

Big Engines, Easy Power

As a young, twenty-one year old, Ron Husman bought his first Nova in 1969 right off the show room floor at Brown Chevrolet in Cherokee, Iowa for \$2,575. Those new car prices have been gone for a long time. “The car was a nothing-special version with a 307, an automatic transmission, and black interior with a bench front seat,” Ron shared. Being smaller than most cars at the time made it fun to drive and cruise around in. He drove the car for a couple years and traded it for a newer Chevy pickup.

Ron then traded the pickup for another Chevy pickup that had a 454 big block for an engine. He liked the big engine’s power enough to keep it for 22 years, eventually trading it for the Ford diesel pickup that he still has today.

In 1986, Ron bought another unfinished Nova. It was a 1973 model with a (you guessed it) 454 engine that the previous owner had installed. Small cars with big engines were growing on Ron. He restored the car over a three-year period and eventually put it up for sale, and it was gone before he could blink. For the next 20 years, Ron wondered many times why he sold that big-engined Nova.

In October of 2010, he found his current 1971 Chevrolet Nova advertised for sale online in Moline, Illinois. The Nova article listed a 396-cubic-inch V8 with a 4 speed; features interesting enough for him to make the trip to check it out. Upon arrival he saw that the car had a great paint job that was done recently, along with a good running 396 and a 4 speed. It was everything Ron was looking for. The owner had lost interest and wanted to build a Mopar because of recent auction sales prices. The car needed a little interior work as noted by Ron, so after some price negotiation, he brought the car home.

Ron has been having fun bringing the car up to his standards. From redoing the interior to the correct original form, to installing 4-wheel disc brakes, along with new springs to help the ride. He has also tuned it to run on 30% ethanol, which helps the engine run better and stronger. One interesting fact Ron found out about the engine when he was checking things out was that the serial number on it had a “J O” in it, which means the engine came out of a Bel Air police car. The car has headers and Flowmaster exhaust for cool sound. Ron’s wife, Maritta, gets a kick out of riding in the Nova, which makes Ron smile and feel like a kid again. Happy wife, cool car, what more could you ask for?



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