

Scratch Two Off The Bucket List- Route 66 in 1968 Shelby

by Mike Hulley



It all began about 12 years ago, as i started the search for my Dream Car - a 1968 Shelby GT500. I knew the car would be out of my reach unless I could find one stashed away in a barn somewhere. Slim odds at best! But along the way, I left the corporate world and took over a little (turnaround-need-ed) startup business that had a potential to sell or IPO. The car became one of many “carrots” that hung before me as a motivator. Also, I had this burning desire to recreate a trip from my childhood, Route 66. What if I could put these two dreams together, and journey down memory lane traveling in piece of classic Americana!

About 4 years ago, as the sale of the company become imminent, I found a car in a small town in California on about the 50th page of a web search. It simply said “1968 Mustang, GT500, restored and in good shape.” The older gentlemen said that he hated auction sites and he was asking roughly half of what I had seen similar cars go for on TV. It was almost to hard to believe. After numerous calls and emails, I went to look at the car - it was immaculate. We agreed on a price and I shipped the car back to Colorado, where it appraised at almost double my purchase price.

While the car was still a long way from being really drive able, on the car’s first showing at the 2016 Bandimere Ford Day show, it won first place. The full rotisserie restore had been done in 2004, so the hoses belts, tires, and wires were already leaking and showing a little rot. I began the long process of fixing everything that needed to be replaced. And after that I started going through the entire vehicle to get it ready for a 2500 mile road trip. First, address the matching numbers engine and transmission combination (Lemans 427 dual quad and close ratio 4 speed) that got roughly 8-9 miles a gallon and was turning 3500 rpm at 70 mph.

While I was competent to do most of the mechanical work, an engine/trans swap was a little too advanced for me. So, I found a great guy named Lou Rivera, a master mechanic that specializes in these types of cars. Lou did an awesome job dropping in a Keith Craft aluminum 427/482ci engine and a TKO 600 transmission with OD. The new combination got over 15 mph and was only turning 1800 at 70. Lou also attacked a few of the electrical, braking, and steering “grem-lins.” The final step, was me tweaking all the many leaks (brakes, steering, axle, transmission, etc.) that I discovered while I broke in the new engine with ever increasing little road trips.

I retired at the end of 2018, so I set my sights on a early summer Route 66 road trip before the summer crowds and
(Continued on next page)



Scratch Two Off The Bucket List (Continued)

hot temperatures ensued. I bought some old Route 66 maps for New Mexico, Arizona, and California with all the trip high-lights on Amazon. This allowed me to plan out an itinerary of roughly 300-350 miles per day while avoiding stopovers in big cities. I then started the final car tuning, all the test drives and fixes were done in the spring time. Not an easy feat with no heater (or AC) in the car. Also, during a test drive down to Pueblo and back, my wife decided that a road trip in this old beast of a race car was sounding a lot like the trip from hell. I now had to find a new wing man, since mine of 37 years had just bowed out. I reached out to a long time friend Tim who had recently retired as an airline Captain. Tim was a triple threat: good friend, good mechanic, and another guy like me - born to drive.

We hit the road on a Monday morning in May, heading to Santa Fe as the first stop and entrance on to the "Mother Road." Along the way, I informed Tim that I had brought a car cover in case the car was too conspicuous. He said he thought the cover would attract even more attention. We soon discovered as many people pulled along side us, followed us into gas stations and restaurants, and told us stories of cars that had got away, the car cover was an absolute necessity. This was the first of many nights that it "slept" with one eye open looking out the window of our hotel room. Yes, I booked only rooms in hotels where I could park the car in front of the room and keep it in sight all night long.

The second day we hit the road and stayed on Route 66 almost the entire way. We wound our way down bumpy roads, through small and sometimes deserted towns. We got diverted onto I-40 whenever the bridges were out or the road was

closed. We averaged about 55-60 mph on Route 66 and tired to keep it under 70mph on the Interstate. We developed a new appreciation for Carroll Shelby, Dan Guerney, and the race car drivers from the 60s as this car was all over the road. At least we had a good Route 66 music mix, all songs from between 1965-1970, but it wasn't easy hearing it over the exhaust sound and road noise - oh well!

We passed through Indian reservations and by numerous Casinos as we headed to Gallup for the night. We were the first on the scene of a terrible accident, where 66 crosses 40 in Gallup, that had 3 casualties and 1 survivor. I had just passed my National EMT certification the week before (thanks South Metro), so at least I could try to help the lady in back of the van until the police and fire department arrived. That night we stowed the car in the bag and took a UBER out to dinner, we needed some time to decompress after the events of the day.

The next morning we hit the road from Gallup to Kingman. This is probably the most scenic part of the drive, passing thorough Winslow, Meteor City, Twin Guns, Twin Arrows, Holbrook, and our favorite - Seligman. Cruising along reading the Burma Shave signs, we considered hitting some of the many sights like the Wigwam Hotels, Meteor Crater, the Painted Desert and assorted gift shops and museums. Every town we stopped at was like stepping back into the 50s and 60s - Americana at its finest. But, the decay of some of these small towns, such as the plight of many a small towns in the USA, made it hard to believe that these places were the same thriving towns that I had passed through as a child in 1967 and as a college student in 1976.

From Kingman, we traveled across Hoover Dam and up

(Continued on page 5)





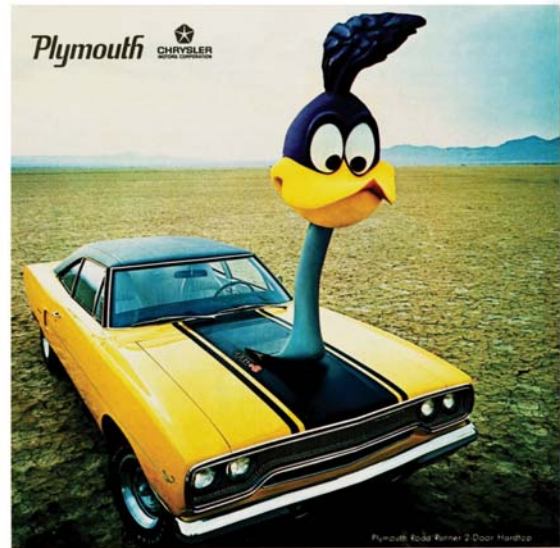
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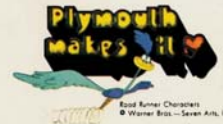


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Scratch Two Off The Bucket List (Continued)

into Las Vegas. I wanted to take the car back to where it started its life - the Shelby Factory. The guys at the factory and museum were incredible. When they saw the car, they had me pull it into the "Winners Circle" out front. Two of the older chief mechanics came out and did a complete inspection of the car - two thumbs up! They even said that the signature on the glove was time correct for Carroll in 1968, before he got cocky with his signature and way before he got a little shaky prior to his death in 2012. I ask when the last time was that a 68 was driven out to Vegas and they said "probably about 20-30 years ago - no one does that anymore because of their worth or being in a museum somewhere." They also said that driving it was what Carroll wanted us to do and that car number 0956 looks almost as good as the day it rolled off the line.

I would like to say that we continued on through Barstow and out to the end of the Route at the Santa Monica pier, but that didn't happen. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen events, we had to divert to St. George Utah and then all the way back home on I-70. The trip was definitely a trip of a lifetime with many lives touched and too many stories to tell here. It was so cool meeting so many people and hearing the stories of their

Route 66 journeys. On a positive note, I am very happy to report that the car was flawless, we averaged 15.7 mpg and only had two small issues: the rubber pad fell off the clutch pedal, and one window rubber trim became dislodged - both were fixed with a little adhesive.

So, in conclusion, scratch two bucket list items, and I will cherish the memories of the trip and the many efforts (and wrench time) to accomplish this journey forever.



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Chip Foose explains why designers love the '32 Ford

by Kyle Smith / Reprinted from Hagerty News



There are only a select number of automotive designs that have an almost universal draw, and the 1932 Ford Model B stands near the top of that short list. Whether factory or heavily customized, the '32 Ford has a gorgeous appeal, but why is that? Chip Foose sat down with a pen and our cameras to share his thoughts about how this 87-year-old design is still relevant today.

How this iconic Ford became so iconic isn't 100-percent clear. It could have been the fact it was easy to modify V-8 power, or the affordable nature of the overall package. The '32 really hit its stride in the secondhand market, when the recovery from the war effort found a surplus of mechanically handy folks snapping up cars to build into performance machines.

The first thing to recognize is that the draw of the '32 Ford is subjective, meaning that, of course, there are dissenting opinions as to its timeless beauty. The strongest voice against the '32 is a call that the design is boxy, a sentiment that Chip does not completely disagree with. Of course, Chip being Chip, he alters the designs ever so subtly to create a graceful silhouette from any angle rather than accepting the shape as



Ford chose. He also loves the fact that much of the design is form following function.

The Model B was produced in 14 different body styles, but Chip focuses on the three most popular—three-window and five-window coupes, and the roadster. These were the quintessential base for the hot rods that shaped car culture from the 1950s and beyond. Each has its own flair and small features that create the timelessness of the design: the forward curve of the door on the three-window coupes, the larger and better-proportioned doors on the five-window coupes.

He also lays out the changes he proposed when he worked for the infamous Boyd Coddington in the 1990s. The "Boydster" was what Chip penned, and it quickly became an iconic design that was replicated in fiberglass and proliferated throughout the country. With just a few slight tweaks to the Ford sheet metal, the Ford went from '30s economy car to timeless hot rod. Chip even argues that though hot rodders have done a lot of customization to the '32, there are still wild ideas yet to materialize.

Even if the design aspect is not appealing to you, it's fascinating to watch how effortlessly Chip makes lines with his black Sharpie. The quick and swoopy strokes shape a car out of thin air, making the art of design appear so easy. That is what makes Chip Foose, well, Chip Foose.





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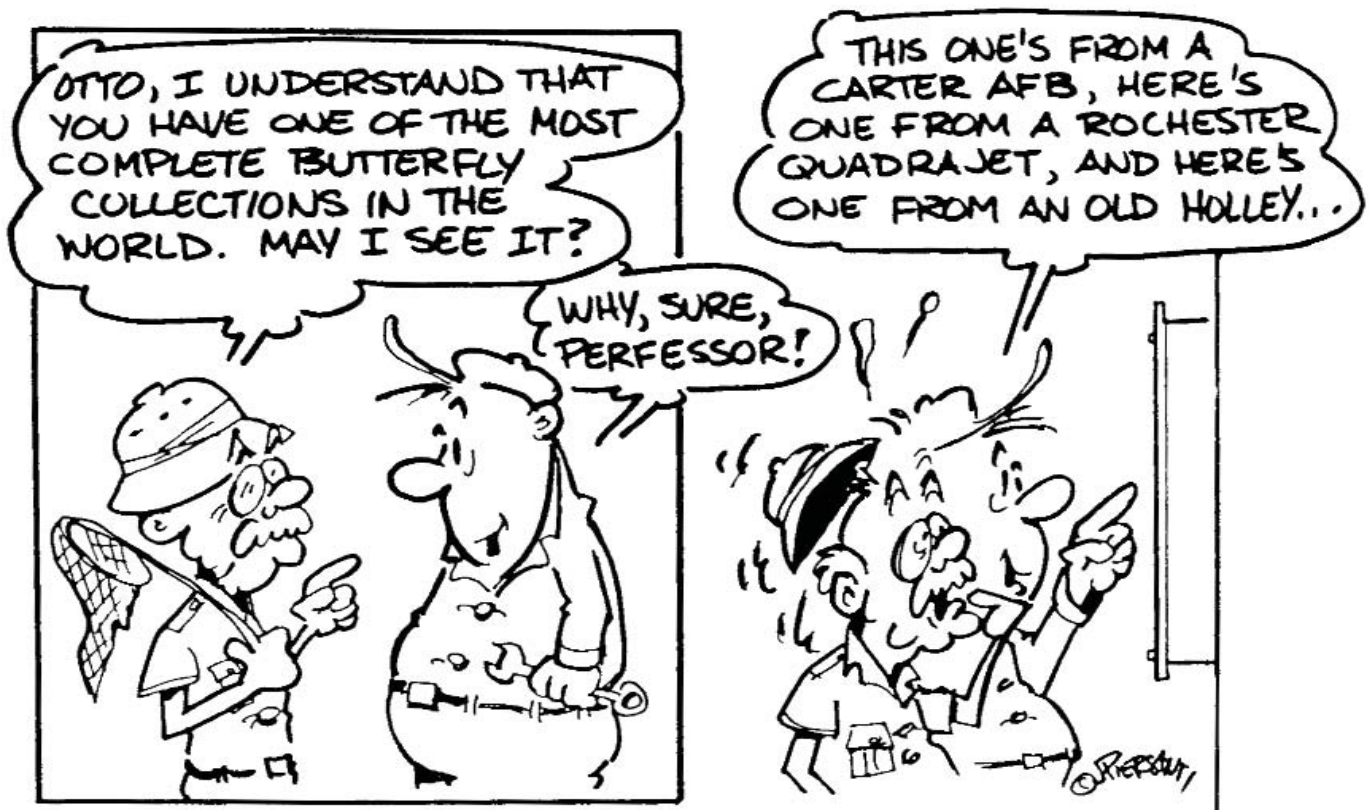
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ED: I am looking for other Cars of the Month. These cars do not have to be concours award winners, just cars that have owners who are proud to own them. (Don't we all feel that way?) To nominate a car and owner, please contact me at gakiyama@earthlink.net. Thanks.

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