

THE BIRTH OF A LEGEND

The story is a pretty cool one. The President of Ford Motor Company US, Lee Iacocca, calls up a mate called Carroll Shelby who knows a thing or two about fast cars, and asks him to design a competitive Mustang. At the time Carroll was reluctant to give it a shot, as he didn't think too highly of the Mustang.

"It was practically impossible to take a little secretary's car that sold for \$2,395 and turn it into something that would go out and win races," Shelby recalled. It would be a challenge that Carroll would not take lightly, and started doing his homework.

"Ford had a V8 engine I thought we could hop up. Then I asked my friend John Bishop at Sports Car Club of America what he thought I ought to do with the chassis. He said I ought to put bigger brakes on it, take the rear seats out and change to a much stiffer suspension." Spanners started flying, and the Shelby American plant near Los Angeles International Airport, which was Carroll's base, buzzed to the sound of a legend being created.

After the dust had finally settled, out rolled the very first Shelby GT Mustang. It was an instant hit, and when Ford released it in mid-1965 all 500 or so sold quickly to very happy buyers. So began the path in history of Carroll Shelby and his awesome Mustangs, and to this day the old dog is still cranking out hardcore Fords packed with new tricks.



A

B

C

Above: She looks serious because no one took her car seriously...until now

A: 'Secretary's Car' just took on a whole new meaning

B: Mess with these two and they'll throw the book at you!

C: ...must write suitable caption... ummmm...

Below: Attention to detail on this car is amazing

When Carroll Shelby decided to give good mate and Ford US CEO Lee Iacocca a hand in turning the 60's Mustang from a docile donkey into a fire breathing racehorse he didn't mess around. He loaded up a big engine, big brakes, big suspension and wrapped it up in a body that had so much attitude it made even the Chevrolet drivers drool.

That was over 45 years ago, and despite the huge leaps in technology since then, very little beats a 'Shelbyised' 1965 Mustang Fastback for instant street cred these days. In the 60's nothing out of the US came close to the success Carroll created with the look and sound of the 65 Fastback. It just worked and looked so perfect from day one that it has been one of the most replicated Mustang formats of all time.

Never has replicating a car been so applicable after you spy Gary Smith's efforts with his sensational 65 fastback. This is so much more than just another Shelby clone, it's heart and soul are deeply entrenched with the sort of ideology Carroll set out to instil in his cars. Back in the 60's Carroll recognised the need through hard work and commitment, to build a better, faster and more competitive Mustang platform. Gary has got a life time subscription to this motto, and this is the result of one man's grand plan.

When this project started, Gary makes a joke that the money (earmarked) for an overseas trip was at the last minute funnelled towards the Stang...much to the dismay of his wife Anna. The build was started by chance after a ride to the shops for Gary and his daughter on their push bikes. "We were riding down to the shops for some milk," smiles Gary "somehow we ended up in the Muscle Car Factory garage. I was blown away by the Mustangs,

and I knew that after 20 odd years of telling my wife I would build one that I had finally stumbled across the answer."

That answer led to a partnership being formed with Leo the owner of the Muscle Car Factory, and a plan hatched to create one of the best Mustang fastbacks this country has ever seen. Gary's particular Stang was already onsite when he wheeled through the door on his pushie. Leo simply sat down with Gary and worked out exactly what he wanted, and then directed him to the most applicable vehicle.

"I really wanted to build a Hertz replica," explains Gary "Leo had a genuine A-code black on black Mustang that needed a restoration there, so we did a deal and the build started." Gary is a fussy bugger, as you can see from the pics, and directed Leo to make the Stang as straight as possible, which in itself would add an extra 12 months to the build time.

The massive task of turning something average into something stunning started with a complete strip down. Mustang Fastbacks are notoriously hard for getting into the actual fastback section to carry out repairs, so the guys at Muscle Car Factory undertook a Herculean effort of stripping all the metal work and panels away. It was this type of dedication that saw basically a chassis with a roof turret become the focal point for the beginning of the Stang's road to recovery.

Rust was removed, everything was undercoated, protected and checked three or four times. Underneath everything was prepped to the same standard as the top, and the work carried out is mind blowing to say the least. Leo and the boys have shown commitment seldom seen in the resurrection of an older car, and that hard work was starting to pay off in spades.

