

Forty-Nine...

GT40...

Mustang Mach I...

Mustang Pony...

Thunderbird...

From LA to DC, Dallas to Chicago, the Ford Living Legends Tour made the rounds this summer and fall, including a late September round at ten Arizona Ford dealers in the Phoenix metro area. Excitement was in the air as we attended to get our first in-the-flesh look at the GT40 and Forty-Nine, neither of which had ever been in Arizona before.

Ford's Living Legends Studio is a modern-day reflection of legendary "skunkworks" team which toiled in a small corner of the Ford design studio in Dearborn, Michigan, in the 1950s. This is the group that developed the original Thunderbird. Today's Studio serves as curator of Ford's classic nameplates, developing concepts for new and existing products. There are four elements to the Living Legend line-up, and five vehicles visited us.

GT40

The original GT40 was built in the mid-1960s to compete for the trophy at the legendary Le Mans race circuit. This racer is credited with changing performance car history, placing 1-2-3 at the 24 Heures de Le Mans in 1966 and going on to win for the next three consecutive years. From Le Mans to Sebring to Daytona, the GT40 was instrumental in the careers of driving

legends such as Dan Gurney and AJ Foyt.

The concept shares the name, and the look and feel, of the original, but is more than 18" longer and nearly four inches taller. Just 45 days after the GT40 concept car appeared at the North American International Auto Show earlier this year, Ford responded to an incredible popular response by announcing it would build the 500 hp supercar in 2003, reportedly to be called simply the Ford GT.

Stay tuned! We have more photos, specifications, historical information to share with you; watch for a complete writeup on the Ford GT in an upcoming edition of *Arizona Driver* magazine.

Forty-Nine

New car design and production came to a halt in the US during World War II and didn't take much of another step forward until the revolutionary 1949 Ford hit the streets. Sleek, low and with integrated fenders, the '49 Ford influenced the entire industry from that point forward.

The Forty-Nine concept car is true to its roots, with simple shapes, classic proportions, clean body panels and modest use of chrome. This 21st century car is still ready for a night of rock'n'roll and drive-ins.



Ford GT40



Ford Forty-Nine



Ford Mustang Mach I

The Forty-Nine coupe that visited Arizona is one of only two in the world; the other is a convertible also created for the auto show circuit.

Mustang Mach I and Pony

After its 1964 1/2 introduction at the New York World's Fair, it didn't take that long for the Ford Mustang to become the best-selling car in history, eclipsing the Model T. The car's popularity has continued unabated for almost 40 years, and has been produced in many iterations, from the Boss 302, Boss 429 and Mach I machines of the early '70s to the Bullitt and SVT Cobra available today.

The powerful Mach I and specially-appointed Pony versions for 2003 carry on the heritage of those classics.

Thunderbird

Today's Thunderbird also began its new life as an auto show concept car, and returned to regular production in the 2001 model year. That successful adaptation of a priceless Ford icon to today's technologies and tastes was instrumental in developing the Living Legends Studio concept. ■



Ford Mustang Pony



Ford Thunderbird

Photos: Ford Motor Company