



Shelby Bash 5 Honoring the 50th Anniversary of Shelby American

I have been fortunate to have attended the previous four Bash events, and this year's version was moved to March instead of the earlier January dates. This was a great benefit to many East Coast enthusiasts who were able to drive their cars to the event. Some came from as far away as Ontario Canada, New York, and Florida.

As with years past, we organized a caravan from NorCal to SoCal. Thirteen of us (two from Vancouver BC), met that Tuesday morning for breakfast at Casa de Fruta, then we traveled over the hill to Santa Nella, where we rendezvoused another five drivers, three as far away as Washington.

As with years past, I'd arranged the LAX Embassy Suites as our host hotel. Although not on the official 50th activity schedule, rather our event was a pre-bash kick-off. Team Shelby Pacific Region director, Michael McGuirk had contacted a number of vendors who were very gracious with sponsorships and raffle prizes, including Denbeste Motorsports, McKenzie Mustang, Stillen, True Forged, Shelby Performance Parts, and the Shelby Foundation. We had 50+ cars and 80+ people show up. After our Bash early registration, and mixer, it was down to the garage for a "sticker party", which included putting the door stickers onto our cars and much BS'ing.



Wednesday morning had us gathering at Carroll Shelby Enterprises in Gardena. A tour of Carroll's private collection and the Shelby Engine plant were at our leisure. With about 100 cars registered for the cruise to Las Vegas, it was decided that we would divide the cars into three groups. Each group had a lead pace car, a rear pace car, and were set off with about 10 minutes between groups. After the drivers meeting at 8:30am, it was on to our scheduled stop in Barstow, which is about half way between Los Angeles and Las Vegas. A lunch was included at the famous Tommy's Burgers. After food and fuel, the same three groups were sent off to Southpointe Hotel & Casino, which was the host hotel for the celebration.



This Bash was a sell-out, and the 6th floor (secured) parking was filling up with many great Shelby's, other than a couple of vintage cars and two Ford GT's, (our friend Mike's Heritage and one twin-turbo GTX-1) the rest were all of the new gen variety. Of course, let us not forget the requisite rentals 'stangs, which also (shhh) saw track duty. It's good to have the 5.0's back.



The first evening function on Wednesday was held outdoors at the Guitar Center in Town Square. A large section of parking lot was cordoned off, for the Shelby and Denbeste haulers, food services, a rock/blues (Chris Bell) band which really pumped the jams. In addition to the almost 200 Shelby's that showed up, Shelby brought out their Nationwide Series Stock car as well as the 50th Super Snake and GTS. It was a warm comfortable evening and a great time was had by all.

This year, the track portion of the event was held at Spring Mountain Motorsports Ranch. Located 50 miles west in Pahrump, it was both an easy and scenic drive from the hotel. For those unfamiliar with Spring Mountain, it is a private track club complete with beautiful grounds, clubhouse, condos and swimming pool. The track is designed to be in multiple configurations, and for us, it was going to be in its longest form at 3.6 miles including three long straightaways and passing zones. The Ford GT's were easily hitting 140mph on the back straight. Certainly, a major upgrade from the road course at LVMS, in my opinion. Although the track only had a 50' elevation change,



it was very technical. The open track portion was run by our good friends at LASSAC and NORCAL SAAC, including our own Cole Reif and Richard Ravel. Great job fellas! All four run groups had plenty of track time. When a car went off, (ah, this author was one of those), the track clean-up crew got right on it.

Best suggestion of the week goes to Michael McGuirk, which was to rent a RV for the track. He located a service that delivered and retrieved the motorcoach. It was \$1100 for the two days, so eleven of us in at \$100 per, and we now had a Team Shelby Pacific Region clubhouse. John Keller and Rick Yates had burger wars and fed us both days. Thanks guys!. The debate still rages as to which one was best, with Yates leading. But Keller's bacon, egg and cheese breakfast sandwiches were damn good. This may have spoiled me for all future track days, because my support vehicle and amenities are whatever I can cram in the trunk of my car. A 40' coach that offered comfort, shade, cold drinks, hot food and AC... what's not to like?

Thursday night had us in the one of the hotel ballrooms with dinner, and bench racing stories of the day. Along with a number of Shelby's new creations that were on display, including the new 50th Cobra,



Super Snake, GTS & GT350's, Dennis Pittsenbarger of Hot Rod Magazine MC'd an auction of some really cool Shelby memorabilia. Of course, all money raised went to the Carroll Shelby Children's Fund.

For those not doing the open track, Friday morning offered a scenic 130 mile Poker Run that started at the hotel, took drivers into Shoshone California, then back into Nevada and concluded at the track. The winning hand was three Aces. Rumor has it, there may have been some exercising of the throttle on those deserted back roads.

Speaking of the aforementioned track clean up, by all accounts, my "off-road" excursion Friday morning was quite spectacular, including my interior being parchment instead of black (from all of the desert dust), three 1-2" round rocks inside the car, (yup, you read that right, inside!) and using my carbon fiber splitter for a digging/grading implement. Joke of the day belonged to Kevin Patten. After the proverbial dust had settled, Kevin approaches me and says, "good news, bad news...the good news is, the track is only charging you \$40 for track clean up, the bad news is, State of Nevada is fining you \$500 for mining without a license."



Friday evening was the Banquet held at Shelby American HQ. A large tent was set up behind the factory served as the venue (same as the 85th Birthday Bash). After a short video presentation along and a few guest speakers, SAI President John Luft introduced Henry Ford III and presented him with the first Shelby Hall of Fame Award for his grandfather Henry II (the Deuce) for his success at the World Championship at Le Mans. Young Mr. Ford was very well spoken and had all of us laughing as he recalled a story of having dinner with Carroll. It was great to have automotive royalty in attendance.

As with years past, the closing event was the Car Show and pancake breakfast at Shelby American. Although there was a threat of weather, which thankfully never happened, there was a large turnout. The cars were grouped in classes and was a popular-vote format. I was truly surprised during the awards announcement when I heard my name called that my battle scarred KR won. My other "trophy", will be my broken CF splitter mounted to the garage wall with a 50th sticker.

As the cliché goes, all good things must come to an end. Thanks to all of the staff and volunteers who made this Bash the best ever. Five days of fun and camaraderie with many old friends and making new ones. Now, on to the next big one, the Cobra 50th Reunion at Pomona. It is going to be a great year for all things Shelby.



Tom Dankel
G.A.S., Global Auto Source
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