

## *It's Pontiac Through And Through*

There's no question Ron Hammerschmidt is a Pontiac man. In addition to being a member of the Great Plains Streetrodders, he's also a member of the local chapter of the Pontiac Oakland Club International.

So, when he decided he wanted to build a street rod, he went specifically looking for a Pontiac. He already had a 1967 Pontiac Firebird, so he said when he decided to look for a old coupe, he also decided it was going to have to be another Pontiac.

"I kind of always wanted to do a 30s coupe," he said.

He purchased his 1939 Pontiac business coupe in 1999 in Watertown. It was original, with the straight-six-cylinder engine and three-speed transmission on the column. The body had a little rust, but was pretty straight. It ran well enough that he tried to drive it home after purchasing it, but it quit near Madison. He was able to get it running again, but he had something bigger and better in mind for this coupe.

"I think they look cooler when they're a little bit lower," Ron said of his decision to modify his coupe.

"I tore it apart and subframed it with a Firebird front end," Ron said. "It took me a long time to chop the front end off of that (original) frame. I was a little worried because I'd never done it before."

He already had a spare 400 c.i. Pontiac engine and a spare 1979 Trans Am rear end, which was part of the reason he decided to look for an old Pontiac that could provide a home for them.

In addition, he installed a Pontiac Turbo 400 transmission and a B&M Hammer shifter. Since the rear end had disc brakes, he installed disc brakes from a Nova on the front. OK, a Nova is not a Pontiac, but it is from the GM family.

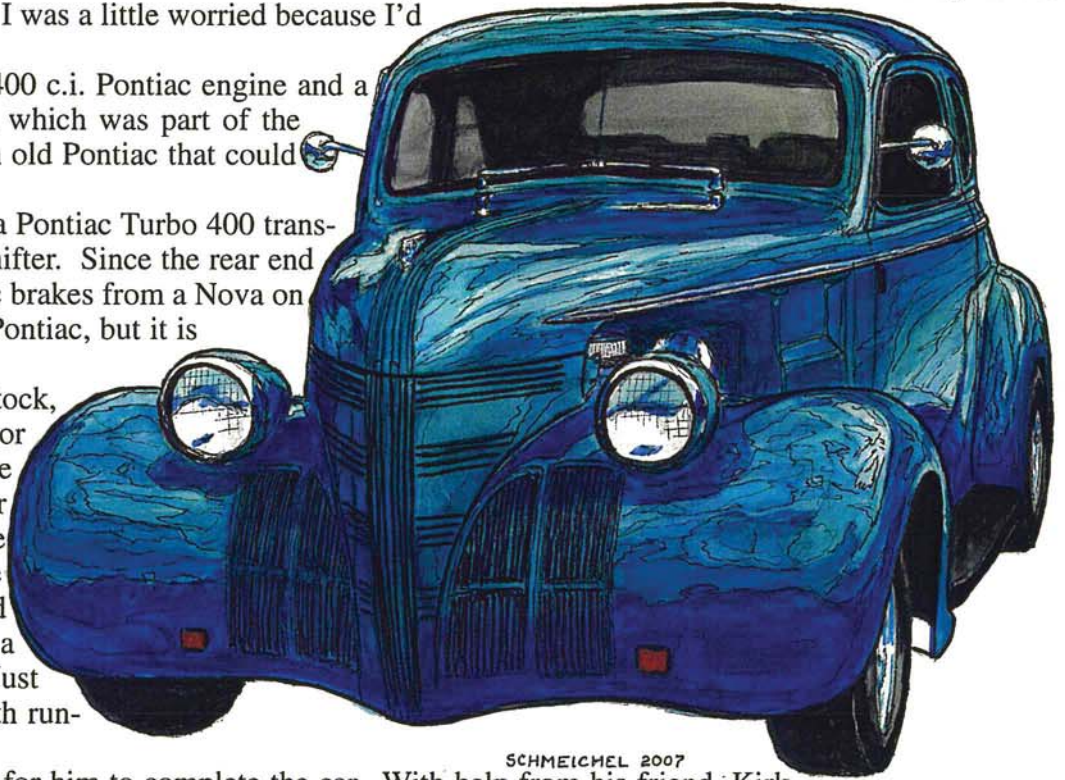
The body is mostly stock, although he did shave off the door handles and removed the bumpers, filling in the bumper holes on the body. He left the sides of the hood off to reveal the big motor. It originally only had one tail-light, but he installed a second one with turn signals. Just this past year he installed smooth running-boards.

It took about three years for him to complete the car. With help from his friend, Kirk Lee, he said he did all the work, including painting it, in his garage. The only work he hired out was the upholstery.

The car is built to cruise. And he confesses he prefers to drive it over his Firebird, now.

"I kind of like the coupe more," Ron said. "The wife drives the '67 (Firebird). She kind of likes that more."

What's next? Ron pulled a 1949 Chevy pickup out of a grove of trees on his in-laws' property. It's an old farm truck that is pretty beat up. But if his '39 Pontiac is an example of his abilities, that pickup will look a lot better once he's finished with it.



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