

6S2059 - "Why would you want a fake Shelby?"

Contributed by Troy Kruger
Tuesday, February 26 2008
Last Updated Tuesday, February 26 2008

1966 Shelby GT350H

Hertz SFM2059

Owner: Rusty Kruger

Photos: Troy Kruger

It started with a pheasant hunting trip with my dad when I was about 13 years old. We were having lunch in your typical small town diner when the conversation about dream cars came up. "Dad, someday when I can afford it, I will buy my dream car, a fake Shelby Hertz Mustang!" He shook his head in disbelief and responded, "Why would you want a fake Shelby?" I came back with a realistic answer in that by the time I ever had enough money to buy a car like that, I would never be able to afford a real Shelby. This was in the late 80s when values were starting to really take off. Well I guess the seed was planted. He purchased me a SAAC membership for my birthday, and for the next 4 years I had been scouring the Deals on Wheels, Hemmings and Snakebites looking for a car I could convince him to consider purchasing. I had many conversations with various people in parts of the country in regards to their "Shelbys" for sale. It was a tough road for a kid - nobody would take me seriously.

Then, I saw an ad in the Snakebite for #2059. I quickly called up Bill Collins in PA and we talked about his car. He did not dismiss me over the phone, and even offered to take my '65 Mustang in on trade. Now it was time to do my research. I checked the 1987 registry and found the car. I did some research on this seller and found out he was the regional SAAC rep. That seemed trustworthy enough for me. Bill gave me the Ford VIN and so I sent in a letter to SAAC for verification. I think it was Howard Pardee who wrote this teenager a letter stating the VIN belonged to a Shelby. The seller and I swapped pictures and all was looking good.

I then presented my case to my Dad, and told him this was a good car and that there may not be another opportunity to trade my Mustang for a Shelby as original and presentable as this one. Of course, it didn't hurt that I reminded him of the local GT500KR convertible we passed on for a mere \$15K just a few short years earlier that was now worth \$60K!. I handed my dad the phone and a few minutes later, and the deal was done. We drove our '65 Mustang 425 miles to meet Bill in MN where the plan was to trade cars and drive home the Shelby! The car was presented accurately and was all we expected it to be. The only problem was that we blew the tranny about 20 miles into the trip home. It still ran, but blew fluid all over the place as we limped home filling up with tranny fluid every 40 miles or so.

#2059 is a very original GT350H, which sports the original FoMoCo sheetmetal. Two lower quarter panel patches along with a fresh application of base/clear and a few exterior chrome pieces were the only visible evidence of restoration. The engine may have been freshened up at one time and the exhaust had been replaced along with the front carpet as well. I don't have a clear history of the car, other than what is presented in the current registry. #2059 remains mostly in the same condition it was when purchased from Bill Collins in 1992. Since then, it has had a windshield and some few interior items replaced along with some buffing of the paint and restoration of the original wheels.

This Hertz is a wonderful car to drive. I had the best summer of my life with that car before heading to college. I only got pulled over once, but managed to escape a ticket. It was fun learning the finer points of a proper forced downshift and chirping of the tires in all 3 gears. Anybody who faults these cars for their "automatic" transmission probably had never had the pleasure of driving one. That shift kit can be quite a neck snapper! Once I went off to college, it has done a lot of garage duty. I did an internship one summer back near home and got reacquainted with the Hertz and drove it often - even to work! These days, my dad tries to drives a tank of gas a year, and I rarely get an opportunity to drive it anymore.