

BARGAIN-BASEN



OLDSMOBILE HAS BEEN GONE FROM THE CONTEMPORARY AUTOMOTIVE SCENE FOR THE BETTER PART OF A DECADE, THE FIRST OF GM'S BRANDS THAT WERE SHED IN AN EFFORT TO RIGHT-SIZE THE COMPANY. OLDSMOBILE MIGHT BE A FADING MEMORY TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC, BUT MUSCLECAR FANS REMEMBER THAT OLDS BUILT MANY POTENT PERFORMANCE CARS UNDER THE 442 MONIKER.

The 442 was born late in the 1964 model year, a belated response to Pontiac's introduction of the GTO option for the Tempest Le Mans series. It was created by Oldsmobile engineer John Beltz and was in essence a combination of components assembled into the "B09 Police Apprehender" package. In the inaugural year the 442 badges denoted the combination of a four-barrel carburetor, 4-speed transmission and dual exhausts. In the abbreviated run, a total of 2,999 were sold in the last quarter of the 1964



model year.

Big changes occurred in 1965 as GM lifted its restrictions on engines bigger than 330ci installed in its A-body intermediates, a ban that John DeLorean conveniently skirted in 1964 with the installation of the 389ci V-8 between the shock towers of

the original GTO. For Oldsmobile that meant the replacement of the 330ci V-8 with a new 400ci V-8 and getting the same enlarged and restyled platform as its GM A-body stablemates. The 442 designation was recalibrated to reflect the change to the 400ci V-8, now producing 345hp, along with the four-barrel carburetor and dual exhausts. Offered in four body styles, over the full model year Oldsmobile shifted 25,003 442s, a healthy portion of Olds' intermediate sales that year.

Changes were evolutionary for the

MENT **MUSCLECAR**

PHIL PEREA'S 1967 442 WAS A USED
CAR SPECIAL THAT WAS THE BEST
DEAL OF HIS LIFE

BY RICHARD TRUESDELL / PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD TRUESDELL



442 for 1966 except for two engine options. The first was the L69, which featured three two-barrel Rochester 2GC carburetors on a progressive linkage which raised horsepower to 360. The second was the rare W30 option, which added a functional outside air induction system and a hotter cam. Because of the required ducting, the battery was relocated to the trunk which marginally improved weight distribution. Only 54 W30s were reportedly built by the factory for 1966, although an additional 97 were produced for dealer installation, this out of total 442 production of 21,997.

The triple-carb option was short-lived given a new GM edict for 1967 that allowed multiple carburetors only on the

Corvette. The W30 option was fitted with a four-barrel QuadraJet carburetor replacing the three two-barrel setup and new red plastic inner fender liners distinguished the W30-equipped cars. In all, 502 factory W30 engines were built to meet NHRA homologation rules and, in 1967, the W30 was again available as a dealer-installed option. For 1967 442 production rose slightly to 24,833 units.

All of this history matters little to Felipe "Phil" Perea Jr., retired Program Business and Operations Manager formerly employed by Hughes Aircraft in Southern California. Along with his wife Maureen and daughters, they have made the restoration of their 1967 Oldsmobile 442 a family affair that also includes help from grandsons

Cory, Zachary and Dalton.

Phil's love affair with cars started in his years in the Air Force when he owned a 1957 Chevrolet 210 two-door hardtop. There, he joined a car club at the base that was populated mostly by fellow Californians who were hot rod enthusiasts and initiated Phil into the world of customizing and drag racing. His involvement in the club helped him learn about restorations, customizing and auto mechanics. Over the years Phil and Maureen have stayed mostly within the GM family and besides their 1967 442, Phil owns a 1992 Chevrolet Lumina Z34 and a 2003 Chevrolet Monte Carlo SS, their daily driver.

The story of Phil's 442 starts in February, 1969, when he was lured to Cormier Chevrolet in Wilmington, California. The



two-year-old 442 with just 1,100 miles was the bait served up by a TV commercial that offered the car for just \$1,200. "I wasn't looking to buy a car," says Phil. "But I was curious to see what they had. The Olds was in the back lot by the garage area and not out where anyone could easily see. When I saw it and the price, I was shocked and asked if this was for real."

Phil quickly went home and, after

1989, it was placed under wraps to await restoration. At the time Phil characterized the car as junkyard material and in need of a total restoration. Between 1989 and 2003 Phil bought replacement parts from restoration parts suppliers to replace every needed item on the car so long as it was to factory- original specifications. The most important sources were Fusic Automotive in Connecticut and Original Parts Group

GM to manufacture the now rare exhaust system. The engine was treated to a rebuild by Long Beach Hi-Tech Heads Inc. while the 3-speed Turbo Hydra-Matic 400 was rebuilt by K. McIntosh Transmissions in Visalia, California.

Although he could have easily farmed out the reassembly of the car, all of the final assembly of the car body, drivetrain, interior, suspension and electrical harnessing was done by Phil, his wife, daughters and grandsons, with extensive use of the factory original assembly manuals. With the exception of some underhood dress-up chrome shown in the photos, the car was restored to 100 percent factory-original specification.

While the 442 was once Phil's daily driver, now it's driven primarily to local shows and the odometer shows just 500 miles since its restoration. It was at one such show, a local Chevelle event in Southern California, that we caught up with Phil more than 18 months ago. The car looked immediately familiar given that it was featured by Original Parts Group

"FOR MANY YEARS THE 442 WAS THE FAMILY'S DAILY DRIVER. TWENTY YEARS LATER, IN 1989, IT WAS PLACED UNDER WRAPS TO AWAIT RESTORATION."

consulting with Maureen, returned to buy the car. "We expected some catastrophic failure to happen," recalls Phil. "We joked as to which wheel or fender or motor or maybe the transmission would fall off before we got it home. It turned out to be the best car deal we have ever had."

For many years the 442 was the family's daily driver. Twenty years later, in

Inc. in California as well as some individual vendors who supplied many rare NOS parts.

The bodywork and paint were done locally by South Bay Classics Restoration in Carson, who totally disassembled the car. Phil mentioned that the original baffled tailpipes were obtained from Art Vilalunga in Detroit, Michigan, who was licensed by



Inc. on the cover of their 2008 Factory Direct Restoration & Performance Catalog for 1964-1972 F-85, Cutlass and 442.

In talking with Musclecarr Enthusiast, Phil noted that living in a typical suburban tract house presented some challenges. "My garage is a typical two-car garage in a tract home," says Phil. "But I have managed to have the tools needed to do what I had to do. Storage of finished parts while awaiting restoration was all over the house where room was available but mostly in the garage overhead and the attic."

With his ownership of this 442 now spanning more than four decades, Phil has quite an attachment to it. But times move on and he's giving serious thought that it's time that it moves on to another Oldsmobile enthusiast who, like Phil, can appreciate its charms and give it the TLC it deserves. If you're interested in discussing with Phil possible ownership of the latest Musclecarr Enthusiast cover car, he can be contacted directly at Pereajrperea@aol.com. ■

