

CARROLL SHELBY ON COBRAS

KIT CAR

ILLUSTRATED

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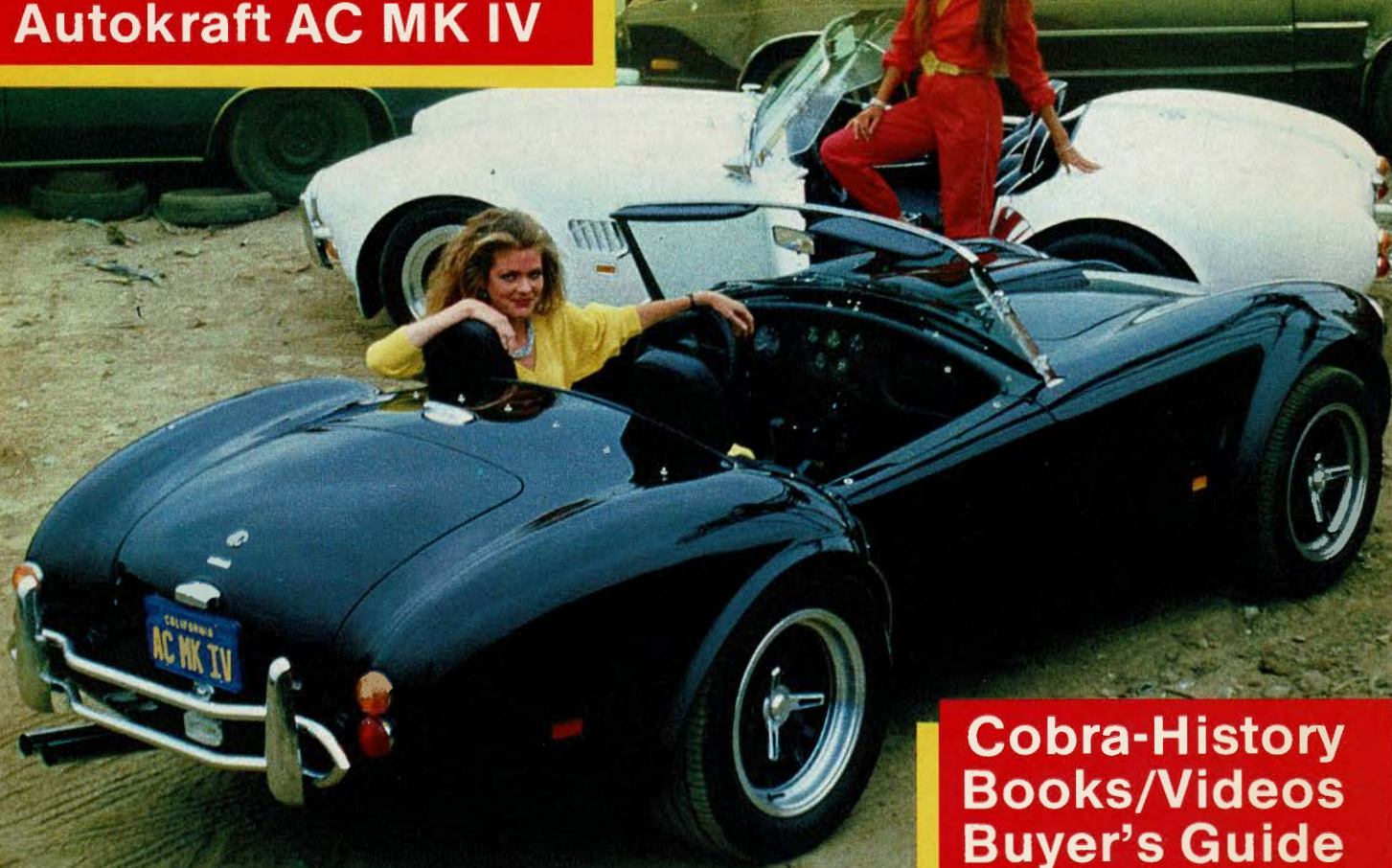
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Special Issue!
the COBRA
Lives!

**Out of the ashes:
Autokraft AC MK IV**



**Cobra-History
Books/Videos
Buyer's Guide**

**Shop Tour:
The Autokraft Factory**



Inside Autokraft, Ltd.



This weathered building is the birthplace of the Autokraft AC MK IV Cobra. Inside the walls of this 25,000 sq. ft. building the Cobra is resurrected. Located on the grounds of the old Brooklands race track, Autokraft, Ltd. employs 40 craftsmen who build the Cobra. A few of them were involved in the original project when they were employed by AC.

There once was a racetrack located about 40 miles north east of London called Brooklands. This track not only played host to many historic races, it was also used as a jumping off point for our planes on D-Day. The super long straights made for perfect runways to launch an assault on Europe. The track is now closed and has been for years. The sounds and smells of race machinery are only memories and the high bank turns are now covered in weeds and shrubs. It seems to be an appropriate place for Autokraft, Ltd. (Unit 815, Brooklands Industrial Park, Weybridge, Surrey, England) to be located. This now-quiet track is the birthplace of the resurrected Cobra. From the outside of the weathered brick and wood building there is little, if any, indication of what goes on inside the 25,000 sq. ft. shop.

Less than a decade ago, Brian Angliss began Autokraft, Ltd. At that time, the shop was involved in high quality, frame-up restorations of various marques. Angliss then began manufacturing replacement parts for Cobras and he developed quite a reputation as a Cobra restorer. The Autokraft shop soon becomes the premier restoration shop for Cobras in the UK and Europe.

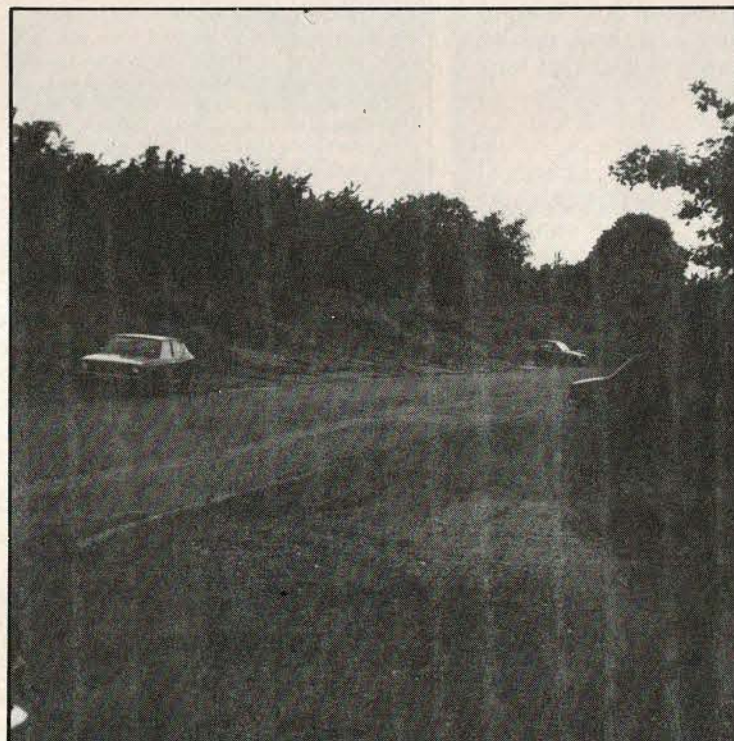
It is now 1982 and Angliss begins building complete cars. Being the perfectionist he is, he buys many of the wood bucks, or forms, that were origi-

nally used by AC Cars to form the aluminum bodies. He also purchases the original frame jig they used to build the ladder style frame. Not only does Angliss use original tooling, he manages to talk many of the original craftsmen out of retirement and puts them to work.

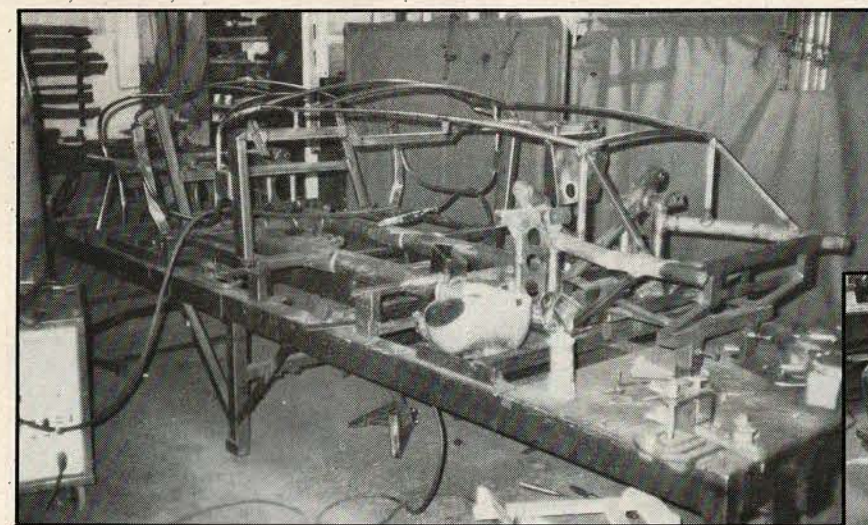
Luckily for us, the California dis-

tributor of the AC MK IV, Ralph Riskin (1344 Wetherly Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90069) knows how to use a camera and snapped a few pictures of the interior of the shop. This is a rare sight for anybody since Angliss is so secretive, he makes Howard Hughes look like an extrovert.

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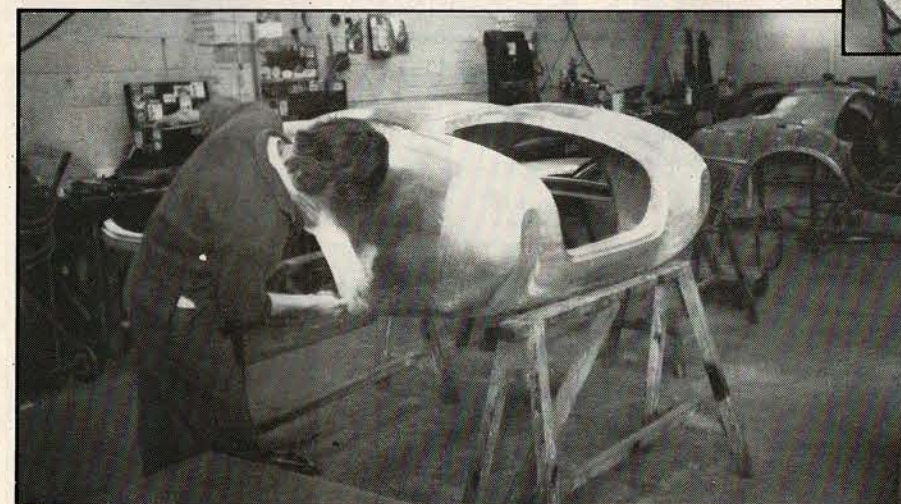
The high banked corners of Brooklands can still be seen although they are now covered by weeds and shrubs.



LEFT — One of the many pieces of original tooling Angliss purchased from AC prior to beginning his own operation was a frame jig. Here a finished frame waits to get the welds polished and buffed prior to painting.



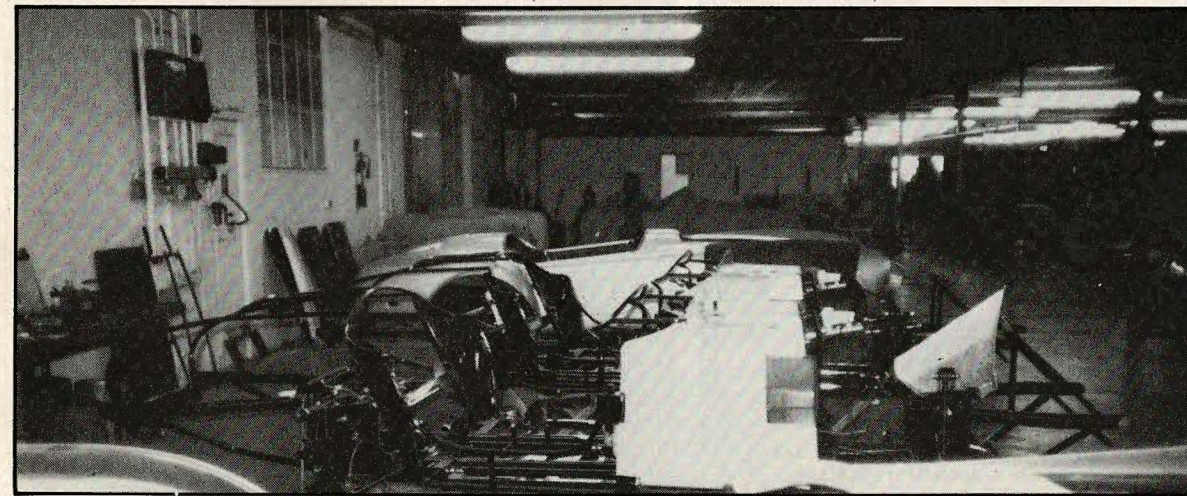
This wood buck, or form, is also an AC original. The years of use have left it none the worse for wear.



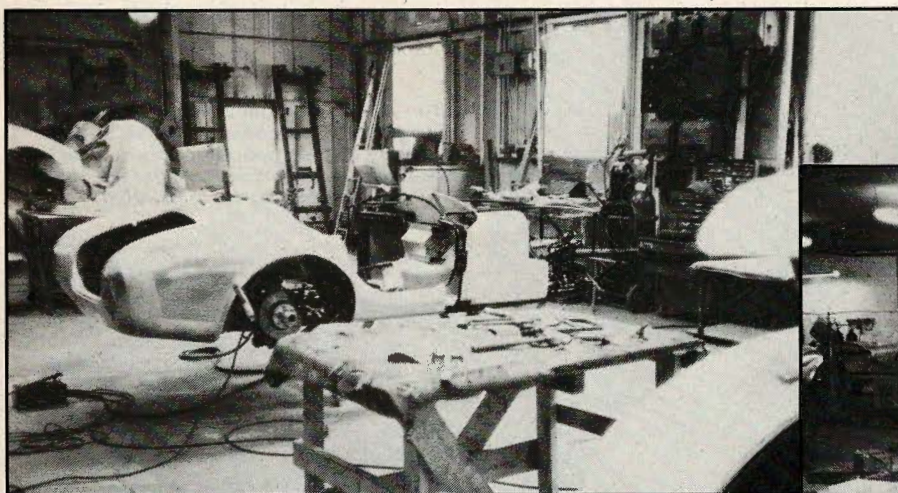
A true craft, working with aluminum requires patience, skill, and a dedication to the task. A rear section is getting the finishing touches by one of the workers. Rather than grinding them down, the welds are hammered flat; this adds strength. In the background you can see another tail section. If you look closely, you can see how each of the aluminum panels was rolled and formed to create the piece. When completed, you'll be able to see the weld but you won't be able to feel it because it is so smooth.



Placed seemingly helter skelter, various nose and tail sections await the final assembly area.

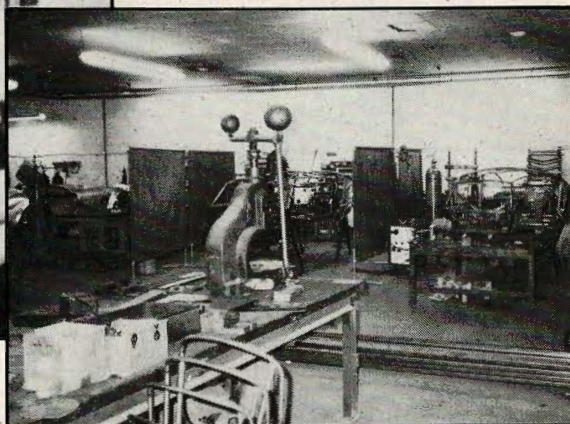


A partial view of the final assembly area. Here, the frames have been painted and the chassis are slowly going together.



In the body assembly area there is no real assembly line. The men work where they can and although there may be a method to their madness, it is unseen to the casual observer.

BELOW — Another view of the frame fabrication shop.



Cobras, Cobras everywhere. The paint booths are to the left and no less than 12 cars await the final touches.



Although the layman may not see it, there are imperfections in the body and these two Gents are responsible for making sure the aluminum body is smooth as, ahem, glass. And we don't mean fiberglass.



Out behind the Autokraft shop is a treasure trove of discarded Cobras. Here a discarded 289 frame gets swallowed up by Mother Nature. Needless to say, it makes for one heck of a trellis.

Out of the Ashes

*The Cobra:
Resurrected by Autokraft*

By Michael Baranowski

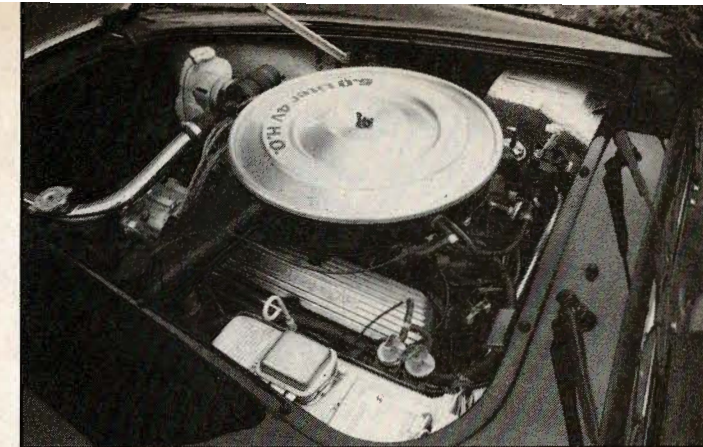
Well, do you think the Autokraft Cobra is the real McCoy or merely a well crafted replica? The one thing you can be darn sure of is this: We have no intention of making your mind up for you. When you take a look at the Autokraft Cobra, or more correctly the Autokraft AC MKIV, and all the intrigue surrounding it, it may indeed appear to be both at the same time. If you're confused, join the ever-expanding club. When you try to get a comment from the three parties involved: Carroll Shelby, the Ford Motor Co., and Brian Angliss owner of Autokraft, as to what the car really is you'll get three greatly different answers. Shelby is of the opinion that the car is a blatant rip-off and he says as much elsewhere in these pages. He considers the car a replica and wants Autokraft to stop using the Cobra name. The Ford Motor Co. feels the car is a resurrected version of the Shelby-fathered Cobra. Last but not most certainly not least, Brian Angliss feels the car is the real item. Yes, there are a few facts that support Angliss and seem to justify his real McCoy claim. He has indeed assembled all of the elements that went into building the original car, with the exception of the engine of course. In today's world the 427 has about a snowball's

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY: MICHAEL BARANOWSKI

MODELS: ROBYN LYNN KAYE (LEFT)
KATHERINE ST. JOHN (RIGHT)





A brand new 302 cu. in. V8 powers the Autokraft car. This is the same engine found under the hood of the '85 Mustang except for the headers and roller cam.

A clue to the true heritage of the car can be found at the fuel filler neck.



The low back seats are covered in Connolly leather. The leather treatment is carried over to the dash and door panels.

chance of making it past an inspector, especially in California. First and foremost, Angliss has succeeded in pulling off the coup of the century when he was allowed to call his car a Cobra and use the name and logos. Angliss has also recently purchased a controlling interest in AC Cars which has possession of the original tooling. You'll note we said possession because ownership of the tooling is a major bone of contention right now between Shelby, Ford and Angliss. The best statement about this whole situation comes from "Automobile" magazine. To quote an acquaintance of journalist William Jeanes "This is one of those situations where, with very little effort, everybody concerned can manage to look like a real ass."

The two examples of Autokraft Cobras we show are the pride and joy of Ralph Riskin and was one of the very first imported. Jim Mapson took delivery of his '86 in January of '86 after waiting more than 1½ years for delivery. The car bears chassis number 1060 and was the very first California-smogged car delivered. A die-hard racer of vintage Cobras, Mapson has spent more time at the wheel of his 289 than most folks spend at the wheel of their street car. The only two modifications Jim made was to add the Halibrand knock-offs and to lower the spring perches, and ride, 1½ inches. Jim also opted for the hood scoop which makes up ½ of the option list.

The only other option is a pair of stripes.

When the cars arrive here in the States, they'll have the same 200+ hp, 302 cu. in. V8 that came in the 1985 Mustang. This will be bolted into a tubular steel ladder frame that has been assembled on jigs identical to the originals. The only real difference between the Mustang and Autokraft engine is the fact the Autokraft V8 comes with headers and a roller cam. The engine also wears a pair of aluminum valve covers inscribed with "Powered by Ford." Since overheating was a problem with the originals, Autokraft has installed a thermostatically controlled fan just forward of the radiator to aid cooling chores. Hanging off the back side of the 5.0 liter engine is a 5-speed Borg-Warner T-5 tranny filled with evenly spaced ratios. The final drive ratio in the Salisbury rear end is 3.56:1.

The front suspension utilizes unequal length a-arms and Spax shocks. Large (11.63 diameter) vented Girling disc brakes are fit at the four corners and they do an admirable job of bringing the VR50 Goodyear wrapped Halibrands to a rapid halt.

The body for this car is hand formed from 16-gauge aluminum on some of the original bucks. Each body will take about 200 man hours to complete and with the exception of a slightly longer nose, the skin is a spot-on duplicate of the original snake. To prevent rocks from flying up inside the wheel wells and pummeling the

underside of the body, fiberglass inner fenders have been installed to act as shields.

When you slide into the Connolly leather-covered seats you find a more spacious interior than the originals. The passenger compartment is slightly longer and wider which gives you things like footroom which 427s never had. Interior heat was also a problem with '65s and thanks to shielding in special areas, the only heat you'll feel is when you turn it on yourself. The doors and dash also wear the soft leather and instrumentation is provided by Smith's gauges. Interestingly enough, the tach has no redline indicated which leads you to believe Autokraft feels the folks who'll be driving the car know what they are doing. The steering column is adjustable for the driver although hand tools are required. There is a spot on the dash for a radio although Jim is hesitant to install one. It's his opinion the roar of the engine is music enough. Hopefully, most people will agree.

Does the Autokraft Cobra sound like a car you'd like in your garage? You bet it does and you can drive yours home for a mere \$41,000.00. Just be prepared to answer questions constantly and be prepared to take a stand on whether or not it's a replica or the real thing. The only thing that will probably be agreed upon is the fact it is a beautiful, and beautifully crafted, piece of machinery.

KCI



Ford and Autokraft; The relationship explained

The new relationship between the Ford Motor Company and Autokraft of England has received quite a bit of publicity in the automotive press lately. It appears that a new Cobra has been born, or resurrected as the factory prefers to call it. What has yet to be explained are the exact terms of the agreement. The only way to know those would be to have a copy of the agreement in hand or, speak with a person involved in hammering out the actual deal. We did the latter when we spoke with John Clinard, Marketing Manager of Ford's Special Vehicle Operations Group. John was one of four individuals involved with the deal-making. The other three were Edsel Ford, Michael Kranefuss head of SVO, and Brian Angliss owner of Autokraft. John recently spoke with us via the phone and he relayed the details as far as Ford is concerned.

The story opens in December of 1982. Brian Angliss is selling his engineless Cobra's through a small dealership in Chicago. As the cars are then manufactured, they will accept any combination of engine and transmission. Angliss also happens to be one of England's premier Cobra restorers and he'd really like his replica to be authentic. To help in the redesign of the engine compartment to accept a Ford drivetrain, Angliss contacts Jack Roush of Roush Engineering in Livonia, Michigan. At that time the Ford factory had yet to be contacted about anything. In redesigning the engine bay, Roush becomes impressed with the cars construction and Angliss and Roush enter into a(n) (temporary) agreement. Angliss will supply the cars and Roush will install the engines and handle distribution however, Roush soon learns how tough it is to be a manufacturer and decides he can't handle the responsibility of running the Ford factory Trans-Am race team and build Cobras at the same time. The two reach an amicable parting of the ways. Roush nonetheless arranges a meeting at SVO between Ford, Kranefuss, and Clinard. Out of this meeting comes the resurrected Cobra.

The details...

The Ford Motor Company will become

a sub-contractor of 5.0 liter engines (302 cu. in.) and transmission to Autokraft. They will be sold to the English factory through Ford's Industrial Engine Division and they will carry a Ford warranty. It will then become Autokraft's responsibility to issue their own warranty. They have and, surprise, they're identical. By the way, Ford was also a sub-contractor to Shelby American when the first Cobras rolled off the line.

The finished cars will be sold through Ford dealerships although it is up to the individual dealership to negotiate with Autokraft. They will also be serviceable at those same dealerships. Ford prefers that the Factory have a hands-off attitude about this aspect.

There will not be resumption of serial numbers for a number of reasons. The first and foremost being that the NHTSA now requires a 17-digit number on new cars.

About the Cobra name...

As the cars are now imported to the United States, they wear only the AC logo. They are entitled to since they received a 25 year license on the AC logo from AC Cars. Interestingly enough, Angliss recently bought a controlling interest in AC Cars. The name Cobra has been given to Angliss and Autokraft for a length of time not specified. The cars are now being sold in Europe under the Cobra name and they wear the appropriate nameplates. Once the final product liability questions have been answered here in the US, the cars will be sold here as AC Cobras, again with correct insignia.

It is also true that once that happens, the Ford Motor Company will unleash it's giant legal machine on unauthorized users of the name Cobra. They simply want to protect their investment. And they fully intend to.

The conclusion...

It would appear that Brian Angliss has come as close as any individual has in resurrecting the Cobra. With the exception of Shelby, Angliss has reassembled the original players in this play and the Cobra truly does seem destined to roll on the street again. How well will it be received? Only time can tell.

KCI

We recently spent some time with Carroll Shelby at the Chrysler-Shelby Development Center in Santa Fe Springs talking about the new Autokraft version of his legendary Cobra. As many people are already aware, Autokraft has been licensed by the Ford Motor Company to use the name Cobra and the Cobra logos on their car. Ford will also be supplying 5.0 liter engine (302 cu.in.) and trannies for use in the car. When the cars are sold in the United States, they will be sold through a select few Ford dealerships and the drivetrains will be covered by Ford warranties.

Needless to say, Carroll is not a bit happy about this and he shared his feelings with us.

"As you know, Shelby American was the builder of the Cobra and not Ford. Ford really had nothing to do with it. Iacocca gave me the money to build the prototype at Shelby American and the right to sell Cobras through select Shelby dealerships. When we quit building the Cobra we had an agreement with Ford — through Ray Geddes who was coordinator of my programs all the way through — there would be no more Cobras. I sold the name Cobra to Ford for \$1.00, I didn't sell the right to manufacture this car that AC cars was building. I had a verbal agreement with Edsel Ford three years ago to never allow the use of the name Cobra with any replicas. Because I think the Cobra should have died. As far as the 289 or 427 versions, nobody had any idea it would become a legend. It was just another rough riding clunker that happened to be a very fast car.

"Anyway, suddenly, everybody starts making kits. I really didn't worry about them because most were pretty junky and they called them Cobra replicas. In my opinion, you can't stop anybody from making these kits. Then suddenly, I've heard Ford had licensed this Brian Angliss fellow (the owner of Autokraft-ed.) and AC has given him the tooling to build the cars. AC didn't have a damn thing to do with the design of the 427 Cobra. It was done by a Ford employee, Klaus Arning, who still works for Ford. Arning did it on his own time, designing the chassis that is, and Phil Remington who now works for Dan Gurney, was the guy who made it work. Pete Brock and the employees of Shelby American are the ones who put it together. All AC was, was a subcontractor that we gave the right to sell the Cobra in Europe and England. That was probably the biggest mistake I ever made. Now, suddenly, they think the car is theirs and they had nothing to do with it. It wasn't even their idea. Now, Ford has licensed the Brian

Carroll Shelby on the Autokraft Cobra

By Michael Baranowski

PHOTOS BY JACKY MOREL

Angliss fellow, who I don't know and have nothing against. I would think he could come up with something better than 20 year old technology, if he's any kind of automobile man, instead of taking the things that Phil Remington, Pete Brock, Klaus Arning, Bob Holbert, Davey McDonald, Ken Miles and a lot of others developed. Dan Gurney and Phil Hill took the car and made it a legend on the race-tracks. Now they've taken the 427 and put in a completely different engine and called it a Cobra. I'm not sure what legal recourse I have because, unfortunately, over the past 20 years many papers have been lost. What I do have are the people who participated and worked for Ford during this whole time. Ray Geddes remembers the agreement and he knows what it was. All Ford got was the name, I had the rights to build the car. I'm not saying they don't have the right to use the name Cobra because they do. What I'm saying is they don't have the right to give the name away to be used on this particular car. What ever it takes to stop it, I will do. I was lied to by Edsel Ford. He lived at my house when we were building the Cobras and the only reason I left Ford was because performance went away in the 70s and when they hired Jackie Stewart, I figured they didn't want me anymore. That's why I went to work for Lee Iacocca and Chrysler.

This Autokraft car is still just a replica. Just because they took some tooling that is 20 years old and worn out, doesn't make it a real Cobra. The reason it became a legend was due to all the work put into it by the people who built it. Just to copy it and palm it off as an original is a blatant lie and doesn't have anything to do with where the name Cobra came from or what it accomplished on the race track. This car won't out run anything anymore and with the little ol' motor they've got in it, it is hard pressed to pull it's own weight.

"Thank God for the Shelby American Automobile Club. They call them replicas and they don't register them as Cobras. They are registered as replicas and that is what this car is — a replica. In return for Ford loaning me some money, I sold them the name for \$1.00 and they've used it ever since. They've screwed the name up so bad it doesn't mean anything anymore,

in my opinion. I think most people at Ford feel the same way, I know Iacocca does. I've talked to Edsel about it, as well as others at Ford and they fell they've taken a damn good name and obliterated it. They want to use the name again and I could care less what they do. It's not up to me to decide. The one thing I'm upset about is them letting these people, Autokraft, who have no right to use the name, use it on a

copy an automobile that was somebody else's idea. Unless I wanted one for my collection, say a 158 Alfa. If I couldn't buy one, I'd probably build one, but for my collection only. I could never commercialize on what a lot of other people did. The only reason the Cobra became famous is because Ken Miles, Davey McDonald, Bob Holbert, and Pete Brock made a little shoebox work. We used to call it a pair of



car without consulting me or asking any questions. Shelby American built the Cobra. I intend to follow any legal recourse I can, I'm not really ready to talk about it yet.

"The name doesn't make the car, the car makes the name. You can call a car anything you want to and if it goes out and waxes everybody's ass, it will be recognized as an exceptional automobile. I just used the name Cobra. I've got lots of names I could use. The name Cobra doesn't mean anything to me anymore. What does matter to me is all the blood, sweat and tears from all of the people who developed it from a pile of poop to a pretty decent car. From Pete Brock, who was my first employee, to Dan Gurney, Phil Hill, Jo Schlesser and Ken Miles plus the 50 others who made it work. These are the ones I think Ford hurt when they allow something like this. I've seen the cars before and they're damn nice work but why doesn't Brian Angliss build something he thought up instead of copying somebody else? I can't imagine why anybody would ever go

buggy springs tied down by trace chains. It was a rough riding sumbitch that would pound your head off but, they turned it into a champion that beat Ferrari. AC cars didn't do that; Brian Angliss didn't do that. How can they sit around and make a profit off it, rather than let the Cobra legend die?

The people who went out and spent the 8 Grand 20 years ago, they had guts. I couldn't even sell the 1000 cars I built. These folks are the ones who deserve to get the appreciation if there is money to be made. All Autokraft is doing is cheapening the name by calling the car something it isn't. The original buyers bought something that Ken Miles waxed Ferrari's ass with. Brian Angliss didn't have anything to do with it.

"If anybody was going to build the Cobra again, it would be me. Believe me, I've had ample opportunity but, I've said no. It isn't right to the folks who bought the cars originally.

"That's the way I feel and you can print that."

KCI