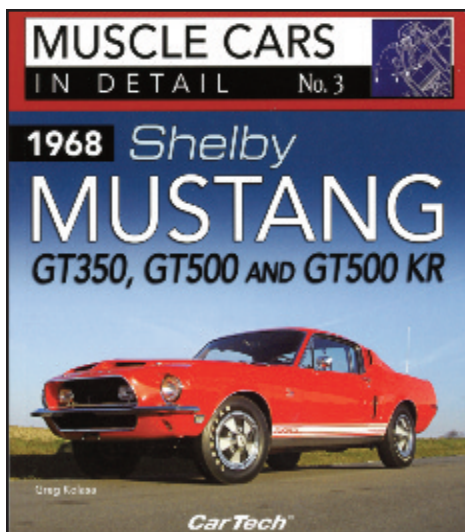


# SHELBY AMERICANA



**1968 SHELBY MUSTANG GT350, GT500 and GT500KR** by Greg Kolasa. 8 1/4" x 9" softcover; 96 pages, 132 color photos. Published by Car Tech, Forest Lake, MN. [www.carttech-books.com](http://www.carttech-books.com) \$18.95

Car Tech Auto Books is publishing a series of books called "Muscle Cars in Detail," each one concentrating on a particular classic muscle car. To date there are six in the series: '70 Chevelle SS, '71 Plymouth Cuda, '69 Camaro SS, '69 Plymouth Road Runner, '73-'74 Pontiac Trans-Am, and '68 Shelby Mustang.

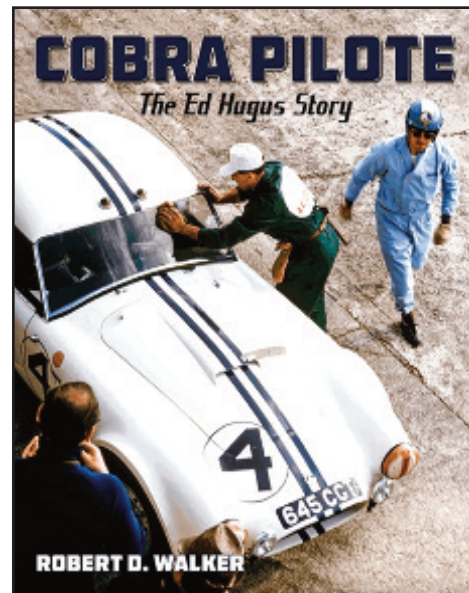
Written by SAAC member Greg Kolasa, who has gained broad experience with Shelys, serving as the club's Hertz and GT40 registrar as well as researching and writing several sections of its various registries, the book is well written and thoughtfully organized. It begins with an overview of Ford's performance program in the 1960s, where and how Carroll Shelby fit into the picture, and the basic history of where the 1968 models fit into Shelby history. Context is needed to tell the story, and Kolasa provides plenty of it.

The book uses color photography (both historical and current) to show specific Shelby-unique details. The text explains them in great detail. Much of this can be confusing to the novice and Kolasa does a great job in sorting everything out and explaining the exceptions to the rules – and with limited-production cars like Shelys there are plenty of exceptions.

The book is not afraid to dive into the mechanical nitty-gritty, explaining the different specifications for the three basic models: GT350, GT500 and GT500KR. It explains production aspects and answers questions such as, why convertibles were added to the product line and outlines options and colors. In short, it's all here and while not making everyone who reads this book a concours judge (no book can), at least they will be able to identify the various models and know the difference between them. It's an excellent starting point to begin the trip into Shelby history.

Kolasa also takes time to explain side issues, like options and specifications (using easy-to-understand charts), the explanation of serial numbers (the pedigree of any Shelby), special colors, rarity and values. For 1968, Shelby production was shifted from Southern California to Michigan, to the A.O. Smith Corporation and this is also explained. There was a Hertz rent-a-car program for 1968 and this is also detailed, as is production of Ford's 1968 Mustang California Special, a cousin of the Shelby. In short, Kolasa has left nothing out in telling the 1968 story.

It is obvious Car Tech's series will eventually include books on each year Shelby, and if they are as thorough and well written as this book they will also be as successful.



**COBRA PILOTE – The Ed Hugus Story** by Robert D. Walker. 9 1/4" x 11 1/4" hardcover; 304 pages, 114 color and 146 black & white photos. Published by Dalton Watson Fine Books, Deerfield, Illinois. [www.daltonwatson.com](http://www.daltonwatson.com) \$89.00.

After fifty years, you'd think that all the books about Cobras and those who raced them would have already been written. You'd think. But as soon as you do, another book pops up, like this one, which is not a rehash of something previously written. It's a brand new book, in this case, about someone who played an integral part in the Cobra story in the earliest days but as things spooled up, he was left by the wayside. In short, if you thought you knew the beginning of the Cobra story, you don't. After you read Robert Walker's book, you will. It is thoroughly researched and well written.

Ed Hugus passed away in 2006 and for a period of time prior to that, he stayed out of the public eye (as well as the probing inquiries of Cobra en-

enthusiasts). He was soft-spoken and modest about his experiences and history. Walker, a Cobra owner living in Pebble Beach, was competing at the Monterey vintage races and was also restoring an early Cobra. He was mentioned in an article in the Carmel newspaper and that prompted Ed Hugus, also a Pebble Beach resident, to contact him. Hugus had a couple of original Cobra pieces and inquired if Walker would like to have them. This led, first, to lunch and then to a friendship that lasted two years, until Hugus passed away from pneumonia. During that time, Hugus spoke in detail of his experiences with Carroll Shelby and the part he played in the beginning of Cobra history. As Walker heard Hugus' revelations, he realized how thin the beginning of the story was after fifty years of Cobra adoration. Here was a story that needed to be told.

The Cobra tale, as we presently know it, came almost exclusively from Carroll Shelby. Shelby explained everything in his 1965 book, "The Cobra Story" (as told to John Bentley). Shelby was interviewed about the car by anyone remotely considered to be an "automotive journalist." It was a remarkable story and Shelby became exceedingly good at telling it. The trouble was, it was his story; he controlled the narrative. He provided the details that others wrote about. And now, fifty-five years later, we learn there is another side to his story. For Cobra enthusiasts, this is juicy stuff.

The beginnings of the Cobra story have traditionally been told using a simplified time line: Shelby has his idea for his own sports car. He contacts AC Cars and proposes building a sport car (Shelby's term) using a new lightweight Ford engine. Almost simultaneously he contacts Ford and tells them he has a perfect sport car, if only he had an engine. Ford, on the brink of their Total Performance campaign, leaps at the opportunity to have a "Corvette-slayer" in its showrooms. Actually, it turns out there was a lot more to it than that, and there was a good reason why Shelby stuck to his own script. Through Ed Hugus, Walker unrolls the real story.

It is fascinating and we won't give too many of the details away, but it turned out that Shelby had no funding and Ford was not about to begin shoveling money at him. He knew Hugus through sports car racing (in the 1950s it was like one big fraternity) and saw Hugus, owner of a successful foreign car dealership in Pittsburgh, as a potential affiliate that he could partner up with to get production moving on the East Coast (where engineless cars would be brought into the country). Hugus, with connections all over the East Coast, would also make a perfect distributor for the car.

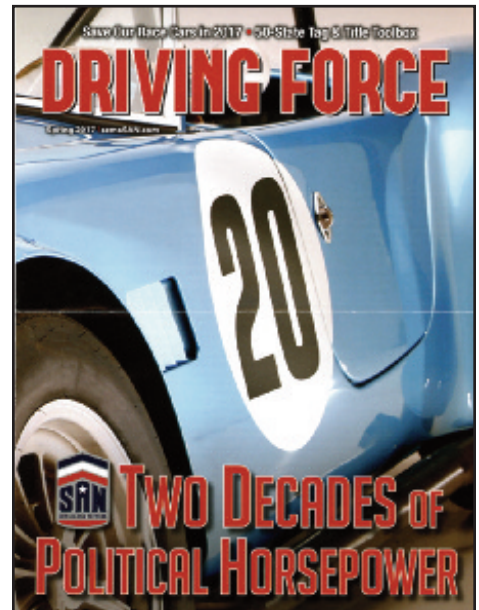
Ed Hugus was happy to get involved because it was an exciting project, but he never wanted to be Shelby's partner. All he wanted was to be a dealer and to race a Cobra. Ford, however, seemed more satisfied with Hugus' business operation than with Shelby's, which was non-existent. In those early days when nothing was certain and Shelby was scrambling to make his idea reality, he was also paranoid that someone – like Hugus – could get between him and Ford and take his idea across the goal line. Shelby was in a tight spot: he needed Hugus but didn't quite trust him, and Ford was not completely sold on the Texan. It is a fascinating story, told with the authority that only a principal has.

This book corrects many misconceptions of Cobra history and because of the thorough research that Walker has done, the story becomes much clearer. In addition, the serial number of every Cobra involved is included in the text, giving it that much more authority. It is obvious that this research was provided by Cobra Registrar Ned Scudder, who is credited in the book's preface. The foreword is written by Peter Brock.

The book is profusely illustrated with pictures from Hugus' personal collection as well as race entry lists, photos of his awards, dash plaques and other memorabilia. Ed Hugus raced from the early 1950s through 1970, but the Cobra portion was, clearly, the most important. You won't know the complete Cobra story until you read this book.



This 1965 Ford Econoline ad was spotted on the Internet by someone who reported it on the SAAC Forum. It was an illustration, and the van was depicted in Carroll Shelby School of High Performance Driving livery. After fifty years we can't recall having ever seen it before, but since it was an Internet find, no additional information was available.



The Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) publishes a newsletter called "Driving Force" for the SEMA Action Network. Basically, they report on matters effecting the automobile aftermarket, to include legislative and regulatory advocacy. Their Spring newsletter carried an image on a 289 FIA Cobra replica on the cover.