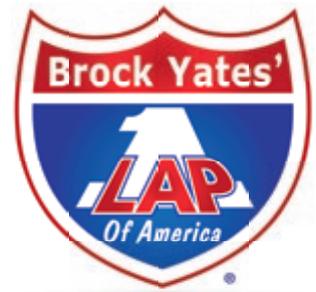


# Lap Dogs?

Eight days, thousands of road miles, dozens of different races, 720bhp and one set of tyres... ACM's own Stig runs the One Lap Of America.

Words & photography: Chris Smith



onelapofamerica



For those of you who have been on the moon for the past few years, the One Lap of America is a motorsports event run by Brock Yates Jr, son of famed Car and Driver journalist and Cannonball Run creator. The event is an eight-day gig covering between 3,000-4,000 miles on public roads between race tracks. Tracks consist of everything for the would-be racer: oval, drag, road courses, autocross and anything in-between. It's a far cry from the Gumball or the Bullrun as this event has no parties or nightclubs in sight, and actually keeps the enthusiastic driving to the tracks. If you make a hotel bed after your evening road leg you are lucky. Why? After racing at the track in the day, you have to make your way to the next that night. A road leg is usually 500-700 miles, it's all mapped out, though, even driving at the speed limits you'll make the next track on time, albeit with a lack of sleep. I have competed in this event twice before in 2010 and 2012, having loved every minute of it

and this year was no exception.

Brenspeed were going to supply the car to compete in.

Brenspeed are America's premier tuning company for the 2008 to present day Ford Mustang, and their facility being 30 miles from the start of the event, Tire Rack Head Quarters, Indiana, made things easier. Brenspeed pushed until the last to get the car prepped. In the planning stages it was: "Which model shall we use?" Brenspeed already had a brace of demonstrators in the stable which had both been breathed on, running up to 750hp and beyond. The planning was a professional affair. Brent White, the owner and operator of Brenspeed (and my co-driver), Doug, his right hand man and also George, the workshop manager, were all on hand over a three-month period of conference calls to decide what to run, but in the end a brand new 2015 GT 5.0 was decided on.

America has always had a love affair with the Mustang, as has much

Below: Brent (left) and Chris make time for BBQ in Memphis before the event

of the rest of the world, but the 2015 model was all new, and the first with independent rear suspension. Things got really tight with the car arriving at Brenspeed HQ on time, as the list of names for these cars was far greater than units produced at that time, but Brenspeed's relationship →



with Ford Motorsport proved to be an incentive and subsequently the car arrived only a few days later than anticipated. Finished in metallic black with its six-speed manual trans and putting out 430hp from the factory package, it was an eyeful. The car was ordered with the "Track Pack," 3.73:1 gears, upgraded Brembo six-pots up front and air conditioned seats. Yes, Ford had got their act together; this wasn't reminiscent of a Mustang, but more a Euro car of today's Merc or BMW standards.

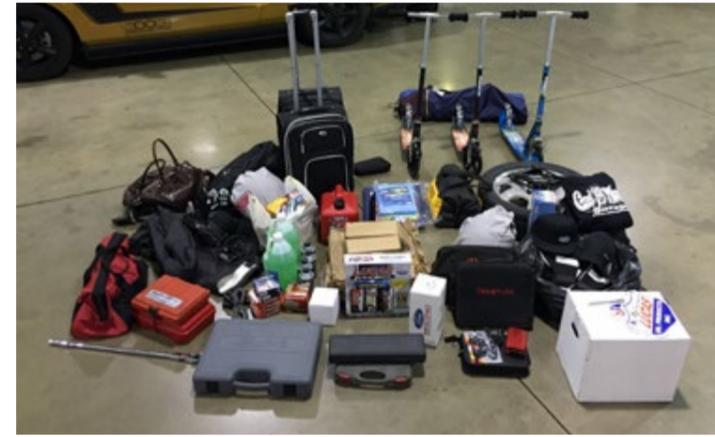
The class the car would be running in was SSGT2 Big Bore. Basically two rules denote this, an engine over 3,500cc and a retail price of less than \$50,000. The class would see Mustangs, Camaros, Nissan 370Z, Corvette C5s and anything else that meets the criteria. After running a 2010 SS Camaro in 2012 and a second place finish in class, it was important to establish where things could be improved. The answer was quite clear, as in 2012 the car that beat us was a Roush Mustang! Armed with another 150hp and some monster brakes and suspension, the Camaro never seemed to keep up with the bloody thing, and



it's at this point I have to tell you the last thing regarding your car entry... The rule book states that you can make any modification you wish to your car, so Brent and the boys were happy to break out their brand new development blower kit, the only purpose-built Ford Motorsport unit on the market for the 2015, not some older unit that had been made to fit... These boys really know how to make the difference in performance with

(Above & right) The luggage and "Oh Shit Kit"... All this fits in a Mustang (Far right) The Late Great BB King's in Memphis...

their meticulous attention to detail and development of parts. I was at a car auction in Houston the week before the event started so Brent and Doug made the trip from Indiana down to meet me, the idea being to get some break-in miles on the car and get used to it. The car had been sent ahead of time to Dallas as we had picked up some sponsorship from Richard and Aaron at Gas Monkey Garage, and they had the car wrapped



for us at 360 Wraps (thanks, Tommy). I arrived at La Torretta Resort in Conroe on the Thursday and caught up with Brent and Doug the following morning. "So, what's the story guys?" I really wanted to know how it had turned out. Doug gave me the walk around whilst Brent stood there and smiled with a beer in hand (and yes, I said it was am!) "We got the power up to where you wanted it, the reliability we are confident in as

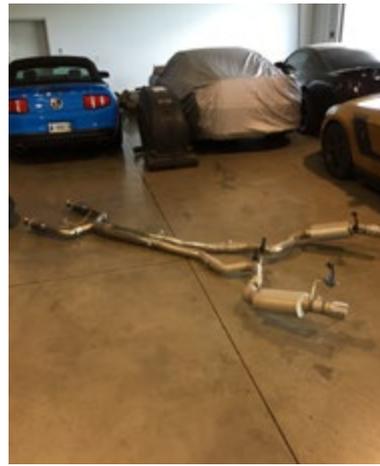
well." "Bulletproof" was the term used, I recall, "And the car moves like a champ." As Charlie Sheen would say, "Winning". The blower kit had been installed with cold air induction, a new AFCO cooling system for cooling the motor and a separate charge cooler for the blower. The Coyote 5.0 suffers from the rearmost two cylinders getting hot on big horsepower cars, but Brenspeed produce a banjo which fits →



to the rear cylinder head core plugs and joins the heads together in a more sympathetic manner over the factory supplied effort. The exhaust was dumped, as were the stock headers, for a full Kooks affair including high-flow catalytic converters giving the best symphony of any V8 you could imagine. Coupled with its wrapped Gas Monkey bodywork and sounding like a champ, the car was now putting out a dyno-proven 720hp at the crank, and 590-600hp at the wheels - this was going to get interesting.

The car auction came and went, then we headed to Dallas for some PR with Gas Monkey. I remember driving up with some friends from the UK, we had hired an SUV and watched Brent and Doug gaining many looks from enthused motorists - they were either Gas Monkey fans or had never seen the brand new 2015 Mustang model. After a couple of days in Dallas we said goodbye to my Brit mates, and to Doug who headed back to Indiana. Brent and I started making our way back to HQ, a mere 1,050 miles north... but no chore this, it was fun, and after finding a privately owned stretch of road I ran the car hard from a standing start. Basically it hit 160mph faster than you could blink, I mean it sincerely, a 5.0 Mustang making super-car performance. Fast as \*\*ck. Now I know there are some sceptics out there calling BS on this, but I have owned and raced many cars over the years, including some of the newer muscle cars like Z06 'Vettes and later modified Camaros and 911s, and this thing is right up there with the best of them.

We had an overnight stop at Memphis, Tennessee, and sampled the best BBQ on the planet followed by some cold ones at the late great BB King's Blues Club, then it was a 6am



start to get to North Webster, Indiana.

The car had been in a mini rally all of its own even before getting to the start line two days later, so it was all hands on deck at Brenspeer for more prep and a good clean, and a final pull on the dyno was ordered by Brent who wanted to make sure things were flawless - your typical OCD perfectionist. They had got the "Oh Sh\*t Kit" together over a period of three weeks and got everything the hard shoulder motorist could need - duct tape, cable ties, fuses, spare fluids, you name it, it was included. George had a present for us when we

(Top left) Full Kooks System chosen over stock... (Above left) AFCO cooling system, keeping 720hp cool is a task in itself... (Above) Rear end is treated to Lucas Development Oil. This was blended by them for the event... (Below) BBQ in Memphis..... Killer!

rolled in - some uprated halfshafts, a one-piece alloy prop, and a McLeod twin plate clutch good for 1,000hp. They all went in in three hours. This crew weren't dicking around, they wanted to finish unscathed in the event; after all, a happy car makes for a happy team, right?

The only thing that was on our minds was the fact that the 2015 model was just that - new - and we were about to do all the R&D that had ever been done outside of Ford's testing facility on what was essentially the first big-horsepower 2015 GT... all after a grand total of modifying it over a three week period.

There is one other key element to this event which I forgot to mention, you have to buy and fit brand new tyres from Tire Rack where we start from, then they "brand" the sidewalls with "OLOA2015." You have to complete all track events, then your road legs and then finish whilst they're still legal, and remember, come rain or sun, you are racing at the track! So to the uninitiated, placing some super sticky Yokohamas on your ride would be the worst thing you could do, as you'll barely make it out of the car park before replacing them. A great intermediate road tyre is the key here. Luckily I had negotiated a deal with Continental Tyres North America and they were wickedly helpful in finding and supplying us the boots for the job (thanks, Bob).

It was Friday afternoon before we knew it, so we packed the car and made our way up to South Bend to scope out the competition, and boy, was there some...

Follow Team ACM next month for the start of the event! **ACM**

