

Love Is Best the Second Time Around

Finding Your High School Hurst/Olds After 42 Years

By Richard Truesdell

In 2016, Rich Moline sold his company and, with his wife Darlene, bought a second home in Reno, Nevada. Of course, if you're a car enthusiast and call Reno your home in the summertime, you're going to attend Hot August Nights.

That summer, the couple was checking out the cars when Rich spotted a reminder of his youth, a 1969 Hurst/Oldsmobile hardtop. "It was the first Hurst/Olds I had seen since selling mine, back in 1975," he recalls. "I visited with the owner, Bill Nipper, an Oldsmobile guru who also has a beautiful 1972 W-30. We must have talked for a couple of hours. From Bill, I learned that his car was all-original, a true Hurst/Oldsmobile with just 20,300 miles showing on the odometer." Rich noted that in 2016, Bill knew little of the car's history prior to his ownership.

A year later, Rich and Darlene ran into Bill again at Hot August Nights. During the previous year, Bill had done some research on the car. "Bill found documentation to verify that the car was number 211," says Rich. "And Bill noted that it originally had been delivered to Billion Motors in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Well, I grew up in Sioux Falls, and I bought my Hurst/Olds at Billion Motors in 1972. The car before me was my car!"

Rich says he was "stunned, shocked. All the emotions you can imagine were bursting inside, but I had to remain calm. It was not for sale, and the last thing I wanted Bill



"How were they separated in the first place?"

to know was that I was willing to pay just about any price to get her back.

"I found Darlene in the food court and told her, 'You have to see something.'

"As we get closer to the car she says, 'We already saw that car last year, and I hung out forever while you two talked.'

"I just insisted she had to come over, but

told her not to show any excitement. She did not maintain her composure at all but yelled out several expletives. Bill's friends said, 'Wow, they really seem to like that car.' The cat was well and truly out of the bag."

Rich made Bill an offer, but he refused. "I could only ask him to give me first right of refusal to purchase if he was ever



■ Number 221 today, and with Rich Moline in 1972.

going to let her go, and he agreed.

"That November, I got the call that he had booked a slot for a premium Saturday time at Mecum in Las Vegas in a week. If I wanted it, I needed to show up with a check. We agreed to meet the next day, and we drove to his home in Fernley, Nevada, for a test drive. As I backed it out into



“Wow, they really seem to like that car”

the street, the sound and feel were that of my youth, and memories flooded back after more than 40 years apart. As I drove, I asked Darlene to feel under the dash to see if there were two drilled-out holes. She confirmed the holes were there, and I told her that's where I installed my eight-track player.” (She and Rich met after Rich sold the car in 1975 and were married in 1979.)

After the paperwork was completed, Rich showed Bill a picture of him as a junior in high school with number 211 at Sherman Park in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in the fall of 1972. It took Bill only a couple of minutes to realize, yes, that was Rich's car, 42 years ago. (Imagine being a junior in high school and driving a three-year-old Hurst/Olds. Those were great times.)

So now that car and owner have been reunited, how were they separated in the first place? Rich loves telling the story of how he had searched for his car for more than three decades, once he realized how much he missed it.

When Rich was growing up, his dad was



■ How many of us got to drive a three-year-old Hurst/Olds in high school? Here's Rich on his way to prom.



■ With its Cameo White paint and Firefrost Gold stripes, the 1969 Hurst/Olds looks very different from the understated black and Peruvian Silver paint scheme of the 1968 version. Yet the bold look remains classic, now five decades on.

■ That's Rich on the right, buying the H/O back from Bill Nipper 42 years after selling it.

AT A GLANCE

1969 HURST/OLDS

Owned by: Rich Moline

Restored by: Original unrestored

Engine: 455ci/380hp V-8

Transmission: TH400 3-speed automatic

Rear end: 342 with limited-slip

Interior: Black vinyl bucket seat

Wheels: 15x7 Hurst Special Edition

Tires: 225/60R15 front, 255/60R15 rear BFGoodrich Rival T/A



■ The 455ci V-8 under the hood was not offered in regular-production, midsize Oldsmobiles in 1969, just the Hurst-built cars. GM wouldn't relax that engine-size rule for another model year. The 455 produced 380 hp and 500 lb-ft of torque, which propelled the 3,965-pound car down the quarter-mile in 14.21 seconds at 99.66 mph, according to *Hot Rod* magazine.

LOVE IS BEST THE SECOND TIME AROUND

an aircraft mechanic, so their home had a fully equipped, heated, and air-conditioned garage with a pit, an engine hoist, and a paint booth. His first car was a 1965 Chevy Impala Super Sport he purchased from a junkyard for a \$1,000 cash at age 15—cash he earned working since he was 12.

Rich has wonderful memories of working on cars with his dad, even with the rules his father enforced. These included no working after 11 p.m., and that every tool had to be returned to its proper place before shutting down.

"We were working on my Hurst one night and had completed the tasks, and as I returned the tools, we were missing a 9/16 socket," Rich recalls. "I tore that garage apart, but it was nowhere to be found. I knew what had to be done, so I took my mom's car to the hardware store to buy a 9/16 socket. They did not sell sockets singly back then, so I had to purchase a set. Upon my return, you can imagine my dad's happy grin, seeing that he now had an entirely new set.

"He said, 'Back her out.'

"As I did, he bent down and picked up the 9/16 socket that had rolled behind the tire.

"He smiled and looked at me only to say, 'Wow, now we have an extra one.' That tells you a lot about my dad."

The rest of the story is similar to that of



■ Subtle modifications differentiated the Hurst/Olds, including gold stripes on the headrests and the Hurst/Olds badge on the glovebox.



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- The backseat of the Hurst/Olds is all original like the rest of the interior.
- The iconic Hurst Dual-Gate shifter is mounted between the front bucket seats.
- The odometer shows that this car has traveled less than 21,000 miles over the last 50 years.

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so many Baby Boomer gearheads. After high school graduation, Rich was fortunate to land a management training position with a very large trucking company. In 1975 he was promoted and transferred to the Quad Cities in Iowa and knew at that time he could no longer afford the Hurst/Olds. It was a difficult decision but a financial one when no other options were available. He traded it in on a 1975 Chevy Blazer.

But the desire for the long-lost Hurst/Olds would never subside. About 30 years ago he started looking for number 211. He traveled to the South Dakota DMV and the original dealership in Marion, South Dakota, to no avail.

"My family knew of my longing," says Rich. "About 20 years ago, Hallmark Cards came out with a Christmas ornament of a 1969 Hurst/Oldsmobile. That Christmas I received two gifts, one from my mom in Sioux Falls and another from my wife. They had both bought me the same Hurst/Oldsmobile ornament."

It has been said by some that the Hurst/Oldsmobile was the first "gentleman's hot rod," and that's probably true. But what is more important is that George Hurst was one of the first, if not *the* first, aftermarket tuner-car builder. He forged alliances with General Motors, Chrysler, and AMC to build limited-series-production, modified tuner cars that were set apart from mainstream offerings coming from Detroit. Many times Hurst built the cars the manufacturers couldn't: Hemi Darts and Barracudas, and the audacious mid-year 1969 AMC Hurst SC/Rambler. But the Hurst/Oldsmobiles set a standard all tuner cars followed. And you're not likely to get any argument on that subject from one very happy Rich Moline. Like others profiled in this issue, he knows he is one lucky guy.

Editor's note: Richard Truesdell is the co-author, with Mark Fletcher, of the now out-of-print 2012 book Hurst Equipped. A limited number of signed copies (fewer than 10) are available from the authors for \$60, shipping in the U.S. included. For details contact Rich at richtruesdell@gmail.com.



■ The on-hood graphics and mailbox-size scoops left nothing to the imagination.




■ Rich and wife Darlene, whose shirt says "Once was lost #211 Hurst/Olds Now Found."

MEET THE MUSCLE MACHINE

These pages are from the lavish four-page brochure produced by Hurst to market the 1969 Hurst/Olds. Based on the 4-4-2 Holiday Coupe, the H/O "is the ultimate expression of Oldsmobile-engineered high-performance hardware, put together in a bold new custom package by Hurst."

MUSCLE

1969 HURST/OLDS



Meet the muscle machine . . . the 1969 Hurst/Olds. It's a limited production custom special from Oldsmobile and Hurst Performance Research.

Now some people insist that the H/O on the hood scoop stands for hairy Olds . . . but we prefer to think it represents a bit more.

Here is the ultimate expression of Oldsmobile-engineered high-performance hardware . . . put together in a bold new custom package by Hurst.

And a potent package it is.

Up there in front sits a dual-inlet ozone grabber that appears as though it just might bite.

And it does. But only cold, dense, fresh air. It does it on demand, with

vacuum-operated precision.

Then if you let your eye run rearward along the side and top you'll see those bold gold custom stripes.

And perched across the rear, sits the sexiest spoiler since Mata Hari. With its negative lift, it turns high-speed air turbulence into road-grabbing rear traction. Kind of a reverse-Wright-brothers effect.

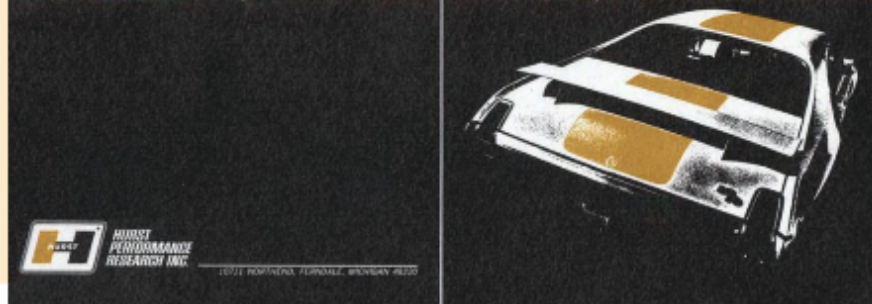
Now we by-passed a few other outside goodies.

There are two dual low-drag racing-type outside mirrors . . . and distinctive Hurst/Olds emblems on the front quarter panels and rear deck lid.

That last one is going to get the most visibility.

1969 HURST/OLDS SPECIFICATIONS		ENGINE (Std.)		REAR AXLE	
GENERAL		Fuel	Premium	Type	Gilberty Live Hybrid, Semi-Floating
Model	Modified 4-4-2 Holiday Coupe	Air Induction	Special Cold Air w/ Hood Scoop	Differential	Limited Slip, Multiple Plate Clutch
Wheelbase	112.0	Intake Valve Duration	285°	Axle Ratio (Std.)	3.42
Length, overall	201.8	Exhaust Valve Duration	287°	Axle Ratio (Opt.)	3.91
Width, overall	76.2	Valve Opening Overlap	57°	Axle Ratio (A/C)	3.23
Height, overall	52.8	Valve Lift	0.472	TIRES	
Track, front	61.0	Valve Lifters	Hydraulic	Type and Manufacturer	Slee-Steered Goodyear Polyglas®
Track, rear	60.0	Exhaust System	Dual	Size	P60 x 15
Weight	3718 lbs.	TRANSMISSION (Std.)		WHEELS	
		Name	Turbo Hydra-Matic	Type	Welded Steel
ENGINE		Type	Modified 9-Speed Torque Converter	Size and Flange	15 x 7 JJ
Type	90° OHV V-8	Gear Ratio, low	2.45	BRAKES	
Bore and Stroke	4.125 x 4.250	Gear Ratio, second	1.48	Type	Power
Displacement, cubic inches	455	Gear Ratio, third	1.05	Front	11 inch Disc
Compression Ratio	12.5:1	Gear Ratio, reverse	2.08	Rear	9.5 inch Drum
Horsepower (6 rpm)	350 @ 5000	Torque Converter Ratio	2.30		
Torque (lb./ft. @ rpm)	560 @ 3000	Shift Mechanism	Hurst Dual/Gate		
Carburetor	4-801, Rochester 4 MV				

All dimensions are in inches unless otherwise indicated. While the information herein was in effect when approved for printing, Hurst Performance Research, Inc. reserves the right to change specifications, design or price without notice and without liability transfer.



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