

CLASSIC DRIVER

Ford GT40 2003 - sales structure and price guide announced



DEARBORN, Oct. 15, 2002 - Winning the 1966 24-Hours at Le Mans in 1-2-3 fashion: priceless. Beating Enzo Ferrari at his own game: priceless. Driving home in a new Ford GT in 2004: about six figures.

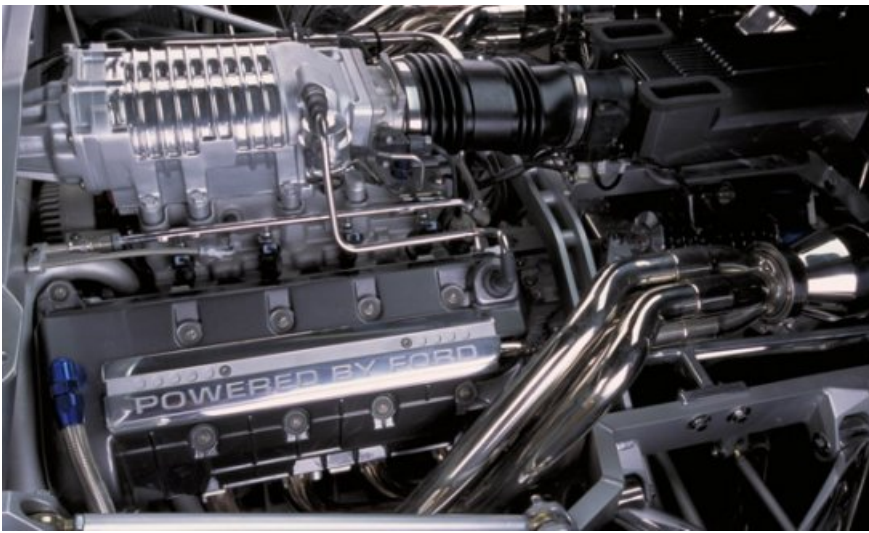
Ford announced to dealers the first details about the upcoming production version of its award-winning GT40. The first: the new, limited-production supercar from Ford will carry the name of the 1960s racer that made automotive history, the Ford GT.

"More than 35 years after that famous Le Mans victory we're proud to announce that Ford's new supercar will carry the same name as the legendary Ford GT racecar," said Steve Lyons, president of Ford Division. "And we're putting customers first, so dealers who have won recognition for customer satisfaction will guarantee themselves one of these dream cars."



Ford announced it would build a production version of its GT40 concept car just 45 days after the car won unprecedented public and critical acclaim at 2002 North American International Auto Show. Since that time, dealers have been deluged with inquiries from interested customers asking, "how much, how many and when?"

"When we announced our plans to produce the car, we asked people to be patient about the details, but frankly, no one listened," said Lyons. "There's just too much excitement surrounding this car. And the speculation on price and volume has been wild. That's why we wanted to communicate some of the details now." While the final MSRP won't be released until just before the car goes on sale, Lyons told dealers that early guesses of \$250,000 are way off. According to Lyons, the MSRP will "substantially less than \$150,000," which, he explained, will make it substantially less than its nearest supercar competitor the Ferrari 360 Modena.



Ford announced officially at its annual dealer meetings last week that only three cars would be produced in 2003 to promote the product and help celebrate Ford Motor Company's 100th Anniversary. The three cars are symbolic of Ford's miraculous 1-2-3 victory in the 1966 24-hours of Le Mans. Regular, limited-production of about 1,000 cars annually begins in 2004.

Ford dealers also were informed that the distribution plan for the Ford GT would be based on a system that rewards dealers for consistently delivering high customer-satisfaction numbers and good sales results. Dealers unable to meet the specific qualification will participate in a lottery for a chance to earn at least one of the extremely low-volume products.

GT40 Legend

The legend of the Ford GT began in the mid-1960s. The great American supercar was a low-slung, muscular machine built by Ford to win on the legendary Le Mans race circuit. And it did. The Ford GT dominated the world of endurance racing from 1966 to 1969. Ford's 2002 auto show concept, dubbed the GT40 in recognition of the nickname of some of the earlier, 40-inch high racecars, was created to celebrate that great era in history and look forward to the great years to come. Unveiled at the 2002 North American International Auto Show, the GT40 concept became an instant sensation. Just 45 days after the vehicle was unveiled, Ford stunned the world again, officially announcing plans for production version.

The Story of the Ford GT Name

True racing historians and enthusiasts know the legend behind the name of the Ford GT, which later became nicknamed GT40 in reference to the car's overall height. The original race program was conceived by Henry Ford II as after his attempt to purchase Ferrari fell through. Ford turned his attention to building his own program. The program's roots can be traced back to England where, in 1963 Ford's team, under the direction of Roy Lunn, began work on an all-new Ford racecar, loosely based on the Eric Broadley's Lola GT. In April of 1964, the car, proudly bearing the name Ford GT was presented to the press for the first time. It was at Le Mans in June of 1964 that people began referring to the sleek racer as GT40. In its first year, all the Ford GTs retired from the race. Ford hired Carroll Shelby in 1964 to oversee the program. His first move was to install a 427 cubic inch engine in the car, which became known as the Ford GT40 Mark II. In February 1965, Ken Miles and Lloyd Ruby drove the Mark II to its first win at the Daytona 2000-km race breaking almost every established track record. The cars went on to their famous 1-2-3 victory at Le Mans in 1966 and dominated the endurance racing world for four straight years.

Throughout the years and despite the GT40 nickname and various versions including Mark II, III, IV and the less known and aesthetically best-forgotten "Mirage" models, at the insistence of Henry Ford II, the cars continued to the nomenclature "Ford GT" or just "Ford" on their body-sides and steering wheel hub.

The legendary Ford GT racing program culminated in June of 1969 with its last victory at Le Mans. Some cars continued to compete after 1969, but the Ford factory program came to a close. Various attempts to keep the flame burning in the form of newly available cars built from spare parts and replica parts continued through the 1970s to present, including a line of cars known as GT40 Mark Vs built by an aftermarket company, which even picked up on the chassis numbering sequence. No Ford badging appeared on these cars. The side stripes carried the name "GT40" or a "GT40 MkV" badge on the wheels.



At the 2002 North American International Auto Show, Ford rolled out a concept car called the GT40, which also carried on the numbering sequence of the cars. After deciding to build a production version of the car in February, Ford said details, including the final name would be announced later.

Lyons told dealers last week that the new supercar would be called simply the “Ford GT” paying homage to the original while making a clear statement for the Ford brand.

“The legend of the Ford GT is a distinct Ford legend and we want to pay homage to that,” said Lyons. “Little kids, and big ones, dream about ‘Ferraris’ not ‘360 Modenas.’ We want people to dream about the ‘Ford GT’ and put the emphasis on the Ford brand.”

Note: To read about the exciting new GT40 as 'Car of the Week' [please click here](#)

Note: To read Tony Dron's definitive history of the GT40 at the Le Mans 24 Hour race [please click here](#)

Story and photos: Ford Media

Gallery

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