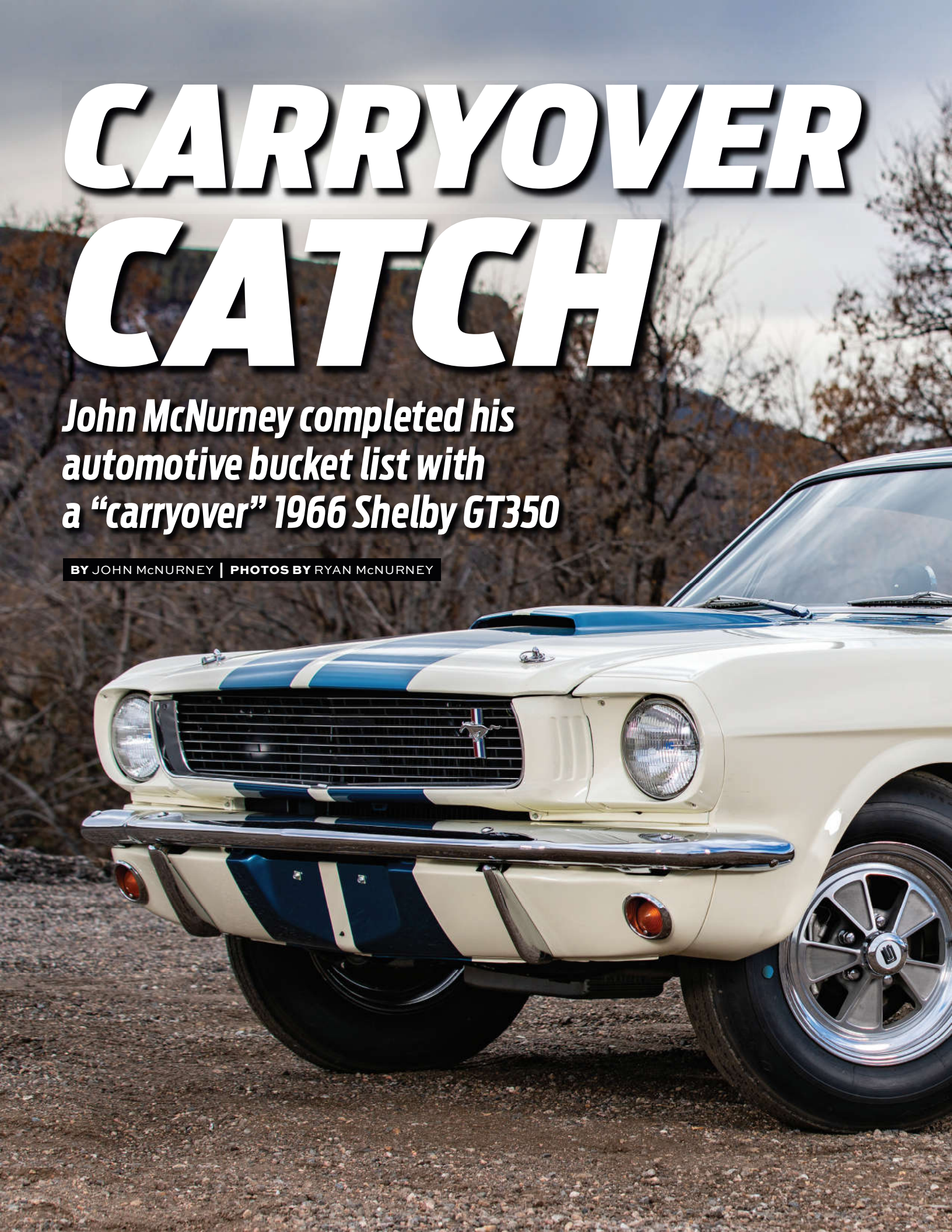
CARRYOVER CATCH

John McNurney completed his automotive bucket list with a "carryover" 1966 Shelby GT350

BY JOHN McNURNEY | **PHOTOS BY** RYAN McNURNEY

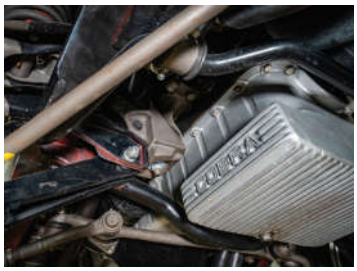


G.T. 350

I was 17 years old in 1965 and, like most driving age teen males back then, I loved cars. I even drafted a bucket list of cars that I wanted to eventually own, a list that included a Shelby GT350, a Shelby AC Cobra, and an E-Type Jaguar. Back then, I had to be satisfied with replica slot racing cars and plastic models, some of which I still own. My meager income was slated for my college education.

During the autumn of 1966, I started my higher education at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. While there, I had occasion to notice a white GT350 with blue stripes, one of my beautiful bucket list cars. It was lovely to see but so far out of my reach that owning such a prize never entered my mind.

Jump forward in time to the year 2000. I finally had the time and financial resources to acquire some real project cars, so I began searching for the cars on my bucket list. Unfortunately, I was unable to find any of those prizes that I could afford until 2010 when I bought a Cobra from Shelby American and a barn-find E-type Jaguar that needed work. The GT350 remained elusive because I insisted on finding a car with the original engine and transmission that I could buy without breaking the bank. The original drivetrain was key because I intended to fully restore it.



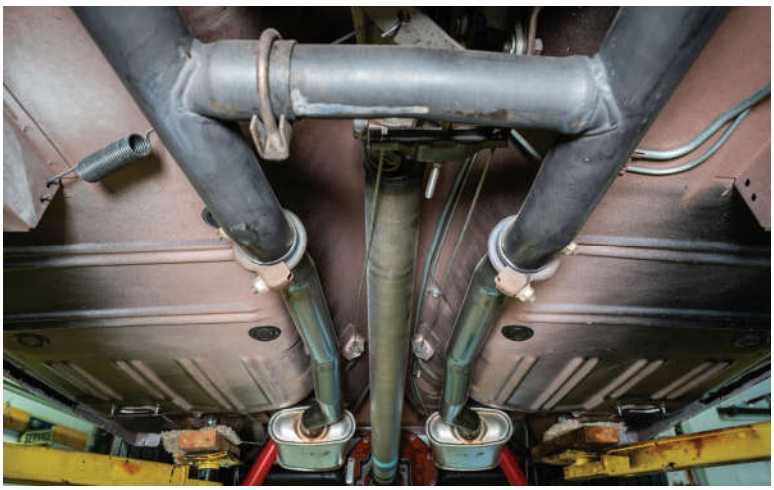
Those 252 cars, which became known as "carryover GT350s," were produced with a unique and somewhat variable combination of 1965 and 1966 GT350 characteristics.

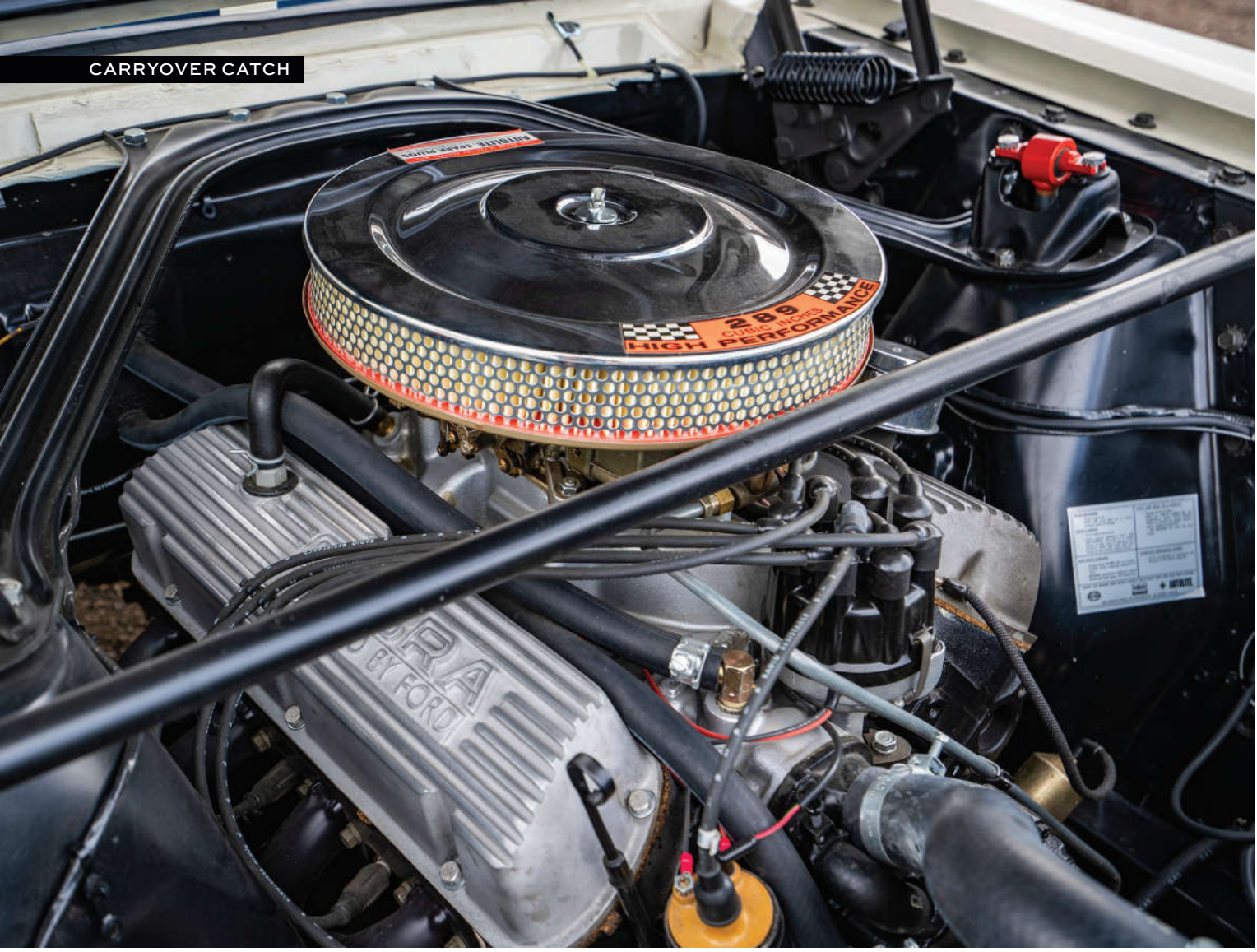
My quest was finally satisfied when I found and purchased a 1966 GT350, SFM6S130, in British Columbia, Canada. The first thing I did after getting my hands on that beauty was to research its history with the help of Howard Pardee, 1965-66 Shelby Registrar, and Steve Sloan of the Carryover Owners Group. I was shocked to learn that my car was originally sold new in 1966 by University Ford Sales, Inc. in Champaign, Illinois! Therefore, it is highly likely that it is the very same GT350 that I had seen when I was a freshman in college. The original owner reportedly moved to Vancouver, British Columbia, during late 1966 or early 1967 and sold the car to a dealer there. Over the next 47 years, the car was owned by four fellows in British Columbia. However, two brothers, Sonny and Dennis Friesen, accounted for 42 years of ownership. I bought the car from Dennis Friesen's estate when he passed and became a long-time friend of Sonny, who was a fantastic source of the personal history for my GT350.

As I prepared to begin the restoration of 6S130, I discovered that it was a carryover GT350 with an original 1965 Ford VIN and a 1966 Shelby VIN. As I learned from Brant Halterman (the recognized authority on carryover GT350s and my mentor during the restoration of my car), Shelby American took delivery of 250 K-code 1965 Mustang fastbacks toward the end of the 1965 production run from San Jose, plus they built two prototype 1966 GT350s. Those 252 cars, which became known as "carryover GT350s," were produced with a unique and somewhat variable combination of 1965 and 1966 GT350 characteristics. The purpose of the 252 cars was to keep Shelby's work force busy during the summer shutdown typical of U.S. automakers during the 1960s. Details about the history and unique features of the carryover GT350s can be found at https://carryovergt350.com/.

With the total cooperation of my son, Ryan, and good friend, Ken Naperola, we began a complete restoration of my carryover GT350 during July 2014 largely completing the process during March 2017. The project could not have been successfully completed without the personal guidance and support of Brant Halterman from Virginia Classic Mustang. While my three-man crew did almost everything on the project, the body work and painting were completed by Apex Auto Body under the supervision of owner Dave Imes. I say largely completed during 2017 because the project has been refined over the years due to input from members of Front Range Mustang Club and particularly Joe Bolis, president of the local chapter of the Shelby American Automobile Club in Denver, Colorado.

The process began with total disassembly of the vehicle. Every part was removed, evaluated as to authenticity, and catalogued. Parts that were not period-correct and applicable to my car were replaced to the extent possible with correct vintage parts. We were fortunate that many of 6S130's original parts were still present or had been replaced by the Friesens with authentic replacement Shelby parts. Usable existing parts included most of the interior as well as the engine, transmission, and associated parts. All were restored to original Shelby specifications. Notable exceptions were the hood, radiator, tachometer, shocks, fuel pump, driveshaft, and rear axle. An original, unique carryover tachometer, period-correct Koni shock absorbers, and a fuel pump were acquired from internet sources and professionally restored. A correct carryover driveshaft and hood skin were purchased from a Colorado Shelby race shop and a correct dated-coded center section for the rear axle was found locally. A correct radiator top tank was acquired and used by a local artisan to build a perfect radiator. A replica of the Shelby fiberglass and steel frame hood was built by Apex Auto Body based on a description of the original process provided by Brant Halterman using a date-correct hood frame from a donor car.





While the various mechanical parts were being examined and replaced, the body was bead-blasted to bare metal revealing panels that were badly damaged or previously replaced. All such panels were replaced with date-correct pieces from a Mustang coupe donor car built in San Jose at the same time as my car. Since all early Mustang body parts are stamped with dates and codes indicating the origin of manufacture, a suitable complete donor car body was purchased in Phoenix, transported to Denver, bead-blasted to bare metal, and then used as source of replacement body pieces. The painting process painstakingly followed published Ford procedures for applying primer, paint, and stripes during 1965 using official Ford colors.

Once the body was repaired and painted, the car was assembled following the Ford assembly manual for 1965 Mustangs. Nearly all of the parts used for the restoration were original correct parts. A few inconsequential reproduction pieces were used and many fasteners were replaced with replicas of the originals for safety reasons. All reproduction fasteners that were used had correct head markings. All subsequent Shelby modifications of the original K-code Mustangs were implemented.

We believe that the resulting restored carryover GT350 6S130 is very close to exactly how it was delivered for sale to University Ford Sales, Inc. in Champaign, Illinois, during September 1966. Check out the accompanying photos and see if you agree.