



Words: Richard Truesdell Photography: Richard Truesdell & Tod Schellinger

OH my Dad would be so happy!' Those are the words that Mark Griep voiced when he was finally shown his totally overhauled 1965 Ford Mustang fastback after it spent a week in the hands of the crack team of vehicle transformation specialists headed up by the indomitable Chip Foose.

Mark Griep was once just your average Southern California tennis pro with a fully restored '65 Mustang safely tucked away in the garage and a '65 Fastback quietly rusting away in the yard, a victim of there just not being enough time and resources to make a serious dent in the restoration effort.

But that was all before his 16-year-old daughter Chelsea caught an episode of the hit cable TV reality show *Overhaulin'* (which airs on Discovery Home & Leisure in the UK; check your local cable listings or satellite provider). From that point on, his life changed in ways he couldn't imagine. Along the way, he got to live the fantasy that almost everyone of us dreams about, having noted designer and hot rod builder Chip Foose overhaul his own project vehicle that has languished alongside his house for what almost seems like forever.

Overhaulin' a Classic Mustang

Chip Foose and his team of craftsmen transform a pile of rust in to a show car that embodies the true spirit of its owner and the father who gave him the car and his love for Mustangs.

For those of you unfamiliar with the *Overhaulin'* concept, the premise is pretty simple. If you know a gearhead with a car in need of an extreme makeover, you're invited to submit to the producers a written proposal along with photos of the ride in question. Each week Foose, together with creator and producer Bud Brutsman and his production team

review over 15,000 applications. From the initial stack they narrow down the pile and focus in on cars with broad appeal as well as an interesting story.

In the case of Griep's Mustang, which the production team dubbed 'Rustang' due to the almost terminal tinworm that infected his six-cylinder, 1965 Ford Mustang Fastback, the

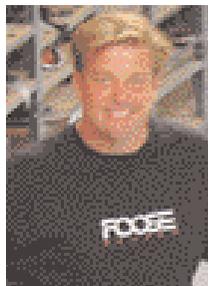
The On Air Team



WHILE working with a basic outline of a script, most of the actual dialogue is live, as-it-happens, with no Teleprompters. The ring-leaders of this three-ring circus are Chip, Courtney and Chris who, with 14 programmes under their belt, work like a well-oiled machine, giving you the impression that they're moving like clockwork. Nothing could be further from the truth ...

Chip Foose Designer

Born and raised in Santa Barbara, Chip Foose is already a legend in automotive design circles. At age seven, he started working for his father's company, Project Design. At 12, Chip had painted his first car; a Porsche 356. Inspired by a chance meeting with legendary



designer Alex Tremulus, he attended the famed Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, where he majored in automotive product design and graduated with honours in 1990. Later, Foose joined Boyd Coddington and Hot Rods by Boyd, eventually becoming the president. He was responsible for many internationally known vehicles, such as the Roadster, Sportstar, Boydster I and II, and Boyd Air. In November 1997, Foose was inducted into the *Hot Rod* Hall of Fame, and in 2002, was inducted into the Darryl Starbird Rod & Custom Car Museum Hall of Fame.

Courtney Hansen Co-Host

Courtney Hansen grew up in Orono, Minnesota, where



DIARY OF DECEPTION: HOW THE PRANK UNFOLDED

story had to do with the fact that the car had been in the Griep family since it was new. Mark's wife Beth explains.

'Marks father, David, bought the car new back in 1965 in Tagunga, California,' says Beth. 'David was an engineer at the jet propulsion laboratory and drove the car daily to work. The car was given to Mark in 1988 because his Dad finally got a company car and no longer needed the Mustang.'

Mark elaborates further. 'My Dad loved Mustangs; that car was in our family since I was five years old. I have experienced every possible emotion in that car and have driven in every possible situation in that car. My Dad's spirit still lives inside that car. For some people it might be hard to understand that a simple thing like a car can mean so much to me.'

'My dad bought me my first Mustang when I was a freshman in college. It was all smashed up and when I came back for the holidays my Dad had gone to the local junk yards and bought me all the body parts to make the car look respectable. From then on it was studying, trial and error, and all sorts of troubles and successes as I learned to work on my own Mustang. My dad taught me many techniques and provided much wisdom to be a Mustang mechanic. His favourite quote was "read the manual, Son" which I did from cover to cover.'

Once the decision had been made on the selection of the vehicle, better known as the 'mark', *Overhauled*, with the cooperation of the accomplice who submitted the entry (in this case it's Mark's daughter Chelsea who filled out the paperwork and submitted the entry), Foote and the production team arrange to have the vehicle 'stolen' after which it is taken to a designated shop nearby where the car is quickly evaluated and work begins.

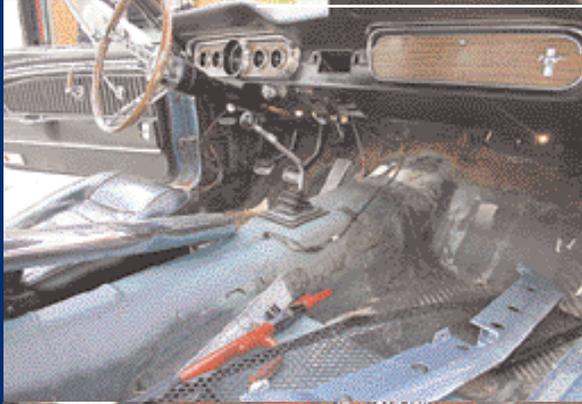
Well-known aftermarket suppliers donate components, and in many cases, installation technicians, who install the components. As soon as the car arrives at the shop, in this case Chicane Sport Tuning in Torrance, California, work begins at a feverish pace, all being videotaped by a crackerjack production team that transforms the shop into a fully equipped studio/soundstage. I was lucky enough to be in the right place and got the call just as work began on Griep's Rustang, which was the last week of July, 2004. Foote works a rotating core of specialists, better known as the A-

she modelled and developed a passion for writing and entertaining. Courtney grew up in the world of auto racing. Her father, Jerry Hansen, who once owned Brainerd International Raceway in Minnesota, attained 27 national SCCA titles, making him one of the most successful drivers in history. No wonder Courtney is a car enthusiast. She also works as a spokesperson for Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Ltd.



**Chris Jacobs
Co-Host**

Born in Chicago, Illinois, Chris Jacobs has numerous small-screen credits, including *The X-Files*, *CSI*, *Touched by an Angel* and *Two and a Half Men*, before landing with *Overhauled*. Chris currently resides in Los Angeles and is obsessed with golf and hot rods.



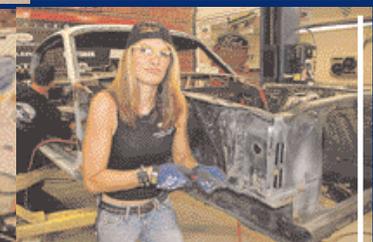
Although 'complete' the interior was in very rough shape. The interior team from Motostyle and the audio gurus from Clarion would have their work cut out for them on this install.



As soon as the car was in the shop on Monday (day 1) the team set out to cut away all of the rusted out sheet metal. The overall condition of the car was far worse than the *Overhauled* team had expected



Deep into Tuesday, day 2, progress is being made as the new sheetmetal for the engine compartment is already in place. Here Joe Gosinski, the owner of Chicane is already making a survey for the installation of the Maier suspension components



Every gear head's dream, co-host Courtney Hansen ... I mean a new crate motor to power their project vehicle. Here Greg Coleman and Kevin Byrd from Ford Racing start the assembly process of the small block 302-based, 347 cubic inch V8 that pumps out 415 horsepower.



Because of the fastback body and the fact that time was of the essence, damage around the C-pillar and the area surrounding the trunk opening had to be repaired quickly if there was to be any hope of getting the shell to the paint shop by late Thursday



Now deep in to day 2, much of the Maier front suspension and the Baer big brake upgrade has been fitted and thus far, there's been no major obstacles encountered by the *Overhauled* team, save for the rust that seems to be everywhere

Top view of the test first test fitting of the engine and transmission. It was amazing just how easy this step looked. It certainly pays to have every tool you need when attempting to tackle a project of this magnitude.

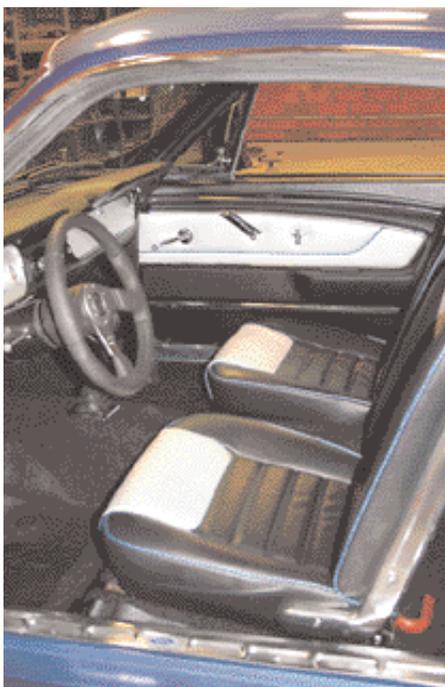


Team. Some are local professionals who donate their time to be part of what is a special effort while others come in for each build-up; most are from those companies who have donated components to the project.

In the case of Griep's Mustang the team included Chip's Dad Sam, Hot Bryan Fuller (Foos Design), Joe Gosinski (Chicane Sport Tuning), Kevin Byrd and Greg Coleman (Ford Racing), Melanie and Stacie Morimoto (both Motostyle), Shane Boulay, and Doug Windle and the team from M2 Paint and Body in Long Beach. Together they turn trash to flash - in this case it was a tired white Mustang six-banger, like a caterpillar morphing in to a butterfly, it was transformed into a BMW Blue modified 'Stang Fastback that defies easy characterisation.

In addition to the A-Team members other manpower contributors to the project included Adam Diaz and Richard Waitas from sponsor Magnaflo; Nic Cheeks from Baer Brakes; sound system gurus Neil Naydo and Sean Uyematsu from Clarion; Mike Maier, Jason Fletcher, Jerry Licatsas and Joel Villarreal; and from the Mustang suspension specialists at Maier. The continual flow of work on this project was coordinated by Chip's right-hand man, Craig Chaffers, an accomplished car and rod builder in his own right.

The story of how Mark's Mustang got on *Overhaulin'* starts with his daughter Chelsea, who saw the show and thought that her Dad's car would make a great candidate. Following the instructions on the website, with a little help from her Mom, she crafted a well-written proposal that included all of the necessary back-up materials, the combination of which caught



the eye of the production team as it was lining up vehicles for the show's second season.

'We had seen the show and admired the quality of work,' says Beth. 'Chelsea and I knew that Mark would appreciate the workmanship. Mark had just spent more than seven years restoring a '65 Mustang Convertible, doing all the work himself. He has a real appreciation of the effort that goes into "overhaulin'" a car.

'Chelsea had started to learn how to drive and really wanted to get the car fixed up for her Dad. After making the submission we didn't think much about it, figuring that there were hundreds of equally worthy submissions. Ultimately the producers called Chelsea on her cell phone and told her not to tell anyone but they were interested in doing her Dad's car. After that, it was in the hands of the *Overhaulin'* team who arranged to have the car 'stolen' from our driveway. I knew what was going on but poor Mark hadn't a clue.

'I have to admit that Mark was very calm, far more than I expected. He was concerned that people were stealing cars in the area and wondered why they decided to take his car since it was in pieces and parts as he had started the restoration work on it. While Mark was in contact with the show's producers who were posing as police and were stringing him along, Chelsea and I met with Chip and discussed how Mark would restore the car, if he had the chance. Chip was great and was very interested in how Mark would like the car. We told him that Mark is a "stock" kind of guy but not really a freak about it.

We told Chip that Mark really liked blue and loved Shelbys. When Chip showed us the rendering we knew Mark would love it. What most impressed me was how much time Chip spent thinking about Mark and how he felt about the car and then creating something that is uniquely for him. Chip is such an artist that to have one of his works of art created for you is just amazing. Plus Chip is a really nice person too!

Beth and Chelsea first saw the rendering on Thursday, day four, at the M2 Body and Paint Shop in Long Beach. By that time the team had removed all the metal forward of the A-pillar, replacing it with fresher metal. 'It's too bad you weren't here when we brought it in,' says Foos. 'We called it the "Rustang" when we first saw it. It was obvious that we would have to replace the entire front section so we put in



TOP: THE FINISHED PRODUCT - WHO'D HAVE BELIEVED THAT UNLOVED SIX-POT 'RUSTANG' WOULD TURN INTO SUCH A DROP-DEAD GORGEOUS BEAUTY! ABOVE: NOW THIS IS THE KIND OF BESPOKE INTERIOR WE CAN REALLY DIG, HAND-STITCHED BY STACIE AND MELANIE MORIMOTO. THE FINISHING TOUCH IS A MOMO STEERING WHEEL LEFT: THE CAR WAS SO RUSTY, THE TEAM ENDED UP THROWING THE FRONT AWAY FROM THE BULK-HEAD FORWARDS, AND REPLACED IT WITH NEW METAL

a call to Memory Lane who supplied us with what amounts to a new front clip. We simply cut away the original along with much of the floor structure, a process that was essentially complete when you showed up on Wednesday. While we're a little bit behind schedule, we still got the car to the paint shop by Thursday evening. I think we'll be all right.'

By midday Saturday the car was back at Chicane Sport Tuning and from there it was a race to Monday at 4pm when the plan was to have show co-host Chris Jacobs, who was posing as a detective, to call Mark down to the shop under the guise of identifying his car so that it could be returned to him.

What he didn't know, and what we didn't know was exactly how the prank would be sprung; that was done late Sunday night when producer Brutsman storyboarded and scripted the concluding scene which would involve members of the build team laying face down in Chicane Sport Tuning's forecourt, their wrists cuffed behind them with HD Tie-Wraps, while Mark surveyed what was left of his beloved Mustang ... his six-pot engine was sitting on a pallet and a stack of parts from his car was piled in the driveway.

When Mark arrived, he immediately saw his original bumper, the Snowbird, Utah bumper sticker seemingly confirming that his Mustang had already met the chop shop's angle grinder. Chris then directed Mark to the six team members lying face down to see if he could identify any of them. While all this was going on outside, Melanie and Stacie Morimoto from Motostyle had completed installing the interior and could finally relax with the rest of the build team, who were watching the prank go down on big screen TV monitors inside the Chicane Sport Tuning shop with the rest of the exhausted build team.

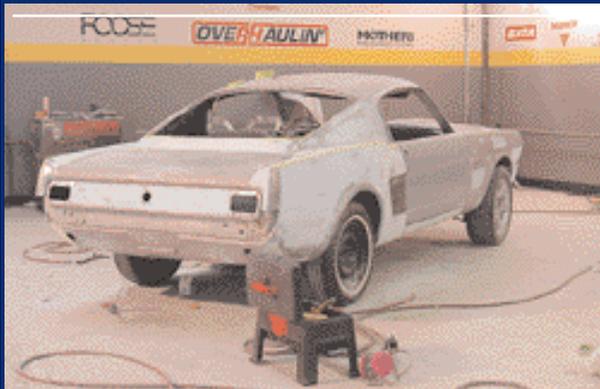
It should be noted that Melanie came out of retirement to work on the car, testimony to the respect accorded her skills by the *Overhauled*' team and her own desire to be part of something that was obviously special.

After failing to identify any of the first five perps, Mark, who probably wanted to kill each and every one of them, finally confronted Chip. Here's what Mark had to say about the confrontation months later. 'He looked familiar but I was just stunned and couldn't understand why a thief would have a tennis ball in his mouth, which he basically spit at me.

That's when it dawned on me that something was up. After that, it was just a blur; I couldn't believe it, that I had been *Overhauled*. After being shown the car, the best thing was that I realised that I wouldn't be fixing all of the rust. I really couldn't believe what they had done with the car ... in just a week. Truly unbelievable.'

Looking back on the week on the *Overhauled*' set, we tried to come up with a few words to describe the process. The best that we could come up with was testosterone-fuelled choreographed chaos. While work was progressing on simultaneous fronts, the production team was filming on-air segments.

While each volunteer was an expert in their field, no-one had worked together before, yet everyone stayed out of each other's way while three cameras filmed the spectacle – the best example of the choreography that makes the show the success that it has become. While on-screen it might look perfect, let us tell you that behind the scenes it amazed me that it all went off without a hitch. ✘



On Thursday evening the Mustang was transported from Torrance to nearby Long Beach where the team at M2 attacked the shell with a vengeance as it was prepared for the paint steps. While this was going on, back at Chicane, the full custom interior was being stitched.

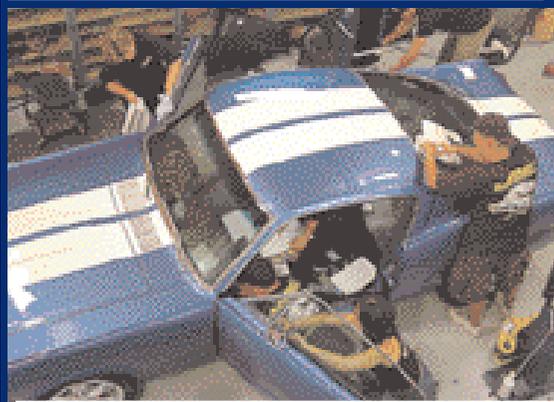
Finally it's time for paint. Here M2 master gun man Doug Windle applies the first of several coats of a striking BMW blue metallic that ultimately will be accented by bold white stripes



It's now early Monday morning, delivery day and around 4am, the 347 Ford V8 is fired in the car for the very first time. This is 12 hours from the expected delivery and yet the interior and glass is still to be installed



Under the car, Greg Coleman from Ford Racing and Joe Joe Gosinski of Chicane check out clearance issues on the Magnaflow exhaust system now that the engine has been installed



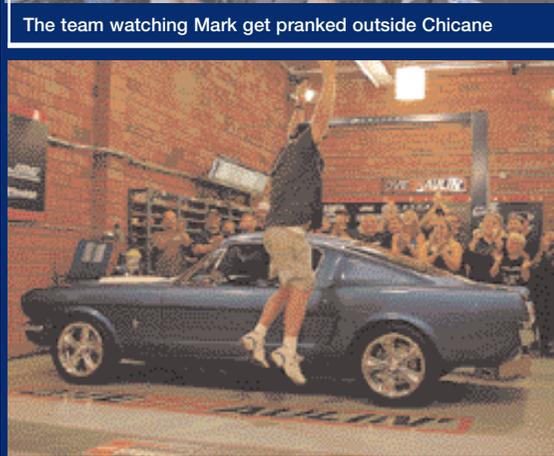
With Mark on his way to Chicane for the final part of the prank, work proceeds at a feverish pitch as everyone pitches in to get the interior reinstalled in time. Delivery at this point is about an hour away



The team watching Mark get pranked outside Chicane



As the prank is unfolding outside, Stacie Morimoto is able to get the passenger side door panel installed while Sean Uyematsu from Clarion is making the final connections to the car's high-powered sound system



Chip tie-wrapped for the pranks finale!

No, it's not a Toyota commercial, but Mark Griep expressing his unbridled joy to the entire *Overhauled*' team clapping in the background. After saying that his father would have loved what they did, there were tears of joy flowing from his eyes as he thanked everyone personally!