

Racing's Heritage: Winning Both On And Off The Track

(NAPSA)—The adage is probably as old as stock-car racing itself: Win on Sunday, Sell on Monday. But, is that axiom as pertinent today as it was, say, in the 1960s?

Ford, which for the first time in nearly four decades, has introduced an all-new model and gone NASCAR racing with it at the same time, is confident that the answer is yes, if not on Monday, then at least as soon as you're looking for a new car.

Fusion replaces Taurus as the Ford entry into NASCAR's Nextel Cup and Busch series, becoming the manufacturer's first all-new nameplate to debut simultaneously on the racetrack and in the showroom since Torino in 1968. Torino's debut 38 years earlier resulted in a driver's championship for NASCAR Hall-of-Famer David Pearson, and more than 2.6 million units sold during its eight-year (1968-75) run.

"The great interest in NASCAR racing will help us tie the Fusion name to the Ford brand, and it's only right that we race Ford's newest car in America's flagship racing series," said Marty Collins, General Marketing Manager, Ford Division.

Racing has made good business sense for Ford, dating back more than a century, when company founder Henry Ford raced to prove out his new product, and to gain favorable publicity for his efforts. His victory in his one and only race, in 1901, proved to be the turning point in attracting the investors who helped him start the Ford Motor Company in 1903.

"My great-grandfather understood the value of racing, and what it could do for a company," said Edsel B. Ford II, a member of the Ford board of directors and a long-time supporter of Ford's racing



START YOUR ENGINES—Fusion, an all-new nameplate, debuts on the racetrack and in the showroom.

programs. "He knew what racing could do, both in terms of technological innovation and marketing. I think he'd be pleased that those are key reasons we still race today."

The NASCAR Fusion replaces the venerable Taurus race car, which captured four NASCAR championships (three in Nextel Cup and one in Busch) and 100 Nextel Cup points victories from 1998-2005. It concluded its storied run with a 1-2-3-4 finish at the season-ending Ford 400 at Homestead-Miami Speedway in November 2005, as Greg Biffle scored his series. "We really wanted to send Taurus out with one more championship," noted Dan Davis, director, Ford Racing Technology. "But the time is right to move on to Fusion."

The production Fusion aims to emulate Taurus' off-the-track success, too: It was the best-selling car in America for five consecutive years (1992-96), and sold more than 6.5 million units between 1985-2005.

Current Ford Racing driver Dale Jarrett, who won a NASCAR championship with the Taurus in 1999 and also is a Ford dealer in North Carolina, is optimistic about the production Fusion.

"It's got a very nice driving and handling package, plus the inside is very roomy and the interior is nicely done as well," said Jarrett. "I think this is just what we've been looking for to increase sales."