

It's Just Part of the Family

Some members of the family get a little uglier as time passes. But with a little extra attention, Mike and Lori Paulson enabled a member of their family to look even better than when in its prime.

They've had the 1965 Chevrolet Chevelle convertible they've been cruising around in this past summer since 1980, even though it wasn't seen at cruising events until this year. It used to belong to Mike's brother Dave, and they acquired it when Dave Paulson passed away.

"I had some work done to it and didn't like the way it turned out and parked it," Mike explained. "Then I started getting serious working on it three or four years ago."

And serious he was, doing a complete, body-off restoration. There wasn't a part on the car that Mike didn't handle.

While he went for a back-to-stock restoration, he also wanted the car the way he would have ordered it new, so he did add a lot of features to what was originally a very Plain Jane, low-optioned car. But the parts he did add were parts that were available when the car was new, having picked up power disc brakes, power steering and other items off other GM cars of that era in salvage yards.

"I tried to update it, but I tried to keep it so it looked pretty much stock," he said. But as a member of the Great Plains Streetrodders, he also has some street-rodding blood in him, which is evident in the car. "I tried to go with the old school look, with Corvette valve covers."

The original 327 V-8 engine was retained, but he built it to look and act like the 327 that came in 1965 Corvettes, and he installed a Positrac rear-end. The original stock two-barrel carburetor was replaced with a more aggressive four-barrel unit. But to make the car easy and economical to drive, he replaced the Powerglide transmission with a more recent overdrive automatic transmission.

When asked about the bright yellow color, he said he chose that because his brother had intended to paint the car yellow. It was originally white with a white convertible top. He picked the shade from a Dupont chip catalogue. Some might wonder if maybe he bought too much paint and tried to use it up, but he had a purpose there, too.

It wasn't that he or Lori were too enamored with the color, but he wanted to use it to change some things he didn't like about the original car and provide a custom, street-rod look while keeping the car basically stock. He didn't like the black plastic dash, nor the plastic chrome trim in the interior, so he replaced all that with the car's exterior color. Under the hood, he didn't think the Chevrolet orange engine-block color would go well with the yellow and didn't like the inner fender wells being black, so he painted them yellow, too. The end result is a custom look to an otherwise stock car.

SCHMECHEL 2006

For a sound system, he went with an AM-FM radio with cassette player. He didn't go with a CD player because he wanted a stereo that would fit in the original location without having to cut the original dash. And music was not a high priority in this car.

"The thing I've noticed with convertibles is it doesn't pay to put a lot of money into a stereo system because you have all the wind noise," he noted.

He is very pleased with the outcome of their Chevelle. It is not only a keeper, but a member of the family. He said he hopes when he is gone it will continue to be passed down in the family.

