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2008 Ford Mustang Picture

The 9 millionth Mustang, a GT convertible, is headed to "a dealership in Iowa," Ford says. | September 15, 2009 | Ford Motor Company

News

Historic: Ford Builds 9 Millionth Mustang

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DEARBORN, Michigan — Ford reached a major milestone midweek with the announcement that the 9 millionth **Mustang** — the longest-running nameplate in the Blue Oval brand's history — had

rolled off the line. The Mustang GT convertible is on its way to an unspecified buyer at a "dealership in Iowa," the automaker said.

Ford noted that the Mustang will celebrate its 45th anniversary on April 17, 2009. The pony car's longevity in the auto industry was remarkable even 20 years ago. In his 1988 book *Talking Straight*, Lee Iacocca, former Ford president and a key member of the team that developed the Mustang, remarked: "I knew my days were numbered when people started telling me the Mustang qualified as an antique."

The company said one of every two sports cars sold in America is a Mustang and said the pony car leads the \$1-billion aftermarket parts and accessories industry as the most personalized vehicle of all time.

The Mustang's official launch occurred on April 17, 1964 at the New York World's Fair, although Americans were given a preview the night before, when Ford bought the 9:30 p.m. time slot on all three television networks. "An estimated 27 million Americans watched the Ford program, setting off one of the greatest consumer stampedes for an automobile," according to the 1996 book *Car Crazy: The Official Motor City High-Octane, Turbocharged, Chrome-Plated, Back Road Book of Car Culture*. "Ford, which hoped to sell 100,000 of its sporty Mustangs in the first year, was swamped with 22,000 orders on the first day alone. The 100,000 mark was hit just four months later, and the 12-month total of some 417,000 set a record for a new American car."

The early Mustangs were pitched as a fun, affordable, "young person's car" that could transform lives. A 1964 *Readers Digest* ad for the Mustang proclaimed: "Two weeks ago, this man was a bashful schoolteacher in a small Midwestern city. Add Mustang. Now he has three steady girls, is on first-name terms with the best head waiter in town, is society's darling. All of the above came with his Mustang. So did buckets (seats), full wheel covers, wall-to-wall carpeting, padded dash, vinyl upholstery and more."

The 1987 book *The Fords: An American Epic*, notes that Mustang almost was christened "Torino" by Ford ad agency J. Walter Thompson. "But then a call came from Charlie Moore, Henry's (Henry Ford II) personal publicity agent inside the company, telling Iacocca he would have to find another name because anything Italianate might remind people of the gossip they might have heard about Henry and Cristina (Ford's Italian second wife). Henry himself had strongly suggested 'Thunderbird II.' But the Thompson agency recommended 'Mustang' — their concept came from the great World War II fighter plane, not the horse — and that stuck."

What this means to you: Raise your glass as this beloved American muscle car celebrates another watershed event. — *Anita Lienert, Correspondent*