



Forgotten Formula: A '98 Firebird Formula WS6 Convertible Exists



By **ANDREW NUSSBAUM** ([HTTPS://WWW.LSXMAG.COM/AUTHOR/ANDREWNUSSBAUM/](https://www.lsxmag.com/author/andrewnussbaum/))
| AUGUST 26, 2019

It seems more often than not that when we write about a Pontiac, the word 'rare' becomes part of the story. Well, with that said and as a follow-up to "Formula-Driven" The Final Firebird Formula '98-'02, here we got a rare Pontiac for you. In fact, a Pontiac that, by all accounts, shouldn't even exist, but it does. So now in an exclusive feature, LSX Magazine uncloaks this piece of late-model Poncho history, sharing all we know about this rarest of the last of the breed birds...and of course, we'll show her to you, as well.

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Shoulda', Coulda', Woulda': The 1998 Formula

Not to be redundant, but this story demands reiteration of some key details about Firebird Formula production for the '98 model-year. The Formula (W66) was fitted with the Gen III 5.7L LS1 and, like all birds, wore a new front fascia, fenders, hood, headlights, and taillights. It was all good for Pontiac's other V8, bird-sharing drivetrain with standard and optional features with its Trans Am sibling, while retaining the silky-smooth sleeper shape of the base Firebird. The one negative, based on very low 1994-'97 orders: there would be no convertible Formulas offered from 1998-'02, with open-air cruising relegated to the base 'bird and Trans Am only.

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Early Birds And Acronyms: ASC, SLP, And WS6

By mid-1997, the Firebird line was in flux with the aforementioned changes being readied for the 1998 model-year production. Most integral was American Sunroof Company (ASC), taking over the WS6 Ram Air program from Street Legal Performance (SLP). SLP's Tier-1 relationship with GM/Pontiac had developed/manufactured the Ram Air revival for the '96-'97 LT1 V8 Firebirds. ASC now conceived a new WS6 package, with a revised hood and Ram-Air intake integrated with the Firebirds fresh fascia. ASC was also responsible for fourth-gen convertible conversions an honored task bestowed upon them since the third-gen cars.

With all this transference going on and seemingly before the final decision was made to ax the ragtop Formula option, two topless Formulas were built as test and tune vehicles. Both were pre-production proposal ASC WS6 cars in red (81U) pewter cloth(14B) interior, with our owner's car having an automatic, black top, and the other, fitted with a six-speed and white top.

According to extensive research and the paperwork provided by our owner, his car was invoiced by the Pontiac division and produced in May of 1997 and then shipped to GMs Fleet Operations in Milford, Michigan. The invoice also shows North American Operations (NAO), Company Vehicle Fleet Ypsilanti, Michigan, as a possible delivery destination.

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From there, one doesn't have to be Sherlock Holmes to apply deductive reasoning as to the early life of our subject car — only what happened after. As for the six-speed, white-topped example with no real evidence of its present-day whereabouts, except for some unconfirmed internet rumor, it most likely met with the crusher or was dismantled for parts or SEMA modification, as is common practice for vehicles of this type.

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Car Facts

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For both the present owner and us, no stone was left unturned in telling this story with the utmost accuracy. With that, we'll take it from the top and our first piece of evidence: the vehicle CARFAX. According to this detailed history, our convertible Formula WS6 is not even identified as such but is recorded as a '98 Firebird Trans Am convertible. This is also the case on the previous owners' buyer's guide/warranty paperwork, but more on that later.

With invaluable input from the founder and head of Pontiac Historic Services (PHS) and Poncho guru, Jim Mattison proposes that with the very low VIN number, and since no convertible Formula WS6 cars were supposed to exist, the car was assumed to be a Trans Am. He adds that this car should never have ended up in public hands for the above-mentioned reasons, and no window sticker will exist either. Mr. Mattison suggests that this Formula's clandestine existence and lack of eyes on it, when its paperwork went across someone at GM's desk, is how it slipped through the corporate cracks and was sent to auction and sold as a topless Trans Am.

Mattison's theory seems spot-on, since the CARFAX shows one owner from Minnesota purchasing the car with 12,899 miles on it at a Midwest Region Auto Auction in late January 1999. Mattison states this was probably a dealer sale with a manufacturer's certificate of origin. For four years, the owner enjoyed the rare Formula, between residences in Minnesota and sunny Arizona. As of May 2003, the CARFAX shows the Formula ending up in a Phoenix dealer's inventory, with 23,686 miles on the clock. Here's where our secret saga really heats up.

Owner Two: Enter Paul

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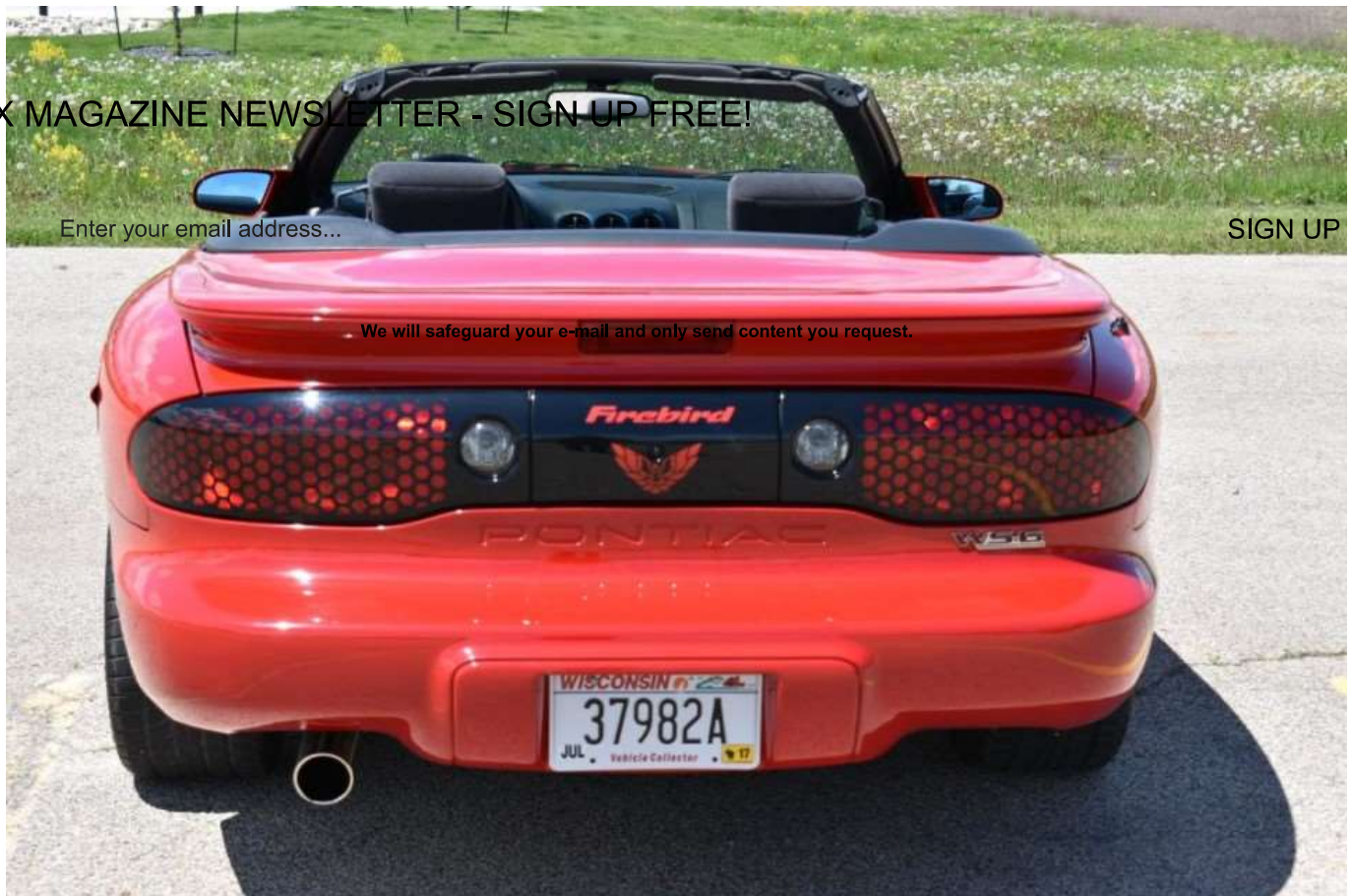


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Paul Albrecht is a Wisconsin native and heavy truck dealer who also happens to be friends with our present owner. He's not necessarily a car guy — in 2003, Paul was on the hunt for a sporty car, something to enjoy his days off, and during those brief Wisconsin summers. Hoping to avoid the likely rust and rot issues associated with cars living up north, Paul relegated his search to the southern states. One day, while scanning the Internet, Paul's eye was transfixed by a shiny red Pontiac Firebird convertible, offered by Performance Dodge in Phoenix, Arizona. After some phone conversation and a local buddy's quick appraisal, Paul hopped on a desert-bound flight with every intention of buying the topless Firebird.

Once on the ground at Performance Dodge, Paul was told a story about this particular car. According to the salesperson, the Formula's previous owner was a former GM executive who had a second home in Phoenix and had recently traded-in the 'bird for a diesel-powered Dodge pick-up. Most tales do originate from truths. But connecting the dots on the CARFAX history, 16 years after the fact and with a Dodge dealership that no longer exists, knowing for sure if this backstory is accurate is quite impossible. All Paul did know for sure was that he loved his new red convertible enough to strap in and drive the 1,700 miles and roughly 27 hours back to Wisconsin.

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Once back in the badger state, Paul cruised the tires off his new ragtop V8-powered Firebird, still not knowing what he had. That question only started badgering him when everywhere he went, many admirers would ask, “What kind of car is this and do they still make them?” So, by early 2004, Paul decided to call PHS and the plot thickened from there. According to Paul, within a day of speaking to Jim Mattison at PHS, who told him [Paul] unequivocally, that he shouldn’t have that car, he received a pretty surprising phone call. The man on the line said he was from Pontiac and asked Paul how he got the rare ‘bird and then quickly made an offer of \$30,000 for her. Only having just purchased the car and still in shock as to what he’d acquired by pure chance, Paul decided to keep his Formula. Since PHS gets its info from the manufacturer, this phone call makes sense, as Pontiac would’ve gotten word of the car’s existence and private ownership.

In February 2004, the PHS documents arrived, including the vehicle invoice/order sheet from Pontiac. An enlightened Paul learned that his was an authentic, one of two built, 1998 WS6 Firebird Formula Convertible. As a further nod to his lucky acquisition of a car that no one should have owned, a big underlined “congratulations” appears on the PHS cover sheet.

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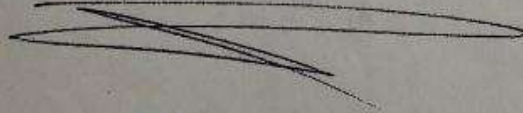
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Pontiac Historic Services is a private corporation, not to be confused with Pontiac Motor Division.

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Even with the good news, Paul's tenure would be short and sweet. By 2006, an unfortunate impending divorce began to steer him toward a painful and reluctant sale.

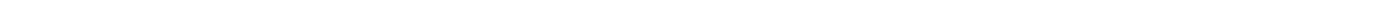
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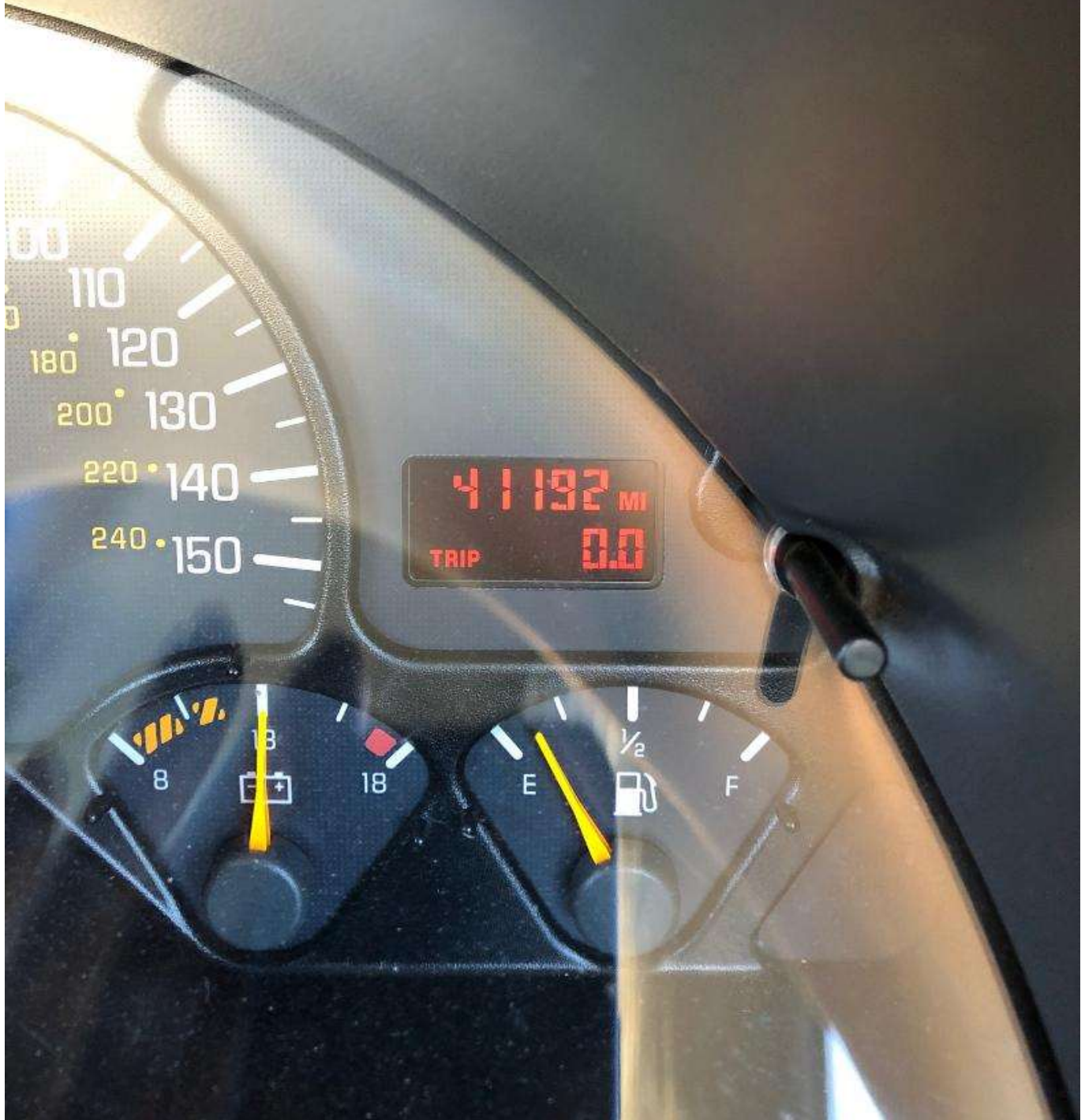


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Randy Davis is a 51-year old excavating contractor from Wisconsin, whose friendship with Paul started many years before this story. A lifelong car guy, Randy exalts being a self-taught mechanic, putting cylinder heads and doing his first motor swap at 13 years old and fixing people's cars by 15. The early hot rodding was definitely a byproduct of good parenting, being that Randy describes his dad as a youthful racer and mom being into cars, too. Randy had plenty of exposure to American iron, growing up around dad's '55 Chevy, '65 Stang and '69 383-cid/four-speed-pistol-gripped Road Runner. However, Randy's first steeds were big, heavy, hand-me-down sedans, which were better than nothing.

Randy had laid eyes on his pal Paul's topless Firebird more than once and definitely liked what he saw. When Paul informed him about his marital situation and needing to part with the Formula, Randy was an instant player. Since receiving the iron-clad PHS confirmation of the Formula's origins and the \$30,000 offer from the unnamed Pontiac person, Paul felt brazen enough to put the Formula on eBay with a \$100,000 reserve. After a short stint with no offers, Paul and Randy's negotiations got serious.



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Paul knew he had a rare collector piece, if not yet a six-figure car, and wanted to fetch a good price. Randy was aware of the Formula's special uniqueness and didn't want to insult his friend. But without a crystal ball, he was intent on getting the car for a price that made sense in the present. With that, Randy offered Paul \$35,000 for the 8-year-old Formula Firebird, now showing a tad over 40,000 miles on the odometer. Taking into consideration that this was a strong offer, five-grand more than the anonymous Pontiac guy offered three-years prior, and knowing it would have a good home, Paul eventually accepted. So, with all that said and done, by May of 2006, Randy Davis took possession of the Formula Firebird WS6 convertible. Ironically, this is the only Firebird and Pontiac he has ever owned. Since obtaining the Formula, Randy has driven it sparingly during Wisconsin's short summers, going to local shows and barely recording 1,000 miles in the last 13 years.



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Droptop Have And Have Not

Lest any questions remain as to the authenticity of our subject car, one need look no further than the (RPO) sticker or Service Parts Identification (SPID) label on the driver's side door jamb. Here we find four tell-tale codes, which prove beyond a shadow of a doubt what she is.

The first code in the upper right-hand corner is 2FS67 — this denotes a convertible Firebird it would be 2FS87 for a hardtop/T-top coupe. Code WS9 means a V8 Firebird and all Formulas and Trans Ams have this. Code WS6 denotes that this Firebird was built as a Formula model — it would be Y82 for a Trans Am. And WS6, which shows that this car is equipped with the Ram Air performance and handling package.

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Furthermore, it's what our Ram Air Formula convertible is missing, as much as what it has, that cements the proof of its early secretive beginnings and not-for-sale-status. Clearly absent in the pictures provided by Randy, are any "Ram Air" decals on the leading edges of each hood scoop. Also not present is a "Pontiac Ram Air" decal under the hood on the airbox. And as the icing on the cake, the early production ASC Ram Air hood is rough, to say the least. With Randy's description and images of the underside, depicting a hand-formed and unfinished piece, with glue visible on the seams and fiberglass and composite weave showing, it's obvious pieces of this car were not off the assembly line.

Conclusion

Well, there you have it. This is definitely one of the rarest birds to fly from GM's Canadian coop, and owned by a guy who hadn't partaken in the Poncho hobby prior. After exhaustive questioning and with definite pushing of our own opinion, Randy seems intent on keeping his one-of-one ragtop Ram Air Formula for quite a while. Who knows, maybe 20 years from now, on a cool January night in Scottsdale, Arizona, Randy's rolling piece of Pontiac provenance will go across the block and command some big money. Good luck Randy, and thank you for sharing.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Nussbaum


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Pontiac possessed by Smokey and the Bandit at 6 years old, and cultivated through the '80s by GTAs, IROCS and Grand Nationals, Andrew hails from Queens NY and has been writing freelance for ten years.



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| NOVEMBER 23, 2022

The early 1940s, World War II-era Willys coupes pre-date the birth of organized drag racing by about a decade, and as such, they have been a part of the sport's DNA since the very beginning. You'll generally find them at nostalgia and Gasser-specific type events, but rarely do they feature power from modern-day engine designs and technology. But then again, they aren't often owned by members of the Millennial generation, either.

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Thirty-five-year-old Dayton, Tennessee native Scottie Stone has what may be one of drag racing's finest examples of the old saying, "teaching an old dog new tricks," in the form of a 1941 Willys with a 346 cubic-inch, twin-turbocharged LS1 for power. Between that and the Holley (<https://www.holley.com/>) Dominator electronic fuel injection, Willys-Overland Motors founder John Willys would be floored.

"These cars are rare outside the show car scene," Stone says. "You'll find very few still running down a racetrack. And I have never seen another Willys street rod with turbos....usually they are blown big-blocks. I took what I liked about the old-school and added a little new-school technology, and it all blended really well."

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Stone's other projects have included a Trailblazer SS, a Pontiac G8, a 1990 Nissan 240sx, and an 1984 Chevy S-10, so a '41 Willys is an interesting departure.

"My dad bracket raced when I was younger. Also my cousins, aunts, and uncles all raced drag raced and dirt track raced. Racing was born into my blood. I was born and raised around racing, and I love the thrill of speed and competition. I've watched others build cool cars, growing up and when I finally got the knowledge, money, tools, time, and the project car I always wanted, I knew it was time to build something cool and unique that you don't see at every racetrack," Stone shares.

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Stone found the Willys in South Carolina via the internet — a full-scale fiberglass replica body and a chassis built purposely for street use, which Stone re-did once in his possession. The 25.5-spec Funny-Car cage now is built atop a 2×4 square-tube mild-steel frame.

The build took Stone four years to complete and is the first car he's ever built from the ground up. "I did all the fabrication, welding, and wiring myself. I also built the motor, the transmission, and the rearend alone. The only thing outsourced was the bodywork." The project began in 2018, and was finally completed and debuted at the Holley LS Fest this fall, to much fanfare and attention.

The circa-2000 factory aluminum LS1 engine block and crankshaft have been mated to forged Diamond (<https://www.diamonddracing.net>) pistons and Lunati (<https://www.lunatipower.com/>) rods, and retains the factory 5.7-liters of displacement. Stone procured a custom-grind COMP (<https://www.compcams.com/>) camshaft and Manley (<http://www.manleyperformance.com>) valves to update the otherwise stock GM 317 aluminum heads. The air, charged by a pair of VS Racing (<https://turbo4less.com/>) 65mm billet-wheel turbos through a Shearer Fab water-to-air intercooler, enters via a Holley Sniper 102mm throttle body and a Holley Hi-Ram intake manifold. The aforementioned Holley Dominator ECU, with directions from tuner Derek Burton, supplies fuel via twin HyperFuel (<https://hyperfuelsystems.com/>) 340 in-tank fuel pumps and 160cc injectors, and spark through a Holley Dominator ignition box.

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A Powerglide transmission operated with a B&M (https://www.holley.com/brands/b_and_m/) Pro Bandit shifter is paired with a 9.5-inch PTC (<http://www.ptcrace.com>) converter (4,500 rpm stall) and Torflex plate to deliver the power through a 3-inch steel driveshaft to the 9-inch Ford rearend. The housing sports a Strange Engineering (<https://www.strangeengineering.net>) spool, 3.89 gears, and 35-spline axles.

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Once he had the chassis complete, Stone bolted on Heidts (<https://www.heidts.com/>) front control arms, Strange front struts, Aldan American (<https://aldanamerican.com>) rear shocks, and fabricated a four-link with a Chassis Engineering (<https://www.chassisengineering.com>) wishbone and anti-roll bar. It all rides on shiny RC Components (<https://shoprccomponents.com>) polished wheels, including double-beadlock rears, with Phoenix (<https://www.hosecandy.com>) tires up front and Hoosier (<https://www.hoosiertire.com/>) 28×10.5's out back. Outlaw single-piston brakes bring it to a stop. The entire package, with Stone in the seat, tips the scales at just over 3,000 pounds, and being a bit tail-heavy, performs nice launches on its way to best elapsed times in the 5.4-second range at just shy of 130 mph to the 1/8-mile.

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“For a home-built chassis this car is a blast to drive. It goes straight as an arrow. We only have 12 total passes it, but I’m learning the chassis and tuning every time we hit the track,” he says. “We pick up e.t. and mile-per-hour every pass we make. For a street rod with a Funny-Car cage in it, it drives and rides really nice down the street...very comfortable.”

Stone was quick to point out that his original vision for this project was to campaign it in drag-and-drive events, and many of the features he invested time and money into are geared to that.

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“I put nice cushion seats in it for long trips the wife and I plan on making in the future. It also has cup holders and cell phone charger built into the dash. We’re going to beat the lug nuts off this thing...I didn’t build it to sit in a garage and look pretty, it was built to be used and abused.”

Stone routinely drives his machine on short trips , in between visits to racetracks in and around Tennessee. The Willys, in just a dozen runs, has shown impressive promise, and has also exposed some of its shortcomings. Stone says with the coming addition of double-adjustable shocks to get the car to squat at the hit, he believes it should pick up a couple of tenths to the 60-foot clocks, and dip into the 4.90s.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Wolf

Andrew has been involved in motorsports from a very young age. Over the years, he has photographed several major auto racing events, sports, news journalism, portraiture, and everything in between. After working with the Power Automedia staff for some time on a freelance basis, Andrew joined the team in 2010.

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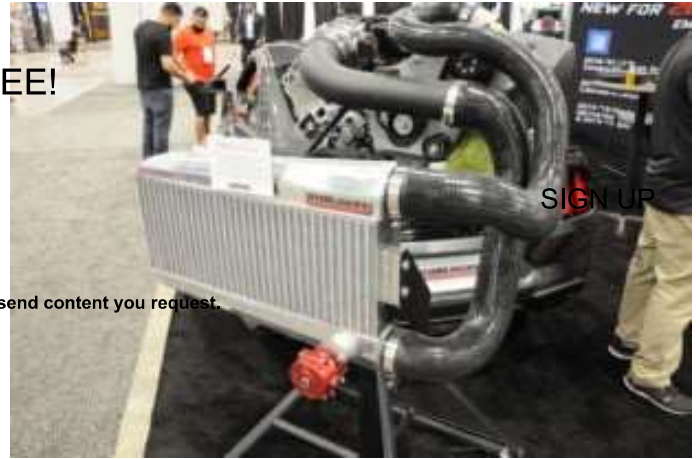


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SEMA 2022: Griot's Garage Debuts Boss Hybrid Micro Polisher

(<https://www.lsxmag.com/news/sema-2022-griots-garage-debuts-boss-hybrid-micro-polisher/>)

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By **DAVE CRUIKSHANK** ([HTTPS://WWW.LSXMAG.COM/AUTHOR/DAVIDCRUIKSHANK/](https://www.lsxmag.com/author/davidcruikshank/))
| NOVEMBER 23, 2022

 **W**e like to keep a clean, sanitary ride around these parts. Not only does a spotless car look good going down the boulevard, but it runs better when it's at its shiny best. We  have a soft spot for Griot's Garage (<http://griotsgarage.com>) products and have used them for years, so we were keen to check out what they brought to SEMA for 2022.

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(https://www.speednik.com/files/2022/11/sema-2022-griots-garage-shows-boss-hybrid-micro-polisher-2022-11-16_08-33-23_156561.jpg)

We caught up with the lovely Griot's rep Stevie at their booth over in the West Hall, and she gave us an update on their all-new Boss Hybrid Micro Polisher. In a nutshell, this is a cordless buffer that can accept one, two, and three-inch pads, helping you get into the most intricate nooks and crannies of your ride's bodywork. Anyone with a modern car (or a vintage car with curves and fenders) can appreciate how tricky it is to polish around flourishes in the bodywork.

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Not only that, but the polishing head can pivot into 90-, 45-, 30-, and 15-degree positions, allowing even better angles to get the tricky spots. The frosting on the cake is that it's battery-powered, eliminating the dreaded cord dragging across not only your shoulder but your car's precious paint. Griot's Garage says you get up to an hour of polishing per charge.

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The company invented the one-stop detailing superstore years ago, and they aren't standing still. They have an updated selection of garage tools, ceramic coatings, applicators, and a slick new catalog too. Go here for more info. (<https://www.griotsgarage.com/>)

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Dave Cruikshank

Dave Cruikshank is a lifelong car enthusiast and an Editor at Power Automedia. A zealous car geek since birth, he digs lead sleds, curvy fiberglass, kustoms and street rods. He currently owns a '95 Corvette, '76 Cadillac Seville, '99 LS1 Trans Am and big old Ford Van.

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B Is For Blasphemy: B Is For Build's Mid-

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fbuilds-mid-engine-ls-swapped-mustang/)



By JEREMY NICHOLS (HTTPS://WWW.LSXMAG.COM/AUTHOR/JEREMYNICHOLS/)

| NOVEMBER 22, 2022

The annual SEMA Show (<http://www.semashow.com/>) in Las Vegas never disappoints with a seemingly endless number of wild builds that display what is possible with sheetmetal, carbon fiber, composites, fiberglass, and paint. No strangers to building cars that are way outside the box and get people talking, Chris Steinbacher and his team at B Is For Build (<https://www.youtube.com/@BisforBuild>) showed up to this year's SEMA show ready to wow the crowd and stir the pot a little. The B Is For Build guys have seemingly hit the trifecta of car building controversial subjects by cutting up a classic 1967 fastback Mustang, making it mid-engine, and LS swapping it.



(<https://www.speednik.com/files/2022/11/b-is-for-blasphemy-b-is-for-builds-mid-engine-ls->

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One of the more wild creations at SEMA 2022 was the B Is For Build wide-body mid-engine LS-swapped '67 Mustang.

Chris and his team rolled their one-off creation into the Holley (<http://www.holley.com>) booth two days before SEMA started. The only problem was that the car wasn't finished and didn't run. After another couple of sleepless nights inside the Central Hall of the Las Vegas Convention Center, the crew completed the Mustang and got it running with only an hour to spare.

Based on a rendering Chris saw online, his Mustang features a one-off wide-body kit created entirely by hand, one layer of fiberglass at a time.

From What-If To Reality

Chris admitted he had wanted to build a fastback Mustang for a long time. When the opportunity popped up to snag a mid-engine chassis for a reasonable price, he decided to take one last swing at building a classic Mustang the way he wanted. Having seen a rendering by artist Karan Adivi (<https://www.instagram.com/karanadivi/?hl=en>) of what a '69 Boss 302 Mustang could look like with a wider-than-wide body kit and the proper stance, Chris knew the direction he wanted to go with this build. So, he reached out to Adivi to get his blessing to bring the artist's rendering to life in steel and fiberglass. With the enthusiastic support of Adivi, Chris got to it with a combination of 3D scanning, modeling, and old-fashioned pencil and paper to figure out how to fit a classic Mustang body to a mid-engine chassis.

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B Is For Build based their Mustang on this rendering by Karan Adivi.

Turning A Pony Into A Thoroughbred

Taking an iconic car like a '60s Mustang and building it with the exaggerated proportions of Adivi's rendering will make waves among car enthusiasts. There are the purists that believe the body lines should be left alone, the custom car people that are all for making things unique while following unspoken aesthetic criteria, and the ones that think there are zero rules to car building. Chris and the B Is For Build crew fall into the latter group. Their creation is sure to garner positive and negative reactions from all who lay their eyes on it.

The humongous bulging fenders wrap around 12-inch wide American Racing wheels custom-made for this project.

Backing up a little, Chris sourced the rolling chassis for this project through a friend who had a line of several retired movie cars from the film Need For Speed. The chassis is one of approximately 14 built by Superlite Cars (SLC) specifically for the film to be replica supercars. This particular chassis appeared as a Bugatti in the movie. Although the car was a bit of a basket case by the time Chris purchased it, the foundation was there to start a new build. The SLC chassis is a thorough-bred race car chassis built for speed and handling. It features independent front and rear suspension with QA1 (<https://www.qa1.net/>) coilovers. Chris' purchase also included an LS3 engine mated to a Porsche transaxle. To spice things up a bit, a Holley (<https://www.holley.com/>) Hi-Ram intake fitted with a direct port nitrous system from NOS (<https://www.holley.com/brands/nos/>) was added to the existing LS3.

The car sports QA1 coilovers in a cantilever setup in the rear. The direct port nitrous system may not get used much, but it definitely adds to the looks department of the engine bay.

With the SLC chassis sitting in the B Is For Build shop, the team set work getting their Mustang body to fit. Although the rendering of this car is based on a '69 Boss Mustang, the car uses a '67 Fastback Mustang as its starting point. As is expected with this type of project, the wheelbase of the body needed to be adjusted to match the chassis. Cutting the body in half and stretching the wheelbase 3 inches was surprisingly one of the more straightforward body modifications made on this project. According to Chris, they had to cut their Mustang body along its entire length several times to narrow and taper the car's width a total of 8 inches to match up to the SLC chassis.

With its extremely wide fenders, it is hard to tell that the width of this Mustang has been narrowed approximately eight inches to fit its SLC chassis.

With the body nipped and tucked to fit its supercar chassis, the next stage of the build was to fabricate the framework and skeleton of the extra-wide body kit, followed by layers upon layers of fiberglass. Once the guys had the body's general shape in solid form, many hours of meticulous hand sanding were required to achieve the curves and lines to match Adivi's rendering. When building any wide-body vehicle, the wheels and tires can be a make-it-or-break-it piece of the puzzle. B Is For Build teamed up with American Racing (<https://www.americanracing.com/>) to create a custom set of 12-inch wide wheels with staggered offsets to fill the bulging fenders just right. The approximately 10 inches of lip on the rear wheels is achieved with a 144 mm negative offset.

Aside from the obvious wide-body kit, the B Is For Build Mustang features many other one-off and custom parts.

■

Building a complete car from the chassis up is a huge undertaking. Building a car that requires cutting and sectioning to fit a chassis it was never meant for and then creating a one-off wide-body kit from scratch all in about 45 days to make a SEMA crunch deadline is mind-blowing. Chris and the B Is For Build crew pulled it off and have created a car that gets people talking. We look forward to seeing what B Is For Build will come up with next.

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Holley (<https://www.holley.com/>)

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(866) 464-6553 (tel:(866) 464-6553)

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jeremy Nichols

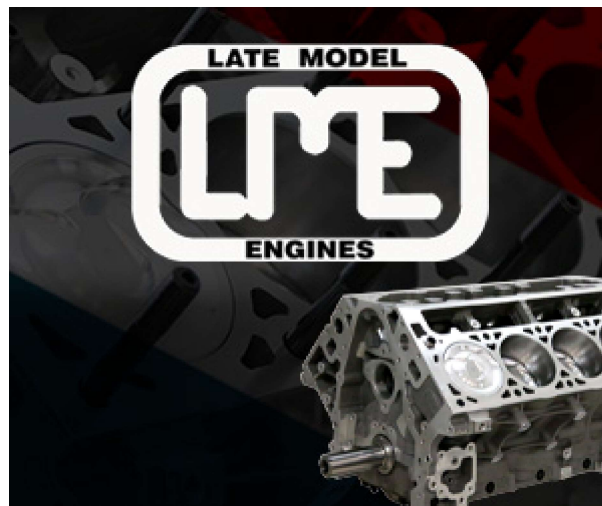
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Jeremy loves to go fast, whether that's on two wheels, four wheels, or boating. With a willingness to compete at almost anything, Jeremy shoots competition long-range rifles matches and races road bicycles and enjoys building vehicles for people.

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Wolf In Sheep's Clothing: C2 Corvette Restomod Sits On C7 Drivetrain (https://www.lsxmag.com/features/car-features/wolf-in-sheeps-clothing-c2-corvette-restomod-sits-on-c7-drivetrain/)

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By ANDY BOLIG (HTTPS://WWW.LSXMAG.COM/AUTHOR/ANDREWBOLIG/) | NOVEMBER 18, 2022

When the C2 Corvette generation hit the streets and racetracks in 1963, the all-new chassis took the world by storm. That chassis design carried over for 1964 production and was so advanced that it would continue through the C3 generation, serving for just shy of two decades. That said, the last time GM slid this chassis design under a Corvette was more than four decades ago, so it goes without saying, there have been improvements since then.

The car was a "driver" when Kevin purchased it. The original frame and drivetrain were removed to make room for the Street Shop chassis featuring the 650-horsepower LT4 engine.

There's no denying the appeal of the 1964 Stingray Corvette's styling. This white coupe may serve as the perfect example of how one might infuse today's technology while keeping all those glorious lines intact. That is precisely what Kevin Wilkinson, the car's owner, and Tim Ames of J&M Enterprizes (https://jmcorvettes.com/), sought to do as they planned this car's build. While the restomod concept isn't new to Corvettes, the exacting level of detail given to this build is one of the key elements that set it apart. The Stingray generation's classic lines speak for themselves with this build, as many of the car's modifications would go unnoticed if they weren't pointed out.

Closing The Corvette Generation Gap

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Kevin's car started as a driver-class Corvette owned by another J&M customer. He was looking to sell the car, and Kevin bought it as the base of this build. Even though the car could be driven, it was far from what Kevin and Tim envisioned. The planned modifications cut right to the core of the car, and it was quickly disassembled to its very foundation.



(https://www.speednik.com/files/2022/10/this-1964-corvette-is-a-c7-in-sheeps-clothing-2022-10-19_10-51-57_944610.jpg)

C2 Corvette bodies started with a floor, and other components were added as the body moved down the line. The modifications for Kevin's car were so foundational that Tim needed to strip the body back down to step one to make the changes.

When the bodies were created for the C2 Corvette generation, the assemblers began the process of building the body from the floor up. For this rebuild, Tim would also need to start from the very beginning. Kevin was quite accustomed to the comfy seats in his C7 Corvette and wanted that same level of comfort in his C2. Kevin wanted to use C7 seats, but they are much taller than the factory units and hit the roof.

The C7 Corvette seats didn't fit the car, so Tim lowered the floor to match the bottom of the frame. He also separated the firewall and seat mounting even further to give Kevin enough room to settle into the Stingray's interior. The entire floor was removed to make these changes.

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Neither Keith nor Tim wanted to cut them down, plus Kevin needed extra legroom. The answer was to drop the floor down even with the bottom of the chassis, move the floor pan and seat mounting area rearward an inch, and relocate the firewall forward to allow more legroom. With the cabin now made comfy for Kevin, the process of rebuilding the body with all new components and then filling them with modern bits could begin.

The floor was lowered to match the bottom of the frame rail to give Kevin as much headroom as possible. Tim then began rebuilding the body, including the entire "birdcage" metal frame.

As you can imagine, Kevin would not have been happy with decades-old performance while surrounded by the modern look and feel of a much newer Corvette. A complete Street Shop (<https://www.streetshopinc.com>) chassis full of C7 components and fitted with a supercharged LT4 engine and six-speed transmission was ordered to rectify that. The craftsmen at Street Shop raised the C7 suspension's mounting points on the new frame to allow for a lower ride height once the body was installed. The lower stance is just the tip of the iceberg of the many almost imperceptible details that add up to make this resto-Vette a success.

Street Shop Inc. supplied the complete chassis, including the LT4 crate engine and six-speed transmission. The frame uses C7 Corvette suspension components and geometry and handles like a modern Corvette. The chassis was painted and reassembled before sliding under the body.

"I pay a tremendous amount of attention to detail in my business," says Kevin. "Tim shares that same passion in building his amazing Corvettes. We worked through every detail together, no matter how small." When outside work was required, the duo would invite the help of equally-talented craftsmen to move the project forward. Chance Blevins at Blevins Auto (<https://blevinsauto.com/>) did the interior for the car, working with Kevin to find just the right shade of leather. He then fitted it throughout the cockpit, and Kevin states the custom-fitted interior is quite comfy and describes its fitment as superb.

The interior is finished in a stunning blue hue, a testament to the handiwork of Chance Blevins at Blevins Automotive

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Emblems are a great way to make a statement on an all-white exterior, but Kevin didn't want to shout to get his point across. Keen eyes will note the differences between these emblems from stock, but the changes could easily go unnoticed, a tribute to their subtlety and craftsmanship. Kevin had Andrea Koenig of Motorhead Jewelry (<https://www.motorheadjewelry.com/>) in Louisville, Kentucky, make C2-looking emblems with the factory C2-styled "Corvette" combined with a one-word "Stingray" in the C7 font. The side emblems are the original C2 design for a fuel-injected Corvette with the Fuelie tagline swapped out to "Supercharged" in the C7 style. One final design element that could easily go unnoticed includes the custom Classic Instruments (<https://www.classicinstruments.com/>) gauges combining the C2 Corvette crossed flags and numbers in the C7 Corvette's font.

The dash panels were treated to custom-designed gauges from Classic Instruments featuring Corvette's crossed flags. Both the dash and glovebox door were covered to match the interior.

Bridging the gap between generations was mainly the work of Tim and the team at J&M. After the body and chassis was fitted properly, the car was disassembled for the last time so everything could be coated in the appropriate color for the build. The body and frame received their shiny white hue, while the engine compartment received a contrasting color that matched the interior. After the appropriate cutting and buffing, all the components were installed for the last time.

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Getting a perfect fit required numerous trial-fit sessions. Once everything was perfect, the body was then removed in preparation for painting. The rear quarter panels were widened to allow those custom-made Brixton Forged wheels with crossed flag center caps to fit between the wheel wells.

Now that the car is finished, Kevin reports that he intends to drive it primarily, but he attests that it looks great, even when sitting at home in his garage.

“I would not change or try to improve a single thing on the car.”
– Kevin Wilkinson

PHOTO GALLERY

VIEW FULL GALLERY > (<https://www.lsxmag.com/photos/car-features/wolf-in-sheeps-clothing-c2-corvette-restomod-sits-on-c7-drivetrain/>)

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“The car is a beast, super-fast in all aspects, from acceleration to braking. In addition to the amazing responsiveness, it is super comfortable and tracks beautifully cruising down the highway.”



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Coupling those iconic lines with world-class performance is a surefire way to create an amazing driving experience. It only gets better when you include the increased cabin volume to ensure the inhabitants are comfy while doing so. The icing on the cake would be the sound of that unbridled LT4 through the side pipes while it's all going down!

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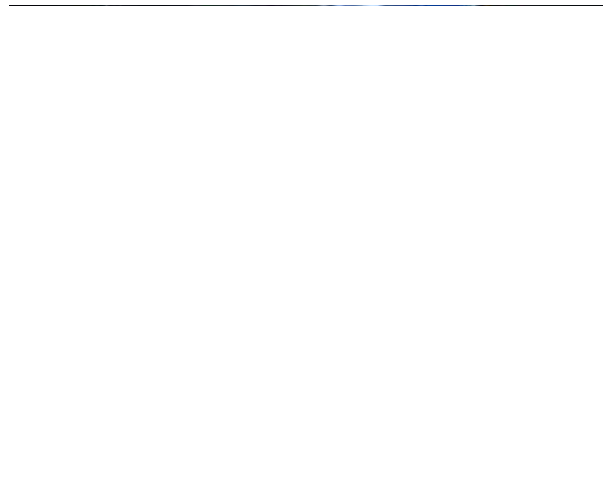
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Andy Bolig

Andy has been intrigued by mechanical things all of his life and enjoys tinkering with cars of all makes and ages. Finding value in style points, he can appreciate cars of all power and performance levels. Andy is an avid railfan and gets his “high” by flying radio-controlled model airplanes when time permits. He keeps his feet firmly grounded by working on his two street rods and his supercharged C4 Corvette. Whether planes, trains, motorcycles, or automobiles, Andy has immersed himself in a world driven by internal combustion.

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