

COLLECTING CLASSIC CARS AS AN ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENT

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In these uncertain economic times, it's difficult to make plans for your next investment. But have you ever thought of owning a classic car? While there are trends and bubbles, overall values of classic cars have gone up over the years. As with any investment, you must do your homework. The most important factor to consider is how to acquire a car you like and enjoy owning. Don't expect the car to increase in value, but rather go into this purchase just to have fun with it. Pedigree, provenance, rarity, number manufactured as well as vehicle condition, all contribute to its value, but the maintenance, restoration, insurance, and the storage all add up to the cost. But, when you take a ride in your classic car on a weekend and you get a "thumbs up" from everyone, its well worth it, and the pride of ownership soon overcomes any cost. Just Google, "collector car values" to learn about this great hobby, and get ready to have fun.

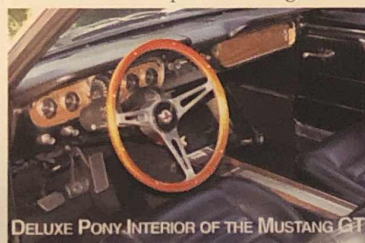
If you're like me there are certain cars you always lusted after, but couldn't afford to own. It may be a car someone in your family or your neighbor owned, or you simply saw it in a movie or on TV. Maybe you were too young or you hadn't the means, but as you grew older and life was coming at you fast, there was a sweet spot inside your brain that forever etched the image of "that car" that you lusted over years ago. And for car guys and gals, there are many dreams awaiting to be fulfilled at the right time.

When I was 16-years old, while walking to catch my school bus



THE AUTHOR WITH HIS 1965 FORD MUSTANG GT FASTBACK AND A 1968 AC COBRA

in Tokyo I noticed a new car being positioned in a dealer's show room. It was a 1965 Ford Mustang 2+2 fastback, Ivy green, with white stripes running above



DELUXE PONY INTERIOR OF THE MUSTANG GT

the rocker panels. There was a 289 and a GT badge on the side of the front fender. As I peered through the show room window with my runny nose and clammy hands on the glass, the salesman shooed me away. This was the first time that I saw a real Ford Mustang in my life. The image burned into my eyes and I dreamt of owning one when I came to the United States.

In 1968, I landed in the San Francisco area to go to college. While in school, I couldn't find a

Mustang that I liked, but my desire to own one never waned. Adding fuel to the fire were movies like Goldfinger where James Bond (Sean Connery)



1965 MUSTANG 289 CU. IN. HIGH PERFORMANCE V-8 ENGINE

drove a white Mustang convertible. The most romantic car movie ever made, "A Man and a Woman," featured a race car driver and a beautiful widow with a young son. Their romance involved several scenes in a Mustang. Then, Steve McQueen in the movie "Bullitt" drove a green '67 Mustang Fastback through the hills of San Francisco. All these movies fueled my passion to one day owning a Mustang.

About 14-years ago, I went to look at one for sale in Beverly

Hills, of all places and there she sat, an Ivy-green GT Fastback with black Pony Interior and a genuine K-code hi-performance engine to boot. When I took it for a spin, I was so excited that by the time we got back I was in love with it...mesmerized by the déjà vu. I purchased it then and there.

Collecting and owning a car of your dreams is a wonderful hobby. Like any hobby it is the people that you meet and the beautiful cars you get to see. Many precious cars have become art objects that can no longer be driven on the street. These show-cars or trailer-queens have been carefully restored, and preserved by their owners only to be shown at car shows and Concours d'Elegance venues. But for me, what's the point of



1965 FORD MUSTANG GT FASTBACK

owning a car like this and not driving it? I drive my Mustang to car shows and cruise-ins just for the fun of it. It's a blast to drive especially on curvy winding roads, and the sound of the exhaust is music to my ears. And by the way...it's a lot more fun than investing in a portfolio and looking at a stock certificate in my file cabinet. Oh, and my Mustang is now worth five times what I paid for.

We welcome your questions, suggestions and event information. email us: vinshin@bhtmag.com