





CLONE WARS

Shelby buddies Clyde Madsen and Dick Waitneight each own pristine early GT350s. One is real, the other a clone. Before turning the page, can you tell which is which?

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD TRUESDELL

THE WHOLE CLONING CONTROVERSY HAS STIRRED UP MUCH DEBATE AMONG THE EDITORS HERE IN THE PLUSH OFFICES OF MUSCLECAR ENTHUSIAST. SOME, LIKE SENIOR CONTRIBUTING EDITOR PAUL ZAZARINE, BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE AN ABOMINATION, WHILE OTHERS ON THE TEAM FEEL THAT THEY HAVE THEIR PLACE IN THE WORLD SO LONG AS THEY ARE NOT PRESENTED AS THE REAL THING.

Our debate mirrors similar arguments across the musclecar hobby. Most people have strong feeling one way or another, but it is clear that there are issues beyond fraud when it comes to the cloning of popular musclecars. People clone cars for reasons of practicality, economics, convenience, enthusiasm and yes, deception, and we wanted to get our arms around the whole subject.

Take these two GT350s. One is the real deal, the other a well-crafted clone. We thought that it would be interesting to let each owner weigh in with his own opinion on the debate, to see how each feels about this hot-button topic. Their own words, on the following pages, might surprise you.

The cloning controversy is not going to go away anytime soon. As the prices of real musclecars skyrocket to unprecedented heights, cloning lesser cars into top echelon examples is here to stay. So long as there is no intent to deceive, most of us will acknowledge that practice is mostly benign, while others will take the position that it is a capital crime. As this has been the number one topic in the reader's mail department, we're really eager to see what happens when we devote a significant chunk of this issue of Musclecar Enthusiast to this hot-button topic.



REAL



CAR ONE: 1965 SHELBY GT350

Clyde Madsen, a self-employed manufacturer's representative, along with his wife Janet, have acquired a taste for the good life living in Laguna Niguel, California. The GT350 pictured here shares garage space with a 1970 Boss 302 Mustang, and the pair has owned a variety of vintage Corvettes and Porsches over the past 20 years.

As his father was a salesperson for Ford it should come as no surprise that Madsen grew up with an affinity for all things Blue Oval. He even remembers as an 8th grader, sitting in Mustangs prior to their official introduction date of April 11, 1964, as the dealer was keeping the cars hidden in a lot behind the dealership. "Nearly a year later," says

Madsen, "The Shelby Mustang came out and the dealer my father worked at, Bennett Ford in Salt Lake City, was the only dealer in the Mountain States to have the Shelby franchise. About two months after the GT350s were introduced, in the summer of 1965, my father took me for a ride in one of these cars and as an impressionable kid, left me desirous to someday own one of these cars! I purchased this Shelby in 1997."

Madsen's GT350 is exceptionally well documented. Refer to the 1997 Shelby American World Registry, page 385, for a detailed history of SFM5S195.

Much of the restoration work on this car occurred while in the custody of the Ford Motor Company in 1981. Since then Madsen has detailed the original R-Model magnesium wheels, install the correct original "dealer option" 48IDA Weber carburetor set-up complete with correct original Shelby intake manifold. To date this car has never had a radio installed (all '65 GT350's came radio delete) and because it was a pre-January 1966 production date, no outside review mirror has been installed (outside rearview mirrors became mandatory by

DOT as of January 1, 1966). Both the radio and the mirror would have been dealer options.

While Madsen has no desire to race his prize, it is street driven to every car show or event. "This car has significant historical notoriety," says Madsen. "I am only the temporary curator of this piece of art and history. I am extremely interested in racing cars and would like to someday own a clone GT350 that I can enjoy driving in anger!"

As an owner of a real GT350, Madsen's comments on the issue of clones is something that you might expect. "I have no problem with clone Shelybs as long as the owners are up front about their origins. If you see a car that is being touted as a 'real' Shelby and it is obviously not, then that is where the trouble begins. These cars are highly sought after and the fact they are 'cloned' only endorses the fact that many people want one of these cars. I watch the values of both the 'real' and the 'clones' going up in price and appreciate why we need to keep the separation between the two. I encourage people to create clone Shelybs but I also let them know that they need to assure everyone that they are true clones."



CLONE

CAR TWO: 1966 SHELBY GT350

Richard Waitneight is a retired mergers and acquisition specialist who, along his wife Sandy, hails from Newport Beach, California, and is a close friend of Clyde Madsen. At the weekly Saturday morning Crystal Cove car show, Dick and Clyde often park their GT350s next to each other, showing that, in this case, the clone controversy is a non-issue.

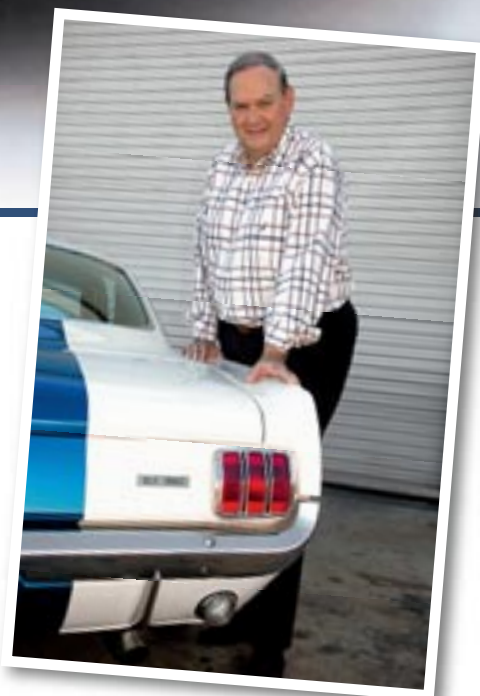
When we asked Dick why he went the clone route, even though he could have easily afforded the real thing, here's what he had to say. "I always wanted a GT350 but I knew that ultimately, since I planned to race it, that I'd hammer it into the dirt, so I didn't want to destroy a piece of history. I found a very good '66 fastback and took it to Russ Robinson of Glenn's Alignment in Costa Mesa, California. Glenn's Alignment is a Shelby and GT-350 Mecca here in Southern California and Glenn is the Messiah. I asked him to make me an absolutely perfect knock-off in every way but the serial number and he did it."

"The car runs like a champ," continues Waitneight, "And with the exception of a few minor modifications, like an

electronic ignition, a hydraulic cam, slightly wider tires and the Tremec T-5 5-speed transmission, the car is as it would have been had it emerged from the Shelby American shop, outside of LAX at 6501 West Imperial Highway back in 1966."

Waitneight knows little of his car's history other than to say it was purchased from a young man in Phoenix back in 1995. It was an exceptionally clean car that the previous owner had already started to Shelbyize, being a real Shelby nut himself. Save those modifications, it was a magnificent 85,000-mile original and utterly unmolested. It was great foundation for exactly what he had planned.

Since then the car, which sports an unbored, Shelby-correct 289 V-8, has been driven about 35,000 miles, 5,000 of which were put on the clock participating in the 1999 Great American Race. He's a regular at Shelby American club events, and many of those miles were racked up at Willow Springs Raceway, where Waitneight can feel the difference made by Robinson when he lowered the stock Ford suspension to proper Shelby specs (1.5-inch drop), and added the



Monte Carlo bar which goes between the original-style orange Koni shocks.

When asked to weigh in on the legitimacy of clones, Waitneight has this to say: "So long as the car is not represented as the real thing, I don't see what's wrong with building a clone. I built this car to drive as it seems silly, even if you can afford it, to abuse a well-documented original. They've just become too valuable to do that. But I also believe, real or cloned, these cars should be driven. That's what they were originally built to do." ■