

Factory customized Ford Mustangs

MUSTANG BULLITT AND SHELBY COBRA GT500



By Barbara and Bill Schaffer

Like the car in the Bullitt movie, the new limited edition Ford Mustang Bullitt is fitted with Euro-Flange 'Bullitt' wheels with a charcoal satin finish. The only difference is the originals were probably the 14-inch, and these are 18-inches.

In its 44-year, five-generation history, the Ford Mustang has probably been one of the most customized cars from an American automaker. The customizations came not only by the owners, but also from aftermarket builders like Shelby and Saleen, along with a dozens of Ford factory special editions.

So far this year, Ford is offering six different special edition Mustangs: the Shelby GT500 coupe and convertible, Shelby GT500 KR coupe, Shelby GT coupe and convertible, GT California Special coupe, Bullitt coupe and the Warriors in Pink coupe and convertible, for which a portion of sales of the pink-striped Mustang goes to breast cancer research.

There has also been the collaboration of Ford, Barrett-Jackson Auction and Shelby to create a limited edition 2008 Barrett-Jackson Mustang Shelby GT (see the January/February 2008 issue of *Arizona Driver Magazine*).

Two of the most popular special Mustangs, the Shelby GT500 and the Bullitt, recently found their way into our garage.

Bullitt Mustang

In 1968, legendary actor Steve McQueen drove a Dark Highland Green 1968 Mustang GT in the movie *Bullitt*, with a seven-minute chase that has become one of the most famous movie car chases of all time. Marking the 40-year anniversary of the movie, the Mustang Bullitt closely parallels the look of McQueen's car. Unlike the way cars are "placed" in movies today, the practice in Hollywood in 1968 was to remove all exterior badges and logos from the car, including the pony on the grille, and that's

how the Mustang appeared in the movie.

To match that look, the 2008 Bullitt model is painted a close match to the original color, and badging is confined to Mustang emblems on the wheel hubcaps and the word "Bullitt" in a gun-sight graphic at the center of the faux gas cap in the center of the decklid (the location of the filler in the original). However, the car is so iconic, it needs no labels for almost anyone to know what it is.

Ford did take some liberties by using a much more powerful 4.6-liter V-8 rated at 315 horsepower. The chassis and suspension are upgraded from the GT, and the dual exhaust was designed to match the sound of the original car as closely as possible.

Inside, the Bullitt is fitted with black leather seats, satin metallic trim and a hand-machined aluminum swirl panel appliqué. A satin aluminum shift ball replaces the leather shifter knob for the five-speed manual transmission. The Bullitt logo caps the center of steering wheel and "Bullitt" is embossed on the metal sill plates.

It was fun simply to drive around town and listen to the near-musical exhaust notes, but the car begs to be pushed, up to its 6500 rpm redline. The suspension is compliant, but not harsh. The modern version is very fast, running from 0 to 60 mph in 5.0 seconds, and it has an estimated top speed of 151 mph, according to Ford. Both those numbers are significantly faster than the original.

The Bullitt package adds \$3,310 to the standard vehicle price of \$27,020, or about the equivalent of a 2008 Mustang GT Premium. Our test vehicle also had an anti-

Bullitt Mustang

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Premium audio system with 6 CD & MP3 changer; Air conditioning; Leather seats; Power driver's seat; Speed control; Tilt wheel; Power locks and windows; Traction control; Keyless entry.

Base Price \$ 27,020

Options:

- Active anti theft\$ 325
- HID headlights\$ 525
- Sirius radio\$ 195
- Bullitt package\$ 3,310
- DVD-based navigation.....\$ 1,995
- Ambient lighting.....\$ 295
- Triptunes™\$ 295

Total Options.....\$ 6,940

Freight.....\$ 745

Price as Tested\$ 34,705

DIMENSIONS

- EPA SizeSubcompact
- Weight.....3,483 lb.
- Wheelbase107.1 in.
- Length.....187.6 in.
- Width.....67.774.0 in.
- Height54.5 in.
- Fuel Capacity16.0 gal.
- Cargo Capacity.....13.1 cu. ft.

MECHANICAL

- Engine.....4.6L SOHC V-8
- Horsepower315@6000
- Torque325@4250
- Transmission6-spd. man.
- Drive.....rear wheel
- Brakes.....Disc ABS
- Tires235/50ZR18

PERFORMANCE

- 0 to 60 mph.....5.0 sec.
- Top speed151 mph
- EPA economy rating15/23 mpg

COMPETITORS

BMW 1 Series, Honda Accord coupe, Infiniti G37, Mazda RX-8, Mitsubishi Eclipse, Nissan Altima coupe, Pontiac G6 coupe, Toyota Camry Solara, Volkswagen R32, Volvo C30



An option (\$295) in new Ford Mustang Shelby GT500, shown here, is a seven-color programmable ambient lighting feature, with a switch to cycle through different colored lights on the front console, footwells and around the cupholders.

theft system (\$325), HID headlamps (\$525), DVD-based navigation system (\$1,995) and a couple of other features that bought the MSRP to \$34,705 with shipping. Production is limited to a total of only 7,700 cars.

Shelby GT500

Today, McQueen's Bullitt character would probably be driving the Shelby GT500. The modern successor to the famous 1967-1970 Shelby GT500 is more awesome than the original. Powered by a 500-hp supercharged 5.4 liter V-8 with a six-speed manual transmission, race-tuned suspension and Brembo brakes, the GT500 appears to be as close to a street-ready race car as you can get. Nevertheless, this car could easily be an everyday driver that just happens to accelerate from 0 to 60 mph in 4.3 seconds and with a top speed limited to 155 mph. Imagine how quickly it will merge in with freeway traffic.

We expected a clutch that required both feet to push to the floor, but this one, although stiff, was reasonable. The body is extremely rigid, but the suspension is a step or two tighter than the Bullitt version.

It's easy to spot the Shelby version, with its sinister-looking front end that includes wide upper and lower fascia openings and the Cobra logo in place of the pony in the center of the grille. Of course, the optional GT500 premier trim package (\$500) with two broad racing stripes over the length of the car is a big clue, too.

Developed in collaboration between Carol Shelby and Ford's SVT (Special Vehicle Team), the Shelby is available as a coupe or a

convertible. The engine is force-fed to 8.5 pounds of pressure by a "Roots-type" supercharger that provides an instantaneous response. To make sure all that power can stop, engineers fitted the car with 14-inch four-piston Brembo brakes in the front and 11.8-inch vented discs in the rear.

As a top-of-the-line model, the Shelby GT500 has a high level of equipment, plus some extras—like an aluminum hood with air extractors, rear spoiler and multiple Cobra emblems. Options on our \$40,930 test vehicle included Sirius Satellite Radio (\$195) and the GT500 trim package (\$595).

A penalty for the 500 horsepower is fuel mileage of 15 mpg city and 21 mpg highway, according to the EPA, and as a result there is a \$1,300 Gas Guzzler Tax. With this extra tax, options and shipping, our car was priced at \$43,765, which equates to a very reasonable \$87.53 per horsepower.

If that's not enough, this spring a Shelby GT500KR (King of the Road) version was also introduced in a limited run of 1,000 cars (see May/June 2007 *Arizona Driver Magazine*). After starting life as a "regular" Shelby GT500, the cars are sent to Shelby's Las Vegas facility to be further customized with more performance upgrades, and the engine is further modified to 540 hp. Each car can then be hand-customized and delivered to each customer in an enclosed transporter, like the legendary Ford GT.

Regular Mustang prices start at \$20,235 including destination charges, for a Deluxe version with a 4.0-liter V-6 engine. For more information, see your local Ford dealer. ■

Shelby GT500

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Aluminum hood; Premium audio with 6 CD/MP3 changer; SVT suspension; Brembo brakes; Traction control; Keyless entry; Air conditioning; Keyless entry

Base Price \$ 40,930

Options:

- Sirius Satellite Radio\$ 195
- GT500 premier trim package\$ 595

Total Options and Gas Guzzler.....\$ 790

Gas Guzzler tax\$ 1,300

Freight.....\$ 745

Price as Tested\$ 43,765

DIMENSIONS

- EPA SizeSub compact
- Weight.....3,920 lb.
- Wheelbase107.1 in.
- Length.....187.6 in.
- Width.....74.0 in.
- Height54.5 in.
- Fuel Capacity16.0 gal.
- Cargo Capacity.....12.3 cu. ft.

MECHANICAL

- Engine.....5.4L SOHC Supercharged V-8
- Horsepower500@6000
- Torque480@4500
- Transmission6-spd. man.
- Drive.....rear wheel
- Brakes.....Disc ABS
- Tires.....Front 255/40ZR18
- Rear285/40ZR18

PERFORMANCE

- 0 to 60 mph.....4.3 sec.
- Top speed155 mph
- EPA economy rating15/21 mpg

COMPETITORS

Audi A5, BMW 3 Series, Dodge Challenger, Infiniti G37