

The Ultimate HILL CLIMB



SEA LEVEL

Sponsors

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Rugged and powerful though they are, it's unusual to find Cobra sports cars venturing into 4x4 territory. Understandably, when Don Henderson says that he is going to drive his Cobra from East London's beachfront to the top of the 2855m Sani Pass, people step back and tap their heads. But the Don's car has proved equal to every action call so far, and there is no reason it should not arrive at the top of the pass with flags flying. "The challenge, titled "The Ultimate Hill Climb", is to drive a replica of a thoroughbred 1960's race car up the 4x4- restricted Sani Pass, the first time this has been done", says Don. "the pass is soon to be tarred, becoming a highway between South Africa and Lesotho, and then it won't be such a challenge anymore".

The Cobra, a familiar sight around East London, has been a joy and a pleasure to Don and his wife Alma since he finished building it in 1998. The shape of the Cobra has always appealed to Don. "it was designed by an American chicken farmer, Carrol Shelby", he says. "I was fortunate enough to obtain a kit for one in 1996, and with lots of patience from my wife and lots of help from friends, I built it in 18 months. It has won awards at national car shows in all the major centres, Cape town, Durban, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Klerksdorp. Some enthusiasts trailer their cars to these shows, but for my wife and me, half the pleasure is driving the car there.

Don has always had a passion for cars combined with feats of endurance. He remembers being particularly fascinated by the then Kyalami 8- hour endurance races and the Roof of Africa Rallies. For years Don has dreamed of climbing the Sani Pass in the Cobra. Most people dismiss the idea when he mentions it, but there have been a few friends who have offered encouragement, among them Brandon Hattingh, Shane Sutherland, Alastair Saxton and East London's own "Mr Cobra", Gary Miles. With their help, the date for the climb has been set, and preparations have begun in earnest. Special permission has to be obtained for - non 4x4 vehicles to climb the pass, and the minimum requirement is a diff lock, which the Cobra has. Help will be at hand in the form of two 4x4 Toyota Hilux support vehicles, to be driven by Gary Miles and Shane Sutherland.

Don's Cobra now sports 4x4 tyres and protective metal skid plates underneath. A naming right sponsor has been secured, and details are being finalized in this regard before approaching sub-sponsors.

The expedition is planned for 25 to 28 April 2008 and covers 1500km, including the trip to the pass, driving through Lesotho and travelling back to East London via Ficksburg and Queenstown.

We wish the team great success and safe motoring as they embark on this epic journey !



Above: Don's Cobra and the Backup Vehicles that are going to tackle the Sani Pass.



Right: The Team from Left to Right: Brandon, Shane, Gary and Donald.