
Feature Article

The Big Itch by Terry Brim

Talk about your 7 year itch, meet Mike Mills. At the tender age of 7, Mike got the itch for a corvette. As it turns out, Mike was introduced to the Corvette world by his uncle who had and still has a 68 coupe. Mike recalls how at every opportunity, he and his cousin would sit and play in his uncle's 68 corvette.

The road has not been easy for Mike however. His first experience in buying a corvette was back in 1999. Mike and his wife Traci went looking for a Big Block shark at a not to be named local area dealer. As it turned out, the dealer did not have a BB shark however, he did have a 67 roadster on his showroom floor within Mike's price range. After striking a deal, Mike became the proud owner of what he thought was a 67. After owning the car for almost a year, Mike discovered that the car was not a 67 after all, but rather a patched up 63 or 64 made to look like a 67 complete with a 67 VIN number. Thankfully, he did manage to get his

money back from the dealer. After that experience however, Mike decided he had better become educated in the art of matching numbers.

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As it turned out, about this time, the dad of Mike's best friend from high school had a 89 roadster which he was looking to sell. Since this was a one owner car which he knew this time around to be correct, it found its way into Mike's family. Since the car had sat for the previous 18 months however, Mike had to do a few things to get it back to roadworthy condition. This entailed the usual, brakes, lower ball joints, alternator, fuel injectors, spark plugs, new seat covers, new convertible top, etc. As a side note, Mike has turned into a regular gear head, opting to do most of his mechanical

work himself. Incidentally, Mike has the 89 looking sharp and is thinking about selling it next spring, so heads up for anyone looking for a clean red/red 89 roadster. To hear Mike put it, although the 89 is a great car, it just wasn't



what he was looking for in a corvette. What he was looking was noise and chrome bumpers with maybe a 4-speed thrown in, preferably a shark.....so the hunt began again! This time around older but wiser.

Mike tells of finding (as advertised) a Blue 1970 big block shark complete with matching numbers on eBay in Lincoln, Nebraska. Just what he was looking for, or so it

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seemed. He was ready to buy the car when the owner shared with him the name of the previous owner of the car. Mike

Again, as Mike tells the story, her response was “oh, there was no VIN number on the car when we bought it”

could never make contact with the previous owner however, after many phone calls, he did manage to talk to his wife. It was during one of these conversations that Mike asked her to tell him about the car. As Mike tells the story, her response was “oh, it was a beautiful candy apple red corvette”....alarms began to go off in Mike’s head.

Because of the experience with his 67, Mike’s next question was about the VIN number on the car. Again, as Mike tells the story, her response was “oh, there was no VIN number on the car when we bought it”again, more alarms! When Mike asked the current owner about this, his response was that the VIN number was lost when they were

painting the car..... What’s that old adage, “fool me once shame on you, fool me twice shame on me” This time around, Mike had done his homework! Needless to say, that shark did not join Mike’s family.

Still on the prowl looking for a chrome bumper vette, Mike set out again. This time however Traci was pushing Mike to look for a mid-year. This combined with his mid-year knowledge gained from researching the 67 fiasco, Mike decided to turn his search towards a mid-year.

This past June, Mike found his current 1966 red/black roadster in the Detroit Trading Post. Although it’s a non



matching numbers car, Mike knew exactly what he was getting. The car is mostly original except for the engine which is a 396 big block out of a 69 Nova. Mike’s view is that corvette’s are meant to be driven and a driver is what he was looking for.

Like most of us, Mike has plans for those cold winter nights and week-ends. They

include, installing a set of side pipes which he bought from Greg Gorniak... watch out! Mike’s winter time projects also include, installing a stock intake (vs the Elderbrock currently on the car), changing the rear end to a 356 (currently the car has a 411). When I asked Mike about this change, he told me he was afraid that with the combination of the big block, side pipes and 411 rear end, it would be too noisy on the road for cruises he and Traci love to take.... talk about doing your homework! Other plans are to install a new oil pressure gauge and tachometer head replacement.

Next spring when we all come out of hibernation, look for Mike and his beautiful 66 red BB roadster. I’m sure he’ll have plenty of stories to share.

See more of Mike’s Corvette world on the next page

Mike Mill's Corvette World

