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*Racing*³

DRIVEN TO WIN

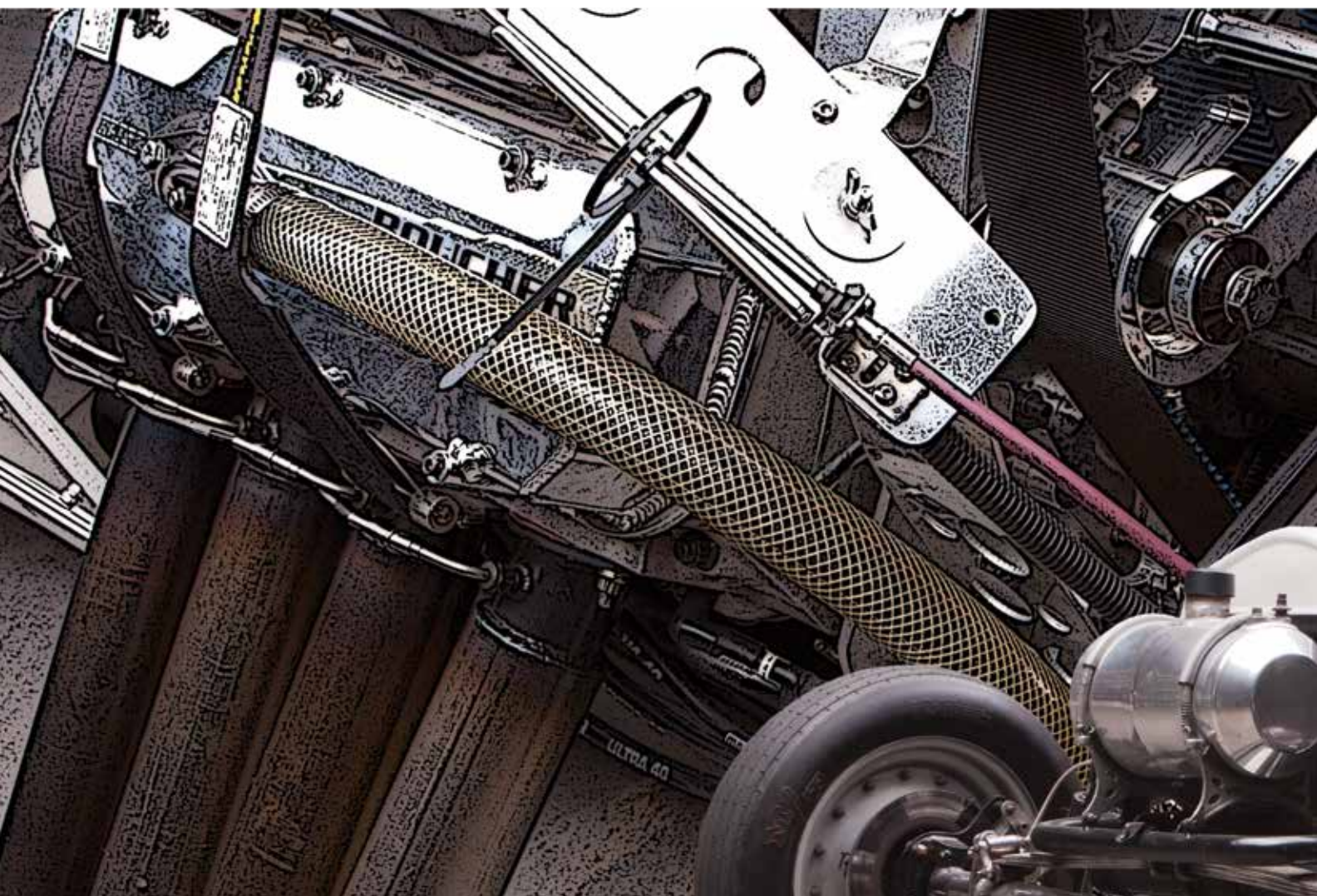




THERE ARE NO LIMITS WHEN PASSION IS INVOLVED

ON ANY GIVEN DAY, WITH A GIVEN SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES, YOU THINK YOU HAVE A LIMIT TO WHAT YOU CAN ACHIEVE. BUT WHEN YOU TOUCH THE LIMIT, SOMETHING HAPPENS, AND SUDDENLY YOU REALIZE YOU CAN GO A LITTLE BIT FURTHER. WHAT RACING HAS TAUGHT US IS THAT WHEN DESIGN AND EXPERTISE IS MATCHED WITH DETERMINATION, INSTINCT, AND EXPERIENCE... THERE ARE NO LIMITS. TEAM ACE RACING HAS PROVEN THIS TIME AND TIME AGAIN, AND IT'S BECOME PART OF ACE MANUFACTURING, AS WELL.





WHAT'S UNDER THE HOOD



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CHANCE OR FATE?

ONE ENCOUNTER DRIVES DECADES OF RACING INVOLVEMENT

My introduction to racing began in 1966 when I was 15 years old. I was baling hay on my Uncle's farm when my friend Doug drove into the field to let me know that he could use his Dad's car on Sunday. We decided we'd drive into Edmonton and go to the drag races at Speedway. I was thrilled at the idea of seeing real race cars. So that Sunday four of us headed out for the hour drive to Speedway Park.

I remember getting out of the car to the sounds of the roaring engines. As we went through the pits, there was a large group of people around one dragster in particular. We were several rows back in the crowd and I couldn't see who the driver was. A total stranger turned to me and said, "That's Don Garlits!" As we worked our way through the crowd to get closer, Don suddenly spoke, saying that he had a signed picture to give away. He pointed in my direction and said, "Hey Kid"... and I thought that could never be me. But he was looking right at me. He said, "Yes you there, come here." He shook my hand and gave me a picture and I was just overwhelmed. I froze on the spot. Don finally said, "Got any questions?" I said, "I think it would be amazing to own a race car like this."

He then looked me straight in the eye, tapped me on the right shoulder and said, "Kid, if you work hard, I guarantee you will own your own race car." My life changed after hearing those words from Don. Even then, Don was a legend. Two years before, he had achieved the first of his three greatest accomplishments in the sport of drag racing.

Team Ace Racing receives its primary sponsorship from ACE Manufacturing Metals (Bittern Lake, AB). Company president Harold Parfett has been instrumental for the team's ongoing success and evolution. ACE Manufacturing employs over 100 and is a custom manufacturing leader, specializing in metal electrical enclosures for industry.



In Great Meadows, N.J., he became the first to record an official backed-up 200-mph speed. The next month, he drove Swamp Rat VI to his first of eight U.S. Nationals titles, defeating Jack Williams in the final with a 7.67 e.t. at 198 mph. Three years later, with a dragster he built in 72 hours after failing to qualify at the Winternationals and Springnationals, he became the first two-time winner of the most prestigious drag race in the world and the next year the first to win two straight U.S. Nationals titles. In 1992, as he had done so many times over the years all over Canada and the US, Garlits brought a roaring crowd to its feet when he ran his much coveted first four-second e.t. and 300-mph speed in Sunday qualifying, 4.720 and 303.37 mph. Afterward, Garlits, four months shy of his 70th birthday, announced his intention to find a sponsor and resume driving once again.

Don Garlits was a true champion and by all accounts a gentleman. His Swamp Rats were beautiful, strong and simple. Don wasn't flashy or full of himself. He seemed to be just like anybody else. Except he

Don Garlit's dragster on display in the **ACE** Car Collection.

wasn't. He was a man who moved the sport of drag racing with him. Through his developments and experimenting, and by always charging forward, the sport followed him...just like all those eyes did in Edmonton back on that special day in 1966.

Fast forward eleven years and I'm now 26. That year I left a good stable job and decided to start manufacturing electrical boxes in my garage. It was a big decision. The business, ACE Manufacturing, was a struggle initially. There was no spare money for that race car Don said I could achieve. However, as time progressed, the business grew stronger and we made a little more money that we could put aside. It wasn't long before local racers would come up to my shop and ask if I would sponsor their race cars. My thinking was while I couldn't afford to run my own car, I could help other struggling racers. Sponsorship connected me to racing. The only thing I wanted to see was how badly they wanted to win. If their desire to win was there then I would help them.

In 1990 we formed Team Ace Racing. Eddy Plaizier raced his now famous 1948 Anglia in super gas, Frankie Plaizier with the dragster races in super comp, and Casey Plaizier ran the junior dragster. This gave us a great start to a family orientated multi-car race team. Kevin Boyer joined with his drag bike, that has now lead to a championship nitro Harley a 205 mph 6 second rocket. In 2004 we added a 1937 Chevrolet nostalgia funny car to the mix, and in 2006 a 1953 Corvette funny car bought us to a 6 car team. Over the years, we have won a lot of races and thrilled a lot of fans. Team Ace Racing,

with the cars we own and the cars we sponsor is now a 14 car team. I am very proud to have been a part of the race team's growth.

We have supported Garage Shots Magazine right from its first issue. I saw this special edition as an opportunity to partner with them, to showcase some of our racing vehicles and the amazing custom work that others have developed. What follows are some stories from car builds that have caught my eye in the magazine over the years. It's been my experience that whether you are building cars or electrical enclosures, there are similarities in the process.

Every building project is a puzzle with multiple solutions available. Good builders make smart choices in terms of materials and design. It's that natural instinct combined with curiosity and the craftsmanship and expertise that go into custom fabrication that really set a winning project apart. That mix is the secret to producing high quality products and high performance vehicles.

In an effort to support this independent magazine, we've agreed to top up new subscriptions so you can enjoy hot rods and customs for two years for the price of one.

I hope you enjoy!

A Pair of ACES

Top, 1953 Corvette

Bottom, 1937 Chevrolet





SOME SECRETS OF INSANE ACCELERATION

FUEL - Top fuel dragsters burn a mix of 90% nitromethane and 10% alcohol.

ENGINES - The engines can only be 500 cu in, but produce 10,000 horsepower.

MAGNETOS - Dual magnetos supply 44 amps to each spark plug. It is like an arc welder for each cylinder.

SPARK PLUGS - Spark plug electrodes are totally consumed during one pass.

MORE THAN A HEMI - A stock Hemi V8 will not produce enough horsepower to drive the supercharger.

G FORCES - The launch acceleration approaches 8 G's.

SPEED - Dragsters reach 300 mph before you have time to read this sentence (4 seconds).





Team
ACE
Racing

Troy Sitko



DRIVER PROFILE

SPONSORED BY TEAM ACE RACING



FOR THIS ISSUE, WE INTERVIEWED TWO DRIVERS FROM TEAM ACE RACING. TROY AND MARK ARE BOTH FROM ALBERTA AND RACE A PAIR OF 2000 HORSEPOWER CARS.

MARK VENANCE

YEARS RACING

- 22 years

HOMETOWN

- Streamstown, AB

RACING TEAM

- Team Ace Racing

GS: Do you remember your first race?

MV: Yes, it was in Saskatoon SK in a rear engine dragster. I think I did a 9.10 at 140 mph and I thought that was pretty fast at the time.

GS: Who have been your major influences so far?

MV: I used to race snowmobiles for years with my buddy Dwayne and we always talked about how we should have got into car racing instead.

GS: What has your career highlight been to date?

MV: Bakersfield, CA. It was the first time I got to drive the ACE car.

GS: If you could race in any event what would it be?

MV: Any race is good as long as I am racing.

GS: If you had a chance to race in a different class or series is there something else you would like to try?

MV: Not really, it's always been and always will be drag racing for me.

GS: What does the future hold for you and the sport?

MV: Don't really know at this time, as long as my health is good I will be racing.

VEHICLE SPECS

- 23-T Aluminium shop-built powder coated bodies
- 125" Funny Car chassis
- Engines: 540 cubic inch Keith Black Aluminium Block with 14-71 Littlefield Blower
- 2000 Horsepower
- 3 speed Lenco Transmissions
- Fuel: Alcohol
- 1/4 mile: 6.90 @ 195 mph - indexed Keith Black



DOUBLE TROUBLE

TROY SITKO

YEARS RACING

- 22 years

HOMETOWN

- Edmonton, AB

RACING TEAM

- Team Ace Racing

GS: Do you remember your first race?

TS: Oh yeah, I won it. It was junior drag racers, there were four cars and I qualified number 2 and won the final here in Edmonton at Capital Raceways.

GS: Who were your major influences growing up?

TS: Well my Dad and my Grandpa as they were racing well before I was born. But other pro guys would be Joe Amato, or Don Garlits, I haven't got there yet but maybe someday.

GS: What has your career highlight been to date?

TS: Wow, probably my 5 sec pass in Seattle has been one of the coolest things I have done in a race car to date, that and my first trophy that I got in Harold's ACE car was really special as it was Harold's sponsored race.

GS: If you could race in any event what would it be?

TS: I love racing at the California Hot Rod Reunion, would really love to win that one, plus the March Meet at Bakersfield.

GS: If you had a chance to race in a different class or series is there something else you would like to try?

TS: I think Indy would be cool, 200 mph into the corner would be a little hairy. In the same sport, I would love to try Top Fuel Dragster and go 300 mph before I am done racing.

GS: What does the future hold for you in this sport?

TS: Right now I have a little one at home so this schedule works well for me but as I said someday I want to try Top Fuel.



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Mark Venance
Team
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Racing



RED WHITE & COOL

THIS FEATURE ORIGINALLY
APPEARED IN ISSUE 1 OF
GARAGE|SHOTS MAGAZINE



THE VANDERHELMS' RE-ENVISION A 1931 MODEL A

Finding a 1931 Ford A Coupe is a rarity by all accounts. So when the Vanderhelms had a look at the chassis sitting in an old barn in Alberta in 1998, they could not imagine what that chassis would become or how long it would be in their lives. But they both knew it had potential.

Thirteen years later, that car would take second and first in local car shows, but for six years the car just sat in the Vanderhelms' garage untouched. Rob knew the car needed a lot of structural work and fabrication and welding wasn't his strong suit. It wasn't until 2004 that he rolled the vehicle into a local Edmonton hot rod garage. It would be another year and a half until it would roll back out and he'd be able to sit in it comfortably.

**“I was told by the original
owner that it was a '29 but
it turned out to be a 1931.”**





Before the rebuild began, the Vanderhelms talked to a lot of different people at car shows, trying to get the names of reputable shops where they could take their project. Finally Wadson's in Edmonton, Alberta, was chosen and they did most of the work on the vehicle. Beyond the fabrication, the chassis had to be reconstructed and rear suspension was added from a Corvette. In the end they wanted something a little more 'cool looking' so they cut the whole back suspension off, narrowed the back end 5" and kicked it up 3". Before it was done, the car was stretched 4" to retain the stock firewall. It's more of a show car than a true muscle car. It has an automatic transmission, air conditioning, power windows, and keyless entry... the creature comforts. Rob drove it out of Wadsons' in 2006.

“We built the car hoping for a clean look. Kept all the emblems off it. It’s really just a street rod.”



There are 3,400 kilometers on the speedometer. The owners have taken it as far as Banff and they say that, close to home or far away, the reactions they get on the road are pretty standard. “Anytime you go out on the highway with this car, the people that pass you are waving and going crazy.” His wife adds, “Older people and young kids have the same sort of reaction. Everybody appreciates this kind of car. You don’t see many on the road.” On one of those trips there was almost an accident when a passing car slowed down and photographed Rob driving the Ford with a big telephoto lens. “I was going 100 km/h and this guy was in the other lane of the highway shooting the car with this huge lens. It was a little dangerous.”



BODY MODIFICATION

This car is all steel, there’s no fibreglass. Top chopped 1¾”. Filled roof. Bobbed rear fenders. Rootlieb hood, with ’32 grill shell. Welded body seams.

ENGINE AND CHASSIS

Wheel base stretched 4 inches. Custom built chassis with chromed TCI independent front suspension and modified C4 Corvette rear suspension.

Car was built by Wadson’s Hot Rod Parts in Edmonton (many thanks to Wayne, Noel and Cory).

Engine is a 355 ci Chevy with polished Tune Port Fuel Injection (TPI), approx. 300 hp – built by Campbell Automotive.

700R4 Automatic Transmission was rebuilt and modified by Bruce at Pro Choice Automatic in St. Albert, Alberta.

INTERIOR

Air conditioning. Power windows. Remote keyless entry.

Custom interior by Floyd Ebby at Complete Street Auto Upholstery.





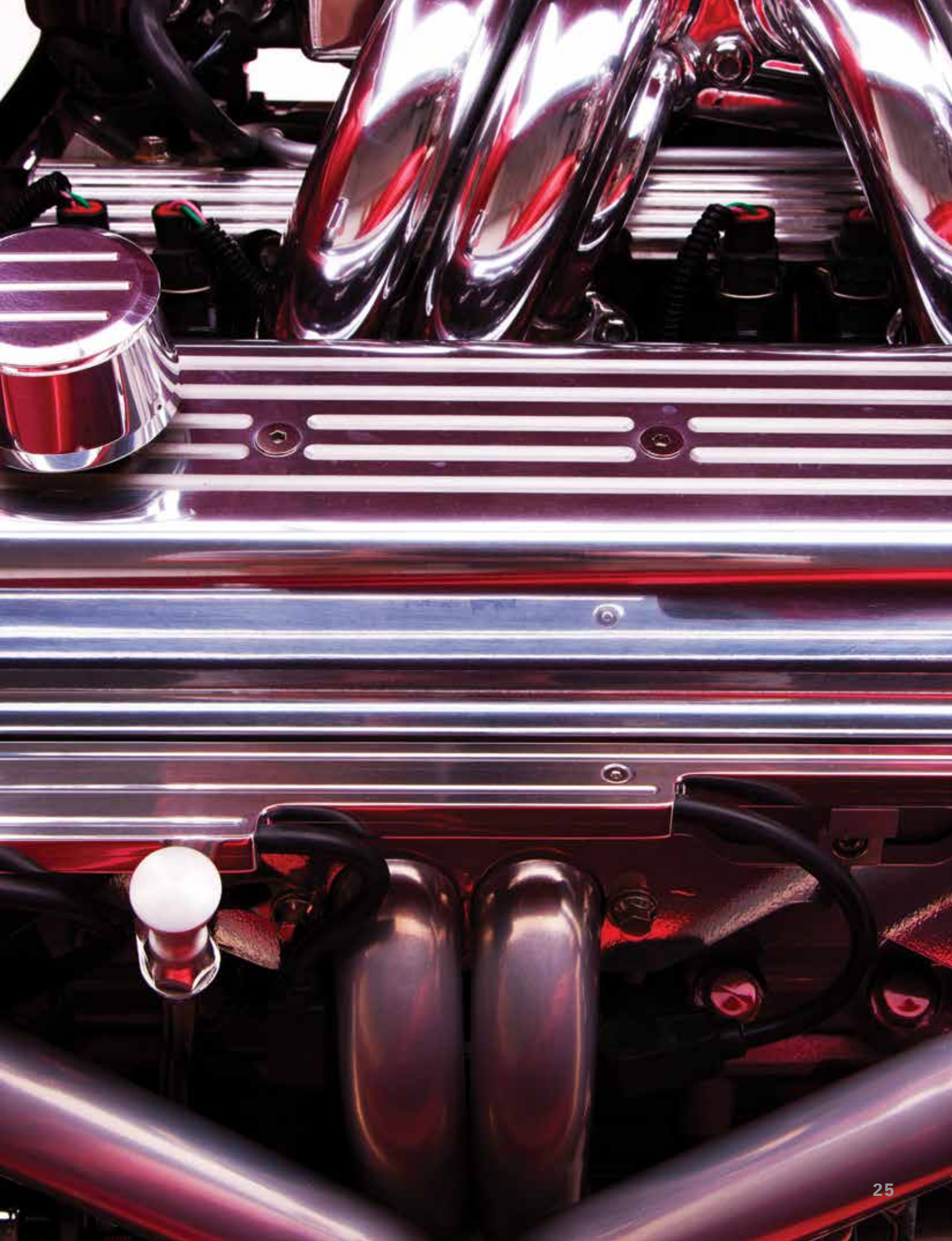


“I really like the engine. When it’s polished it’s one of the nicest induction systems I’ve ever seen.”



When he’s asked about future projects, Rob pauses. “I was always interested in cars but never really to this extent. We have a ‘36 Ford pick-up but that’s a basket case. To be honest, I like motorcycles more than cars and if I had to give something up I’d let the car go and focus on bikes.”

There’s only one like it and it’s for sale. If you’d like to get in touch with the Vanderhelms please contact the magazine.





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GENERALLY STRIKING

A SOUTHERN ICON ROARS ACROSS THE PRAIRIES

THIS FEATURE ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN ISSUE 4 OF GARAGE|SHOTS MAGAZINE



Admit it. Everyone who has seen the *Dukes of Hazzard* has thought about jumping into their vehicles through the window—and quite a few have tried. Just search YouTube. It's definitely a lot harder than it looks, and that was probably the easiest stunt involving the General Lee. Episode after episode it flew through the air, jumping bridges, hills, and pretty much anything in its path. The car was such an integral part of the show it was basically a character—it's even got its own name.

Tony Wong was no different than most kids growing up in early 80s. He idolized the Duke cousins, sure... but what he really wanted was their car. "I had models and small die-cast toys, and as your dream grows up and you get older you figure you've got to make this thing come true, somehow," Tony states. A few years ago he felt he was finally in a position to make that dream a reality. With the help of a mechanic friend of his, Kevin O'Dowd, the hunt was on. Fruitless months were spent with Tony rejecting one 1969 Dodge Charger after another, finding too many faults or imperfections. With the movie being remade for 2005 (starring Seann William Scott and Johnny Knoxville), Tony finally found the one—from the official supplier of the movie cars.

“Warner Brothers is said to have wrecked 249 General Lees during the filming of the *Dukes of Hazzard*. That just breaks your heart.”





The anticipation was almost too much to bear. “When I first received the vehicle,” he remembers, “when it came off the truck and right into my garage... I pretty much lost it.” The Charger had already been painted orange in preparation for the movie, but it was still a long way off from a General Lee. A new motor, push bar, decals, and countless other additions and fixes later (to the tune of 500+ hours), and Tony was finally face to face with the car he’d coveted since first catching a glimpse of it on the TV screen. A notorious, and very conspicuous, car.

“It’s really quite amazing. When I bring this car down to a show, or even just to the gas station, I’ve got people of all ages surrounding it. It’s almost like a kid in the candy shop,” he laughs. “You’ve got to be in the right mood to own this car,” Tony adds. “If I’m having a bad day and I get into it, I still have to think positive, because there’s always going to be people honking at me and waving at me.”





“As a kid, having the small toy car just wasn’t good enough for me. I wanted the real General Lee.”



His family has been reaping the benefits of having a celebrity in their midst, as well. “Recently I just took my nephew for his Grade 12 graduation in it. He was quite honoured, and I was too,” Tony smiles. But above all, it’s that family time that Tony feels most grateful for. “The boys have been very active—they have a passion for vehicles, and they’ve been out with me to car shows. It’s been a pleasure, not just owning the vehicle, but building a relationship with your kids.”

Tony would like to send a special thanks to Kevin O’Dowd, and D&W Custom Engines, Calgary.





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Taking styling cues from General Motors' early sixties concept designs along with the production 1963-67 Corvette Stingray and Buick Riviera, JF Launier had the insight to combine them into one. That combination won him the top custom award in the world.

THIS FEATURE ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN ISSUE 13 OF GARAGE|SHOTS MAGAZINE

RIDLE SOLVED

1964 BUICK RIVIERA



Six years ago JF Launier built a 1956 Chrysler station wagon which earned him his first Great 8 Award at Detroit's Autorama and a chance to win the world's top custom award, the Don Ridler Memorial Award. At the time, JF thought he had the car. "I thought we had the right car to win. A lot of people thought we had it."

JF decided to go in a different direction for this entry. He knew he wanted to get away from '30s and '50s cars and he did not want to do another '69 Camaro for the competition. What did he find? A \$300 1964 Buick Riviera. There was a little family history with Rivieras as he had a '63 when he was younger. His newly acquired '64 would become something a world apart from that original '63.


JF's process of building a car of this magnitude is a little different than a lot of builders, "I just move things around until my eyeball says the proportions are right and then I weld it up." When asked if it is different than he first imagined, he responds, "I don't envision them until I am done the mock ups in metal. At first the car was to have a '67 Chevelle roof and remain a four door, so it has changed a lot." The twin turbos in the back took a lot of engineering and was the biggest mechanical customization. But that was not the only



major engineering that went into the car. "It was all experimental and one off. It was an extreme amount of metal work," JF adds. In total about 20,000 hours went into building Rivision. The car went through some drama before it was unveiled in Detroit too. "I ran the car through the garage wall before we loaded it on the trailer, and we had to repair it in Chicago on the way to the show. It was not completed till about 30 seconds before the show."

JF is the third Canadian to win the award since its inception in 1964, however, one of the previous winners was built in the US and never saw a Canadian road. Speaking of roads, Rivision has seen it's share of roads and tracks. A lot of comments on the forum boards are about the time that went into this build and how it would never see the road. JF has proved that to be false. He had Rivision out on the autocross track at the





*The attention to detail is
incredible. Every, nut, bolt and
fastener are clocked to line up.*



Goodguys PPG Nationals in Columbus, Ohio. As JF states, "It was fun to see the reaction of the crowd when they see a Ridler Award winner sideways on an autocross track." The car, to-date, has over 300 miles on it since the show. JF points out it was the first Ridler winner to be drag raced and JF has had plenty of fun doing burnouts and doughnuts. "It drives fantastic, like a 5 litre Mustang in the snow. It's a lot of fun."

When asked about the hardest part of the build, he's quick with an answer. "Definitely the financing. We had a lot of help from sponsors and friends." A Ridler Award car cannot be shown to the public during its build and must be unveiled for the first time in Detroit. "It took six years of my life going into a project that nobody knows about and does not promote your business," JF recalls. When asked what he is most proud of he quickly replies, "The overall shape and lines. I think it looks like a modern contemporary car but with the '60s heritage with a road race feel."

How did it get its name Rivision? Well, JF first wanted to call it "Revenge" but his son came up to him and said it should be called "Rivision" and they went with that. Will he try for another Ridler? "I won't personally, but if someone wants to fund it I would enjoy that journey with them and help them build their dream."



I took it back to the idea that what if the Buick engineers peeked over the wall and saw the Corvette guys with their split window and said, 'Wow we really need a two door sports coupe'.



1964 BUICK RIVIERA | RIVISION

Built by JF Kustoms, Osoyoos, BC

- Custom chassis and suspension
- Speed Tech front suspension
- Ride Tech shocks
- SSBC brakes with 15" rotors and 8 piston calipers on front
- SSBC brakes with 14" rotors and 4 piston calipers on rear
- Custom 13 spoke wheels by Curtis Speed, 21x14.5 rear, 19x19.5 front
- Interior by Lee Baxter's Hot Rod Interiors
- Custom bezels by Curtis Speed
- Custom gauge by Classic Instruments
- GM LS engine bored and stroked to 6.2L, 850 HP
- Twin 48 mm turbos
- Custom Riviera Sunset Pearl Paint by BASF
- Pirelli P Zero355/25/21 tires
- Jeweled exhaust
- Tremec Transmission
- ACT clutch
- Tuff Stuff starter and alternator



SPECIAL THANKS TO

- Van City Plating
- Hydes Leather
- Mike Curtis
- Smart Parts
- Clayton Machine Works
- Norton
- Ride Tech
- Michael Kukura of BASF
- Lee Baxter's Hot Rod Interiors
- Tremec Transmission
- ACT Clutch
- Tuff Stuff

- Speed Tech
- Gary Yorston
- Clint Peterman
- Doug Blatchford
- Ted Hammer

AND TO THE CREW...

Gary, Lee, Clint, Phil, Jake, Neil, Shawn, Mike, Trisha, Ken, Eldon, Greg, Steve, Frank, Rob, Leon, Bill, Wayne, Kevin, Ben, Bob, Chris, Rick, Cassidy, Colin, Les, Paul, Russ, Dan, Ron and Gord.



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BURT WOULD APPROVE!

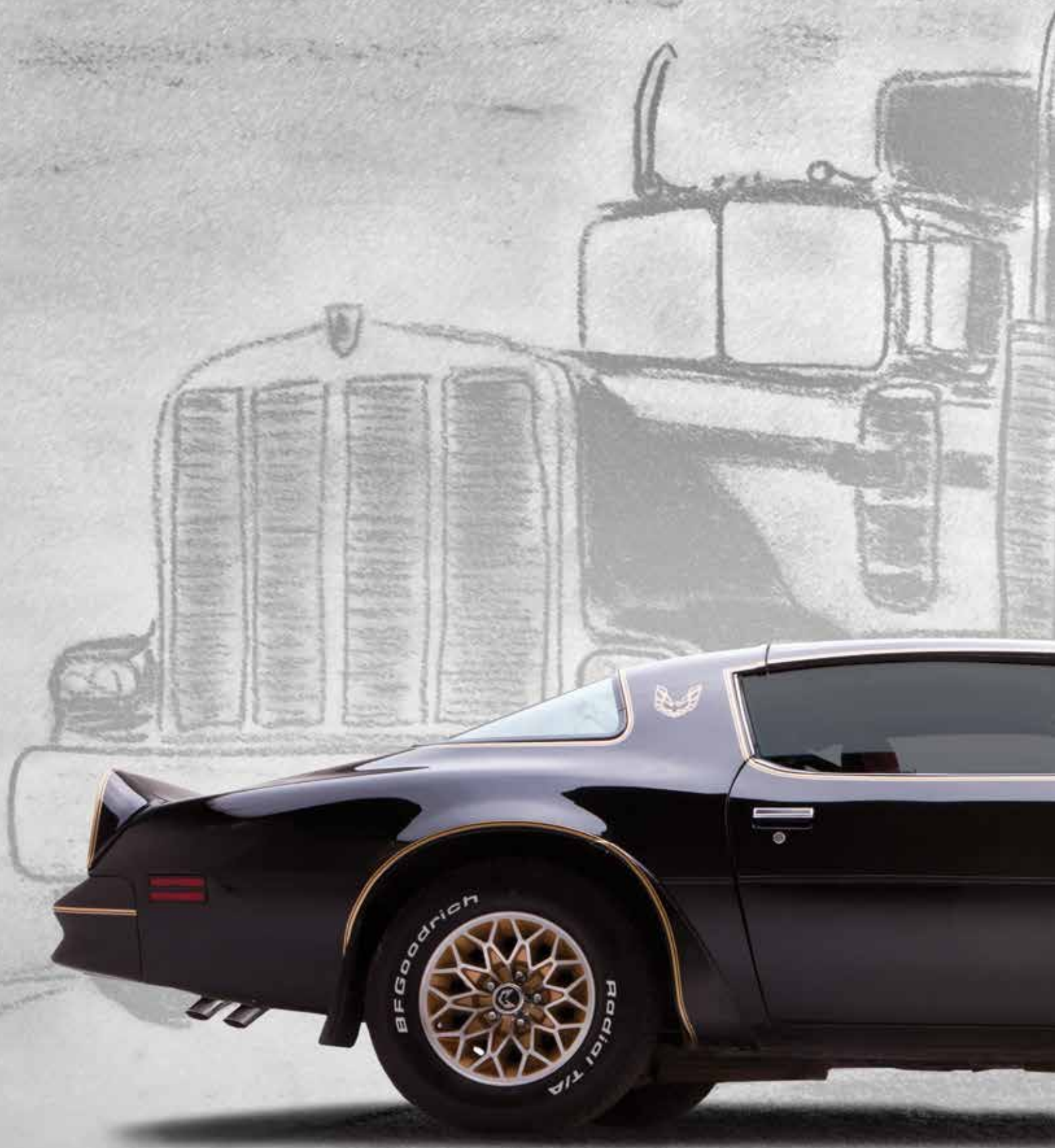
The policeman versus lovable ne'er-do-well is perhaps one of the most classic car chase match-ups in Hollywood—and we aren't usually cheering for the long arm of the law. In *Smokey and the Bandit*, Burt Reynolds puts on a mighty good show of being the bee in the Sheriff's proverbial bonnet. So when David Holmes, president of the Calgary Firebird Club, takes his '77 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am to the annual Smokey and the Bandit run, you'd expect the hackles of the local police force to rise in some kind of instinctual response to such an iconic (and infamous) car.

"There were three of us on our way to Texarkana," David says of one of his run-ins, "and I got pulled over by a state trooper down there." Preparing for the worst, David rolled down his window. "He gets out, and he's the stereotypical state trooper with the mirrored lenses, and a big belly on him, and he leans in and says, 'I just want y'all to know you never done nothin' wrong, I just want some pictures,'" David says in southern drawl and grins. "He was really funny, a really nice guy, so we chatted for about 15 minutes, and he took a couple pictures." Even with Bandit's 'total disrespect for the law,' it seems the law sure has a lot of respect for David's flashy beast.



THIS FEATURE ORIGINALLY
APPEARED IN ISSUE 4 OF
GARAGE|SHOTS MAGAZINE





“Before the movie came out a few people noticed the car, but after the movie came out, the attention just exploded. Cat calls, whistles, and even clapping was a daily occurrence.”





But David is no bandwagon-jumper. When he first saw the '77 Trans Am, it was brand new and *Smokey and the Bandit* hadn't even appeared on the big screen yet. He fell in love and just had to have it. He ordered it straight from the factory, with all the options possible, minus air conditioning and power windows. "I didn't think that in Canada we needed air conditioning," he chuckles, "and power windows just scared me 'cause of the motors blowing out back in those days." For a couple of months, a few appreciative eyes followed his car as it strutted around town, but when the movie came out, the attention just exploded. Cat calls, whistles, and even clapping was a daily occurrence. David had been using it as a daily driver, and saw no reason to stop. "I'd drive it all year-round," he remembers, smiling.





Slowly, David decided maybe he'd be better off trying to preserve it a bit. Having kept it more or less completely stock, the years had definitely taken their toll. It was restored in 2004, including new paint and body parts, and re-machined wheels. "But it still has the original 8-track in it," he brags. Nowadays, he takes it on the road to the Smokey and the Bandit runs in the United States every year since 2009, for a few other car shows, and the occasional family vacation. "It's starting to get old, though," David sighs. But he's got no intention of selling it, which has given a few of his family members some distinctly Hollywood ideas. "I think I have contracts out on me by all my nieces and nephews right now," he laughs.



"What we have here is a total respect for the car!"





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GREEN WITH ENVY

A '48 HUDSON HORNET IS REBORN

THIS FEATURE ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN ISSUE 2 OF
GARAGE|SHOTS MAGAZINE



Even if you don't know a thing about cars, one look at this vehicle tells you it's one hot ride. It even originated from a place known for its intense heat. Theo Kuypers, the car's owner, found the car's body in Phoenix, Arizona. The desert location meant the body was rust-free, but the only part of the car that remains original is the top of the roof. The rest of it was modified, every square inch. Theo had a lot of help turning the Hornet into the head-turner you see here. Gary was his partner in the build. The two men spent seven years creating perfection. Gary did the work, Theo provided guidance (and cash).

In the 1950s, Hudsons dominated stock car racing, becoming a force to be reckoned with on the NASCAR circuit. During the 1952 NASCAR Grand National season, Hudsons won 27 of the 34 Grand National races. One of the reasons for its impressive racing performance, says Theo, was the car's innovative low center of gravity. They were one of the first cars produced with a sunken floor. This "step down" body design also gave the car superior handling abilities, allowing it to out-maneuver other cars. In the end, Hudson merged with Nash to form AMC, and the brand disappeared in 1957.





“It took 17 hides to do the upholstery. That’s the seats, front and back, all the floor, all the headliner, and all the trunk.”

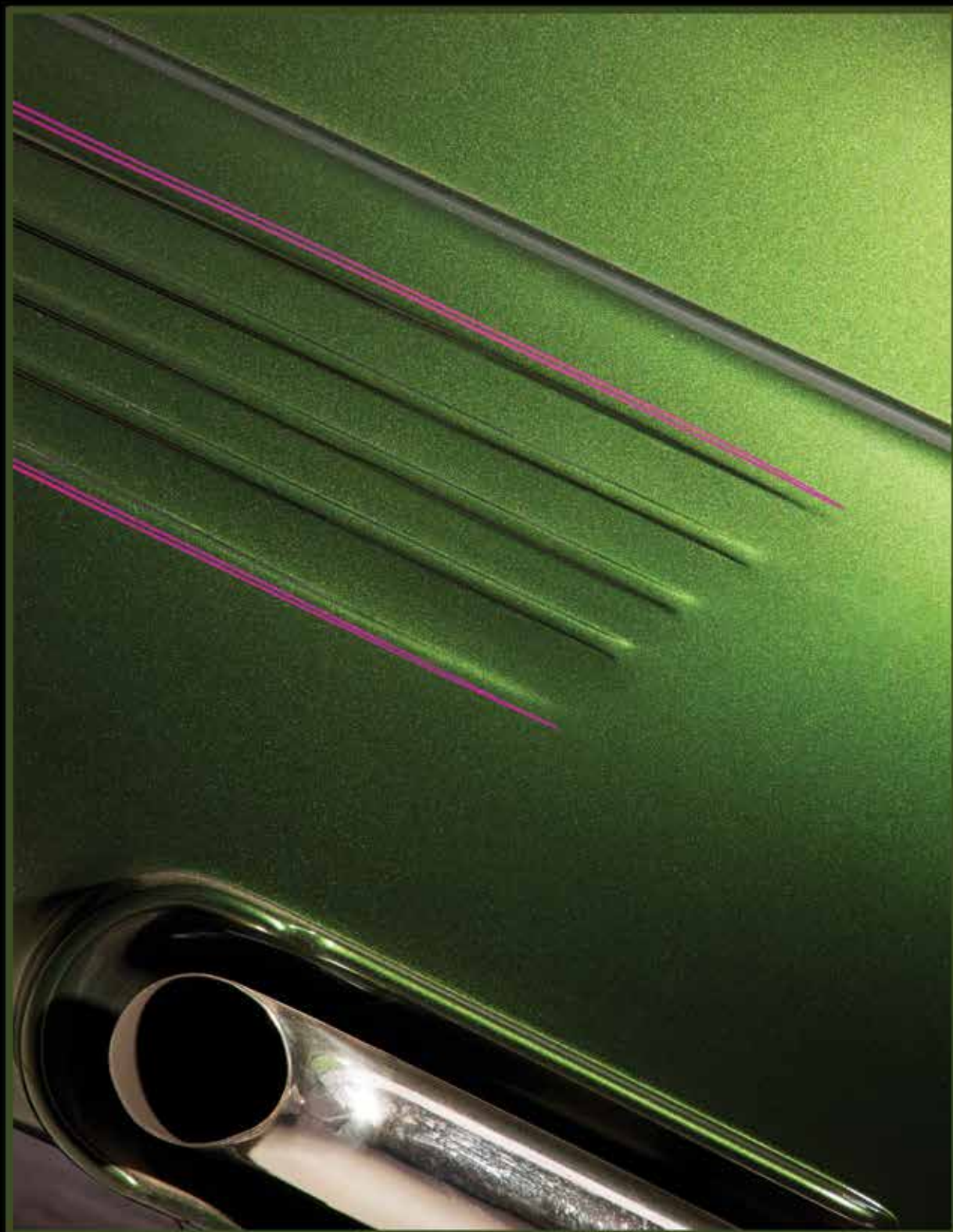




In a way, the relationship between Gary and Theo is quite historical too. Long before this build, when in their teens, Gary and Theo built hot rods together in Theo's dad's garage. Gary opted to stay with the trade, opening his shop (Egbert's Street Rods and Collector Cars Inc.) and Theo went in a different direction, focusing on construction and the motel business. When Theo found the '48 Hudson, he went to Gary to help him execute the customization and restoration. In the end, the project took over seven thousand shop hours to complete. Both men pause when they say that number out loud. (But what's seven thousand hours between friends?)

They started by chopping the roof three inches. Then they threw aside the doors and did away with the vent window. They put the stainless steel exhaust out, not hanging off the side but tucked in under. They added '52 Chevy rear quarter panels to extend the tail end. There's a '49 Mercury opening in the front for the grill, for the '53 DeSoto grill to fit in. Then they added '55 Pontiac split bumpers, front and back, plus the window over the back wheel to show more of the chrome. They even added a built-in electric lift to take up the rear wheels in case you have to change one. It's a screw lift deal, but Theo says it has come in handy.











All those hours and hard work paid off. In 2003, Theo attended car shows on the ISCA (International Show Car Association) schedule. This included travelling to cities across the United States and Eastern Canada. He visited Washington, DC, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Syracuse, Chicago, Quebec, Chattanooga, Green Bay, Buffalo, and Louisville. That same year, the car was awarded the title of 'International Champion.'

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