
From a Bad Banana to a Yellow 67' 427 Big Block

by Terry Brim

Unlike many of us, Pete Tank did not come from a car family. In fact, his father never drove a car! But like many of us, Pete hung around car nuts. Not just ordinary car nuts, but those who were into the Detroit area drag racing. But, I'm getting ahead of myself. Back when Pete was a young lad of 8 or so, he had an older friend also named Pete, who belonged to a car club that rented a garage across the alley from Pete's house. Turns out, the car club had a hot rod car called "The Bad Banana" and young Pete would go over and watch them work on the car in the evenings....What better way to peak an interest in cars at the impressionable age of 8!

Unfortunately, the club disbanded about 4 years later and Pete lost track of his friend and the Bad Banana. Fast-forward another 4 years to when Pete was around 16. Pete and another friend stopped at a Shell gas station and wouldn't you know, his old friend Pete came out to pump gas. Long story short, they

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recognized one another and his old friend Pete offered our Pete a job at his gas station. That started a long lasting friendship that still exists today. Turns out Pete's friend still has a 1955 Chevy drag race car that he restored and took 2nd place in a newly established NHRA class of hot rod cars for guys that drove their cars to work and then raced them on the week-ends.

Pete's got his first car while still in high school. It was a 64' Chevy Impala that he raced. When Pete bought the car, it has a small block motor, which he promptly replaced with a 396 big block.

In 1967, at the height of the Viet Nam war, Pete joined

the Navy (turns out he was allergic to lead, the round kind). After spending 4 years in the

Navy most of which he spent at an Air Force Base (Pete says he never saw a ship while in the navy!), he was hired at Ford Research Center as a test driver....how cool was that! Pete was a

at Ford for 7 years and it was during this time that he went to night school to get his Electrical Engineering degree.

It was not until after Pete got out of the military that he started drifting away from drag racing cars and developed an interest in Corvettes. Pete's first Corvette was a 1964 blue small block 4-speed coupe, which he bought in 1974. Pete detailed out the 64' and drove it as a daily driver for 3-4 years. His next Vette was another coupe, which he bought in the 1978/1979-time period. The 67' was a yellow small block 4-speed, which Pete says he half restored redoing the suspension, engine and paint..... this was the beginning of Pete's Corvette restoration experience, which is still on going today.



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In 1984, Pete moved to Dayton without a Vette in hand. During the next few years after arriving in Dayton, Pete spent his time building his house and like many of us, saving his pennies until he could afford his next Vette. It wasn't until 1988 that Pete bought his next Corvette, another 64' coupe. This one was a white small block which he did a complete body off restoration. Pete sold the 64' after completing the body off restoration and in 1990. He bought a 1990 Corvette with only 1,000 miles showing on the odometer. The 90' was a triple black convertible...Pete says it was his only convertible. During the next 5-6 years, Pete didn't do any restoration work; he just enjoyed driving his 90'.

Around 1995/1996, Pete bought the yellow 67' coupe



big block that he still owns today. Pete drove the 67' for about 4 years before he decided to do a complete body off restoration. During this

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time, he sold his 90' and was able to focus his

energy on re-doing the 67'. The car is a 400HP 4-speed with PS/PB, side pipes and speed-warning option. The car also has a unique black/white interior.

Currently, Pete has two other Corvettes that he is restoring. One is a 1968 blue/blue

435HP T-Top that he bought 8-9 years ago.

Pete says the restoration on the 68' is all completed except for the interior that is sitting upstairs in his house. Pete also has a 1976 350HP maroon/saddle with a 4-speed that is rather unique for a 76'.

Like many old Vette's, the 76' has a unique story behind it. Turns out the car was in a garage that caught on fire. The owners managed to get the car out into the driveway before it burned however, tar from the burning garage roof fell on the 76' and ruined the paint. In addition Pete says that for some reason when the firemen arrived, they sprayed down the interior of the car and of course that also ruined the interior. Long story short Pete's ex girl friend bought the car. Pete eventually bought the car from her and is

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currently doing almost a complete body on restoration of the 76' as well as trying to find time to complete his 68' Pete says the 68' restoration is currently on hold however until he gets the 76' finished.

Pete is from the Detroit Michigan area and still has many friends that he often goes back to see. In late June, there is a big cruise-in the Down River area where Pete is from, that according to Pete, is almost as big as the Woodward cruise-in minus all the SUV's etc. His goal is to get the 76' finished so that he can drive up to Michigan the end of June and participate in the Down River cruise-in.

Pete's current plans are to keep the 76' as a driver as well as the 67'. Pete says he will probably sell the 68' after he gets the interior completed sometime later this year.....so, if anyone is interested in a completely restored blue/blue 68 435HP, now's your chance, I'm sure Pete would like to talk with you!

