

# **AC COBRA: The Legacy**

by Trevor Legate

## **SPECIFICATION**

215 x 230mm (landscape)

160 pages full colour

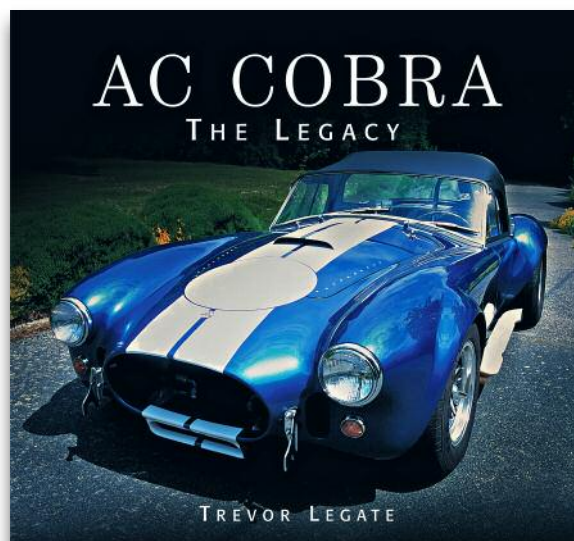
Over 120 colour photographs

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## **AC COBRA: THE LEGACY by Trevor Legate**

This eagerly-awaited new work from award-winning author and Cobra historian Trevor Legate presents the story of the legendary AC Cobra sports car. His continuing research has unearthed new information regarding production of the first Cobras, plus fresh insight into the Le Mans assault by AC in 1963. For many years, the origin of the car was the matter of debate and conjecture but new light has been shed on this fascinating story following further study of original documents and recent conversations with the people who built the Cobra.

The book also reviews 100 years of AC Cars production, from humble beginnings at the start of the 20th century, surviving two World Wars, the abortive attempt to build a modern Cobra in Malta – to its current revival within the grounds of the Brooklands Museum, where one-off sports cars are still made in the traditional manner.

Even though the original Cobra ceased production over 40 years ago, both AC and the car's originator, Carroll Shelby, relaunched their own modern recreation of the Cobra; this book attempts to unravel the trials and tribulations that resulted, including the legal actions taken against the kit car industry that was responsible for the remarkable surge of interest in the Cobra.

The book includes the fully-illustrated story of the unique annual 'invitation only' Cobra Tour, where owners of original Shelby AC Cobras congregate in Virginia, USA to drive many hundreds of miles around the country roads, surrounded by stunning scenery, enjoying their cars as they were intended. Trevor took full advantage of a invitation to join in and record this special event.

Every automotive enthusiast has his own opinion about the AC Cobra and the huge numbers of replicas it spawned; this book finally separates fact from fiction and updates the complex story of the sports car that refuses to die.

Superbly illustrated throughout, including many rare photographs dating from 1963 to the present day.

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Chapter 7: The Kirkham Cobra – A Marriage Made in Poland

## **SYNOPSIS**

### **Chapter 1: THE CAR THAT BECAME A COBRA**

A review of the history of the AC Ace and its role in the evolution of the Cobra. How a back-street 'special' became a successful production sports car that would later form the basis of a legendary and highly collectable classic automobile.

### **Chapter 2: CARROLL SHELBY VISITS THAMES DITTON**

The story of the motivation behind Carroll Shelby's determination to create his own sports car with the long-term intention of returning to Europe to take on the might of Ferrari and challenge its supremacy in sports car racing.

### **Chapter 3: COBRA v FERRARI: THE RACING YEARS**

An account of how the original fragile Cobra was turned into a reliable race car capable of beating the best that the rest of the world could offer. From 1963 the Cobra dominated American club racing which resulted in Ford bank-rolling the Shelby American team to travel to Europe in 1964 to challenge for the GT world championship. Following some political manoeuvring by Ferrari, the team missed the title by one point, returning in 1965 to lift the trophy.

### **Chapter 4: SEVEN LITRE POWER**

The story of the 427 Cobra and the creation of the infamous 427S/C, officially recognized as the world's fastest road car for over 20 years. A reappraisal of the reasons why the car was never officially raced in international competition.

### **Chapter 5: THE COBRA TOUR**

A very special annual road trip for a select number of owners of original AC Cobras, who gather in Virginia USA and drive their cars in the manner they were intended, along stunning mountain roads and beautiful green valleys. Only a handful of people are fortunate enough to take part in this event and the opportunity to be permitted to record the occasion was too good to miss. Conversations with such dedicated owners just add to the special atmosphere.

### **Chapter 6: CLONE WARS – THE ADVENT OF THE REPLICAS COBRA**

A detailed study of the highly influential and successful replica Cobra scene, the reasons why Carroll Shelby acknowledged the debt owed to the kit-cars and why he tried to have every one put out of business – and continues to do so! The story of the new Cobra built by Shelby Automotive, the attempted joint venture between Shelby and AC Cars and why it failed on more than one occasion. A review of the Mark 4 Cobra built by AC Cars and the long saga of the history of AC as it attempted to survive in a competitive market, including the disastrous attempt to build cars in Malta.

### **Chapter 7: THE KIRKHAM COBRA – A MARRIAGE MADE IN POLAND**

The unlikely true story of the Kirkham brothers from Utah who found the answer to producing a new aluminium-bodied Cobra via a defunct aerospace factory in Poland. They liked the work of the Polish craftsmen so much, they bought the company. Illustrated with photographs of the chassis and bodywork being constructed in Poland and the cars being finished at the factory in Utah, together with images of the Kirkham Cobras on the road and at the Bonneville salt flats. Includes an on-the-road essay documenting the entertaining story of a road trip from the south coast of England to north Wales by Kirkham Cobra.