



Shelby Mustangs, including Hertz 'Rent-A-Racer', corralled with a '63 AC Cobra (on right)

BRAINS BEHIND THE MUSCLE

Dragon Wheels Restorations

Location Nr Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire **Web** www.dragonwheelsrestorations.co.uk
Tel 01908 551131 **Staff** one
E-mail faulknerstevens@btinternet.com **Specialism** AC Cobras and Shelby Mustangs
Prices £42 hourly rate



Early production GT500 with Stage 2 motor



Trimming is undertaken in-house in Bucks



Ground-up resto of Lime Gold '67 GT500

Once synonymous with producing some of the UK's best concours Chevy Corvettes, Dragon Wheels' focus today is the location, supply and restoration of Shelby Mustangs and genuine AC Cobras. Boss Alan Faulkner-Stevens has a wealth of experience of muscle cars and his global clientele consists mainly of discerning collectors who expect nothing less than perfection.

This ties in neatly with his background in the fastidious avionics industry: "I had spells at Cranfield College of Aeronautics, the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Thurleigh and Marconi, plus I was heavily

involved in the Lagonda and Virage programmes of the late '80s during my time as an Aston Martin design and development engineer."

All dismantling, reassembly, trimming and fine detailing are handled in-house at the company's rural Buckinghamshire workshop. Other disciplines are entrusted to respected specialists. "Our engine rebuilds are undertaken by Peter Knight Racing Services," says Faulkner-Stevens, "bodywork repairs by ex-Aston craftsmen and paintwork by a firm that usually concentrates on Bentleys, Rolls-Royces and Aston Martins."

Projects can be completed to 100% originality, but more often than not clients stipulate sensible modifications to the brakes. Engine

upgrades are a company forte, too. Built to Faulkner-Stevens' spec – with unleaded heads, altered camshaft profiles and lowered compression for better drivability – they are returned by Peter Knight balanced and blueprinted, and after a full dyno calibration.

One of Faulkner-Stevens' latest creations is a Stage 2 motor: "It uses a 428PI V8 with new internals and bored out to 462cu in, plus special 427 side-oiler heads and handmade exhaust manifolds in stainless steel. It is rated at 510bhp, with 525lb ft torque."

The actions of a recent customer are indicative of the company's high standards. He had purchased a fully restored Shelby Mustang in the USA some 10-12 years ago but,

after parking it next to a freshly finished Dragon Wheels rebuild at a show, he decided to have his car totally restored again, this time by Faulkner-Stevens: "He stipulated that he didn't want an ill-fitting glassfibre bonnet or bootlid, so the team painstakingly fabricated new ones from stainless steel."

Dragon Wheels can restore your own Mustang or source a car for you from America. Its typical schedule for a ground-up nut-and-bolt rebuild is 18 months. There's not much that Faulkner-Stevens doesn't know about Cobras, either: he's the AC Owners' Club registrar for MkIV models, and his most recent restoration of one was a class winner at the club's 2012 summer concours. **Paul Bussey**