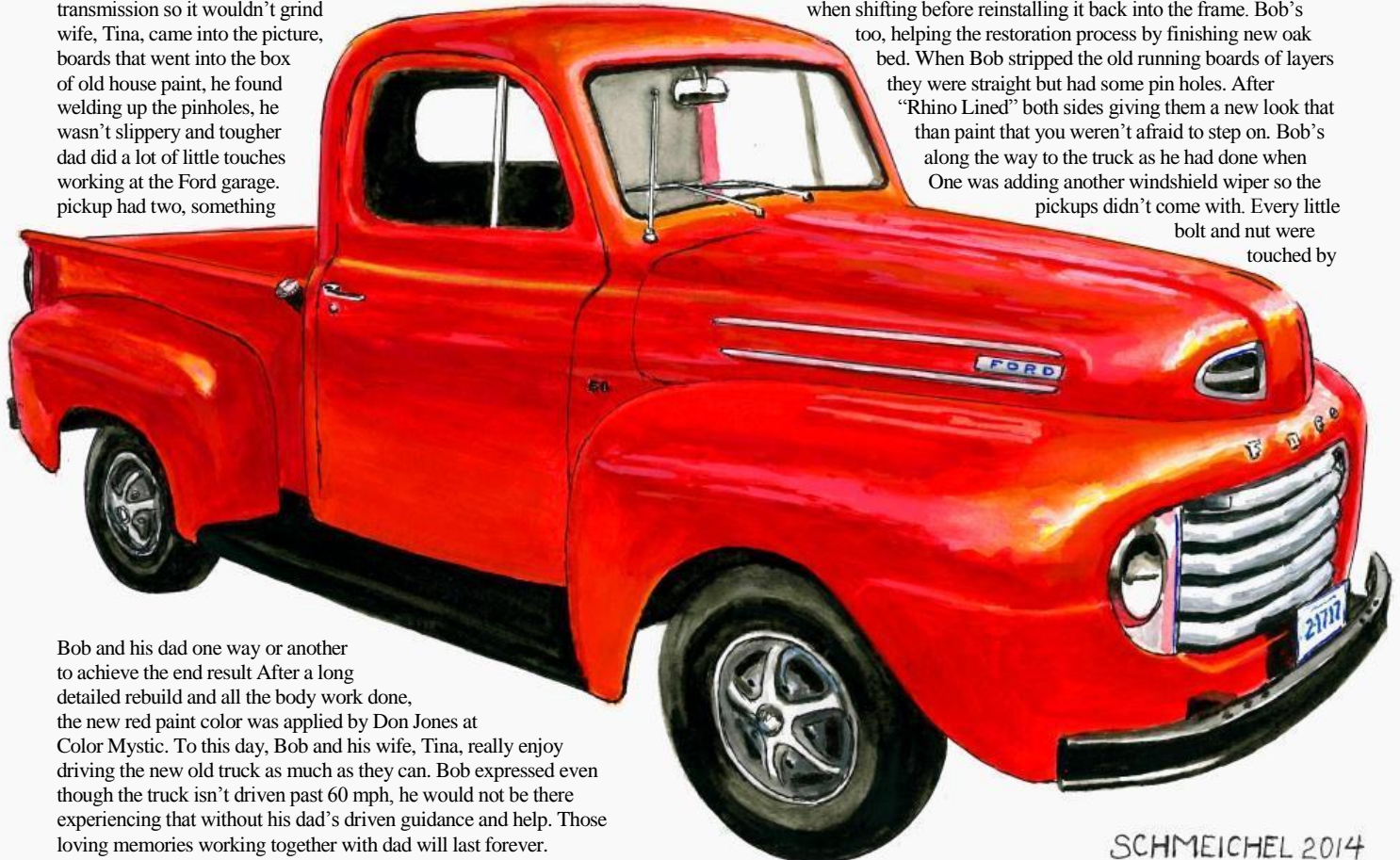


Dad's Direction

By Bob Schmeichel

Our fathers have always been there having a major influence on us from infancy through adulthood. As we grew up, we didn't always agree with directions he might have given, but because of his experiences, his thoughts were passed along to us so we didn't make the same mistakes. Sometimes as kids, we always seemed to learn the hard way when dad wasn't around. When it came to automobiles, his choices may have led you to be loyal specifically in your teen age years. Thinking back, whether it be a Buick, Chevrolet, Oldsmobile, Pontiac, Chrysler, Dodge, Plymouth, Ford, Lincoln, Mercury, Kaiser, Studebaker or American Motors, they all had their likes and dislikes. Growing up in the 50s and 60s the majority of the choices were American-made autos, although Volkswagen and other imports were finding their way into America then. Engines lasted around 100,000 miles then and had to be rebuilt to maintain performance. Today with computerized machine work, along with tighter tolerances, engines will go 200,000 miles without an issue in almost anything. Although the once large assortment of American-made cars is disappearing and the import picture is growing ever larger, I am sure that the same allure between father-and-son favorite brands still holds true today no matter what kind of car.

Bob Irvine grew up in the 50s and 60s with his dad being an auto mechanic at Soo Ford on Minnesota Avenue. Bob's dad coming off a farm knew nothing but hard work and applied himself so much that he became one of the area's top tune-up specialists. His favorite engines to work on were flat heads. Ford Motor Company was the first to come out with a production V-8 in 1932. It was called a flathead engine with 60 horsepower, which was produced up into the early 1950s. Over the years with dad working at the garage, the Ford influence rubbed off on Bob. Later in life, in his adult years, Bob thought it would be fun to have an old Ford truck with a flathead engine that he and his father could work on together. Although his dad liked 1951 and '52 pickups, the earlier 1948 and '49 Ford model pickups were more to Bob's liking. Bob said he watched for quite a few years waiting to see one for sale in the newspaper. Then finally in 2005 one came up in an auction held in Canton, South Dakota, but Bob was already committed to going out of town to a Thunderbird Classic meet in Minneapolis the same day. Not wanting to miss the chance at an old truck, Bob called on his dad to go look at the truck and possibly buy it for him if the auction price wasn't crazy high. As it turned out, Bob's dad was able to have the last reasonable bid on the 1949 F-1 Ford truck allowing him to bring it home. After arriving back home from the T-Bird meet, Bob was pleasantly surprised to see a rough but complete old truck that ran with everything there sitting in his driveway. All the fenders were pretty banged up along with tool boxes installed on the edges of the box, but the main tell-tale story was painted on the doors saying, "Peterson Painting." It meant it was a work horse most of its life and was still surviving. Not realizing the rebuild process would take the next four years to do, Bob's excitement never slowed as he tore into it the next day starting with disassembly. Bob mentioned to his surprise that 95 percent of the bolts he tried to remove broke before they unscrewed. After the sheet metal was pretty much all removed except the cab of the truck, the hunt was on for better pieces. The needs led him to Harford, Freeman, Vermillion and all around the area before he found all that was necessary pertaining to straight sheet metal. When it came to rebuilding the old flathead, Bob's dad talked him into finding a newer Mercury crankshaft and a matched set of pistons creating a Stroker to give the old flathead new life. With Bob's dad being the old Ford mechanic and doing the engine work, upgrade gave the old flathead about 20 more horse power along with what feels like way more low-speed torque than the original engine ever had. An old friend, Rodney Smart, helped take apart and repair the transmission so it wouldn't grind when shifting before reinstalling it back into the frame. Bob's wife, Tina, came into the picture, boards that went into the box of old house paint, he found welding up the pinholes, he wasn't slippery and tougher dad did a lot of little touches working at the Ford garage. pickup had two, something



Bob and his dad one way or another to achieve the end result After a long detailed rebuild and all the body work done, the new red paint color was applied by Don Jones at Color Mystic. To this day, Bob and his wife, Tina, really enjoy driving the new old truck as much as they can. Bob expressed even though the truck isn't driven past 60 mph, he would not be there experiencing that without his dad's driven guidance and help. Those loving memories working together with dad will last forever.

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