

Once Bitten,

NO WAY! THE OWNER OF THIS GRABBER LIME '71 MACH 1 IS STILL ADDING PONIES TO HIS STABLE

Text by Denise Rounds / photography by Rob Reaser

Miles DeCoste had no idea what he was getting himself into 21 years ago when he purchased this '71 Mach 1. "At the time I was looking for an original big-block Ford, I had owned Fairlanes and Torinos, and I didn't know much about the Mustang," said Miles.

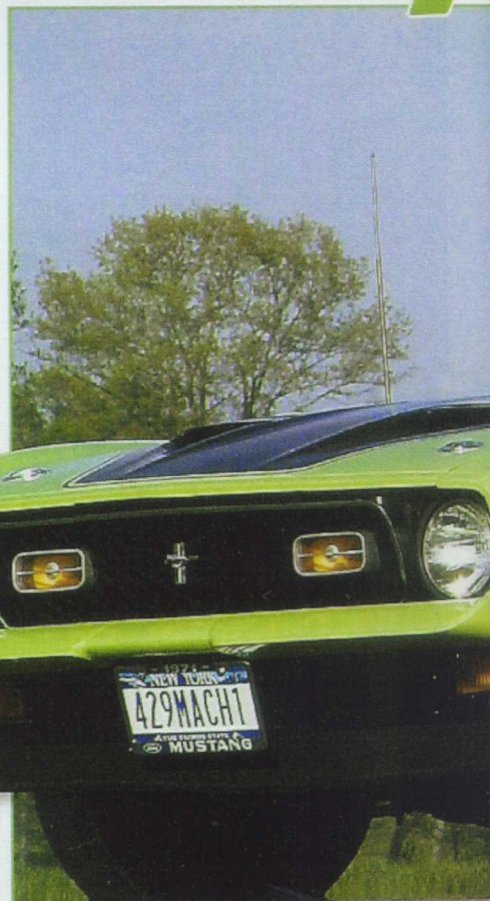
For someone unfamiliar with Mustangs, Miles made a rather nice choice for his first pony. According to factory records the total production number for the 1971 Mach 1 was 36,449 vehicles, only a fraction of which were equipped with 429 SCJ option. Add the Grabber Lime color to the equation and you've got one uncommon Mustang.

The two previous owners of this Mach 1 lived in the same area of New York that Miles does, and they drove it in the snow and salt, repainted it dark green, and even plowed it into a bar...as in...beer joint. Needless to say it needed a serious restoration when Miles bought it.

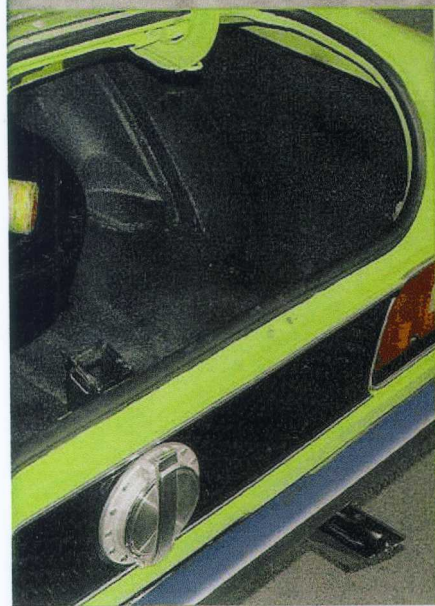
Soon after Miles bought the SportsRoof pony he met his wife, Jayne. "I knew it was love at first sight when he added my name to the registration," said Jayne. It wasn't long before the responsibilities of marriage and raising a family slowed the DeCoste's restoration efforts. "We came very close to having to sell the car when our children were small and money was tight—but got by with selling a few of the accumulated parts instead," said Miles.

The DeCoste's worked on the Mach 1 sporadically for several years. Miles credits

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Twice Shy?



» OWNER

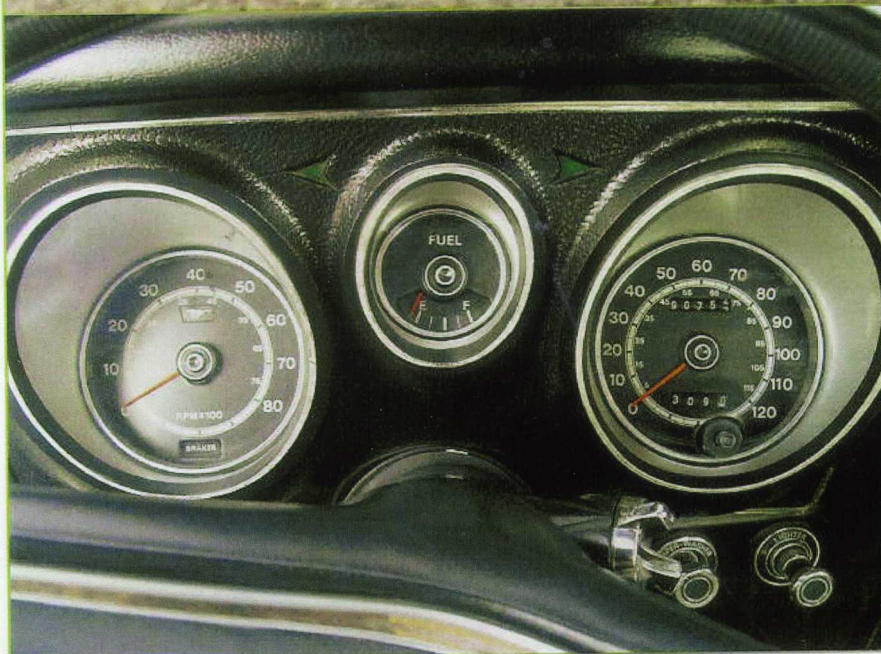
Miles & Joyce DeCoste
Moors Forks, New York

» VITAL DATA

- 1971 Mach 1
- Grabber Lime
- Black Deluxe Sports interior
- 90,825 miles

- 4-speed close ratio limited-slip
- 3.91 gears
- 429 SCJ engine
- Ram Air
- Rev limiter

- AM radio
- Power steering
- Power front disc brakes
- F60x15 Wide Oval belted raised white letter tires





his friends, Mike and Patty Nutt who own M&S Autobody in Sciota, New York, as key players in the car's restoration. Mike gave Miles the job of taking the car apart. Once that step was finished, Mike put it back together.

In the spring of 1997, Miles and his son Nick, who was nine years old at the time, rebuilt the engine in the DeCoste garage. "Nick would read out the specs while I put it together," Miles told us. "In fact, while we were completing the engine rebuild, Nick's third grade class was studying how simple motors work. We had to take the Mustang to school for a little 'show and tell' after Nick explained to the class how a real motor works."

The engine contains the original block and heads—the pistons, main, rod and cam bearings along with rings and oil pump were replaced. The camshaft is the original Ford solid lifter stick, along with the lifters. The Holley carburetor is still the original 780 CFM and was rebuilt by Holley. Miles had the exhaust manifolds Jet Hot-coated, and to get rid of the points he installed a Pertronix electronic ignition.

Miles told us the hardest part of the restoration was the lack of information available for 1971 to 1973 Mustangs, and the 429 SCJ cars in particular. Now he has an excellent source of information, www.429mustangcougarinfo.50megs.com, an online club for owners of 429 Mustangs and Cougars.

The DeCoste's enjoy competing in local shows and meeting other people who are working on or have owned classic Mustangs. They've won numerous awards over the years, and received their first MCA Concours Driven Gold Award at the 40th Anniversary Show in Nashville, Tennessee.

"The best part about this car is that we like to drive it," said Miles. "We only trailer the car to shows when the distance is too great. With two teenagers, we cannot load all our gear and the car's cleaning supplies in the Mustang at one time. My wife has decided that she has had enough of following another vehicle to haul our supplies—trailing is easier. She says that too many people cut her off as they slow down to get a better look at the Mustang."

Lately, Miles has been adding ponies to his stable. "Back in 1984, when I bought the first Mach 1, I didn't know just how hard the 'Mustang Bug' would bite me. We now own a second '71 429 SCJ that we are in the process of restoring, and at 16, Nick's first car is a '73 Mach 1 with a 351 Cleveland Q-code. Our fourteen-year-old daughter, Kayla, is keeping her eyes open for a '67 convertible."

Hmm, wonder if Miles has room in his house for another "kid?" ■

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