



35 Years In Tulsa

MID-AMERICA FORD & TEAM SHELBY NATIONALS CELEBRATES 35 YEARS

Text by Mary Jean Wesche
Photos by Keith Keplinger

What began as a backyard picnic 35-years-ago for Shelby, Mustang, and Ford enthusiasts has turned into one of the Premier Ford events in America. Each June, thousands descend upon Tulsa, Oklahoma, for the Mid-America Ford & Team Shelby Nationals. And, in spite of the 100-plus temperatures, this year's event was bigger than ever.

Early registration began on Wednesday at the Tulsa Marriott Southern Hills, the host hotel. A Ford and Shelby products trade show actually kicks off the four-day event on Wednesday evening. The Marriott's banquet room is filled with the likes of Kevin Mari, Classic Design Concepts, John Clor, Auto Etc Neon, Team Shelby, and art and memorabilia vendors.

Thursday's activities begin with the Ford Mustang Open Track at Hallett Motor Racing Circuit, in Jennings, OK. In addition to the Open Track time, sponsors and vendors are set up in various areas in the paddock along with a swap

meet area. Thursday evening, a cruise takes place from the Marriott through Tulsa to Brookside District's Peoria Street—Tulsa's version of Woodward Avenue. This year, 700-plus Ford vehicles participated. Local law enforcement is always courteous and was on hand to assist with the caravan. Jim Owens, Shelby Automobiles Marketing Manager, and Amy Boylan, Shelby Automobiles President, unveiled their Shelby SR.

On Friday, activities at Hallett continued. One unique track event was a contest involving a Fusion Hybrid. Fritz Wilke, Ford Performance and Enthusiast Marketing Manager, challenged several individuals to drive the Hybrid Fusion around the Hallett Circuit to see out who could get the best mileage. Kind of a "reverse" race. It was interesting and fun to watch. Tom Rolewicz, Ford SMT Engineer took the drivers out on the streets near Hallett and gave brief instruction on how to efficiently drive the Hybrid. Then, the contestant would take the Hybrid on one lap at Hallett. Ford boasts the Hybrid's 41-city-driving mpg. Well, this event proved that the Hybrid is all that it claims to be, and more. Read about the results on page 30.

On Friday evening, Carroll Shelby was honored upon the 50th Anniversary of his win at the 1959 24 Hours of Le Mans. Shelby's long-time friend, colleague, and automotive artist Bill Neale, and former Shelby American Team driver Tom Yeager regaled everyone with stories about Carroll Shelby. On Saturday, those wishing to put their vehicle on a track have a choice of venue. Drivers can choose another open track day at Hallett or drag racing at Tulsa Raceway Park.

Several brackets were created for all performance levels. Again, vendors and sponsors are set up around the paddock, and a swap meet provided numerous vintage and new parts for enthusiasts.

On Saturday evening, a banquet of epic proportions is held at the host hotel. Door prizes by the hundreds are given out, a full dinner is served, an event video is shown, and special guest speakers top out the evening.

The keynote speaker for 2009 was Mike Crowley, Ford Group Marketing Manager for North America. He was extremely entertaining, and drew a roar when he frequently asked, "By the way,

did you know we (Ford) didn't take the money?" He was obviously referring to the government's loans to the other Detroit "two."

One little-known fact about Mike Crowley is that he's a true Mustang enthusiast, owning both a 1967 and 2010 Mustang.

One special highlight of the banquet was the presentation of a Ford Lifetime Achievement Award to *Mustang Times* Publisher Austin Craig. Fritz Wilke, Ford Performance and Enthusiast Marketing Manager presented his award. Austin, who was obviously moved by the presentation, was given a standing ovation.

On Sunday, the parking lot adjacent to the Marriott hotel was filled with more than 1,200 Ford vehicles from every era. Vendors lined the show field. A rain shower didn't keep some of the most beautiful Ford vehicles I've ever seen from entering the car show. Awards were presented in the banquet room of the Marriott along with more door prizes. All too soon, the event came to a close.

The annual Mid-America Meet is one event I recommend you attend at least once. Although once you attend, you will want to go back every year.

In 2010, the 36th Mid-America Ford Meet is scheduled for June 16-20. **MT**



▲ Vintage Mustangs and Shelbys took to the Hallett Motor Racing Circuit for Open Track times.



▲ On the left in the front row is none other than Mustang Times "Roadracer" Charlie Jones piloting his Shelby previously owned by Walt Hane.



▲ Late model Mustangs take to the Hallett Circuit.

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▲ Every generation of Mustang was represented at the Thursday evening cruise-in.



▲ Shelby employees unveiled the Shelby SR to a large audience.



▲ Carroll Shelby spoke on Friday night, the 50th anniversary of his victory at the June 20-21, 1959, 24 Hours of Le Mans.



▲ The caravan to Peoria Street in the Brookside District of Tulsa was 700-plus vehicles long.



▲ In addition to the hundreds of drivers at the drag strip, many spectators braved the 100-plus degrees.



▲ Ford Racing's John Clor stopped to visit with Austin and Barbra Craig at Friday's festivities.



▲ I know that a Terlingua Mustang is generally Black with yellow, this white Terlingua caught my eye.



▲ How cool it was to see vintage Mustangs taking on the quarter mile.



▲ Former Shelby American Team driver Tom Yeager spoke to Team Shelby members about his racing experiences.



▲ Shelby Automobiles prepared to unveil their newest model.



▲ The board says it all. Left lane temperature was 134, right lane 130 at 2:45 on Saturday afternoon. HOT!



▲ Although it was at capacity, the banquet room became quiet as the video of the weekend's events was shown.



▲ (L-R) Event Coordinator Earl Groves and Event Director Jim Wicks give out some of the hundreds of door prizes.



▲ Shelby Automobiles' newly introduced Shelby SR was just one of the Mustangs on display at the show.



▲ Shelby Automobiles President Amy Boylan addressed the crowd at the banquet.



▲ The show field circled the Marriott. This Mach1 is a good example of the caliber of vehicle at the show.



▲ Mike Crowley, Ford Group Marketing Manager for North America, was the banquet keynote speaker.



▲ Trophies, plaques, door prizes, all ready to be handed out at the closing award ceremony.

Sidebar:



Participants in the "How many mpg can you achieve in a Hybrid Fusion in one lap of Hallett" achieved some interesting numbers. Here are the results:

Gary Patterson.....	76.1
Justin Hobbs.....	68.3
Greg Hobbs.....	67.2
Barbra Craig.....	66.6
Gary Davis.....	65.6
Scott Yeager.....	61.9
Jan Zaffor.....	61.2
LeWayne Bartel.....	61.1
<i>(with two additional passengers)</i>	
Warren Hall.....	59.0
Matt Carter.....	57.3
Austin Craig.....	54.7
Tom Yeager.....	50.4
Steve McCarley.....	50.3
Gary Bennett.....	50.1

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