

The History of Shelby-American Cars

by Ken Yeager

Part II

The Mustang was officially introduced in April 1964 at the World's Fair in New York. A few weeks later the car was to be delivered in local Ford dealerships. In those few short weeks Ford spent an unbelievable ten million dollars promoting the car before the first Mustang ever hit the showroom.

On April 17, 1964 Ford dealers opened their doors to find people standing in line waiting to get a look at the new car. "The hysteria was reminiscent of that created some thirty-six years before when firemen in several cities had to hose down crowds clamoring to see the 1928 Ford Model A." After just a short twelve month period the Mustang had sold 418,812 units out the door — a new all-time record for a first year entry. This record still stands in automotive history.

After Shelby saw the success of the Mustang he thought he should come out with his own version. In 1965 Shelby came out with his car which was supposed to be an alternative to the Corvette. This car was to provide the Mustang line with a heartier performance image.

The 1965 Shelby GT-350 started life as a Mustang fastback with a high performance 289 engine and minus a rear seat. All Shelys that year came in only one color, Wimbledon White; this was the way the car was delivered to the Shelby-American plant in California.

The first thing done to the car was to modify the suspension. This was done by lowering the front A frame one inch to give the car a better steering ratio. Next, each car was fitted with over-ride traction bars to provide the car with good traction when starting out fast. Another item added was Koni shocks which made the car more stable. Another modifica-

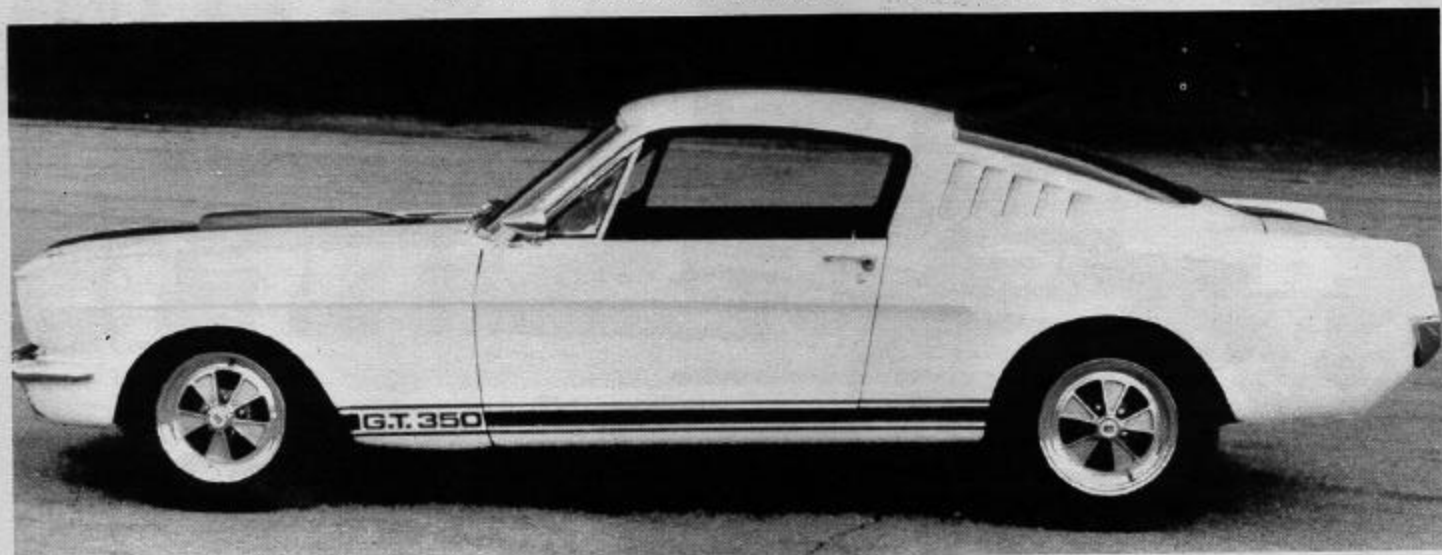
tion was the addition of one-piece export brace under the hood which went across length wise in front of each shock; this made a great improvement in the handling of the car.

The other big modification was to the engine which was changed to get better performance. Shelby added a high rise intake manifold and a Holley 715 cfm carburetor to give the engine more gas so the car could produce more horsepower. Another addition was to put a set of Tri-Y exhaust headers connected to an exhaust system which ran out the side. This allowed the engine to breathe better thus producing more horsepower. After all these changes the engine turned 306 horsepower which made it very competitive with the Corvette.

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1965 GT 350

The last noticeable change was the outside appearance of the car. A fiberglass hood was added that would help make the car lighter. Next, a matching set of stripes that said GT-350 was put below each door. These stripes, which were Guardsman Blue, distinguished the car from regular Mustangs.

At the end of the 1965 season Shelby had sold five hundred and sixty-two cars. His racing version cars had beat the Corvette in the B-production racing class. Shelby had done what Ford wanted: build a performance image for the Mustang.

In 1966 Shelby added several little cosmetic changes to make his car look more different than the regular Mustang. The most noticeable difference was the addition of a rear plexiglass window on each side instead of the regular stock Mustang vents. Another big change was the rear brake scoops that were located right behind each door of the car. These scoops functioned to force air into the rear drum brakes, keeping them cooler. A nice addition to further distinguish the car from the rear was a gas cap that said GT-350 on it.

Another big change for 1966 was the addition of several new colors. Now there was a choice of Candy Apple Red, Guardsman Blue, Ivy Green, Raven Black, and of course, Wimbledon White. Carroll Shelby was quoted in 1965 as saying, "You can have a Shelby GT-350 in any color you want as long as it is Wimbledon White." All of these changes added up to a good year for Shelby-American. In 1966 almost four times as many Shelybs were sold as in 1965.

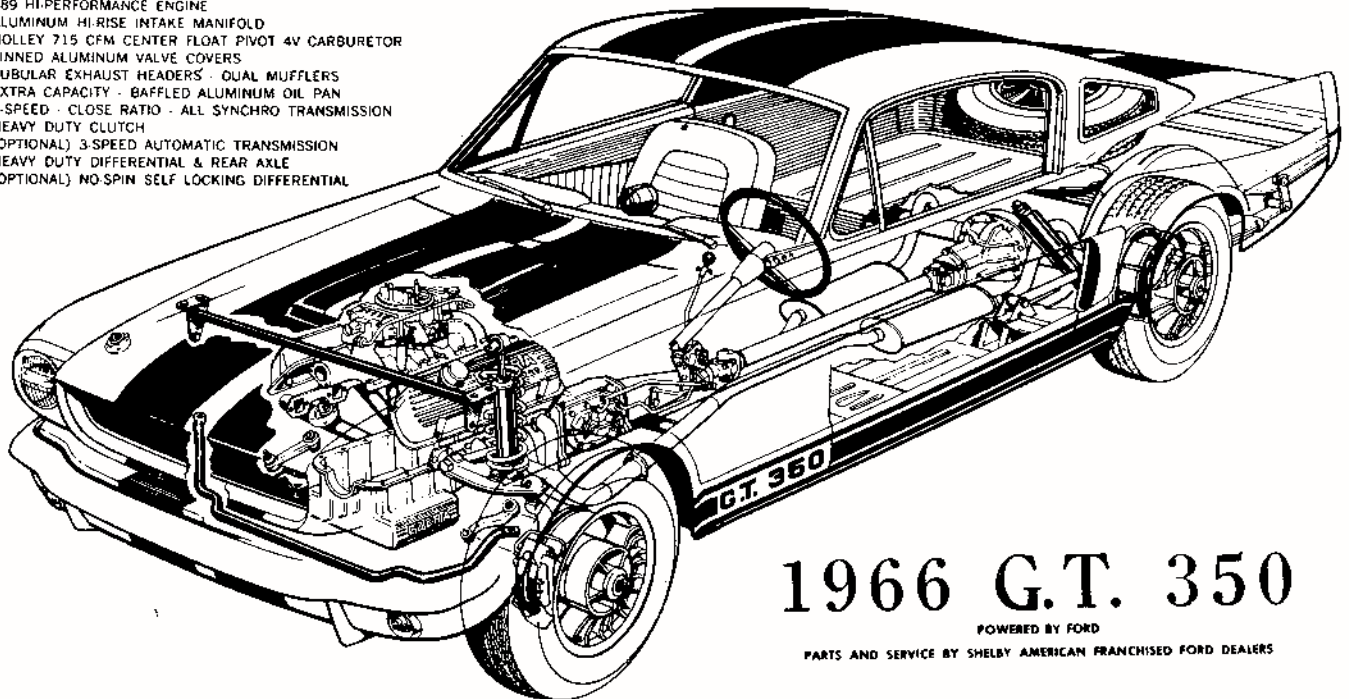
SUSPENSION
 QUICK STEERING MODIFICATION
 FRONT SUSPENSION GEOMETRIC MODIFICATION
 LOWER FRONT STABILIZER BAR
 ADJUSTABLE HEAVY DUTY SHOCKS
 MONTE CARLO BAR
 REAR AXLE STABILIZER BARS
 EXPORT FRONT UNIBODY REINFORCING YOKE

BRAKES - WHEELS - TIRES
 CALIPER DISC FRONT BRAKES W/SPECIAL COMPETITION TESTED PADS
 LARGE REAR DRUM BRAKES W/SINTERED AND SEGMENTED LININGS
 SPECIAL STEEL WHEELS - 15 INCH W/6 K RIM
 14 INCH W/6JK RIM
 (OPTIONAL) CAST ALLOY WHEELS - 14 INCH 6½ J RIM
 HIGH SPEED LOW PROFILE TIRES, 7.75 x 15 OR 6.95 x 14 (WHEN APPLICABLE)
 SPECIAL CHROMED WHEEL LUG NUTS

INTERIOR
 REAR LUGGAGE PLATFORM
 FOLDING REAR SEATS (OPTIONAL)
 TWIN BUCKET SEATS
 COMPETITION 3-INCH WIDE SEAT BELTS
 FIVE DIAL INSTRUMENT PANEL
 COWL MOUNTED TACHOMETER
 SIMULATED WOOD RIM STEERING WHEEL

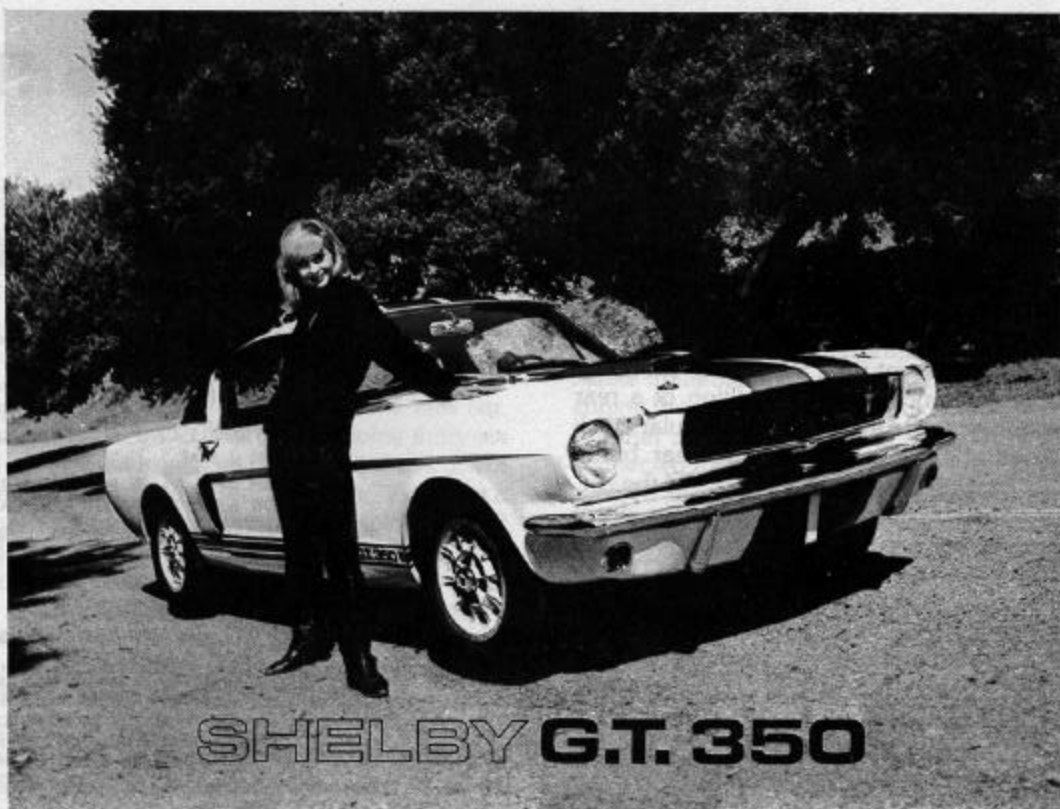
EXTERIOR
 SPECIAL AIR SCOOP HOOD
 COMPETITION HOOD LOCK PINS
 REAR BRAKE AIR SCOOP
 ROCKER PANEL STRIPES & IDENTIFICATION
 G.T. 350 MEDALLION FUEL FILLER CAP
 LE MANS BODY STRIPES (OPTIONAL)
 REAR SIDE WINDOWS

ENGINE - TRANSMISSION - REAR AXLE
 289 HI-PERFORMANCE ENGINE
 ALUMINUM HI-RISE INTAKE MANIFOLD
 HOLLEY 715 CFM CENTER FLOAT PIVOT 4V CARBURETOR
 FINNED ALUMINUM VALVE COVERS
 TUBULAR EXHAUST HEADERS - DUAL MUFFLERS
 EXTRA CAPACITY - BAFFLED ALUMINUM OIL PAN
 4-SPEED - CLOSE RATIO - ALL SYNCHRO TRANSMISSION
 HEAVY DUTY CLUTCH
 (OPTIONAL) 3-SPEED AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION
 HEAVY DUTY DIFFERENTIAL & REAR AXLE
 (OPTIONAL) NO-SPIN SELF LOCKING DIFFERENTIAL



1966 G.T. 350

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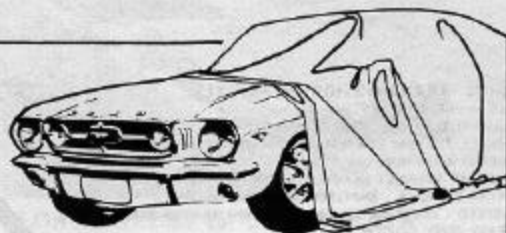
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