

## SVO Marketing Manual - Background

The American consumer is becoming increasingly sophisticated. This is clearly demonstrated with regard to automobiles, where the influx of imported cars has broadened consumer awareness of "European" handling traits and performance combined-with-economy from small-displacement engines. With this awareness has come a demand in-America for performance cars in the European idiom. Following the successful European imports, the Japanese have been first to respond, with a new generation of cars including Toyota Supra and Celica GT, Datsun 280-ZX 2+2, Isuzu Impulse, Mitsubishi Starion, and others.

In 1981, Ford Motor Company took the domestic lead into this market by launching Special Vehicle operations to develop Ford performance cars which respond fully to contemporary demands. (While GM has made cursory efforts toward this market -- with cars such as Cadillac Cimarron, Pontiac 6000, and Buick Skyhawk T-Type -- none has proved to be serious competition in the opinion of owners of BMW, Audi, Volvo Turbo, SAAB Turbo, etc. Additionally, the new 1984 Corvette is not regarded as a contender in this market, as it is heavy, strictly a two seater, and still relies on a large-displacement V8 engine.)

The acknowledged benchmark among sports sedan/2+2 buyers is the new BMW 320i (318i for 1983), a 1.8 liter, 4 cylinder, fuel injected model which is noted for exceptional quality, economy, performance, and road manners. The Mustang SVO was developed using the 1982 320i as its functional target. Using technology demonstrated in the IMSA GTX Mustangs (turbocharging through an intercooler, European Goodyear tires, gas-filled shocks and struts, 4-wheel disc brakes), the Mustang SVO exhibits performance and handling fully capable of competing in the BMW's league. This was demonstrated when two Mustang SVO prototypes competed in the 1982 "Longest Day" 24-hour race for sedans at Nelson Ledges, Ohio. The two cars lead the race in early hours, and both finished, despite experiencing a number of problems endemic to racing with prototype componentry. An updated SVO will be entered by driver Ron Smaldone in the June 1983 "Longest Day". As highlighted in the Media Section later in this manual, the SVO is noteworthy in that it was truly developed through racetrack experience, yet it offers a blend of tractability and ride which can belie its all-out performance capability. It is unique among American cars, and is a formidable competitor with the most sophisticated European and Japanese sports sedans in its class.