

Allen Grant: Shelby Cobra Racecar Driver Extraordinaire



Overview of Allen Grant, the Cobra and F100 Pickup:

CSX2128 was the second Cobra built with rack & pinion steering and was a Shelby American factory race Cobra. It was originally raced by Dan Gurney at Sebring in 1963 and campaigned in the USRRC (United States Road Racing Championship) series with Dave MacDonald. Allen Grant was working at Shelby American as Production Manager when Allen sold CSX2128 to Coventry Motors in Walnut Creek, CA. Allen convinced Coventry Motors to allow him to race the Cobra against the Shelby American Factory Team Drivers. Allen won his first race in Santa Barbara, and then again at Candlestick Park. Allen's next race was at Riverside Raceway during the Times Grand Prix weekend. Allen proved himself against the Shelby Team Driver's Dan Gurney, Lew Spencer, and Bob Bondurant by coming in second place behind Bondurant after spinning out in the first lap after being hit and restarting at the back of the field. George Lucas (of Star Wars fame) was Allen's friend from Modesto and his Crew Chief attending every race. Ole Olsen was a fabricator at Shelby American who supported Allen as his Chief Mechanic. Allen would tow the Cobra to the races with Coventry Motors' 1956 Ford pickup truck. Allen and George came up with the bright yellow paint scheme used on both the truck and the Cobra. Allen owns replicas of both vehicles and they reside at his shop in Palm Springs.



Here's a great article and some videos about racing legend **Allen Grant** and his winning **Cobra**:

- <https://www.rcnmag.com/blog/making-your-own-luck>
- <https://youtu.be/l42Ld66Qayg>
- <https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&p=allen+grant#id=7&vid=d5b494f75ecd9d17e95d32a3354e4d25&action=view>
- <https://youtu.be/KEZ3cRamxyl>





Allen Grant at his recent 80th Birthday Celebration



A personal message to Allen at his Birthday Celebration from Randy Richardson, LASAAC President:

Sixty years ago, competitive automobile racing was a deadly sport. Junkyard jalopies were created by innovative tradesman with little or no safety in mind. Mishaps were often deadly and only the most skillful and brave often prevailed. There is a reason everyone is not a racecar driver, and there is a reason all racecar drivers aren't successful. It takes special talents and razor-sharp skills to stay ahead of the competition, but most of all it takes the initiative, determination, and passion to be a winner.

Allen Grant has proven to have all of those traits and more. Early in his driving career he was immediately successful, and he raced with and against the greatest drivers to ever honor a racetrack. Many of these men tragically never survived their racing career. To prove his superior driving skills, Allen convinced Coventry Motors in 1963 to buy a used Cobra and let him race it. Allen impressed Carroll Shelby so much with his competitive performance at the Riverside Endurance Race in 1963 he earned a position as a Shelby Team Driver. By 1965, Allen was instrumental in Shelby American's winning the FIA World Manufacturer's Championship, the first time an American Manufacturer had ever won that title.

In early 2012, my good friend Austin Craig introduced me to Allen during Carroll Shelby's birthday celebration in Las Vegas. As we spoke, I had a sense of an honorable man, a sincerity that shone with his demeanor. I told Allen about the Los Angeles Shelby Club's charitable annual car show and asked Allen if he would be our Guest of Honor. Without hesitation Allen answered

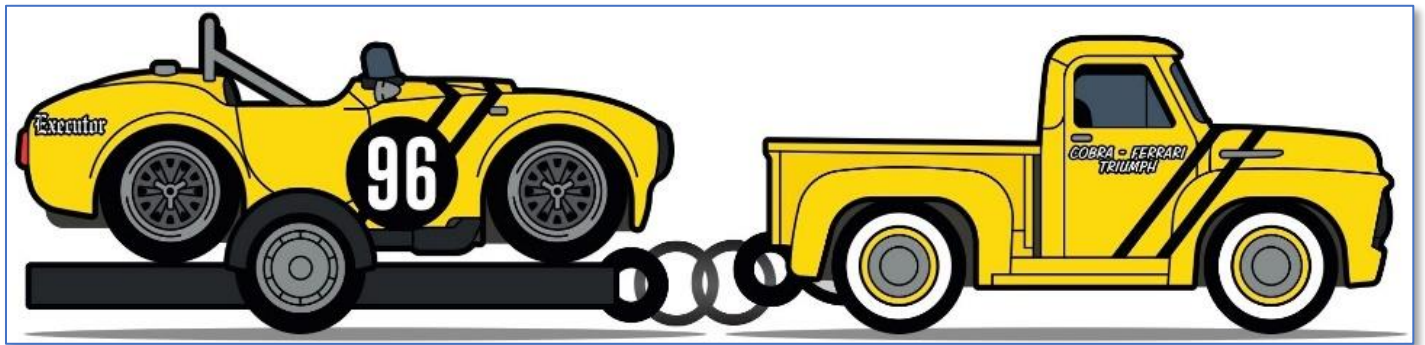
“Yes,” and never asked for anything other than the time and place. Since our first meeting Allen has proven to be a genuine and gracious friend, extending a warm welcome to everyone he meets. Allen embraces his memories working at Shelby American many years ago and continues to honor the legacy of a bygone era.

One of Allen’s favorite sayings is “Second place is first loser,” and Allen still lives with the same competitive passion as he did nearly sixty years ago.

Happy 80th birthday my friend.

Randy Richardson

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