



**LEFT**  
Exterior includes a host of bonnet scoops, spoilers and winglets as well as upgraded LEDs, decals and quarter window scoops



# ROUSH RS3

Track-focused 'Stang gains mega mumbo

★ <i>Rating</i> 4.0	<b>ENGINE</b> 4951cc V8, DOHC, 32v, s/c	<b>LIKE:</b> Epic amount of straight-line power; addictive soundtrack; high grip levels; easy to live with <b>DISLIKE:</b> Steering remains numb; you can never really use all the power; slippery seats
	<b>POWER</b> 542kW @ 6850rpm	
	<b>TORQUE</b> 827Nm @ 5000rpm	
	<b>0-100KM/H</b> 4.3sec (estimated)	
	<b>WEIGHT</b> 1739kg (est) • <b>PRICE</b> \$112,874	

BY • TRENT GIUNCO + PICS ELLEN DEWAR

**WE'RE ALWAYS TOLD** to listen to our parents because they know best. More often than not, this is true. And yet, I'm sitting in traffic with normal temps in a 542kW Mustang after driving spiritedly through some twisty roads thinking how a piece of childhood advice couldn't be more wrong. "You'll never make your car better than how it came from the factory" was my father's catch-cry for years as he stood by and watched my

brother lower and louden one steed to the next. Oh, and don't even get me started on his view of power upgrades. Simply, the Roush RS3 (via Mustang Motorsport) is doing everything in its power to make me question my old man's logic. This fully ADR compliant and complied, warranty-toting (three-year/60,000km) aftermarket Mustang feels anything but a tuned, and therefore tarnished, pony. Despite its



**MAIN**

The capable dynamics of the standard GT have been bolstered with the Roush treatment. It's truly an event to drive quickly

spleen-splitting straight-line pace, it is as docile as any other commuter stuck in peak-hour Melbourne traffic. The sticker price of \$112,874 (including the purchase of a manual Mustang GT) even seems reasonable given the total package. Although it's no shrinking violet, with the familiar, retro-esque silhouette being accompanied by an assortment of Roush kit - namely the bonnet scoops and 20-inch Quicksilver aluminium wheels. Matched with a deep burble from the quad exhaust tips, it's hard to miss, but in a good way. The interior is standard 'Stang, with only a few Roush clues as to what lies beneath. The RS3 is Roush's stage three kit (hence RS3) which, for \$41,499 on top of the \$57,490 Mustang GT manual, gets you 500kW and 739Nm of supercharged goodness and extreme-duty half shafts. Yet for an extra \$3500, the Phase 2 upgrade kit fitted here turns the wick up on the TVS R2300 supercharger to 542kW and 827Nm. The way in which that grunt gets to

the Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2-shod rear hoops is what's most impressive. So linear is the power and torque delivery that the supercharger is almost imperceptible. Yet, it can go from 'My Little Pony' to raging stallion in one flex of your right ankle. And the passive exhaust sounds authentically unhinged. So ferocious is the power that you need a long stretch of road to ever experience full throttle. You also need precise inputs with the six-speed manual - oh no, it won't be rushed. Helping harness that power are the aforementioned 285-section Cup 2s at the rear (265 front). When up to temp, the way they dig into the road is as savage as the rate of acceleration. However, you need a fairly smooth surface or the RS3 will scamper across the tarmac when hard on the gas. On the flip side, the Brembo brakes do a solid job of arresting the licence-scaring speed, while the middle pedal remains overly sensitive (like the standard GT) in the initial stages of travel.

## THE ROUSH RS3 CAN GO FROM 'MY LITTLE PONY' TO RAGING STALLION IN ONE FLEX OF YOUR RIGHT ANKLE

While it's not totally a point-and-shoot affair with mid-corner throttle applications helping engage the rear, you still have to be weary of the fact you have 542kW/827Nm. The only downside to the added roadholding is the fact it has only exacerbated the standard GT's lack of connection through the wheel. Yes, the sharp Mustang front-end remains, but getting to the apex is something that you sight, rather than something you feel. However, it's not only the focused rubber offering up all the purchase here as there's tangible mechanical



**TOP LEFT**

Apart from little Roush touches like the white shift knob and illuminated sill plates, the RS3's interior is largely left standard

**ABOVE**

Extreme-duty half shafts help beef up the driveline, while the Coyote 5.0-litre responds well to forced induction

grip. Fitted with the optional three-way adjustable performance coilovers (adjustable for height and damper), there's enough compression and control to feel what the car is doing underneath you. For a supposedly circuit-biased kit, the RS3 has a resounding amount of compliance and a duality of character that suits both road and track. A chink in the Roush's armour is the standard leather seats and the serious lack of side bolstering. Although you can option Alcantara inserts. Okay, there were a few odd sounds on test that wouldn't be found in a standard GT, however, as a package that can serve as a weekend cruiser and a track-day bruiser, the RS3 ticks a lot of boxes. At \$112,874 (including optional equipment) for this variant, the price of entry doesn't seem unsavoury given the absolute experience it returns. Its party piece is the fact it's bloody quick, surprisingly capable and, well, 'normal'. Sorry dad, but the Roush RS3 proves you wrong on this one. **M**