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2005 Shelby Cobra GT500

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The most powerful factory-built Ford Mustang in history will take to the street next year, following a unique collaboration between performance car legend Carroll Shelby and the Ford Special Vehicle Team (SVT).

Ford took the wraps off the 450-plus horsepower Ford Shelby Cobra GT500 show car at the New Year International Auto Show March 23. Designed in the unmistakable image of Shelby Mustangs of the 1960s, the Shelby Cobra GT500 melds SVT's modern engineering with the big-block performance that made the original GT500 the king of the road.

"The all-new 2005 Ford Mustang is one of the hottest cars in many years," says Phil Martens, Ford group vice president, Product Creation. "Its chassis was engineered from the beginning to be the basis of a high-performance, world-class sports car from SVT, and the Shelby Cobra GT500 is it."

Carroll Shelby lends his support to SVT, adapting his earlier role as a senior advisor on the "Dream Team" that was assembled to develop and build the 2005 Ford GT.



A production version of the GT500 will go on sale in 2006, continuing the high-performance lineage of the SVT Mustang Cobra model line. It will be followed by a steady stream of performance products developed by SVT, possibly including a version of the production-intent Sport Trac Adrenalin, the industry's first performance sport-utility truck.

Just as the original Shelby GT500 was the "step up" to big-block power from the GT350, the new Ford Shelby Cobra GT500 steps up to Ford's 5.4-liter "MOD" V-8. The result? The GT500 is the most powerful factory Mustang ever. Its supercharged 5.4-liter, 32-valve V-8 evolves from SVT's experience with supercharging the "MOD" engine to deliver more than 450 horsepower and 450 foot-pounds of torque.

Under the striped, powerdome hood lurks the most powerful factory Mustang engine ever with more than 450 hp, 450 lb.-ft. of torque.

The cast-iron-block, four-valve engine is force-fed an air-and-fuel mixture via a screw-type supercharger at 8.5 pounds per square inch of boost. Aluminum cylinder heads, piston rings and bearings sourced from the Ford GT program bring a high level of proven durability to the drivetrain, while upgraded cooling components promise longevity. "Powered by SVT" camshaft covers are the finishing touch to the engine.

"This version of the 5.4-liter V-8 has a higher horsepower rating than any other factory Mustang in history," says Jay O'Connell, SVT chief vehicle engineer. "It really delivers on the essence of two great names in Ford performance - a mix of SVT's modern-day experience with supercharging and the Shelby GT500's heritage of big-block power."



Helping to put the power of the GT500's supercharged V-8 to the pavement is a T-56 six-speed manual gearbox. The evenly spaced gears mean less stirring is needed to find the "sweet spot" in keeping the revs "on cam" for power to pass, while at the same time making the most of the engine's broad torque curve. The heavy-duty transmission has proven itself a willing companion to V-8 power in Mustangs in both road and track environments, including the 2000 SVT Mustang Cobra R, 2004 SVT Mustang Cobra and the new race-winning Ford Racing Mustang FR500C.

The GT500 features a MacPherson strut independent front suspension with "Reverse L" lower control arms, and a solid-axle, three-link rear suspension with coil springs and a Panhard rod for precise control of the rear axle.

This rear suspension design has been validated on the track by Ford Racing. The race-prepared Ford Racing Mustang FR500C was purpose-built from the base 2005 Mustang body structure and suspension geometry to run in the Grand-Am Cup series, a class of road racing for production-based cars. Competing against the best from Germany and Japan, a Mustang FR500C competed in and won its first ever race in the season-opener at Daytona International Speedway in February 2005.



Continuing the snake logo tradition of past-generation SVT Mustang Cobras, as well as late-model Shelby Mustangs, the fenders each feature an updated design of the Cobra. For the first time on any SVT Mustang, the front grille features an off-center snake in place of the standard running horse. "GT500" is emblazoned inside the side rocker stripes, and the name "SHELBY" is prominently featured across the rear deck. The SVT logo can be seen on the wheel center caps, a signature SVT location, as well as on the doorsill plates. To top it off, the "gas cap" medallion between the taillights reads "Shelby GT500" centered on the Cobra image.

The interior is completely wrapped in ebony black leather, including the top of the dash, door panels and center arm rest. Also wrapped in ebony leather are the shift lever, shift boot and parking-brake handle. SVT Red leather seat and door panel inserts provide a marked contrast to the rest of the leather-trimmed cabin, surrounding the performance enthusiast with luxury and comfort. Snake logos embroidered into the seat backs finish the package.

Carroll Shelby first put his name on a Mustang back in 1964 when he was asked to inject some high performance into the brand-new pony car. The result was the GT350R, a lightweight, handling-focused race car that earned the Mustang its first performance credentials. Subsequent Shelby Mustangs included a street version of the race car, the GT350, and what was known as the "rent-a-racer" Mustang, the GT350H, a joint project with the Hertz rental car corporation.

The ultimate Shelby Mustang of the era was the GT500KR, or "King of the Road." Powered by a big block 428-cubic inch "Cobra Jet" V-8, the GT500KR was one of the most powerful, and memorable, muscle cars of that period. Shelby Mustang production ceased in 1970 with a total volume of 14,559 units.

Text/Photos: Ford Motor Company

Editor's note: *Regular readers will be familiar with the [road test in January of the Ford Mustang GT 2005](#), courtesy of **American Car Imports**. That was an impressive car - this one looks awesome. I am sure Anthony Cohen of ACI will be one of the first in the UK to quote on this exciting machine. Call him on +44 (0)20 8889 4545 , or email sales@americancarimports.com.*

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