



simultaneously at Shelby American. Created by Alan Turner, the basis of the design was to provide improved aerodynamics by lowering the car's profile. To accomplish this Turner moved the seats outside of the main frame rails, which allowed the car's overall height to be no more than 42". Satisfied with the final design, the car received construction approval and its engineering/drawing number became its chassis number. Constructed in right-hand drive form, A-98 was tested prior to shipment to the '64 LeMans race on the M-1 Motorway just north of London at 4 a.m., allegedly with the tacit approval of the local gendarmes. Achieving a speed of 183 mph, the car generated sufficient outraged press reports so as to create a minor furor over its testing on public roads. Painted a light green metallic which was termed Racing Green, the car was registered with the number plate "BPH 4B." As #3, driven by Jack Sears and Peter Bolton, the car crashed in the sixth hour when a rear tire blew out at speed. It was thought at the time that the rear end had lost its traction-lock and was transmitting the engine's torque to just one side, effectively causing the tires to wear unevenly. A collision with a Ferrari behind the AC destroyed both cars. A-98 was relegated by AC Cars to a storage facility for the next eight years. Enter Ashley F. ("Barrie") Bird (Aberdeen, Scotland), who, on a mission to locate spares in '72, stumbled across the coupe's derelict body buck behind the factory and persuaded AC to allow him the opportunity to rebuild the almost-forgotten A-98. A lengthy reconstruction followed, with help provided by many AC enthusiasts in the form of donated parts. Salvaging the original chassis rather than building a reproduction, the car was rebodied by Maurice Gomm, who had built the car's original panels in '64. The car's restoration was essentially completed in '84, following which A-98 became a sought-after display-piece at race gatherings in Europe. It has been pictured in numerous publications, including the *ACOC Review* '74, pp. 36, 37, 39; Shoen's "Cobra-Ferrari Wars," p.172; Legate's "Cobra," pp.86, 89; McLellan's "AC & Cobra," p.134 (bottom); McLellan's "Classic AC's - AutoCarrier to Cobra," pp.139, 140, 141 (top); Taylor and Burns' "AC Heritage,"

pp. 88-93; McComb's "AC (Shelby) Cobra," pp.110-111, 112, 114, 118-119; and Adam's "Cobra," pp. 2-3'



COB5998. A rolling, RHD leaf spring chassis was constructed by AC Cars and shipped to Shelby American where it was referred to as the "show chassis" and used in displays. It was prominently pictured in photographs taken at Shelby American's LAX facility during the May '65 meeting of FoMoCo's Board of Directors meeting. Shortly thereafter, Carroll Shelby directed that the chassis be taken to the fabrication shop of Tex Collins' Cal Automotive (one of Shelby American's subcontractors that provided fiberglass parts used in GT350 production). It was used to build an open-wheeled hot rod T-bucket roadster by Cal Automotive employees Kurt Hamilton and Gayle Black. Black recalled Shelby driving the car around the block when it was finished but he was not especially impressed. The car ended up in Collin's possession and the details of the agreement (or sale) with Shelby are not known. What is known is that ten years later, in the mid-'70s, Shelby saw the bare chassis (with original chrome pieces still in place) at Bruce Kimmins' Coach Craft (Torrance, CA). He was said to have remarked something to the effect that, "Collins never returned it or paid for it." As a RHD car, it likely was given a COB serial number but nothing relating to this has been found in factory records. It would have to have some serial number that would appear on export documents. It did have a number, but whatever number that was had been obliterated when the chassis was used to build a street rod. It was titled in California in 1965 as a "Special Construction." In the mid-'70s, Collins sold the car to a friend, Gary Bandy. Collins was killed about six months later. Bandy took the car to Catalina Island where he had a house. After using it there for four or five years, he brought it back and parked it in a warehouse he owned (Burbank, CA). Sometime in the late 1980s when Cobra prices were on a trajectory but before the building of replica chassis and other components became common, it was purchased by Geoffrey Shanklin (Glendale, CA). He brought the chassis to Bruce Kimmins/Kimmins Custom Fabrication (Torrance, CA) who handbuilt a 289 Cobra LHD competition body with cutback doors. The

car was completed in 1995 and Shanklin began vintage racing it. Rather than use the original California DMV-assigned "Special Construction" number, the car was given a unused Cobra COB serial number based on the fact that it was originally an RHD car. The number given the car was COB5998. It was purchased from Shanklin by Dave Larian (LaCresanta, CA). In 2011 it was purchased by Marty Beaulieu (Seaside, CA) and sent to Cobra Automotive (Wallingford, CT) in 2012 where the car was completely gone through mechanically and cosmetically. The body was stripped to bare metal and repainted. The engine, suspension and brakes were rebuilt. It was finished in time to participate in the 50th Cobra celebration at the Monterey Mo-



torsports Reunion at Laguna Seca in August, 2012, driven by Curt Vogt. For the next couple of years Beaulieu raced it in West Coast HMS vintage events.

