

Always Loved Trucks

By Bob Schmeichel

Growing up on a 2,000-acre ranch in east Texas, motorcycles and pickups were the everyday mode of transportation for Mark Bowers in his younger years. Mark's dad told him at the age of 12 that he could have the '56 Ford pickup that had sat behind the house for the last eight years in the weeds. Not being able to drive legally in Texas kept Mark from doing anything with the '56 pickup until he was 15 going on 16. Then with the help of a couple of friends, he changed spark

plugs and put in a new gas tank to bring life to the truck that sat for so long. After that, they removed the trees that had grown in the box over the years and cleaned up the rest of the pickup as much as they could. Mark was excited with thoughts of his new found freedom of driving himself around but waited until he turned 16. Once he turned 16, the fun and driving memories began including his first speeding ticket. Mark admits to not knowing very much mechanically at the time as he found out when he installed three car stereos in the '56 only to have each one blow up before someone told him that Fords have a positive ground. So after that, and even on dates, the music in the '56 was provided by a transistor radio. Mark had the '56 Ford pickup for a couple years then bought a '55 Chevy pickup. After the '55 Chevy pickup, but he bought an '82 Chevy pickup, then an '86 Nissan pickup, and then a '67 Chevy pickup. He said he always liked the style of the '67/'68 Chevy pickups and it was his dream to have one.

After graduation from college, Mark was working and living in Dallas when he met Lana. After a couple of years, they fell in love and decided to get married in 1987. After living in Dallas for six years, they to move back to Lana's home town of Sioux Falls and make a go of a business at a little bit slower pace. Before the move back to Sioux Falls, they sold a good share of what they had to make the move easier including the '67 Chevy pickup. For the next 11 years, most of Mark's attention was on growing his business, but he did manage to find and buy another 1968 Chevy pickup whose previous owner told him it was all original with factory air. Mark drove the pickup as he did in Texas, as a mode of transportation around town, until 2009 when he decided to restore it as a gift to himself. After he got into it, he discovered it didn't have the original engine and wasn't sure if the cab of the truck was original either. Instead of restoring it to original, Mark decided to customize and hot rod the truck. The process began with pulling the body and box off the frame and bringing everything up to better-than-new, off-the-showroom condition. Every suspension part, right down to every nut and bolt, was replaced on the frame. A new engine and overdrive transmission were installed in the frame, too. You could still eat off the frame today if you wanted to because it is that clean. After the body work was done, Mark searched and found Joe Foster at Custom Joe's in Tea who came up with the exact paint theme direction Mark was looking for. It was based on the Greek God Poseidon's Trident spear, which utilized three colors: blue on the bottom representing water, silver on the top representing the sky, and orange in between representing fire with the spear in the flame shapes around the rear. Mark expressed that he and his family truly enjoy driving and showing his truck along with getting to know club members and the different directions
we all go to have fun. Mark did
air bags on the truck, not to lower it,
camper trailer and take his family
places they haven't been yet.



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