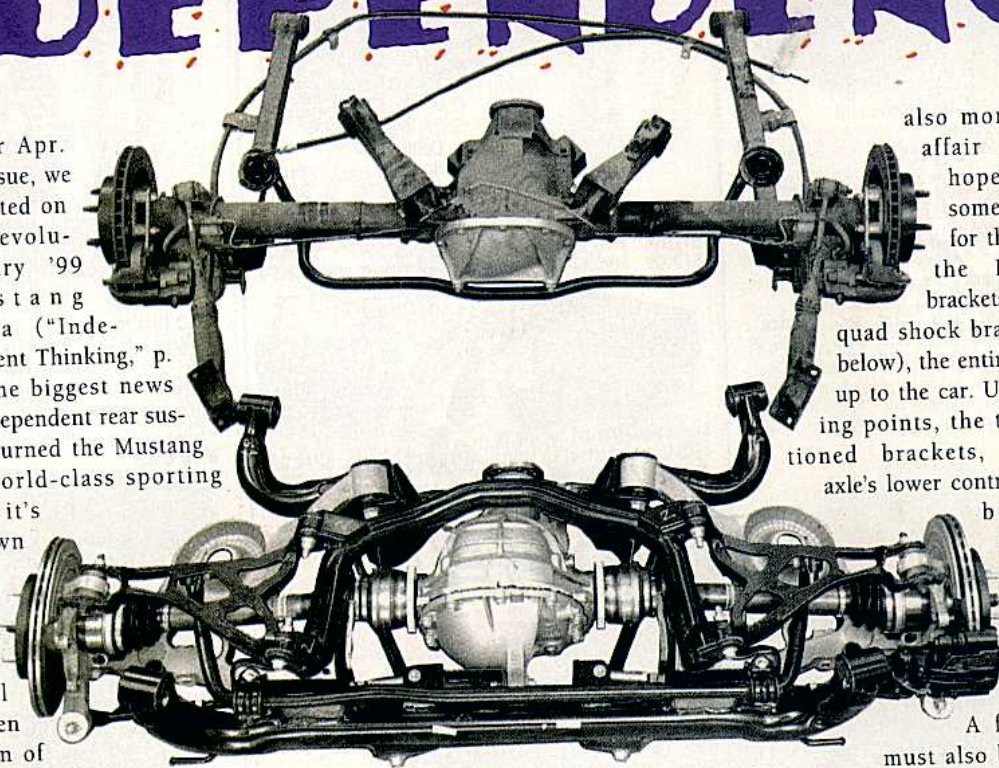


INSTALLATION OF INDEPENDENCE

In our Apr. '99 issue, we reported on the evolutionary '99 Mustang Cobra ("Independent Thinking," p. 16). Clearly, the biggest news was the car's independent rear suspension that's turned the Mustang into a truly world-class sporting coupe. While it's now well known that the '99 Cobra has IRS, the biggest question for the past several months has been the proposition of how difficult it would be to retrofit. After attending the first installation of Ford Racing Performance Parts IRS offering (the Cobra assembly simply delivered to your door), we were pleasantly surprised to



Complete '99 Cobra IRS setups should be available from Currie by the time this makes print. The IRS is a slick package that retrofits better than anyone dared hope—at least on SN-95 Mustangs. With the 8.8 live axle already out of our '95 convertible, the two make an interesting comparo. By looking at the ends of the lower control arms on the 8.8, you can see how the front mounting points of the IRS are in the exact same location. The rear pickup points are right where the quad shocks are mounted to the car.

also more of a bolt-in affair than we had hoped. Other than some minor welding for the installation of the IRS mounting brackets that replace the quad shock brackets (outlined below), the entire IRS setup bolts up to the car. Using four mounting points, the two above-mentioned brackets, and the live axle's lower control arm mounting brackets, two Currie technicians had the entire suspension installed in less than five hours.

A few more hours must also be scheduled for such considerations as the ABS sensor connections and rerouting the exhaust system (see The Real Details sidebar), but all told, installing an IRS in an SN-95 Mustang is a feasible aftermarket undertaking.

If you can handle a lower control arm installation and a little more, you can install the new Mustang IRS

text and photography by Miles Cook

discover the job was considerably easier than we thought.

The job was performed at Currie Enterprises, the well-known rear axle specialist in Anaheim, California. Currie has been chosen by FRPP as a distributor for the

new assembly, and our photo vehicle was the first installation of the first IRS assembly, which Currie had received the day before.

Not only is the '99 Cobra IRS a perfect fit in Currie's '95 GT convertible, but it's

While this isn't a swap you can whip out in your driveway on jackstands (a good transmission or suspension jack and a car hoist are mandatory), it's clearly an easier undertaking than you'd otherwise think. See the following photos for more detail.

1 The 8.8 centersection is similar to that used on the now out-of-production Lincoln Mark VIII. As in the '99 Cobra, it has 3.27 gears, but Currie has already done a 3.73 swap in a '99 Cobra. So, the usual 3.55s, 3.73s, or 4.10s will be an option in the IRS. The 8.8 pumpkin of the tubular subframe cradle is visible; it's the part that hard-mounts to the car. It's an ingenious design we're sure will be the new darling of performance street enthusiasts and possibly the open-track crowd as well. On either side of the 8.8 housing, the toothed wheels for ABS sensors are clearly visible. If your SN-95 has ABS, you only need to procure different sensors to get it to work with the IRS (see sidebar).

