

Introducing the First Ladies of Mustang

When people think Mustang, what often comes to mind are qualities like sportiness and “masculine cool” – right?

So it may be a surprise to learn some key players in bringing Mustang to life over the past 50 years have been women.

Ford marked International Women’s Day March 8 and National Women’s History Month this month with a look at some of the women who have played an important role in creating the new Ford Mustang, as well as women who have influenced the pony car over the past 50 years.

Throughout the course of this car’s life, women have made contributions to the Mustang story in many ways, said Mustang spokesperson Alan Hall.

In fact, the first person to buy a Mustang was a woman.

In 1964, a Chicago school-teacher, Gail Brown, made history when she became the first Mustang owner in America. She still owns the car, and what makes her story all the more special is that Brown bought her Mustang on April 15 – two days before the car was set to go on sale. The Chicago dealer had displayed the car two days earlier than scheduled.

These days, Hall said, women hold key positions at Ford in the development of the new Mustang, in roles ranging from engineering the customer drive experience, to picking the car’s colors and materials, to continuing the Mustang legacy of being a household name.

One of these women is Marcy Fisher, Hall said. As vehicle line director for the program, Fisher oversees every detail of the new Ford Mustang as it comes together – from the planning process to when the car hits dealer showrooms.

Fisher was excited to have this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to help develop and launch the all-new pony car in its 50th year, Hall said. In addition to her Mustang responsibilities, Fisher serves as vehicle line director for Ford Explorer, Taurus, Police Interceptor, Flex and Escape development.

She has 28 years of engineering expertise in manufacturing and product development, having joined Ford in 1986 as an engineer. Since then, Fisher has held a number of positions with the company, including several engineering jobs at assembly plants where the vehicles come together on the line. She has also served as director of design engineering in Product Development.

Hall said Fisher has twice been named to the 100 Leading Women in the Automotive Industry list by *Automotive News*.

Michele Lubin Henney, vehicle integration supervisor, has also played a role in developing the new Mustang, Hall said.

When customers sit in the new Mustang this fall, they will get a “world-class” driving experience thanks in part to Henney’s tireless efforts, said Hall.

A lifelong motorsports enthusiast, Henney’s passion was sparked in her grandfather’s auto body shop and during weekends spent at the track watching her father race motocross. Today, she has her own collection of motorcycles, and loves to hit the road with her husband.

Henney is responsible for the integration of vehicle attributes – how the car sounds, how it feels when it drives, fuel economy, and driver and passenger comfort, to name just a few, Hall said. “Mustang attracts a variety of customers, all of whom are looking for the ultimate Mustang driving experience,” said Henney.

“As a female engineer on the program, I can offer a different perspective than the men on the team. I believe the end result is the most refined total driving ex-



From left: Susan Lampinen, Melanie Banker, Michele Lubin Henney and Marcy Fisher surround the new 2015 Mustang.

perience we’ve ever offered our customers. I can’t wait to see their reactions when they drive the new Mustang for the first time. I’m so proud to be a part of this team.”

Then there’s Susan Lampinen.

For the past decade, Ford chief color and materials designer Lampinen has guided the process of selecting those often iconic exterior paint colors, along with colors and materials for the Mustang cabin.

“Mustang paint colors need to denote performance, sportiness and power,” says Lampinen. “I’m looking at authentic, expressive materials that need to be more premium, with a relentless attention to detail. With Mustang, I’m not afraid to take a risk.”

Melanie Banker is the U.S. marketing manager for the Mustang, Hall said. This job has Banker playing a critical role – first in bringing the car to customers in the marketplace – then in monitoring its performance.

A member of the Mustang team for several years, Banker works in both research and development of the new car, as well as in the consumer marketing process, Hall said.

“Men and women use their cars and the features of their vehicles differently, so having both involved in research and development is extremely important,” Banker said.

“Everyone loves Mustang, so it is important for us to keep all customer groups in mind when making vehicle decisions.

“I hear from customers every day sharing the things they love about the car, and people send me pictures of themselves with their Mustangs,” says Banker.

“I get requests from 7-year-olds asking me why we make certain vehicle decisions. The dedica-

tion of the team as a whole is amazing, because everyone here knows how much Mustang means to its fans and to Ford.

“Working on the product side has given me a whole new appreciation for how a company works to put a vehicle together. This has been exceptionally rewarding, and I’m very excited for what’s to come.”

Fiat Ad Man Will Share Stories on Launch Success

“The FIAT Brand Storyscape” is the title of an April 16 seminar presentation by Casey Hurbis, the head of Fiat Brand Communication and Advertising.

Hurbis will talk Fiat and share the importance of creating a story to connect customers to a brand at the Marketing & Sales Executive of Detroit (MSED) seminar.

The presentation will provide information on the successful launch of the Fiat Brand and the role social media played in bringing the brand to life, said MSED meetings coordinator Cheryl Dry.

Hurbis has been responsible for re-establishing the FIAT Brand in America, Dry said. Some of his projects include the Super Bowl commercial featuring supermodel Catrinel Menghia, Charlie Sheen’s “House Arrest” commercial, and most recently the “Mirage” campaign featuring P. Diddy and the hit song, “Happy,” by Pharrell Williams.

The event will be held at Golling Fiat at 34500 Woodward Avenue in Birmingham. Cost for the event is \$20 for MSED members and \$60 for non-members.

AP Writer Likes Cadillac’s Electric ELR as ‘Sleek, Sexy’

by ANN M. JOB
For The Associated Press

Finally, there’s an electric car that rivals Tesla’s eye-catching Model S.

The sleek, new-for-2014 Cadillac ELR coupe is arguably as sexy looking as the sporty Model S, and like the Tesla, it’s a plug-in vehicle that’s capable of traveling for hours without stopping.

For drivers who don’t want to worry about finding a place to recharge batteries and waiting around until the charging is complete, the Cadillac ELR is eminently more accommodating.

It carries with it a four-cylinder gasoline engine. So when the electric power is depleted, the ELR switches seamlessly to the on-board engine and can, therefore, travel well over 300 miles.

A few points, though: According to U.S. government estimates, the Cadillac’s range in all-electric mode is just 37 miles, while the Tesla’s all-electric mode is good for up to 265 miles.

Secondly, the Tesla only has an electric powerplant and so is viewed as more of an earth-friendly car by environmental purists. Plus, while the ELR is a new model at Cadillac, it’s frequently called the Cadillac version of the Chevrolet Volt because it uses the Volt’s underlying front-wheel-drive platform and electric-gasoline power system. But the luxury car price tag on the ELR means buyers can purchase two Volts for the price of one ELR.

Starting MSRP, including destination charge, is \$80,990 for a 2014 ELR. The 2014 Volt has a starting MSRP, including destination charge, of \$35,805.

Meantime, the rear-wheel drive, 2014 Tesla S has a starting retail price, including destination charge, of \$63,570 with an electric storage battery pack that provides a federal government estimated travel range of 208 miles. A 2014 Tesla S with a higher capacity battery pack that provides a federal government estimated travel range of 265 miles has a starting retail price of \$73,570.

All ELRs come with a continuously variable automatic transmission that a driver operates like an automatic.

Standard equipment includes dual-zone, automatic climate control, remote keyless entry and keyless start, suede microfiber ceiling material, rearview camera, outside heated mirrors, 20-inch wheels, rain-sensing wipers and premium Bose 10-speaker audio system.

The ELR also includes Cadillac’s CUE touch screen for ventilation and audio controls, among other things, and Bluetooth hands-free phone connectivity and audio streaming as standard equipment.

The ELR even allows drivers to program the times when they want the car to begin charging, say, late at night when the electricity rates can be lower-priced.

But the ELR, which has the highest starting retail price of any Cadillac car, does not offer a sunroof. Fortunately, the ELR drives like a regular car. Though it weighs 4,050 pounds – the battery pack alone weighs 435 pounds – the ELR moves quickly from startup under electric propulsion. Production of the ELR is limited to fewer than 5,000 annually.

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