

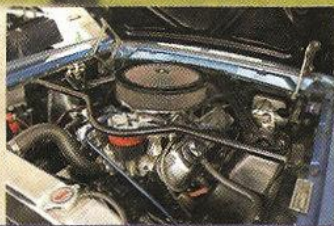
Inside a Vintage Race Car

Vintage racing is just old race cars out on track jockeying for position, right? Well, it's a little more involved than that, as today's vintage racer needs to balance track-ready performance with period looks. The car has to be safe, too.

Russ Flynn's 1966 Shelby GT350 nicely demonstrates these points. After catching racing fever about five and a half years ago, Russ decided that having a dedicated track car made more sense than tearing up his street Shelby. He eventually found this car, one that Cobra Automotive had prepared for competition several years ago.

Russ sticks to East Coast events and usually has Cobra Automotive perform the track-side support. "They require a boatload of maintenance," he says, as racing is tough on equipment. Having a crew present allows Russ to concentrate on his driving, he adds. For longer tows, he'll also rely on the shop's services—anything within reason to make the weekend more enjoyable.

Engine: Where a street car spends most of its life near idle, a race engine is expected to survive long stints up against the rev limiter. Here's where high-flow heads, knife-edged cranks and big carburetors come into play. Handling is going to help in the turns, but on a track with long straights—like Sebring, Daytona or Road America—that extra horsepower is a big plus.



Cooling: Running those high engine speeds for extended periods of time is going to generate heat, so keeping things cool is paramount. Getting as much air as possible through—and not around—the radiator is going to make the engine happy. Don't forget that the oil also helps cool the engine, so oversized oil pans, oil coolers and pressurized accumulators are popular additions.

Tires and wheels: All types of racing place a huge emphasis on wheels and tires. In vintage racing, the trick is finding the right setup that maintains the appropriate spirit without compromising performance. Several companies now offer tires specifically for vintage racing. Don't forget that wheels are considered a wear item; old ones should be periodically inspected.



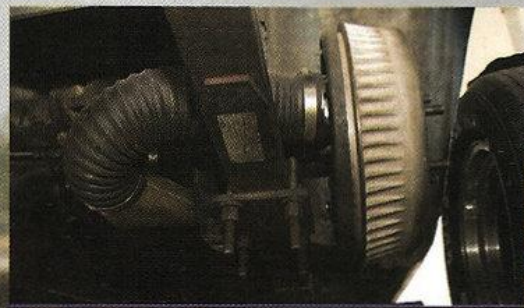
Vintage Racing Is Bigger Than Ever

- There really isn't one big national vintage race club, as each organization is more regional in its scope.
- Some clubs have strict cutoff dates, while others allow later cars that are still historically significant.
- Before getting on track, all organizations require participants to attend an accredited driving school.
- Race groups are formed so cars of similar performance are on track together to prevent any problems with slower and faster cars competing at once.
- Looking for more track time or want to co-drive with a buddy? Many vintage groups also hold endurance races.

Interior: While going fast and winning races is fun, being safe should be paramount. Look inside most any vintage race car, and you'll find a robust roll cage, on-board fire system and sturdy driver's seat. We have come a long way from the simple roll bars and flimsy fiberglass buckets of the '50s and '60s. A quick-release steering wheel helps with driver ingress and egress.



Brakes: A braking system has one simple task: Convert kinetic energy into heat. Some of the modifications employed today to keep the brake system from overheating may not be period-correct, but ducting, modern pad and shoe compounds as well as oversized drums and rotors can usually be added without spoiling the original looks of the car.



Body: Fiberglass body panels, flared fenders and added-on wings may lower lap times, but many believe that a "proper" vintage race car should retain its original looks and factory body panels. Graphics, they continue, should be appropriate for when the car was originally raced; if sponsor decals are necessary, they should be kept tidy and period-correct.



It's Like the World's Coolest Car Show

- Vintage racing has gotten a lot of historically significant cars out of storage. See them at speed, not parked on a display.
- Whether your passion is Formula 1, NASCAR or British sports cars, they can all be found at today's vintage and historic races.
- Many tracks from our past, including Daytona, Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca and Sebring, regularly host vintage races.
- Don't forget to walk the paddock. Here you can get within feet of the machinery. Bring your camera.
- Looking for a fun weekend activity for your club? Attend a local vintage race and cheer on your favorite marque.

Who Says You Need a Car to Play?

- Vintage races can't happen without a small army of workers, from pit marshals to registrars.
- Every racing group needs safety workers, including firefighters and emergency medical technicians.
- Behind each top driver is a competent crew. Someone has to change tires, bleed brakes and keep the driver hydrated.
- When a team scores a win, they need to tell the world. Maintaining a Web site and writing press releases can spread the word.
- Big rigs are becoming more prevalent at vintage races. Have a CDL? Like to watch racing? See where we're going?