

W

e've all been there at one time or another. We want a boulevard blaster to tinker with and strut on the streets, but trickling cash flows negate the one-stop dream shopping. Randy Ross of Maumee, Ohio, was no different in his younger days. Since 1987, Randy had longed to own a zippy 5.0 Mustang, but funds simply didn't match the desire. Yet, like most determined hot-rod enthusiasts, Randy eventually managed to break into pony power without breaking the bank.

In 1991, Randy was working for an auto repair shop. Part of his duties included salvage yard parts pickups. In April of that year, on one such excursion, Randy spotted a '90 5.0 LX hardtop sitting on the "rebuildable side" of the yard. This was the section relegated to cars that were practically new, yet badly wrecked. The 5.0 was so new it still had the window sticker in place.

Randy contacted a professional bodyman for whom he had done previous mechanical work. After they inspected the Mustang, the body pro determined that the car could be salvaged by cutting it in half and tacking on a new rear clip. Randy jumped at the chance, and a month later the spliced-together hardtop was returned to stock condition—with the exception of a cowl induction hood—and ready for road duty.

For the next 1½ years, Randy employed the 5.0 for all his transportation needs. Then in 1993, a new job and a company vehicle set the stage for a complete transformation of the hardtop.

"From that point on," says Randy, "I was determined to have a street/strip and show Mustang. Although the drivetrain had low miles, I started from scratch with a D.S.S. Competition Engines 306 Pro Bullet, a Ford Racing Performance Parts transmission, and a pro-built rearend. While I was in the process of this transplant, I hand-polished any item that would fit under my buffing wheel."

The V-8 came well dressed from the inside out, with the package including a 0.030-inch bore, 0.010-inch undersized and balanced crank, ARP rod bolts, Custom D.S.S./TRW pistons rimmed with Speed-Pro chrome-moly rings, and a Competition Cams unit featuring 0.532-inch intake and 0.544-inch exhaust valve lift with 224 intake and 230 exhaust degrees of duration. Edelbrock Performer RPM heads were selected to top the cylinder banks, and these were fitted with 2.02x1.60-inch valves, 1.6

Harland Sharp roller rockers, and Competition Cams double valvesprings and roller lifters. A GT-40 intake boasting a 65mm Accufab throttle body and Pro-M 77mm mass air meter sits atop the Edelbrock heads. Fuel delivery is managed by a 95 gph at 45-psi fuel Cartech fuel pump, Earl's -8 feed and -6 return fuel lines, 24-pound FRPP injectors, and a stock computer bolstered with an Autologic chip.

The resulting gasses are routed through FRPP 1½-inch short-tube headers, trailed by a MAC 2½-inch H-pipe (sans cats), Flowmaster two-chamber 2½-inch mufflers, and equally sized MAC tailpipes. To further enhance the 306's output, Randy installed a Stage II 150hp NOS kit, along with a progressive controller, a purge system, and a bottle heater.

TRIPLE



Further down range, Randy beefed up the FRPP five-speed with a heavy-duty clutch and pressure plate, and connected an FRPP heavy-duty aluminum driveshaft to the 8.8-inch rear end. This unit also received the gear-up treatment via an Auburn Pro 4.10 differential and Moser 31-spline axles.

With such an increase in on-tap power, and with street/strip driving on the horizon,

Randy had to do a bit of suspension and handling tweaking. The springs were replaced with an Eibach Pro Kit, Hotchkis upper and lower control arms displaced the stock components, and Energy Suspension polyurethane bushings nudged out the rubbers. To tighten up the chassis, Randy went with HPM double-cross subframe connectors, boxed-in and welded the torque boxes, added MidSouth

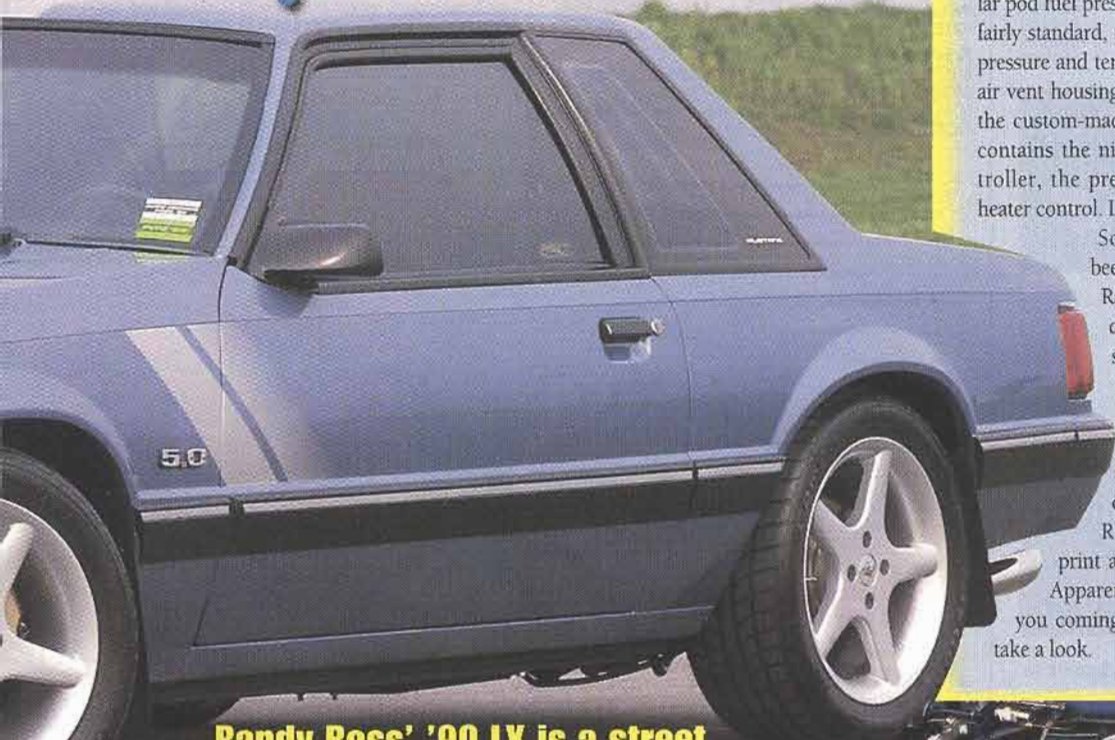
Race Cars' jacking rails with a matrix brace, and threw in a Kenny Brown Super Street Cage for additional protection and chassis stiffening. The entire package was then accented with 17x8-inch Dial-Elysee wheels and BFGoodrich Comp T/As.

To give the Mustang a distinctive appearance, 4-inch 3M silver stripes were laid on the Crystal Blue PPG topcoat from the front bumper, across the Harwood fiberglass hood and roof, and down the rear bumper.

Considering the extensive powertrain and handling mods, as well as the initial bodywork, Randy was fairly conservative when attention turned to the interior. The stock upholstery and carpet were kept in place, but he did perform some trick work with gauge and nitrous control placement. While the pillar pod fuel pressure and H₂O temp gauges are fairly standard, the clean installation of the oil pressure and temperature gauges in the center air vent housing is not. Equally uncommon is the custom-made glove compartment, which contains the nitrous oxide progressive controller, the pressure gauge, and the bottle heater control. Like we said, pretty trick.

So what has all of this work been good for? On the showfield, Randy's LX almost always holds down one of the Top 3 award spots. On the street, the silver-striped pony can hold its own without breaking a sweat (it cuts a mean corner on the autocross field as well), and on the quarter-mile strip, Randy's LX has managed to print an 11.70 at 118-mph timeslip. Apparently, this is one LX that'll get you coming, going, or turning around to take a look.

THREAT



Randy Ross' '90 LX is a street, strip, and show champion

text and photography by Rob Reaser

