

KK1220 is one of the first Boss 429s



To the casual observer, the color is the main attraction of Rick Parker's beautifully restored '69 Boss 429 Mustang. Boss 429s look bad in black. But Rick looks at KK1220 with an educated eye knowing the first production Boss 429, job No. 1, was KK1208.

Black has emerged as the most desirable color for Boss 429 collectors, but this '69 is also one of the first sold to the public. Steve Strange's standard reference book, *Boss 429: Performance Mustang Style*, states: "The first 50 cars built were priority cars, going to preferential dealers, factory-sponsored racers, or

any area where the cars could be given exposure."

None of those preferential dealers were in the little hamlet of Parma Heights, Ohio. Rick grew up in Columbus and had not even heard of this small town. Yet KK1220, one of the first Boss 429s built, went to the dealership in Parma Heights, a small

BAD ^{IN} BLACK

text and photos by Jerry Heasley



town near Cleveland. Truth is often stranger than fiction.

Rick says it hit him that during the early '80s, the Performance Ford Club of America staged a gigantic show at Ricart Ford in Columbus. "Singer Ford in Columbus was also a gigantic Ford dealer," Rick tells us. "They were Boss 429 crazy. And Dick

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Mashiter Ford was performance crazy. They actually had a performance club." Cars came from all over the nation. This black fastback must have been the Boss 429 he and so many thousands of others ogled year after year at this big show.

"Nobody looked at KK numbers in 1982," Rick says. "People just passed

by the car." In other words, the KK number didn't matter or even mean anything at that point. People didn't know they were looking at one of the most unusual and rarest Boss 429s ever built.

Rick opened Signature Auto Classics (SAC) in 1999 when his hobby started consuming the majority of his



time. What better way is there to serve your passion for Cobra Jets, Cougars, 427 Galaxies, Shelbys, Fairlanes, Torinos, and Boss Mustangs? On a recent trip to SAC, we spotted 37 such vehicles. A few belong to customers, but most of them belong to Rick. Meanwhile Rick, Larry Marcum, and Doug Klinger restore the factory Ford musclecars in a smaller section of the shop.

Rick generously dispenses information to restorers and collectors; no doubt because he's a collector too.



Helping others can lead to car purchases, as it did with KK1220. Rick and the gang at SAC were guiding a customer through a Boss 429 restoration a few years ago. After about a year and a half of work, the restorer was weary of the job.

"One day he called and said, 'I'm done,'" Rick told us, "'I'm not going to finish it.' So he towed it all the way to Columbus in an enclosed trailer."

Rick bought the Boss, which was a non-roller still on a rotisserie jig. The engine and four-speed

had been rebuilt. The body was in red oxide primer. To the neophyte, the car might have looked like a chip shot to restore. However, Boss 429s fall on the exotic side of Mustang restorations. Obviously, the factory smog equipment is hard to find and therefore expensive. Ditto for other unique parts like the air cleaner and its snorkel, the unique battery and caps, and a host of other parts. But Rick and his crew had the expertise to round up the special parts and bring the Boss 429 back to its original factory glory.

"The fun thing about that car is that when it was done, we drove it!" Rick said laughing.

The Boss 429 may rank up there as one of the hobby's most trailered cars. Rick respects pushing restored gems on and off trailers, but he also respects revving the solid-lifter, hemi-headed





big-block engine and shifting the four-speed through the gears. You have to keep the fluids running through the car to keep everything in shape, and Rick's cars are more than show worthy because they are run, as Ford intended.

When we arrived to take pictures, he fired up the black Boss and off we went. He says SAC gets a lot of positive feedback from his friends and customers for driving the exotic Mustang. "So many of these cars are restored, and then the owners are afraid to take them on the road. I wouldn't drive it from here to Florida, but it is fun to take out and drive."

Rick doesn't go to extremes. The car's first major show was the 40th Anniversary Mustang Show in Nashville in April 2004. He trailed his part-time driver to the track there and entered it in the Mustang Club of America concours-trailer class. It received a gold award.

We remember the car sitting under the bleachers. Rick was having a great time fielding questions from a steady stream of onlookers. The black-on-black was obviously a big attraction.

Raven Black was one of five Boss 429 colors for '69, in addition to



Royal Maroon; Black Jade, which is a dark green; Candyapple Red; and Wimbledon White. The Grabber colors didn't debut until 1970. Rick likes the black color combination, but he's not sure whether it or Black Jade is more rare.

Today people think about the KK number. According to Strange's book, KK1201 through KK1214 were special use vehicles; Job No. 1 was KK1208, used for engine development. Also, of the first 50 built,

"Extra care was taken in building these cars to assure proper fit and finish, for they would be given the closest scrutiny by the press and the public." KK1220 is still getting that close scrutiny today. 🐎

Editor's note: Rick Parker sold the black Boss 429 after the photography was done for this article. The subsequent owner sold the car for \$308,000 at the Russo and Steel collector-car auction last January.

