



1-of-1 Special Order 1969 Mercury Cougar XR7 Convertible  
428 Cobra Jet V-8 Engine

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## One of a Kind Find

After yet another trip to the All-Ford Nationals in Carlisle, Pa., the car bug bit again. After a short discussion, it was decided that a Mustang convertible would suit our desires, so the hunt was on. We did the usual things you know what I mean. We looked at the classifieds, Trader magazines, asked around, but nothing turned up. Well, I also drive a truck for a living, so while on the road, my eyes naturally focus in on anything with a ragtop.

While on the road one day, I drove past a little gas station that also sold cars as a sideline, not 10 miles from my house. I knew the place and the owner, and I also knew that he stayed away from Blue Oval products. He had about a dozen cars in his lot, and I noticed quite a few soft-tops. So every trip that I made past, I would focus in on the convertibles.



**Barbara and Gary Seitz, of Venus, Pa., found a diamond in the rough with this Pastel Gray, R-code '69, once owned by former Ford Motor Co. Vice Chair Allan D. Gilmour.**

The cars were parked four wide and three deep. After a week of studying the first two rows, I began to concentrate on the back row. On the fly, I saw one more ragtop there. I could tell it was white with a black top, but nothing else. So on the return trip, I slowed down for a look, and there it was: not a Mustang, but a Cougar.

For the rest of the day, that Cougar nagged at me. That night I told the family about the car, and we decided it was worth looking at. The next day, I stopped to look at the car. One quick walk around, I knew it was a 1969 in pretty decent shape. I popped the hood, took a quick look. It didn't look like a 351 probably a 390. I opened the driver's door and looked inside. I don't know why, but I looked at the door dataplate and started reading the numbers: 9F94R. . . . Whoa, baby, an R code! That's not a 390; it's a 428 Cobra Jet! I looked under the hood again, and that's what threw me. The hood and Ram-Air were replaced with a stock hood and air-cleaner, but what the heck.

After a phone call, a deal was struck and the car was purchased. The man said he had put some parts in the trunk and had a couple more in his garage. In the trunk there was a hood scoop, hood decals, NOS light bezels, shop manuals and records dating to 1971. In the garage: two NOS fenders and front valances the previous owner had bought them for a quick fix in case they hit a deer.

After a few rides in the car, we decided a paint job was in order. The original color was Pastel Gray, but the car was repainted white. We thought some shade of blue would look nice with the blue interior. At night I would sit and study the Cougar, trying to decide on a color, but the car just seemed to scream out Don't paint me just yet! I'm special. Just wait and see.

I wanted to find out more about the car but how and where? Be it coincidence or fate, in the very next issue of *Mustang & Fords* was an article about Kevin Martis Ford and Mercury VIN databases. So, I thought, why not? I contacted Kevin and ordered the total package they offered.

It was like Christmas Day when the package arrived. None of us knew what was inside. What we read, to say the least, was shocking: Only 127 R-code XR-7 convertibles built in 1969. And of those 127, only one was painted Pastel Gray and fitted with an automatic transmission. And quoting what Kevin wrote: THIS IS THAT COUGAR, A SPECIAL ORDER FOR A FORD MOTOR COMPANY EXECUTIVE [former Ford Motor Co. Vice Chair Allan D. Gilmour]. After reading that, we were all so excited, you would swear we just won the lottery! So the color choice is simple, Pastel Gray, it is.

Now, when I walk past the Cougar, it just seems to smile and say those famous words: I told you so. So, the ragtop that was to be used as a weekend cruiser is now a full-blown restoration project. It will take a few years, but the Cougar will take its place among the best at the All-Ford Nationals at Carlisle. So tell your readers that the Bargain Buggies really are parked in the back row!

*Gary & Barbara Seitz, #7021*

[Cougar Club of America](#)