

SOME CARS ALLOW YOU TO RELIVE THE PAST

MAKING CONNECTIONS

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THERE ARE LOTS OF REASONS WHY PEOPLE CHOOSE TO CREATE A UNIQUE CAR, BUT ONE OF THE MOST FREQUENT IS THE CONNECTION TO EARLIER TIMES.

Riding in the family car as a child, enjoying that Sunday drive with the folks, or the weekend picnic with friends, all revolve around the vehicle

that made it happen. Years later, when there is a little extra time and some disposable income, creating a replica of the old family ride is a way to once

again enjoy those treasured memories.

David Marco, from Atlantic Beach, Florida, understands those connections well. He is the owner of an eye care diagnostic business and an avid aviator. More than just an accomplished pilot, David holds several world records for around the world flights.

His passion for aviation led to a





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connection with another enthusiastic pilot, automotive performance expert Jack Roush. Both David and Jack own and have flown restored P-51 Mustangs and they became good friends as a result. The two men were soon discussing cars and discovered David's interest in '50s-era muscle cars. David decided that Jack was the man to build a special vehicle, one that would create a bridge to earlier times.

Pictures in the Marco family archives showed a vintage '56 Buick owned by David's parents that would make the perfect connection, recalling those days of childhood and honoring the memories of his late parents. Once the decision was made, Roush used his contacts around the country to locate a suitable car, finding this 1956 Buick Special two-door hardtop in Colorado. In fairly good shape, the car

was trailered to Roush headquarters in Livonia, Michigan, where David and Jack sat down to discuss the build.

One of the key elements in the plan centered around David's dissatisfaction with overly customized vehicles. Many of the popular show cars had been so distorted that few of the original lines showed through. David's goal was to enhance the lines of his car with lots of subtle changes, resulting in a recognizable car that had been elegantly modified.

With a clear plan established, the first step in the process was ensuring the half-century-old chassis was brought up to new millennium standards. The team at Roush began by boxing the original frame, adding a Heidts front end and NASCAR-style trailing arms to hold the





nine-inch Ford rear fitted with a Truetrac differential. QA1 adjustable coilovers and Wilwood 12-inch disc brakes were added to all four corners, and the Buick runs a combination of 17 x 8 American Racing Torq Thrust wheels up front and 18 x 10 versions in the rear. Yokohama 55-series rubber up front and 50-series in the rear plant the power to the ground.

There's lots of power to plant. Although Roush is most famous for his work with Fords, David wanted a GM motor in a GM car so the General's 502 crate motor was the perfect choice. Pumping out 502hp of naturally aspirated power, it doubled the horsepower of the original 322ci V-8.

Since reliability was more important than brute power, no turbos or superchargers were considered.



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Elegance was a factor, however, and everything under the hood reflects that goal. The motor benefits from a beautifully designed intake plenum that creates a dramatic impression when the hood is raised.

The smooth inner fender panels and firewall were painted silver, in contrast to the unique valve covers, painted a deep shade of Velvet Red and sporting both Buick and Roush logos. Hand-

fabricated exhaust headers feed Flowmasters and the side-exiting pipes match the shape of the famous Buick portholes ("VentiPorts"). In addition to all the other connections, the Tremec TKO five-speed provides a tactile sense that reinforces a driving connection to the vintage Buick whenever David gets behind the wheel.

Body mods were next. In a side-to-side comparison, spectators can see





that roughly 30 percent of the chrome on the car has been eliminated. Few, however, will spot the subtleties like the original front bumper shape that has been thinned slightly with approximately one inch of depth

removed. The turn signals are now incorporated into the newly minimized bumper guards. The original Buick emblem in the grille was retained but the grillwork behind it was sprayed body color. Factory chrome headlight

rims were eliminated and halogen bulbs turn night into day.

Door handles were shaved, emphasizing the shape of the door and the Buick cut line. The traditional Buick sweepspear was reduced with the



portion wrapping around the rear wheels eliminated. David and his wife Julie chose the colors and the Roush Special Vehicles Team sprayed the roof and side cove with Sherwin-Williams Very Velvet Red using a gold underbase. A contrasting Vapor Silver covers the rest.

David wanted the interior to retain its period characteristics, opting for a pair of Roush-modified, GM bucket seats up front and a matching bench seat in the rear. Roush Trim Services stitched a combination of elegant burgundy fabric and authentic '50s gray Naugahyde to get just the right look. Roush covered the dash with carbon fiber and the original instruments were re-calibrated

by Classic Instruments, finished in a subtle ivory. A matching tach resides in the center console.

The factory chrome fresh air vents were augmented with a second pair found on eBay, now mounted in the center in order to improve the efficiency of the new Vintage Air A/C unit. A leather-wrapped Grant wheel resides on an adjustable ididit column. Musical entertainment comes from a Kenwood head unit and four Crutchfield speakers with Dynamat insulation minimizing any unwanted sonic intrusion. The trunk was upholstered to match and a Buick emblem added to the rear wall.

The car took approximately two years



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to complete, but it was time well spent. David and his family regularly enjoy Sunday rides in the car, dedicated to his mother Caroline. 

