

SUBTLE TOUCHES



Finding a New Way to Skin One Quick Cobra

*story & photos by
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Just when we think we've seen every possible permutation of a Cobra, somebody comes up with something new. That's what we really marvel at in the world of specialty cars, this endless creativity of kit builders. It took two seasoned companies to come up with a fresh take on an old favorite, called the Roush/Superformance Special Edition MKIII-R.

Okay, the name is quite a mouthful, but it's quite a car, developed by one of the biggest Cobra replica companies in the world, and an engine company that has produced more Ford wins than any other manufacturer. The R/S Special Edition was initially built as a one-off project to showcase the respective abilities of each company, but due to the public's response, it turned into a regular production offering.

Commenting on the Roush red-and-black signature color scheme, "People never realized that you could do that to a Cobra," notes Todd Andrews of Roush. "It appeals to a whole new market, people who normally didn't want a Cobra." And that's not because it looks like a low-rider or hot rod, or has cup holders



and Donk-sized wheels. Instead, the black chrome finish on the trim pieces give the car a more restrained, purposeful quality—less bling, but way more bang for the buck.

For those not familiar with these two high-profile firms, Superformance works in close concert with Hi-Tech Automotive RSA, the world's largest specialty-car production facility with more than 600 craftsmen and associated employees in a 400,000-square-foot

factory in South Africa that has built more than 4,000 rolling component chassis to date. Superformance has over 20 independent dealers throughout the world. By definition, the company's turnkey-minus cars come without an engine, and that's where Roush comes in.

Better known to the general public as Roush Fenway Racing, its division of Roush Performance Engines has been producing complete performance crate "street engines" since 2003, and offers a wide range of powerplants to suit the preferences of Cobra builders of all types. The engine in this specific special edition is Roush's 427 IR motor, backed by a Tremec 5-speed tranny. But that stroked small-block was taken to a new level of finish

with a number of custom pieces. The following items have been changed or modified:

- Dart Aluminum Block (Iron Dart is stock)
- Aluminum Flywheel (Steel is stock)
- Clay Cook Billet-Polished and Hard Coat Anodized Valve Covers and Air Cleaner Lids
- TWM Throttle Bodies' Trumpets are Hard Coat Anodized
- Engine is Dry Sump (Wet Sump is stock; note oil tank is mounted in the trunk)
- Roush/Nascar Style Pulley Set-up (FEAD-Front End Accessory Drive) that incorporates the oil pump for the Dry Sump, also Hard Coat Anodized
- All hoses are braided and all fittings are anodized with a brushed appearance.

After all was said and done, the engine dyno'd at 576hp and 540 lb/ft torque. (Note that the potential is for as much as 560 horses, depending on the setup). Before this mill was maneuvered into the engine bay, though, several modifications took place on the standard Superformance roadster at Exotic Auto Restoration. To create an unusual and trend-setting visual treatment, the Exotic crew first removed all of the chrome factory trim pieces, including the windshield, hood and trunk latches, headlight rings, quick jacks, all the way down to the tonneau cover rivets and roll bar. These components were all then coated in a distinctive black chrome finish. Once back on the car, the effect was altogether startling. But that's only half of the story.

Whenever possible, we like to manhandle the cars we feature, just to make sure all the parts work, of course. (Well, if somebody handed you the keys to a Cobra, whataya gonna say? I'm too busy?) So Andrews let us tool around SoCal on some back roads, and blow out the side pipes. We came to one simple conclusion: It's a brain cleaner. With big-block power and small-block weight, combined with modern electronic fuel induction, suspension and brakes, this Cobra's got it all—and then some. The only problem now is to figure out how to go one better. **CG**

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