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1962 SHELBY 260 COBRA

1962 Shelby 260 Cobra – The "T" Car

- CSX 2005 - the 6th Cobra ever made and the first Cobra offered publicly for sale
- Leased by Shelby American to Universal Studios for 'The Killers' (1964)
- Trainer car at Shelby's School; pupils included James Garner before 'Grand Prix' and Steve McQueen before 'Le Mans'
- Concours restoration by Mike McCluskey

Internal memos at Shelby American show that CSX 2005, finished in white over red, was invoiced to European Cars, Inc. on 08/23/1962 for completion and retail sale. European Cars Inc. started as an MG and Jaguar dealership run by Ed Hugus, who, of course, played a pivotal role in the Cobra Model's success. At the time of order, Cobra and Ford had yet to sign a production contract, and Shelby American had not yet been created, so Ed Hugus ordered CSX 2005 directly from AC Cars and it became the first Cobra ever sold at Retail.

Richard J Neil Jr., better known as Dick Neil, was the first owner of CSX 2005. He aspired to race the first production Cobra sold and graduated from the Connecticut wing of the SCCA drivers' school. In 1963, he set his sights on the Hawaiian Grand Prix and decided to test out CSX 2005 on the 3,000-mile journey from Massachusetts to California. He reportedly made it as far as Syracuse, New York, before breaking down and had to truck the car the rest of the way to Shelby American in Venice, California. By this time, Shelby had taken over from Hugus as the US distributor and upon arrival, Carroll Shelby, ever the salesman, convinced Neil to trade up to a new 289 MK II Cobra. Thus, Neil Jr. became the owner of the first car delivered with rack and pinion steering and a 289 engine. Neil went on to race his 289 CSX 2151, lovingly known as "Hairy Canary," extensively in Hawaii and later in British Columbia.

After repairs, CSX 2005 was assigned by Shelby American for numerous photo shoots and promotions. Keeping the red interior but now painted black, CSX 2005 was leased to Universal Studios for use in the upcoming television movie The Killers. An adaptation of Ernest Hemingway's short story, the cast included John Cassavetes as racing driver Jonny North, Angie Dickinson as the femme fatale, and Lee Marvin and Ronald Reagan as the baddies in the latter's final acting role. For the movie, CSX 2005 lost its front grille and received front and rear quick jacks, a roll bar and roll bar support, and front and rear sway bars. It was at this time that the car had its AC Cobra badges replaced with Shelby ones, and the Shelby teardrop hood latches replaced the original Wilmot Breeden Budget Lock T-handle units. The Number 98 was emblazoned on the front to match actual LA Times GP footage of Dave McDonald's fiery (but non-fatal) crash that was used in the film.

Shortly after the studio had assigned Cassavetes to the role, they discovered he could barely drive, let alone drive a Cobra. This, therefore, was CSX 2005's first teaching role. Cassavetes' body positioning looked so awkward in the car that they later had to reshoot the close-up footage on a stationary set in Los Angeles and inserted the aforementioned race footage from Riverside behind. Upon completion, the Killers was deemed too violent for television viewing and was repackaged as a 95-minute Hollywood film for the silver screen. It was released on July 7th 1964, and Marvin earned a Best Foreign Actor BAFTA in 1966 for his role.

Whilst thankfully spared from any major damage during filming, CSX 2005 did suffer a minor ding to the bottom edge of the rear wing, and Universal Studios was billed for the repairs. In late spring, CSX 2005 resumed press duties and was photographed for the August 1964 edition of Sports Car, and the September issue of Car & Driver Magazine. Bills show that in June, CSX 2005 was sold, alongside Viva Las Vegas' CSX 2038, to the Carroll Shelby School of High Performance driving. At this point, CSX 2005 had been resprayed blue, retrimmed in black, affixed with a "T" for trainer, and all easily damaged parts were removed. A few

shots of CSX 2005, still wearing number 98, presumably from the aforementioned April shoot, were used in promotional material for the school, including the school's brochure.

Shelby started teaching in 1961 after his health forced an early retirement from racing. Desperate to turn his career change into some money, Shelby advertised his new school in racing trade magazines and said full details could be obtained by sending $1 for a brochure. It was the first-ever school for high-performance driving and, rather unexpectedly, Shelby was inundated with applications and $1 bills. This presented a problem as he had neglected to ever design or print any brochures. This was quickly rectified, and the school got off the ground, further gaining momentum with the addition of the Cobras in 1964. 27-year-old racing driver Pete Brock was the school's Headmaster, with others, including Ken Miles, John Timanus, and Carroll Shelby (when the cameras were on) on hand as instructors. Pete had been a stunt driver in The Killers, so he knew CSX 2005 and taught drivers of all occupations and skill levels how to tame the snake. They event sent a company-wide memo to Shelby American Employees inviting them to learn. 1959 Miss Universe Akiko Kojima, Grand Prix actor James Garner, journalist John Jerome, Baby Food scion Dan Gerber, motorsports fanatic and actor Steve McQueen all cut their teeth at the Carroll Shelby School of High Performance Driving. The school ran from 1961 until 1968, when it became the Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving, an institution that outlived Bob himself!

CSX 2005 was sold after Bondurant took over the School, as he opted for Datsun 240Zs and Porsche 911s for his training fleet. By the early-1970s the Cobra belonged to two brothers in Kirkland, Washington who had it restored and repainted. They sold CSX 2005 to Jay Cyr in 1974, who in turn put it into an auction six months later. Donald Bell had previously spoken to Jay Cyr about the Cobra and tried to buy it outside of the auction. He finally succeeded in 1975 purchasing CSX 2005 for $9,000. Don used the car regularly and by the time he attended the first SAAC meeting in Oakland, California in August 1976, the Cobra 2005 was painted black over black. After the event, Bell put CSX 2005 into static storage and it wouldn't emerge until 2010.

In 2010, Southern California Cobra enthusiast David Lerian acquired CSX 2005. Whilst in need of restoration, CSX 2005 was found to be in a sound and complete state. With the help and guidance of Cobra expert Lynn Park, 2005 was identified as being a significant driving school Cobra. Lynn encouraged Lerian to entrust 2005 to noted Cobra restorer Mike McCluskey, who set out to return CSX 2005 to its former Riverside Raceway "T" car glory in scholastic detail.

Once completed, CSX 2005 was displayed at the NHRA Motorsports Museum, the SAAC- 38 and more with Pete Brock and James Morton all smiles upon seeing it. After selling to the current owner via JD Classics in 2016, further Concours restoration work was carried out and she was displayed at the 2017 Pebble Beach Concours of Elegance and 2018 Salon Prive at Blenhiem Palace.

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