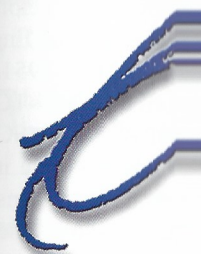



# BIOGRAPHY



Carroll Shelby  
His historic  
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Here, we present  
his colorful life.  
much like Shelby

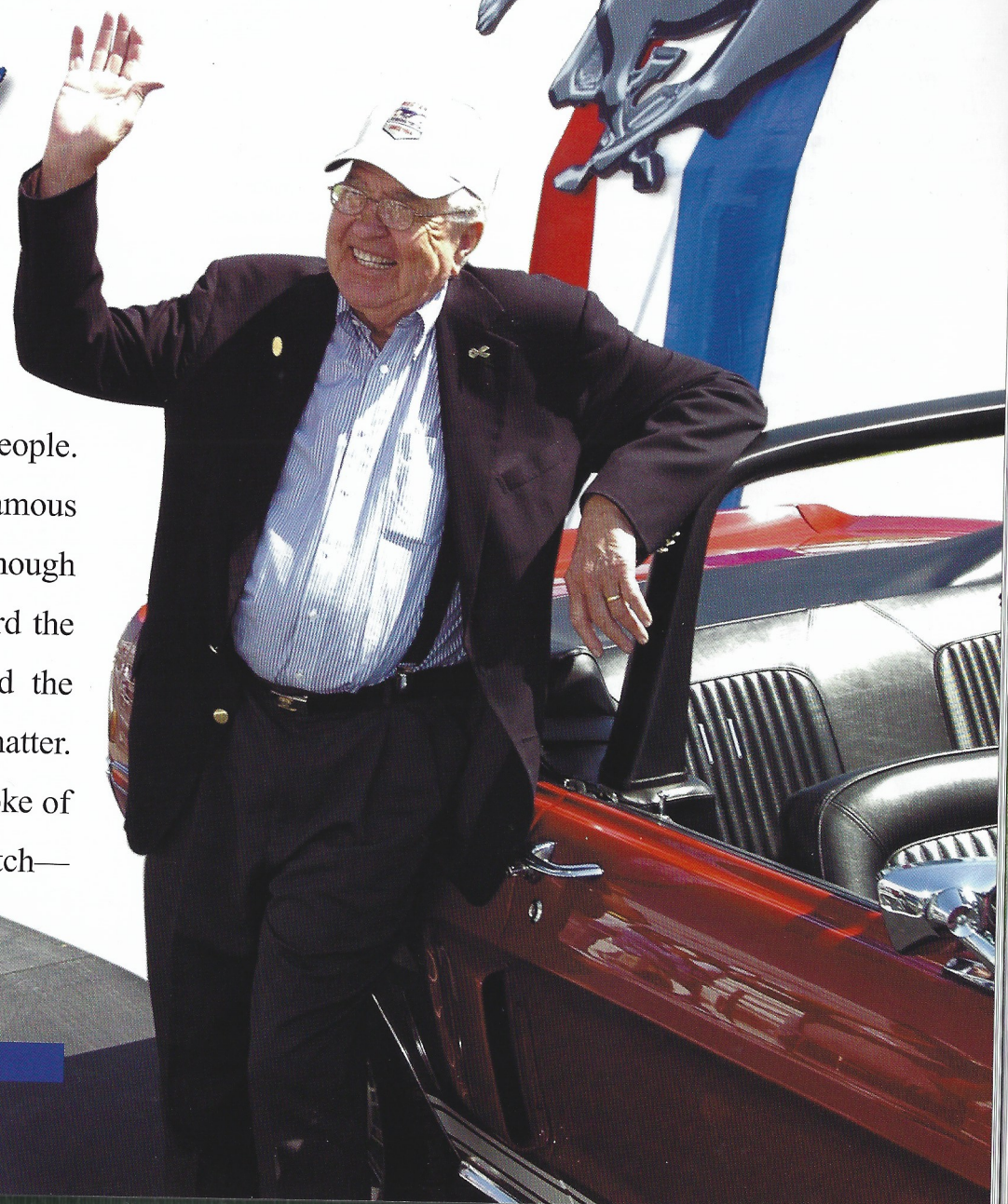
BY



# Carroll Shelby

Carroll Shelby is many things to many people. His history is crowded with famous faces, infamous rivalries, world-class races—and wins—and enough myth-making to make any iconoclast blush. To record the invention and re-invention of Shelby (the man and the image) is best left to yet another book project on the matter. Here, we present, as concisely as possible, a brushstroke of his colorful life. Such a task is not simple by any stretch—much like Shelby himself.

BY GARY WITZENBURG

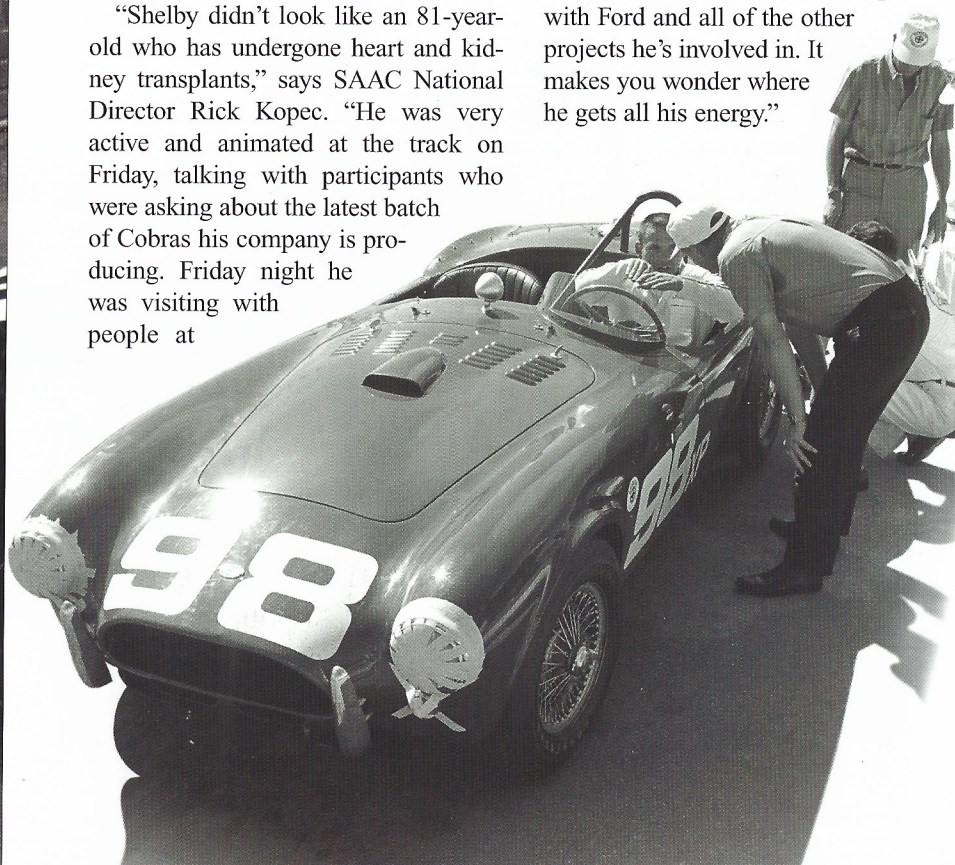


**W**hen we caught up with Carroll Shelby at the April 2004 40th Anniversary Mustang celebration in Nashville, he was looking surprisingly fit and energetic for his 81 years. In July, he was in Detroit for business with Ford and the next two days at Michigan International Speedway for the Shelby American Automobile Club (SAAC) convention. An estimated 500 Shelby Cobras and Mustangs and some 2,000 fans showed up for the annual event despite off-and-on rain and thunder showers.

"Shelby didn't look like an 81-year-old who has undergone heart and kidney transplants," says SAAC National Director Rick Kopec. "He was very active and animated at the track on Friday, talking with participants who were asking about the latest batch of Cobras his company is producing. Friday night he was visiting with people at

the Shelby Art and Literature Show at the Ypsilanti Marriott and later holding court at the bar, surrounded by two dozen attendees who could not believe they were sharing the moment with the guy responsible for their car. Everyone is surprised at how accessible and friendly he is.

"Saturday, he was back at the track, posing for pictures and signing autographs in return for donations to his Carroll Shelby Children's Foundation. Saturday evening, he spoke after dinner, talking about his new relationship with Ford and all of the other projects he's involved in. It makes you wonder where he gets all his energy."



Riverside Times Grand Prix, Riverside, Calif., 1962. Carroll Shelby talks to driver Bill Krause, at the wheel of an early Cobra, before the start of the race.

## THE EARLY YEARS

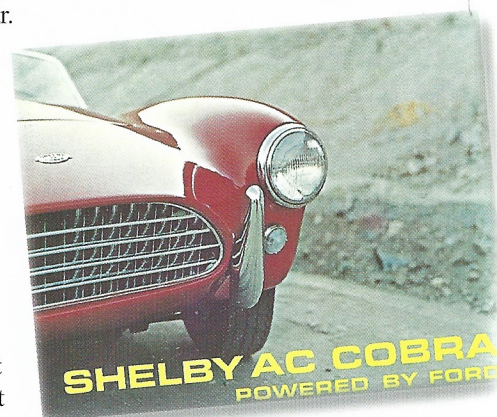
**C**arroll Hall Shelby was described as "hell bent for leather" almost from the day he was born in the East Texas town of Leesburg on Jan. 11, 1923. His postmaster father moved his family to Dallas when Carroll was 7, and two other significant events that same year helped determine the direction of young Carroll's life: he developed a strong interest in cars and racing; and his doctor diagnosed a pain in his chest as a minor heart murmur.

But as he grew into the stereotypically tall, strapping Texan, Shelby seemed to outgrow the heart problem. He married his high-school sweetheart, joined the Army Air Corps as a mechanic, went through flight school, then engineering school, and spent the WW II years flying training missions for bombardiers and navigators, as well as test-flying aircraft after maintenance. He was that adventuresome guy who tested airplanes that were downed for mechanical troubles, making sure their repairs had been completed correctly.

Following the war, he started a concrete delivery business, often driving the trucks himself. It was profitable but not profitable enough. The then-booming oil business in Texas sang its siren song, so he sold out in 1947 to work as an oil-field roughneck and learn the business. Just over a year later, he changed direction again and built a chicken farm north of Dallas.

He made \$5,000 on his first batch of chickens. His second batch died. Life

became a frustrating, back-breaking struggle to keep his chickens alive and his family's heads above water. As a fun distraction from his troubles during this difficult time, Shelby began helping a friend who modified and raced English MG sports cars. In May 1951, he climbed aboard his friend's MG-TC at a Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) meet in Norman, Okla., to drive in his first race. And he won. More wins followed. Soon the 29-year-old Shelby's driving talents were renown throughout the Southwest.



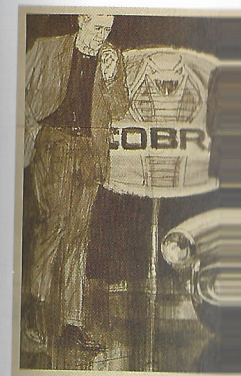
One race day he showed up straight from the farm wearing striped bib overalls. "My chickens all had limberneck," he explains, "and I was goin' broke. I'd been vaccinatin' chickens and had chicken s\*\*\* all over my overalls. But I was runnin' late, so I drove out to the track in 'em. It was hot, 110 degrees, so I decided to leave the overalls on because I thought they'd be cooler to drive in."

When he climbed into the car, people laughed. When he won, a trademark was born. "Everybody giggled and laughed," says Shelby. "Then I won the

race. They ran my p... those overalls. I de... pretty good deal, so

## RACING V

**T**he chicken fa... but Shelby... career as a p... few years b... faster cars and wid... record streak of 1



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race. They ran my picture in the paper in those overalls. I decided, shoot, this is a pretty good deal, so I kept on doing it."

## RACING WITH PAIN

**T**he chicken farm soon went under, but Shelby had earned a new career as a paid driver. The next few years brought more wins, faster cars and wider fame, including a record streak of 19 straight victories

three or four hundred miles long. You'd lose 15 pounds sweating."

This was not a man without courage or determination, nor was he afraid of a little pain. In 1955, he co-drove a Ferrari to second place in the Sebring, Fla., 12-hour enduro with one arm badly broken from an earlier crash. To support the heavy cast, he taped his hand to the steering wheel. In 1956, he

raced the crazed Marque de Portago for an hour in the dark without headlights at Nassau. "We must have run into each other 15 times," he says. "I should

have known better. I should have pulled in. But I just wanted to beat him." And he did, averaging nearly 100 mph. In September 1957, he crashed hard at Riverside, Calif. The doctors repaired his face with plastic surgery and fused three discs in his back. Come November, Shelby returned to Riverside to win.

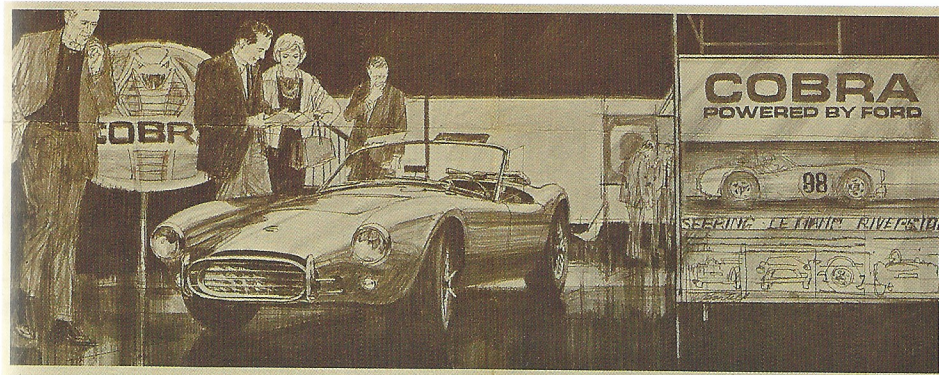
But his heart condition was a different matter. The only way to

beat it was to quit racing.

Still, Shelby drove the entire 1960 season with nitroglycerin pills under his tongue, and he won that year's USAC road-racing championship. Then he resolved to hang up his helmet and pursue an ambition that would spawn a legend.

## COBRA DREAMS

**E**ver since he had started helping his friend with those little MGs back in his chicken farm days, Shelby had nurtured the dream of someday building his own sports car. He thoroughly enjoyed the driving but saw it mostly as a means to that end. One reason he had joined the high-pressure, highly dangerous Formula



and two SCCA National Championships; 1956 and 1957 *Sports Illustrated* Sports Car Driver of the Year; 1958 *New York Times* Sports Car Driver of the Year; and Formula One Grand Prix competitor in Europe and South America. In 1959, Shelby was victorious in the sports car racer's ultimate test—the famous, treacherous and grueling 24 hours of Le Mans.

Then, one morning, the pain in his chest returned. His doctor's diagnosis: angina pectoris, brought on by overexertion. "Lucky I didn't have a heart attack during a race," Shelby says, "because those Grands Prix in the '50s used to be



Cobra publicity included brochures (opposite inset and above) and photographs of Shelby with his cars, like this one taken in Venice, Calif., in 1964. Shelby poses with his new '64 production Cobra (left) and his Cobra race car.

day he showed up  
farm wearing striped  
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Shelby. "Then I won the



One of six 1964 Cobra "Daytona" Coupes built for international GT racing.

One Grand Prix circuit in Europe ("They used to kill four or five drivers a year in those days," he recalls) was to learn about the sports-car-building business.

"I had to drive to make a living," Shelby explains, "but I wanted to go to Europe to see how Ferrari worked, how Maserati, Morgan, Aston Martin and Lotus worked." As early as 1955, he had nearly orchestrated a deal to wed Chevrolet Corvette powertrains to European sports car chassis, but GM

top brass shot it down. The last thing the struggling Corvette needed at the time was another strong competitor.

But he needed serious money to move the car from prototype to production. Shelby knew that Ford Division Vice President Lee Iacocca could open the purse strings for him. Talking the matter over with Advanced Planning Engineer Don Frey, Shelby's strongest supporter at Ford, led to a meeting. And when the tall Texan strode confidently into the vice president's office in his

black cowboy hat and boots, looked him square in the eye and asked for \$25,000 to build a car to "blow off Chevy's Corvette," Iacocca reportedly said, "Give this guy \$25,000 before he bites somebody." The agreement was that Ford would supply engines and development dollars in exchange for "Powered by Ford" badges on the car's front flanks.

Shelby's sleek, powerful Cobra was a hit with the auto press from their first 1962 test drives of his first and only



prototype, which he kept painting different colors to create the impression that there were several cars. Once production was underway, the 260 cid small-block V8 soon grew to a 289, then



Above: The 1967 Cobra Shelby, in both style and performance.

was replaced in mid-1967 by a more powerful 427 cid V8 (later 428s) in an upgraded, more muscular version of the car.

As tested by Shelby's development driver Ken Miles, the Cobra could accelerate from 0 to 60 in less than nine seconds and stop in another five seconds—by 1967 muscle-car standards, top performance.

Bob Bondurant, founder of the Bondurant Performance Driving School, was one of Shelby's first customers. In 1962, he was winning nearly every sponsored Corvette race. "Shelby called and a



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fessional, the 260 cid  
grew to a 289, then



**Above: The 1967 Cobra 427 SC remains quintessentially Shelby, in both style and performance.**

was replaced in mid-1964 by a brutally powerful 427 cid V8 (and some unrelated 428s) in an upgraded, much more muscular version of the car.

As tested by Shelby racer and development driver Ken Miles, a 427 Cobra could accelerate from rest to 100 mph in less than nine seconds, then brake to a stop in another five. Even by 1960s muscle-car standards, that was superlative performance.

Bob Bondurant, founder and president of the Bondurant School of High Performance Driving in Phoenix, was one of Shelby's first and most successful drivers. In 1962, Bondurant was winning nearly every race in a dealer-sponsored Corvette. When the Cobra racer was ready the following year, "Shelby called and asked what I was

doing on such-and-such a day," Bondurant recalls. "I said, 'Nothing.' He said, 'Good. You're driving Ken Miles' Cobra, because I've got him testing. Get on such-and-such a flight, stay at such-and-such a hotel.'"

Bondurant was persuaded by Shelby to drive the Cobra, all the while thinking, "Okay, I'll drive the Cobra and learn its weaknesses, then I'll be back in my Corvette. That's how we'll beat the Cobra." Bondurant won that race, and the next, and the next. He stayed with the Cobra, which won its first SCCA



national class championship in its first season. "The next year," says Bondurant, "we went to Europe and raced there. Gurney and I won [the GT class, finishing fourth overall], at Le Mans and we came within five points of winning the World Manufacturer's Championship.

In 1964, Shelby's racing team built six burly Cobra "Daytona" Coupes designed by former

**Inset and below: Shelby at Le Mans, 1965. In photo below, Shelby stands at the rear of the Ford Mark II prototype of Phil Hill and Chris Amon.**



GM stylist Peter Brock. "Ford sent us back to Europe in '65," Bondurant says. "We won every single race, beat Ferrari and won the Manufacturer's Championship."

"Then I got word that Ferrari wanted to see me, and he asked me to drive for him. I thought, wow, that could be neat! But I knew the seven-liter Ford GTs would be at Le Mans. I called Carroll and asked for his advice. He said, 'We're going to run three races:

Daytona, Sebring and Le Mans. If you're driving for Ferrari, we'll beat you. But you're a race driver. Not many Americans get a chance to race for Ferrari. If you have that chance, you should take it. And run really hard.' So, with Carroll's blessing, I ran for Ferrari in '66. And they did beat us."

That year, a Ford-backed, Shelby-led team of Ford GT40 "prototypes" soundly beat Ferrari at Le Mans. In 1967, they did it again with new Ford GT Mk IVs.



At the Sebring 12-Hour Race, 1966. Dan Gurney (left) and Shelby talk during a nighttime pit stop.



Ford's Don Frey (left) and Shelby at the end of the 24 Hours of Le Mans, 1967.

Bondurant adds that he liked Shelby and learned "a ton" from him, including marketing, public relations and how to attract and care for sponsors. "I got along great with him and really enjoyed racing for him," Bondurant says. "He was a race driver and ran the team like a driver would, and he did a great job. He helped me get where I am today, and we're still very good friends."

"Also, one year when Pete Brock was running his Carroll Shelby School of High Performance Driving, Pete was going on vacation, so Carroll said, 'You're going to teach.' I said, 'I never taught before.' He said, 'just tell 'em what you do.' I said, 'I don't know what I do, I just do it.' I ran the school for a week, and he claims that was the reason I started my school."

Legendary fabricator and car builder Phil Remington, Shelby's chief engineer and one of his first two employees, also speaks fondly of his former boss: "He told us what he wanted, what the end

result was supposed to be," he recalls, "then ... left us alone. Once in a while he'd stick his nose in, but by and large he left it up to us to take care of everything."

Just 1,003 early Cobras were built between 1963 and 1967—75 with the 260 cid engine, 580 with the 289 engine and 348 with the mighty 427 (and 428) cid big-blocks, including race cars, prototypes and a few bare chassis. Today, 37 years later, good examples of these legendary sports cars, especially the big-blocks, can bring mid-six figures.

## SHELBY MUSTANGS

Two years after the Cobra's creation, Iacocca asked Shelby to make a serious sports car out of Ford's sporty but tame new Mustang. The result was another legend, the Shelby GT350. Like the Cobras, GT350s were raced almost from the day they went on sale in

January 1965, and cousins in domineering SCCA classes. Most block GT500 models in 1967, and a total of 1,000 Mustang-based Shelby Mustangs, including prototypes. Depending on year of production, some of these cars cost as much as \$100,000.

Shelby quit the car business in fall 1967, when he sold his California Cobra Mustang production company in Michigan. He spent the rest of his life concentrating on other investments: wheeling deals, planes, chili. Chili?

"A partner and I had a place on the Mexican border. We had a couple hundred thousand dollars in the bank."



Above: Shelby poses with a 1967 for a story in *Ford* magazine in 1967.



of Le Mans, 1967.

supposed to be," he recalls, "I left it up to you. I was supposed to be, but by and large he was supposed to take care of everything." 1963 early Cobras were built between 1963 and 1967-75 with the 289 engine, 580 with the 289 engine with the mighty 427 (and 428) blocks, including race cars, produced a few bare chassis. Today, after, good examples of these sports cars, especially the can bring mid-six figures.

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January 1965, and joined their Cobra cousins in dominating their respective SCCA classes. More powerful big-block GT500 models were added in 1967, and a total of 13,769 1965-70 Mustang-based Shelybs were built, including prototypes and race cars. Depending on year, model and condition, some of these can bring as much as \$100,000.

Shelby quit the car-building business in fall 1967, when he closed his California Cobra line and Shelby Mustang production moved to Michigan. He spent the next decade concentrating on other businesses and investments: wheels, real estate, airplanes, chili. Chili?

"A partner and I had a ranch down by the Mexican border in West Texas, a couple hundred thousand acres," he



says, "and we couldn't sell it. I called a friend named Tom Tierney, an ex-Ford PR man and quite a promoter. I said, 'I've got this ol' ranch that's 200,000



Above: Shelby poses atop the hood of his GT500 and the celebrated Cobra sport car in 1967 for a story in *Ford Times*. Top: Shelby looks on during tire tests at Goodyear's test track in 1967.

acres of rocks. How are we going to sell it?' Tom called back in a couple weeks. 'We're going to have the world's championship chili cook-off.'"

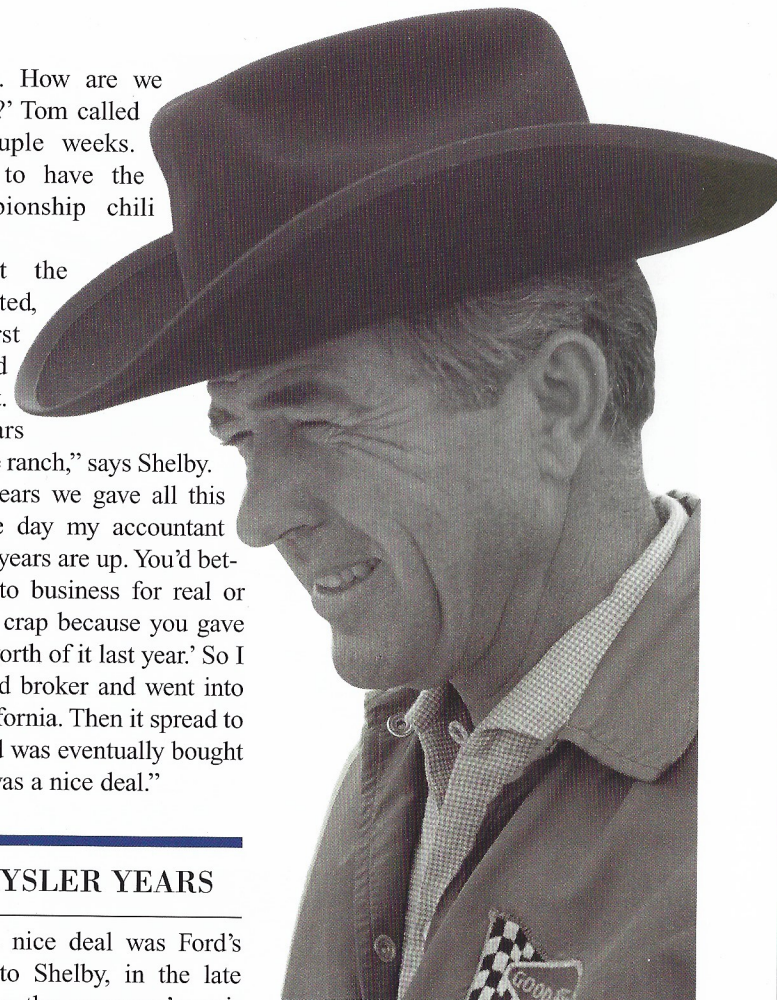
Tierney got the press interested, and the first cook-off started an annual event. "A couple years later we sold the ranch," says Shelby. "But for five years we gave all this chili away. One day my accountant said, 'Your five years are up. You'd better either go into business for real or forget this chili crap because you gave away \$35,000 worth of it last year.' So I found me a food broker and went into business in California. Then it spread to the 50 states and was eventually bought by Kraft. That was a nice deal."

## THE CHRYSLER YEARS

Not such a nice deal was Ford's response to Shelby, in the late '70s, when the company's revitalized performance plans didn't include him. "They hired Jackie Stewart. That kind of ticked me off, because I'd been loyal to them all through the '70s and hadn't gotten a thing out of it."

It was late 1979 when Iacocca—who had risen to the Ford presidency only to be fired by Henry Ford II, then had resurfaced as chairman of a sickly Chrysler Corp.—called Shelby. Once Iacocca, a man with a good memory, had Chrysler turned around and pointed

in a profitable direction, next priority was an agreement with Shelby to develop performance parts and some high-image versions of certain Dodge-brand cars. That partnership was announced in September 1982, and out of it came the Chrysler-Shelby Development Center in Sante Fe Springs, Calif., which worked on suspension development, multi-valve cylinder heads for future engines, high-performance four-wheel drive and other engineering projects.



"Iacocca was the guy who always took care of me," Shelby says now. "He sent John Fernandez to work with me, and we built those four-cylinder pocket rockets [the Dodge Shelby Charger in 1983, Omni GLH in '84, GLHS and a Shelby Daytona Z dealer package in '86, and a Shelby Lancer in '87]. We thought we'd sell 3,000, then sold 7,500 the first year.

*"But the big thing at Chrysler was the Viper. After Bob Lutz arrived, he and I sat down one day and decided to build it. I wanted to build it with a supercharged V8. He wanted a V10. He won.*

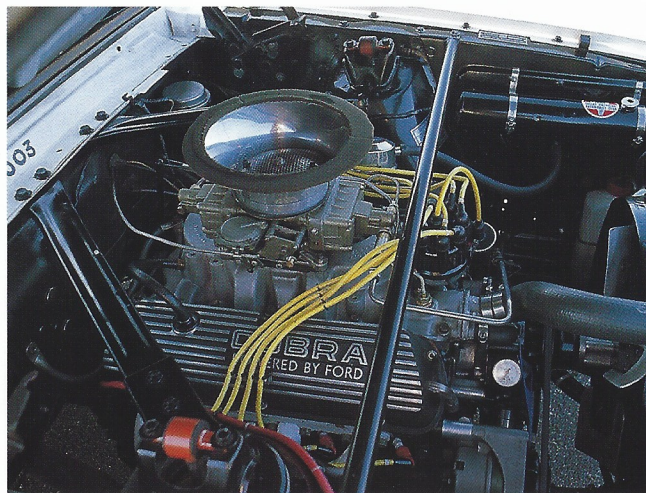
I built a prototype with John Fernandez, then they decided to take it in-house. I had to have a heart transplant about that time, so I wasn't really a big part of the Viper after that. My job was to keep Iacocca from killing it, to



This 1965 GT350-R fastback is one of three of the first race car prototypes. Jerry Titus raced it at Riverside in February 1965, and it became a test car at the Carroll Shelby School for High Performance Driving.



Shelby was serious about his custom builds. The padded rollbar (left) of the GT350-R (the "R" designated for "racing") was also seen in production GT350 models. The 289 powerplant (right) put out 350 hp at 5400 rpm, accelerating the lighter-weight model from 0 to 60 mph in 5.2 seconds.



keep him posted that we weren't spending too much money until we got into it far enough that he couldn't say no."

## SHELBY SERIES I

When Iacocca left Chrysler, it was time for me to leave," says Shelby. "I had known [newly appointed Oldsmobile General Manager and GM VP] John Rock for some time, and I went to him and said, 'We ought to build a sports car.' He said, 'I agree.' We started off very well, had orders for the car, and it was coming along. Suddenly, I got a call from John Rock. He had been fired. That was



doomsday for me. But I didn't deal with General Motors. One of those companies is somebody who throws you out of the vest around you.

"The Series I was a great-handling car, a supercharged four-liter [Chrysler Northstar] V8 engine, a 100-hp [0-60 mph] car. It went into bankruptcy. It left me, and I had to own. We struggled with 248 of them. There would have done di

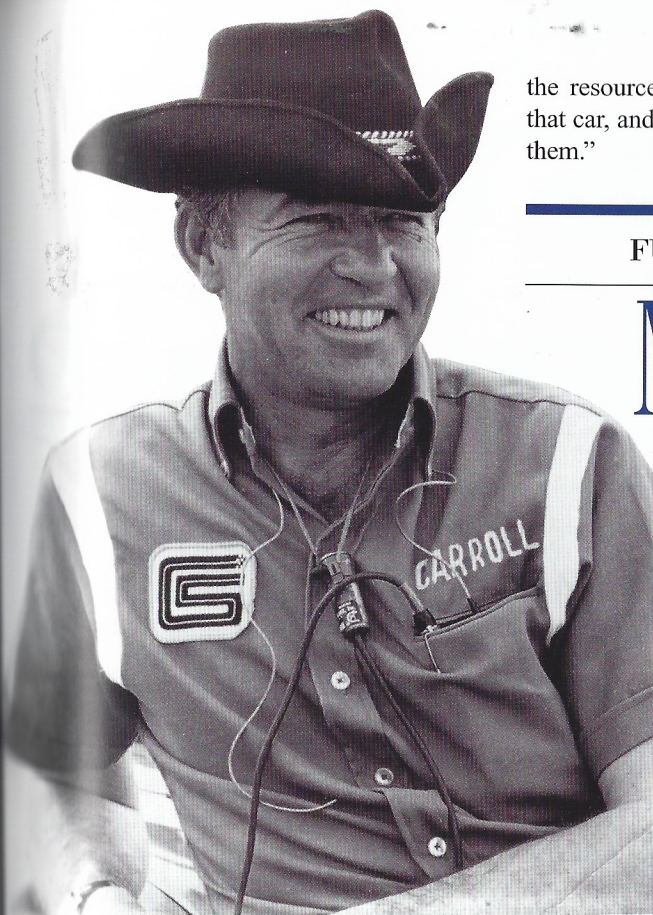


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## BY SERIES I

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the resources, but I'm damn proud of that car, and so are the people who own them."

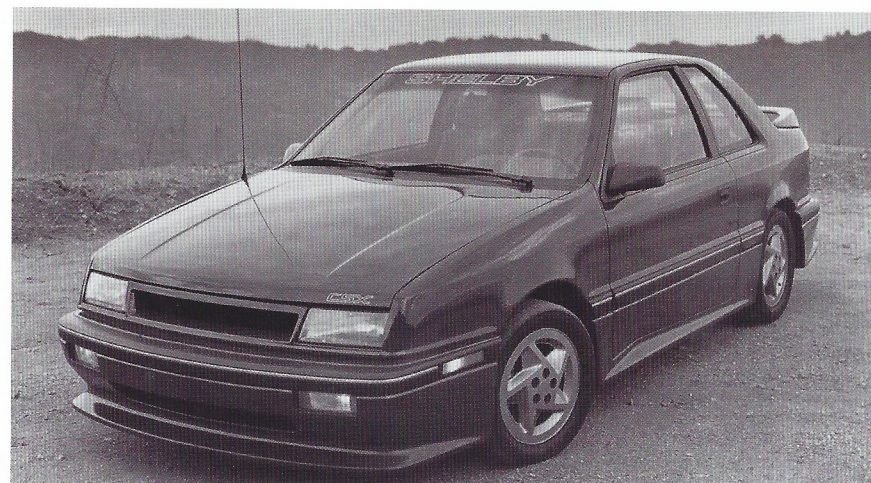
## FULL CIRCLE

**N**In 1991, Shelby American began building a run of "completion" Cobras using serial numbers registered but never used in 1965. "We were building two to three a week in Las Vegas," he says. "I took that over and settled our legal problems [over the Cobra name] with Ford. The trademarks were mine, but I had to get that straightened out. Thank God it is now, because I'm back with Ford and have a great relationship with Billy Ford and Edsel and the people there."

doomsday for me. Back then, you couldn't deal with General Motors—with any of those companies—unless you had somebody who threw a bullet-proof vest around you.

"The Series I was a fabulous car, a great-handling car, and with the supercharged four-liter [de-stroked Cadillac Northstar] V8 engine, it was a 3.3-second [0-60 mph] car. I had a partner who went into bankruptcy after Oldsmobile left me, and I had to finish it on my own. We struggled through that, built 248 of them. There are a lot of things I would have done differently if I'd had

What is his biggest accomplishment? "I've got three damn good kids, and a bunch of good grandkids." He chuckles over this very non-automotive answer. "That's what I'm proudest of." Shelby has been married to his sixth wife, Cleo, for eight years. His first marriage produced three children, Sharon, Michael and Patrick. "Pat's chairman of a bank. Michael is very successful in the oil and gas business." And there are six Shelby grandkids. "Got my first great grandchild the other day, Pierce Shelby, by Patrick's son, Aaron," he adds.



Shelby's working relationship with Chrysler included special 1989 models—the CSX (top) with turbocharger and a Shelby version of the Dodge Dakota (bottom) with 318 cubic-inch 5.2-liter V8.

*"But the Cobra has to be the highlight of my career. I never expected it to be what it has been. I love the Series I, and I've built a prototype of a concept that I think will be as radical as the Cobra was."*

His biggest mistake? "Oh, I've made so many of those. At one time, I was offered the Toyota distributorship for the Southwestern states. I gave it to a friend of mine, who's made a billion

dollars out of it. That's probably the biggest financial mistake." But Shelby doesn't put much value in hindsight when it comes to worrying about the past. "Everything's turned out very well for me.

"As far as the Cobra is concerned, the biggest blunder I ever pulled is not jumping on these replica car guys very early. Since I had a heart transplant and a kidney transplant, I asked them to

give my children's foundation \$1,000 a car," but, says Shelby, the request has rudely gone unheeded. "But when you're dealing with people not smart enough to build their own cars, they're going to steal from you. So I build four Cobras a week myself now, four different models—289, 289 FIA, 427 and Daytona Coupe—and it's a pretty good little business."

Who are the best people he's worked with? "Let me give you a short list: Phil Remington (he's a genius, he could make anything); Al Dowd (he coordinated all the racing activities); Homer Perry (the greatest guy I ever worked with inside a company, he coordinated everything with Ford running at Le Mans in '66 and '67); Lee Iacocca (he put a vest around me and helped me make it work); Ray Geddes (a Ford lawyer and bean counter who came out and worked on my program); Carroll Smith; and Henry Ford II.

"The only way '66 and '67 [Ford's hugely successful racing seasons] ever worked was because Henry Ford said he

wanted it done. In September 1965, after the cars blew up at Le Mans, he called Don Frey, Leo Beebe and I in and said, 'Is that the best we can do?' He had name tags for the three of us that said, 'Ford wins Le Mans in 1966.'

Frey said, 'What are our fiscal restrictions?' Ford said, 'You boys would like a job next June, wouldn't you?' It was an unlimited budget. There'll never be another one, and there'll never be another Henry Ford.

"There are a lot more. I hope they'll forgive me for not mentioning all of them."

The best drivers? "Oh, there are so many. I had so much respect for Ken Miles. The Cobra never would have been what it was without Ken. Dave MacDonald would have been one of the most brilliant drivers ever if he hadn't gotten killed at Indy. Bob Bondurant was a great driver. When you've had those guys, and A.J. Foyt, Dan Gurney, Lloyd Ruby ... [with] that class of people driving for you, you

can't pick one over another."



ship, and I consider him a good friend. He comes to the conventions, poses for pictures and signs autographs, and he has an excellent

## AGELESS WONDER

Shelby attended SAAC's first convention in Oakland, Calif., in 1975 and has made almost every other one since. "We got involved with him more and more over the years," Kopec says. "He was starting to get inundated with questions about the cars that he couldn't answer. Somebody would write an article saying, 'Shelby put this cam in the car,' and people [thought of] Carroll Shelby with his sleeves rolled up working on the cars." Shelby is the first to set the record straight on such misconceptions, that, for instance, he didn't do the wrenching—he paid people to do it.

"So he would contact us, and we were happy to answer those questions," says Kopec. "Now it's a really nice relation-

memory for people. Somebody will go up to him asking for his autograph, really nervous, and say something like, 'My car's not here because it's got an oil leak.' Two years later, he'll meet the same guy and say, 'Did you get that oil leak fixed?'

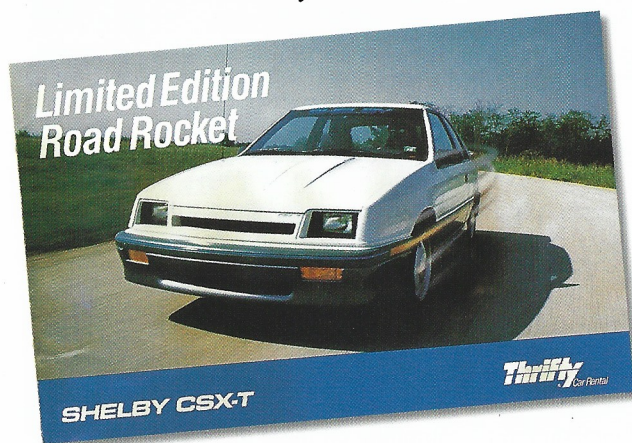
"He had a heart transplant in 1990, then a kidney transplant—donated by his son, Mike—in 1996. When someone gets a heart transplant, some say it's a gift. But it's also hard work. You really have to want to continue living to make it work, and you have to work hard at it every day. He speaks to a lot of doctors and reads professional newsletters. He takes 55 different medications a day, because his immune system is depressed, and he's always juggling his medications and willing to try different things. The average [life expectancy] after a heart transplant is something like five years, so he's way outside the envelope at 14 years.

"I think that's why of the patience he uses on certain projects that he's done, some are long-term, so he's trying to continue at

Today, Shelby's Carroll Shelby International parent company for Licensing (Shelby apparel, video games, motive parts, die cast and Shelby Automobiles) manufactures "continuation" Vegas. In addition, Gardena, Calif., but Ford 427 engines, and any called Engine Technology on a "revolutionary" to run on alternative

Feeling grateful a heart transplant, Shelby

**Opposite:** Shelby and J. Mustang's 40th anniversary. **Above right:** Shelby at the Ford Shelby Cobra January 2004 North American International Auto Show. **Cobra influence is seen Shelby GR-1 concept.**



The Shelby Chrysler CSX-T was rented to Thrifty Car Rental customers in 1988.

consider him a good friend. comes to the conventions, es for pictures and signs autographs, and he has an excellent



memory for people. ill go up to him asking for n, really nervous, and say like, 'My car's not here got an oil leak.' Two years eet the same guy and say, hat oil leak fixed?"

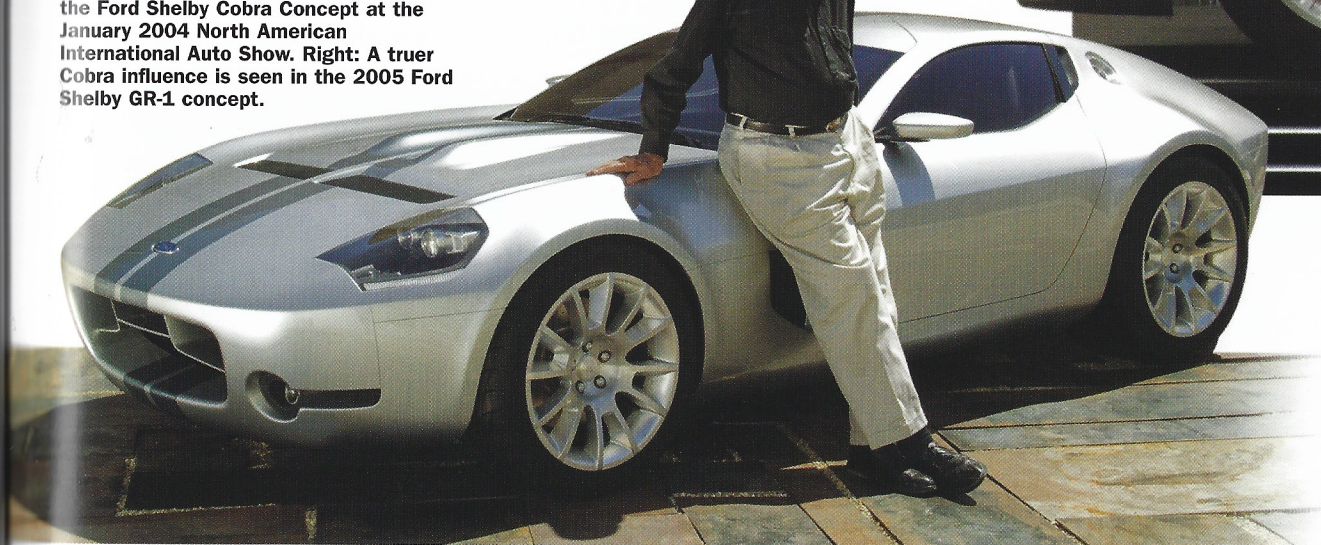
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"I think that's why he's losing some of the patience he used to have. He has certain projects that he wants to get done, some are long-term, and he realizes he's not going to be around for the long term, so he's trying to set things up so they'll continue after he's gone."

Today, Shelby's businesses include Carroll Shelby International, Inc., the parent company for Carroll Shelby Licensing (Shelby and Cobra logos, apparel, video games, car alarms, automotive parts, die cast models, posters) and Shelby Automobiles, which manufactures "continuation" Cobras in Las Vegas. In addition, Shelby Engines in Gardena, Calif., builds special-order Ford 427 engines, and a Shelby company called Engine Technologies is working on a "revolutionary type of engine" to run on alternative fuels.

Feeling grateful after his successful heart transplant, Shelby launched his

**Opposite: Shelby and John Force at Mustang's 40th anniversary celebration. Above right: Shelby at the introduction of the Ford Shelby Cobra Concept at the January 2004 North American International Auto Show. Right: A truer Cobra influence is seen in the 2005 Ford Shelby GR-1 concept.**



Carroll Shelby Children's Foundation in 1991 to fund transplants for indigent children around the world. He was inducted into the Talladega, Ala., International Motorsports Hall of Fame that same year and into the Novi, Mich., Motorsports Hall of Fame of America in 1992. In 2003, he received a prestigious Robert E. Petersen Lifetime Achievement Award. And, at Detroit's January 2004, North American International Auto Show, he and Ford CEO William Clay Ford Jr. (great grandson of founder Henry) unveiled a 605hp, 6.4-liter V10-powered Shelby Cobra Concept sports car that could reach production. If some version should one day, what a fitting tribute!

Kopec relates that former Shelby driver Lew Spencer once said of Shelby: "He's got something—call it charisma or snake oil or something—but if you put him at one end of a basketball court and 20 people at



the other end, and none of them know who he is, within 15 minutes all 20 will be at his end."

Shelby just shrugs. "I'd do a lot of things different if I had to do it all over," he says with a grin. "I'm just lucky to be here at 81 years old. I'm thankful every morning when I wake up." **AO**