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NAYS

**VAUGHN GITTIN JR'S '10 FALKEN
TIRE/FORD RACING DRIFT MUSTANG**



GITTIN SIDWAYS

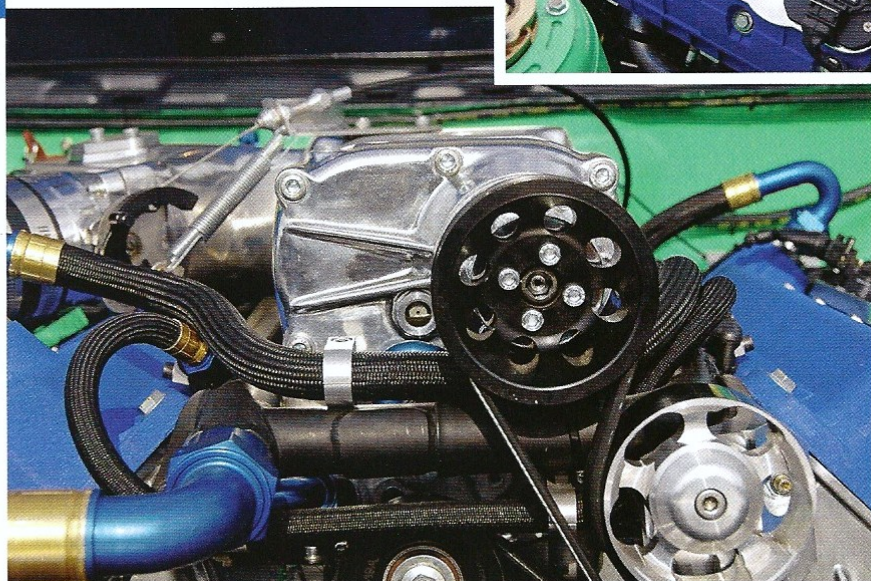
FALKEN TIRE/FORD RACING '10 MUSTANG GT, DRIVEN BY VAUGHN GITTIN JR



Story and Photos by **Drew Phillips**

If you haven't heard of Vaughn Gittin Jr, you will soon. The Joppa, Maryland, native has earned the reputation of being one of the world's best drifters and is the next big thing at Ford Racing. His accolades include winning the 2005 D1 USA vs. Japan competition, the 2007 D1 World Championship, and the final event of the 2008 Formula D season at Irwindale Speedway. Gittin, piloting his well-known '05 Mustang, is also responsible for helping to bring American muscle to the sport, which has historically been dominated by Japanese cars.

For the 2009 season, Vaughn Gittin put his '05 Mustang out to pasture and upgraded to an all-new '10 model. Built by AutoSport Dynamics (ASD) in Charlotte, NC, the new car is purpose-built for drifting and represents a huge step up from the previous generation. One of the main focuses of the new Mustang was to take out as much weight as possible. While the old car wouldn't necessarily be considered heavy at 3,150 pounds, the '10 model tips the scales at a mere 2,500 pounds! "We placed a lot of emphasis on weight reduction so the car could be as nimble as possible and change direction as quickly as possible," said Ian Stewart of ASD, who gave us all the technical details on Gittin's new ride. "Everything that



was not a necessity for structural integrity or Formula D rulebook compliance was removed from the car." In addition to removing as much weight as possible, ASD also used plenty of lightweight components including carbon-fiber body panels on the entire car except for the front and rear bumpers. The interior has also been completely stripped, featuring only the essentials, like a pair of Sparco race seats,

rollcage, and a custom dash built by ASD. "It took a huge amount of work, but as soon as we started testing the car, [Vaughn Gittin] Junior commented on how quickly it changed direction," Stewart went on to say.

Powering Gittin's '10 Mustang is a Ford Racing Aluminator long-block, complete with a Cobra rotating assembly, forged steel eight-bolt crankshaft, forged aluminum pistons,

'03-'04 Cobra cylinder heads and camshafts, and MoTeC M800 engine management system. Fitted with a Ford Racing/Whipple intercooled supercharger system, the 4.6L V-8 puts 680 horsepower and 650 lb-ft torque. According to Stewart, drifting puts more stress on engines than any other motorsport with the exception

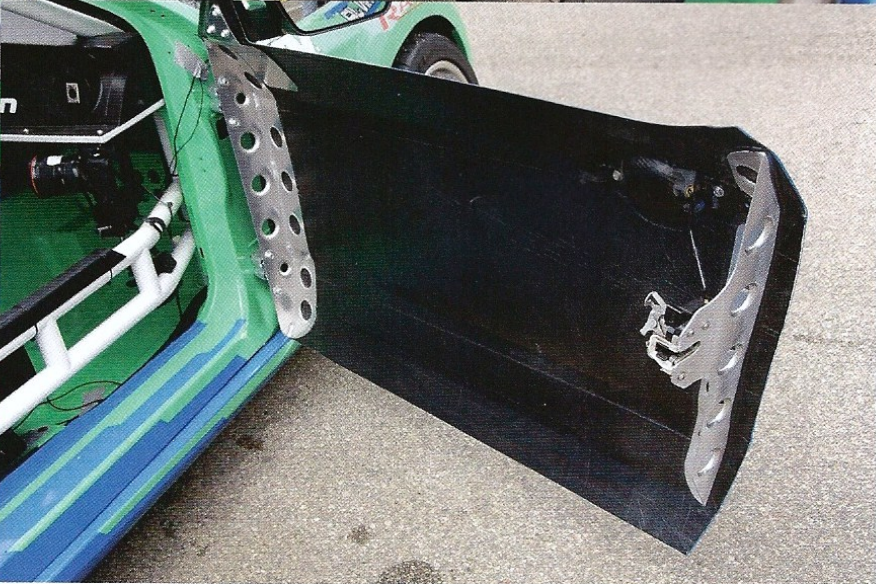
GITTIN MIGHT BE SIDEWAYS MOST OF THE TIME, BUT HE NEEDS HIS CAR TO BE PREDICTABLE AND CONSISTENT

of NASCAR. Typically, the motor is run at or near redline throughout the entire course, which can be especially hard on the motor's valvetrain. "Thankfully, the Ford Racing engine we use can handle that type of abuse," Stewart told us. "What's more impressive is that it's a straight up crate engine that anyone can buy without any additional internal modifications. That really is a testament to how good those engines are, straight out of the box from Ford Racing."

As you might expect, AutoSport Dynamics also built Vaughn's Mustang to handle with accuracy and precision. Gittin might be sideways most of the time, but he needs his car to be predictable and consistent. Having good tires is of utmost importance, and fortunately Falken is always on hand at every event to provide plenty of high quality rubber.

Its DOT-approved Azenis RT-615 is Gittin's tire of choice, featuring an $\frac{3}{32}$ molded tread design and a motorsports-grade compound that maintains grip as temperatures increase. The tires are wrapped around lightweight, 18-inch HRE C21 wheels specifically designed

to minimize unsprung mass and rotational inertia. Stopping power is provided by a Wilwood Superlite 6R 14-inch brake system up front and a twin Wilwood caliper setup at the rear using the stock disc. Finally, a Tein adjustable coilover suspension system



GITTIN SIDWAYS

FALKEN TIRE/FORD RACING '10 MUSTANG GT, DRIVEN BY VAUGHN GITTIN JR

allows for specific tuning at each track, along with numerous custom modifications from AutoSport Dynamics.

We wanted to learn more about the man behind the Mustang, and Vaughn Gittin Jr was kind enough to grant MM&F an interview. Read on to learn how Vaughn became a professional drifter, what he thinks of his new ride, and how it feels to be a part of the Mustang community.

MM&F: Where did you get your love for cars?

VG: My father always had cool hot rods when I was growing up, so I would have to say it was in my blood from day one.

MM&F: What was your motorsports experience before drifting?

VG: I raced Motocross for about five years. I was also into skateboarding and BMX, but motorsports had a huge influence on me.

MM&F: How and when did you first hear about drifting?

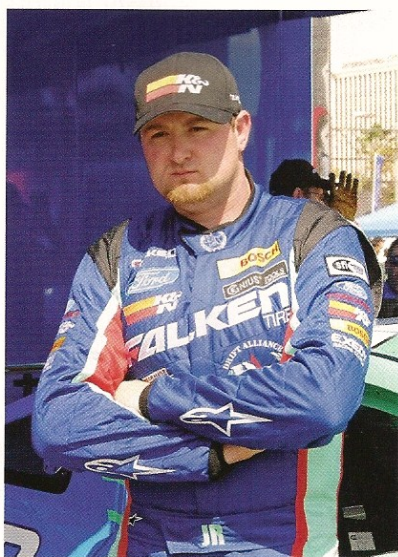
VG: In 2002 I was doing research about buying parts for a 240SX I had, and I kept coming across 'drifting' being tossed around the forums. I watched some videos and just fell in love.

MM&F: What was the first car you ever competed with in drifting? Did you build it yourself?

VG: It was a '91 Nissan 240SX Coupe. I built it myself in my garage, and I still have the car!

MM&F: What is the Drift Alliance and how did it form?

VG: The Drift Alliance is the best band ever without instruments! We are a very tight-knit crew that loves drifting and having fun. We've done a lot to build the sport all over the world and continue to



push hard. It started in 2003 when Tony Angelo wanted to have a drift team similar to some of the skate and BMX teams we all knew. It has grown into the most well-known crew in the USA, and it's something words can't explain. It's much larger than we ever imagined.

MM&F: How did you get connected with Falken and Ford Racing?

VG: In 2003 I was invited out to an exhibition in California due to my success on the East Coast. I felt it was a great opportunity, and I spent every dollar I had and maxed out my credit card to ship my car there and make it happen. I arrived in California armed with proposals, and that is where I met the Falken Tire family. From there my career leaped into full speed. In 2004 I fell in love with the look of the new Mustang and wanted to bring some American muscle into the sport. Team Falken was on the same page, so we built an '05 GT for competition and "Old Betsy" did us good.

We won the 2005 USA vs. Japan competition and the 2007 D1GP World Championship!! After a few years of keeping the Ford Racing crew on my email list, "Bleeding Blue" (and teal), and working hard, we hooked up with the guys over at Ford Racing in 2007. It has been incredible working with the family over at Ford.

MM&F: For 2009 you upgraded to a '10 Mustang. How does this car compare to your previous Mustang?

DRIFTING 101

Unlike other forms of motorsports, there are no timed laps and no checkered flag in drifting. However, don't be fooled into thinking that this sport is just doing donuts or figure eights in a parking lot. Drifting takes an incredible amount of car control and maintaining a controlled slide for a long period of time through a specific course. In Formula Drift, the series in which Vaughn Gittin Jr competes with his '10 Mustang, competitors are judged in four categories:

SPEED: A combination of the entry speed into the first corner and the overall speed through the whole course.

LINE: The ideal path a vehicle must take marked by various clipping points (similar to apexes). The closer the driver comes to these clipping points the better.

ANGLE: Measured by the amount of counter-steer a driver uses through the course. The more the better!

OVERALL IMPACT: Judges determine the "overall feel" of the run and how well the previous three criteria were executed throughout the entire lap. This is the most subjective part of the judging.

During competition, each driver begins with 100 points at the start of each run and receives deductions based on how well they perform in each category. A spin, experiencing major understeer or push, or having two or more tires off course during the run results in a score of zero.

After drivers make two qualifying passes, their top score is used to place them into a knockout-style grid of the top 32 cars. In this head-to-head format, drivers drift the course as a pair, going once as the lead car and once as the following car.

After the end of both runs, the judges either declare a winner that goes onto the next round, or determine that the scoring is too close and the runs need to be made again. The driver who can survive all five rounds of elimination is declared the winner.



THE DETAILS

Falken Tire/Ford Racing '10 Mustang GT,
driven by Vaughn Gittin Jr

ENGINE

Ford Racing Aluminator 4.6L DOHC V-8
(FRPP M-6007-A46SC)
3.552-inch bore
3.543-inch stroke
8.5:1 compression ratio
Cobra rotating assembly
Forged steel eight-bolt crankshaft
Forged 16.0cc pistons
Blue cam covers
'03-'04 Cobra cylinder heads and
camshafts
MoTeC M800 engine management system
Whipple supercharger system
Bosch fuel injectors
Bosch spark plugs
K&N air filter
680 horsepower
650 lb-ft torque

TRANSMISSION

NASCAR Sprint Cup four-speed
Exedy twin-disc clutch with Tilton NASCAR
bellhousing

REAR END

8.8-inch modified by AutoSport Dynamics

EXHAUST

AutoSport Dynamics custom exhaust
system
American Racing 1¾-inch primary headers

SUSPENSION

Front: Tein coilover suspension system
Rear: Tein coilover suspension system
Additional AutoSport Dynamics custom
modifications

BRAKES

Front: 14-inch Wilwood slotted rotors,
Wilwood Superlite 6R calipers
Rear: stock rotors, MustangDrift twin rear
Wilwood calipers

WHEELS

Front: HRE C21, 18x9
Rear: HRE C21, 18x10.5

TIRES

Front: Falken Azenis RT-615, P255/40R18
Rear: Falken Azenis RT-615, P295/40R18

INTERIOR

AutoSport Dynamics rollcage, Sparco race
seats with custom seat mounts, Sparco
race steering wheel, AutoSport Dynamics
custom dash, Auto Meter gauges, Wilwood
pedal assembly

EXTERIOR

MustangDrift carbon-fiber body panels,
OEM Mustang front and rear bumpers,
Falken Motorsports racing livery



VG: The '10 Falken Tire/Ford Racing Mustang is un-freaking-believable. The guys from ASD in Charlotte, NC, did an incredible job building the car. It's a whole new animal and very innovative for our sport. The only thing that didn't change is things that they couldn't improve—the Falken Azenis RT-615 tires and my steering wheel. It is 2,500 pounds wet (last year we were 3,150), powered by a 680hp Ford Racing supercharged Aluminator crate engine (last year we were naturally aspirated), and it has a quick change rear and some other secrets I just can't tell you all. You'll have to come see it in person!

MM&F: Can you give us a general idea of what it is like to drift a 680 horsepower Mustang?

VG: Just imagine an insane roller coaster that you have complete control over combined with the incredible sound of those 680 horses screaming from the Aluminator and the delightful smell of Falken Tires burning!

MM&F: What was it like to go drifting in Japan with the '10 Mustang?

VG: For me it was simply a dream come true. I was able to go enjoy circuits I have only dreamed about and drive with the true pioneers of the sport in their country. Not only

did I have a ton of fun and fulfill my dream, but I was able to let those who normally would not have the opportunity get to experience a Mustang. It is unbelievable the impressions that the '10 Mustang can leave on people, even on the other side of the world. The new Mustang can turn any frown upside down and I think it can even cure sickness! Check out the videos at www.the2010mustang.com.

MM&F: What has been your experience so far with being part of the Mustang community?

VG: It has been incredible, I have never met a more passionate group of people in my life, and I am extremely proud to be a part of it! There are even Mustangs starting to go out to local drift events. I just want to see more, it's almost like they were built for it! Initially it was weird, though, because some loved what I was doing and others hated it. There are so many misconceptions about drifting, and a lot of people didn't understand it until recently. Most just thought it was some ricers doing burnouts in parking lots and didn't realize the skill level required as well as the fabrication and technology in the cars. However, the more people who are exposed to the sport, the more people there are who understand it. For example I just drifted at the 45th (Mustang anniversary event), and I had hundreds of people come up to me blown away with what they had just seen. They would tell me 'I had no idea drifting was that cool! I've seen it on TV, but it is nothing like it is in person!'

MM&F: What has been your favorite moment in your drifting career?

VG: Wow, there are so many! If I had to narrow it down I would say putting the Falken Tire Mustang on the top of the podium at the 2005 USA vs. Japan competition felt the best, and revealing the new '10 Ford Mustang to the World was simply an absolute honor to me.

Vaughn would like to thank all of his sponsors: Falken Tire Corporation, Ford Racing Performance Parts, AutoSport Dynamics, K&N Filters, Bosch, Tein Suspension, Wilwood Brakes, Exedy Clutches, MoTeC Systems, Mothers Car Polish, and Mustang Drift & Performance **MM&F**

