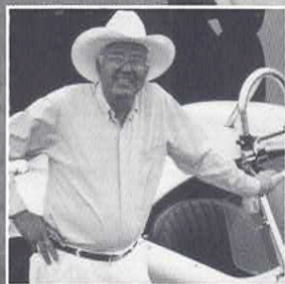


# KIT CAR

THE SPECIALTY CAR MAGAZINE

## Shelby Cobra Meets It's Match! -The Contemporary Cobra Replica!



Carroll Shelby

By Mac DeMere  
Senior Road Test Editor, Motor Trend Magazine and  
Steve Temple, Editor, Kit Car Magazine

The cable network ESPN did something similar with the great pro football teams. ESPN's computer simulation allowed the '66 Packers, to "play" the undefeated '72 Dolphins. Although it won't provoke as many bar-stool discussions and concussions as the NFL simulation, our game plan matched a Shelby Cobra against a team of reproductions. We wanted to see how close the copies came to duplicating the entire Cobra experience -- by using track tests of slalom speed, skid-pad grip and drag-strip time. We actually borrowed a "re-created original" 427 Shelby Cobra. It's nearly identical to the ones Shelby built back in the '60s, except for a slightly thicker gauge of aluminum in the bodywork and a redesigned upper ball joint in the front suspension. Both alterations were done to improve the car's durability. "It was the Cobra I would have built had production continued," Shelby claimed. This game features players from (alphabetical order): Ace Auto Services, Auto Sport Performance Products, Butler Racing, Contemporary Classic, Hi-Tech, MidStates and V.S.E. by Herb Adams. In sum, this gathering represents a wide sampling of replica philosophies. Shelby agreed to participate in our test, as long as there weren't any "shotgun" motors. Be that as it may, the intent of this event was not to see who had the quickest Cobra on the planet. We wanted to see how these replicas stacked up to the original in a number of different ways.



Except for the fact that the manufacturer doesn't wear bib overalls, Contemporary's roadster is about as close as you'll come to the original Cobra.



**The Contemporary was the only car that equalled or bettered the results of the Shelby in every test category.**

**ACCELERATION, 0-60 MPH (SEC)**

**CONTEMPORARY 4.8**

**SHELBY 427 4.8**

**SKIDPAD (LATERAL g)**

**CONTEMPORARY 1.00 g**

**SHELBY 427 1.00 g**

**SLALOM (MPH)**

**CONTEMPORARY 69.9**

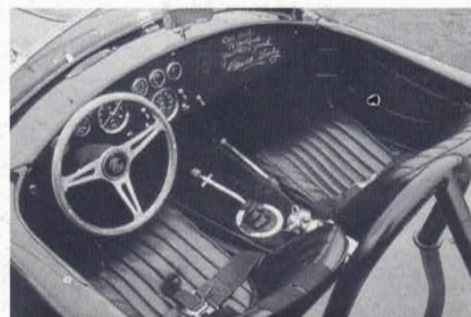
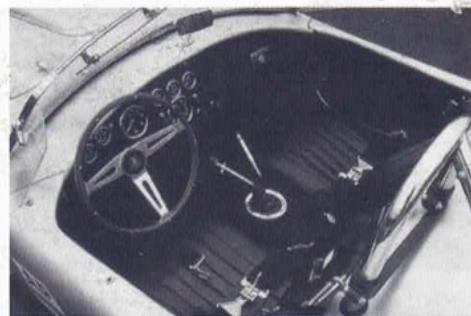
**SHELBY 427 68.2**

**ACCELERATION, QUARTER-MILE (SEC@MPH)**

**SHELBY 427 13.2 @ 105.5**

**CONTEMPORARY 13.2 @ 104.3**

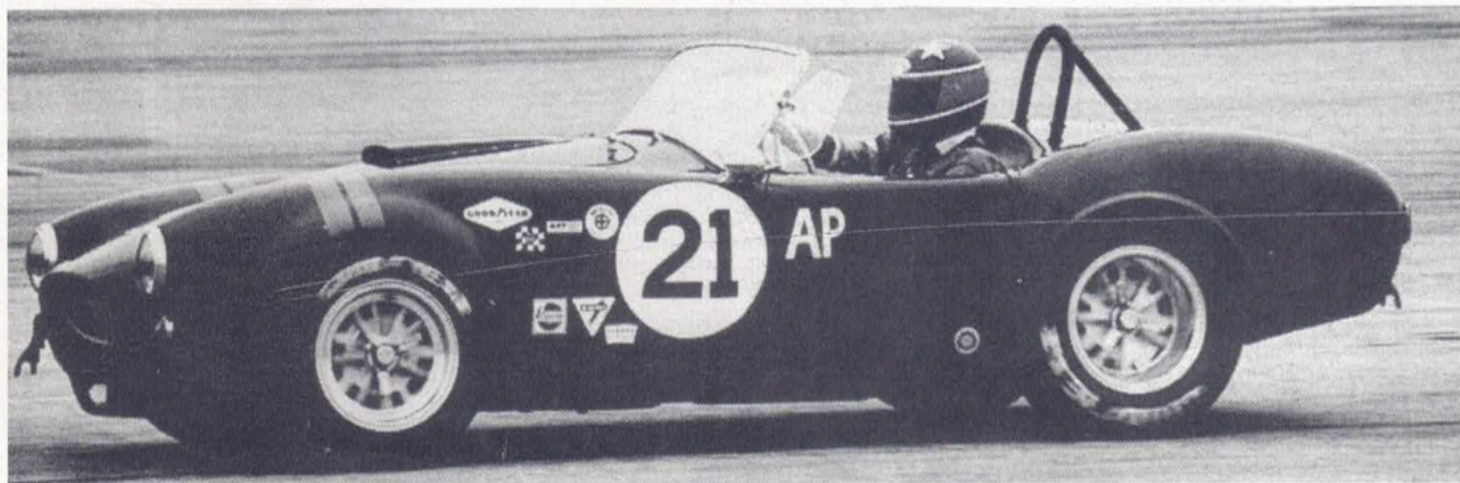
Test Editor, Mac DeMere. The Contemporary identically matched the Cobra's times in 0-60 MPH and quarter-mile acceleration and matched its 1.0 g performance around the skid-pad. Its trap speed at the end of the quarter-mile was an insignificant 1.2 MPH slower, while its slalom speed was 1.7 MPH quicker. However, the Contemporary was the only car that equalled or bettered the results of the Shelby in every test category (see performance graphs). You can't quantify feel, yet the Contemporary Classic felt very close to the Cobra -- a good job of reproducing the wonders of the original. Another important similarity was the Jaguar independent rear suspension, which allowed the car to match the original's low-seating position. This car's round-tube frame configurations is also nearly identical. The Jaguar XKE's front and rear suspension used, does an impressive job as the Contemporary Classic has a better turn in response than the Shelby. Except for the fact that the manufacturer doesn't wear bib overalls, Contemporary's roadster is about as close as you'll come to the original Cobra. Lewis Downs (the car's owner) believes he's getting more than 400 horsepower from his 428 cubic-inch Ford -- the Blue Streaks were on the verge of wheelspin at the end of the quarter-mile. The engine, like the car, is 10 years old, but hasn't been apart except for a precautionary main bearing change. *One non-original part of the Contemporary Classic is a big signature on the dash. It reads: "Carroll Shelby, Best Wishes." That just about says it all.*



Not all cockpits are created equally. Probably the closest in appearance to Shelby's (top) is Contemporary Classic's (middle). Compare these two with the "no nostalgia" approach of the replica from V.S.E. by Herb Adams (bottom). Note the size of the transmission tunnel.

**Contemporary Classic might as well be a signature replica...**

All skid-pad, slalom and drag-strip figures were obtained by Motor Trend Senior Road



Lewis Downs and this 10-year old Contemporary Cobra Replica have covered over 40,000 miles together. You can create your own Contemporary Cobra Replica for a mere fraction of the \$500,000 cost of the Shelby Cobra used in this test.

**A.C. EXOTIC CARS INC.**

12955 York Delta Dr., Unit J  
Cleveland, Ohio 44133

Phone: 216-582-5444 Fax: 216-582-5455