

STANGNET GT500



StangNet's Project Shelby GT500

"...Even Good Things Shouldn't be Left Alone."

*text and photos by Mary Jean Wesche
Photos courtesy of StangNet.com*

At the Mid-America Ford & Shelby meet in Tulsa, OK, this summer, walking through the host hotel's lobby was especially interesting. Each year, pristine Mustangs of all of generations are on display inside of the hotel. This year, one new Shelby especially caught my eye.

Michael Raburn, MCA member and the founding brain behind StangNet.com, partnered with Classic Design Concepts and produced the StangNet Glassback Shelby GT500. To borrow a phrase from Emeril Lagasse, Michael "kicked it up a notch." Michael states he, "...wanted his car to stand out amongst the herd of other contemporary Shelby Mustang offerings." Partnering with

George Huisman of CDC was a good step in achieving his goal. Michael's Shelby sports a Glassback roof. But, not just any Glassback roof—his is a one-off custom Glassback utilizing perforated vinyl on the outside of the glass giving the appearance of a solid roof with stripes. From inside the cockpit, you can still see out. It's just like you're looking through tinted glass—quite an awesome feature.

Jeff Niffin at Ladd Road performed the custom paint job. One of Michael's first requests was that the factory tape stripes be removed and replaced with painted stripes. The stripes were outlined with painter's tape to be sure to keep the same pattern, then the stripes were removed. The color is a "secret hue," not the factory Vista Blue as most other GT500's you'd see. Additionally, Michael decided not to use a metal-flake

based paint thus giving it a deep, smooth look. The stripe is as smooth as glass—no lines or edges on this Shelby! The pieces that had the stripes painted were then clear coated again to enhance the smooth finish. Michael also had all of the body paneling wet sanded and polished. This process removed all the orange peel in the factory clear coat. Michael's GT500 now has quite a deep shine. (Underhood, the factory strut brace was also painted white and striped to match the LeMans stripe.)

The stock grille was left in place; however, he had the lower spoiler painted body color and the stripes extended over it as well. The factory piece was sanded then painted with the stripes to match. The side stripes on the rocker panels were changed to match the car's painted stripes. Artworks Graphics adeptly handled the job, which now

gives the rocker stripes a continuous look. The rear spoiler is custom, Michael first started with a Foose-designed wing, which allows for the factory holes in the rear deck to be hidden. Utilizing CAD techniques, the rear wing was redesigned to get just the right "look." Mission accomplished! (Michael states that CDC is looking into methods to mass produce this particular wing. If you are interested, let CDC know.) C-pillar louvered scoops were installed, side view mirrors are color-keyed, and functional brake cooling ducts were placed where the factory driving lights were. The factory front lower grille was removed and fabricated with sockets for driving lights "borrowed" from the Mustang V6 Pony Package. Bezels and mounts were hand-fabricated to ensure the lights were centered between the LeMans stripes, and 2008 GT500 HID headlamps were installed. Every aspect of the exterior is exceptional, and as Michael so eloquently states, "It's all about the details."

The GT500 was lowered and is now handled by a Steeda coilover suspension. The Shelby was set at a good ride height, the strut rebound was tuned and the camber alignment was set. And, the Shelby still maintains low road noise. Dampening is controlled with D-Spec struts set to medium with spring rates of 225 up front and 200 in the rear. Michael considers the overall ride quality and handling superb. The BFG KDW tires ride on CCW SP20 19-inch wheels, which include a deep-dish lip on the rears.

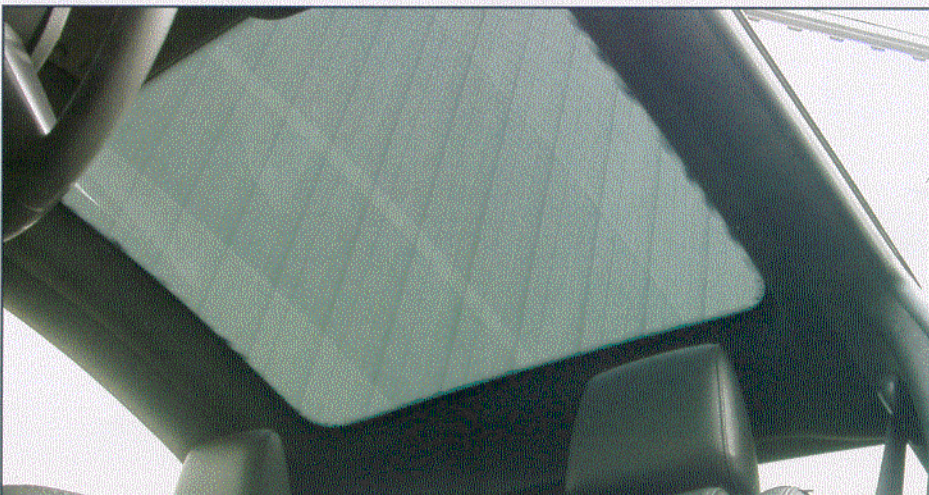
Michael also decided he wanted more power. So, a C&L Mass Air system was added. It was one of C&L's first GT500 Mass Air systems. Fit, quality, look, and performance are perfect. A tune change was provided by C&L's custom tuned Diablo Predator. Michael states, "Drivability remains normal, but the power gains are very noticeable."

The exhaust combination that was chosen is MRT's catted H-pipe and MagnaFlow's stainless steel catback system. The airflow increased and the sound is a deep rumble with no drone.

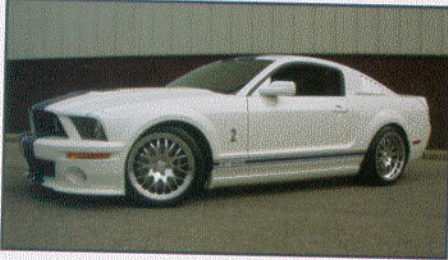
With the exception of a Rockford Fosgate Mustang sound system and the Ford GT Push-Button Start System, the interior remains stock. Having always been a fan of Rockford Fosgate products, Michael contacted the company and his GT500 is now a fortunate recipient of Fosgate's exclusive-for-Mustang package. With an overall appearance of stock while giving the Shelby a 2000-

watt system, Michael is thrilled with the performance.

All in all, we're anxious to find out what else Michael has done to his Shelby by now and we'd love to know Dyno numbers. In the meantime, we'll be looking for him at SEMA in the Classic Design Concepts booth. **MT**



STANGNET'S PROJECT SHELBY 500





STANGNET'S PROJECT SHELBY 500 MODIFICATIONS

- CDC GT500 Glassback Roof
- CDC Custom Rear Shelby spoiler
- CDC GT500 Lower Front Grill with Driving Lights
- CDC C-Pillar Louvered Scoops
- CDC Sequential Signals and Mirrors
- Custom GT500 Painted Stripes (custom blue color)
- Custom GT500 Side Stripes to match painted stripes
- Custom Painted/Striped Strut Brace
- Custom Painted Rocker, Front Spoiler and Rear Valance.
- Painted Valve Covers
- Custom Paint by Jeff Niffin
- Custom Functional Brake Ducts
- 2008 Ford GT500 HID Headlights
- Ford GT Push Button Start
- CCW SP20 19" Wheels
- BFG KDW Tires
- Steeda Coil Over Suspension
- C&L GT500 Mass Air System and Tune
- Magnaflow Catback
- MRT Catted H-Pipe
- Rockford Fosgate Mustang Sound System

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