



Articles & Stories

[Home](#) » [Resources](#) » [Article Search](#) » Customer Success

[ShareThis](#)

Tribute Build Rakes in \$90K at Barrett-Jackson Auction to Benefit Darrell Gwynn Foundation: Builder Gateway Classic Mustang and Miller Electric Mfg. Co. Support Foundation's Mission to End Paralysis



Darrell Gwynn of the Darrell Gwynn Foundation speaks at the Barrett-Jackson Auction, held Jan. 21, 2011 in Scottsdale, Ariz. At auction, a 1976 Mercury Montego tribute car built by Gateway Classic Mustang was auctioned off for \$90,000. Proceeds will benefit the Darrell Gwynn Foundation's many programs that provide awareness, prevention, support and ultimately a cure for paralysis.

In the 1976 Daytona 500, Richard Petty was leading on the last lap when passed by David Pearson in his Wood Brothers Racing 1976 Mercury Montego. Petty tried to clear Pearson coming off the final corner. The two collided and spun into the infield as they approached the finish line. Petty's car stalled, but Pearson picked up the clutch, revved the engine and was able to hobble across the finish line to win the Daytona 500. [Watch the finish.](#)

Many fans consider this finish to be the greatest in the history of NASCAR. So it makes sense that the winning car — a 1976 Mercury Montego — would be “recreated” for a special cause.

On Jan. 21, 2011, the Darrell Gwynn Foundation auctioned a 1976 Mercury Montego tribute car built by Gateway Classic Mustang and made a wheelchair donation live on Speed Channel from the Barrett-Jackson Auction in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Champion drag racer and foundation founder Darrell Gwynn attended the auctioning of the tribute car along with Leonard Wood of Wood Brothers Racing.

Get to Know the Builder: Gateway Classic Mustang

Brothers Lonny and Jason Childress started Gateway Classic Mustang in 1999 with their minds set on creating vintage-inspired cars that you can and want to actually drive.

“They may look vintage, but don’t be fooled,” said Lonny. “Our Mustangs leave the shop driving like current rides.”

Located 75 miles southwest of St. Louis, Gateway Classic Mustang is a leading builder of classic Mustangs and does everything in-house except for building engines and transmissions. Gateway Classic Mustang even developed a suspension product (under the name Gateway Performance Suspension) and sells it, among other Mustang aftermarket products, out of their shop and online at www.gatewayclassicmustang.com and www.gatewayperformancesuspension.com.

Their team of five employees does partial and complete restorations, including fabrication, sheet metal replacement, paint and body and mechanical work on Mustangs (years 1965–2011).

Prior to starting the business, the brothers had successful careers in racing; Lonny drove the monster truck Bigfoot and Jason competitively drove Grave Digger on the show circuit. Now Lonny focuses his attention to detail on fabrication and painting. Jason assists in the shop as needed and manages office operations and business opportunities.

The pair has worked on numerous notable projects including a GCM-R ’67 Mustang for Sammy Hagar in 2006 and 2007. This was the first Dynacorn body ever completed and put out on the streets.

Following the build, they joined Hagar on tour (how cool is that), where they were introduced to Michael Anthony, the former bassist for Van Halen who currently plays for the rock supergroup Chickenfoot. Gateway Classic Mustang was then asked to build a '69 GT-500 Shelby convertible for Anthony. Both builds were captured by Hot Rod Television and aired on Speed Channel in 2007 and 2008, respectively.

But the fun didn't stop there. Happen to have an extra \$135,000 burning a hole in your pocket? A Bullitt remake can be yours! A limited number of serialized Steve McQueen Signature Mustangs will be built to order and sold by Gateway Classic Mustang.

In 2009, the Childress brothers and their staff completed a car for actor/racer Chad McQueen, son of the late Steve McQueen who starred in "Bullitt", a 1968 American film best remembered for its [car chase scene](#) through the streets of San Francisco. The car, driven by McQueen, was a Highland Green 1968 Ford Mustang GT 390 CID Fastback. The build garnered media attention including a feature on DIY Celebrity Rides in 2009 and another special featured by Hot Rod Television on Speed Channel in 2010.

Their latest project — the 1976 Mercury Montego tribute car — was built in four short months and donated to the foundation free of charge, including labor. The street legal tribute car features a Ford Racing 521 CID engine, Keisler 5-speed transmission, and Sherwin-Williams Barrett-Jackson Collector Color Series paint job.

As part of the build process, Gateway Classic Mustang stripped the car down and then cut it apart using a [Spectrum® 375 X-TREME™](#) plasma cutter. The build also required sheet metal replacement and a roll cage install. For this job, they turned to the [Millermatic® 140 with Auto-Set™](#) MIG welder and also used a [Syncrowave® 350 LX](#) TIG welder while building a deck lid spoiler and all of the exhaust.

Gateway Classic Mustang relies exclusively on Miller for its welding and cutting needs. Miller product managers have worked collaboratively with Lonny and Jason over the last six years to share product knowledge, resources and unique opportunities, as the company executes world-class projects for its clients.

In fact, it was Gateway Classic Mustang that informed Miller product manager Steve Hidden of the opportunity to get involved in the Darrell Gwynn Foundation/Barrett-Jackson Auction. Hot Rods to Hell in Anderson, Calif. needed a new welder for manufacturing their suspension systems and were willing to trade one of their NASCAR style truck arm suspensions for a welder. Miller enthusiastically signed on to support the project by donating a [Millermatic® 350P](#) to finish the job.

"When Jason and Lonny contacted me about the Darrell Gwynn Foundation build I knew right away that Miller needed to get involved," said Miller Product Manager Steve Hidden who attended the recent Jan. 21 Barrett-Jackson Auction. "The project car turned out great and the auction was quite a unique experience. Miller Electric was honored to be a part of the project and donation."

In addition to Gateway Classic Mustang building the car and Miller's equipment donation, other project sponsors included Barrett-Jackson, Ford Racing, JEGS, Reliable Transportation, Wood Brothers Racing, Hot Rod TV, 3M, American Autowire, Autotailors, Autotronic Controls, Baer Inc., Be Cool, BF Goodrich, Blue Oval Parts, Classic 2 Current, Cragar, Daerborn Classics, Denco Powder Coating, Dynamic Control, Holley, Hot Rods to Hell, Ididit, Billet Badges, John's Industries, Keisler Automotive, Optima Batteries, Pilkington Classics, QuickTime Inc., Redi-Kleen Stripping, Scat Enterprises, Sherwin Williams and Sprint.

Going Once, Going Twice, SOLD!

At auction, the car was purchased by Foundation supporter Tom Day for \$90,000, who then donated the car back to the foundation. Auction proceeds totaled \$490,000 (another car was also auctioned off), which will benefit the Darrell Gwynn Foundation's many programs that provide awareness, prevention, support and ultimately a cure for paralysis.

The foundation was started by Darrell Gwynn in 2002. He was at the height of his professional drag racing career when in 1990, on a test run in England, a freak accident left him paralyzed with a devastating spinal cord injury.

The car will be auctioned again at the Palm Beach, Fla., Barrett-Jackson Auction in April 2011. Proceeds will again go to support Darrell's mission.

Visit www.darrellgwynnfoundation.org for more information including paralysis prevention and statistics, upcoming events and ways to support the foundation.

Want More?

The tribute build was captured by Hot Rod Television and is scheduled to air in April 2011 on Speed Channel. In the meantime, check out the build and other project photos in the [Gateway Classic Mustang photo gallery](#).



On Jan. 21, 2011, the Darrell Gwynn Foundation auctioned a 1976 Mercury Montego tribute car built by Gateway Classic Mustang and made a wheelchair donation live on Speed Channel from the Barrett-Jackson Auction in Scottsdale, Ariz.



At auction, a 1976 Mercury Montego tribute car built by Gateway Classic Mustang was auctioned off for \$90,000. Proceeds will benefit the Darrell Gwynn Foundation's many programs that provide awareness, prevention, support and ultimately a cure for paralysis.

Customer Success

Products

- [SYNCROWAVE 350 LX](#)
- [SPECTRUM 375 X-TREME](#)
- [MILLERMATIC 350P](#)
- [MILLERMATIC 140 AUTO-SET](#)

Welding Categories

- Plasma Cutting
- TIG
- MIG

Welding Applications

- Motorsports (car, truck, bike, etc.)
- Fabrication