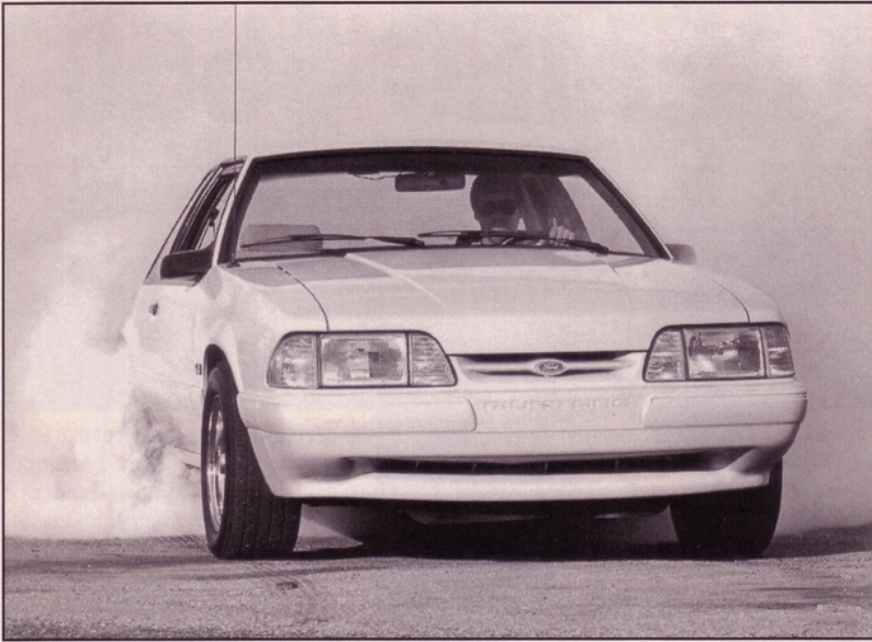


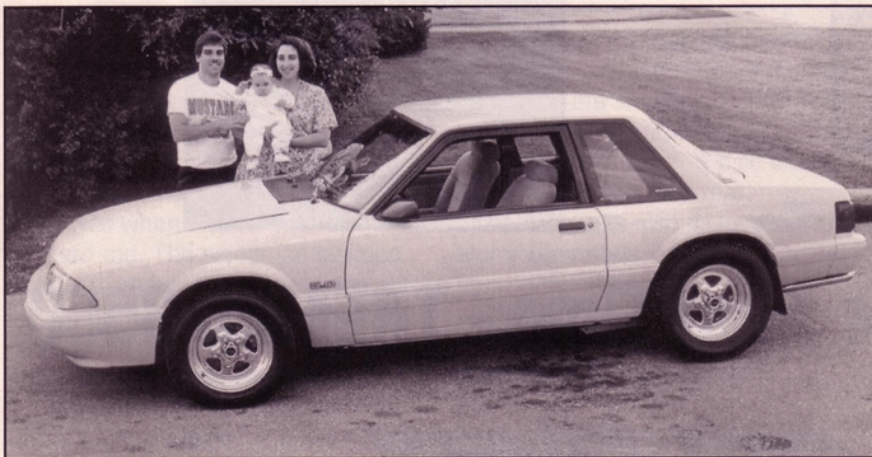
BY NEIL VAN OPPRE

Photos: Neil Van Oppre



I Love Lucy

The story of a man and a woman, and the battle for the keys to her LX.



Lucy and Lidio Iacobelli have good reason to be proud of their 11-second Mustang. After all, raising a family and starting a new business are hard enough without trying to race two cars at the same time. Lucy's '88 LX doubles as a daily driver and rolling advertisement for their family-run business, Alternative Auto Performance of Mt. Clemens, Mich.

When we first heard from Lucy Iacobelli, it was in a letter that told us how she met her husband, Lidio, while cruising Gratiot Avenue outside of Detroit. "He was driving his '79 302 Mustang, I was driving my '85 4-cylinder coupe," Lucy wrote. "It was love at first sight—and he was pretty nice-looking, too."

Lidio still owns the '79, and after seeing that car progress to become a low 11-second street/strip car, Lucy decided that it was time to replace her 4-cylinder car with the 5-liter coupe featured here.

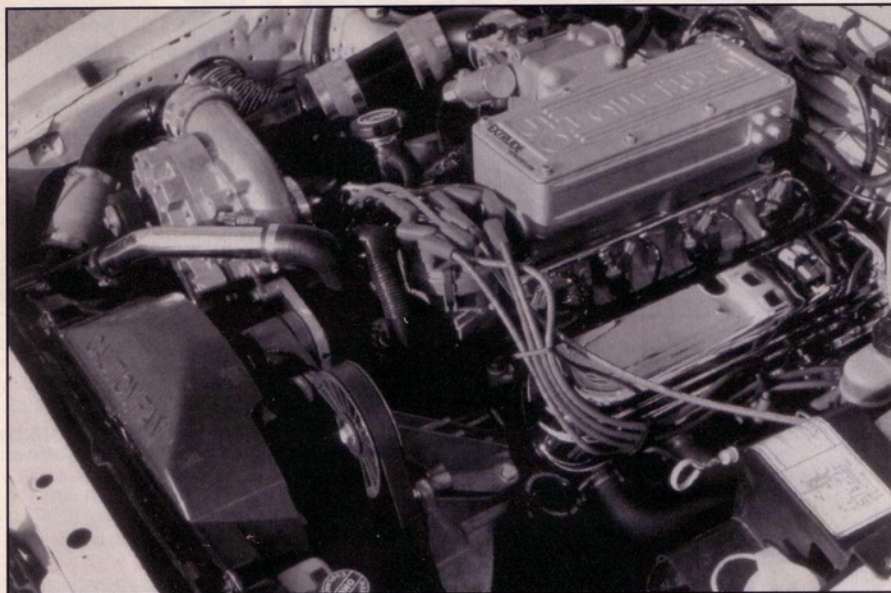
It wasn't long before Lidio was making changes to Lucy's LX, and soon both cars were making regular trips to the drags. As Lucy put it, "Now our family is equipped with two strip cars, one with a baby seat and one without." The irony here is that Lucy now sees less and less time behind the wheel of her car.

It seems that Lidio has taken quite a liking to the coupe now that it's become a rolling example of the work the Iacobellis perform at their shop, Alternative Auto Performance, in Mt. Clemens, Mich.

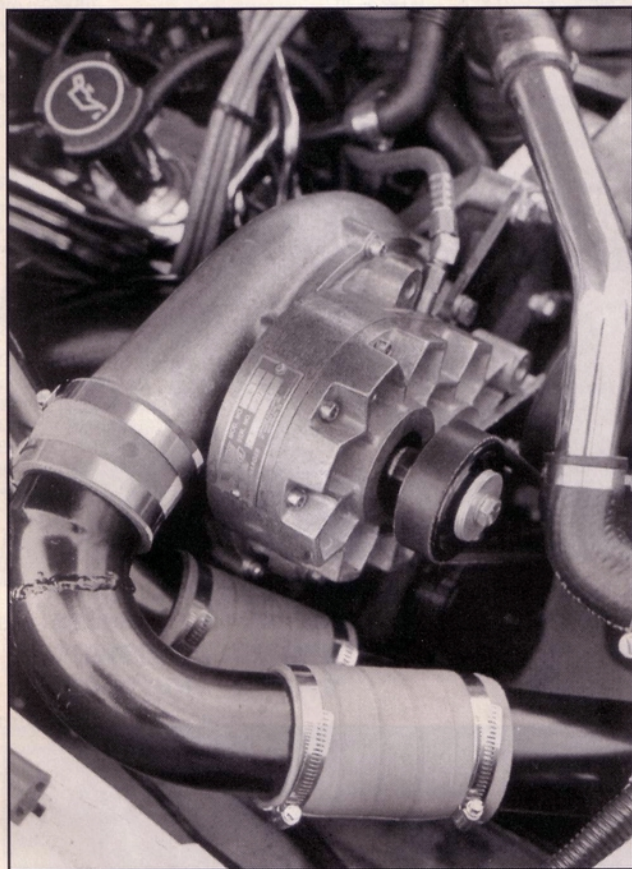
As 5-liter specialists Lidio and his brother Frank soon found out, the best way to attract business was to have a fast, high-profile 5-liter car of their own. Lucy's Tropical Yellow coupe was high profile from the start, making it the obvious choice as the "shop car."

One parameter Lidio established at the outset was to get a 12-second pass with an internally stock motor. That was accomplished with the typical bolt-ons such as gears, tires, exhaust, pulleys and long tube headers. Keep in mind that the car ran 12.90s at 104 mph with Gatorback tires on the front. In fact, all times recorded, including the car's current best of 11.95/113.58, were accomplished with a front tire combo that consists of P225/60 Gatorbacks mounted on steel 15x7 Cragar Street Star wheels.

Lidio quickly realized that trying



Running in the 11s while keeping a strict budget requires choosing the proper parts. Factory short-block is topped off with ported and polished 1970 351W heads with 1.84/1.54 valves. Crane .523/.544 lift cam (216/224° at .050), Extrude Honed factory lower intake and CarTech upper plenum. An MSD ignition with boost timing retard and Magnacore wires ensure adequate spark when the Vortech supercharger reaches 9 lbs. of boost. Incoming air is processed by a 77mm Pro-M mass air meter calibrated for the 24-lb./hr. injectors. Exhaust gasses exit through 1½-inch Hedman long tube headers, a 2½-inch H-pipe and 2-chamber Flowmaster mufflers.



To attain 8-9 lbs. of boost at the manifold, Lidio employs a 2.625-inch blower pulley in combination with a 6¾-inch crank pulley.



Totally stealth interior shows no signs of car's high performance. The velcro-mounted shift light on steering column is normally hidden out of sight as is a recently added boost gauge.

to race two cars while starting a family and a new business venture meant making some concessions. He found the much heavier Street Star wheels were an inexpensive way to dress up the car compared to their more pricey cousins, the aluminum

Drag Stars. At the track, the coupe runs a pair of Drag Star-mounted 28x9-inch Mickey Thompson slicks borrowed from the '79 car.

Knowing that many of his customers would be looking for the same kind of low-cost performance gains

that he was after, Lidio began to experiment. At one point, he tried a 150-hp nitrous system that improved ETs from the 13-0hs to 12-teens, but the biggest success came when Lidio finally succumbed to the urge, took a Vortech supercharger out of stock

and then bolted it on the car.

After running 12.90s with the stock cam and heads, Lidio installed a pair of 1970 351W heads that were treated to a port and polish and 1.84/1.54 valves, along with a Crane roller cam that spec'd out at .523/.544 lift with 216/224 duration at .050 lift. Installed on the stock short-block with graphite head gaskets (Lidio reports good success with the graphite) and running 8-9 lbs. of boost, this setup ran 12-teens at 111 mph with an Extrude Honed factory intake and 11.95/113.58 with a CarTech plenum box in place of the factory upper manifold.

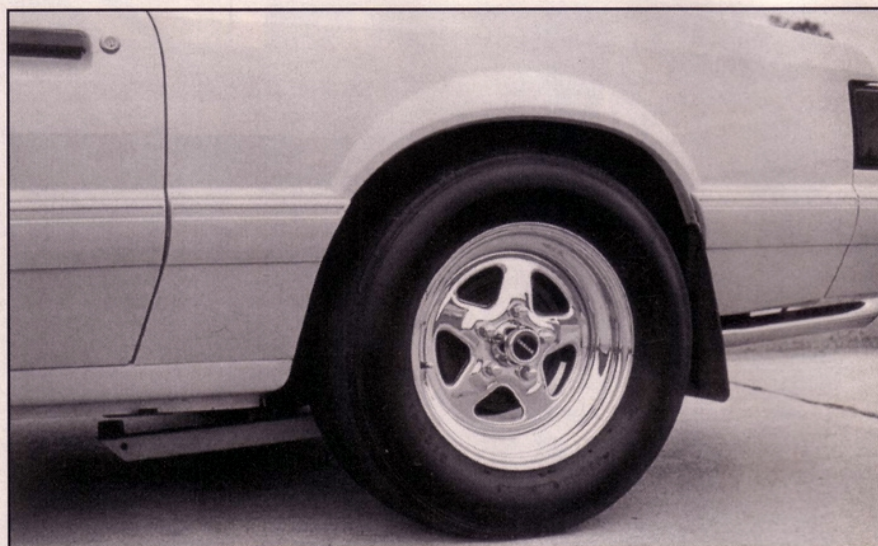
Needless to say, the car is doing a great job of attracting attention to the business, and everyone is happy with its performance, especially Lucy. Now if she could just get her keys back ... 🐾



Until recently, this sight was a common one, as young JoAnna Iacobelli enjoyed her many trips in Mom's Mustang. The baby seat and helmet still remain, but now that Daddy has the keys, the car spends more time drumming up business than ferrying Lucy and JoAnna on errands.



In spite of the LX coupe's reputation for light weight, this car weighs in at nearly 3300 lbs. (with driver) in race trim, thanks to added weight under the hood, heavy front wheels and tires, and the need for a full tank of gas to aid traction. With 375 hp on tap, it takes 70/30 Lakewood struts, a Center Force Gold clutch assembly, Alternative Auto subframe connectors and 4-cylinder upper and lower rear control arms to transfer the power to the ground.



Lakewood traction bars put the power to a factory 8.8 rear carrying 4.10 gears. J60-15 M&H DOT tires were used to put car into the 12.90s with the stock motor. The current 113-mph Vortech combination gets hooked by 28x9 M/T slicks.

