

Meet Shelley, an Autonomous Vehicle

Tester:

Um, are we OK with the test?

Christian Gerdes:

You're good.

Lee Powell:

This is Shelley. Like other high-performance sports cars, it can traverse tough terrain, accelerate quickly, negotiate turns at high speeds. But Shelley does not need a driver.

Christian Gerdes:

What we're trying to do is to create an autonomous race car, an autonomous rally car, so a car that can drive itself up to the very limits of handling.

Lee Powell:

This is the latest driverless vehicle designed by engineers at Stanford's center for automotive research. Its next challenge: a climb up Pikes Peak in Colorado. The last self-driving vehicles, Stanley and Junior, won top prizes in government contests for long-range and city driving.

Lee Powell:

Shelley is an Audi TTS coupe equipped with GPS receivers and computers, letting it follow digital maps and make adjustments to terrain in real time.

Christian Gerdes:

Well, if we understand how to drive at the limits, we also understand how to stabilize the car at the limits, how to help you stay in the lane and stable under a wide variety of circumstances.

Lee Powell:

Already, autonomous vehicle technology has led to features allowing cars to park themselves or handle stop-and-go traffic on their own.

Marcial Hernandez:

One of my personal, uh, goals in kind of working in this technology is a system where you're tired at the end of the day, you just want to relax on your way home, push the button, and the car gets you home.

Lee Powell:

With Shelley, the Stanford team is developing a driverless car that handles like a race car. Soon, they may go for a record on a dry lake in southern California, breaking the world record for the fastest autonomous vehicle on land.

Lee Powell:

Lee Powell, The Associated Press.

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