

CLASSIC DRIVER

[This Martini-liveried Mustang is the coolest pony car in the Wild West](#)

Lead

Following a chance encounter between Ford's top execs and Martini & Rossi in 1965, this Rally-spec Mustang, powered by a Ford-Lotus Indy 500 engine and dressed in the famous livery, was created to compete and promote the pony car in Europe. Except for one thing. None of the above is true...

Admit it, we had you fooled. That's testament to the obsessive research and attention to detail (reminiscent of [Singer](#) and [Magnus Walker's](#) creations) that make this Mustang project look so convincing. While the tale is entirely fictitious (a light-hearted backstory given to the car by its creators to help explain the idea behind it), it's perfectly plausible. That's what we love about it - once the idea was conceived, no compromises were made until the fantasy vision was made a reality.

'Simplify, then add lightness'



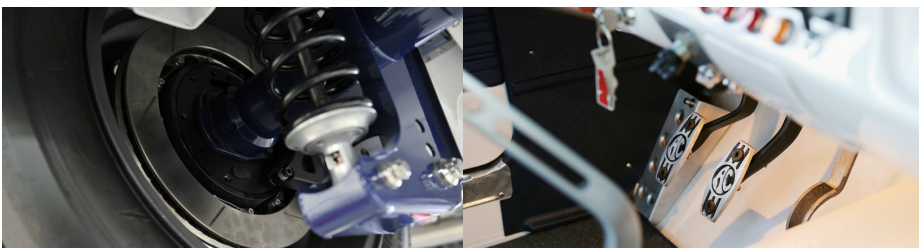
Steve Strobe and the folks at [Pure Vision Design](#) in California are behind the project, which was created for last year's SEMA show. In true [Lotus](#) 'simplify, then add lightness' fashion, the 1966 Fastback (dubbed the T-5R, T-5 denoting the export model's reference and R for Shelby race-prepared) uses authentic glassfibre panels and lightweight components such as the 28kg transmission and circa-1966 four-cam Ford-Lotus Indy engine - perhaps the most unusual choice of motor we've ever seen in a 'Stang. Talking of that engine, it's essentially just like the one Jim Clark used to win the 500 in 1965, with a little road tuning, of course.

Devil in the detail



It's in the cosmetic details that the car really shines, both inside and out. From the unique four-spoke Lotus-Ford Indy-style wheels to the stripped-out, period rally-spec interior, complete with map-reading lamp and dash timers, you're forever finding new intricacies to admire – the finish is just superb. We particularly appreciate the fact that the gauges are in German, because this is figuratively a T-5 German export model, so that's the way it would have been... had the story been true.

'Loud and fast art'



The almost comical quest for authenticity stops with what you can't see. Underneath, there are modern mechanicals (such as new braking and suspension systems) making this Mustang incredibly capable as a sports car, but also more refined and comfortable.

Following the Mustang's 1-2 finish at the 1964 Tour de France, in the words of the T-5R's visionary Steve Stroppe, "It's loud and fast art that should have, and could have, come to be." Yes, the Martini livery might upset the purists (though they've hardly overdone it), but the care and time taken in its construction should swiftly sway their mood. In this, its 50th year, we can't think of a more impressive tribute to the legendary pony car.

Photos: Drew Phillips

Gallery

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