



Some Movie Influence Led to
This Shell Valley Stunner

2Cams

by Jim Youngs

Who among us growing up wasn't influenced in one way or another by some movie? As far as our automotive influences are concerned, there were plenty of movies from our youth that made an impact on our impressionable psyches. The late '60s and 1970s in particular seemed to have a great influence on those of us of a certain age; baby boomers. Who can forget such automotive blockbusters as "Bullit," "American Graffiti," "Smokey and the Bandit," "Two Lane Blacktop," "Vanishing Point," and "Dirty Mary, Crazy Larry?" "Gumball Rally," out in 1976, had a big impact on a lot of guys, including Rob Weidemoyer who saw it with his cousin three times in the month it was released that summer. As he told us, he just couldn't get that little blue '65 Shelby Cobra out of his mind and vowed one day to own one.

Like practically every Cobra fanatic in our world, he realized early on that he probably couldn't afford to own one, so he was led to the next best thing; a replica. We love those stories.

Rob is from Pennsylvania and is most fortunate since the biggest kit car show there is—Carlisle Import & Kit Nationals— is virtually right in his own backyard. That show is a great opportunity to see a wide variety of what's available and compare one car to another. Once he decided that he finally needed to fulfill his "Gumball" dreams, he made the short trek to Carlisle to check out what was available in the Cobra world. Apparently it didn't take long for him to gravitate to the big Shell Valley display where he was able to really take a look at some finished and unfinished cars, chat with the owner of the company and get some feedback from SV customers in attendance. He obviously liked what he heard and saw as he put a deposit on a turnkey roadster right on the spot...after a call to his wife, of course.

After the show the Shell Valley team got busy with Rob's

car starting with a solid foundation of the company's proprietary ladder-style chassis. The 2"x4" 3/16" wall-thickness tubular steel frame was powdercoated and fitted with a narrowed Ford 9" rearend, with a 3.50:1 gear ratio, located by an adjustable four-link set-up with QA-1 coilover shocks. For the front suspension SV uses its own Mustang II-style strut-eliminator tubular A-arms and another set of QA-1 coilovers. Shell Valley typically uses 11" Granada disc brakes with GM metric calipers on the front and Ford Explorer/SVO brakes on the rear. Vintage Wheels' pin-drive rims were chosen for the car's solid footing—15x7 fronts and 15x9 rears—wrapped with Cooper Cobra tires, 235/60 fronts and 295/50 rears.

For power, Weidemoyer turned to the Engine Factory (www.enginefactory.com) to deliver one of their custom built crate engines, a Ford 351 Windsor roller-cam block with a bore/stroke of 4.000"/3.500" and a dyno'd horsepower rating of 435, more than ample to push the light weight roadster to pucker speeds. A Comp Cams Xtreme Energy roller cam was added as were Mahle power forged 10:1 pistons, shot-peened rods and nodular cast iron crank. The mill is topped by Edelbrock RPM heads, an Edelbrock Performer RPM intake manifold sporting a gleaming Endurashine finish and an Edelbrock Thunder-Series 650cfm carb. The engine is backed up by a Tremec TKO-600 transmission and Quicktime steel bellhousing.

Like all of Shell Valley's bodies, Rob's was molded with a combination of hand-layup and chopper gun processes with some Kevlar added in high-stress areas. After the necessary bodywork was accomplished, the car was painted with PPG Lamborghini Frost Titanium followed by Ford-code UH Tuxedo Black Metallic stripes and six coats of clear.

The interior was purposely kept pretty traditional with upholstery in black leather with silver piping done by Stitch's Upholstery. The upholstered dash holds AutoMeter Cobra Series gauges in a traditional layout. A wood-rimmed steering wheel handles the guidance duties and a dog-leg shifter keeps track of the gears. Four-point racing harnesses keep the occupants securely in their seats. Rob added a pair of bullet sideview mirrors on the windshield frame.

Movies might let us live a little vicariously for a couple of hours but often they influence some of our most important life decisions, like the pursuit of happiness. It certainly seemed to work for Rob Weidemoyer.

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