



The Pony Express

January 2008

THE SCOOP ON UNIQUE'S 'NOT SO UNIQUE' PERFORMANCE

Many of you are aware that the club canceled a planned trip in October to attend the annual Unique Performance Fest when the company postponed the event. The reason was stated to be problems with getting the named guests available. Turns out there was a good reason for that. The following was compiled from several news articles.

In November, after a public dispute between Mr. Shelby and Unique Performance, and following lawsuits against Unique from customers who say they put down large deposits but never received their cars, the story took a new twist. Farmers Branch police and Texas state officials raided Unique and seized 61 cars in varying states of completion at five sites.

The Farmers Branch police department said Unique's cars were seized because authorities had learned that the company might have altered the V.I.N's. Authorities suggested that Unique engaged in a practice known as "title washing," in which salvage titles are cleansed of salvage status by retitling the cars in another state. Customers might be unaware that the donor car for their GT500 Eleanor had been declared a total loss previously.

Both Mr. Shelby and Chip Foose, the prominent custom car designer who had also licensed Unique to build cars from his designs, have severed their ties with Unique Performance.

In less than five years, Unique Performance had acquired a high profile in the U.S. auto world with its 1967 GT 500 "Eleanor" Mustangs and 1966 GT 350SR Mustangs – cars it created from scratch using the bodies and basic platforms from old '66 and '67 Mustang "donor" cars. It got orders for at least 225 over a five-year period, at prices ranging from \$100,000 to more than \$200,000 each, but only about 119 were built, company officials say.

In a general response to the police accusations, Unique Performance says that it holds titles or bills of sale for every car seized in the raid, and that it had procedures for notifying authorities when the company replaced a body panel on a car that contained a vehicle identification number. And while Unique Performance acknowledges that financial problems slowed the delivery of some customers' cars, the company purchased "donor" cars so it could build every Mustang for which it had a deposit.

The VIN number is stamped on sheet metal in two areas in the engine compartment. If those panels are replaced because of an accident or rust, the VIN is often missing on one side of the car or both. Many of the 40-year-old donor cars had rust or had been repaired over the years. When Unique replaced a panel, it was supposed to advise the state what it had done, and the state had a process for establishing the VIN.

Many of the 106 customers awaiting cars have an entirely different complaint: They contend that Unique Performance took their deposits and never delivered their cars – paying rent, overhead and the wages of about 100 employees rather than finishing the cars. Unique had taken in an estimated \$10 million to \$15 million in deposits.

Mr. Hasty denies the customers' allegations. But he acknowledges that financial problems at Unique slowed the progress on some customers' cars. "I have a vehicle for every single deposit a customer has given us," he said.

Some Unique Performance customers are also suing Texas automotive legend Carroll Shelby, whose company granted a license to Unique in September 2002 to call its new/old cars "Shelbys." To complicate the situation, Unique filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy protection in November, about a week after the police raid.

Mr. Hasty blamed financial setbacks for his company's failure to deliver cars on time.

About two years ago, Mr. Hasty said, he received 22 engines from Shelby that wouldn't run. Another 73 cars that had been sent to a Shelby facility in Las Vegas – where prisoners performed some of the sheet metal and body work as part of a job-training program – "were built improperly," he said.

Unique Performance was also trying to develop a Shelby F-150 Ford pickup and was grappling with a lawsuit over using the Eleanor name from the movie.

"All of the revenue we received went into an operating fund," Mr. Hasty said. "And when you're involved with the engine situation, fixing the cars that went to Shelby, developing the F-150 and the lawsuits, you're looking at \$1.8 million that we had to spend real fast. That put us behind."

Shelby Automobiles has denied Mr. Hasty's assertions, contending that Mr. Hasty never raised the engines or bodywork as issues until recently. And Unique Performance ultimately hired the Shelby official responsible for the engine and bodywork programs, Shelby officials say.

Prior to the seizure, Shelby Automobiles sent Mr. Hasty and Unique Performance a notice terminating their licensing agreement. Shelby Automobiles met with Unique Performance officials in June after learning that several customers were suing the company because they had not received their cars.

"One of the reasons we didn't give the go-ahead on the F-150 project was we got suspicious that they were taking money from Customer A to pay for building Customer B's car," said Neil Cummings, a Los Angeles attorney representing Shelby Automobiles. "That's when we told him [Mr. Hasty] that he could not proceed until he had cleaned up this situation."

Even now, many disgruntled Unique customers just want their cars. And if Unique Performance can't deliver them, they want Shelby Automobiles to intercede.

Carroll Shelby issued a statement in mid-December about the company. "Everyone at Carroll Shelby Licensing has been disappointed by the recent events at Unique Motorcars," the holding company for Unique Performance, Mr. Shelby said. "Doug Hasty continues to blame everyone else for his problems when he should just look in the mirror. "We sympathize with those who paid Unique Motorcars and never got their car. I want to assure them that not one dime of their deposit made its way to Carroll Shelby Licensing."

Mr. Hasty, meanwhile, says he has little hope of rebuilding his business. "We're in a horrible place," he said, adding that he was in the process of lining up \$4.5 million from a local investor when Unique Performance collapsed. "It's a process I've got to live through for the next two or three years."

SAY IT AIN'T SO, STEVE!

Steve Saleen retired from the company he founded, Saleen, Inc in May. Famous for highly modified Mustangs and F150s, the Saleen S7 supercar and also responsible for production of much of the Ford GT, his company has been a powerhouse of performance. Since then, he has announced plans to import cars from China, becoming the CEO of ZX Automobile Company of North America.

The first imports will be a pickup truck and an SUV, bringing them first into Mexico and then eventually into the U.S. ZXNA expects to have 150 dealers within a year to invest \$300,000 each in ZXNA. They already have 30 dealers, Saleen says.

The company hopes to have an assembly plant in Baja, Mexico, where it will build vehicles for the United States. Plans call for importing 30,000 vehicles a year by 2009.

2008 dues of \$20 per family membership are to be paid to our club treasurer, Derek Peaster. You can pay in person at the next meeting or send a check to Derek at 140 Sarah Lane Lumberton, TX 77657. (payable to Wild Horse Mustang Club)

Upcoming Mustang Events in Detail

February 10-17, 2008

Mustang Cruise

Miami, Florida

Attention all Mustang enthusiasts. If you are a vintage or late model Mustang Enthusiast, you will want to join us on a wonderful 7 night Eastern Caribbean cruise featuring exciting Mustang seminars and workshops. Speakers include Kevin Marti of the Marti Report, Arley Whitsell, 2006 Mustang Club of America President, Larry Jewett, editor of Mustang Enthusiast Magazine as well as other Mustang experts. We'll have Mustang themed on-board activities such as welcome champagne party, muscle car breakfasts, gearhead get-togethers, great give-aways and other exciting events aimed at all Mustang enthusiasts. Join us while we cruise from Miami to the eastern Caribbean with ports including Nassau, St Thomas and St. Maartin. It's a great way for Mustang lovers worldwide to get together and have a relaxing time in the sun while in the company of other Mustang enthusiasts. The cruise offers a unique venue to have your February 2008 Mustang Club meeting. For more details on this cruise including full information on the speakers, cabin prices and complete itinerary, visit www.catchawaveproductions.com or call Arthur Meltz or Jan Holloway at Travelink Services: 800-454-3737.

March 7-8, 2008

ROEA/Great Race Car Show & Track Event

Grandbury, Texas

Hosted by Roush Owners & Enthusiasts Association at Grandbury & Motorsports Ranch. Event hours are 8am-6pm with check-in running 8am. Registration fee is \$20/\$95 (pre-registration \$15). Fri: join Great Race in their rally Fri: car cruise in Sat: car show sponsored by Grand Prairie Ford Sat: track event Sat: BBQ w/Great Race Email for flyer and more info. For more information, call Carol Barker at 704-542-8093 or email carol_barker@goroush.com or visit the website at <http://www.goroush.com>.

March 8, 2008

9th Annual Mustang and Ford Power Show

Sulphur, Louisiana

Hosted by Cajun Mustangers at Don Shetler Ford. Event hours are 8-4 with check-in running 8-11. Registration fee is 20. Door Prizes, Goody Bags, Trophies, T-shirts, 50/50, For more information, call Chad Stanley at 409-960-7333 or email Chadspnys@aol.com or call Jason Liles at 337-842-5103 or email jasonliles@hotmail.com.

March 28-30, 2008

Pensacola National 2008

Pensacola, Florida

hosted by the Gulf Coast Regional Mustang Club at the Pensacola Interstate fairgrounds. Host hotel will be the Quality Inn (850-944-0333). Log onto the club's website for updated information.

April 18-19, 2008

5th Annual Texas Bullitt Shootout

Lufkin, Texas

hosted by Bullitt Events at Pine Valley Raceway Park. Event 12 Noon - 7:00 p.m. Check-in 3:00 - 6:00 p.m. Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 12 Noon Saturday. Registration \$20 (\$10 before April 5). Friday night cruise in and Saturday car show and drag racing. Three heads up racing classes and a bracket class. For more information, call Greg Autry at 469.235.2020; email gautry@imboc.com; or visit www.imboc.com

May 3, 2008

Joe P. Collins Memorial Car & Truck Show

LUFKIN, Texas

Hosted by Hospice in the Pines at Wal-Mart Parking Lot. Event hours are 9am to 3pm with check-in running 8am-11am. Registration fee is \$20.00. Open event welcoming ALL makes and model cars and trucks. Twenty classes and over 60 trophies. Door prizes, 50/50 jar, goodie bags and T-shirts to first 75 participants. Within close walking distance to many eating establishments. Show site on Wal-Mart parking lot at US Hwy 59 & Daniel McCall Drive on the south side of Lufkin, Texas. Hotel at show site (Texas Inn & Suites). For more information, call Roman Collins at 936-366-3261 or email policemustang@yahoo.com or call Laura DuBose at 936-632-1514 or email or visit the website at <http://www.dpsmustang.com>.

Club Meeting Notes

The club had the last meeting on January 10th at Olive Garden in Beaumont.

- The Club has \$2497.60 in the treasury. Dues are due!
- Many upcoming events were discussed including:
 - Spindletop Rod Club Show March 28-30
 - MCA National Show in Pensacola March 28-30. Club members are encouraged to attend this event (just a short seven hour drive away). This is the closest MCA National this year.
- Congratulations to the club members that attended the December Show in Sour Lake and won the club attendance award. Rumor has it that Rocky and his Cobra took a first place.
- We need members to suggest outings and meeting locations. Send your ideas to Ronnie Woods.
- We also need members to volunteer for show committees. Ron will be talking with Kinsel to set the date – probably in May.
- We will try to have a driving event in February, weather permitting.

Our next club meeting will be on February 7th @6:30pm at Elena's Mexican Restaurant on College St. in Beaumont.

Member News

Bob Davenport sold his '97 Cobra recently. Someone got themselves a 2500 mile cherry with that car.

Jason and Heather found a nearly identical fox body convertible to replace hers after the mishap on the drag strip.

Ron Roth has his '96 GT up for sale. It is posted on several local websites.

Don O'Brien's Shelby is still being modified at the Shelby plant in Vegas. Hopefully it will be back soon.

Other News

Carroll Shelby's personal '69 Shelby convertible sold January 19th on Barrett-Jackson auctions for \$675,000.⁰⁰. That's a chunk of change, but less than the \$5 million his personal AC Cobra went for last year.

It seems that specialty Mustangs continue to proliferate. Even with the demise of Unique Performance, there are several new offerings out there. Roush has a new "P51A" coming out, AJ Foyt has the "Coyote", and Shelby is even looking at a Terlingua tribute car (It's a V-6!). It's just a great time to be a Mustang fan.

2008 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

GO TO WWW.WILDHORSEMUSTANGCLUB.COM FOR THE FULL YEARS CALENDAR

CRUISE NIGHTS

1ST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH @ OFFICE DEPOT IN PORT ARTHUR/NEDERLAND

3RD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH @ WEINERSCHNITZEL IN ORANGE

4TH SATURDAY OF THE MONTH @ WEINERSCHNITZEL IN BEAUMONT

5TH SATURDAY – VIDOR CRUISE

JANUARY

28 – 3 HOUSTON AUTO SHOW
RELIANT CENTER

FEBRUARY

7 CLUB MEETING
23-24 MIDNIGHT FANTASIES SHOW
RAYNE, LA
TBD DRIVING EVENT

MARCH

1 PROJECT GRADUATION SHOW,
LUMBERTON HIGH SCHOOL
6 CLUB MEETING

8 CAJUN MUSTANGERS SHOW
SULFUR, LA

15 WESTBROOK AUTORAMA
PROJECT GRADUATION
WESTBROOK HS, BEAUMONT

28-30 MCA NATIONAL SHOW,
PENSACOLA

28-30 SPINDLETOP ROD CLUB
SHOW, BEAUMONT

28-30 O'REILLY SPRING NATIONALS
HOUSTON RACEWAY PARK

CLUB BUSINESSES

KINSEL FORD – CINDY YOHE, DON COLLINS

AAMCO TRANSMISSIONS – THE RAYZOR'S

AFLAC INSURANCE – MARTY JONES

GRINNELL COMPUTERS – OUR WEBMASTER, KEVIN GRINNELL

HOUSE OF POWER/PERFORMANCE – THE BROWN'S

PARSON'S DIFFERENTIALS – CLIFF PARSONS

SNAP-ON TOOLS – DONNIE TIPTON

WOODS SUPERMARKET AND MINI STORAGE – RONNIE AND KATHY WOODS

GO BURGERS LLC (BURGER KING) - DON O'BRIEN

**Wild Horse Mustang Club
Sue Quick, Editor
90 Beech Dr.
Lumberton, TX 77657**

THE PONY EXPRESS

WHMC Officers

President - Ron Roth 751-0447

Vice President - Ronnie Woods 769-5961

Secretary - Sue Quick 755-1256

Treasurer - Derek Peaster 751-3396