

Different Directions With Patience

By Bob Schmeichel

Old cars are not for everyone, but having a '55 Chevy in high school solidified Verlyn Ramse's love for them that never went away. So in 2000, after driving by a '57 Chevy for six months in Wheaton, Minnesota, with a for sale sign on it, the bug hit him again. In calling about the '57, Verlyn got excited again to hear it was a one-owner car bought by a nephew at his uncle's estate auction only to resell. Since the car had sat for over six months, it didn't take too much prodding from Verlyn to own this cherry two-tone green low mileage car.

After getting the car home, Verlyn pulled the engine and trans out to have them freshened up. After getting it back together, he then decided to have new exhaust put on it. Once at the muffler shop, the guys there suggested that he should restore the car first since it was so nice. Then come back and see them about the exhaust when it was done.

So with that idea, Verlyn was off to Pierre's Body shop only to have them tell him that they didn't do restorations. I think I would have been fit to be tied about then, however, they did recommend a body shop near Tea owned by Steve Stratmeyer who did total restorations. So before Verlyn realized it, the '57 was there and the body was pulled off the frame beginning the long process. The car was there for two years with many modifications done to the body beginning with shaving the hood, doors, and trunk lid along with a custom stretching of the '57 Chevy hood bullets for a really neat, different look. Getting close to having it painted, Verlyn decided on a "House of Color" candy brandy wine color. Because painting the candy color was outside of Stratmeyer's admitted painting abilities, another painter from another body shop was hired to apply the finishing colors. Once the car was home again the next thing on the agenda was the upholstery. After looking around, Verlyn became friends with a guy from Arizona named Pat O'Neil who was doing upholstery at a number of different shops in the area. Verlyn hired him but had to continually track him down for the next two years where ever Pat went to make sure all the '57 interior pieces were completed. The end result netted a gorgeous, white leather interior to compliment the beautifully customized exterior. The '57 has been on the road for seven years so far and still looks as fresh as the day it was finished. Verlyn enjoys driving the car as much as he can during the summers even though his wife, Barb, wishes the car had air conditioning. Maybe I can talk him into adding air so Barb can enjoy it equally as much. How about it, Verlyn?



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