

SHELBY BASH 2009

Having the privilege of attending Carroll Shelby's 85th Birthday last year, I knew I had to attend the Shelby Bash 2009 when it was announced back in October. Last year, I trailered our '68 KR directly to Vegas to coincide with the release of the 2008 GT500KR, this year I wanted to drive. The weather forecast was good, so it was decided to drive our 2008 GT500 convertible.

The official event schedule was as follows. Thursday, January 8th, meet at Carroll Shelby Enterprises in Gardena to cruise en masse to Las Vegas. The host hotel in Vegas was the brand new (only open 7 weeks) Aliante Hotel and Casino in North Las Vegas, close to Shelby Automobiles. Friday and Saturday offered open track. For those not tracking their cars, poker runs were organized for both days. Sunday was the Car Show.

As Wednesday night was not part of the package, I have a good friend who is the manager at the Embassy Suites LAX-North, so I was able to organize a block of 40 rooms at a deep discount! Attendees were from as far away as the Netherlands. Farthest driven were Detroit, Nashville, and points in between. One Guy trailered a GLHS from Windsor, Ontario Canada! I also organized 6 cars to meet at the Chevron at Casa de Fruta to cruise down to LA together Wednesday morning. The assembled cars were a red 2007 GT500, two white Shelby GT's, one Shelby GT-Hertz, a Whipple Supercharged Legend Lime GT, and our Ebony GT500. We pushed off on the appointed time of 9:30 am. Our only stop was fuel at the base of the Grapevine. We pulled into the hotel off Century Blvd at 1:30pm. Four hours from start to finish. Quick but not crazy...



We gathered the next morning at Carroll's offices in Gardena. There were 87 cars that showed up for the caravan to Vegas! The majority of the cars were the new generation Shelby's, which included a bunch of Super Snakes, a smattering of Shelby Dodges, one '66 GT350H, and one very wicked twin turbo Ford GTX1. Carroll's shop in Gardena is a working facility. There were machinists and numerous C'N'C machines buzzing away working on aluminum blocks and heads. The highlight



though was viewing a sizable collection of Carroll's personal cars, which included the 2008 GT500KR that Ford gave Carroll for his birthday last year, two Series One cars, '69 GT500, '68 GT500KR, '65 Tiger, '73 Pantera, two Superformance cars, one Daytona Coupe, one roadster, and a significant number of his Dodge cars & trucks, most of these were either Job 1 or prototypes.

There was a drivers meeting prior to departure to temper the testosterone levels. Last year it ended up turning into a free-for-all with stories of Patrick Dempsey tearing through the desert at 160+ mph in Amy Boylan's Grabber Orange Super Snake. As the story goes, when some of the group was getting gas along the way, a trucker pulls up and tells them, "Hey, you guys are like a rash all over the radio. The cops and Highway Patrol from California and Nevada are looking for you".

There was one organized stop in Barstow for fuel and a lunch provided at Tommy's Burgers, then back on the road to Las Vegas. Noted photographer and author Jerry Heasley was riding in the back of a convertible and took what I can only assume are many awesome "moving" pictures. Some taken at speeds nearing triple digits. We arrived at our hotel around 3:00pm and got ourselves situated. The only function on the schedule for that evening was in informal mixer in one of the ballrooms. It was low key, offered the chance to meet many new people. I was surprised to see Amy Boylan, Gary Davis, and Gary Patterson in attendance. For those that don't know, Amy is the president of Shelby Automobiles and the two Gary's are next in command.



Friday offered the first day of open track at Las Vegas Motor Speedway and was held on the outer 2.39 mile road course. For people not participating in the open track, a poker run was a short, but very nice 65 miles that took us through Red Rocks Park with the last stop at the speedway. Friday evening there was a private function at the ETA Lounge in the hotel with a hosted bar, so everyone was well lubricated. Saturday was a repeat of Friday's activities, except the poker run was expanded to about 120 miles and took drivers near Lake Mead and through the Valley of Fire. Carroll Shelby made a short appearance at the track as we was committed to Ford and the Detroit Auto Show, to where he flew directly that afternoon.

The banquet Saturday evening was attended by a full house of about 400 people. Of course, Amy Boylan spoke and two persons familiar to Norcal SAAC, Bernie

Kretschmar talked about the glory days and Jerry Titus, which led us to (and funny as ever) Rick Titus, who had us all in stitches. Rick was there in honor of his father. He and Amy announced a new project by Shelby Automobiles, a post title project: Jerry Titus Edition 500HP Mustangs. The surprise speaker was Carroll's wife Cleo. She told how active and sharp Carroll is and how much he appreciates the passion and enthusiasm shown by everyone present, and the owners and fans of all things Shelby. A very nice buffet-style dinner was followed by a very extensive raffle (yours truly won the only black Carroll Shelby Stetson) and there was also an auction, which generated just under \$11,000 with the proceeds going to the Carroll Shelby's Children's Fund. Three of the items were a private tour for two of Jay Leno's Dream Garage. One of these earned a high bid of \$2200.00.

Sunday was both the pancake breakfast at Shelby's Corner Cafe and a car show across the parking lot at Shelby Automobiles. I got a chance to speak briefly with Rick Titus, and thanked him for his rousing performance the night before and that we'd appreciated him coming to Nor Cal Mini Nats in the past. The real highlight for me that day was spending ten quality minutes with Cleo Shelby, in a booth at the Shelby Cafe. It was just her and I with no one else around. She is originally from London. I discovered that she had raced Jaguar D-Types, Gullwing Mercedes Benz, and a Cobra back in Britain in the 50's and 60's. We then talked about how London is one of my favorite cities, Kensington (where my wife and I stay when we go there), and shopping for diamonds and vintage watches on Portabello Road.

All good things must come to and end. Three of us left Las Vegas at 1:00pm and I pulled into my garage in Hollister at 8:00 pm, not bad time considering we had two fuel stops. But I won't mention the drag race two GT500's had in the Mojave desert with a rolling start of about 100mph....oops, did that get out....It wasn't me, I swear...yea right!

Five days, 1260 miles, great people, great memories. I can't wait until next year. For those interested in upcoming events, log on to www.teamshelby.com

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Club Cars include: 2008 GT500 'vert, 1968 GT500KR,
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