

# 1965 Shelby Cobra 427

Not long ago, the Cobra 427 would have been the hot setup on any race track. Now it's a civilized street machine!

Several years ago, the manufacturers of a posh British grand touring car got a fair amount of mileage out of the claim that their vehicle could accelerate from 0–100 mph and brake to a complete stop in less than 25 seconds.

This was indeed an impressively brief period of time during which all that change of velocity happened, but automotive development has come a long way since then and today perhaps half a dozen production cars of one kind or another can perform on that level. What's more, there are several automobiles being produced in the United States that will break through that arbitrary 25 second barrier like the Germans through the Maginot Line. One is the 427 Sting Ray; another, most certainly, is the new 427 Cobra from Shelby American.

Alright, you say, if 25 seconds from 0–100–0 isn't so hot anymore, what the hell is? Twenty seconds?

Not too bad, but the Cobra can do better.

How much better, wise guy?

How about maybe 14.5 seconds?

Get that, **14.5 seconds to**

**accelerate to 100 miles an hour**

**and then stop again.** Until

something better comes along, that may have to stand as some sort of high water mark in performance for cars that are readily available to the general public. That figure, mind you, is obtainable by the average Cobra driver with the regular 8.15 x 15 Goodyear Blue Dot street tires.

Cobra test driver Ken Miles has done the job in as little as 13.8 seconds, and who knows how much improvement could be made with racing tires that would nullify some of the tremendous wheel spin?

The 427 Cobra does accelerate and decelerate at unbelievable rates, as the above figures should imply. What's more, it is a more civilized machine than the original 289 Cobra that brought the fabulous Shelby organization into being four years ago. It handles properly, thanks to a completely new all-independent suspension system that is traceable to the deft hand of Klaus Arning, the Ford Motor Company genius responsible for the impeccable handling of the Ford GT.

Everyone at Shelby is more than candid about admitting that the handling of the original Cobra was considerably less than optimum. In fact, *C/D* was once informed by a Shelby lieutenant that the old tubular AC chassis had considerably less torsional rigidity than the rail frame of a Model T! Coupled with this flexible frame was an antiquated suspension system, designed in the post-war years, that utilized leaf springs and lower wishbones. One staff member recalls a particularly painful day in southern California when he was outrun down a bumpy orange grove lane by an MG 1100. "There I was, with all that Cobra horsepower, and the rear wheels were bouncing and leaping around so badly that I could barely keep the beast on the road, much less catch up to the MG. It was terrible!"