

Better Than Ever Before

When Rob Baatz bought his 1987 Pontiac Fiero in 1994, he knew it needed a lot of work. But that didn't daunt him; rather, he decided to create additional work to be done on the car.

It was a project car from the beginning, and after numerous customized touches, some people don't even recognize the car as a Fiero.

He stripped the car down to the frame and installed a new suspension, engine and interior. The power-plant is a supercharged 3800 V-6 from a 1998 Pontiac Grand Prix GTP. It fit in place of the Fiero engine with few modifications, but then the wiring, and hoses took six months to work out, plus he had to custom make an alternator bracket.

Not satisfied with a hotrod Fiero, Rob went on to add some extensive custom touches to the body work. He cut the roof to install T-tops, made his own, one-off, custom rear quarter panels and designed air scoops for the hood and rear deck. Sometimes asked why there is a hood scoop on a mid-engine car, he says it helps immensely cool the engine, since the radiator is still mounted conventionally in the front.



It took a year to get the car on the road, but he has been working on the details ever since then, having only painted it the GMC yellow color two years ago.

The most common, and perhaps unusual question he gets about the car is, "What is it?" Then when he tells them, they say, "That don't look like a Fiero," Rob related. But Rob doesn't mind.

"That's the point," he said. "It's unusual, stands out."

Even while finishing this one, he bought a 1985 Fiero and rebuilt it, although not taking it to the extreme as his first one.

"The yellow one, we really chopped and cut, a lot of crazy stuff to that one," he said.

Does that mean he went too far on the '87 Fiero. Not at all. In fact, he's looking for his next project now, and he wants "something bolder to do."

