





Best of Both Worlds

WITH CLASSIC DESIGN CONCEPTS' GLASSBACK,
YOU CAN COMBINE THE BEST ELEMENTS A FASTBACK
AND A CONVERTIBLE IN ONE UNIQUE PACKAGE

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What if you were able to combine the best of both worlds, the now classic styling of the new Mustang fastback with the airy feel of the convertible? No, Ford's not planning a metal retractable roof version of America's favorite ponycar, but Classic Design Concepts may now be offering the next best thing, a front-to-rear high performance solar glass roof panel, an option they have dubbed the Glassback, which can be retrofitted to any 2005-2006 Mustang fastback.

In the weeks following last year's SEMA show, Classic Design Concepts' President George Huisman handed us the keys for a two-week trial, which included a weekend in Palm Springs, to gauge public reaction to the Glassback roof in car-crazy Southern California. If our experience is any indication, he's got a sure fire hit on his hands. With the latest generation of this Mustang now out on the road for two years, the car de jour bloom is off the rose, so to speak, but almost everywhere we took the bright red Glassback, we were peppered with questions, the two most universal being when will it be available and how much. At press time in early March, the answers are very soon, quite possibly by the time you read this, and the price has yet to be finalized. If you visit the Classic Design Concepts Web page, (classicsdesignconcepts.com) you'll find the most up-to-date information.

The glass roof is the first of a series of Glassback components to be offered by CDC. It is a single piece of laminated glass that includes Solutia's Vanceva color and high performance solar glass interlayers. This keeps the interior cool while giving the exterior a distinctive look that drew attention wherever we parked. The silver glass roof runs from the A-pillar to the B-pillar and gives the vehicle the look of the coupe but the feel of an open-air convertible—without the wind and noise. In addition, it really serves to open up the contemporary Mustang's interior.

"In 2004, when we first showed our Glassbacks, which were installed on a number of SEMA show Mustangs, we were a big hit," said Huisman. "People couldn't wait for them to become available. We're so excited that we're now able to share something as unique

and amazing as a high performance solar glass roof with our customers."

Besides the aesthetic enhancement provided by Solutia's Vanceva high performance solar glass interlayers, its other benefits include:

Superior interior sound control—Vanceva

The chin spoiler, hoodcoop, C-pillar scoops and ducktail spoiler give the vehicle a bold, aggressive look, while the sequential tail lights, pony grille, stars and stripes flag pony, gauge pod and custom floor mats are unique touches that make the vehicle distinctive and personal.

laminated glass reduces noise entering the vehicle by up to six decibels in the most sensitive hearing range (1000-6000 Hz) over tempered glass. Conversely, it also keeps the good sound in, enhancing the listening experience for passengers. This would become even more apparent when we cranked up the mega-watt Rockford Fosgate AV system installed in the vehicle.

Solar protection—Vanceva laminated glass screens up to 95 percent of the sun's harmful UVA and UVB radiation that can cause vehicle interiors to deteriorate. The product has an ultraviolet protection factor of 50+ (SPF). It's as if the Glassback Mustang applied a protective layer of

sunscreen to the roof. With the addition of a high performance solar glass interlayer, infrared radiation is also significantly reduced, resulting in a cooler, more comfortable interior.

The Glassback roof was not the only noteworthy upgrade to the CDC Mustang. It also featured many components to their a la carte All-American V-6 Package, which included several CDC custom restyling

products. The chin spoiler, hoodcoop, C-pillar scoops and ducktail spoiler give the vehicle a bold, aggressive look, while the sequential tail lights, pony grille, stars and stripes flag pony, gauge pod and custom floor mats are unique touches that make the vehicle distinctive and personal. We feel that the C-pillar scoops work especially well and, even with the Mustang's now familiar shape, draw the eye to that section of the car, and to the Glassback roof as well.

In addition, the Glassback we drove benefited from the installation of a JBA exhaust system, which includes headers, custom fabricated dual exhausts mufflers and tips. This, in addition to picking up a few extra horsepower from the V-6, provided a very musclecar-like V-8 rumble that was welcome as well. Given that Ford built a very high percentage of V-6 Mustangs, we suspect that when all the prices are announced, a fully equipped V-6 Glassback, will cost less than a GT convertible. There's a supercharged version already in the works; our car, after our evaluation drive, was scheduled for the installation



of a supercharger, which ultimately will become another component on the All-American V-6 Package.

As we mentioned earlier, the installation of the Glassback roof really serves to improve the Mustang's interior, which also benefited from a few not-too-discreet upgrades, silver trim applied to both the seats and the door panels. With the added illumination offered by the glass panel overhead, the interior environment gets a 10 out of 10 for style. And that's before we cranked up the Rockford Fosgate AV system.

This is a true, aftermarket-quality system featuring an in-dash AM/FM/DVD receiver with a retractable screen, a separate MP3 hard drive player featuring a slick WiFi interface—you can download song files from your PC or laptop remotely, even while you sleep—two amplifiers mounted in a drop-down panel in the trunk, upgraded speakers in all factory locations and a 12-inch subwoofer mounted in the floor of the trunk. Quite honestly, it puts the OE Mach 1000 system on the trailer. You have to marvel at just how much bass

can be produced by just a single subwoofer. The real key is how Rockford's installation team carefully optimized the selection of the 12-inch subwoofer for the enclosure volume available, proving once again that less is more.

The system is not a one-trick bass pony as the upgraded full-range speakers add a fullness and sense of detail found lacking on the factory-installed system. If we had to quibble with any element of the installation, it would be the mounting of the tweeters. If this were our car, we would come up with a different solution, either high up in each front door trim panel or more discreetly mounted in the A-pillar. Maybe with their experience in manufacturing restyling components, CDC can come up with replacement A-pillar trim that can easily accept the one-inch tweeters that are common in most component separate systems. What we'd like to see is the tweeters as successfully integrated as the gauges in the pod on the top of the center of the dashboard.

By itself, the CDC Glassback roof is an

exciting upgrade for current Mustangs. Combined with some or all of the All-American V-6 Package components, they truly transform the exterior and interior of any Mustang fastback and add a distinctive look to a car that has already established its own benchmarks in that category. As Ford continues to put almost 200,000 new Mustangs on the street each year, it's a cost-effective way to add a level of distinction and personalization to your new Mustang or one that's already parked in your garage. ■

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