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Body beautiful

New nose minus oil cooler scoop is as the Cobra left the factory



1964 SHELBY COBRA 289 MKII FIA

OWNED BY KEVIN KIVLOCHAN
CLASSIC.CARS@BAUERMEDIA.CO.UK

The restoration of my Cobra started in September 2009 after the engine died at the Goodwood Revival. With a plan to race at July 2010's Le Mans Classic, the engine and gearbox were rebuilt. But as with all restorations the list of things to do grew and became a complete mechanical rebuild. Actually, that's not true – I drew the line at crack-testing the ignition key.

It seemed wrong to not attack the bodywork as well, replacing 45kg of filler with metal and returning the details to their correct 1964 shapes. Lawrence Kett of G&A Fabrications in Walton-on-Thames (01932 225523, www.ga-fabrications.com) was named the right man for the job, but for weeks I agonised over the cost. I asked friends in Cobra circles for their views, wanting to hear them say that the car was fine. But instead everyone reminded me of the importance of my car, its unique history and its fantastic original condition that must be preserved. It's amazing how my mates love to spend my money.

So with some reluctance I agreed to send

the car to Lawrence to work his magic.

After five months of work Lawrence invited me over to look at the half-finished car. Over the years the upper leading edge of the nose had been reshaped making the mouth of the car a little too flat. Lawrence had removed the oil cooler scoop, putting the car back to its specification when Jack Sears ran it at Croft in August 1964 and Keith Schellenberg raced at the Angolan Grand Prix of 1965.

He had also reworked the passenger side and reshaped the front wheelarches to make them slab-sided, as they would have been in period, and also strengthened the rear passenger-side wheelarch, which was rather flimsy after the filler had been removed.

At this stage effectively half the car had

been done and for me this could not have been better – it helped me to understand what Lawrence had been telling me for all those months and I could actually see what I was getting for my money.

Three weeks later I got a call to say the car was finished and I could collect my jigsaw puzzle ready for assembly. I can't wait to see the finished article – I'm sure it will be superb.

Meanwhile my racing has been restricted to driving friends' cars. I've been lucky enough to compete in the Tour Auto, Le Mans Classic and Spa Six-Hours, but the frustration and free time meant I've been studying the classifieds. The result? I've succumbed and bought a historic touring car to join the Cobra in 2011. But that's another story.



Left: reshaped wheelarches have put the Cobra back to its 1964 shape

NEED TO KNOW

Miles this month Pushed 100 metres – out of the workshop and back in
Costs Dread to think: way into five figures
Engine 4727cc, V8
Power 409bhp @ 6500rpm **Performance**
Top speed: 170mph;
0-60mph: sub-5sec