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Déjà Vu All Over Again

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD TRUESDELL

MUSTANG 69'S NICK GAVRILES TEAMS UP WITH KENNY BROWN PERFORMANCE TO DELIVER AN '06 MUSTANG WITH THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE '69 BOSS

We all have our favorite Mustangs. For us older guys—those of us who grew up in the go-go Swinging Sixties—the choices are endless. For some, like me, it would be a pristine '64½ 260 Rangoon Red ragtop. For others it would be a Highland Green '67 fastback, while

some would opt for a Valencia Orange '69 Boss 302 done up Parnelli Jones/Bud Moore Trans-Am-style. Late-model guys, those of you who cut your teeth on Fox- and SN-95-era Mustangs, the choices would be almost as endless, from a '79 Pace Car all the way up to tuner and

aftermarket manufactured ponies. But what if you could have the best of both worlds—classic looks mated to modern mechanicals? Now I know what you're saying, the new-generation '05 and '06 Mustangs are already throwbacks to the classic '67 and '68 benchmarks, but the



problem is that Ford will build about 200,000 copies annually. If you want something really unique, a Mustang that you won't see every day, we've got your ticket punched—the Boss 69 from the talented pen of designer Nick Gavriles and Mustang 69, with an infusion of underhood and suspension tweaks from the Ford performance maestros at Kenny Brown Performance. The combination, in the words of the late Robert Palmer, is simply irresistible.

The story starts about two years ago when Gavriles, who has a long history of Mustang involvement dating back to the original SVO in the 1980s, started thinking about ways the look of the then-new '05 Mustang could be further enhanced. He started sketching some ideas and came up with two different styling concepts, one with cues from the '67-'68 Mustang, the other which called its inspiration from the '69-'70 models. Over the course of about a year, he bought a Mustang, then set out with foam blocks and modeling clay to bring both designs to life in 1:1



scale. Finally, when he couldn't decide which treatment was best (the passenger side of the car was done up with the '67-'68 treatment, the driver's side with the '69-'70 version), Gavriles invited 100 friends over for a pizza and beer party and let them decide; obviously the '69-

'70 version won.

From this point the project moved forward and through his association with Kenny Brown of Kenny Brown Performance. With the 2005 SEMA show in mind, a decision was made to build two cars, the black car which



THE PLAYERS: KENNY BROWN AND NICK GAVRILES

For Mustang enthusiasts, the name Kenny Brown really needs no introduction. For more than 30 years Kenny Brown has been developing, racing and building high-performance, high-quality vehicles and components, specializing in Mustangs. His reputation was forged in the 1980s, when with a then little-known Southern Californian, Steve Saleen, they won back-to-back Escort Endurance Series Championships in 1986 and 1987. Following the second championship, Kenny set out on his own and Mustang owners worldwide sought his expertise, especially in the area of suspension design, to make their cars handle better than the factory ever anticipated.

Nick Gavriles' résumé reads like a who's who of the aftermarket industry. Starting at age 10, with his first car, a 1946 Ford, Nick learned the business from the ground up, working on his father's race team. Over the years, he's worked with George Barris, Roush Racing and Miller Racing, and along the way he was involved in the development of the original SVO Mustang while working a second time with Jack Roush. Over the years he honed his skills as a fabricator and worked with Decoma on the highly acclaimed Viper-powered PT Cruiser, which won the Chrysler Design Excellence Award at the 2001 SEMA show. Since then he's turned his attention to the new Mustang, the results of which are evident throughout these pages.



spotted the CSR-69 as well as the black production prototype, and after speaking with Mustang '69's Vice President of Marketing, Jim Hodge, we arranged to shoot the CSR-69 as soon as the show closed, on the parking deck of the New York, New York hotel/casino. There it was decided to bring the CSR-69 to Southern California for a full studio photo shoot, which is where the story took a strange turn.

We spent most of the day shooting the red CSR-69 and decided, since Hodge had transported both cars to California, to shoot both cars together. Afterwards, after pulling CSR-69 out of the studio, we decided to shoot the "plain" black production prototype by itself. It was pretty much a way to fill studio time while waiting for three other cars to show up for a separate feature. While this part of the shoot took less than 45 minutes, looking through the viewfinder, in the purity of the white studio, the lines of the car came into sharp focus, especially when photographing the car's front three-quarter view from above.

Painted black, the modifications made to the rear quarterpanels took on a degree of subtlety that was lost in the widebody car; it was a degree of perfection that most often is lost under some bright metallic show car finish that more often than not conceals, rather than enhances, the overall design. As the other cars had started arriving, we concluded the shoot and the photo DVD of both cars was burned and overnighted to the art team at Mustang Enthusiast, where it was expected that CSR-69 would grace the cover...that is until Senior Creative Director Mark Potter saw something special in the shots of the black car,



would closely approximate the projected production car version, and a more radical, widebody version, the red one that would form the basis of the Kenny Brown CSR-69, designed to replicate the look of the Golden Age of Trans-Am racing from the late '60s and early '70s.

Fast forward to the 2005 SEMA show when Mustang Enthusiast was tipped off to the existence of the CSR-69 which, due to a positioning mix-up, was relegated to the outside parking lot and the Unique Performance booth. After hiking what seemed like a quarter-mile, we



KENNY BROWN SUSPENSION PROGRAM

For the '05-'06 Mustang, Kenny Brown Performance offers several suspension upgrades. The following matrix explains the options. For additional details, call Kenny Brown Performance at (317) 247-5320 for exact component specifications.

- ▶ Naturally Aspirated Kenny Brown Mustangs
- ▶ KB Gran Touring: Street/Touring/Track (\$9,500)
- ▶ KB Sport: Serious Street or Track (\$19,900)
- ▶ Supercharged Kenny Brown Mustangs
- ▶ KB Gran Touring Super-S: Street/Touring/Track (\$19,900)
- ▶ KB Sport Super-S: Serious Street or Track (\$28,500)
- ▶ The KB/Mustangs Premium Performance Range
- ▶ KB Club Sport: Track or Hot Street (\$29,500 + up)
- ▶ KB Club Sport Racer: Serious Track or Hot Street (\$39,500 + up)
- ▶ KB/GT Racers: Track Only (\$125,000 +up)

and it was decided to feature it on this month's cover.

In the weeks since the close of the show, production plans for both versions have moved forward at light speed. While details were being finalized as we went to press, the overwhelming positive reactions to both cars at the SEMA show have put the following plan in place. For the production version, which will employ stamped steel rather than fiberglass rear quarterpanels, a contract production facility has been established in Texas to handle the conversions, and turnkey cars will be available at selected Ford dealers starting later in 2006. Up to date details, including final pricing, can be found at the Mustang 69 Web site at boss69mustang.com.

Through arrangements with Kenny Brown Performance, three stages of suspension upgrades will be available (see sidebar), and performance upgrades from MRT will be available for both the V-6 and V-8, including MRT's wild twin turbo setup for the V-6.

And what if you already have an '05 or '06 Mustang and want to have your car converted? Unfortunately, at the present time, the standard kit isn't available for existing '05 and '06 Mustangs. The widebody conversion will be available from the start through Mustang 69, done in their facilities in either Michigan or California. The widebody CSR-69 conversion, which includes one of three separate Kenny Brown Performance suspension upgrades, is available through Kenny Brown Performance.

In any event, should you go in this direction, be prepared every time you stop for fuel to have to explain what you're driving. The beauty of either version is that you'll be driving a truly distinctive Mustang, and no matter how many Ford builds, that won't change. ■



BOSS
SIXTY NINE

