

# LONG TIME COMING



*More than three decades in the making, Mark Bard's restomod Mach 1 is a testament to perseverance... and procrastination*

Words and photography by Barry Kluczyk

**B**y its very definition, a project is something that takes time, and we don't have to tell most of you holding this magazine in your procrastinating hands that some projects tend to drag out seemingly as long as the Chicago Cubs have been trying to win a World Series title.

When Mark Bard started on this '70 Mach 1 restomod, the term didn't even exist. It was 1977 and Jimmy Carter was in the first year of his one and only term, filling the Oval Office with cases of his

brother's Billy Beer. Then again, Mark—who hails from Tilbury, Ontario—would have been more in tune with the Right Honourable Pierre Trudeau, who was Canada's prime minister back then. Either way, CB radios were the cell phones of the day, wood paneling was the basement décor of choice and a new sci-fi movie called *Star Wars* was drawing fans to movie theaters in their bell-bottoms and halter tops.

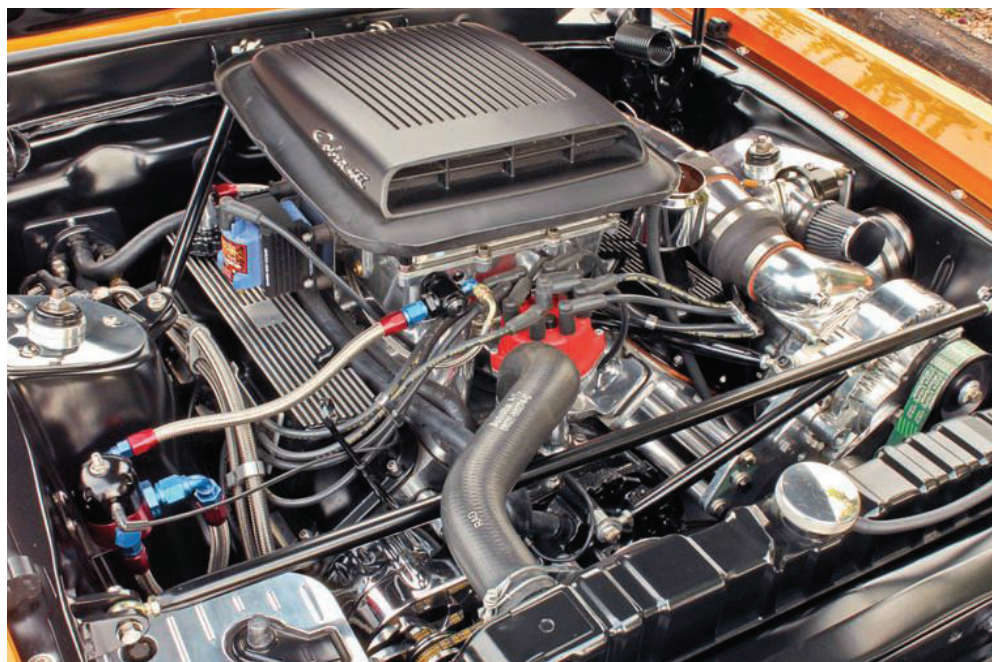
Mark was a young, wrench-turning enthusiast who



traded a Pinto and a fistful of cash for an original Mach 1 (one of 3,528 built with a 351C-4V and one of only 450 to come with a white interior). Back then, a year in the life of a car was like dog years, and it was nothing for a car less than 10 years old to have already begun to show tremendous wear and tear, so it didn't dissuade Mark at all that the original 351 Cleveland and four-speed had long been replaced by a slushbox-backed 302. He drove the car for a

couple of years with plans on fixing it up further, but the smug feeling that came with trading a Pinto for a Mach 1 was shattered when he discovered the car had been hit hard early in its life.

"Once I started on it, I found it had been hit all down the left side and repaired with a ton of body filler," says Mark. "Everything under the carpet was rotten, too—the frame rails, torque boxes, trunk and more. The car wasn't even 10 years old at the time!"



**A Paxton supercharger on the Boss 351 engine is reminiscent of earlier centrifugally blown factory Fords such as the F-code Thunderbird and certain Shelby Mustangs. "Zoomie" exhaust outlets are '70s street chic.**

Such a revelation, unfortunately, was common for enthusiasts back then, as corrosion protection technology simply wasn't good and Detroit iron deteriorated quickly in rust-belt climates. Over the next few years, as time and funds permitted, Mark did what he could to turn back the tin worm. He back-halved the car with new wheel tubs, trunk pan and frame rails, but as so many of us can relate, progress on the project halted. That was in 1981, as Mark spent the next few years focusing on his new shop: Sparky's Performance Centre, which he still runs there in Tilbury, doing mechanical and restoration work.

"When I opened the shop, the Mach 1 went into a storage shed," he says. "I always planned to finish the car, so I kept a list of everything I was going to need and would go to the Ford dealership periodically to buy parts. Back then, just about everything was still available. Those were the days!"

Flashing forward nearly twenty years, Sparky's underwent an expansion in 1999 that included a dedicated bay for the Mustang, but still, Mark didn't have the time to spin the wrenches on his own car. (He also had started a body shop.) By 2006, however, he finally made the time and jumped back into the dormant project with the gusto of a Star Wars fan who has had one too many Billy Beers. That included taking a few steps back and undoing some of the previous work.

"We built a jig so that the car would be put back together nice and square, but it required taking apart some of the stuff I'd already done, including spot welds," he says. "It was a tough way to

get going again, but it was the right way to go."

With the Mustang firmly affixed to the jig, all-new floors, frame rails, torque boxes, trunk pan, wheel tubs, quarter panels, doors and fenders were installed, along with an all-new front frame assembly. We believe there are still a few square inches of the original roof in there somewhere. Fortunately, that cache of original Ford parts Mark had accumulated in the early Eighties included sheet metal, so he was able to fit genuine NOS fenders and more to the car.

By the late-2000s, the aesthetic for modified cars had changed from ladder bars clamped to the axle and chrome velocity stacks pushing through the hood, and Mark rightfully went the restomod route, finally putting dreams of ribbons of metal-flaked paint and a crushed red velvet dashboard out of his head. In their place is the appearance of a nicely restored Mustang that, upon closer inspection, reveals a number of clever details. The color, for instance, isn't Grabber Orange;

it's a Lamborghini color with a pearlescent quality that has to be viewed from different angles to fully appreciate it. Southwest Coatings and Finishing, in Tilbury, Ontario, handled the paint job.

The Mach 1 shaker scoop isn't an original '70 piece, either. It's from the 2003 production model. The scoop has been modified to accept the air inlet for a Paxton-blown 351. Mark even removed the lower cladding that was unique to the 1970 Mach 1, smoothing out the appearance, although admittedly at the expense of the characteristic styling.

The '70 Mach 1 never came with "zoomie" exhaust



**The boost gauge needle in this quartet of Auto Meter instruments will spin to 12 pounds, thanks to the blower.**



outlets, either, but the discreet pipes exiting in front of the rear tires look surprisingly integrated and appropriate on a car from its era. The same goes for the American 200S wheels, known better for decades as “daisy” wheels for their petal-shaped spokes. They give the car a 1970s street race aesthetic, but that aesthetic changes completely when Mark hits a couple of switches and the car drops to the ground on its air-bag suspension.

Supplied by RideTech, the Air Ride Technologies suspension is another of the car’s signature features, and Mark claims his was one of the first Fords to be equipped with one. He also swapped the original steering system

for a more contemporary rack-and-pinion setup.

A control box between the front seats allows Mark to alter the car’s ride height instantly. It’s one of several upgrades to the cabin that includes Auto Meter instruments replacing all of the factory gauges—along with some additional gauges added to former vent outlets in the center of the dashboard. The front seats are from a 1990s-era Eagle Talon, re-covered in leather and cloth by Mr. B’s Custom Upholstery, in Coatsworth Station, Ontario.

Additional interior amenities include a Hurst V-Gate shifter with a pistol grip-type handle. It had to be modified and moved rearward six inches to clear the

**A racing-style, push/pull Hurst V-Gate shifter adds a high-performance aesthetic to the Mustang’s updated cabin, which includes micro-fiber-trimmed seats.**



Subtle enhancements distinguish the Mach 1's appearance without altering its instantly recognizable identity. That's not Grabber Orange, but a Lamborghini color, and the shaker-style scoop is actually from a 2003 Mach 1.



dashboard. Mark also keeps cool in his Mustang with a Classic Auto Air air conditioning system.

Back to that supercharged 351 for a moment: It's actually a real 1971 Boss 351, built to accommodate the Paxton supercharger, which crams air into the engine at up to 12 pounds per square inch. The engine was over-bored during its buildup, but retains a factory Boss 351 forged crankshaft and shot-peened Boss 351 connecting rods. With the Paxton blowing into a Demon 750-CFM carburetor, the net effect is more than 700 horsepower and about 575 lb.ft. of axle-twisting torque. The engine is backed by a Toploader four-speed, which channels torque to a Traction Lok-equipped 9-inch rear end.

The V-Gate shifter is an old-school design intended mostly for the drag strip. There's no side-to-side movement, as all shifting is done "in line," meaning you pull it back to shift to second gear and push it forward to go into third, etc. The handle at the front of the shifter enables the transmission to engage first gear, while the lever to the right of the shifter is for reverse.

"It's more horsepower than I can really use around here, but it's nice to know it's ready whenever I get the chance," says Mark. "And the shifter definitely takes some getting used to, but once you get the hang of it, it's easy enough."

You'd think that after nearly 35 years, Mark wouldn't have felt rushed to complete the car, but by early 2011 he was feeling the squeeze of getting it to the Motor City for the Detroit Autorama – one of the largest and most prestigious indoor car shows.

"There was an all-nighter to get it finished, just like you see on one of those cable TV shows about building cars," he says. "With the help of a bunch of good friends, the car was loaded on a trailer at 7 a.m. and delivered to Detroit, where it won its class. Three weeks later, it was named the Best Ford and one of the Top 10 overall at Toronto Speedworld."

The hits have kept coming, too, as Mark and the Mustang take home a trophy at just about every event they attend. That's quite a few, too, because the car is a driver and the owner enjoys exercising its more than 700-horse supercharged engine and banging through the gears of the Toploader transmission behind it. We simply don't have the space on these pages to show every last detail, but believe us, the underside is as sanitary as everything else within eyeshot.

It's also the perfect rolling calling card for Mark's automotive services, exemplifying craftsmanship, creativity and excellent attention to detail. He swears, too, that customer projects don't take more than 30 years to complete! 🍀

Ride height is adjusted via a console controller. Vintage American 200S "daisy" wheels are a great alternative to cookie-cutter Torq Thrusts.



## OWNER'S VIEW



### It literally took decades

to get this car built, but I've been driving and enjoying it ever since. I haven't really made any additional changes or modifications since it was completed. It came out basically the way I wanted, and now that it's done, I'm having fun.

I know it seems extreme for a project to take so long, but I know plenty of other guys who have cars stored in their garages or out behind a barn, waiting for the right time. I can't say I can give advice on how long it should take to build your car, but I can say that once you see your dream become a reality, there's no greater feeling!

I waited a long time to get this one done, and I'm glad I saw it through to the end.—Mark Bard



## 1970 FORD MUSTANG MACH 1 SPECIFICATIONS

### ENGINE

Block Type	Ford 1971 Boss 351 (Cleveland) OHV V-8, cast-iron with four-bolt main caps; over-bored 0.030-inch
Cylinder Heads	Edelbrock Performer RPM (ported), with 190-cc intake runners, 2.05/1.60-inch valves, intake/exhaust
Displacement	357 cu.in.
Bore x Stroke	4.030 in. x 3.500 in.
Compression Ratio	10:1
Pistons	Speed Pro forged aluminum with Speed Pro rings
Connecting Rods	Boss 351 (shot-peened), 5.780 inches long
Crankshaft	Boss 351 forged steel
Horsepower @ RPM	709 @ 6,600
Torque @ RPM	574-lb.ft. @ 6,200
Camshaft	COMP Cams hydraulic roller
Valvetrain	COMP Cams 1.72:1-ratio roller rocker arms, lifters and valve springs; titanium retainers
Duration	290/290 degrees advertised, intake/exhaust; 110-degree lobe separation angle
Lift	.576/.576-inch intake/exhaust
Fuel System	Aeromotive electric pump
Induction System	Edelbrock Performer RPM aluminum intake manifold with Demon 750-CFM four-barrel carb; Paxton Novi supercharger (12 psi)
Lubrication System	Pressure, gear-type pump; Melling high-pressure oil pump and pick-up; Ford oil pan
Ignition System	MSD "ready to run" billet distributor and 6AL ignition box
Exhaust System	Hedman ceramic-coated headers with 1.75-inch primaries and 3-inch collectors; 3-inch custom exhaust system with Spin Tech mufflers
Original Engine	Ford 351 Cleveland 4V

### TRANSMISSION

Type	Ford Toploader close-ratio four-speed manual
Ratios	1st 2.32:1 2nd 1.69:1 3rd 1.29:1 4th 1.00:1 Reverse 2.59:1
Clutch	McLeod dual-disc

### DIFFERENTIAL

Type	Ford 9-inch (narrowed); N-case Traction-Lok differential with 31-spline axles
Ratio	3.89:1

### STEERING

Type	Flaming River power-assisted rack-and-pinion
Ratio	12.5:1

### BRAKES

Front	1979 Ford Mustang 11-inch rotors with two-piston calipers
Rear	Ford Racing drum-to-disc conversion with 11-inch rotors

### SUSPENSION

Front	Global West upper and lower control arms and Air Ride Technologies ShockWave air-over-shock height-adjustable dampers
Rear	Solid axle; RideTech ShockWave air-over-shock height-adjustable dampers

### WHEELS AND TIRES

Wheels	American Racing 200S Front 15 x 8 inches Rear 15 x 10 inches
Tires	Mickey Thompson Sportsman Front S/R 26 x 10.00-R15LT Rear S/R 28 x 12.00-R15LT

### PERFORMANCE

1/4-Mile ET	Not available
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