



holman moody collection

story by **Mark Dill**

Lee Holman worked in the machine shop at Holman and Moody when, 40 years ago, Jimmy Clark added his name to the stellar list of drivers that drove for the storied company. Holman, son of founder John Holman and now the company's president, has only worked for one company all his life. And he's not alone. Several of his buddies working in the machine shop today, grinding camshafts and restoring Ford Fairlanes, were plying their trade right there with him back in 1967. Brought into the family business in 1958 at age 13, Holman pushed a broom, took inventory of spare parts and soaked up everything he could from his dad and co-founder Ralph Moody.

And there was plenty to learn. John Holman had moved from California to Charlotte in 1956 to head up Ford Motor Company's NASCAR effort. When all manufacturers curtailed NASCAR factory support the following year, the elder Holman formed a partnership with Moody to support teams running Fords. Immediately, they were a force to be reckoned with, winning two races in 1957 and, with driving legend Curtis Turner, one of the two final races that took place on the sands of Daytona Beach in 1958.

Success beget success and the Holman and Moody operation began to look more like a factory, producing ten 1959 Ford Thunderbirds for the next season. The big event was the opening of the Daytona International Speedway and Holman and Moody was in the thick of it as driver Johnny Beauchamp crossed the line second to Lee Petty in a finish so close it took three days to sort it out.

In 1961, the company began building engines for the Woods Brothers race team, a hugely successful relationship that lasted nearly 40 years. Throughout the 1960s, outstanding drivers like Fred Lorenzen, Dan Gurney, Fireball Roberts and Mario Andretti racked up a long list of NASCAR victories. David Pearson not only won dozens of races, but the 1968 and 1969 championships as well in Holman and Moody Fords.

And it wasn't all NASCAR. Holman and Moody produced impressive efforts in road racing, especially the 12 Hours of Sebring where their Cobras had more speed – if less reliability – than the world-beating Ferraris. They were a drag racing powerhouse as well, building Mustangs for the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) factory experimental class (A/FX). Bill Lawton won the 1965 Winter Nationals in one, while Clester Andrews won 40 of 42 match races in another. They made a brief appearance in Can-Am in 1967 with the unique “Honker” car driven by Mario Andretti.

Holman and Moody took a different direction in the 1970s as John Holman grew disenchanted in his relationship with NASCAR management and curtailed race team operations. He bought out Moody in 1972 when Ralph left to work with race teams. Unfortunately, John Holman was stricken with a heart attack and passed away in 1975. The business was managed by a bank trust until 1978 when Lee Holman assumed the presidency at age 33.

The company continued to build engines for the Woods Brothers through the 1980s and 90s. During the nineties, Lee Holman leveraged the company's marvelous 1960s heritage to take it in an exciting new direction: classic restoration and vintage car racing.

No longer engaged with active professional race teams, Holman and Moody is now exclusively focused on 1960s Ford automobiles for car clubs and vintage racers. In particular, they build and restore Cobras, Shelby Mustangs, Ford Fairlanes and Ford GT MkII racers. Their big competitive advantage over other shops offering the same services is that Holman and Moody has ownership of the world's only original blueprints of engines such as the Fairlane 427 and the Hi-Po 289. Not even Ford Motor Company can say that.

Now housed in a 25,000 square foot facility – only the second shop in the company's 50-year history – Holman and Moody is recognized worldwide with customers clamoring from Australia, Finland, England and other spots around the globe. Holman is so respected on a global scale he was the only person selected to drive an original Ford GT MkII at last year's Goodwood Festival of Speed in England on the 30th anniversary of the Mark's Le Mans victory. Alongside him in other cars were Hall of Fame road racers such as Phil Hill, Dan Gurney, Stirling Moss and Jackie Oliver.

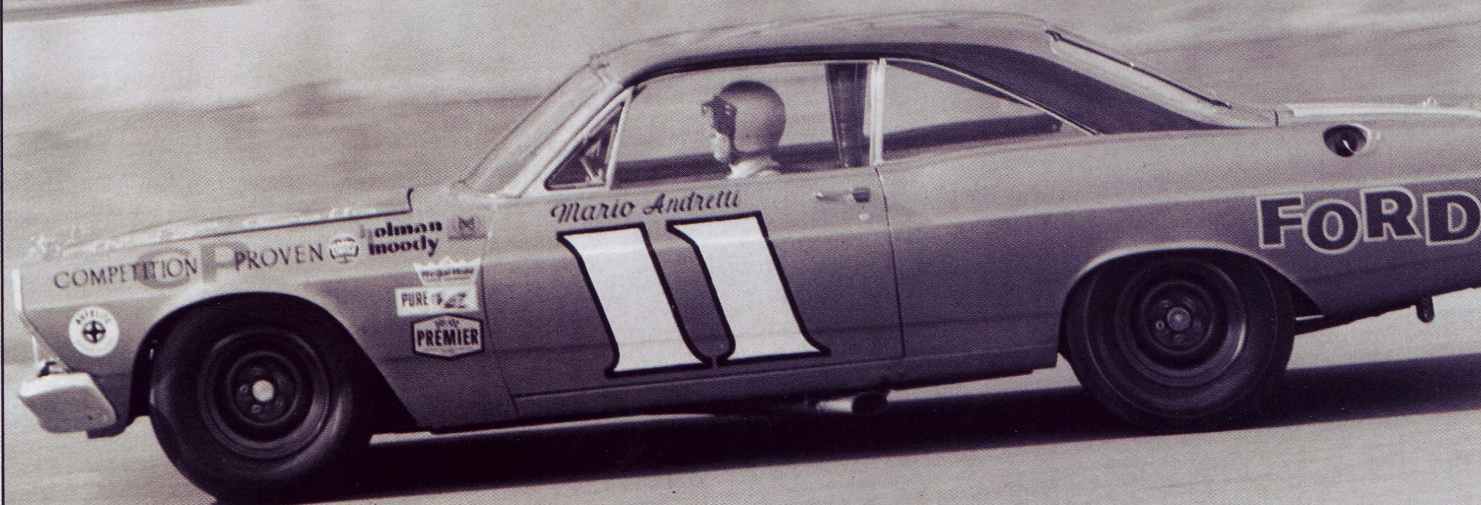
Business operations are actually divided into two companies. Holman Automotive runs the machine shop, and Holman and Moody manages their vintage car operations, trademarks and intellectual property, including a research library for writers and historians. Details can be found at www.holmanmoody.com.

“I guess you could say we are stuck in the 1960s,” says Lee Holman.

Judging by the past and future of Holman and Moody, it seems that is a pretty good place to be. ■

HOLMAN-MOODY

JIMMY CLARK



Certainly a highlight of Holman and Moody history was the 1967 Daytona 500 win at the hands of Mario Andretti.