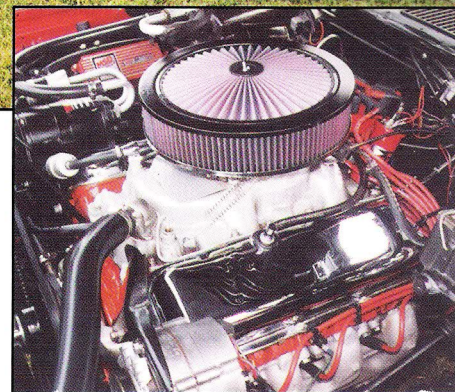




Old Faithful

Spoutin' Off About
a Long-Term Project
By Chuck Hanson



It's been a long-held notion that any project car is never really "done." It's an easy-to-believe adage when you're staring at a body in grey primer, and parts scattered all over the garage. But when a car looks good, runs even better than it looks, and takes home the awards in national competition, well... most folks might argue that such a car is definitely "done."

But not Bob Wilcox.

own stuff is one of the great mysteries of the universe. But he does. "Over the years I've used the '68 as a daily driver, a tow car, an occasional drag racer, and most recently as a "driven" show car. Right now it has 177,000 miles on the clock, and I hope to put another 177,000 more on it!"

That's right, Bob actually drives his Chevelle to all the events he attends around the country. "I've driven this car to all eight ACES Chevell-abrations, and have managed to get a Top Three Award six times." Not bad for a car that was last redone back in '94, huh? That was when it got NOS quarters, fenders, bumpers, grill, bezels, markers, and, well, just about any thing else that could be located.

Wilcox also built a stout 454 back then, and backed it with a bullet-proof TH400 and a 12-bolt posi spinning 3.42 gears. The combination lets Bob cruise right along with Interstate traffic, but also lets him click off some 12.90s at 105mph in the quarter-mile. The car's deceptively stock appearance has certainly caught more than one stop light hero off guard!

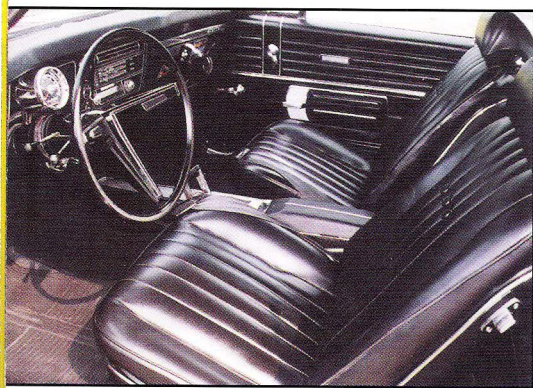
The stock '68 underpinnings were upgraded with a full set of urethane bushings to help minimize suspension deflection, while the rear lower control arms were boxed to add rigidity. Then Bob bolted up

a 1.25-inch

front sway bar and a 1-inch rear bar to help control body roll, with a set of Koni adjustable shocks to manage suspension oscillations. Up until recently, 7x15 inch Rallys helped put the BFG rubber to the road. But like we asked earlier, is a project car ever "done?" Bob wanted a new look for the '68, so he popped for a set of chrome 15-inch American Torq Thrusts. They give his classic Chevelle a real classy appearance, without succumbing to the belly-button 17s that are *de rigueur* at many car events today.

So what else does Wilcox have up his sleeve? Well, apparently the 454 just doesn't have enough beans for Bob's right foot. So he's planning on screwing together an aluminum-headed, roller-cammed 502 that he hopes will twist the dyno to the tune of 600 horses or more, with 625 lbs/ft torque. Now, that's a lot of grunt... especially when you plan to do it on pump gas! Quite

assuredly for Bob Wilcox, his '68 is one project that'll never be "done." **CW**



Wilcox has owned his Matador red '68 SS396 for over 30 years. Yep, he bought it from the original owner in '73. Back then the Chevelle was pretty much just another used car, and Bob picked it up after forking over 400 of his hard-earned bucks! But even back then that was one helluva deal.

As you might expect, both Bob and his Chevelle have been through quite a few changes over the years. "I'm the 2nd, 4th, and 6th owners of this Chevelle," remarked Bob. "Even though I've been through three divorces, I've managed to keep it through thick and thin!" Hmmm. Maybe Bob shoulda married the Chevelle. The 56-year-old musclecar mechanic specializes in restoring and upgrading '64-'72 Chevells for a long list of customers, with an occasional GM "alternative" A-body finding its way into the shop.

How Wilcox finds time to work on his

