Ford Mustang ‘Dark Horse’ – Brief First Impressions

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Kim Henson test drives a special 21st Century Ford Mustang

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For many car enthusiasts there is something magical about the sound and feel of a V8 engine, and Ford's current Mustang continues to delight with its vast useable reserves of performance, accompanied by its unique exhaust burble. The sound is heartwarming even when cruising gently, but when the car accelerates the wonderful noise – albeit muted – brings real exhilaration and a smile to the face.

This has been the case with Mustang models through the years, and certainly still applies

today.
During a recent driving day arranged by the Western Group of Motoring Writers, I was fortunate to get the chance to get behind the wheel of a Mustang ‘Dark Horse’ model.

Essentially this is a Mustang with ‘everything’ accentuated towards performance and the sheer enjoyment of driving a machine built for pleasure motoring.
Among the car’s many desirable features are the five litre V8 engine, developing 453 bhp plus 540 Nm (398 lb.ft) of torque, a six speed Tremec manual gearbox, a Torsen limited slip differential, specially tuned Magnaride Adaptive suspension, unique aluminium alloy wheels, aerodynamic body styling and exclusive paint colours. Road presence guaranteed…



Ford tells us that the car is capable of reaching 155 mph, after scorching from rest to 62 mph in just 5.2 seconds. I believe them.
During my brief test drive I was impressed by the manner in which the car accelerated, both from rest and on the move, of course helped by the massive reserves of torque available from low engine speeds. This characteristic also helped make the car docile and easy to

drive in heavy traffic, although it is on the open road where this beast is really in its element.
Fuel consumption, I hear you ask? Well the official Combined mpg figure is 22.8, but bearing in mind the power and torque on hand, that could be considered to be reasonable.

Of course the car is packed with modern technology (including selectable drive modes, ‘electronic drift handbrake’, a 13.2 inch touchscreen, Bang and Olufsen 12 speaker surround sound system, etc.) and a multitude of safety/vehicle control systems – all working away behind the scenes to enhance the driving experience.

This is a larger than life car in so many ways yet it was not a difficult or temperamental vehicle to drive, with a compliant ride quality, excellent road manners, impressive steering and roadholding and highly efficient brakes.
I also liked the front seat comfort within the specially upholstered interior, the easy to assimilate dash layout and the large boot.


DARK HORSE

Photograph © Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales).



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Incidentally, in theory the Mustang is a 2+2 but the smart-looking rear seats are best described as ‘very cosy’…



However, to me this car is primarily all about the way it looks, drives and sounds.

VERDICT

Glorious, exhilarating, fun, just wonderful. How glad, and lucky, I am that I was able to drive this Mustang.
The price? £65,170, but with extra cost items the On the Road price of the test car as driven was £76,540.

