

If Kevin Kappenman's 1937 Ford slant-back two-door sedan looks good, it's because he made sure it was right by building it up twice, although not by choice.

He bought the car in 1991 after a lengthy search for this particular car in this particular body style. He likes the 1937 Fords, but he especially likes the slant-back style, in part because they aren't seen very often.

"I looked for that car three years before I found it," he said.

While he really likes the style, the car was still in for a lot of changes.

"I drove it on the trailer as a flathead," he said, but he wouldn't keep that original engine for long. He replaced it with an updated 302 c.i. V-8 bored .030 over and attached it to a C-4 transmission. He tore the car apart and started redoing everything and almost had it ready for paint when disaster struck. He was cutting holes in the rear for the custom LED taillights when it caught on fire and burned up almost completely, destroying the interior, windows and more.

"I had the dash sitting on the back seat so nobody would touch it, and it melted," Kevin related. "I had to redo the entire car again."

Since he is in the business of fire protection equipment, he had the equipment to put the fire out himself, but it took three large fire extinguishers to do it.

It was a major setback. But it wasn't a total loss. He got the car back together with a fresh dashboard just in time for his daughter's wedding, although he still had yet to replace the interior. His daughter wanted the car to be a part of her wedding, so he

drove her in it to the wedding without even getting any soot on the white wedding gown.

"I had two seats in it and we went to the wedding," he said.

He had worked on it for three more years when he hurt his back and had to stop. That was a delay, but not a setback.

He got it finished enough to drive it some last fall, but not without a few bugs. During a cruise to the Mississippi River for the fall foliage some wheel bearings went out and he had to fix it along the side of the road with the help of some fellow Great Plains Streetrodders.

Finally, this past winter he put in a new nine-inch rear end, carburetor and manifold and finished the interior. Now he has it to where he can cruise in it every Wednesday. He wants to assure his fellow club members that it's very dependable now, and said it "runs great."

The car is black on black, with only the wheels showing any chrome. He doesn't like chrome on his car, although he felt chrome wheels were necessary to set off the otherwise all black car. To avoid the summer heat a black car can attract, he installed air conditioning. It also has a 10-CD changer stereo system.

"It's just a very nice driver," Kevin said, which was his goal for this car. "I just as soon cruise than sit on Main Street."

