



# SuperSonicCars

## **The Sound Barrier on film...**

*These images were captured during "The Duel in the Desert" at Black Rock desert, Nevada, in the summer & fall of 1997. The two competing teams in this supersonic race were the Americans led by Craig Breedlove, and the British led by Richard Noble. Craig Breedlove, a five-time Land Speed Record holder, drove his latest Spirit of America jet car with a single GE J-79 turbojet engine and a target speed of 780+ mph. Richard Noble held the Record from 1983 - 1997 at 633.47 mph. The British ran their Thrust SSC (SuperSonic Car) with two Rolls Royce 202 Spey engines, driven by Andy Green. They set a new Land Speed Record on October 15, 1997, at 763.035 mph and in the process became the first Land Speed Record team to break through the sound barrier at Mach 1.020.*



*As Thrust SSC passed through the measured mile on the first northbound run, shock waves formed on top of the car. Captured in this photograph, these shock waves were an extremely rare sight indeed! It was amazing to see this car traveling at 759.333 mph, but even more incredible were the 8 distinct shock waves sweeping upward from the top of the car. These waves rose up and rearward of the car to a height of 100 plus feet while bending the light entering the camera. Even more astonishing, was the vertical "Bow Wave" that was about 30 feet in front of the car, completely detached and captured on film! As Thrust SSC punched through the sound barrier a sonic boom echoed for miles around. In the nearby town of Gerlach, Nevada, pictures on the walls of Bruno's Country Club Restaurant shook and students at Gerlach High School heard the distinct double boom as they sat in their classrooms. This is one of the rarest photos of all time!*



*If ever a crew embodied the spirit of their team name it is the crew of Spirit of America. After losing an engine early in the competition, the SOA crew packed up their car and headed for their home in Rio Vista, California. There, they worked around the clock to bring the Spirit of America back to Black Rock. Late in the day on October 14, 1997, Spirit left the line in 2nd stage afterburner. On this run Spirit accelerated from 0 to 636 mph in 3.5 miles and in about 35 seconds. The unstoppable power of the J-79 and Spirit's beautiful lines are clear to see, demonstrating the perfect balance between form and function. Although many words have been written to describe the tireless efforts put forth by both the American and British teams during this unparalleled world contest, these two images best tell the tale of the competition at Black Rock. As "The Duel in the Desert" captured the world's attention for several months, these images will capture your imagination for years to come with the details of two very rare automobiles and the speeds of which they are capable.*

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