

# SNAKESKIN

## Cobra Car Club of WA Newsletter

2004 Edition January

Volume 3

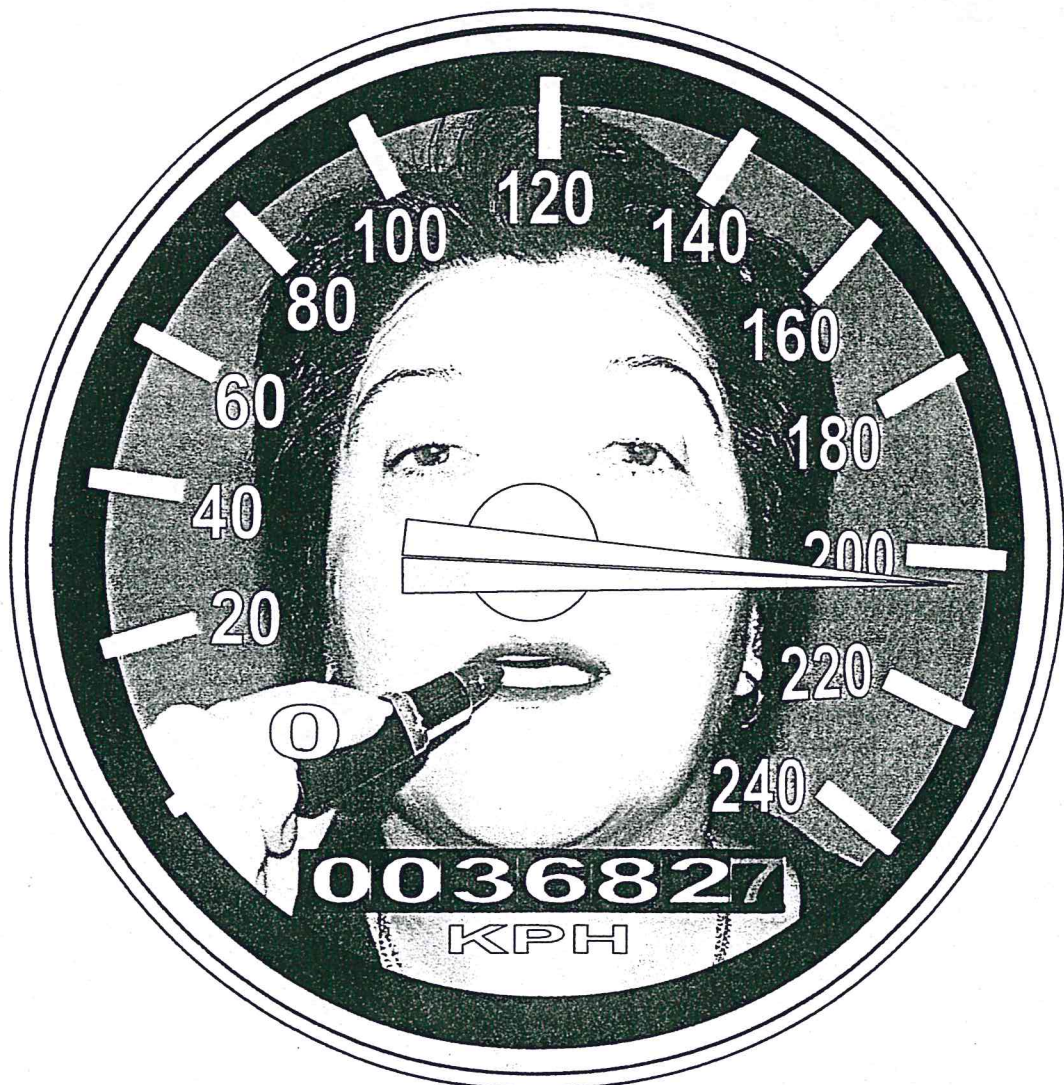
### **FORD SHOWS NEW COBRA AT DETROIT**

Page 4

### **THE MISSING DAYTONA COBRA**

Page 3

Dual purpose Cobra speedo...mirror backed for the ladies.





## CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST AND COASTAL RUN

Sunday 14 December—Christmas Breakfast at “Beach Street Café”, Fremantle—a small café opposite the Rottne Island Ferry Station overlooking the Swan River with about 25-30 members attending. The morning had its usual friendly and jovial atmosphere as we all chatted and enjoyed a variety of breakfasts. The Beach Street Café was an extremely busy place with miss matched chairs and tables, typical of a roadside diner that also catered for a large crowd of Rottne Island ferry passengers on the foot path out front—would be a nice breakfast place to visit on the day of a normal club run but I believe not a suitable venue for the annual Christmas get together as it is a shorts and thongs venue.



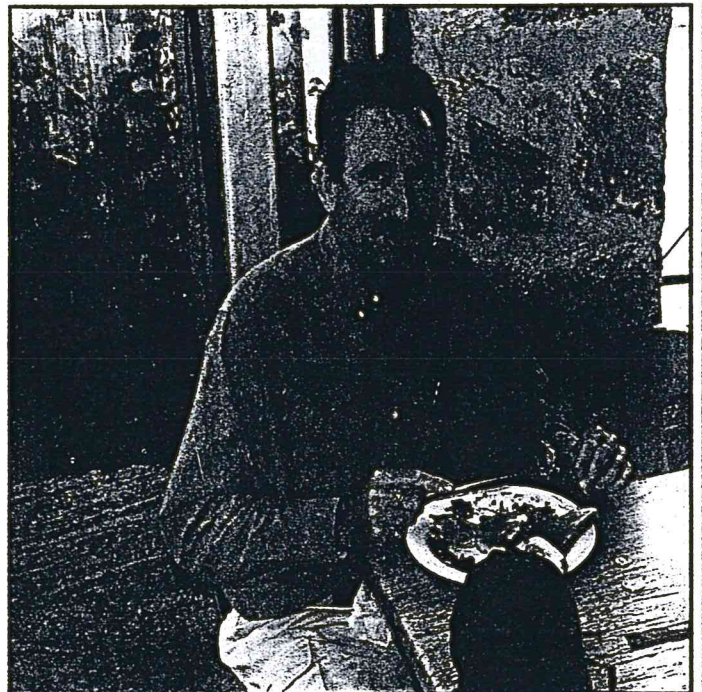
**Members breakfast at Beach Street Café—Fremantle**

With breakfast out of the way, the run up the coast started with 8 cobras and one sedan, leader was Ron McNally. Firstly a drive through Fremantle and down to the E-Shed market area then over the bridge and out to the coast road for a scenic cruise through Cottesloe, City Beach and on to a Scarborough carpark for a short chat, then over to a service station for emergency fuel rations for those low on fuel.

We regrouped in front of Observation City on West Coast Highway and continued our cruise to Trigg Island where we were joined with Rob Payne in his cobra—now we had a convoy of 9 cobras and one sedan.

The road from Trigg Island going north through North Beach, Watermans and Sorrento is one of my favourite pieces of road. The scenery was magnificent - to look out over the Indian Ocean as we wind our way north, also being “tail-end Charlie” in the sedan and following 9 colourful cobras snaking their way along this section of West Coast Highway was a very pleasant bonus—what a site on a beautiful Sunday morning—it doesn’t get any better than that.

Cont: page 7



**Secretary Rob Payne finally got his breakfast**



## THE MISSING COUPE

**In the case of CSX2287 truth is, indeed, stranger than fiction.**

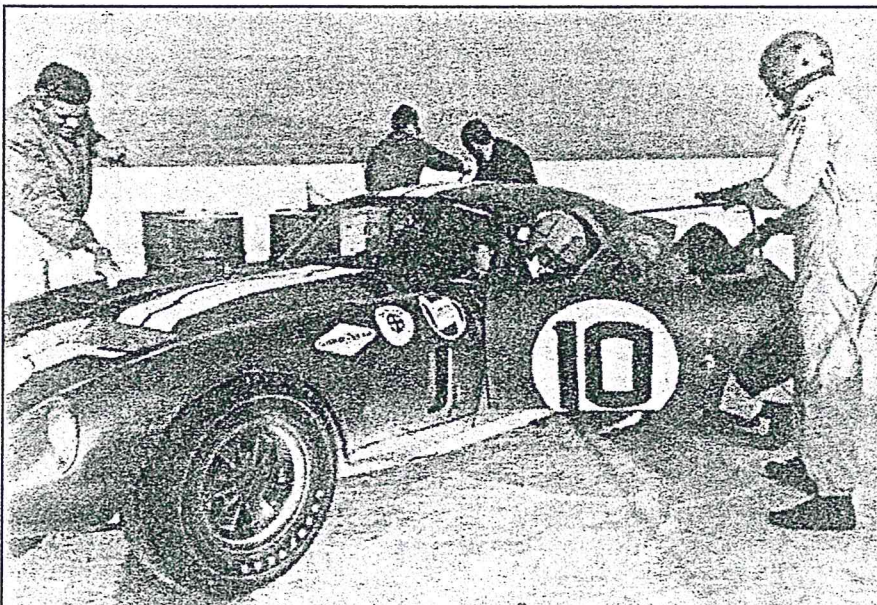
*The following article appeared in SAAC's magazine, The Shelby American, accompanied by 15 photos. It is typical of the type of articles the club's magazine has become famous for. More research and attention to detail go into them than you will find in any other Shelby or Cobra related article printed anywhere else.*

The first Cobra Daytona Coupe has always been something of a mystery ever since it dropped out of sight some time in the early 1970s. The combination of it's being the first Coupe built, the only one built in the U.S., the first Coupe to win a race, and the car in the now famous Daytona pit fire (photos of which were splashed everywhere after it happened in February of 1964) has established CSX2287 as arguably the most valuable of the six. The fact that it has been hidden away for the past 30-odd years by a female owner who has, at times, been described as a paranoid, a recluse, an eccentric and a "kook" by Carroll Shelby himself has only added to the car's mystique.

The six Daytona Coupes are at the pinnacle of the Cobra value pyramid, and as prices rose through the 1980s and into the 1990s, to the point where they were changing hands in million dollar territory, a number of people went to a great deal of effort to find "Mrs. John O'Hara," last known to be somewhere in southern California. Often that was all they had to go on. Their goal, of course, was to convince her to sell her car to them and, as it turns out, none were successful. In fact, only a handful of people were ever able to actually talk to her - and in almost 30 years, only a two or three ever got to see the car. Keep in mind that those searching for it were enthusiasts who, when it came to Cobras, could turn one up by interviewing patients in an Alzheimer's ward. Most were extremely tight-lipped with any information they did manage to discover, believing that the fewer who knew anything about either Mrs. O'Hara or her car, the better their chances would be if she decided to sell it. Trouble was, Mrs. O'Hara didn't want to be found, and when she was she didn't want to discuss her car. So what little information turned up was never telegraphed around the Cobra world. She remained an enigma and the car remained out of sight.

The Shelby American World Registry probably carried as much basic information on CSX2287 as any other source, with the exception of Peter Brock's book, Daytona Cobra Coupes. Brock related the car's early history in painstaking detail. It was completed at AC Cars as chassis-only and air-freighted to Shelby American in Venice in November of 1963. The target for completion, some three months later, was the Daytona Continental, a 2000km FIA-sanctioned endurance race. The chassis was immediately modified and Brock constructed a body buck constructed from his drawings from 3/4" plywood. It was used as a pattern for the body panels which were hand formed at Cal Metal Shaping, a specialty shop in Los Angeles. The individual pieces were then brought back to Shelby American where they were welded into a seamless coupe body. Once the car was completed it was tested at Riverside by Ken Miles and right off the trailer it proved to be faster than the Cobra roadsters. Finally it was painted Viking Blue and just barely prepped in time for Daytona, the first FIA race of the 1964 season. That race accounted for the car's name. The slippery coupe body proved its worth. Cobra team drivers Bob Holbert and Dave MacDonald had the car out in front after 7 hours when a freak fire during a pit stop, caused when gasoline splashed onto the overheated rear end and hot brake rotors, put the car out of the race. In hindsight, team mechanics thought they could have gotten it running again in less than a half hour but when Shelby withdrew the car all discussion ended. A month later, at Sebring, it finished 1st in class and 4th overall. It was then sent overseas where it was entered, with a team of Cobra FIA competition roadsters, at Spa, Le Mans, Rheims, Goodwood and in the Tour de France.

CSX2287 was shipped back to Shelby American, gone through mechanically, and painted the 1965 team colours - Guardsman Blue with a pair of wide white stripes. It's only race that year was Le Mans, where it failed to finish. The car was returned to Shelby American, cleaned up, given a fresh coat of paint, and put on display at various car shows. When it came back to Shelby American it languished, now an obsolete race car which overnight had lost its lustre - and its value. It was photographed with the Cobra Caravan but was not the Coupe that went out on the tour. It was also used for testing at Ford's track in Dearborn. And it was sent to Bonneville in November of 1965 where Craig Breedlove used it to set 23 national and international speed records. But rather than an all-out assault, it was actually intended as little more than a prop. Goodyear's



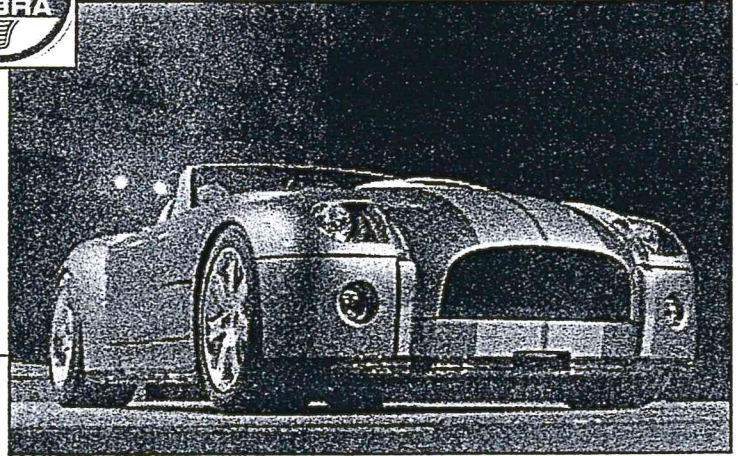
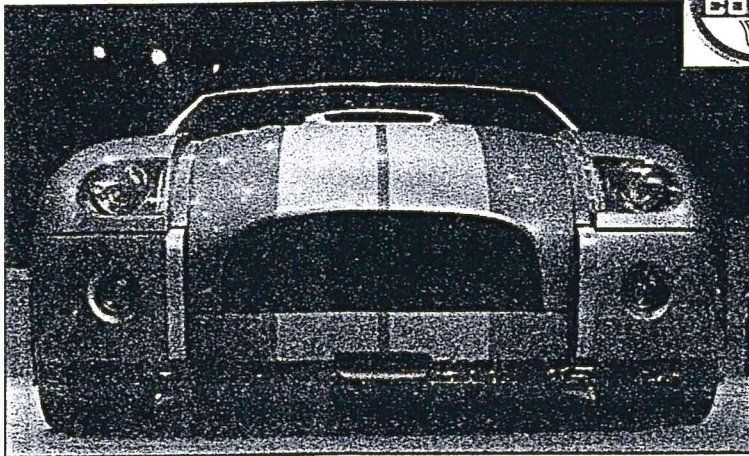
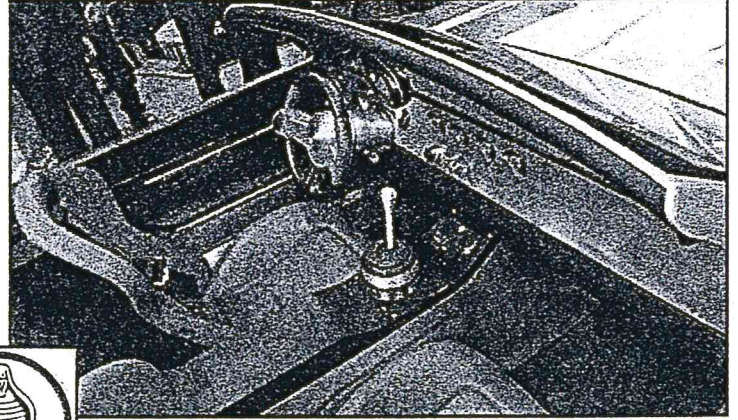
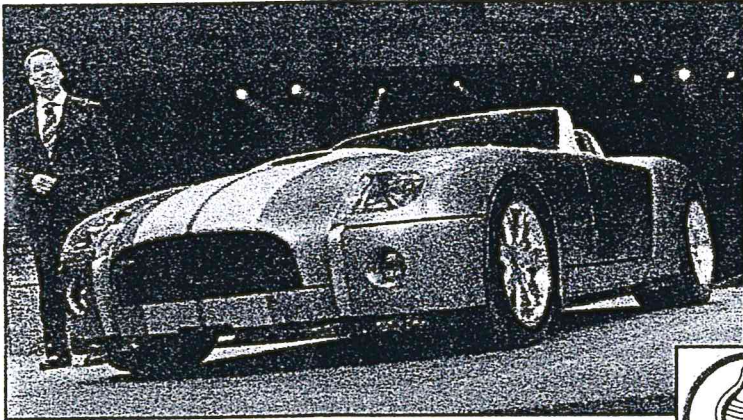
*The in's and out's of 23 endurance records in a Ford Daytona Coupe. Out goes Bob Tatroe and in goes Craig Breedlove during 150.94 mph, 12-hour, 1,862-mile enduro.*

intended as little more than a prop. Goodyear's Tony Webner asked Shelby for the use of a Daytona Coupe as a favour (an accommodation to Goodyear that Shelby was only too happy to make) because Goodyear had reserved the salt for a period of time so Craig Breedlove could make an attempt on the world land speed record in his "Spirit Of America," a three-wheeled, jet-powered vehicle. Bobby Tatroe was also there, attempting to set a record with his rocket-powered "Wingfoot Express." USAC rules required continuous use of the salt for the time a competitor had reserved it. Inactivity was penalized by giving the time to the next person on the list. Breedlove's car was experiencing major propulsion problems and if he didn't make use of the course his time slot would go to arch-rival Art Arfons - who was sponsored by Firestone. If he lost his spot on the salt, Breedlove was afraid that by the time he was able to get back on the schedule the weather would turn bad and if Arfons' "Green Monster" set a new record ahead of him, it would last for the rest of the year - and so would all the publicity it would generate. So the attempt to set endurance records with the Cobra Daytona Coupe (some of which had been on the books since the 1930s) was really little more than a diversion by Goodyear to keep Firestone from getting publicity on the land speed record front. The only Coupe available when Webner's call came in was CSX2287. Shelby told Webner he would make the car available



# DETROIT MOTOR SHOW NEWS

## THE NEW FORD SHELBY COBRA CONCEPT CAR



### A New Legend is Born

**"As the saying goes, too much power is almost enough."**

So thought Carroll Shelby when he shoe-horned a 427 cubic inch Ford V-8 under the hood of a small British roadster, giving birth to the legendary 427 Cobra.

Four decades later, Ford's Advanced Product Creation team – an in-house think-tank *cum* skunk works – explored the idea of applying Shelby's famous formula to the latest components and architectures Ford has to offer. The result is the Ford Shelby Cobra concept, a radical new roadster, fully engineered for high-speed testing, completed in just five months by a small, tightly focused team of enthusiasts.

This production-feasible roadster has a 427-inspired 605-horsepower, all-aluminium V-10 engine mounted at the front of an advanced aluminium chassis modified from the rear-engine Ford GT.

It weighs slightly more than 3,000 pounds and is about as long as a Mazda MX5. There's no roof, no side glass, not even a radio. "That's the formula," said Carroll Shelby. "It's a massive motor in a tiny, lightweight car."

Shelby first installed the Ford "side-oiler" 427 engine in the Cobra in October 1963, but the combination of this powerful engine and the rear leaf-spring suspension made the car treacherous to drive. Ford helped Shelby completely redesign the chassis, including an all-new coil-spring rear suspension, and by January 1965, Shelby introduced the production 427 Cobra – the car many enthusiasts herald as the ultimate street-legal racer.

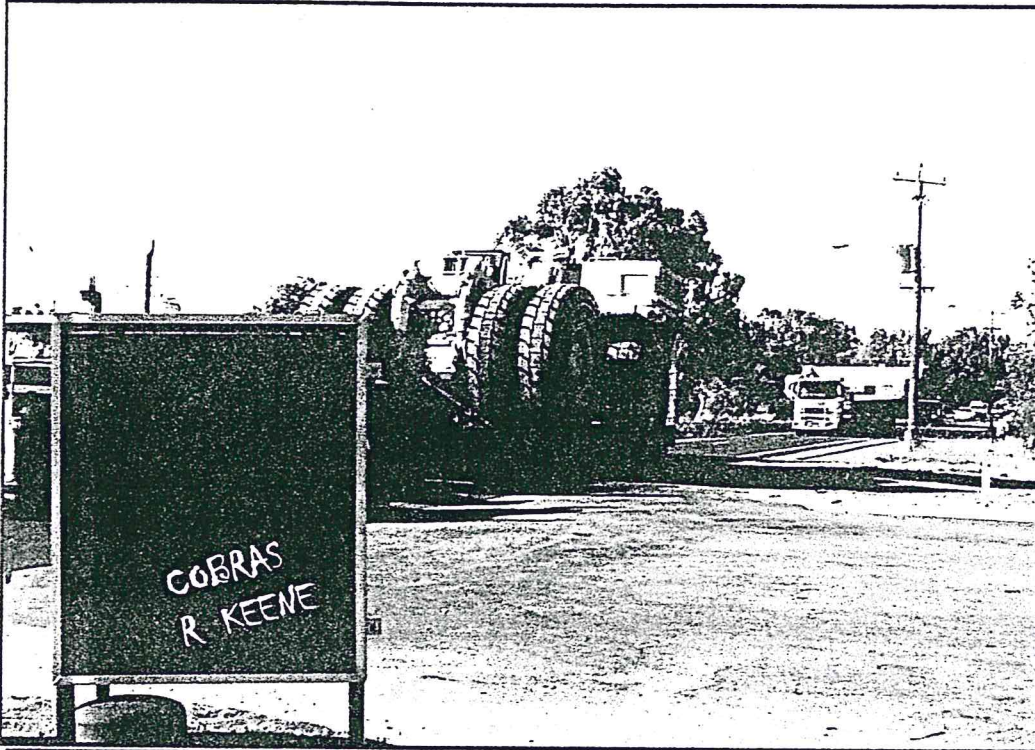
"Our original objective was to build a sports car that would outrun Corvette," Shelby said. "I never dreamed it would become the icon that it did."



# A HOT TRIP TO MOORE RIVER

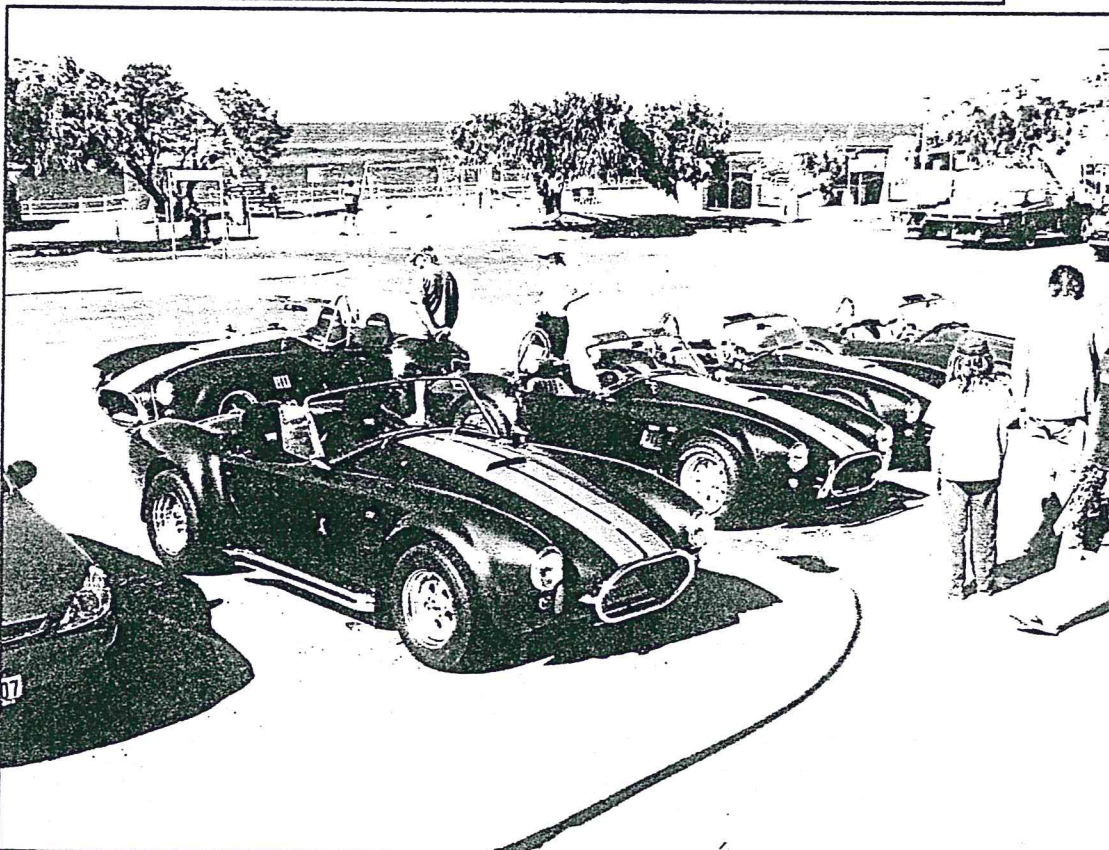
Harry Mac

Sunday 6:50am 11 January 2004, Brian Plank picked me up and we headed for Ginger's Road House on the Great Northern Highway arriving about 7.15am. There were already a lot of Cobras at Gingers when we got there. Ron McNally, Murray Neindorf, Keith Ennis, Rob Keene, Rob Payne, Carl Balling with visiting Crosby Vickers, Dave Bennie, Gordon Scott, Brian Plank, Dave and Jessie Kent and Brian Sizer. After a short chat we were about to leave and head north when a convoy of low loaders went past carrying loads that used up both sides of the road so the decision was made to go back to Gnangara Road up Wanneroo Road and through Yanchep.



Above: *The reason for the change of plans*

Rob Keene and Keith Ennis headed home as they only came to Gingers to say "Hello" and have a chat. Just before the Yanchep turn off Murray Neindorf had pulled over as he was losing too much water from the radiator and on a day where the temperature was forecast at 39 degrees, Murray decided not to risk it and headed back—the rest of us continued to Guilderton. Moore River was a picturesque sight with the morning sun on it and the place was very busy with holiday makers, but we all got



Above: *View from the Moore River Café with river and ocean in the background.*

parking out front of the café—just lucky! I enjoyed a tasty breakfast of bacon, eggs, sausages and beans while sitting outside taking in the sites of the river and ocean, also all the young ladies in bathers that came to the shop and gaze upon the Cobras on display. One comment overhead from one your lady—"that blue one is totally awesome sick eye" - I think it was a compliment but I don't know which blue on she was referring to because there were 4 blue cobras on the run.....Page 12



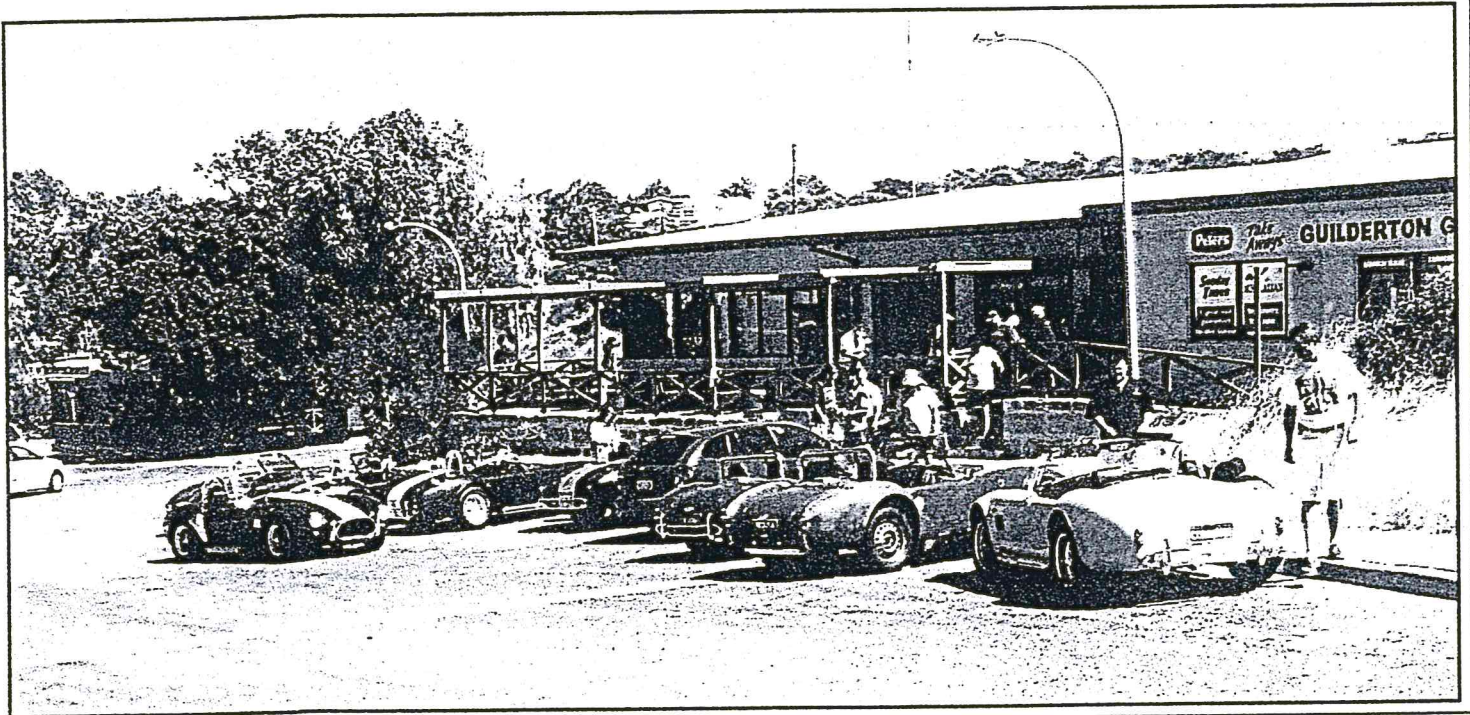
## MOORE RIVER.....cont:

After about an hour we hit the road again but deciding, due to the heat, to head back south instead of inland to Bindoon, Gin Gin and Chittering. The lead changed several times between Brian Plank and Dave Bennie on return trip, I thought it was very courteous of both Dave and Brian to share the lead like that, but I think the rest of the convoy had trouble keeping up.

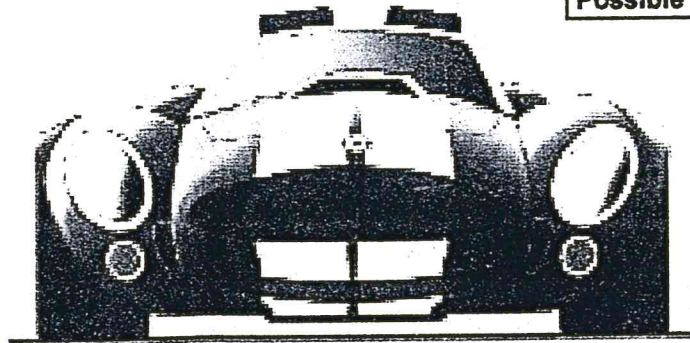
Approaching the Two Rocks turn off, Brian regained the lead and we headed for Two Rocks, losing a couple more Cobras that went straight on. A short cruise through town and down along the beach—the place was packed and with no parking spaces anywhere meant no icecreams so we all headed off in our own way. I think it was about midday when we got back to the Wanneroo Road Yanchep turn off and it was bloody hot, then just a short run to the northern suburbs and we were home—I had to feel for the rest of the other members who were heading to the southern suburbs and poor Dave Bennie and Son had the trip to Mandurah to contend with (and it did get to 39 degrees.)

**“Another nice run with the Cobra Club.”**

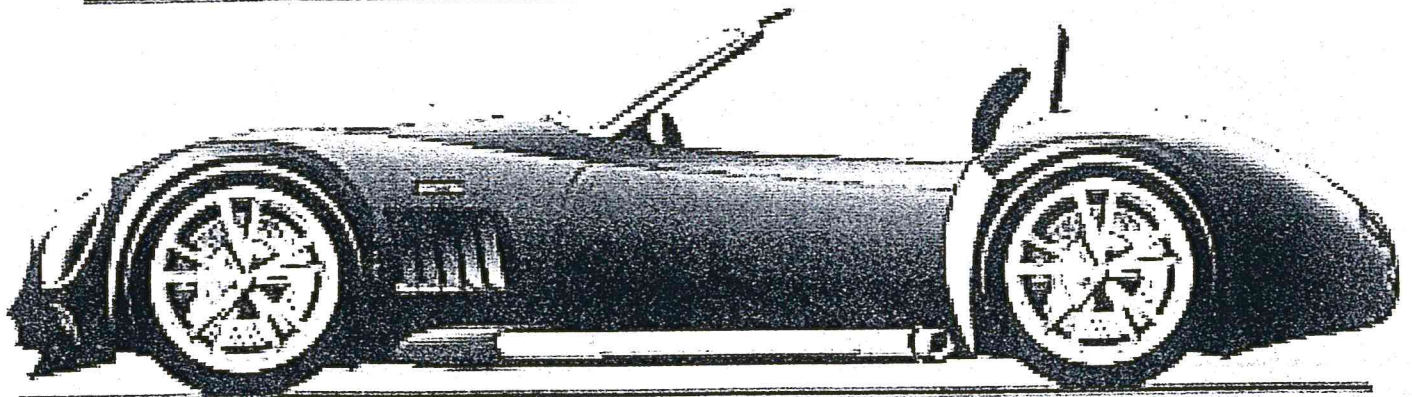
**Harry Mac**



Possible alternative to the new COBRA



**COBRA**





From page 2 , cont:

**CHRISTMAS COASTAL RUN.**

The cruise stopped for another chat break at Hillarys Boat Harbour northern carpark, which we had to ourselves, no problem finding a parking spot and after about 15 minutes we headed south to North Beach and the “Beachcomer’s Café” for tea, coffee and cake. Parking was tight, but all Cobras were catered for—some right next to our tables.



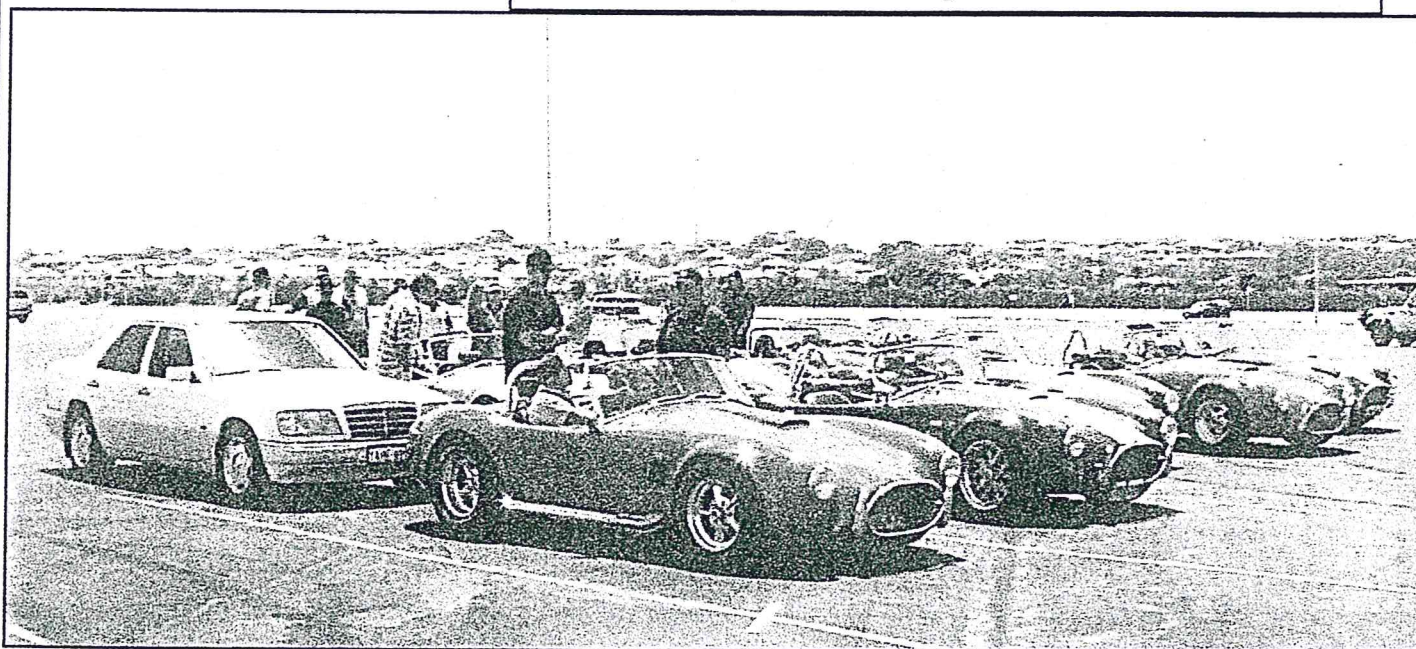
With Sunday being nice and sunny we sat out the front near West Coast Highway to be able to watch the cobras and the passing parade of cars and locals. When our orders arrived, we were faced with the problem of a howling sea breeze blowing across our table and playing havoc with the froth on the capucinos and the serving of cream

**Above.....Scarborough Beach line up**

on top of my lemon meringue pie—the strong wind was the cause of a lot of laughs as we battled to consume our morning tea amid flying napkins and cream—it was a fun time. With morning tea over I headed north again and home, while the rest of the convoy continued south.

**Editor .....Harry Mac.**

**Below.....Hillary’s northern carpark with 9 cobras and 1 sedan**





MY COBRA PROJECT STORY

I was originally bitten by the spell of this unique automobile some twenty years ago when Ampol ran an advert on the telly, promoting their service stations. The throaty roar of an open top car pulling into an Ampol station at dusk, refuelling and then heading back into the sunset with an even louder burble, set my much younger pulse racing. I said to my wife then and there, I have to get one of them, even though I had no idea what kind of car this beast was.

Following some research I found out it was a legendary American sports car & that I had no possible hope of ever being able to afford one. Not one to give up on my dreams, I discovered some years later there were replica versions of this same car at a much more affordable price.

For a few more years, mortgages, kids, renovations etc, I drooled over the very rare appearance of a Cobra or two at different car shows.

Answering an advert in the paper regarding a Cobra gathering in South Perth, I attended the first meeting of the now infamous Cobra Car Club, where I picked many brains & asked all the stupid questions. Not long after, there was an RMC chassis in the Readers Mart, complete with suspension, Jaguar rear end & 351 block, which I purchased & so started my Cobra project.

Most people who have been through a build would understand, I quickly found this was not a Kit car as was projected, but more a component car. With the full support of my wife & family ( a very rare commodity I believe!) and the advise from several people with completed cars, I had set to complete this project with a four-five year plan.

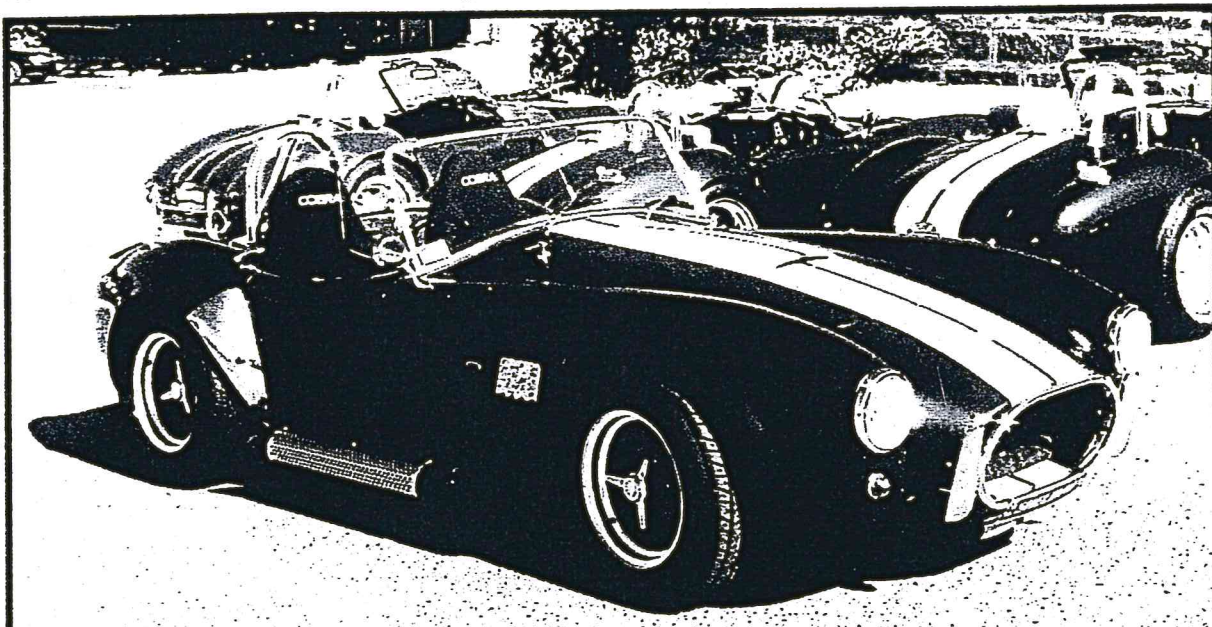
Every spare moment between wife, work, kids sport & other commitments, I spent hunting parts for the Cobra, making them or fitting it all together.

When all the diff bearings were replaced, the diff went in, along with brakes & brake lines, door, boot & bonnet hinges, pedal box, steering rack & column. The body was ordered and when picked up, several mates were called on to help lift it on. I then made a frame to raise and lower it onto the chassis for measuring and fitting further parts, with the frame I could manage it on my own again. Heat resistant matting was installed between the firewall and aluminium cladding in the engine bay. Brake and clutch master cylinders were sourced and fitted, with my young son on the pedal helping me bleed the brakes. More research and the Toyota Supra 5 speed gearbox was ordered from Dellows in Sydney. A 5litre HO Mustang motor came from Performance Unlimited in Balcatta. After making up a set of headers, the motor and gearbox went in, tail shaft ordered & fitted. Fuel tank, filler cap and breather, then connect fuel lines. Sway bars front & rear, radiator, fan, header tank, make and fit cowlings. A pair of seats from Revolution Racegear in Osborne Park fitted just right. Make up an aluminium dash and fit the Smith's gauges from Roadbend Jaguar. Lights, indicators, wipers were installed. A set of borrowed rims were fitted with new tyres, what a difference from the old slave wheels. The factory wiring harness was a breeze to install, but not being confident with electrics, I sent the car to Bidley's Auto electrics in Subiaco

to do the finishing off and install the Wolf engine management system. Next was a trip to Andy's Exhausts for the twin system. Back home again and after a few anxious attempts she finally fired into life with a cloud of smoke filling the shed, never have I heard a sweeter sound. A permit was arranged and



**Brian Plank**



**Cobra at the January Moore River run**



MY COBRA PROJECT STORY.....by Brian Plank cont:

I took her out for our first drive to the wheel aligners. This was great and we took the long way home, just to test the alignment.

After fitting the dash and door trims and a few more odds and ends, I booked in for licensing. The Welshpool centre was where I was headed when an unmarked cop car pulled me over for not having plates. After checking my paperwork, he wished me well and I continued on. All went well at the licensing centre and I finally picked up a set of plates. This was one day I will remember for a long time, after putting quite a few k's on the speedo I headed home to celebrate.

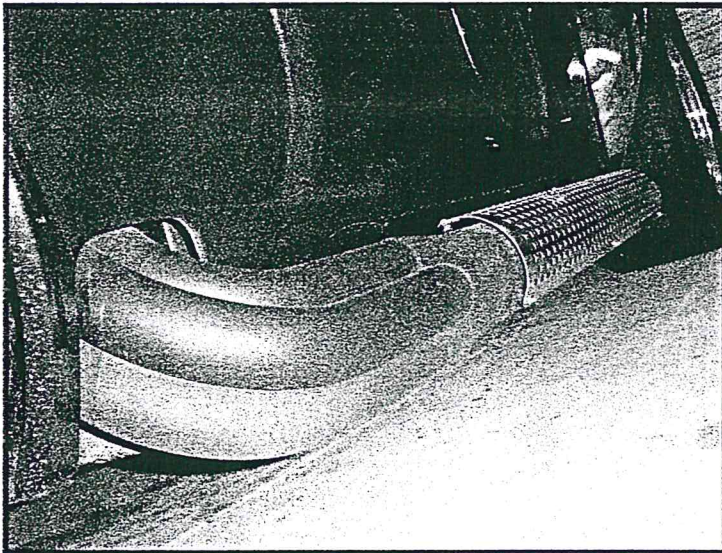
I drove the Cobra for about twelve months unpainted, no interior trim and steel rims, so had great pleasure fitting the new replica Halibrands. A set of side pipes were constructed & fitted, before stripping everything and sending her to the painters. About eleven weeks later they finally finished the paint job and what a sight to behold. Back in the shed again to painfully replace everything previously stripped. A lot of late nights and cautious fitting later, she was complete again ready to turn a few heads. The trimmers fitted carpets to the cockpit and boot, putting the finishing touches to the now completed car. A soft top was fitted just in case of inclement weather when you are a long way from home.

Cobras are one of the most awesome looking cars ever constructed, that sound and drive like it looks and will always pull a crowd.

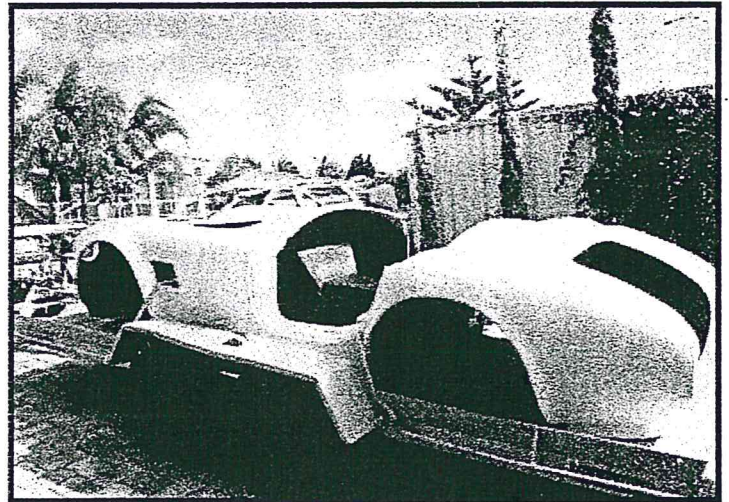
I have driven the Cobra in gymkhanas, drags, and laps of Barbagallo Raceway, short clubruns, cruises and some serious runs to Albany & Dunsborough. After spending approximately four years building my project, I have learnt a lot and met a lot of interesting and knowledgeable people.

This has been a most enjoyable experience and I plan on still driving the Cobra as long as I am physically able to slide into the driver's seat.

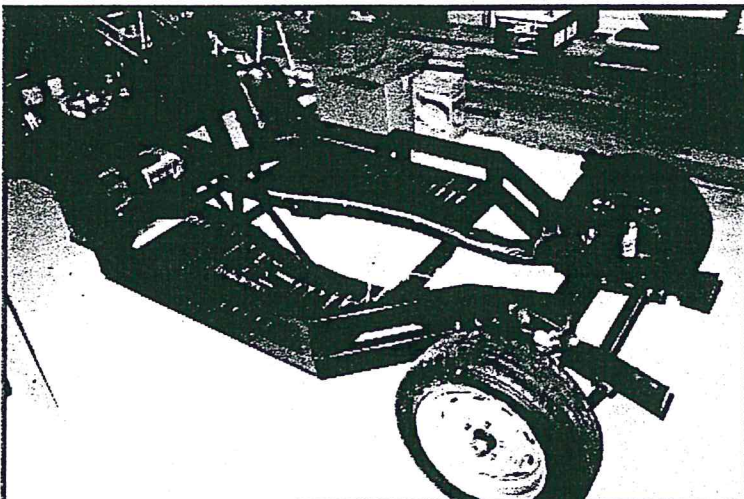
**BRIAN PLANK.**



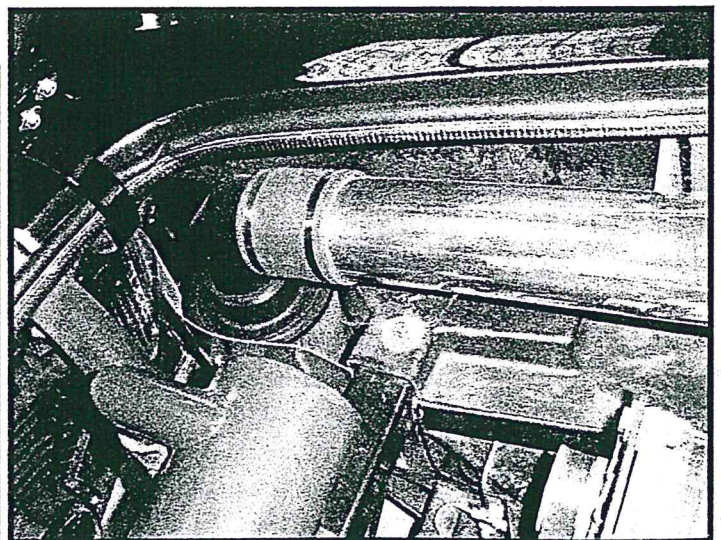
**Home made side pipes and guard.**



**The new RMC gelcoat Cobra body arrives.**



**The Readers Mart rolling chassis bargain.**



**Cold air induction system**



# My Weekend at Motorvation 2004

by Dave Bennie

We entered the car only if it would be in the display tent, as we weren't going to take the car home or camp the night—next time I won't put it in the tent as we had to push the car in and out for the driving events.

The atmosphere was great with thousands of dollars worth of cars and some very tidy spectators looking at them as well :)

I entered into the Slalom and the Go to Whoa (take off as fast as you can and stop without running over witches hats in 100m) I had distributor problems and the car wasn't running at it's best, but still managed reasonable times.

The Slalom is a breeze— with the exceptional sports handling a Cobra has over the ordinary street cars, but the track surface was very slippery when you are zigzagging around witches hats at full throttle in second gear—hee, hee. The weekend was well organized given that there were 550 cars entered and most of them went into the driving events.

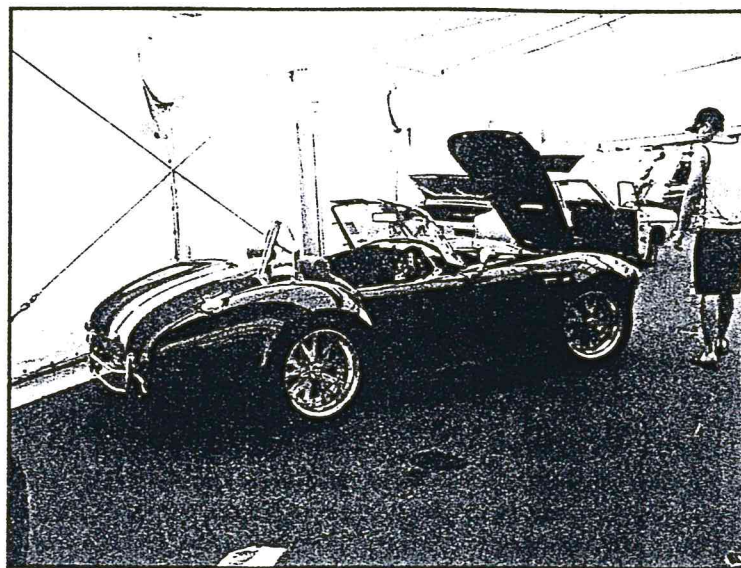
There was a huge variety of cars from all over the place, the usual Holden's and Ford's with some not so usual GT40's to a Rolls Royce 4WD. When you arrive they inspect your car if it is to be in the driving events, bit hard to wind up windows but they let us off. As usual Cobras attract a crowd and you hear all sorts of comments from—"how do you get in and out of it?", "I want one" to "No room for you kids!".

Would be nice to see a group of cars from the club in one area, Brian entered his car and was well set up with tents and BBQ. If I had known his car was entered, I would have joined him on the grass ..... (I mean lawn)—two Cobras side by side would have drawn greater interest.

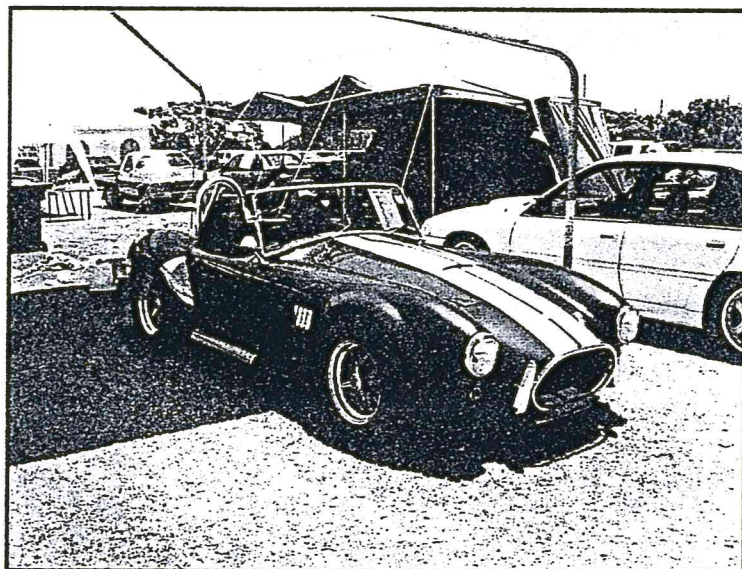
All in all, everyone had fun and enjoyed the experience, looking forward to the next show.

Pics by..... Harry Mac.

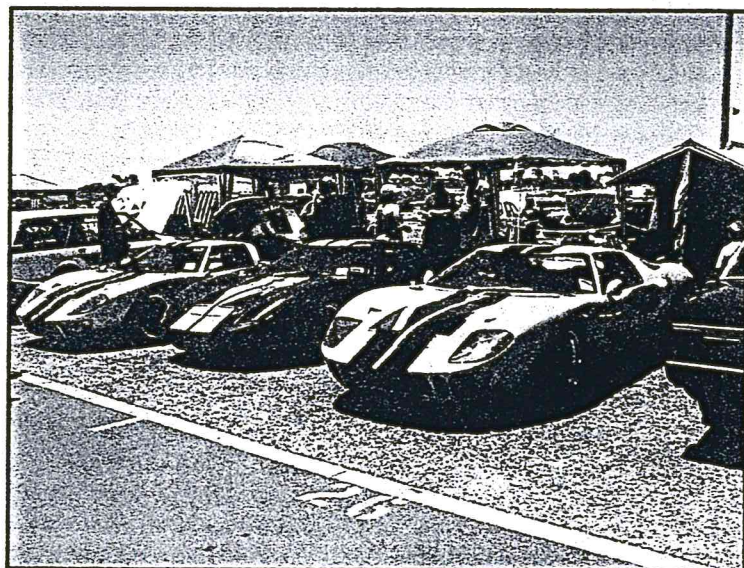
*Dave Bennie and son on the drag strip at Kwinana Motoplex, performance enhancement by Microsoft paintshop air brush.*



*Dave's Cobra on display in the tent*



*Brian Plank's Cobra was shown outside on the grass*



*A trio of GT/40's on show opposite Brian's Cobra*



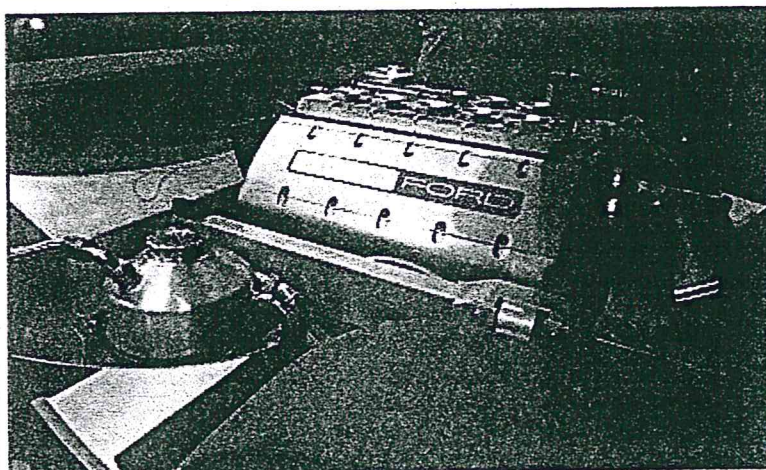


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# Detroit Motor Show News

## New Cobra specifications

Vehicle Type	Open top V-10 roadster
Power train and Chassis	
Chassis construction	Welded and bonded space frame of cast and extruded aluminium
Dimensions (in inches unless otherwise noted)	
Wheelbase	100.0
Overall length	155.4
Overall width	75.0
Track width, front	60.6
Track width, rear	60.4
Front legroom	45.4
Curb weight	3,075 pounds (target with production-level)
Engine	
Type	6.4L, 90-degree V-10
Configuration	Aluminium engine block and cylinder heads
Redline	7,500 rpm
Valve train	DOHC, 4 valves per cylinder
Intake	Velocity stacks with sliding plate throttles
Bore x Stroke	3.66 x 3.70 in / 93.0 x 94.0 mm
Displacement	390 cu in / 6,392 cc
Compression Ratio	10.8:1
Horsepower	605 @ 6,750 rpm



*The new COBRA - 390cu ins - 605hp all aluminium V10 engine.*

*Above Story and technical details from FORD media on the internet.*

**EDITORS NOTE:** Not my cup of tea but I do like that engine. The media is saying "a legend is born"?, the original Cobra wasn't born a legend—it became a legend, by doing amazing things—winning races and setting so many records. A modern day Cobra would really have its work cut out for it when you compare it with all the other super cars that are out there today.  
Editor..... Harry Mac.

Torque	501 lb-ft @ 5,500 rpm	
Drive train		
Layout	Mid-front engine, rear transmission, rear-wheel-drive	
Transmission		
Type	Ricardo 6-speed transaxle	
Gear	Ratios	Theoretical top speed at redline
1st	2.60:1	64 mph
2nd	1.70:1	98 mph
3rd	1.23:1	135 mph
4th	0.95:1	175 mph
5th	0.76:1	219 mph
6th	0.63:1	267 mph
Reverse	3.14:1	
Final Drive	3.36:1 limited slip	
Suspension		
	Unequal-length aluminium control arms, coil-over mono tube shocks, stabilizer bar	
Rear	Unequal-length aluminium control arms, coil-over mono tube shocks, stabilizer bar	
Steering		
	Rack-and-pinion with power assist	
Ratio	17.0:1	
Brakes-Front	14.0 x 1.3 in. (355 x 32 mm) Brembo cross-drilled and vented discs, four-piston monoblock calipers	
Rear	13.2 x 1.3 in. (335 x 32 mm) Brembo cross-drilled and vented discs, four-piston monoblock calipers	
Tires and Wheels		
Front	P275/40R18 BF Goodrich racing tires on 18 x 10-inch BBS wheels	
Rear	P345/35R19 BF Goodrich racing tires on 19 x 13-inch BBS wheels	



but could not guarantee it would hold up, "for even an hour." Webner said that didn't matter. The records were actually secondary; they just needed to hold the salt. A fresh engine was hastily installed and mechanic Tom Greatorex left Shelby American in a pick-up truck with the Coupe on a single-axle trailer about 18 hours after Shelby got Webner's call. Once on the salt, and after a couple of tentative test runs, Breedlove and Webner began to see the Coupe's potential to actually set some records and get some publicity for Goodyear. They suddenly began taking things a little more seriously. CSX2287 ran like a freight train and by the end of the four days it had set 23 new speed records - including one for 12 hours over which the Coupe averaged 150 MPH. When Greatorex got back to Shelby American with the car it was a mess. It was covered with caked salt and the seamless aluminum body had cracked in several places due to the constant pounding the car took over the ruts it created in the 12-mile circle during the 12-hour run. It took days to wash the salt out and Shelby realized that restoring it to its original condition would cost more than the car was worth. He offered it to Greatorex for \$800. Greatorex had had his fill of the car - he turned Shelby down.

Breedlove? Oh yeah - he ran 556 and Arfons had bettered that with a run of 576. So Breedlove came back two weeks later and ran 608, clinching the record. In doing this he went off course at over 600 MPH and crashed spectacularly, but was unhurt. Most importantly, he owned the record.

All six Daytona Coupes were offered for sale at the end of 1965 but there were no takers. The cars were no longer eligible for FIA endurance events and the only SCCA class they could run in was C/Modified - made up of extremely lightweight sports racers with big V8 engines; cars like Lola T-70s and early McLarens. Jim Russell, the owner of American Russkit, a Los Angeles company that made plastic-bodied model kits and slot cars, materialized in December and bought CSX2287 for \$4500. For that price Shelby American would completely go through the car. The engine and transmission were removed and the chassis, running gear, brake calipers and wheels were sandblasted (due to the corrosive qualities of Bonneville's salt). The chassis and running gear were repainted black, the headers were sandblasted and repainted white and the brakes were rebuilt. A new (stock) 289 Hi-Po engine with Webers was installed along with the original transmission. Ducting, original seats and interior components were cleaned and refitted, and Russell specified that a GT350 street clutch be installed. The car was thoroughly tested to insure that it ran properly before it left Shelby American. Russell had the Coupe repainted it's original '65 Guardsman Blue with white stripes and drove it on the street for about a year. During that time it was as reliable as an anvil. In December of 1966 he offered it for sale in Autoweek for \$12,500.

The Coupe was purchased (the actual sale price is not known but has been reported as \$7,500) by rock 'n roll record producer Phil Spector, famous for his "wall of sound" concept as well as writing a number of top-40 hits including "Be My Baby," sung by the Ronettes. He and his wife Ronnie, the Ronettes' lead singer, lived in a secluded mansion in Beverly Hills. The facts become sketchy again, based on equal parts of hearsay and supposition. The reason for the information vacuum on the car is that Spector was, and continues to this day to be, a very private person who purposely makes himself inaccessible. With his ownership, the Coupe was plucked out of the world of Cobra enthusiasts, owners and collectors. Simply put, it disappeared. But at that time no one was tracking the history or whereabouts of Cobras because they were little more than used sports cars.

The Registry footnote says, "...But Spector re-sold the coupe after a brief period of ownership as his driver's license was apparently in jeopardy. 2287 was purchased, at an undisclosed price, by John O'Hara (Yorba Linda, CA), who lost it some ten years later in a divorce settlement. It is thought that Mrs. O'Hara - who has reportedly since remarried and changed her name - has kept the car, which was apparently untouched since its purchase in '67. Thus far, she has resisted all offers to purchase and restore it. Given that the car has not been seen in a number of years, however, another scenario is possible: 2287 may actually have been sold years ago to a buyer who, like many collectors of fine art, enjoys relative anonymity, holding rare, private showings for close friends and associates who will appreciate what they are seeing, with "Mrs. O'Hara" offering up a perfect smoke screen to shield the sale."

The history of CSX2287 following Spector's ownership is now somewhat clearer, thanks to an unbelievably bizarre chain of events that began in October, 2000. But we're getting ahead of ourselves. It is true that Spector and his Daytona Coupe were a terror on the streets of Los Angeles and especially on twisty Mulholland Drive. The car was a police magnet and Spector is said to have driven it like a fleeing felon. Eventually his lawyer pressured him to get rid of the car because of the steady stream of traffic citations it was generating. So around 1971 Spector sold it to his bodyguard, right-hand man and mansion manager, an ex-cop named George Brand who had come to work for him in 1968. According to Brand, the purchase price was \$1000. He had divorced his wife Dorothy around the time he began working for Spector. A race car like a Daytona Coupe is not meant for street driving. It is hot, harsh and loud. An average person who didn't know and didn't care about its history would probably choose to leave it parked rather than drive it once the novelty wore off. And that's exactly what happened. Brand rarely took it out and needed a place to store the car. His only daughter, Donna, in her early 20s and married for three years to her high school sweetheart John O'Hara, offered to keep the Coupe in a storage garage they were renting. Ownership of the car is unclear at this point. One story has the O'Hara's storing the car for Brand, but other sources believe it is more likely he sold it to them. Either way, it was in their possession and they often used it to get from their Yorba Linda home to a cabin near Big Bear Lake - probably an hour and a half's drive at that time. They proceeded to get it registered in both their names but they also discovered the novelty of driving a race car was far outweighed by the difficulty and discomfort inherent in the car. Around 1971 it went into storage for good. The O'Hara's marriage ended in 1982 and because her father had, in essence, given up his claim to the car, its ownership was never in dispute when their property was divided. The judge awarded the car to Donna because the title had transferred to her from her father. But he stipulated that should she ever sell it, half of the money she received would go to her ex-husband. Donna re-registered it in her name and put the car in a storage garage. George Brand isn't likely to offer much illumination on how the car's ownership moved from him to his daughter because, now in his 80s, he is presently in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease.

The story becomes a foggy again, but we can piece it together well enough to continue the narrative. The car sat in a warehouse and Donna continued to pay the monthly rental fee. But it sat on four flat tires (magnesium wheels are known for letting air seep out over time) and that provided one more reason not to drive the car. Around 1988 Donna got a job at a Sears distribution centre and began dating Bob Doty, a fork lift operator there. He eventually became her supervisor and their romance fizzled out but they teamed up to invest in a home in LaHabra, CA. Doty had hoped to rekindle the romance but it went nowhere and he moved out in 1993. For her part, Donna never mentioned the Cobra or her previous marriage of 17 years to him during their relationship.

A small number of Cobra enthusiasts never gave up looking for the "missing Coupe" and around 1977, SAAC member Joe Wallace of Alameda, CA had poked around and asked the right questions which finally resulted in his locating the O'Haras. He was insistent on seeing the car and knowing Wallace as we do (persistent and relentless are two words which come immediately to mind) the O'Haras probably let him look at it just to finally be rid of him. He was able to take some pictures which showed the car was actually in fairly decent, if neglected, shape. .



Now that Wallace knew who owned the car and where it was, he attempted to shop this information around, looking for a \$5,000 "finder's fee" in return for what he had unearthed. There were no buyers. A year or so later Wallace was still sitting on his information, and SAAC was able to squeeze him for the O'Hara's name as well as their location - which it promptly printed in the club's magazine in hopes of flushing the car out. Wallace was not happy about that, but there was little he could do. He had also given copies of his pictures to SAAC, and they were later used in the 1987 edition of the Shelby American World Registry. They were the only ones that existed of the car during the O'Hara's ownership, and Pete Brock also used them in his book

A handful of other Daytona Coupe hopefuls eventually found their way to O'Hara's doorstep but were told, point blank, that the car was not for sale and could not be seen. Period. "Now go away and leave me alone!" After the dust settled from her divorce, Donna moved CSX2287 to the Stor-Mor storage facility in Anaheim, CA. She reportedly asked a long time friend, Kurt Goss, to drive it occasionally but the longer it sat the less it was driven, finally settling down on four flat tires and covered by a thick blanket of dust. After she moved to LaHabra, O'Hara once again made herself difficult to find. On the rare occasions that someone interested in purchasing the Coupe managed to track her down, she quickly became very angry and refused to discuss the car. Neighbours described her as secretive, anti-social and reclusive. She rarely made eye contact with any of them. When someone attempted to knock on her door and talk to her she would threaten them and call the police. Visits to her address by local law enforcement officers were, according to one neighbour, a fairly common event.

Donna O'Hara steadfastly refused to discuss selling her Coupe, even though it was obvious she was not living the kind lifestyle typical of someone who owned a million dollar collector car. She had no apparent plans to do anything with the car, so an explanation grew that she had formed some sort of irrational, emotional attachment to it. How else to explain why a woman would keep a dilapidated Cobra Coupe in storage for twenty-plus years and run off anyone who tracked her down in an attempt to buy it. Actually, there was a grain of truth in this myth, but it wasn't that she was in love with this car. There were two reasons she refused to sell it. One was that she so disliked her ex-husband that she had no desire to share with him any money she might have received from its sale. And make no mistake - she knew what the car was worth (despite attempts by prospective buyers to low-ball her). Another factor was that she apparently had some sort of emotional disorder which kept her from letting go of anything she owned. The Coupe shared storage space with a Datsun 240Z, a '69 MG and eventually a '92 Geo Metro. She had no intention of selling any of them. So when someone showed up at her front door to pester her about selling her Cobra Coupe, she very likely would have had the same response if they had been attempting to convince her to sell the 240Z or the '69 MG. The only difference was that she would not have to give her former husband half of the sale price of those vehicles. So the idea of selling the Coupe was even more loathsome to her.

On January 31, 2001 SAAC received an email from Ralph Torres, of Tallahassee, FL who introduced himself as someone who loved Shelbys and Cobras ever since he was nine years old. He was 29 and presently owned a Cobra replica but his desire was to own a real Cobra some day. Torres went on to explain that he had just finished helping a friend find a very rare car that the friend's father had owned when it was brand new. He said he loved a challenge and had recently purchased a copy of the Shelby American World Registry. He wanted to find some "lost Cobras" ...beginning, he said, with CSX2287. Sceptical would probably be the word we would choose to begin describing our feelings upon reading this email. Incredulous would probably follow soon after. Torres asked if there was anything we knew about CSX2287 or Mrs. John O'Hara that was not in the registry's footnote. We said there really wasn't anything else we could think of, and we tried not to be discouraging. After all, this was obviously a young guy who wasn't a SAAC member, and if he wanted to waste his time it was certainly his to waste. We wished him "good luck," never expecting to hear from him again. After all, there were people who had been involved in Cobras all of their adult lives, people who lived in Southern California, who had tried to find Mrs. O'Hara and her Daytona Coupe and who had come up empty. Others hired expensive private investigators who had not gotten much farther. What chance did a 29 year-old in Florida who worked for the state government have? The next day we got another email from Ralph and it began, "I found CSX2287! It is sort of a sad story that is still developing. Call me when you get a chance and I will update you..." We called Ralph faster than you can say "Carrozzeria," and the story he told us was nothing short of amazing. But probably even more amazing was that he had turned up more solid details on CSX2287 and its owner in twenty-four hours than anyone else had in the past thirty years.

Ralph Torres obviously possessed some sort of a gift for using the telephone to extract information from people he had never met. He had begun his search in Yorba Linda, with John O'Hara. He spoke with him at length and learned that his ex-wife, Donna, had committed suicide three months earlier. He then talked to Donna O'Hara's boyfriend (Bob Doty), another friend (Kurt Goss), her mother (Dorothy Brand) and Donna's neighbours. Each person he spoke to led him to one or two others and in a matter of a few hours he had pieced together the remnants of the story, independently of anyone else who might also have been investigating the missing Daytona Coupe. And there were several. Suddenly a handful of people were hot on the car's trail. In fact, stories began filtering back to SAAC HQ and to Cobra Registrar Ned Scudder so quickly that it was like someone had dumped a gallon of fresh blood into the shark tank at Sea World. A feeding frenzy was taking place as potential buyers, brokers and lawyers all scrambled to get the upper hand. Each contributed small bits and pieces to the story and what eventually unfolded was stranger than any fictional account could have been.

On October 17, 2000 Donna O'Hara contacted her long time friend, Kurt Goss, and asked him to meet with her at her LaHabra residence. She wanted to give him the four vehicles she owned, "...in the unlikely event that anything should happen to her," Goss related in a court statement. "She wanted me to look after her personal effects." She also apparently filled out California DMV forms transferring ownership of all four cars to Goss, but never filed them with the DMV. Five days later, around sun up, Donna O'Hara sat in a recessed area under a bridge over a horse trail in Fullerton, CA. Holding her two pet rabbits in her lap, she poured a couple of gallon jugs of gasoline over herself and struck a match. The Orange County Register, and later The Los Angeles Times both carried stories about her death and the subsequent legal fight for ownership of her Daytona Coupe in their March 14, and March 18, 2001 editions (respectively).

"Contentious to the end, her first words to the Fullerton police officer who rushed to help her were, "Just...let me...die." As they were waiting for the ambulance, she whispered to police officers that she had done this to herself. The LA Times article went on to say that Donna O'Hara refused to identify herself to police or hospital officials. With burns over 98% of her body and in excruciating pain, it took 15 hours for her to die and when she did, no one knew who she was. Her body was taken to the morgue and filed under a "Jane Doe." It remained there for forty days.

When she failed to show up for work at Sears after a period of time her former boyfriend and supervisor Bob Doty filed a missing persons report. Eventually it was determined that the burned body in the morgue might be Donna O'Hara and Doty was asked to make a positive identification. He did.

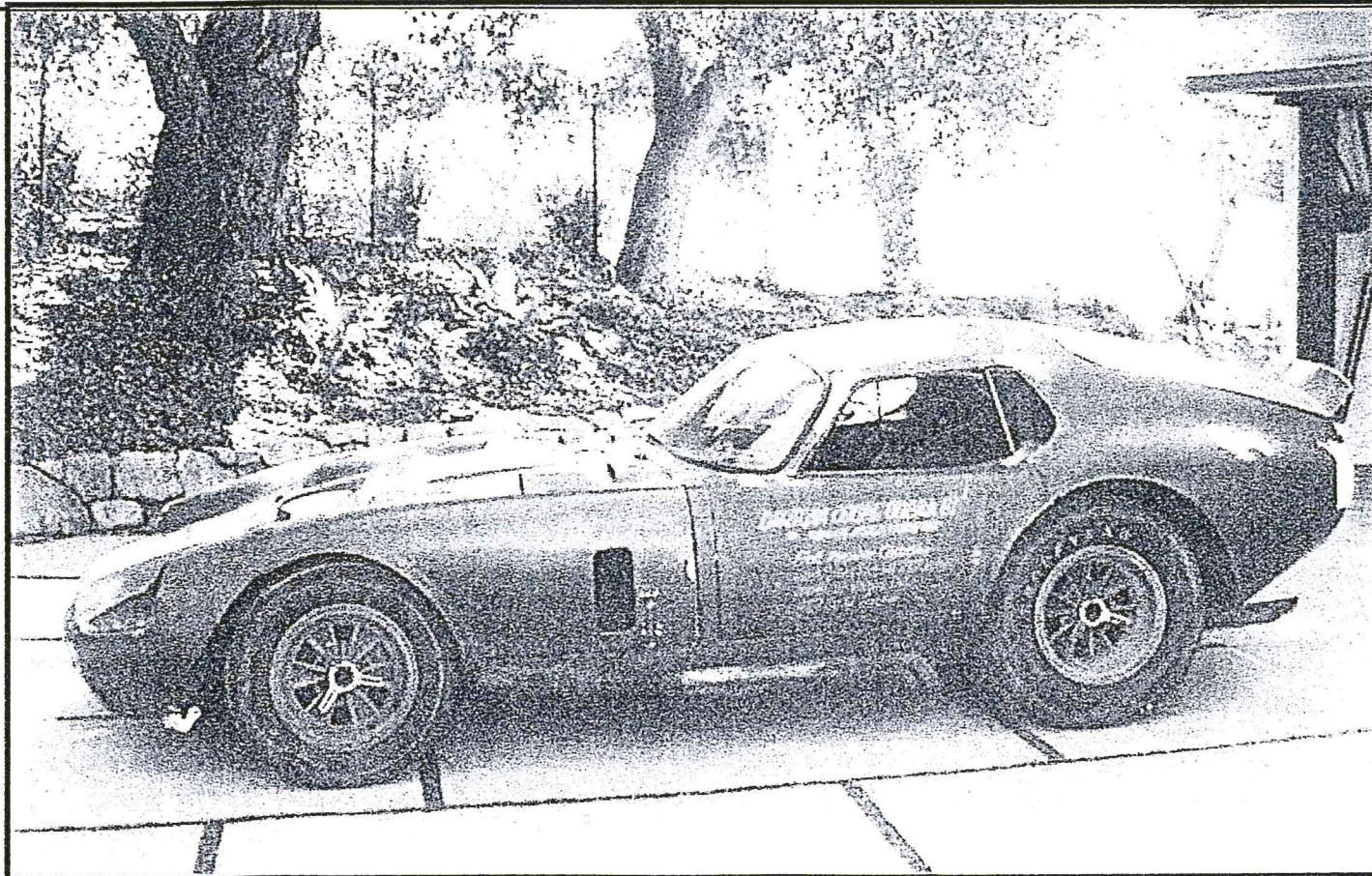


As soon as word of her death became public, some of the people searching for the Daytona Coupe lurched into action. Her only relatives were her mother, Dorothy Brand, now living in San Diego and her father, George Brand, an Alzheimer's patient in a nursing home in Orange County. In going through some of Donna's papers, her mother found a letter from someone offering to buy the Cobra Daytona Coupe for \$2 million. She suddenly realized she was sitting on a gold mine. Dorothy Brand made a few calls and discovered that there were only a handful of Daytona Coupes and one had recently sold for \$4 million. She called the phone number in the letter and spoke with vintage race car dealer Martin Eyears. She told him of her daughter's death and that she was the only heir, and they began discussing the sale of the car. Eyears was comfortable with his original offer of \$2 million. Brand countered that one had recently sold at auction for twice that. But, Eyears informed her, that car was completely restored and in perfect condition. The car she had was far from that. They eventually agreed on a price of \$3 million. He made arrangements to meet with her and on February 7th he paid her for the car and received a notarized bill of sale and the keys to the storage facility.

In yet one more touch of irony, rent on the garage had not been paid since Donna's death and the facility's manager had been about to auction off the old, dusty, flat-tired car to the highest bidder in order to recoup the storage costs. When Dorothy Brand arrived she was informed of the outstanding balance, quickly paid it and took possession of the garage's contents. Once the deal was done Eyears wasted no time in spiriting the car away to his place in Montecito, outside of Santa Barbara. In yet one more ironic twist of fate, SAAC member Lynn Park, one of the others who had been hot on the car's trail for years, caught wind of what Eyears was planning to do and went to court seeking an injunction to keep Dorothy Brand from selling the car. Owing to a legal holiday, the injunction was not able to be served until the day after President's Day. Eyears had picked up the car one day earlier. When Kurt Goss learned of Donna's death he met with some of her relatives, including her mother, and informed them that Donna had given her cars to him a few days before her death. Naturally they were sceptical and one relative, a cousin, later said in court documents that he had seen the paperwork while going through Donna's belongings and there was no name filled in for the recipient on the ownership transfers. He also claimed that Goss had taken the paperwork without permission. The impression was that Goss had filled in his own name on the DMV title transfers. A couple of the potential buyers had been in contact with Goss, thinking he was in a position to sell the car. He received an offer, reportedly in the \$3 million range, which was enough to keep him from sleeping that night. When he finally convinced the storage facility manager to open the doors to let him look at "his" car, it was gone. He was 10 days too late.

Eyears brought the dusty and dented Daytona Coupe to his place outside of Santa Barbara, cleaned it up and took the pictures you see here - which he posted on the internet in hopes of finding a buyer. That all happened fairly quickly. SAAC member Steve Volk, president of the Shelby American Collection in Boulder, CO claims that he had previously agreed to give Eyears \$3.75 million for the Coupe but for reasons that are not entirely clear, Eyears instead sold the car to exotic car collector and SAAC member Fred Simeone, a well known Philadelphia neurosurgeon. The figure bandied about was \$4 million. Goss, in the meantime, retained a lawyer and a week later filed court papers naming Dorothy Brand, Martin Eyears and the owner of the Stor-Mor Storage facility in Anaheim, and demanding return of the car to him along with damages of \$4 million, plus interest on that amount and legal fees.

The legal wrangling had just begun. There were apparently several issues surrounding the case, one of which was the validity of Goss' claim to the car. Another was the matter of estate taxes on a \$3 million vehicle. Donna O'Hara left no will, so probate court could have also stepped in with regards to who had legal right to her property. And Goss was contesting Dorothy Brand's sale, contending that the car had been given to him by Donna O'Hara a few days prior to her death and Brand had no legal right to sell it. At that time, lawyers in the club that we spoke with agreed that Goss's claim was a weak one because O'Hara took her own life shortly after he claimed she gave her vehicles to him.



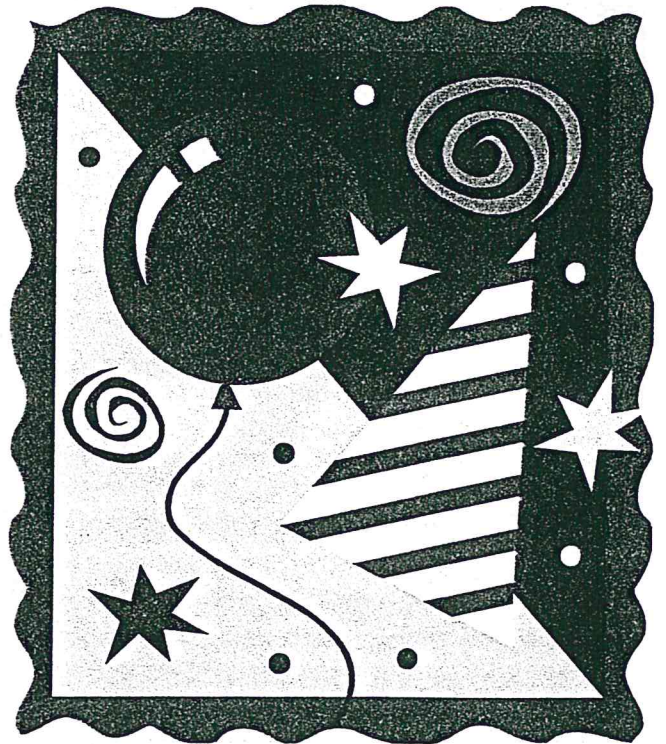
THE MISSING DAYTONA COBRA CSX2287.....2001



## “HOW WAS YOUR NEW YEAR?”

Well New Year has come and gone again. Did you have a quiet one?, watching the New Year come in on the TV like I did. We got a few DVD's and chocolate from the video shop, had a bottle of champagne on ice ready for the big occasion. All of a sudden it happened—it was 12 midnight—it was the end of 2003— it was the beginning of 2004— it was time to open the champagne— it was time to celebrate—it was time to go to bed! What a boring night (my kids say we need to get a life—but to me this is life!). Once we downed our champers we sat down and discussed our New Year's resolutions (we being my wife Coleen, my mother-in-law Frances and myself). We discussed all sorts of resolutions—weight loss, more time for ourselves, less money to the kids, maybe more holidays away, but do we keep our New Year promises—Yes, I know! I can hear you say—”Well why doesn't he make a New Years Resolution to finish his Cobra?”

HAPPY NEW YEAR



I remember over 30 years ago being constantly harassed into making a New Year's Resolution by family and friends to give up all kinds of things and make myself a better person—this brought no end of grief when I couldn't keep the promise I had made on one night of the year when you are 4 sheets to the wind, Schindler's list, full as boot—you know what I mean. Well, let me tell you I have seen many resolutions broken every year. I made a New Year's Resolution way back in the early 70's that I have never broken and every year I quietly remind myself of it—what is it you ask? In 1972 I make a New Year's resolution to never make another New Year's Resolution!!

I wish you all a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Editor.....Harry Mac.

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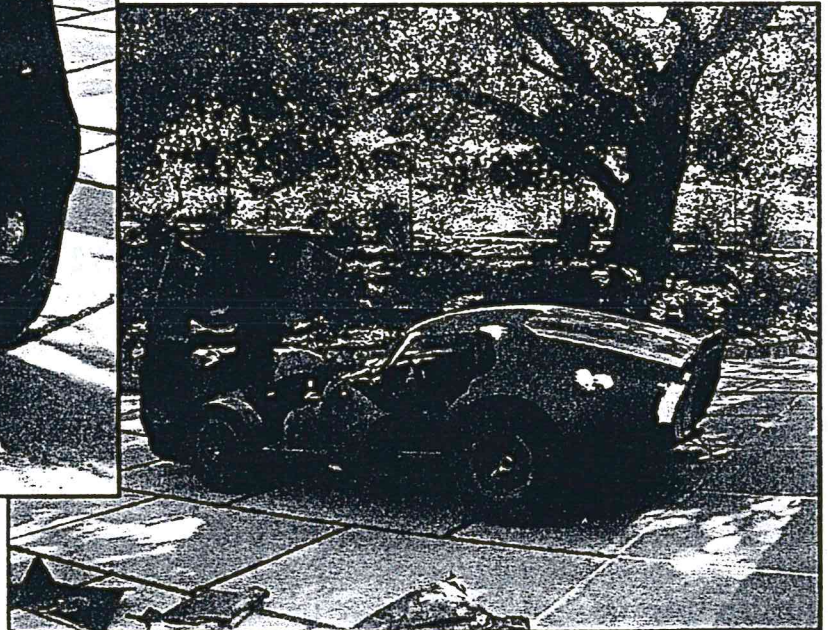
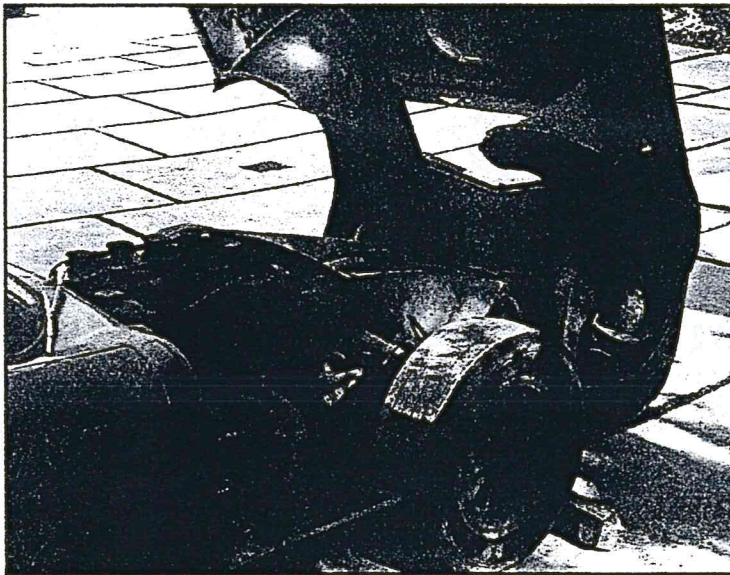
Suddenly finding herself a millionaire, Dorothy Brand did what anyone else living in a trailer park would do - she started spending money like it had an expiration date on it. She was reported to have given \$150,000 to several unnamed charities and divided up another \$850,000 between members of her family. Goss' lawyers put the brakes on her spending spree in early March, convincing Orange County Superior Court Judge James P. Gray to enjoin her from spending any of the remaining \$2 million until the case came to court. The money was put in an interest-bearing escrow account which the IRS was eyeing hungrily. At that point Simeone had the car in Philadelphia and everyone's lawyers were staking out their territory.

A hearing was held on March 17, 2001 to settle procedural and jurisdictional matters in that so many lawyers representing so many different parties were involved. It was then that the case became even more bizarre - if that was possible - when one more attorney burst into the courtroom at the last minute, representing an individual who claimed HE was the car's actual legal owner. Phil Spector had retained Robert Shapiro (yes - that Robert Shapiro, he of the OJ Simpson "Dream Team") as his mouthpiece. Shapiro gave voice to Spector's claim was that he had never sold the Daytona Coupe to George Brand. He had merely asked Brand to look after it and as his employee, that is what he expected Brand to do. Then, Shapiro explained, typical of someone who was very wealthy and who owned a great deal of property, Spector just assumed that "his people" were handling things all these years and the car was safely tucked away somewhere. The fact that it was now worth some \$4 million had absolute nothing to do with Spector's sudden interest in the car.

Judge James Gray ordered all lawyers to attend a settlement conference on October 5, 2001 but he did not hold out much hope that the meeting would settle anything because he also scheduled a full trial to begin on November 19th. The lawyers began jostling each other for position prior to the trial. It was discovered that among the paperwork Goss had found at O'Hara's house were outdated registrations showing that the car was legally registered to her and her husband until 1982 when they were divorced. In 1983 the registration was renewed in only Donna's name. Just like that, Spector's claim evaporated and Shapiro disappeared.

Lawyers for Goss, Brand, Eyears and Simeone eventually put their heads together and hammered out a monetary agreement that their clients all consented to. They brought it before Judge Grey and on Friday, December 7, 2001 he approved the settlement which eliminated the trial that had been scheduled. Dorothy Brand paid Kurt Goss approximately \$800,000 and three of the charities she was reported to have given money to chipped in another \$15,000. After estate taxes were paid and the money she gave to the charities and her family were subtracted, her lawyer Milford Dahl said she was left with virtually nothing.

CSX2287 remained in Philadelphia.



### Postscript on Daytona Coupe CSX2287 [courtesy of Autoweek ]

According to an article in the February 4th issue of Autoweek, now that the ownership of CSX2287 is officially resolved, rumour has it that the coupe is to be restored and put on display at the Shelby American Collection in Boulder, Colorado. This would be a fitting final chapter to an amazing story of an icon. (Ed: Personally, I think it should not be "restored", but rather cleaned up and shown as is. A car is only original once in it's life, and this one should retain the patina it has collected over the past 30 years. We can always see a restored Daytona Coupe....to see one in virtually original condition would be priceless)