AC/Shelby Cobra, 1962-68: Owner’s Workshop Manual

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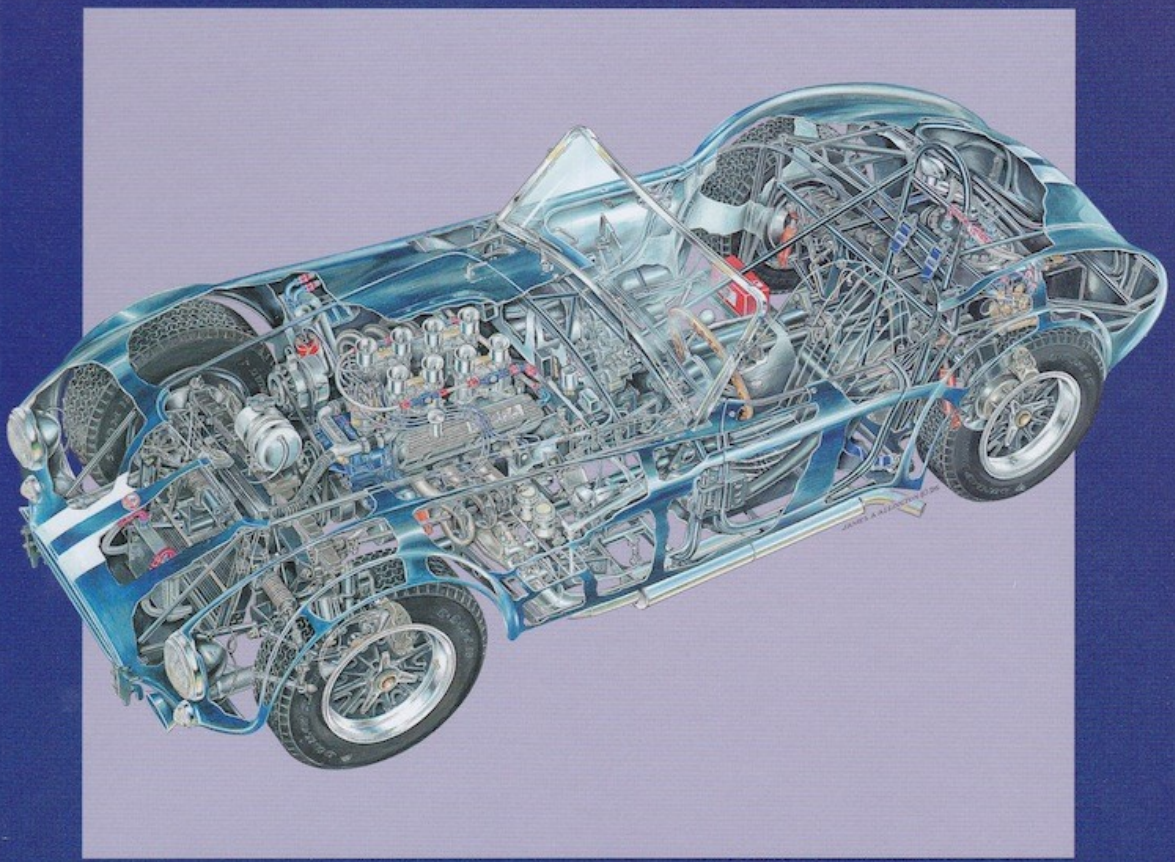
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AC/SHELBY COBRA

Haynes

1962 to 1968 (all models)

Owners' Workshop Manual



An insight into owning, racing and maintaining
Carroll Shelby's legendary Anglo-American sports racing car

One of the greatest sports cars of all time, the AC Cobra was a sensation in a way that is simply unimaginable today. Such was the demand for this Anglo-American hybrid that it was not until November 1965 that the Autocar was able to get its hands on one. *"Few readers,"* it wrote in the opening lines of its road test of the 289 cu.in model, *"will get even this far before turning the page to see the steepest acceleration graph we have ever plotted."* That indeed was the essence of the Cobra: it may have lacked the cornering finesse of the contemporary Ferrari 250 GTO, the car it was designed to beat, (and emphatically did) but the sheer power and torque of the Ford V8, especially the 7 litre version meant that in the right hands, it was faster.

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery then the Cobra surely wins the prize as the most flattered sports car ever: fewer than a thousand AC versions were made, but since production ceased in1968, well over 50,000 copies, continuation models and replicas have appeared.

In its familiar original format, this Haynes Owners' Workshop Manual describes how Carroll Shelby transformed the AC Ace into a championship winning sports car and goes on to detail its development and racing history. Author Glen Smale is an old hand at this and he really brings the Cobra to life, particularly through his interviews with period drivers Gurney, Sears and Bondurant. The section on racing a Cobra today shows how fine the engineering line is between respecting originality and technical improvements. Like the Lola T70, the Cobras are significantly faster now than in the 1960s; the same cannot be said of the more complex V12 Ferraris and Flat 12 Porsches.

Especially interesting are the observations of seasoned Aston Martin works driver Darren Turner who since 2009 has also driven a variety of a Cobras in the Goodwood tourist trophy: the sixties racing car requires far more contribution from the driver; he really has to take responsibility for it, using the engine note or the rev counter to know when to change gear and checking the water temperature and oil pressure instruments systematically, operations that are all completely foreign to today's professional racer in his computer-programmed car. Clearly these 50 year old sports racers are not just far more pleasing to spectators – as

Glen Smale shows, some of today’s professionals relish the challenge they offer too.