

1965 Ford Mustang Rally - The First Cruise, April 1964

Over two days in April 1964, Journalists drove 100 Mustangs from New York to Dearborn as part of the media blitz for the new pony car

Ford Archives - Photographer; Donald Farr - Writer | Mar 21, 2014



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April 13, 1964, was a Big Day for Ford Motor Company. At the Ford Pavilion at the New York World's Fair, Henry Ford II and Lee Iacocca were among the Ford executives who introduced the '65 Mustang during a "Mustang National News Conference." Following the morning press gathering, members of the media were transported to the Westchester Country Club in Rye, New York, about 30 miles north of the World's Fair Flushing Meadows location. The journalists were greeted by approximately 100 new Mustangs lined up on the golf course driving range for a "Mustang Rally" to Dearborn.



Thanks to Dean Weber and Leslie Armbruster from Ford Archives, we have photos and information from the event. Shortly after the morning press conference at the World's Fair, the media arrived at Westchester Country Club for lunch and rally instructions from Ford's race driver/spokesman Ak Miller. At 2:15, the 100 Mustangs, with two media members per car, departed Westchester for the 250-mile or so drive to Syracuse for a dinner reception and overnight stay at the Hotel Syracuse Country House.

The next morning, the group departed Syracuse at 7:30 AM, stopped for lunch at Niagara Falls, and drove through southern Canada to Dearborn, arriving late afternoon at the Dearborn Inn. That evening, the media was bussed to The Roostertail, a Detroit restaurant and entertainment facility, for dinner and rally prizes, which indicates that the press rally was a timed event.

The Mustang Rally press drive provided the media nearly 750 miles of seat time in the new Mustang, reportedly with no mechanical failures or issues for the 100 cars. Unfortunately, we have not been able to locate any of the press coverage, much of

it undoubtedly by newspapers that arrived on doorsteps just in time for the Mustang's public introduction on April 17.



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I Was There

In April 1964, reader Don Fausel was working in Ford's New York district sales office when he was asked to help with the preparation of new Mustangs for a special press function. The event, it turns out, was Ford's media drive from New York through Canada to Dearborn. Over a three-week period, Fausel and other staffers cleaned and prepped the early-production Mustangs for their duties as press cars for the Mustang Rally. Fausel recalls that there were approximately 110 cars, a tally that likely includes the 100 used for the Rally plus spares.

"They were shipped by regular car carrier," Fausel remembers. "They were not covered for transport, although they were delivered to a dealer who had

underground storage to keep them out of sight. One week prior to the drive-away, Ford service reps inspected each car for oil, spare tire, windshield washers, etc. Midway through the process, it became necessary to move the cars to the Ford district office parking lot, where the pre-delivery checks continued. If parts were needed, we called the Dearborn Assembly Plant and they were sent over night. Two days before the drive, the cars were driven to the Westchester Country Club and lined up on the golf course driving range. Press members were transported to the cars, with two persons assigned to each car."

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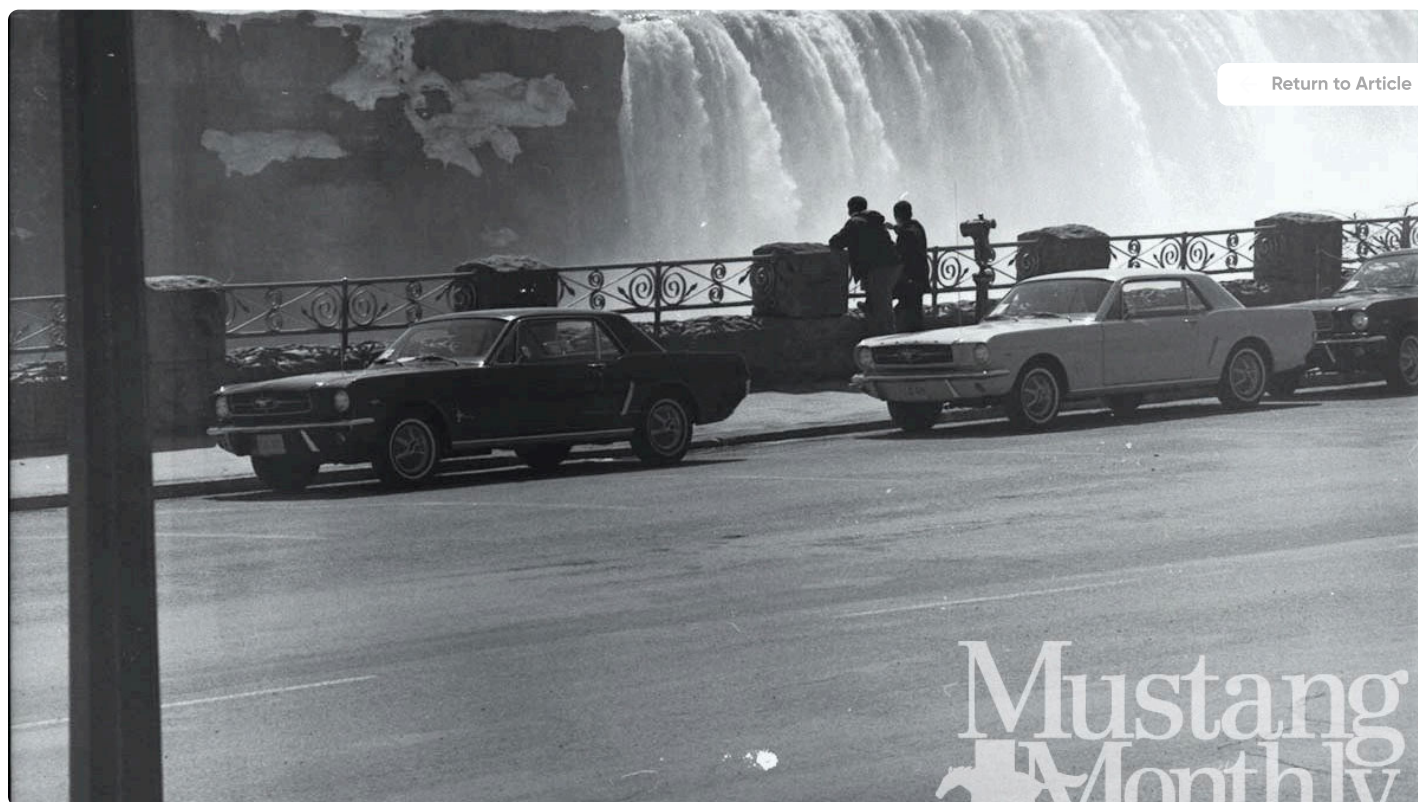
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