

# A King's Black Steed

Matthew Followill from King's of Leon has a hot new ride



Text and photography by Jeff Ford

**R**ed. Red, red, red, red, red. Arguably, the color red is the most popular color for cars. It gets noticed; Red is loud, boisterous and grabs you by your short hairs. We here at LFM are not immune to the seductive ways of the color. Red speaks of action, motion, and verve. If red automotive paint were a hair color it would be—well—blonde.

However, there is another color that, in our opinion, has a certain edge on Red when it comes to cars. That is Black. For years, limousines carting heads of state and potentates and rock stars have been Black. Black says power and prestige, mystery and intrigue. What color is the Bat Mobile?

Exactly. What color is the SR71 Blackbird? UmHum. And the F-117 Nighthawk? Riiight. So, Black has that manly machismo that draws us, which is why we like this Shelby Clone that isn't quite a Clone. The exterior is all business, wearing no eeks and bumps other than the ones that Shelby designed back in the '60s. No radio antenna disturbs the liquid Black paint, no mirrors are festooned on the doors to tart up the body and destroy those classic lines that are subtle, and, with the help of Shelby's magic, much like a purpose built military machine.

While the compulsion to add all the Shelby whistles and bells via stripes is strong, this car will have none of that. No

Le Mans stripes, no GT500 designations on the side or back. Its just black, crouched on 17-inch 10-spoke wheels and wearing attitude like a suit, the car begs to be tested—and to test you.

What is interesting is that this Clone was an "add-on". Allan Shepley of Mustang Central in Byron, Georgia, was already working on a Concours '69 Shelby GT-500 for a customer from Texas when the fellow, on a visit to see the progress of his Grabber Blue '69, saw another of Allan's cars like this one. "I took him for a ride in that Clone and he was blown away," said Shepley. Soon after seeing and riding in the other car an order was placed for this one. The fellow want-

ed a full '67 GT500 clone (sans FE power and four-speed) with stripes, mirrors, badges and wheels. His reasoning? You can't comfortably drive a real Shelby out on the streets, but a Clone, that can be horsed around with; oh, and he wanted it Black. Now, while we like Black as a color it is, without a doubt, the trickiest color to get "right". Black can go one of two ways: either "wow" or "bow-wow", rarely do you see a black car that is in between. Luckily, for the Texas Car Guy Allan Shepley knows a thing or two about painting.

We ran into Allan at the 2008 NPD Silver Springs show in Ocala, Florida before the car was finished. Little did we know that we were about to add fuel to the fire of debate

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that was raging over finishing the car (adding the stripes and deck lid badge). When we saw it we were emphatic "If you add the stripes you'll kill that look". Allan agreed and so the stripes stayed off.

The car is not just a looker though. Under the hood is a 351 Windsor EFI that sucks gobs of air through a Vortech Supercharger, Trick Flow intake, and Edelbrock Victor Jr. heads. In fact, the entire engine looks like it would be more at home in a Fox Chassis drag race Mustang than a '67 GT-500. Behind that 450-plus horsepower engine is a TK500 Tremec five-speed and

a 9-inch rear axle that houses a 3.70:1 Traction-Loc assembly.

The chassis on the Mustang is just as slick. Up front is a Rod and Custom Motorsports Mustang II that houses an Air Ride Technologies bag system and power disc brakes. Out back, the braking is taken care of by RRS rear discs. The wheels look original but in fact are 17-inch 10-spokes that are swathed in B.F. Goodrich KDWs in P235/45ZR17s up front and P245/45ZR17s out back.

The outside is pure Shelby via a StangAholics glass kit and assorted parts from Tony Branda. Inside the cab

is far more austere than Shelby had intended but somehow it works with the rest of the reduction in falderal. While the seats are standard Mustang buckets, the dash panel is a JME

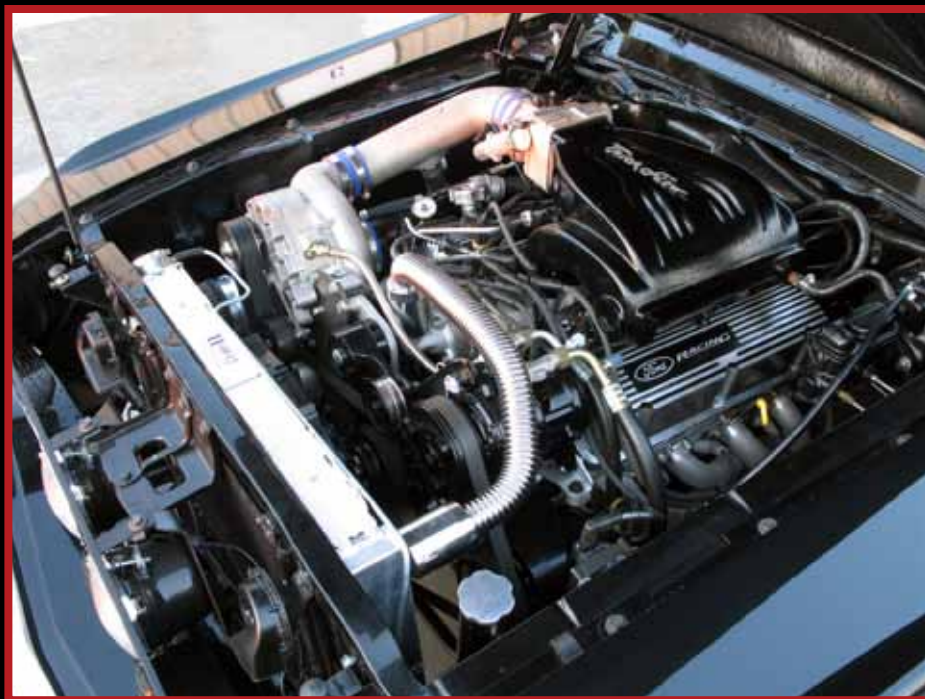


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unit with Procomp gauges and a 160 speedo and 10,000 rpm tach. The Flaming River steering column snakes down through the floor to the Rod & Custom rack and pinion, which is directed by a LeCarra wood grain wheel. Human cooling duties are taken care of by a Classic Auto Air Perfect Fit system while a JVC head unit lays down the tunes. Since the car was a non-fold down rear seat car, Shepley and his crew put the Air Ride Technologies air tank in behind the rear seat under a clever package tray.

When the car was complete, the Texas Car Guy held on to it for a while then let it go to none other than Matthew Followill. Those of you who are older than 50 will probably never have heard of Matthew; he is the lead guitarist for the Alternative Rock Band *Kings of Leon*. You might have heard the song "Use Somebody" on the radio. That wailing (is it cool to say that now?) guitar in the song is slung over the shoulder of Matthew.

According to Allan, Matthew is stoked with his purchase. He sent the car back to Shepley for a full going over before he takes delivery of it. Rumor has it that Matthew keeps going out to look at the video Mustang Central posted for the car. Who can blame him? With 450 plus rear wheel horsepower, a razor sharp Mustang II front end and slick Black paint this car will truly be a King's Black Steed.



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