

2003 SVT Mustang Cobra Overview

Beginning with the original in 1993, every generation of the SVT Mustang Cobra has elevated the standard of performance. Now, the 2003 SVT Mustang Cobra raises the bar yet again, this time increasing power output to a level never before achieved in a production Mustang. The addition of a Roots-type supercharger and water-to-air intercooler to the Cobra's 4.6-litre, DOHC four-valve V-8 engine pushes output to 390 horsepower and 390 foot-pounds of torque.

Another first for the SVT Cobra provides a six-speed gearbox as standard equipment. Additional enhancements for 2003 include design alterations to the front and rear fascias, hood, rocker mouldings and side scoops, as well as several changes to the interior appointments, including new multi-adjustable front seats trimmed in Nudo Leather and Preferred Suede. The SVT Mustang Cobra is built in Dearborn, Michigan.

Design

Exterior design changes distinguish the SVT Mustang Cobra from the regular production Mustang GT. While it retains the SVT-signature round fog lamps, the front fascia is more aggressive. It also helps deliver more air to the engine compartment. The hood has been redesigned and now has flow-through scoops that help vent hot air from the engine compartment. Both the hood and rear deck are made of lightweight composite materials.

At the sides, the rocker panels have been reshaped with simple, clean, vertical surfaces. Colour-keyed, foldaway outside mirrors are unique to Cobra, and the side scoops have new, horizontal fins to match those in the hood scoops. The rear decklid features an integrated spoiler with a light-emitting diode centre high-mounted stop lamp.

The convertible model has a new, high-quality cloth top material, which not only adds to the top's durability but also helps provide better sound insulation for the interior.

Inside, new front bucket seats are designed to provide enhanced support for both comfortable cruising and spirited driving. Seating surfaces have Nudo Leather trim and Preferred Suede inserts. The driver's seat has standard six-way power, plus new power-adjustable thigh and side bolsters and power lumbar support. Switches for these new controls are in an easy-to-reach location on the right-front corner of the seat.

The instrument cluster, with titanium-colour gauge faces, has been redesigned to include a boost gauge and features electroluminescent lighting.

The gear shift knob is leather-wrapped with a brushed-aluminum insert on the top, inscribed with the six-speed pattern.

New metal-trimmed pedals and dead pedal complete the interior transformation.

Additional SVT Mustang Cobra standard features include a leather-wrapped steering wheel; leather boots for the shift and parking brake levers; tilt steering wheel; power windows, mirrors, door locks and trunk release; the SecuriLock™ passive anti-theft system; remote keyless entry; speed control; a MACH 460 audio system with AM/FM stereo; and an in-dash, six-disc CD player.

Exterior colour choices for 2003 are Oxford White Clearcoat, Black Clearcoat, Redfire Clearcoat Metallic, Sonic Blue Clearcoat, Silver Metallic, Dark Shadow Gray and Zinc Yellow Clearcoat. The interior is available in two colour schemes; both feature a Dark Charcoal environment with a choice of Medium Parchment or Medium Graphite accents.

Powertrain

The 2003 SVT Mustang Cobra's 4.6-litre, DOHC V-8 is equipped with a Roots-type Eaton[™] supercharger and new aluminum alloy cylinder heads that provide increased flow capabilities. The engine produces 390 horsepower at 6,000 rpm and 390 foot-pounds of torque at 3,500 rpm, compared with the 2001 model's 320 horsepower at 6,000 rpm and 317 foot-pounds of torque at 4,750 rpm.

To provide the strength necessary for the substantially increased torque output, the new Cobra engine is built on a cast-iron block. This unit contains the carryover forged-steel crankshaft, which is fitted with new Manley forged "H-beam" connecting rods, forged pistons similar to those in the SVT F-150 Lightning.

The engine is mated to a TTC T-56 six-speed manual transmission. Behind that, an aluminum drive shaft with upgraded universal joints connects to the rear axle, that now has a 3.55:1 gear ratio.

Suspension and Brakes

The SVT Mustang Cobra's independent rear suspension system receives upgraded bushings and an additional tubular cross-brace for 2003, necessary for increased loading due to the higher power output and larger tires. The Cobra coupe's springs have higher rates compared with 2001, increased from 500 pounds per inch to 600 pounds per inch at the front and from 470 pounds per inch to 600 pounds per inch on the rear springs. In a departure from past practice, the Cobra convertible receives its own suspension tuning to suit the unique characteristics of its convertible body. The convertible's front spring rates are 500 pounds per inch, and the rear springs are 470 pounds per inch.

The 2003 SVT Cobra is equipped with gas-charged monotube Bilstein[™] dampers at all four corners, and the pad material on the rear brakes has been upgraded for enhanced durability and brake performance.

Safety and Security

The 2003 SVT Mustang Cobra is equipped with second-generation driver and passenger air bags, as well as three-point safety belts in all seating positions.

Additional standard safety features on the 2003 Cobra include an emergency release for the rear decklid, located inside the trunk. It has a phosphorescent handle that's easy to find in the dark and allows anyone locked in the trunk to open it from the inside.

Ford's BeltMinder[™] system senses whether the driver is wearing the safety belt. If the driver is not buckled up when the vehicle is in motion, a warning chime sounds intermittently and a red light is illuminate on the instrument panel. November 2002