



Skip's 1955 Chevy 210 Townsman Wagon

By Benjamin Hunting
Photos Gearhead News

It is a theme we return to again and again in the custom car world – the desire to own something just a little bit different than what everyone else is driving. This craving for individuality has helped to create some of the most interesting automobiles in the Chicagoland scene, including the 1955 Chevrolet 210 Townsman wagon belonging to Wheeling's Skip Tubbs.

When Skip first encountered the four-door Chevrolet wagon that was to absorb most of his attention for the next decade and a half, it was in urgent need of TLC. The year was 1993, and the Townsman had sitting for three years as its owner tried to find the time to begin the restoration process. With too many projects clouding the horizon, and Skip in the market for a unique platform upon which to build a custom car, the two were able to come to a deal.

At this point in its life, the wagon played host to a growing mouse population and it had also suffered a fire in the headliner. Rust had claimed back much of the quarter panel steel, and given that the gas tank had rotted away, Skip was forced to feed the engine fuel from a plastic jug that he mounted underneath the hood just to get the automobile moving. Undaunted, and knowing that many projects start from the same humble roots – or worse – Tubbs pressed on with his plans for getting the Townsman back to its former glory.

The initial three years of ownership saw Skip driving the wagon as-is while he saved up the funds that he knew would be necessary to create the rod of his dreams. The first item he took care of was the vehicle's paint and body work. Ever resourceful, he convinced his son to take a job at a local body shop and then took advantage of a "family discount" to have the '55 Chevy's sheet metal repaired and paint stripped down. The 210 wagon emerged from the paint booth minus the tree sap that had been stuck to almost every inch of its body, having gained a brilliant blue paint job that it still wears today.

Next up was the wagon's interior, which was completely updated by Restorations Unlimited in Cary, IL, who handled all of the stitching and reupholstering.

The only thing left was to replace the original 265 V8 sitting under the hood with a motor that offered a little more pep. Lady Luck smiled on Skip at this point in the restoration process, and he managed to parlay a winning Pick 4 lottery ticket into a complete engine build that resulted in the wagon gaining a 331 cubic inch V8 featuring a tunnel ram intake, two Holley four-barrel carburetors and a 150 horsepower nitrous kit. Sending that power to the ground is a three-speed Turbo 400 automatic transmission with a reverse manual valve body and a 3600 stall converter. A Hurst quarter stick setup and a 12-bolt posi rear end lifted out of a 1969 Chevelle and stuffed with 4.56 gears help the '55 wagon devour the quarter mile with an ET of 11.98 @ 113 miles per hour.

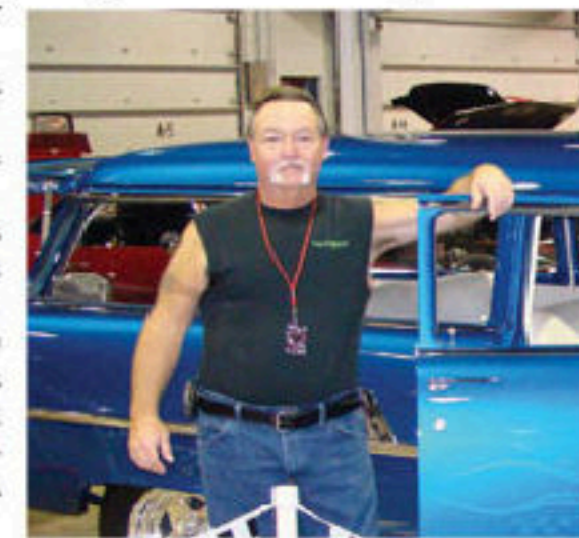
Tubbs has been making the rounds of the show car circuit since 1997, and in the intervening years the car has seen a few updates to his original build, including the



ghost flames it wears today as well as the 15-inch polished billet wheels seen in the photographs. The car attracts attention wherever it goes, not just for what it is, but also for what it's not.

"Everyone has a '55 Chevy coupe, or a Nomad two-door wagon," explained Skip. "I love showing up at meets and cruises with my four-door and knowing that I have something truly unique that many people probably haven't seen done up as a custom before. There are so few of these four-door Townsman wagons left out there."

Skip's wagon doesn't just turn heads on the street, either – it's attracted a fair share of media attention (including a spread in the Chicago Suburban Daily Herald's Auto Sunday section), as well as earned several awards at national car shows for best motor, best paint and even a Gearhead News Pick of The Show trophy at the Muscle Car and Corvette Nationals. Tubbs sees each of these accolades as confirmation that he isn't the only one out there who can appreciate the value of building something different for custom car fans to enjoy.



Sensory Overload For Muscle Car Enthusiasts At The MCACN Show

Courtesy MCACN (www.mcaen.com) Photos Richard Truesdell

By the time November rolls around, most of us are less than thrilled with thoughts of months of hibernation for our treasured "toys". For many, the last gasp comes in the form of what has become a nationally recognized show that takes place right here in our own back yard.

The second annual First National Bank of New York Muscle Car & Corvette

Nationals took place November 20-21 at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont to rave reviews. With over 500 cars on the floor and several hundred all automotive vendor booths, it was indeed sensory overload! Car entries came in from 22 states and Canada with vendors from as far away as the state of Washington participating. "It all came together, and we are



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