

STEVE SALEEN

By combining his racing experience with his vast marketing and engineering skills to create breathtaking road cars, Steve Saleen is quickly becoming an American sports car icon. With the introduction of the S7 supercar and the S7R's racing success, Saleen's place in automotive history as a visionary and innovator is virtually assured.

Founder and president of Saleen, Inc., a high-performance vehicle manufacturer, Saleen worked at his father's manufacturing business prior to attending the University of Southern California, where he graduated with a degree in business.

His interest in fast cars was sparked by his father's purchase of a Porsche. Saleen joined the Porsche Owners Club and began to autocross and race, leading to a career as a professional driver. In 1975, he set three track records in his first year in the Formula Super Vee series. Turning pro in 1979, Saleen set 13 lap records in the SCCA Formula Atlantic series, and finished third in points behind champion Jacques Villeneuve in 1980.

By 1984, Saleen had completed his first production car, the Saleen Mustang. He equipped the car with special aerodynamics, suspension and an attractive and highly functional cockpit. And he's still building them 20 years later!

Driven to prove that he was the builder of the world's best sports cars, Saleen entered race-modified versions of his cars in endurance racing and won the grueling 24-hour race at Mosport Park, Canada, for Ford and General Tire. In 1987, Saleen's three-car team won all four championship titles: Drivers', Team, Manufacturers' and Tire. The Saleen juggernaut continued to roll as he again won the 24-hour Mosport event, but this time his cars claimed a 1-2-3 finish, the first such victory for Ford since Le Mans in the late '60s.

Open wheel racing then followed in 1989, where Saleen tested his mettle in the CART/PPG Indy Car World Series, including appearances at the legendary Indianapolis 500. He returned to the Trans-Am series in 1990-91 and also won the 1991 SCCA Race Truck Championship driving a Ford Ranger sponsored by General Tire.

By 1993, Saleen decided to continue his Mustang racing efforts in the SCCA World Challenge, this time with a redesigned car. Advancements to the program continued, as did development of the Saleen production cars – with powerful supercharged models emerging in the market.

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Saleen teamed up with motion picture and television star Tim Allen in 1995 to form the Saleen/Allen "RRR" Speedlab race team, which campaigned Saleen Mustangs in the SCCA World Challenge Series. That year also marked the introduction of the Saleen Speedster road car.

The good tidings for Saleen and his organization continued in 1996, as Saleen was inducted into the Mustang Hall of Fame -- along with Carroll Shelby. On the track, team mates Saleen and Allen won the SCCA Manufacturers' Championship.

In 1997, the team successfully competed in the 24 Hours of Le Mans. A Saleen Mustang also clinched the SCCA Manufacturers' title for the third time. In 1998, the team claimed their fourth SCCA Manufacturers' Championship title, as well as first- and second-place in the Drivers' Championship.

The new millennium proved to be a big one for the Speedlab effort as the familiar white, purple, yellow and black #5 BASF Saleen SR co-driven by Terry Borcheller and Ron Johnson dominated the Grand American GTO competition to win the 2000 Drivers', Manufacturers' and Team championships.

His company's latest racing offering is already a winner in its own right. The Saleen S7R is a recognized force in international sports car competition, winning championships in all four of the series entered in its inaugural year, including the prestigious 12 Hours of Sebring. Also during 2001, a trio of S7Rs participated in the legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans with the factory entry earning a podium finish. The following year was pretty much a repeat of 2002 with S7Rs again winning four GT championships.

All of the track success has helped Saleen promote his high-performance production vehicles. The Irvine, Calif.-based manufacturer has sold over 9,000 cars. During 2004 Saleen added another model to the stable of S281 Mustangs with which he made his reputation, the Saleen N20 Focus. This high-performance sport compact car offers amazing "bang for the buck," bringing the Saleen brand into a high-profile, youth-oriented segment in which Saleen hasn't competed before. The current line up also includes the S281, the supercharged S281 and the S281E ("E" for Extreme), the world's most powerful (445 hp) fully certified Mustang. With the introduction of the S7, Saleen created his first vehicle not based on any previously existing platform.

Steve Saleen is married to Liz and has a daughter, Molly, and two sons, Clint and Sean. The Saleens live in Orange County, Calif., near the company's headquarters and principal production facility.

