford's 4.6-litre V8. However, the Cobra gets its extra grunt courtesy of an Eaton supercharger.

In developing the Mach 1 concept, Ford engineers and marketing types shopped their project car around at various Mustang car-club gatherings to gauge interest among the faithful. The response, especially to the shaker scoop, was sufficiently encouraging and the production was quickly green-lighted.

The vehicle's signature device works by feeding cool outside air through a filter before it reaches the intake manifold. The engine itself is modified with special cams, a forged crankshaft (on five-speed versions only) and a performance exhaust system.

To make the car drive as good as it looks, the Mach 1 sits 2.5 centimetres lower to the ground (compared to the GT), receives a firmer suspension and uses Brembo brand front and rear rotors for added stopping power. Four-wheel ABS and traction control are also standard.

Other items that showcase the Mach 1 include a front air-dam extension, 17-inch 'Magnum 500'-style five-spoke wheels and woven leather seats - all designed to mimic the original. Even the original colors are available.

Only 6,500 Mach 1s (the same number as the 2001 Bullitt) will be built, each with a special identification number. That's only about four per cent of the total estimated 2003 Mustang sales, but enough to further enhance the brand's enduring mystique for at least another few decades.

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