

Shelby Bash 2010

Tom Dankel

It was that time of year, the 3rd Annual Shelby Bash to be held at Las Vegas Motor Speedway and Shelby American Headquarters. This event happens around the date of Carroll Shelby's Jan. 11, birthday.

I've attended (and reported on) the previous two. And I was anxious to get on the road again for this one. Last year six of us met at Casa De Fruta for our caravan south to Los Angeles. This year we were projecting to have 12+ cars. Nine of us rendezvoused at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday the 6th. We were meeting another driver in Santa Nella, and then met two more at the base of the Grapevine on a scheduled fuel stop. Instead of caravan, our good friend Mike McGuirk came up with moniker "Conga Line" for our little group of drivers.

Like last year, I had reserved a block of 34 rooms at the Embassy Suites near LAX (secured underground parking and a great group rate). This location is also only 10 minutes from our meeting point the next morning at Carroll Shelby Enterprises in Gardena.

Another one of our NorCal group, Tom Wills, coordinated the use of a banquet room with hors d'oeuvres and DJ -- this provided as a great mixer where everyone could reconnect with friends from around the country and BS each other about their respective dyno pulls. Team Shelby took advantage of having all of these people in one place to hand out our credentials for the upcoming activities.

Early the next morning we gathered in Gardena. Carroll keeps a number of his personal cars there, and as this facility is not open to the public, it is a treat to see the large and unique collection of his cars there.

Last year there were 87 cars on the cruise to Las Vegas, this year the number grew to 106 cars! You can appreciate the logistics of trying to get 106 cars all going in the same direction, especially when you add LA traffic into the mix...

Our first scheduled stop was for fuel in Barstow. The designated stop point has a number of gas stations, which is a good thing when a 106 cars roll up. General passersby were enthralled with all of these great cars, and were quick to break out their cameras. I must say, it was quite a sight to see all of us queue up.

Lunch (which was included in our package) was 10 miles up the road in at a 50's diner called Peggy Sues in the ghost town of Calico. They did a fine job with the buffet and





getting us all fed and happy.

Next stop, Las Vegas...wait a minute, the next stop was unplanned when California's finest, the CHP proceeded to attempt and pull over all 106 cars on the shoulder. This created quite a traffic nightmare, and as I was in the second group, I saw the melee ahead of time and motored right on by, along with a few other cars, figuring he can't cite all of us. We pulled into the rest area about a mile ahead, where the rest of our group showed up about five minutes later, followed by two Highway Patrol cruisers. After a stern talking to about exhibition of speed and reckless driving, we were on our way. I have NO idea where that came from because frankly, our procession was a tad on the slow side. Of course the genuine NASCAR GT500KR pace car with light bar on the roof got him a little excited as well.

After we got this unplanned stop over with, we rolled into the Aliante Hotel, ready for some well deserved cocktails. There was a soft opening scheduled for that night. The Aliante is in North Las Vegas, and convenient to the track as well as Shelby American's production facilities.

Friday was the first track day on the 2.5 mile, nine turn road course located outside of the speedway with three run groups: novice, intermediate, and experienced, along with lunch time parade laps.

Friday night offered a mixer in one of the large banquet rooms.

Saturday morning gave participants a choice of a 135 mile poker run through the Valley of Fire, or continued open track.

The poker run had 93 participants and wound you through some of the most spectacular scenery the western US has to offer -- a definite must for anyone visiting the Las Vegas area. The poker run concluded at about noon, so open trackers could get back to the track for some afternoon runs.

As with the past years, Saturdays evening's program included a banquet as well as door prizes and auction, all auction proceeds going to the Carroll Shelby Foundation for children. The guest speaker was Rick Titus; some Nor Cal SAAC members might remember Rick's unique and humorous public speaking abilities.

Sunday concluded with the Car Show and pancake breakfast held at Shelby World Headquarters. Thankfully, this was also the warmest of the all the days. The majority of the cars in the show are of the New Gen variety, from Shelby GTs, GT-Hs, GT500s, Super Snakes, KR's, and one very cool Prudhomme Super Snake. For those not familiar the Prudhomme car, it is a post title, 800 HP street legal drag car!

As this is the 45th Anniversary of the GT 350 and the 427 Cobra, the car show award was a period marketing piece many of you are familiar with, a black and white picture with Carroll standing in front of the GT 350 with a Cobra lurking in the background. Each photo was individually signed, matted, and framed with event plaque. There were no classes or first, second, or thirds. The judges simply chose the 20 best cars.

Your humble writer was fortunate to have been selected to receive one of these awards.

Shortly after twelve noon, the events concluded. Four of us blasted through the Mojave, over the Tehachapi's and down into the San Joaquin valley for the 500 mile trip to the Bay Area. From Wednesday morning until Sunday evening, a 1300+ mile round trip.

Good times, awesome cars, and great people. I'm already planning for Shelby Bash 2011.