

Feature Vehicle

Robert Mirabile – Green City Park, New York

Member #222

1967 Malibu Convertible



Through my teens I had always wanted a 67 Chevelle, it was my favorite car and especially liked convertible 67's. At age 17 I heard of a guy 2 towns over selling a 67 cheap. I went to look at it and it was a real 67 SS convertible. I really didn't notice it much further than the 138 VIN so it was mine for \$400. That was about average for a totally

rotted, real SS in need of total restoration back in the 80's.

After spending several years and lots of money trying to restore it, the project slowed. I had a rolling chassis with all new suspension components but when it came time to do the body, the project really stopped. Every piece of sheet metal had to be replaced with the exception of the cowl. With the project stalled I came across another 67 Chevelle. A Malibu model but it was a drivable car. I thought that if I bought this one it would give me something to drive and enhance my motivation on the SS. Well like a true gear head, I tore into the Malibu as well.

The Malibu was supposed to get a budget makeover and was the birth of my moniker and Team Chevelle screen name 'On budget'. The problem was budget makeovers, while less than a true resto, aren't cheap either. A decision was made back in 92 to combine the two Chevilles to make one good one. Because the Malibu was



the more solid foundation we decided to make that the car to work on. AHHH if I only had a fortune teller. You see back in the early 90's the muscle car market wasn't booming like it is now and an SS wasn't

worth that much more than a Malibu. I tried to sell the SS complete with finished disc brake front and 12 bolt rear rolling chassis along with the body shell for \$200 and couldn't!!!! So we used all the SS parts and turned the Malibu into a nice driver.

I used the fenders, rear end & suspension, front suspension, bumpers, seats, and many other parts from the SS to complete the Malibu. I then stripped the body down to metal, did some homemade patch repair and a few buckets of bondo and sprayed it outside in my driveway. The paint job cost \$200 bucks in materials and start to finish took 7 12-hour days.

Not perfect but good enough for a budget driver, I moved on to a new top and gave it a try recovering the interior. The engine compartment had an old 69 350 that I cleaned and dressed but mechanically left as it was. All in all it came out good enough to take home a few trophies at local event in the first year or 2.

The Malibu was stored outdoors for the first several years and was driven about 10,000 miles each year in ANY weather including snow. This took a toll on the paint and body but that \$200 outdoor home job is still worn to this day.

Over the years the engine was rebuilt, then rebuilt a second time, then freshened with heads, intake and cam, then another cam, and a 3rd cam, then several ignition swaps, headers and exhaust swaps, 3 or 4 different carbs. The original power glide was then replaced with a TH350, another TH350, then a 700R4, then a second 700, then another torque converter to a best ¼ mile of 13.92 all while still putting about 6 to 10 thousand street miles a year on it, even driving to Chevellabration 4 years in a row at about a 2,250 mile round trip.

In recent years I don't drive it nearly as much. All the trips I go on and all the out-of-town shows we travel to almost always include my wife and children. My family has grown large enough where we can no longer drive the Chevelle on trips and now to trailer it to most events.





Most recently, the big cammed 350 didn't really fit how I was driving the car. Mostly cruising and relaxed road trips with less track time. I wanted something that ran smoother and idled easy but fun to drive. I did a budget 454 swap and dressed it to have a look of a 427, just for fun. So now it's got a mild 454 backed by a 700 OD trans and 4:10 12-bolt

posi. It's a blast to drive and has great manners even getting 14.4 MPG on my last 1000-mile trip (to the Cam Am 5th Gathering) on 87-octane fuel.

My future plans are to keep driving. When the kids are older it will get the redo it deserves, but for now I'm enjoying loading the old Malibu full of kids for a trip to the cruise-in. They can eat and play in this Chevelle, because it's really all about the people. Chevelles just bring us together.



For additional pictures see

[http://www.leverfamilysite.com/Rob Mirabile 1967 Chevelle.htm](http://www.leverfamilysite.com/Rob_Mirabile_1967_Chevelle.htm)