

HARBOR

Beatlemania for Barnes

Michael Barnes attends Walk of Fame dedication for Ringo Starr.

Michael Barnes and friends attended the ceremony in which former Beatle Ringo Starr received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

"In celebration of former Beatle Ringo Starr receiving his very own star in front of Capital Records earlier this month, we took a 'magical mystery tour' of our own: The Metro," writes Michael Barnes, Club Member. "It was actually a pleasant experience, especially the absence of gridlock and parking lots.

"There was a modest crowd gathered when the party finally began. Not only was Ringo the 2,401st celebrity to receive a star, it was the 50th anniversary of the Hollywood Walk of Fame. [There were] too many politicians for my liking. Luckily, we were not kept waiting very long before the man of the hour gave a humble speech, his wife by his side. He needed very little help from his friends, but they were there. There was fanfare, there was a marching band, and there were even Sgt. Pepper's costumes. He announced plans for his upcoming tour and a date of Aug. 8 at the Greek Theatre. Ringo joined [former] band mates John Lennon and George Harrison on the Walk of Fame."

Glad you had a good time, Michael!



At Ringo's newly minted star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame were, from left: Michael Barnes; his wife, Rebecca; and friends Bruce LeClair and Summer Etter.

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When you are young, you think you know everything. Before I could drive, I thought a Ferrari or Lamborghini were the ultimate rides that money can buy. As my automobile education grew, I learned I knew very little about what is out there. Believe me, I would not say no to a ride in an Italian beauty or even having one in the garage, but with options ranging from a Hemi-powered 1970 Cuda, a Rolls Royce Phantom or a 1987 Buick Grand National, the choices are endless as to what you can own or dream about owning.

One car on the list of many collectors is the 1965 AC Cobra, otherwise known as the Shelby Cobra. I am sure you have seen a few on the road, but the probability of it being an original is slim. Why, you ask? There are only about 300 in existence, and many are valued in the \$1.5 million range. The only version in existence of the "Super Snake" model sold a couple of years ago for \$5.5 million. Bill Cosby owned the other "Super Snake" just long enough to take it for one scary ride and decided that was plenty, so he gave it back. That same car landed in the Pacific Ocean with the new owner a short time later. The original car was comprised of hand made aluminum panels and housed a 427 Ford V8 with almost 500 horsepower and a top speed of 180 mph. The Shelby became known as the Corvette killer.

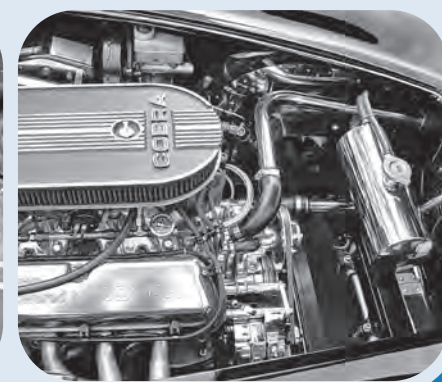
Ramon Naval is a Garage Attendant at the West Valley Station, LAPD, and a 19-year City Employee. In the 1980s, he took a ride in a Shelby replica and was hooked. From then on it was a desire to have one in his possession. After 20 years of saving, it was finally time to buy. In 2006, a leisurely evening on eBay would change his life. What Ramon came across was a jet black Shelby Cobra replica with gold racing stripes. After one click on the "buy" button and a short ride up the 101 freeway, Ramon's dream was now a reality. When asked why he decided to sell the car, the previous owner replied, "I have owned it for two months and my last drive I managed to get it sideways at a high rate of speed and decided that was it."

Ramon's Cobra has a custom-built two-by-four-inch steel frame that has a BMW 3 series suspension and steering bolted to it. Fuel is housed in a custom 18-gallon stainless-steel tank that fits between the frame rails at the rear of the car. The Cobra rolls on aluminum Halibrand-style wheels. The rear wheels are 17-inch-high by 10.5-inches deep, and the front wheels are 17 inches by 8.5 inches wide. The body of the car is all fiberglass and is 2.5 inches wider than the original. The car gets its guts from a polished 342-R Ford motor with the Roush

fixings, including a 770 Street Avenger carburetor. Those fixings help the motor have an output of 450 horsepower in case Ramon is in a hurry. A Tremec five-speed transmission was bolted to the Roush motor and the perfect choice due to its reliability and ability to handle large amounts of horsepower. To stop this machine, disk brakes were placed at all four corners.

The interior of the car has a replicated semi-competition dash with nostalgic-style Auto Meter gauges. Bucket seats are upholstered in black leather, and four-point harness belts help keep Ramon and his passengers in the car while they are holding on for dear life. The cockpit is stripped down, lacking distractions that would take away the full effect of being in a street legal race car.

After four years of owning this car, Ramon says he still gets goosebumps when sliding into the cockpit of this beauty to take a drive with his Tri County Cobra Club counterparts. "It takes me about five minutes to calm down from the excitement," Ramon said with a big smile. Ramon expressed he has not once had a bit of buyer's remorse and manages to drive it at least one to two days a week. I had to ask one last question: Will you ever sell it? Without hesitation, Ramon replied "No way!"



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