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1965 SHELBY COBRA 427 NARROW HIP

1965 Cobra 427 'narrow hip'

- One of only 32 'narrow hip' 427ci (7-litre) Cobras
- Displayed at the 1966 Brussels Motor Show
- Fully restored in recent years to original specification
- Class winner at the 2022 Motorclassica concours in Australia

Dropping a powerful Ford V8 engine into an AC Ace chassis was a simple idea, but in doing so, former racing driver Carroll Shelby created a genuine performance icon: the Cobra.

The early 260ci and 289ci models were fast enough in their own right, but the 427ci model – introduced in 1965 – set a whole new benchmark for road-car acceleration: Car and Driver magazine recorded a staggering 0-100mph time of 8.8 seconds. The chassis was redesigned to cope with the extra power from the 7-litre engine, and it also gained wider bodywork with aggressively flared wheelarches.

For those who found its looks a little too ostentatious, there was the option of a 'narrow hip' 427, which retained the blistering performance but featured styling that was more refined and subtle. They're now among the rarest and most coveted of all production Cobras, with only 32 having been built.

Left-hand-drive Cobras intended for the US export market were given 'CSX' chassis numbers, and CSX3150 was billed to Shelby American on 21 June 1965. Having been shipped to the Shelby workshop in California, it was fitted with a 427ci engine and four-speed transmission, but then – at the request of Ford itself – it was sent back to England and the Slough premises of Ford Advanced Vehicles.

There it was resprayed red from its original Silver Mink Metallic, and painstakingly detailed ahead of an appearance at the Brussels Motor Show in January 1966. The Cobra was given the registration number MPP 841D and appeared on the cover of L'Automobile magazine in June that year. It was also featured inside, beneath the headline: 'The endearing monster.'

Having seen CSX3150 at the Brussels Show, English lawyer Peter Sheridan bought it via John Horsman at Ford Advanced Vehicles. Sheridan had it repainted green and kept it until 1973, when he sold it to Frank Foster. Not only did Foster respray it dark blue, he also had renowned Cobra specialist Brian Angliss convert it to right-hand drive.

Foster took the car with him when he moved from London to Scotland, then sold it in November 1979 to David Ratcliff in New South Wales. The Cobra was destined to remain in Australia for more than 40 years, and featured on the cover of both Sports Car World magazine and Australian Classic Car Monthly.

Subsequent owners included Rob Sherrard, who bought it in 2005, and Sydney-based enthusiast Joe Calleja, who owned it between 2011 and 2019.

CSX3150 was then acquired by Duncan MacKellar, who took it to Queensland-based specialist Dennis Laing so it could be restored to original specification. It was converted back to left-hand drive, a job that was made easier because the original mounting points had been left in place when it was switched to right-hand drive in the 1970s.

During a comprehensive mechanical rebuild, the engine was found to be a later 1966-spec unit, so a correct, date-stamped 1965 block was sourced, along with 1964 cylinder heads. The front end of the bodywork had been modified at some point, so

that was rectified, the original bumpers and 'halo' were restored, and the 1966-spec tail lights were replaced with correct 1965 units.

A bare-metal restoration had been carried out 10 years previously, so it was decided not to separate the body from the chassis, but all corrosion was removed and the chassis was refinished. As a finishing touch, the correct-type filler cap was reinstated, and in 2022 the beautifully restored Cobra won the '60 Years of Shelby' class at the prestigious Motorclassica concours in Melbourne.

CSX3150 was then sold to another well-known Australian car enthusiast and is now offered for sale as a superb example of the rare and highly sought-after 'narrow hip' Cobra 427. Immaculately presented in its original colours and with the trademark 'sunburst' wheels, it makes for a truly exhilarating road car.

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