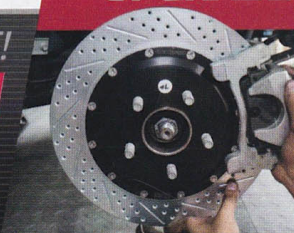




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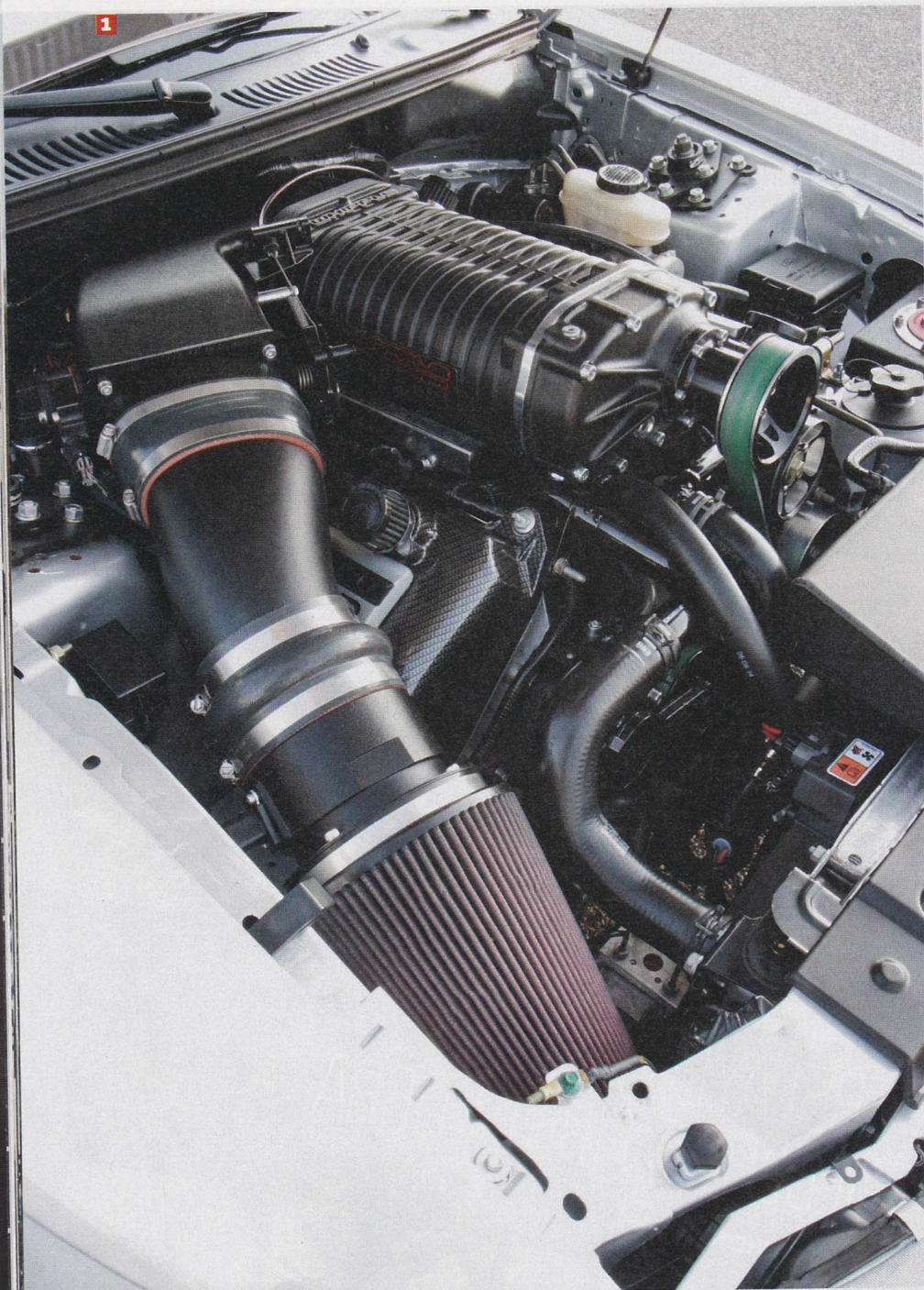
TEN

The Silverslayer wears its original Silver metallic paint, but with a few additions. The body features carbon side scoops, the rear spoiler, and a 3M black brushed aluminum vinyl roof wrap. Weld racing wheels reside at each corner, with Mickey Thompson ET Street 325/60/15 radials out back.

SECOND COMING

THE SILVERSLAYER ISN'T JUSTIN TOLBERT'S FIRST COBRA

TEXT MICHAEL JOHNSON PHOTOS AUTHOR



The 2003-2004 Cobra, codenamed Terminator, is the Mustang that changed everything. It was the car all of us asked for and more. Mustang enthusiasts wanted a factory supercharged option with a six-speed transmission. Not sure if we asked for an independent rear suspension, but Ford and SVT set out to build a world beater. Therefore, the 2003 Cobra featured an IRS. The car known as SVT's John Coletti's baby was born, and we finally had a supercharged, six-speed, IRS-equipped Mustang from the factory. All was right with the world.

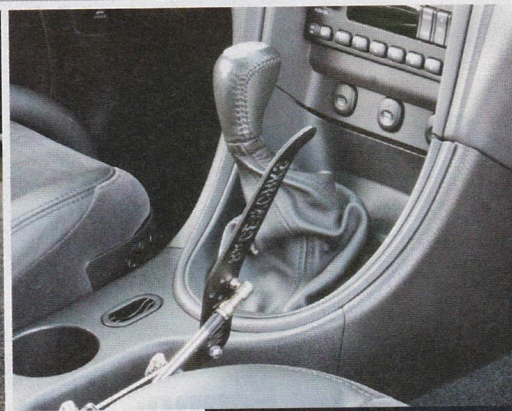
Because of its standard features, the 2003 Cobra was probably the first Mustang to come with so much fanfare that people were willing to pay a premium to own one. These days, with vehicles like the most recent GT350 and GT350R, we've become used to paying premiums for our favorite Mustang, but the 2003 Cobra is the one that started it all.

For Rural Hall, North Carolina's Justin Tolbert, he waited until the second year of Terminator production to get his hands on one. "I bought my first 2004 Cobra in February of 2005," Tolbert says. The initial excitement over the new Terminator had worn off to the point where there were some leftover 2004s. That's how he found his, as a leftover.

However, leftover or not, he was instantly hooked. "I



1. The engine is largely stock in Justin Tolbert's Cobra. It features Triangle Speed Shop oil pump gears, ARP head studs, Fel-Pro MLS head gaskets, a 4.0L supercharger, and supporting fuel and ignition mods. On E85, the combo is good for over 900 rwhp, and 9-second elapsed times. His goal is 5-second elapsed times in the eighth-mile, and he's oh so close with a 6.22.



2. The interior is home to a Maximum Motorsports six-point rollcage, a Ford Performance steering wheel, and a Steeda Tri-Ax shifter attached to the upgraded Tremec T56 transmission.

raced that car for four years until I was caught street racing in November of 2008," says Tolbert. Authorities seized the Cobra, and Tolbert lost his license. "I was devastated."

Of course he longed for another Cobra. He was able to find the one you see here in July 2009 with just 4,200 miles on it. "It was untouched," Tolbert says, "and I had to have it." With the help of his parents, he was able to buy the Cobra, then the modding began in earnest.

As we all know, 2003-2004 Cobra engines came from the factory with good parts already there. Tolbert simply improved on the factory combination. That involved adding ARP head studs, Fel-Pro MLS head gaskets, and Triangle Speed Shop billet oil pump gears. The heads remain stock but feature Kurgan Motorsports-spec Bullet Racing cams.

Most of the changes come from improvements made to the air and fuel delivery and the exhaust

aspects of the car. The lion's share comes from the addition of a 4.0L supercharger, but that addition is bolstered by a ported intake, an AFCO Pro-Series heat exchanger, a 4-inch pulley, and a GT500 mass air meter. The fuel system boasts twin 465-lph fuel pumps, Bosch 1,450cc injectors, an Aeromotive regulator, and DivisionX fuel rails. The bolstered fuel system feeds the beast E85 fuel, while Pro Dyno's Dan Desio handles the tune.

Tolbert's Cobra retains the wondrous Tremec T56

six-speed transmission, but to make sure it can handle the extra power, it features a D&D Performance 26-spline input shaft along with a Spec Stage 3+ clutch and aluminum flywheel. Tolbert rows a Steeda Autosports Tri-Ax shifter, while a Metco drive-shaft loop keeps the Cobra



from entering the pole vault competition.

Like so many other Terminators, Tolbert's Cobra is sans IRS these days; it was swapped in favor of a solid axle. Specifically, he swapped in a 2003 Mach 1 solid axle, but not before he narrowed the rear end 1 inch on each side to fit a larger wheel and tire combination out back. Tolbert also fortified the 8.8 with Strange Engineering 33-spline axles, C-clip eliminators, spool, and 3.73 gears.

To complete the swap, Tolbert used a combination of Maximum Motorsports lower control arms and Panhard bar with BMR Suspension adjustable upper control arms. Up front he sourced Maximum Motorsports again for the Cobra's K-member, front control arms, bumpsteer kit, and caster/camber plates. Tolbert also called on Maximum Motorsports for the car's six-point roll bar and full-length subframe

connectors, which also tie into Wild Rides torque box reinforcements.

To have full control over suspension adjustability, Tolbert employed Strange 10-way adjustable shocks both front and rear, with Hypercoil springs up front and Team Z springs out back. Strange Engineering also got the nod for the Cobra's front brakes, while the stock brakes remain in the back. To finish out the suspension, the Cobra's rolling stock consists of Weld AlumaStar 17x4.5 wheels up front with Mickey Thompson 26-inch radials, and Weld Racing Weld Stars 15x10 in the back wrapped with Mickey Thompson 325/60 drag radials.

On the aforementioned E85, Tolbert's Cobra makes a tick over 900 rwhp and 762 rear-wheel torque. With a goal of running 5s in the eighth-mile, his best as of this writing is a 6.22 at 115 mph. Not surprisingly, his best



3. Tolbert, who formed CT Motorsports, handles much of the mechanical work on his own. Running as many stick shift races as he can, he upgraded the Cobra's Tremec T56 with a 26-spline input shaft, a Spec Stage 3+ clutch with an aluminum flywheel, and the factory driveshaft.

they'll be in front."

An interesting twist to the story is that Tolbert was recently able to reacquire his first Cobra. When it was seized in 2008, it was parked in impound until a dealer bought out the lot. "It sat in the same spot since it was taken," Tolbert says. "It was like someone just parked it for that long."

Unfortunately, sitting that long took its toll on the Cobra. "It's a little rough," says Tolbert. Therefore, he plans to turn that one into a race car, while the one you see here, the SilverSlayer, as it is known, will remain a street/strip car. Before it was seized, it was an Eaton/nitrous/IRS car capable of running in the 10.0s. Safe to say, it's going to be quicker than that soon enough. "It was a big moment for me," Tolbert says, about reacquiring his original Cobra. "My wife and I dated in that car, and now I have two boys—one Cobra for each."

quarter-mile time is a 9.63 at 145 mph with a 1.44 short time. "I race a lot of eighth-mile tracks," he says, "and I usually let the LSX cars stage first since that's the only time

