



A VISIT WITH ONE OF THE MUSTANG WORLD'S MOST RESPECTED TUNERS

10-SECOND SHOP TOUR

For nearly 20 years, Lidio Iacobelli has not only been part of the Mustang performance scene, he's been near the center of it.

His shop, Alternative Auto Performance, grew with the explosion in 5.0 Mustang performance in the early 1990s and has evolved with the industry as the cars and powertrains changed. "It was all 5.0-liters and Vortech blowers in the early days," says Iacobelli. "Now, it's stroker 4.6s, Kenne Bell superchargers and more." Iacobelli started tuning Mustangs as a side job while working as a Ford technician. Today, Iacobelli and his staff of technicians work out of a 7,500-square-foot facility they moved into last year. On our recent visit, the shop was

packed with a variety of cars and projects that depicted a snapshot of the current state of the Mustang performance world. There were several supercharged New Edge Mustangs on hand, along with a new GT awaiting its Vortech. There was also a new GT "Eleanor" clone fitted with a Shelby GT500 5.4-liter engine, as well as a classic Fox-body GT undergoing a complete revamp. A 392-inch stroker Windsor small-block powered it. Naturally, it was supercharged. Iacobelli's personal cars have always been the quarter-mile calling cards of his business. His yel-

This 2007 GT is a typical Iacobelli's "shop car". Don't let the 11.25 dial-in on the windshield fool you — the car has run as quickly as 10.91 at 126 mph. That 10-second run was made through the stock transmission, torque converter and rear gears.

low Fox notchback is well known, as are his more recent projects, including a supercharged '03 Mach I that has run 10-flat in street trim. He's also tinkered with '05 and '07 GTs, other Fox-body racecars and he even helped get the Marauder craze off the ground with a supercharged example. "I use all these cars to experiment with performance boundaries," he says. "I push them to the limit and sometimes break them, but then I know what's safe and reliable for my customers." That's a good philosophy for a professional tuner and, with nearly



Lidio Iacobelli has been modifying and tuning Mustangs for nearly 20 years. His Detroit-area shop, Alternative Auto Performance, is one of the most respected in the industry.



Alternative Auto recently moved from a 4,100-square-foot shop to an updated, well-lit 7,500-square-foot facility on the Northeast corner of the metro Detroit area.



This late-model Mach 1 strapped to Alternative's chassis dyno pumps up 485 horsepower to the tires.



The source of the Mach 1's 485 RWHP is a Vortech-blown and methanol-injected factory four-valve engine.



Marc Smielewski is Alternative primary engine builder and assembles the shop's stroker combinations, which take the 4.6-liter short block to a torquey 5.0 liters.



New Mustang GTs are Alternative Auto's bread and butter, with most — like the example shown here — undergoing a Vortech supercharger installation. Alternative also is fond of the expanded performance range offered by Kenne-Bell's screw-type blowers.



Alternative forged its reputation with the Fox-bodied cars and they continue to be a significant part of the company's business.



Jay Meisel makes adjustments to a black Fox-body's supercharged, 392-inch Windsor small block. The craftsmanship on the car is outstanding.



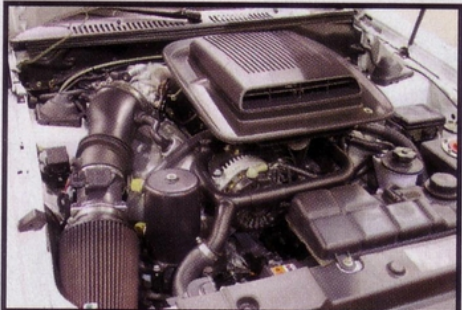
One of the more interesting projects in the shop during our visit was this late-model, GT-based "Eleanor" car, which was stuffed with a Shelby GT500 engine.



The supercharged 5.4-liter GT500 shoehorned into a GT-based Eleanor clone was dropped off at Alternative Auto to get tuned and running.



One of Lidio Iacobelli's personal cars is this white '03 Mach 1, which boasts a supercharger, methanol injection and a squirt of nitrous. Apart from cut-down springs to improve the ride height, the suspension is stock. Gearing is 3.73:1. This super-hot street car has run 10.36 off the bottle and as quick as 10.06 on the juice. It looks pretty innocuous for a 10-second street car.



Iacobelli's white Mach 1 is motivated by one of his company's 5.0-liter stroker engines. It has stock cams and CNC-ported heads, along with Kooks 1.75-inch headers. And under that hood scoop is a Kenne Bell blower. The combination is good for 625 RWHP "on motor" and 690 horses when the laughing gas is applied.



The auxiliary tank under the Mach 1's hood is the methanol reservoir. It enables more aggressive tuning at the track, while drastically reducing exhaust temperature.



From the rear, the Mach 1 looks terribly original. Only the slightly lowered ride height and wider rear wheels indicate the car is anything but factory-original.

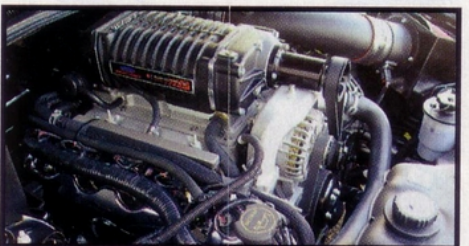
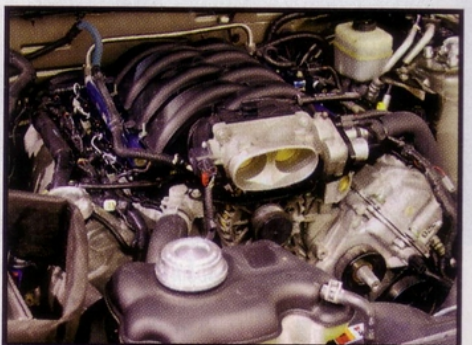
two decades of experience under his belt, it appears to work very well for Iacobelli.

As for the future of Mustang performance, Iacobelli is experimenting with E85 ethanol fuel as a method of extracting maximum performance from his projects.

"The octane of E85 is over 100, so it affords great tuning possibilities," he says.

The end of the racing season came too quickly last year for Iacobelli to continue with his supercharged '07 GT. He made one run with the car on E85, but that was it – and he no longer has the car.

"We keep moving upward and onward," he says. "The next 'shop car' will take us even farther." 🚀



Iacobelli's '07 GT was equipped with a Whipple supercharger, blowing 17 pounds of boost with the support of methanol injection. It made just about 500 RWHP in this configuration. Iacobelli started to experiment with running the car on E85 ethanol fuel late last season and was searching for the edge of the engine's performance envelope. All we can say is, he found it.



Iacobelli's '07 was a smart-looking car, riding on Bonspeed wheels and outfitted with a Shelby rear spoiler. Up front was a Ford hood scoop and Classic Design Concepts chin spoiler.



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