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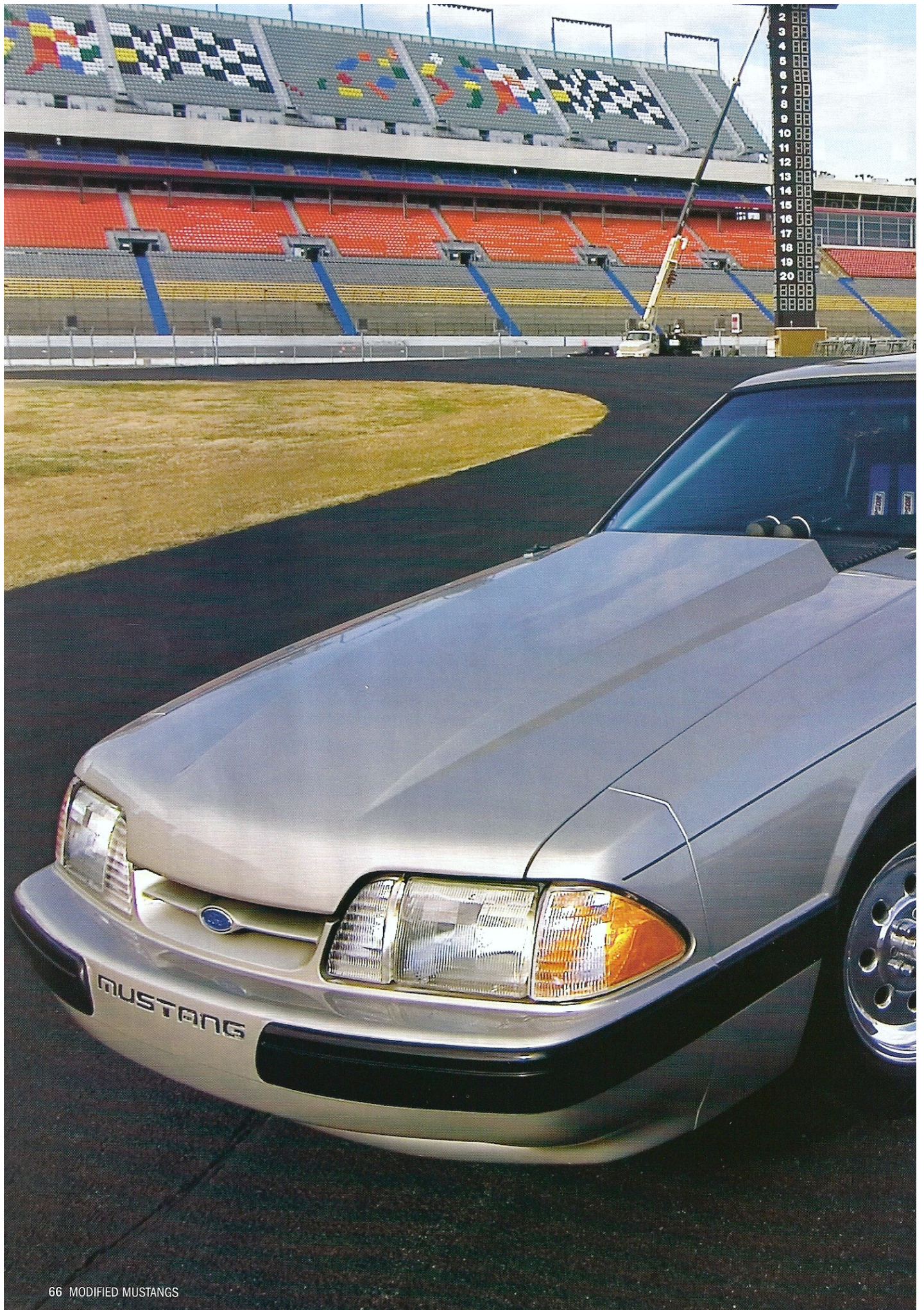
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**Kevin Mullis is driving his first car
through the 1K-horsepower barrier**

Batting A Thousand

Take a close look at the 1990 Mustang on these pages, because it is a true rarity!

A lot of you are probably asking what could be rare about an LX hatchback – built in year when Ford rolled 78,729 nearly identical examples off the River Rouge line?

Two things.

First, you will seldom see a Modified Mustangs feature car still wearing its factory paint and pinstripes. In these days of color-shifting designs, mile-deep metallics and flames so hot they singe, almost no one with any street cred has a paint job by Ford Motor Company – especially when the car is 16 years old!

Second, and this is the point that makes eyebrows rise and jaws drop, the Light Titanium LX is a true sleeper whose bulging hood conceals enough horsepower to make a NEXTEL Cup car seem sluggish by comparison. We're talking 1,000 ponies at the rear wheels!

Kevin Mullis' silver LX didn't always crap thunder and set off Richter scales everywhere it went. It spent its first five years as a five-speed, 5.0-liter Mustang much loved by its retired owner for whom it served as sporty transportation to her retreat at the beach. When her husband passed away and she sold the condo, the 70-year-old looked at the two vehicles in her garage – the other car was a Porsche – and decided to give the Mustang a new home.

Fifteen-year-old Kevin, on the giddy threshold of legal driving age, convinced his father to check out the 50,000-mile LX, which was so stock it even had the original air silencer in the fender. (Didn't everybody get the memo to toss those and install a K&N filter?) The meticulous maintenance records met with Dad's approval, and Kevin began driving one of the coolest cars in his high school parking lot.

No one was surprised when Kevin started pumping his Mustang full of steroids shortly after high school graduation.



Now, before we get too far into the story of Kevin's Mustang it is necessary to explore the automotive DNA of the Mullis men. His father, Pete, bought a slightly used 1963 Ford Sprint when he graduated high school in '67. The black two-door hardtop looked 100 percent original on the outside, but harbored an honest-to-Ford 289 from a wrecked Cobra roadster! Shelby's factory three-carb induction, 9-inch Ford rear axle and Borg-Warner T-10 close-ratio four-speed transmission made it the streetlight

terror of its day. The Falcon has benefited from several upgrades during its 39 years with Pete, including full-length Hooker headers, late-model GT-40 heads and several different paint jobs. Father and son restored the local legend with a black-and-gold scheme a few years ago, and it now enjoys semi-retirement as a show car.

Because he is genetically attracted to speed, no one was surprised when Kevin started pumping his Mustang full of steroids shortly

after high school graduation. "Comes by it natural," as we say in the South. His first attempt to live up to the legacy was a good one, with new pistons, heads, miscellaneous hard parts and a S-trim Vortech turning the stock 302 into a 530-horsepower beast. Although Kevin is a shift-it-yourself kind of guy, he knew the factory five-speed was no match for the increased torque and installed a built C-4 automatic transmission. Backing it all up was a Moser differential housing 33-spline race axles.

INTERIOR / EXTERIOR

WHEELS AND TIRES

FRONT: Weld 15 x 4" Draglites, Kumho skinnies
REAR: Weld 15 x 8" Draglites, Mickey Thompson 28 x 12 1/2" ET Streets

CHASSIS

Full length subframe connectors;
Welded torque boxes;
Custom 3-inch exhaust

EXTERIOR

Saleen Sintex rear wing;
2 1/2-inch cowl induction hood;
Paint by Turn 2 Collision

INTERIOR

Cobra cloth front seats, Simpson five-point harnesses; Autometer water temperature, oil pressure, volts and oil temperature gauges; Autometer 2 5/8" boost, EGT, fuel pressure, NOS pressure gauges; Autometer 5" Tach



BATTING A THOUSAND

KEVIN MULLIS' 1990 MUSTANG LX HATCHBACK

The Mustang's stock 16-inch wheels were pulled and replaced with Weld Drag Lites - 15x3.5 in the front, 15x8 in the rear. Kevin chose Mickey Thompson ET Street tires for the rear measuring 28x12.5 inches, and Kumho 185R15s for the front.

Suspension work was simple but effective. Ford's shock absorbers were junked for Lake-wood units - 90/10s in the front and 50/50s in the back. Kevin mounted adjustable rear suspension bars from Steeda.

The chassis received some attention during this period, as well. Everybody knows the Fox platform can be as flexible as a Russian

gymnast, so Kevin had Custom Performance install some of its full-length subframe connectors as well as weld the torque boxes. The interior was treated to a six-point rollcage, which further stiffened the body, and Kevin built his own rear seat-delete kit from plywood. Losing the back seat reduced weight and created a suitable home for the twin 10-pound nitrous oxide tanks. Cobra seats and Simpson five-point harnesses made the high-speed ride safer and more comfortable.

Eager to keep his finger on the pulse of the built 302, Kevin installed more gauges than a nuclear power plant. Auto Meter dials

measure water temp, oil pressure, voltage, oil temp, fuel pressure, nitrous pressure and RPMs.

Not wanting to give away the element of surprise, he only modified the car's exterior where necessary. A 2.5-inch cowl hood was needed to clear the taller engine, and a Saleen rear wing was installed for better aerodynamics at 100-plus miles an hour. Both were color-matched to the Ford paint by Kevin Schoolcraft at Turn 2 Collision.

Kevin enjoyed the hatchback in that configuration for several years, turning the occasional 1/8th-mile in 6.60 seconds at 105 miles an hour and shooting through the quarter in 10.41



Not wanting to give away the element of surprise, he only modified the car's exterior where necessary.

at 125. Two years ago, he realized the late-model Mustang community was crowded with Fox-bodies of equal output and asked Dale Sciranko at Custom Performance how much horsepower he could build into a small-block Ford V-8. The answer was, "As much as you want to pay for."

Kevin must have paid quite a lot, because he got a 351 SVO block bored .090 over and stroked to 4.250 inches for a massive 444 cubic inches of displacement. Custom Performance honed, decked and performed all other prep on the cast iron block; the steel crank's counter weights were turned down and the shaft balanced, and the holes were filled with CP billet pistons with dished crowns. Carrillo steel rods connect the crank and pistons. AFR 225 aluminum cylinder heads were CNC ported and outfitted with that company's stainless steel valves, K-motion springs and Carrillo retainers. A Custom Performance camshaft hides deep in the block and activates Crower solid lifters. Cooling the big small-block is a four-inch cross-flow radiator and Flex-a-lite fan.

Airflow into the hungry engine looks adequate to feed a commercial jet, starting with the Accufab 90mm throttle body that draws



BATTING A THOUSAND

KEVIN MULLIS' 1990 MUSTANG LX HATCHBACK



through a K&N filter in the cowl vent just below the windshield. An elbow-shaped Wilson upper manifold mates to an Edelbrock Super Victor intake plenum. Eight Lucas high-impedance injectors can flow up to 72 pounds of fuel per hour with the help of a Barry Grant fuel pump and regulator.

A Vortech V-7 YS-trim supercharger sits where a stock Mustang airbox once lived. It force-feeds the 444-cid monster up to 18 psi and blows off excess pressure through a ProCharger valve. Exhaust vapors start at the long-tubes from Kook's Custom Headers, then run through 3.5-inch pipes into a pair of Flowmaster's 40 Series Delta Force competition mufflers.

Electricity from the Optima Yellow Top battery is corralled by an MSD control box and distributor. A Canton Racing Products oil pan handles 8.5 quarts of vital engine lubricant in the form of Valvoline 20W50 racing oil.

With so many ponies headed toward the rear of the car, Kevin pulled the old C-4 slushbox and replaced it with a JW Performance TH400 three-speed automatic transmission that's capable of handling 2,500 horsepower.

Kevin also felt the boost in horsepower required a stouter rollcage, both for his protection and to maintain the integrity of the chassis on the dragstrip. Out went the old six-pointer, and Kevin hired a NASCAR fabricator to build an appropriate cage for the silver LX. Driver and passenger are now surrounded by a 10-point tubular steel skeleton that would make any stock car proud. The in-dash heater and air conditioning plumbing had to be removed for installation of a front crossbar, but the stock interior remained intact otherwise. Rather than simply weld to Ford's hard points, the fabricator mounted his creation directly to the subframe connectors beneath the floor.

When we photographed Kevin's new-and-improved LX, the engine was still being broken in before final tuning and measuring on the dyno, so the owner hasn't been able to do his long-awaited 1,000-horsepower victory dance or run through the 1/8th-mile in the low fives.

For the time being, though, Kevin is content knowing there's another Ford-powered Mullis-mobile creating its own legend in the Carolinas. **MM**



SPECIFICATIONS

Kevin Mullis' 1990 Mustang LX hatchback

ENGINE

Ford 351 Windsor SVO V8

ENGINE MODIFICATIONS

Block bored .040" over, line honed decked and modified to work with crank; Ford Racing forged steel stroker crank worked and balanced by Custom Performance; Carillo rods, CP 9:1 forged dished pistons, Custom Performance solid lifter custom ground camshaft, AFR 225 CNC ported aluminum heads with 208/160 intake exhaust valves Crower lifters, Harlan Sharp 1.6:1 stud mounted rockers K-Motion triple valve springs, Carillo Retainers; Edelbrock Super Victor lower intake manifold with Wilson upper and elbow; K&N air filter, Lucas 72 lb injectors, Barry Grant King Sumo fuel pump, Barry Grant Fuel pressure regulator; Vortech YS-trim supercharger with 77 crank pulley, 27b lower and cog belt; Kooks 2" primary long tube headers, MSD billet distributor, MSD Digital 6 control box, Optima yellow top battery, Taylor 10.4 mm wires, NGK R5820 plugs, Canton aluminum oil pan, ARP main bolts and studs, 4" Cross Flow aluminum radiator, Flex-A-lite fan, braided steel cooling hoses

ENGINE MANAGEMENT

FAST Bank to Bank electronic engine monitoring

DRIVELINE

JW built GM TurboHydramatic 400 three-speed automatic; JW Transbrake, JW steel flywheel, JW 10" 2800 stall speed converter, JW trans blanket; Custom made driveshaft; Moser 33 spline axles; Moser spool

SUSPENSION

Stock front suspension with Lakewood 90/10 struts; Stock rear suspension with Lakewood 50/50 shocks

NUMBERS

1003 RWHP, 978 RWTQ