

# HM Review

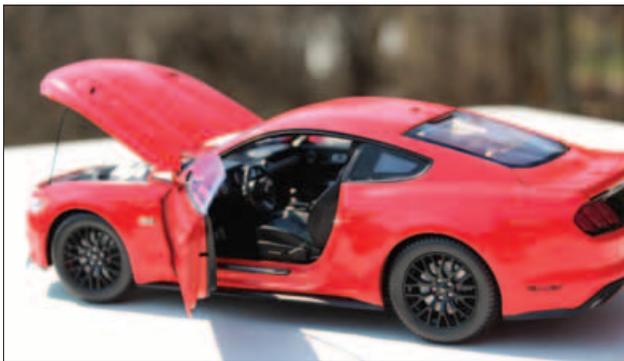
Dennis McFarlane

## AutoWorld 2015 Ford Mustang GT

*After more than 50 years, it's still going strong.*

In the early 1960s Ford Motor Company needed a boost. The company's reputation was lacking and to further complicate the issue, the company was selling cars, but not to young buyers, the market every manufacturer wants to tap. Brand loyalty is also paramount in manufacturing, and this was a time of growing dissent. To hear something along the lines of, "My father was always a Ford man" for the most part meant instant alienation. Ford was in desperate need of a product that would attract the young buyer to its brand.

This was also a period in time when families were beginning to add a second car to the driveway. This was generally a less expensive compact car, which was used primarily for running the kids around and doing some local shopping. Starting with the Falcon, an absolutely lackluster marque with no sense of marketplace, Ford designers used the chassis, and entire running platform, including parts already on the shelf. They redesigned the



*The doors open to reveal a very accurate interior complete with all of the necessary trim.*

body with a sporty, even racy appearance, geared directly at the younger buyer, and came up with the Mustang.

It is amazing what a little sheet metal can do. When the Mustang was released in late 1964 (all titled as 65s), sales were immediate and astronomical. The predicted model run of 100,000 total units (for the entire lifespan of the vehicle) was met in three months. Another 300,000 plus cars were sold before the end of the year (a record) and within 18 months more than one million Mustangs were in the hands of the buying public.

Like all marques, over the years the Mustang has suffered its ups and downs. Yet 50 years and six design changes, known as generations, later, the Mustang is still a



major factor in overall Ford Motor Company sales. (Unquestionably the worst was the third generation shoe-box, or four-eyes, which was introduced as Ford's attempt to show the world they were environmentally conscious. However, as time has passed, the car has developed an almost cult like following) The sixth generation — G6 Mustang — was released in 2015, and it is the focus of this review.

AutoWorld is calling its latest run of American motoring icons Muscle Cars U.S.A. The packaging is a heavy gauge cardboard, without the clear window dealers are used to seeing as part of the company's die cast lines. Also, instead of being attached to a plastic base, the model is held firmly and securely inside the box by a completely encasing molded foam rubber shell.

In an age of aerodynamic styling, where efficiency reins supreme over design, it is a difficult job indeed to retain that familiar Mustang shape while lowering the whole car for stability and widening the body to increase passenger comfort. A person wouldn't think an inch here, or a couple of inches there, would be that noticeable in a 1/24 model, but it is, and AutoWorld has done a great job in translating these changes to scale.



*The Mustang's engine compartment includes the shock tower brace used to stiffen the suspension.*

The review model is bright red, and wow, does it ever stick out. The paint is for the most part flawless, but this particular model is a pre-production sample and there was the tiniest bit of bubbling on the front bumper just below the grille. The headlight and taillight lenses are well done in clear and translucent red plastic respectively, but the fog

lamps are painted. The full-scale Mustang is not adorned with emblems, and neither is the model. The appropriate 5.0 badge, indicating the displacement of the motor, is on each of the front fenders. GT is emblazoned on the trunk lid, and the galloping stallion, part of every Mustang since its introduction, and famous for coining the term "pony car" is centered on the grille, exactly where it belongs.

For a preproduction model, the panel lines are acceptably even and tight. The doors open to reveal an unexpectedly well detailed interior. Even though they are molded plastic, the seats are a very good rendition of Mustang buckets. The center console is complete with a parking brake



*The chassis is well detailed and has a fully articulated four-wheel independent suspension.*

lever and the obligatory, made only in America, cup holders. The shifter is appropriately stubby, and since this vehicle is equipped with a standard transmission, all three pedals, accelerator, brake and clutch, are present. The dash is well done with the instruments finished in the proper colors and details. The steering wheel turns with the front wheels. And the door panels even have the correct number of simulated speakers for the premium nine speaker stereo system.

Opening the hood reveals a well executed engine bay. There really isn't much to be seen of the 5.0 liter, 435hp, V8, as like most engines of this day and age everything is wrapped in huge plastic covers. Unexpected was the tower brace. For years, instead of a double wishbone suspension, Ford has used a strut, sort of a modified coil-over shock system, with the bottom of the strut bolted to a wishbone, and the top of the strut bolted to a tower that's part of the car's unibody structure. The towers can flex, even crack, when stressed, and for years street racers have been bolting on a cross brace to lock the towers in place. To complete the engine compartment, there is a hood prop, which fits into a small dimple, used to hold the hood open.

In full-scale, a Mustang's trunk is barely large enough to get your arms in when packing a suitcase for a trip. In scale, a person can almost fit his finger, but not much else. The trunk floor is covered in a flocking material, and the stereo's subwoofer is located against the right panel, but that's it for the trunk. It is interesting to note that in full-scale there is a spare tire



*Displayed is a license plate correctly identifying the 50th anniversary of the Mustang's introduction.*

well located under the floor mat, but for the past several years Ford Mo. Co. has not included a spare tire as standard equipment. What the purchaser gets instead is a bottle of tire sealer and a small air compressor.

It was a struggle to review this model without first turning it over. New for 2015 is a four-wheel independent suspension developed specifically for the Mustang. As fans of die cast know, many models in this scale simply replicate a chassis using a plastic plate, sometimes with nothing more than a simulated oil pan and exhaust system, but little else. What a pleasantly surprise. AutoWorld has done a magnificent job of incorporating a full pan to replicate the bottom of the unibody and the chassis also includes openings almost identical to the full-scale vehicle.

This is nice, as the lower part of the engine is completely visible. The dual exhaust is properly attached to the manifolds and exits through the bottom of the rear bumper. The front wheels steer from side to side and, as previously mentioned are connected to the steering wheel. And the best part of all, not only does the rear suspension contain the proper components, but along with the front suspension, it is also fully articulated.

Completing the chassis are four blacked-out rims. The wheels are not removable, but the brake discs are clearly visible. There are no brake calipers, but let's get real, this is a model anyone can afford. Although the tires fill the wheel



*The front grille features the galloping stallion that eventually coined the term "pony car."*

wells perfectly, and the tread matches that of a well known performance tire, there are no sidewall markings. With the review model being a preproduction sample, it is not known if this will be part of the actual production run or if AutoWorld is awaiting licensing approval.

Weighing in at over two pounds, this is a hefty model, and that translates into a solid feel. Although any model will break if abused, there is no reason to fear handling this car. For die cast collectors, especially fans of the Mustang,

this model's run will be limited to 1254 models, each with a serial number plate as part of the chassis. This translates into a very limited supply of replicas that will quickly dry up, so make certain you have a couple in inventory for your die cast customers. **HM**