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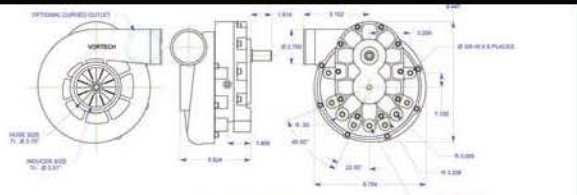
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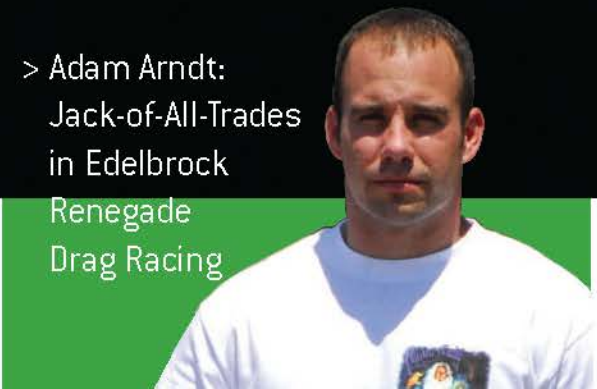
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> Adam Arndt:
Jack-of-All-Trades
in Edelbrock
Renegade
Drag Racing



> Tony Whetstone's 8-Second True Street Machine



LEARNING THE HARD WAY

>> TONY WHETSTONE'S SPRING BREAK SHOOTOUT MACHINE MAKES LAPS



Tallahassee, Florida's Tony Whetstone has looked at the racing calendar every year since the mid-1990's and circled one event—the Spring Break Shootout, held at Bradenton Motorsports Park. As part of the NMRA's season-opening event, it draws some of the country's heavy hitters to the legendary track in March. Many of the NMRA's longtime competitors got their start in the event and have progressed to populating the heads-up classes today.

Whetstone's gorgeous blue turbocharged '88 GT convertible started in speed contests the way so many of us have—on the street, in unsanctioned “events” with other local gearheads. “The car started out very slow. The first year down there, I want to say the car was running somewhere around the 14.80's—the car was worse than a stocker was. Before I even went to the track with this car, I used to street race it. One day, going down the road, the crankshaft broke in half. I didn't know anything back then, and had a local shop rebuild the engine—they picked out a B303 camshaft and a set of low-compression pistons,” he explains.

As you might imagine, the performance wasn't exactly up to par. He continued, “So then I take it to the track and it's running 15.20's and .30's. After a swap to an E303 cam and 70mm throttle body, I managed to get it back down

“The car started out very slow. The first year down there, I want to say the car was running somewhere around the 14.80's.”

into the 14.50's on the engine.” Back then, Whetstone was a big proponent of nitrous oxide, installed a system on the car and got it into the 13.80's, and that's how he got his start at the track.

He purchased the car in December of 1990, when it was only two years old, and since those early days of running at the back of the pack, the car has undergone a number of

WHO HE IS >> Veteran TREMEC True Street and Spring Break Shootout racer.

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE >> Because he is still having fun with his Mustang even after owning it for 23 years!





“It’s always been the ‘Mustang thing’ to go quicker, and I just tried True Street since it was part of the Spring Break Shootout.

serious transformations—as has the Spring Break Shootout class and True Street in general. After a number of years on the bottle, and even toying with a 351-cube engine, he made the decision to jump on the supercharger bandwagon, and installed an S-Trim Vortech on it in 1999 and had it tuned by Chris Johnson of JMS Chip.

But the car wasn't really built with any particular class in mind; Whelstone was just in search of quicker elapsed times and more fun for himself while behind the wheel. “It’s always been the ‘Mustang thing’ to go quicker, and I just tried

True Street since it was part of the Spring Break Shootout. I had tried True Street a couple of times with Fun Ford Weekend, but it was just never that great. It was the appeal of the Spring Break Shootout that kept me coming back to True Street. I had another car, a 2002 Mustang, that was built for the old Fun Ford Street Stang class, but this car has always been more about having fun with what I can afford,” Whelstone says.

The combination in the car today is deceptively simple. A couple of years ago, when he ran into another gearhead that

had recently purchased a B&G turbo kit for his Mustang, Whelstone saw the finished product and was immediately hooked. He explained, “On the stock engine his car made a little bit more than 400 to the tire on only 10 pounds of boost, and that’s when I realized I had to have one. I like this setup the best. The power it makes versus the blower is nice,” Whelstone explained. When it came time to select the powerplant for the current iteration of the car, he went straight to the wizards at Proline Race Engines in Georgia for the 331-cube small-block Ford.



As the Spring Break Shootout has always been the traditional kickoff of the Mustang racing season, Whelstone always had that in the back of his mind during the winter. "I've always tried to make the Shootout. It's always been my biggest goal. If it was the only race I made all year, that's what I was shooting for. Every year, I was a second behind the bump spot," he said.

Not anymore, as during this year's running of the event he qualified sixth for the Spring Break Shootout by turning in an awesome 9.248 three-run average during Saturday's True Street festivities. On Sunday he faced off against Burt Greiner in the first round in what should have been an easy victory, as he had qualified a second-and-a-half quicker than Greiner on Saturday, but as the saying goes, that's why we race 'em on Sunday. "I made a test pass Sunday morning and encountered some pretty bad tire shake. I think it started twisting the output shaft, as on my first round run against Burt it snapped the shaft in half and broke the AOD bellhousing. We've since put in a hardened shaft from a 4R70W—the one that broke was a standard AOD output shaft. Yes, you read that correctly. This street car still has an AOD transmission complete with lockup torque converter—there's no Turbo400 or Powerglide crossbreed in this baby. A simple 13-year-old Performance Automatic manual valve-



body controls the fluid direction, and he relies on a lockup PTC converter to transfer the power.

It's a real street car that he takes out of the garage as often as possible, but it's been a long road to get the performance of the car to where it is today while remaining fully streetable. "The biggest advance that I think I've made is learning the car. Figuring out all of the little bits to it; what's a good radiator, what's a good tune, things like that. Back in the day, nobody cared about drivability, but I think today we've got the best of both worlds. I'm also running the XFI 2.0, which I installed in 2009 when I put the turbo on the car. It's easy to use; once it's set up, it's pretty much done as far as the street tune goes. The rest is just figuring out how to drive it at the track," he explained.

Last season he made the decision to change over to E85 fuel, as well. "I was running VP110 in the car, which is about eight dollars a gallon, and the E85 is about \$3.26 a gallon right now. It's about twenty cents a gallon cheaper than regular 87 octane here," he said. While E85 typically takes a lot more fuel to produce the same amount of performance, Whelstone's machine hasn't seemed to skip a beat. In fact, he told us that the car used about the same amount of fuel on the True Street cruise this year on the E85 as it did last year running the VP fuel. One thing he did in particular to try to minimize the amount of fuel consumed during the cruise was to make sure he was running up front during the tour in an attempt to induce steady-state cruising rather than the "rubber-band" effect that can happen when 110 cars are trying to keep pace with one another over a 30-mile drive.

"I've tried all three power-adders, and for True Street, it has to be the turbocharged combination I like the best. It makes so much power, but drives so stock. When you drive around and you're not in boost, it just drives like a normal car," says Whelstone. As the turbo in the car recently bit the dust, he's got an S480 on order that's expected to pick the car up another 200 horsepower to the tires, but the cage is only good to 8.50's, so he'll be on the edge of what's doable with it. The plan is to lower the launch RPM and just drive the car harder out the back door.

He's also picked up another car for his son Andrew—a '90 GT that has gears, exhaust, and a couple of other things done to it so far—but that's just the beginning. "My goal for next year, if it all works out, is to have his car running in the tens also, so that we can both run in the Spring Break Shootout," Tony explained. To our knowledge, the father/son tandem in the SBSO would be a first, and one we're pulling to see! ■

"The E85 is about \$3.26 a gallon right now. It's about twenty cents a gallon cheaper than regular 87 octane here."



Driver/Owner:	Tony Whelstone
Hometown:	Tallahassee, Florida
Car:	1988 Mustang GT Convertible
Class:	True Street
Car Weight:	3,390 pounds
Chassis Modification:	Wolf Roll Cage and Thru-Floor subframe connectors
Chassis/Roll-Cage Builder:	Carlton Thompson
Engine:	Ford 302
Total Displacement:	331
Builder:	Proline Racing
Block:	Ford Racing Boss
Crankshaft:	Eagle 4340 3.250 Stroke
Rods:	Eagle H-Beam 5.400
Pistons:	Diamond
Cylinder Heads:	TFS Twisted Wedge Heads CNC 205
Camshaft:	Crane .595/ .595 lift .262/ .260e duration @ .050 Hyd Roller
EFI System:	Fast XFI 2.0
Intake Manifold:	Edelbrock 5.0 Vic Jr. Intake
Power Adder:	PT 76GTS Turbo
Ignition System:	MSD Digital 6 - HVC2 Coil
Fuel System:	Magnafuel 4303 Pump and Regulator -10 feed, -8 return, E85 160# injectors
Headers/Exhaust:	B&G Turbo Headers - 3.5" Downpipe to Magnaflow 3.5" Bullet muffler
Transmission:	AOD (wide ratio) with TCI Hardened Lockup input shaft, PA Manual VB w/TB
Transmission Builder:	Carlton Thompson (Hard parts selected by Dirty Dog Performance)
Torque Converter:	PTC Lockup
Rearend:	8.8 CHE Braced
Axles:	Moser 33 spline 5/8 studs
Differential:	Moser Spool
Front Suspension:	UPR K-Member and control arms. Strange Single Adjustable struts-UPR Coilovers 14-750
Rear Suspension:	UPR Adjustable Uppers/Lowers, UPR Anti-Roll Bar, Strange Single adjustable shocks, Mach1 Springs
Steering:	Flaming River Manual rack
Wheels/Tires:	Billiet Specialties Wheels 15x10 and 15x4. M/T Pro Radials 275-60-15 M/T Sportsman S/R Fronts
Brakes:	Aerospace Pro Street Brakes Front/Rear
Quickest E.T., MPH, 60-Foot:	1.24 60' 5.66@120 8.89@153
Crew:	Frank West, Ray Williams, Andrew Whelstone, Danny Nestor
Sponsor:	UPR
Special Thanks:	Thanks to Joe/Mark/Jeremy @ UPR, Dan @ Hyperformance Racing, Chris Johnson @ SCT, Proline, PTC, Dirty Dog Performance. Thanks to my wife Debbie and my daughter Daria for putting up with my craziness :)