

FORDS IN MOTORSPORT



PONY EXPRESS

When two leaders in the UK's flourishing Mustang scene get together and decide to build the ultimate Mustang GT track day car, you can be sure that it will result in explosive performance. Nemesis UK and British GT4 Champions Academy Motorsport tell us how and why they took an unconventional route to quicker lap times

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Aftermath at Ford F1T (1st August) will recall the Fast Ford era, where Academy Motorsport displayed their race-winning GT4 Mustangs along with a pair of special road-legal Mustang track cars. One was the long-running 2016 Hermetz UK demo car which showcases the best of the company's aftermarket Mustang mods, the other was a new creation from the combined hands of Hermetz UK and Academy Motorsport. Guy Tomlinson and Matt Jacob-Jones pooled their considerable skills and experience of American performance V8s to produce their version of the ultimate road-and-track Mustang GT.

The world of modified Mustangs has many facets. There are the periodic Ford, Fiat, Rod, production line-built GT, KX, Shelby, and then there are the possible Shelby American Las Vegas works-produced cars like the

Super Snake, Road, Shelby and Hennessey, also made after-market Mustangs based on factory-built cars. Multimatic Motorsport go further with their Ford Performance-supported GT4 race cars, and new for 2024 are their GT3 race and GTD road derivatives. After that there are the hundreds of indie vendors who deck the halls at SEMA Show every year with glittering goodies to warm the performance ambitions of every red-blooded Mustang owner.

For non-aligned mod shops and individual Mustang owners this phenomenon is a pretty much unregulated free market, (tip for exploration and restoration in smart combinations). For sure, there are expensive traps to slip into if incompatible mods are stacked against each other, but for those in the know the nirvana of compound improvements is worth the risk. This is the path that Matt and Guy have taken with their

joint venture, a 2016 Locallit 610 Mustang GT.

Hermetz UK is a leading supplier of performance and replacement parts for American, European and Japanese vehicles. They specialise in providing competitively priced quality products, excellent availability with extensive stocks, and fast reliable delivery. The company was formed in August 2007, having been spun out of the performance parts division of a major UK automotive parts distributor. With almost fifty combined years of experience in the automotive parts business, Hermetz are happy to share their knowledge and help source the best parts at the best prices, all backed up with solid technical support.

The need to be able to show the products installed and in use led to the launch of the Hermetz demo 6th-generation Mustang GT50, which is a familiar sight on and off track at many UK circuits. As a West Midlands



used to know it made sense for Nemesis to partner with Academy Motorsport who are situated in Pershore. They are complementary: Nemesis specialises in the supply of physical performance parts, while Academy are a championship-winning race team with expertise in building performance cars and providing support services.

Guy Tondreau, MD at Nemesis UK, said: "My aim was to collaborate and show how capable the Mustang can be on track with the right modifications, encouraging other Mustang owners to get their cars out on track, and seasoned track day enthusiasts to consider an S550 15+ Mustang as their next choice of track car. Another aim is to encourage engagement with the Mustang owners' clubs and groups we are involved in. When Matt acquired the 2018 Mustang GT we had the idea to build the car together and follow the British GT calendar circuits by attending the closest public track day a few weeks before. It was great to be able to properly test and develop the car as we went to each circuit as well as attending other

shows and events throughout this year."

Race car preparation is at the core of Academy's business where they are experienced at finding the optimum setup. The experience and knowledge within the team ensures that customer race cars are prepared to the highest standards of readiness. A logical extension of that line of business is professional driver tuition: aspiring drivers looking to improve or learn race techniques can be trained with professional racing drivers. Similarly, test track days and car hire make for superb track day experiences. Academy offer an arrive-and-drive approach with a car that is prepped and ready for use. It's no surprise that the surrounding services available from Academy Motorsport extend further: to include private, corporate events, race VIP packages and product launches. Another of their offerings involves unique cars for sale sourced from around the world.

The idea behind the build of the track GT was to create the most complete road-and-track Mustang using off-the-shelf

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components from Narnett's UK's roster of international suppliers. The selection process needed knowledge and experience from both sides to ensure that only truly exceptional models were being stacked in a virtuous circle of combinations. The car would showcase the vehicle preparation skills from Academy and support Academy's driver development program. British GT4 Mustang driver, Erik Jarns, was to benefit by having extra Mustang track time available as he learned the new-to-him championship's circuits.

Externally, it's the carbon fibre components from Andersen Composites that stand out against the stock Ford black paint, as well as providing lightness and strength. A square footprint of the Apex Race Parts VSSRS forged wheels with Hankook ARI-1 semi-slick tyres are used on track. Highlights of the build are many, but under the bonnet the PSS Tuning Q2 centralised supercharger stands out

visually and aurally, providing 1300 cubic feet of forced air per minute and good for up to 750bhp and 1000ft/lb in the flywheel. In this case, cold starts will never be the same with one of these on board. The multi reasons for fitting this style of supercharger are (good) power delivery, lightness, and compactness. Specialist tuning, upgraded ancillaries and 5,000-mile service intervals are recommended.

Engine and driveline lubricants, coolant and workshop service fluids for the car all come from Academy Motorsport team sponsor Liqui Moly. The Mustang GT is used as a testing ground prior to the same products migrating to the even more extreme conditions of the GT4 race Mustang.

BRDC Rising Star James Hadley, 22, drove the car at Silverstone during Ford Fair and described it as "the fastest road car I have ever driven". He quickly adjusted to driving

the 10-speed automatic transmission's happy paddles and demonstrated the car's capabilities. Later that day, owner Matt Neoh joined back the car out on track and said "This car is faster in a straight line than the GT4 Mustang - that's partly because of the balance-of-performance formula employed in GT4 - but the thing that amazes me about it is that even with all the chassis and suspension mods, it's still a competent and capable road car. It's a revelation because it's all too easy to compromise roadability with this level of track-friendly modifications, and I really like the way it can still be used as a daily driver."

In answer to the question "why an automatic?" Neoh jokes anyway: "Two reasons, really. Firstly, I like being different and my wife also has drive it. Secondly, for ease of use by our customers. It's faster than a manual, and happy paddles are closer to the dual-clutch sequential style pneumatic gearchange on our race Mustangs."

For safety and security this car has a custom-built roll-over cage, Corbeau Revenge X seats with 6-point harnesses, plus a rear seat delete. Chassis and suspension tuning on the Mustang is extensive and a scan of the lengthy build sheet shows GPs Parts and BMR Suspension as the main players. The car is an ongoing project and a programme of continuous improvement, which can only add to the body of knowledge and benefit the UK's Mustang enthusiast community. ■

