The Top 10 American Performance Engines of the Last 30 Years (1985 to 2015)

Jason Cole Cobb on May 25, 2015 at 3:00 pm

Tweet

Share Save

Editor's note: *The rights was a transition period for American engines, as the iconic carburetor gave way to the modern Cadac-inlet vers ous, and fine designations worked a way to the present — one ahen power and fuel economy are no longer mutually exclusive. This modern engine age features a blend of the best carburetor technology, and performance parts.*

So what have been the best engines of those last 30 years? *Wed asked pro to help us answer that very question. Jason Cobb Hendricks and Instagram. Factoring in your votes and comments, we ha ssed the rest of the Top 10 in the rowing days.*

— FORD EFI 5.0L H.O.

The #5 entry on our list isn't yo ung, or even

new. It's a movement. A revolution of sorts.

Ford likely didn't realize it at the time, but when the company added EFI to its existing 5.0L V8 engine in 1985, it was creating a hot selling crate. The small displacement engine (5.0ci cubic inches) was at that point in stock form, but combined with the Mustang and Ford Bronco, the 5.0L V8 was pow erful.

And at 225 horsepower, there was plenty of room for improvement.

The 5.0L H.O. stood for "high output." Ford engineers found ways to bump up horse power. Some were simple modifications to the original, 5.0L EFI-equipped Mustangs. There was a massive proliferation of Ford 5.0L aftermarket performance parts — so much so that Summit Racing even created an entire 5.0L section in its catalog, with hundreds of pages.

It was the aftermarket that turned the EFI 5.0L H.O. into a legend.

History

The Ford 5.0L was born in 1968 — or at least the block of the 5.0L came first appeared.

The engine was basically a carryover from Ford's production line in the Windsor V8, Ford Ford decided to make the switch to the Windsor block. The Ford 5.0L didn't really make a name for itself. The 5.0L H.O. was introduced for the 1985 model year. The original 5.0L H.O. Mustang was a hot rod. A hot carburetor (and later a barrel) was bolted on the intake. It wasn't much, but it was a step in the right direction. Ford made performance-depowered late 1970s. The 5.0L H.O. steadily increased power over the few years thanks to upgraded intake manifolds, aftermarket cams, and other changes. EFI carburetion was introduced in 1986 and finally added to the 5.0L H.O. in 1987 — the year Jason was born.

Or was it?

Although the EFI 5.0L H.O. produced more torque and offered excellent mileage power, peak power was actually down by 20 horsepower in the first year of

EFI. Some enthusiasts feared the direct port injection technology, which thought it would limit their ability to tune the engine. Ford implemented changes to the EFI 5.0L H.O. and power numbers come around — and so did enthusiasts.

Power numbers jumped from 200 horsepower to 225 in 1987 and 1988 — the 5.0L H.O. Mustang GT was born.

Ford's Mustang was the Widow-based EFI 5.0L H.O. Mustang. Pro-body as a legit performance car.

- Brutalized Mic into a a three-magnum aftermarket gear industry.
- Became one of the most modeled hot rod engines in history — rivaling the Chevy big-block Small-block Chevy.
- Lasted for nearly a decade.

The EFI 5.0L H.O. continues to be an affordable performance engine. Its legacy lives on. Its aftermarket parts is eluded only by that of the Ford 5.0L Small-block Chevy. According to Summit Racing, popular upgrades include:

5.0L Engine Modifications

- 4.6L Pool Injectors
- 4.6L Pool Pumps
- 5.0L EFI Intake Manifolds
- 5.0L/5.0L Cylinder Heads
- 5.0L Pulley Kits
- 5.0L Throttle Bodies
- 5.0L Centrifugal Superchargers
- 5.0L Headers
- 5.0L Exhaust Systems
- 5.0L Cam Kits

Tags: 5.0L, 5.0L Mustang, EFI, Ford 5.0L, Top Engines of the 30 Years

Author: Jason Cobb

Jason Cobb is a Detroit native who has been a car enthusiast for his entire life. He has owned a variety of vehicles, ranging from a Ford Mustang to a 1 Ford Ranger. He has also authored articles for multiple automotive publications, including Hot Rod Magazine and Ford Mustang publications on a wide range of topics, including the Ford Shelby Mustang, Ford Ranger, Ford Bronco, the Mazda Miata, and Ford Focus. Jason's passion for car culture and racing.

3 Comments

Oscar Gutierrez

Reply

Sir has a 302 block stroked to a 347 ok is a black coupe not to much. Cool at the whole story and car other than the motor and stroke is just a very light car you have a car that people with 1000 larger engines don't like to race because it weighs 4250 lbs and weighs less than three thousand pounds.thats one hell of a power to weight ratio.and it has room for more power.by using a turbo or super charger

Reply

Frank

Reply

Frank

Reply

Frank