

Working with Ford, Carroll Shelby built 36 lightweight Mustang R-model Shelby GT-350 Fastbacks that wreaked havoc on the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) B-Production road racing class. Shelby Mustangs captured their class from 1965 through 1967.

Carroll Shelby, a Texan who achieved renown as the builder of the AC Cobra, teamed with Ford to create a series of high-performance Shelby Mustang race cars. Taking 289 cid V8 fastbacks off the line at the San Jose assembly plant, Shelby, working from his Venice facility to make the necessary modifications to vault the lively 2+2 Fastback to the rank of king of the SCCA.

To be homologated as an SCCA B-Production racer, rules stipulate that at least 100 "streetable" versions are produced. Shelby easily meets the minimum requirement building, on average, 2,000 units per year between 1965 and 1970. Shelby American soon is occupying two hangars at Los Angeles International Airport.

The Shelby American/Ford Motor Company connection is quite palatable for both builders. Carroll Shelby benefits by using a proven manufacturing base to further his performance reputation, while Ford benefits from the "halo effect" as Mustang sheetmetal increasingly frequents the winner's circle.

Shelby exteriors are distinguished by the following: blue rocker panel stripes with the GT-350 designation; optional blue 10-inch wide stripes running stem to stern; the absence of Ford and Mustang badges and the fact that all are painted white. (From 1966 through 1970 a variety of colors would become available for the Shelybs.) Shelby began the conversion process with the 271-horsepower High Performance 289 cid V8, an all-synchromesh four-speed transmission and a Galaxie rear end. From there, Holley carburetor, high-rise aluminum intake manifolds, aluminum valve covers, aluminum oil pan, fiberglass hood with functional scoop, Koni shocks and front antisway bars are added.

The '65 Mustang Convertible is the Official Pace Car of the 48th Annual Indianapolis 500. Of the 36 Wimbledon White ("Pace Car White") Mustang convertibles, three are prepared for actual parade lap duty.

The three non-replica pace cars begin as 260 cid V8s, and become 289 cid V8s, equipped with four-barrel carburetors, high-performance cylinder heads and Hi-Po hydraulic-lifter camshafts. The K-code engines are then mated to heavy duty Borg-Warner T-10 transmissions. Suspensions are specially tuned and equipped with race-duty Firestone radials.

The winner of the race, A.J. Foyt, is awarded one of the three specially-equipped pace cars with the remaining two winding up in the hands of private owners.

The redesigned '79 Mustang is the Official Pace Car of the 62nd Annual Indianapolis 500. The 2.3-liter turbo and 5.0L TRX-package Mustangs are dressed for the occasion with a front air dam, dual fog lights and a rear wing. Wearing pewter paint, a black hood stripe and official graphics, roughly 11,000 Mustang pace car replicas are produced.

Jack Roush and the Roush Racing team equip the Mustangs pacing the race with Boss 302 parts and a blueprinted heavy-duty block. 351 Windsor heads, forged steel crank and connecting rods, four-barrel Holley carbs and free-flowing, 1.54-inch dual exhausts comprise the hardware. With C-4 three-speed automatic transmissions and a tall rear axle ratio, these 250-plus-horsepower Fox chassis Mustangs are right at home in front of the field.

The 1994 SVT Mustang Cobra Convertible is the Official Pace Car of the 77th Annual Indianapolis 500. Equipped with a 240-horsepower 5.0L V8, Borg-Warner T-5 five-speed manual transmission, specially tuned suspension and 17-inch polished aluminum wheels with Goodyear GSC P225/ZR45 radials, the Rio Red Mustang Cobra that paces Indy is scarcely different than those bought by the public (each of the three Cobras pacing the race is equipped with an automatic transmission, high-intensity halogen headlights, an aftermarket light bar and a fuel cell).

Graphics are delivered in the trunks of the 1,000 pace car replicas, allowing owners a choice in displaying the "Official Pace Car" designation.