

Needed a Hobby

By Bob Schmeichel

I always find it very interesting when it comes to understanding any old car owners mind set. I usually start by asking what intrigued them enough about a specific vehicle to want to have it. The responses back sometimes don't surprise me, usually relating back in time when they were younger and wanting to have a car like that then, but couldn't afford it or didn't have a place to put it. Not so was the case with Paul Rollinger. His response was short and sweet in that he needed a hobby. Something fun that would take his mind away from work in the evenings and weekends. He knew he had the mechanical ability to build a car as he told me about himself assembling a Chevy engine at the age of 13. Model car building also gave him a vast knowledge of how cars go together, only on a full-size scale.

So, with a 1923 T Bucket in mind to build, his search on the internet for ideas began. After much time checking out different web sites, he came across Spirit Industries out of Arkansas, where he ordered a complete rolling chassis cheaper than he thought he could build it. This is not to be confused as the beginnings of a kit car with instructions because Paul still had to make tons of brackets and bolt everything together to his liking. Kit cars have all the thought processes and making things done for you already. Next he ordered a radiator, headers, and a '23 T bucket fiberglass body with a shortened pick-up box from MAS out of Minneapolis. After he started mocking everything up, a buddy found a running 350 Chevy and trans combination that Paul snatched up right away. Paul immediately tore the entire engine totally apart and took the block to Bott Machine to clean up. Paul told me the block was the only thing he used from that original engine and everything else put into and on top of it was totally new. That had to be costly – the trans was rebuilt by a local shop to new specs along with the addition of a shift kit and a 2400 stall converter. The rear end that came with the frame was out of an S-10 Blazer with 3.70 gears and seems to be a bullet proof item used in a lot of rod builds today. Paul cut out and machine turned his own aluminum firewall for something different to place behind the engine. During the five-year process of totally building the car in his home garage, Paul did everything, right down to the upholstery with the exception of the seat bottom. Paul told me doing all the body work and paint took the longest to achieve to his satisfaction. His bright blue color choice makes his car pop with the white interior where ever it is parked, pulling people to it like a magnet.

Paul found the distraction from work during his time off when building his car as fun and energizing. Today he drives his hobby result, enjoying his ride as much as he can knowing the time and money he invested was well spent.

