

SHELBY AMERICANA

{ Modders }

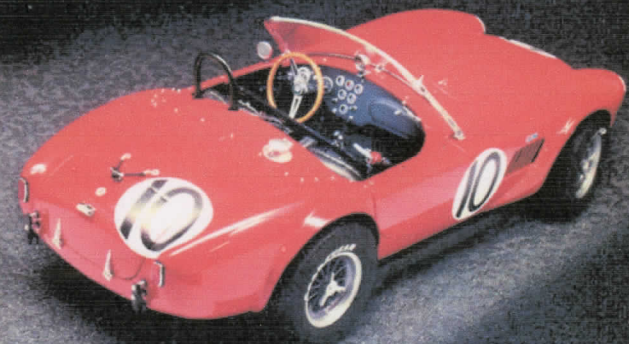
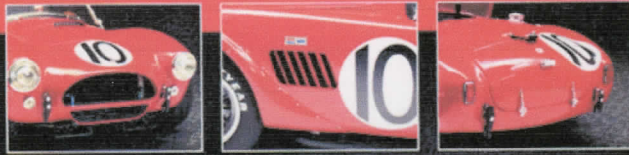
Marshall Buck's 289 Cobra Le Mans

IT'S NOT UNCOMMON for a true automotive enthusiast to buy a car, u—turn it out of the showroom, and park the still—new machine in the dealer's service bay for a few performance or personalization tweaks. Anyone who can utter the letters "A—M—G" or who's read about the halcyon days of Yenko Chevrolet, Joel Rosen's Baldwin Motion shops, or Mr. Norm's Grand Spaulding Dodge knows all about that sort of thing.

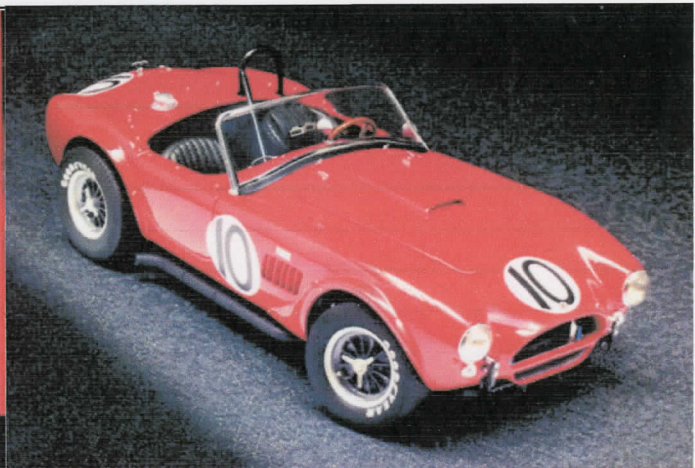
Sometimes that enthusiasm carries over to scale replicas — and for fellows like the current owner of this 1963 Shelby Cobra Le Mans, the fun kicked in when he decided to have a master modeler build an exact copy of his

historic ride. Luckily enough, there was an image already available that closely approximated the car; GMP's 1:12 model of a 289 Cobra would prove to be a great jumping-off point.

Enter our own Marshall Buck, a box full of measuring gear, and serious pile of archival and current photos. Of course, the model came completely apart: dipped, stripped, and then extensively reworked, the shell alone saw twenty modifications (for a complete list of the mods, and some additional photos, go to www.thecarroom.com/buckmods). Some, like the deletion of the rivets in the hood, were relatively easy. Others, like the wholesale repositioning of



32 • The Car Room Magazine, September/October 2009



the side vents to a new position 1/8 inch (approximately 1.5 scale inches) higher, were another story.

The interior saw its share of freshening up, with the all—new dashboard being the star of the show; Buck hand—formed a binnacle that included all of the switches and gauges that CSX 2156 (the car's Shelby serial number) had — and still has — on board. New padding, new trims — even a scratch built, correctly placed fire extinguisher — were necessary to give the car the correct equipment, and its owner/driver/paying customer all the right visuals. Engine mods that ranged from cleaning up the throttle linkage to hand—fabricating a new set of valve cover breathers were joined by new paint, plumbing and real aluminum sheeting; horns got yanked, radiators were freshly tanked, and seams were filled.

All in all, eighty separate mods — frequently requiring multiple steps to accomplish — were visited on the model, and by the time Buck had finished, the Cobra had become an entirely new image. Subtle things like the repositioning of the emblem on the trunk are easy to miss; not so the extensive reworking of the Cobra's nose, hood, trunk lid (it now opens toward the rear) and the wheels — which are all—new castings, hand—mastered by Buck.

So, what's the bottom line for work like this? While taste dictates keeping the actual figure private, you'd probably find the total sum in dollars American sufficient to snag that sweet import coupe you've been eyeing — maybe even u—turn it into the shop for a few tweaks. Ain't life grand? — CRM



thecarroom.com • 33

Sometimes having the car just isn't enough. Let's say you have a Cobra. Most people would be happy with that and things would stop right there. But if you wanted something more, you might gravitate to a competition Cobra. A factory car with some real race history. That would be a big jump. Only about 10% of the entire small block Cobra production were factory comp cars. And comp cars are worth at least twice as much as street cars. So, once you have a factory comp car, where do you go from there? The next step is to restore it, exactly as it was when it was raced. And after that, the next big jump would be, maybe, to vintage race it. And to resist the urge to modify it to go faster and handle better that it did back in the mid-1960s. Being accurately restored, you might want to enter it into a concours car show here and there. You've got something that is unique, historical and accurate—why not show it off? But here's an interesting question: where do you go from there? We think we know. The September/October 2009 issue of *The Car Room*, a magazine dedicated to model cars, had a nice, two-page article on a GMP 1/12 scale die cast model of CSX2156, a LeMans production competition roadster, which was custom built by master modeler Marshall Buck. The car is owned by SAAC members Jim and Sandy McNeil of Bayport, NY. The original GMP die cast used for this car started off as CSX2137, a black factory

team car. Over 80 individual modifications were required, including fabricating accurate Weber linkage. The Halibrand wheels were produced from hand-made molds, since those exact wheels were not part of the original kit. Every detail of this model is perfect. The article did not indicate how long the project took, and the cost was only hinted at. "While taste dictates keeping the actual figure private, you'd probably find the total sum in dollars American sufficient to snag that sweet import coupe you've been eyeing."

