

## *Is There Such a Thing as a Practical Hotrod?*

Clay and Susan Seachris have had hotrods before, but they're getting the hobby narrowed down to where it almost makes sense.

Their latest venture is a '65 Cobra 427 Factory Five Roadster, which they purchased in May 2004 as a replica body and tubular chassis from Massachusetts.

"A 427 Cobra and the little sports car with a big engine was always a dream car," Clay said. "I knew the only way I'd ever own one would be to build one. Being a streetrodder at heart, I needed to build one just the way I wanted it."

They purchased a 1988 Mustang police interceptor that provided the 302 v-8, the transmission, 8.8 rear-end, front spindles, brakes and pedal box. After stripping the worn-out Mustang of all useable parts, the car was junked (with apologies to Fox-body Mustang fans).



"The traction-lok rear-end has 373 gears keeping both back tires locked on quick take-offs and the five-speed transmission offers a top speed beyond my comfort level," Clay said. "The total car weighs only 2100 pounds so the power to weight ratio really makes it wild when the second carburetor comes out to play."

While the Mustang provided many parts, there was still much work to be done. The motor, transmission and rear-end all had to be rebuilt. The engine was bored out, a hotter cam installed, aluminum heads and a dual-carb aluminum intake were added.

"The nice thing about this Cobra is it's all Fox-body Mustang, so it's pretty easy to work on, and pretty easy to get parts," Clay said.

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Clay said the work load was lighter with help from Bob Schmeichel, Nathan Brower and other friends who helped. That also made the build more fun, working together with his friends. As a result, he has stories to tell about the car even before it hit the road. Such as the time he, Nathan and Bob started preparing the car for paint one afternoon, and before they were done, the paint was applied and it was 5 a.m. the next morning.

The paint is a special mix of blue-violet pearl. However, Clay said it makes the car very difficult to photograph. It always seems to look blue in photos, but purple in person, he said.

“Susan and I both like purple and missed a plum pearl ’46 Chevy I built and sold years before,” he said. “We decided to paint the Cobra violet purple even though it is not a normal Cobra color.”

While this is not Clay’s first hotrod, it is easily his favorite. He said before he’d have a car for a little while but would then get the itch to sell it and buy something different. The Cobra seems to have cured that itch.

“I had a street rod before, and I had a numbers-matching muscle car before,” Clay said. “I didn’t want to have to mess with rust again, and I didn’t want the worries of a matching-numbers engine blowing up on me.”

But there’s always something.

“The only thing is it’s got two seats, so we’ve got two cars with two seats,” he said.

Maybe his ’98 Corvette is still causing a little bit of an itch.