

MID AMERICA FORD PERFORMANCE AND SHELBY MEET...



SHINES!

Text and photos by Mary Jean Wesche

If you've never been to the Mid-America Ford Performance and Shelby Meet, you must put it on your list for next year. It begins on a Thursday with an opportunity to participate in an open track event at the Hallet Motor Racing Circuit. On Thursday evening, there is a cruise from the host hotel, the Marriott Tulsa Southern Hills, to Peoria Avenue. Some call this the Woodward Avenue of Tulsa. There, Tulsa's historic district welcomes and embraces the enthusiasts by closing down the streets for a mini car show. Restaurants line the street, which includes a Sonic, and people mill about for hours. Unfortunately this year the evening was marred by liquid sunshine, but no one's spirits were dampened.

As it has since 1982, Ford Motor Company participated in this event in a big way. This year they brought the Shelby Super Snake, and then unveiled the GT500KR at the banquet on Saturday night. It was quite a centerpiece in the banquet room.

Friday is another opportunity to participate at the Hallet Circuit. This year, Scott Hoag, founder of MRT and

former Program Manager for the Bullitt and Mach 1 Mustangs, let a group of Bullitt Mustangs around the track. This included an original Bullitt as well as a group of the newer versions. To see them take off at the start was something I can only hope to describe to you. Seems the drivers were more interested in seeing who could do the best burnout at the start than actually starting their laps. Not one driver was looking ahead at the track, but instead was looking in their rear view mirror to see how much smoke their neighbor's tires produced. It was quite a site and one that was enjoyed by the crowd watching.

After a full day of racing and visiting vendors, the group met at the host hotel for an evening of fun and fellowship. Vendors lined the room displaying all kinds of grown-up toys!

Saturday is historically reserved for drag racing at Tulsa Raceway Park, a vendor's row, and swp meet. The Mid-America staff puts on a Banquet on Saturday night like no other you've ever seen. They have door prizes for just about everyone in attendance. Everything from a Supercharger to an

oil filter, hats to tires, and magazine subscriptions to Shelby wheels. The only thing they didn't give away was the GT500KR that was sitting in the middle of the room.

Jim Wicks, Event Founder, gave awards of appreciation to those who've helped with this fantastic show over the past several years—Jay Bittle of JBA, George Huisman of CDC, Dario Orlando of Steeda, Gary Patterson of Shelby, and Robert Parker of Ford.

Bob Adams from Steeda Autosports spoke to the crowd. Next up was Amy Boylan, President of Shelby Automobiles. Her presentation and her imitation of Carroll Shelby with her New York accent brought the house down. Amy introduced the KR as Jim Wicks, Event Founder, and Gary Patterson, Marketing Manager for Shelby Automobiles, peeled back the cover. Seeing the KR in photos was exciting—seeing it in person is an indescribable experience. The evening's speakers culminated with Robert Parker, Ford Division Car Group Marketing Manager. His video presentation left everyone breathless. If you weren't excited about the Mustang, and about Ford's newest

automobiles, you would be after hearing Robert speak.

The media coverage by the Tulsa-area affiliates is always excellent. Tulsa's Kool 108FM radio station provides live remote coverage. KOTV Channel 6, Tulsa's CBA affiliate, also broadcasted from the meet. Steve Praytor, Channel 6 Account Executive, and Meteorologist Katie Green, both avid Mustang enthusiasts, provided excellent coverage of the event. This was also the same weekend as the 1957 Plymouth Belvedere was dug out of the dirt in downtown Tulsa. The Mid-America meet enjoyed as much publicity as did the other event. In fact, Jim Wicks made sure that the Friday night coverage of the unveiling of that Plymouth was on jumbo screens at the evening's festivities.

Sunday's car show was moved to a different section of the Marriott's parking lot this year as they've outgrown the former area. Shelby Automobiles gave away a Carroll Shelby-autographed GT-H hood. Vendors from all areas of the country attended. The newest Shelby Mustangs were on display at the Ford and Shelby display. Steve McCarley manned an MCA booth!

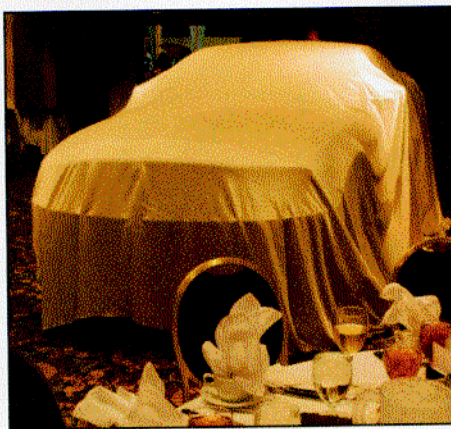
Make your plans now for June 2008. Mid-America Ford Performance and Shelby meet celebrates 35 years which will undoubtedly be a great event. Don't miss it! **MT**



When was the last time you saw three 1969 Boss 429s parked together? Owners Mike Heinemann, Henry Bone, and Dave Lebeis provided this fantastic photo op. Thanks to Jim Wicks for the heads up!



A sampling of the view on Peoria Avenue at Thursday night's cruise.



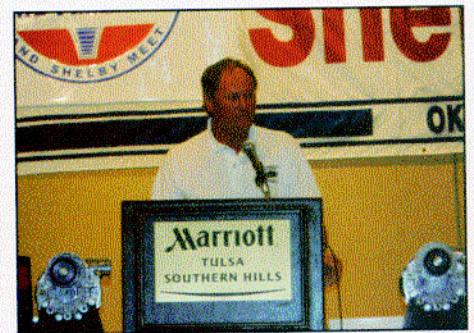
The center of attention in the banquet room was covered for most of the evening. The chair immediately in front of this "mystery car" was mine for the evening—lucky me!



(Standing L) Mike Raburn of StangNet.com and (Standing R) George Huisman of Classic Design Concepts.

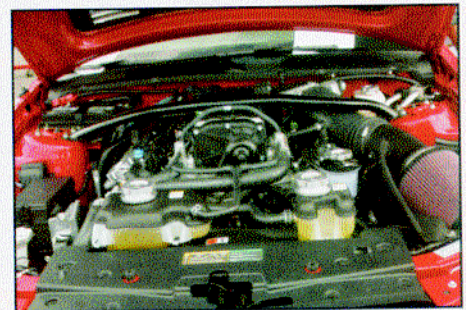


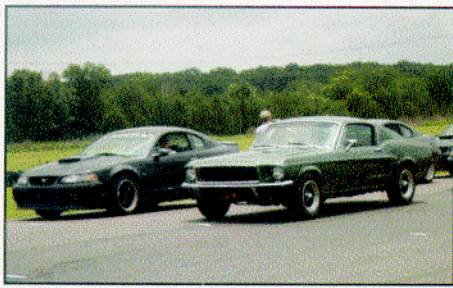
Robert Parket (L) and Amy Boylan (R) presented Jim Wicks (C) an award of appreciation from Ford Motor Company and Shelby Automobiles for perpetuating the hobby.



Jim Wicks, founder of Mid America Ford Performance and Shelby meet welcomes everyone to the banquet.

Better Views of SuperSnake





Scott Hoag (L) in his Bullitt as he gets ready to pace the group for a lap at Hallett. **Ready...**



Set... (One-minute signal given to drivers, as Channel 6 cameraman gets ready to document the action.)



Go! (This set off a chain reaction of smoking tires—a miniature burnout contest of sorts.)



Austin Craig, Publisher of Mustang Times, talks with Todd Gartshore of Baer Brakes.



The lines at the Ford Racing display were always long as people signed up to win a Carroll Shelby-autographed GT-H hood. Not to mention that they had some fantastic products (crate motors for one) to gaze upon.



Earl Groves, one of Mid-America's coordinators, smiles even though liquid sunshine began to chase cars away as night fell on Thursday's cruise.



Katie Green, News on 6 Meteorologist, sits in a GT500 waiting for a chance to go back out onto the Hallett Circuit.



Jay Bittle (C) listens attentively to the evenings' speakers.



A portion of the Steeda display at Tulsa Raceway

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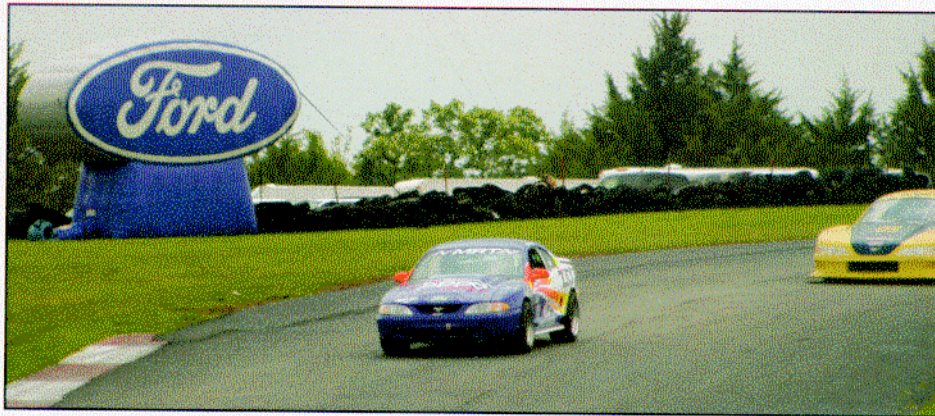
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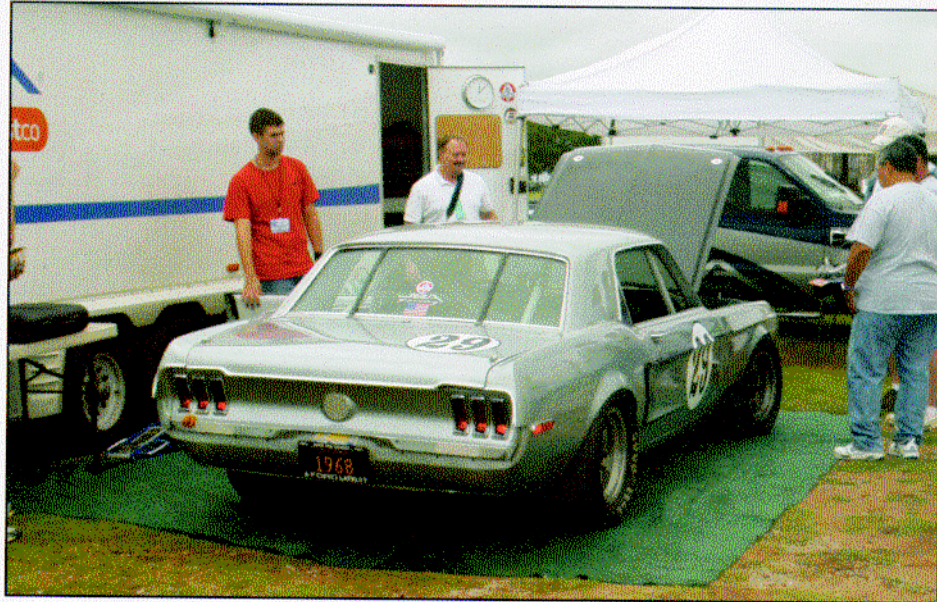


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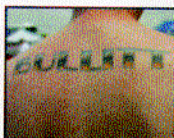
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Tom Shepard pilots his Zippo Cobra R around the Hallett Circuit.



Jay Bittle's race-prepped 1968 Mustang in the Paddock at Hallett.



Robert Reed was an English gentleman

I met at Tulsa Raceway Park. He was anxious to show me his tattoo, shown here. He writes, "I am back home now after 21 days on the road in the USA. I have been to the USA about 40 times.

I have a True Blue 2001 BULLITT number #4576 here in the UK. I bought it in West Palm Beach, Florida, and shipped it back to the UK. I had to alter the lights a bit in order to drive it here

I bought a spare trunk badge and scanned it into my computer, then enlarged it a bit until it fitted my back. I then took the image to a tattoo artist who worked on the design and later completed the tattoo for me.

I have been coming to the Bullitt Nationals events since I got my car and this tattoo was done in time for five

years of the Bullitt Mustang held in San Francisco, where we drove the Bullitt movie route and had a special screening of the 1968 film "BULLITT" starring Steve McQueen. This film viewing was sponsored by Scott Hoag of MRT. Scott is a big supporter of ours and he was on the design team of the 2001 Bullitt Mustang along with Austen Craig, who you were with in Tulsa. Also on the team was Art Hyde.

I was in Tulsa for our Bullitt Nationals and we attended Hallett raceway, Tulsa drag strip and the Shelby mid America show as well. I flew into Orlando for this event and drove to Arkansas where I met a friend and we drove his 1967 Fastback Mustang that has been made to look like a clone of the 1968 GT390 driven by Steve McQueen in the movie, 'Bullitt.'

This goes to show that there are Mustang enthusiasts everywhere!

—Mary Jean Wesche