



Where do our ideas originate? Where do our passions lie? By all indication, 39-year-old Mark Postula might know the answer to these questions. He may have lived another life when this '41 Special Deluxe 5-passenger coupe was new. Maybe he even had one. Maybe he made the ambiguous transition from boyhood to manhood in the back seat of one. His yen never waned.

In his younger years, there were others, yes, a '71 Challenger, a '67 C-10, and a '77 Trans Am, but the '41 gave him chicken-skin every time he thought about it. One thing is for certain. "I have always been a fan of the old fat-fender street rods and when I saw what my cousin was doing to a '41 coupe that was it for me. I had to have one, too." It became a synapse that would not close.

"After building mostly Chevrolet trucks, I purchased a complete 1941 Coupe on New Years Day, 2002. I started to rebuild it but found another one in Mesa [Arizona], about 130 miles south of me. My buddies Bones and Terry and I drove down to have a look at it and we dragged a trailer with us just in case [read: 'no way was I going to come back empty-handed.']"

The car they found out behind the guy's house was trying desperately to be claimed by the desert once and for all. It was completely gutted, just an empty brown shell, but there wasn't an ounce of rot on it even though it had been outside for more than 40 years. He gave the guy \$1,600 for it and they loaded up the body, the frame, and the front

clip. He had a sandblaster scrub it for about eight



hours. He started on this one in the summer of '02 and to fund the project, he sold his trophy-winning '66 C-10 step-side. The first '41 he'd bought languished in the dry air.

Mark is a doer, a worker who feels that the building part is the journey and there's nothing he likes fussing with better than his cars. He did about 95 percent of the work on this one, saving himself a pile of scoots. Still, he figures he's got about \$25,000 in the '41. He farmed out only what he couldn't do himself, which was finishing the upholstery. His other rods, the '66 C10, two '67 C-10s, and a 4-4-2, were built with the same regimen, with his sweat, and his considerable talent.

He put the sand-blasted shell in rotisserie jail and went to work building the roller. When he first began building rods, he couldn't buy the stuff he got for this project because it didn't exist, but now it does. With his seed money, he looked to Total Cost Involved (TCI) for some of the front end components he'd need to complete the sandblasted and painted frame. He hooked the tubular suspension kit to 2-inch drop spindles and checked the motion of the unsprung weight with small-block springs and gas-charged shocks. A power steering rack from an '84 Mercury Capri commands the 15x7 Eagle Series 211 5-spokes and the BFG P205/60 "littles." He took the 11-inch disc brakes from a "GM product" and enabled them with a frame-mounted booster and master cylinder.



Mark got himself a '68 Nova 10-bolt and hung it with Dunlop re-arched leaf springs. The stock drums stayed and wear BFG 235/60 "bigs" on 15x7 Series 211s. Now Mark had an assembly that would roll around rather than having to be dragged on a jack. He got busy with TCI engine mounts to accept the new Goodwrench 350 and a Walton Fabrication mount for the rebuilt TH350 slush box. He plopped an HEI ignition in the motor and put Hooker block-huggers on it. And while access was so easy, he strung a 2½-inch exhaust system and plumbed in the ubiquitous Flowmasters. A Tanks, Inc. reservoir accommodates an electric pump and Mark sticks the gas pump nozzle through a Hagan fuel door. For a semblance of performance and to ease the pain at the pump, he brought an '85 Camaro Tuned Port Fuel Injection system into the equation, but it didn't work just like a snap of the fingers.

" I've done several fuel injection swaps but this one gave me fits. It was a 1985 Tuned Port which didn't mate up with the 1986-89 harness I'd purchased from Painless. I had to upgrade everything to '87 stuff to get it to work. I searched

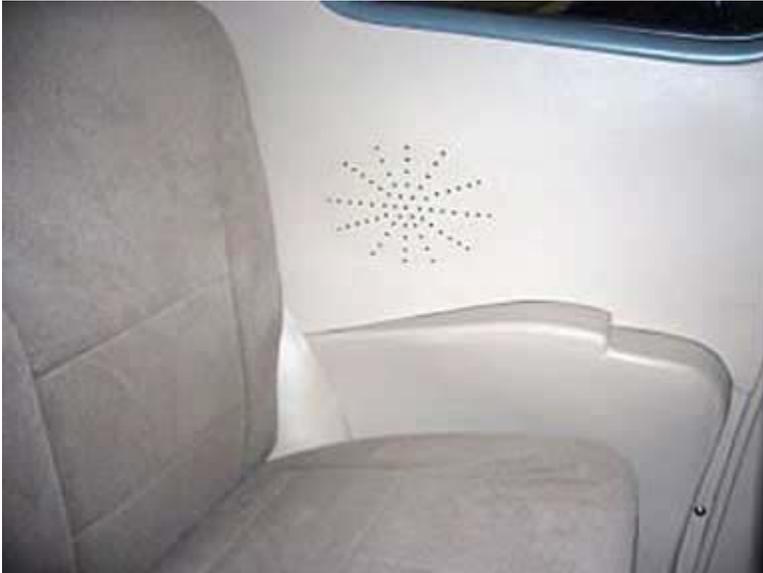
all over for a prom, which I found in Minnesota in an obsolete parts warehouse.”



During its decades of abandonment and abuse (human and natural), the Deluxe had acted as a recreational center of sorts so the body was just “a little rough.” The roof had been used as a trampoline. Mark spent many hours filling the BB pellet dents that festered around the window frames. Further: “The doors didn’t fit real well so I had to do a lot of modifications. The car had no structural support to speak of, so I opted to redesign the radiator support. I used tubing to build a complete front skeleton and I tied the radiator support to the firewall under the custom made inner fender skirting with the considerable help of Bob Miller (BMP Fabrications, Prescott Valley, AZ).

“Bob also designed and built the fan shroud and cover as well as the plenum that sits atop the aluminum radiator. The plenum ducts air to the mass air flow and K&N element that I concealed in the grille area.”





Mark peeled the chrome from the top of the front fenders, nosed the hood, and lost the trim at the bottom of the car as well as the chrome plaques behind the wheelwells. The remainder of the accents stayed in place as did the original trunk handle/license plate bracket. Door handles were also deep-sixed and while he was in the vicinity, Mark designed and built a new key entry.

With the silhouette now so clean and flowing, the original bumpers looked like something from a carnival act. Mark took remedial action with smooth, straight body protectors that were original but minus the added amenities the '41 originally came with. Then work on it suddenly ceased.

Mark surveyed his domain. Too many hot rods in one place...and all of them unfinished. He completed the original '41 and sold it. "I also built a '67 C-10 step-side, and sent it on its way," he confessed. "Then I bought another '69 C-10 and started on it." Clearly, he needed the sage advice that only a wife can impart to her clearly demented husband. "My wife Aurora finally pointed out that I had to finish the street rod pretty damn soon. I put the C-10 aside and went back to work on the coupe."

I've painted numerous cars but I wanted to ensure that I got good coverage on the orange [2007 Caliber Sunburnt Orange] so I got my friend Quinton from Q&S Custom Rides, which was only a couple of



blocks from my house in Prescott Valley, to show me how to lay the metallics. I painted the body and the floor, clear-coated it, and spent the next four months putting car together." He'd deleted the center strip from the two-piece windshield and had Mike Riedhead help him put the new butted glass in the hole.

For plush, smooth accommodations, our man farmed out the interior work to Jim's Auto Upholstery in nearby Chino Valley where they laid up the cloth and vinyl on the '95 GMC truck seats as well as the door panels and headliner. For the rest, Mark embossed "Aurora" on the glove box lid out of respect and gratitude "for all those years she put up with my meddling in the garage..."

Mark finished off his bulbous, organic coupe with an EZ Wire harness, power windows, a steering column out of a '71 Chevy van, a Vintage Air HVAC system, and a Kenwood in-dash system supporting amp, sub-woofer, and four speakers (the rear ones honk through perforated vinyl). He re-surfaced the dashboard and made a billet insert to surround the Auto Meter Antique Beige instruments.



Mark: "I have nearly 1,000 miles on the coupe today. She's fun and fast. I can't think of anything better than driving an old Chevrolet."