



1973 Ford Cologne Capri RS2600 GTU

Chassis no. GAECNP42981

The RS2600 was launched in 1970 to fill the need for a sporting variant of Ford's "Car you always promised yourself" a European interpretation of the 'personal car' concept that had given birth to the phenomenally successful Mustang. With its trademark elliptical rear side window – the creation of Ford stylist Hand Muth – the Capri proved a great success. From its launch in January 1969 until production ended in 1986 almost 2 million had been built. Of that total, the RS2600 represented just 3500 units.

By the end of the 1960s Ford was pursuing a wide-ranging global competitions programme, Jochen Neerpasch, head of the Motorsport Department in Cologne, was delegated to turn the Capri into a race-car. Known as the 'RS2600', this would be based on the 2600GT, Ford of Germany's top-of-the-range model at the time. A number of successes, including class wins, were achieved in international rallies in 1969 but it was already clear that the car's greatest potential was as a circuit racer.



In Group 2 racing trim the RS2600's Weslake-developed V6 engine was bored out to 2,995cc and equipped with Kugelfischer fuel injection and dry sump lubrication, in which form it developed in excess of 320bhp. The suspension, brakes and wheels were up-rated appropriately and the bodywork lightened by the extensive use of glassfibre panels. A ZF five-speed gearbox was standard equipment on the racing RS2600. On the racetrack, the RS2600's finest achievement came in 1972 when works driver Jochen Mass, later to enjoy a successful Formula 1 career, was crowned European Touring Car Champion.



Of the 3500 RS2600s built only a handful were track racers. The remarkable time-warp 1973 racing Capri offered here is a real "barn find," having spent the past quarter-century in a Massachusetts lock-up, to which it was consigned when its contemporary racing days were over.

Even though the RS2600 was never officially imported, several racing RS2600s did find their way to the USA and this car has a documented history racing in IMSA's GTU class in the 1970s.

A new 300bhp Chris Gilbert fuel injected Weslake 3 litre V6 is being prepared for the car which also has a new ZF gearbox.

TAYLOR & CRAWLEY