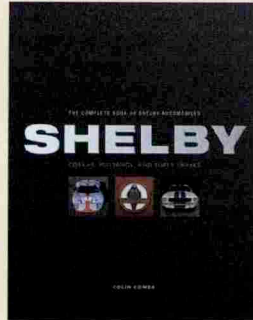


Speaking Volumes by Mark Wigginton

Shelby: The Complete Book of Shelby Automobiles

By Colin Comer, [Motorbooks](#), 256 pages, \$29.70, Amazon

Astride the motoring landscape, our history is littered with icons aplenty, but the most quintessentially American story may belong to Carroll Shelby. The failed-chicken-farmer-turned-racer, the racer-turned-car-builder, the car-builder-turned-one-man-brand, Ol' Shel's backstory reads like a movie. As American as apple pie, he is, at turns, a talented performer, a charmer, a con man, and an entrepreneur rolling the dice again and again—and coming up a winner.



Starting as a hard-charging, successful driver (three times national champion and Sports Illustrated's "Sport Car Driver of the Year" in 1957), Shelby saw up close the beauty of '50s-style hybrids. In Shelby's time a hybrid married a European sports car chassis with a noisy, brutish American engine. His racing days cut short by heart troubles, Shelby wanted to build a car, and he seized the moment to marry an underpowered AC Ace chassis with Ford's light new 260-ci V8. The Cobra was born.

To sell cars, Shelby went on a victory spree across American racing, then off to vanquish the best from Europe. That brash attitude and fearless spirit led to something that has never been replicated—an American car (Cobra Daytona coupe) winning the World Manufacturer's Championship.

The Shelby glory years were, in retrospect, amazingly short. Eight years was all it took to marry various pieces from the Ford parts bins, stir in a passion for winning, and build an American legend with Cobras, GT350s, Daytona coupes, and Ford GT40s.

Colin Comer, an avid fan of the man and the cars he built (as well as an SCM Contributing Editor), has created a comprehensive guide to all of the cars from Shelby and his team, from the many versions of the Cobra through to his current work with Ford on a new Shelby GT500.

Starting with a lovely, heartfelt dedication to Shelby collaborator Phil Remington, the book gives an informed, readable guide to the cars and the men of Shelby American. Backed by beautiful vintage and current photos of the cars, Comer writes with authority and passion about the man and the amazing cars he created.

Provenance: ★★★★★

Colin Comer may have been born to do this book. A hard-driving owner of a GT 350, among other Shelby cars, Comer tapped the records of the Shelby American Automobile Club, existing literature, and Shelby insiders Pete Brock and Phil Remington. Comer's depth of knowledge infuses the book with details.

Fit and finish: ★★★★★

A beautiful book on every level, with tack-sharp historic photos quite well reproduced, paired with spectacular color images. One quibble is that the photo captions are small and light, a bit difficult for these old eyes. That normally wouldn't be a problem, but the captions in this book are dense with facts and lovingly written, a rarity.

Drivability: ★★★★★

What can I say? This book has it all—lovely writing in the tone of a friend over a pint telling you stories about the cars that got away, handsome photographs, important photographs, plenty of inside information and insights, all bound up in a package as elegant and purposeful as the Cobra itself. Bravo.

