

THE BOOSTED CARTEL

BY MICHAEL GALIMI PHOTOS PAUL ROSNER AND TEAM RACE PAGES

CONFESSIONS OF A FIFTEEN-TIME TRUE STREET WINNER
—CHRIS ESCOBAR AND HIS 1986 SVO MUSTANG

Approximately three years ago, the most successful True Street racer of all-time decided to start unbolting, removing, and swapping parts, pieces, and motors. Chris Escobar decided it was time to freshen things up after grabbing eleven True Street overall-win titles. The mission to rebuild his 1986 SVO Mustang to be better, safer, and faster has proven to be successful. Escobar currently sits very strong in the true street world with a 7.86 at 176 mph best, but he has yet to achieve the elusive seven-second average. Rest assured Escobar fans, a new Kris Starnes Power motor is nearing completion, but first here is the story on how he arrived back on the scene bigger and better than before.



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The centerpiece on the rebuild has been focused around the Coyote 5.0 powerplant. "Ford Racing helped us get a Coyote 5.0 and that is what really started it all," Escobar reminisced. With a motor and a dream, the Florida native hit the SEMA Show and PRI Show to pitch his plan and gather support for the SVO rebuild. LaMotta Performance served as the pivot point for the entire project as it was tasked with tearing down the old setup, which it had built over a decade ago prior to Escobar owning the SVO, and building it back up. The shop's owner, Jake LaMotta, was the mastermind, as Escobar described him, with influence and guidance—Escobar didn't make a move without consulting the noted Mustang builder.

The Coyote 5.0 might be enjoying a serious amount of attention from the aftermarket right now, though it hasn't always been that way as Escobar learned firsthand. He shared, "The challenging part was back then no one had any internal parts." He continued, "Kris Starnes, who built the motor, had to jump through hoops. At the time no one had the parts to do what we needed them to do. Sure the motor had Manley rods and custom CP pistons but it still had a stock block, crank, cams, heads, valves, and piston rings. Starnes even had to figure out the right valve springs to use on the stock heads."

As Starnes dealt with the engine issues, Quality Chassis Shop was hard at work crafting a new SFI 25.5 cage and adding mini-tubs out back. Jake LaMotta installed the coil-over rear shocks, a Strange Engineering 9-inch using UPR Products rear suspension components. Hector DeSantiago of Quality Chassis Shop was also tasked with fabricating the turbo system and the custom intake manifold. He mounted a set of boost makers from Turbo by Garrett as well as a massive air-to-air intercooler. A custom sheetmetal intake by DeSantiago adorns the top of the high-tech Ford engine.



Bio: Chris Escobar

Owner/Driver: Chris Escobar **Age:** 42 **From:** Pensacola, FL
Occupation: Self employed, real estate investor **Car:** 1986 SVO Mustang **Class:** True Street **Class:** Me, Myself, and I
Sponsors: Ford Racing, Turbo by Garrett, LaMotta Performance, Kris Starnes Power, Quality Chassis Shop, Horsepower Connection, Dynamic Racing Transmissions, Turbosmart, Darton Sleeves, CP Pistons, Strange Engineering, Baer Brakes, ARP, UPR, Holeshot, TMI, Ferrea, Brisk, FAST, National Parts Depot, Spikes Performance and Refinishing, Valley Girdle Pro, Vibrant Performance, CFM



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Final assembly was a major process that saw Escobar going down to LaMotta Performance in multiple three-week stints until the SVO was finished and fired up. It was a daunting task given Escobar lives some seven-and-a-half hours from the Orlando-based speed shop. It was all worth it in the end with Escobar grabbing runner-up honors during the car's debut weekend at the 2013 NMRA World Finals. The next day Escobar ran 8.02 at 171 mph, showing the turbo Coyote 5.0 had serious potential. "I was gentle on it because of the problems I've seen others have with that type of motor," he said.

One year later and Escobar has claimed four more overall True Street victories, bringing the total to fifteen, and he isn't slowing down. Escobar explained, "I was trying to make the engine survive the whole year and to win races." Despite not leaning on the engine too hard the SVO has clocked a best of 7.86 at 176 mph, a performance Escobar looks to improve on in 2015. Not hiding his emotions he said, "They [led note—Starnes, Darton Sleeves, and LaMotta] want me to turn this new b****h up!" A fresh Kris Starnes-built Coyote 5.0 has a Darton sleeved block and better



SPECIFICATIONS

Car Weight	3,100 pounds
Chassis Modification	SFI 25.5
Chassis/Roll-Cage Builder	Quality Chassis Shop
Engine	2011 Coyote 5.0
Total Displacement	302ci
Builder	Kris Starnes Power
Block	Old block was stock, new one is Darton-sleeved
Crankshaft	Stock
Rods:	Manley
Pistons	CP Pistons
Cylinder Heads	Stock
Camshaft	Custom
EFI System/Carburetor	F.A.S.T.
Intake Manifold	Custom by Quality Chassis Shop
Power Adder	Twin Garrett GTX3582R turbos, Air-to-Air intercooler
Ignition System	F.A.S.T.
Fuel System	MagnaFuel pump
Headers/Exhaust	Custom- by Quality Chassis Shop
Transmission	Dynamic Racing Transmission's Pro Tree 2 PowerGlide
Clutch/Torque Converter	Dynamic Racing Transmission's TCT converter
Rearend	Strange 9-inch
Axles	40-spline
Gears	3.25:1
Front Suspension	UPR K-member, Strange double adjustable coil overs
Rear Suspension	UPR Products, Strange double adjustable coil overs
Steering	Flaming River rack and shaft
Wheels	Holeshot
Tires	M&H (front), Mickey Thompson Radial Pro 275 (rear)
Brakes	Baer Deep Stage SS4+
Quickest E.T., MPH, 60-Foot	7.86, 176, 1.21

flowing everything from a ported set of Coyote 5.0 heads to custom cams, new Ferrea valves, and a fortified short-block that is capable handling big power from the Garrett turbochargers.

"It takes a lot of everything to be successful in True Street," admitted Escobar. He continued, "It isn't like everybody is breaking one thing. Everyone has a different combination; some of the big motors have heating issues while some guys try to run an Overdrive transmission and that could be a problem. Every combo is different, the torture we put these cars through in True Street is crazy. We get the cars hot and they stay hot. Everything in your combination has to be strong."

With a new motor being prepared, Escobar has been motivated in turning up the power to run a seven-second average and adding the prospect of eclipsing twenty event wins in 2015. Those goals have Escobar chomping at the bit to get on track in March for the Spring Break Shootout. But his parting suggestion on his True Street strategy rings truest, "You have to survive the three passes if you want to win." Can the SVO prevail and run deeper into the sevens with the new Coyote 5.0? It will all play out at NMRA in 2015. ■

