

Drivers

Mark Albanese
9980 Boca Ave. North
Naples, FL 34109
bettereducation@comcast.net
Sebring

Dennis Albright
Technology Integration
ISD 229 100 Kirkwood
Lanesboro, MN 55949
americansterling@hotmail.com
Sterling # CCC95

David Aliberti
5208 Jean Street
Verona, PA 15147
prodevelopment@msn.com
Sterling # CCC195

Gary Anagnostis
480 Banbury Drive
Gahanna, OH 43230
garya@completeweb.net
Sebring

Seth Canterbury
225B W. Lakemont Dr.
Kingsland, GA 31548
tscanter26@hotmail.com
Mid year Cimbria

Jack Clay
21221-118th St. Ct. E.
Sumner, WA 98390
jjf42000@hotmail.com
Sterlings #CCC183 & CCC 283

Warren Daugherty
940 Huff Road
New Columbia, PA 17856
farfegnubbin@yahoo.com
Sterling

Arlen Fountain
13808 La Cala St.
Ocean Springs, MS
39564
fountain@datasync.com
Sterling

Paul Hawkins
165 Barbee Lane
Smiths Grove, KY 42171
paulky_2000@yahoo.com
Sebring

Larry Hoganson
18691 Deer Trail Road
Banning, CA 92220
Sterling # CCC132

Bill Jones
511 Roosevelt Drive
Dothan, Alabama 36301
Bjones9950@comcast.net
Sterling

Keith Klein
13936 Wollweber Road
N.
Edwall, WA 99008
kcklein@icehouse.net
Cimbria

Wally Kolcz
14832 Alberta Ave.
Warren, MI 48089
wkolcz@scoutmediagroup.com
active observer

Mike Leach
2730 Setters Ln.
Warsaw, IN 46582
Jazz_68@yahoo.com
active observer

Donnie Luschen
813 SW Arrowhead Drive
Bentonville, AR 72712
duschen@cox.net
Sterling # CCC460

Mike McBride
PO Box 927
St. Helens, OR 97051
www.kitcar.com/sterling/home
Honorary Member

Scott McKinley
3010 London Road
Eau Claire, WI 54701
sgmckinley@yahoo.com
still looking!

Rick Milne
103 Bondsville Road
Downingtown, PA 19335
milne2@msn.com
Sterling # CCC114

Eddie Ortiz
17117 Passage Ave.
Bellflower, CA 90706
Collectorman5000@aol.com
Sterling # CCC393

Paul & Judy Petrali
7814 Olympic Way
Fair Oaks, CA 95628
fools4sterlings@yahoo.com
active observers

Eric & Danielle Phillips
2705 Sayre Lane
Rogers, AR 72758
eric.phillips@exide.com
Sterling

Miguel Santiago
17955 Tanleaf Ln.
Prunedale, CA 93907
Turkeyb0y@myrealbox.com
G2 Sterling (version after Sovran)

Farzad "Fuzz" Sharif
306 Kent Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17111
Fuzz148@comcast.net
Cimbria #04246

Steve Silverstein
85 West 1st Str.
Ronkonkoma, NY 11779
superpuppy1@excite.com
1975 Sterling

Brian Smith
6403 Cedar Run Road
Traverse City, MI 49684
avengergt@hotmail.com
Sterling

Wil Weber
PO Box 215
Farmington, UT 84025
Willden4weber@yahoo.com
Sterling

Shane Williams
5208 Curtis Street
Fremont, CA 94538
brastic_shane@yahoo.com
Sterling

Mike Woolley
1491 Scio Ridge Court
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
sebring_83@yahoo.com
1983 Sebring

Next issue: Gearing up for Spring and the upcoming show season!

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610.269.7518 fax: 610.269.5341



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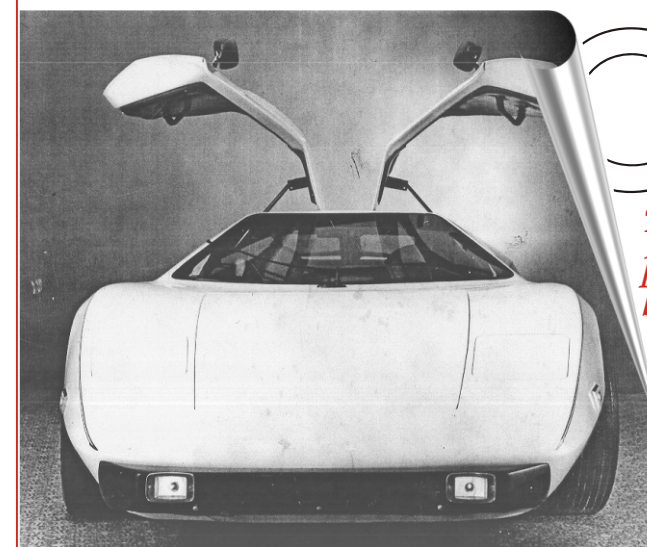
Letter from the editor

Wow! At the end of the year already, and some pretty phenomenal things happened this year for Sterling owners far and wide. I hope that first and foremost is that everyone who has received this newsletter had taken the opportunity to at least contact one other member near them to say hello, and to realize that, indeed, we are a fairly select bunch. Recently, Donnie has updated our website (www.nationalsterling.com) and it is coming along very nicely - kudos, Donnie! But he needs your help, input, and photos to make it better, so send them along - all Donnie's contact info is on the members page.

Other members have made local shows and winning awards, still others sadly have had to sell their cars, maybe one day to own yet another coupe. For myself, I finally finished my T-top inserts. They're not perfect, leak a little, but get the job done reasonably well. That was my goal this year, ever since I was caught in a freak rainstorm in August and got absolutely drenched. My wife vowed never to ride in the car again if rain was threatening without some sort of roof system in place. So there we are.

And still other members had plans laid to waste by unseen circumstances. I had invited Farzad to drive his car along with mine in a local Christmas parade this past month. Fuzz readily agreed, and that says a lot about the man, since he would have to travel about an hour just to get to my location from his house. At the eleventh hour the night before I get a phone call: after filling his gas tank to the brim it sprung a leak - badly. Fuzz called me after siphoning the gas back out and parking the car outside to help vent the fumes, and bummed was the word of the night. Needless to say, he never made the parade, but the intentions were there, and I greatly appreciated it. Things go wrong...and we persevere. Our association has started slowly, but we've gained some momentum over the last year. Everyone has a voice worth hearing owning one of these cars...will 2006 be the year we hear from you?

Have a safe and happy New Year!



CIMBRIA

In this issue, Keith Klein's Cimbria is profiled. This is one of the best documented builds put to paper!



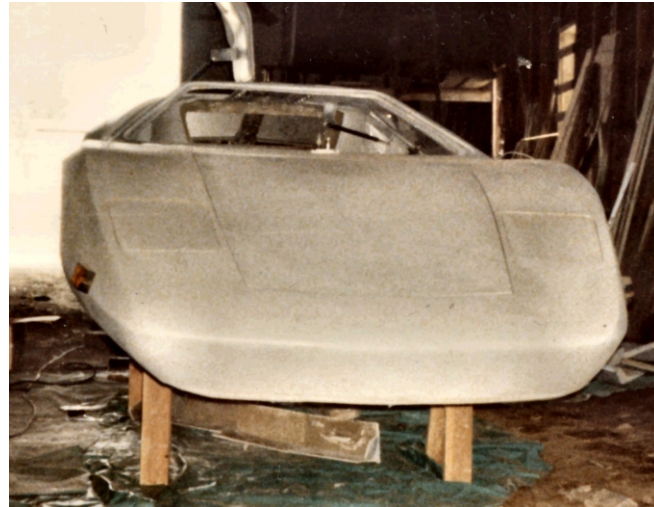
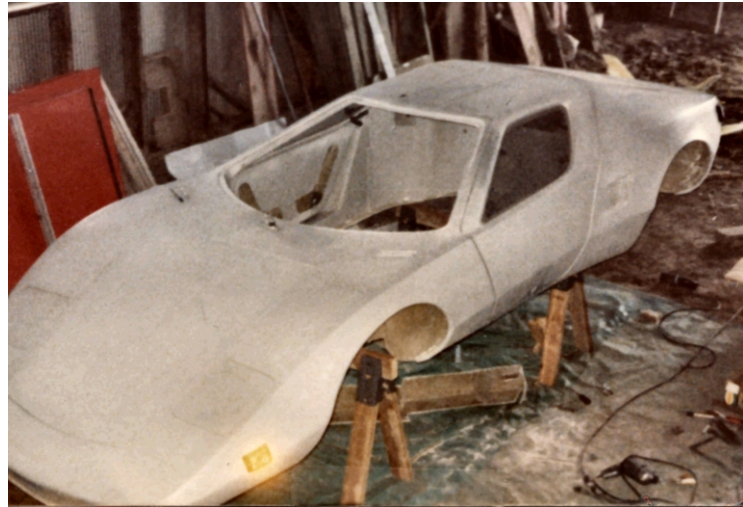
The following article was submitted by Keith Klein in Edwall Washington. Keith put together an incredible resource of scanned images and background on his car. Most of the article is in Keith's own verse, and pictures are entirely his.

04/03/05 "Here's a short bio of my car. I originally built it with my Dad in '78-'79. I started a complete teardown/rebuild in January 2002. A lot of modifications have been made. The doors were cut off and glassed in to make it more like a roadster. The louvers were custom fabbed and headlight tunnels were molded. Bumpers and scoops were cut, smoothed, and better fitted into the body, and the interior was totally redone. All that's left is paint and a new motor (it's in primer)."

12/25/05 "I should have a custom built hi-performance 2.1 liter VW engine in it by January."

THE ALPHA VERSION

The kit arrived from Milwaukee in the summer of 1978. This is what I term the ALPHA version. Amore Cars called this kit the Deluxe version. It consisted of a body shell with the doors hung, the rear hatch and rear glass installed, the exterior lights mounted along with the headlight pods and the front hood in place. Along with this were dozens of parts, none of which seemed to fit right. The chassis had been prepared with a stock 1600 dual port VW engine, lowered suspension, new wheels, and a lowered floorpan with the shifter and steering box moved. The car was advertised as being able to be completed in 120 hours, but I believe that figure was possible only by an experienced builder with a full set of body tools. Many hours were spent reading and re-reading instructions in an attempt to "get things right". Quite a few compromises were made that would not be corrected until version 3.0



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After a second engine rebuild due to overheating, some functional modifications were in order. The engine itself acquired some performance parts in the way of dual carbs, a hotter cam and larger cylinder jugs. The glass rear windows were removed and louvers were fashioned from wood and Bondo to allow for greater airflow from the engine compartment. Further airflow modifications were done in the engine compartment and inside the rear wheel wells. Finally, large openings were cut out below the rear bumper and covered with metal screen.

The old fiberglass gullwing center door support was replaced with a narrow windshield support bar. The steering wheel and dash were updated, as were the front and rear signals and marker lights. The clear plastic snap-in cockpit covers were tossed and the snaps removed. The side vent intake was changed to a single opening. The windshield wiper and motor were removed, as they were unused and unreliable. The disastrous pop-up headlight system was taken out and tunnels for each headlight were built and covered by clear plexiglass.

The rear bumper mounts were removed and the fiberglass bumper cover was molded directly onto the car body. Once again the car was repainted and the striping/decals scheme was redone. After getting married and having kids, this version basically sat for a dozen years.

The current (last?) version is the one you see below. After years of jerry-rigged fixes, it was time to strip the car and fix things correctly. Starting in January of 2002, the body was sanded down to the gelcoat and parts that had been body-filled were re-fiberglassed. Rear deck louvers were built and installed by Spokane Tin and gas filled cylinders were added to hold the rear deck open. A new spoiler was put on and the side vents were better integrated into the body and made functional, feeding the air cleaner in sort of ram air configuration.

A second hood scoop was cut and the openings were molded into the hood. The wiring was redone and new signal and marker lights were added. The headlight tunnels were remolded and proper headlight hardware was mounted. The interior was completely rebuilt with a more form-fitting dash and console, with some new gauges and switches being added along with all new aluminum dash and door pieces.

The openings below the rear bumper were filled, formed and fiberglassed and the bumper itself was more smoothly molded into the car body. Ventilation fans were mounted behind openings in the rear wheel wells to better facilitate airflow into the engine compartment. Driving lights were installed in the front and bracing as made for the front hood and rear deck. A new stereo and speakers were put in and 15" Centerlines replaced the old 14" slotted mags. The suspension was raised 1.5"-2" both in front and back to better facilitate the larger wheels and tires and fix the problem of the rear wheels "squatting down".

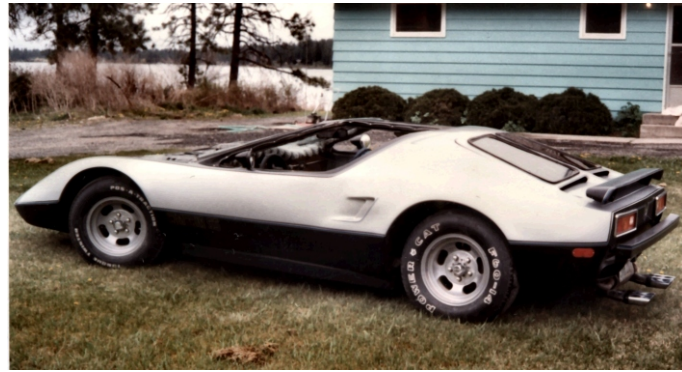
Can you identify his taillights?
Answer in next issue!



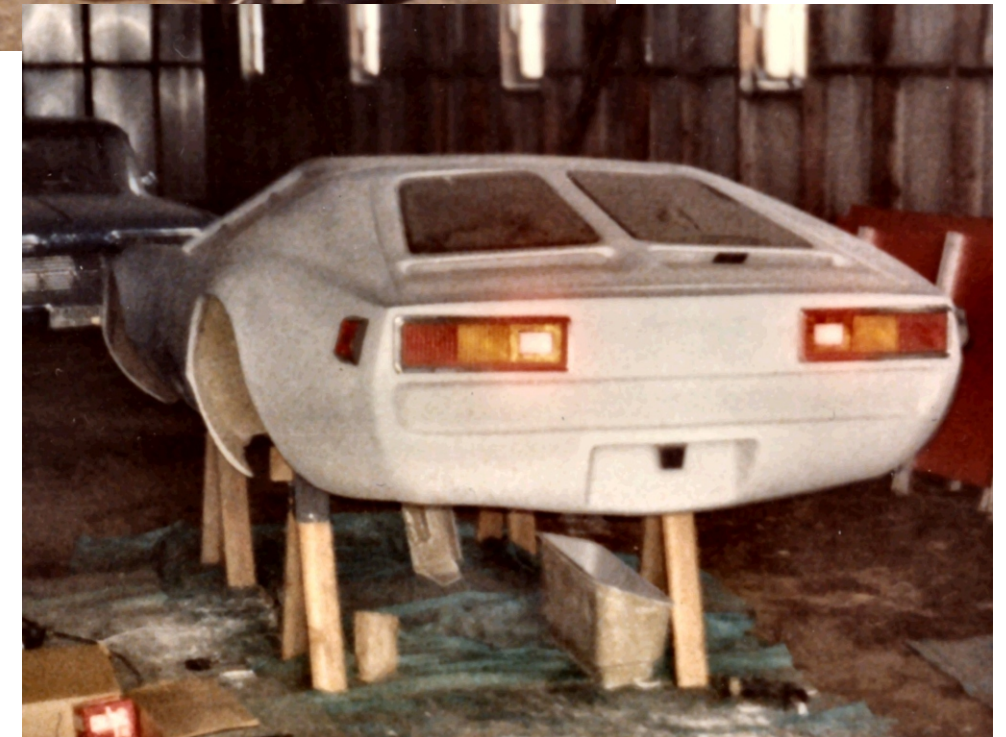
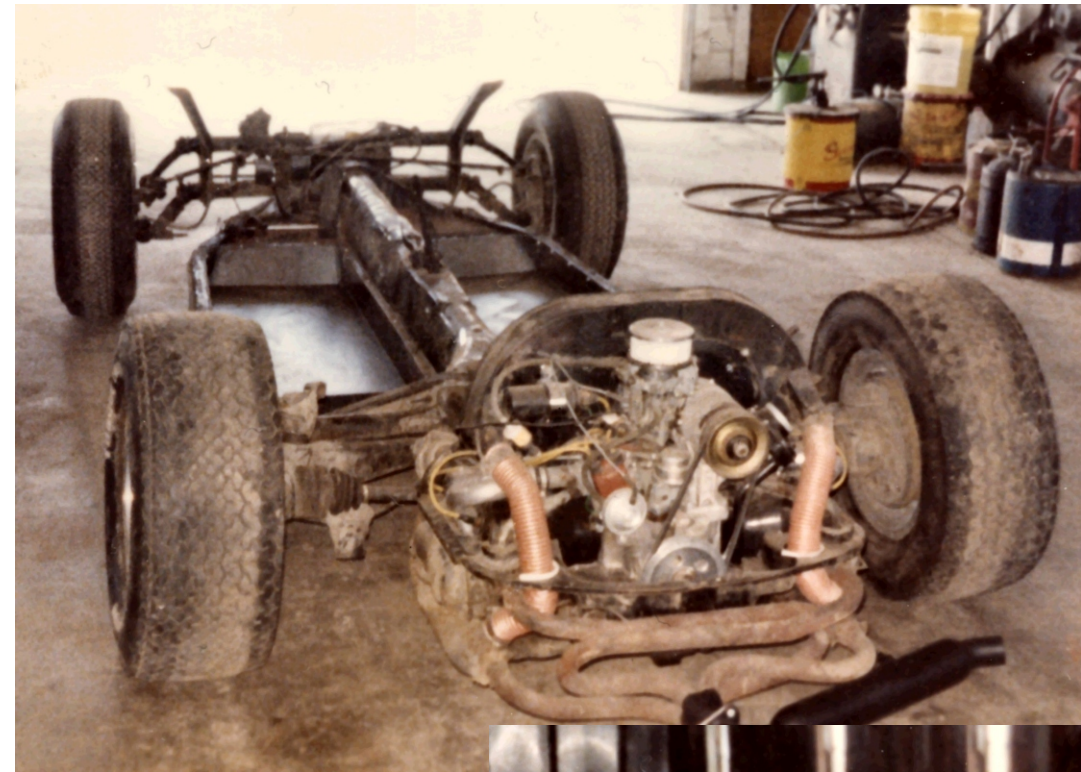
Can't wait for the finished, painted photos!
-ed.

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VERSION 2.0



VERSION 2.5



I had been considering some updates for a few years by now, and it was time for the car's first major revision since completion. This was obviously a fair weather car, so I wanted the top to be open (I also got tired of having my head continually hitting the roof). The top of the gullwing doors were cut out and the doors were then molded into the body. A clear snap-in top (like boats have) was made for those times I didn't want to be completely exposed to the elements. The car was so low that stepping over the side to get in and out wasn't much of a problem. A Monza style exhaust replaced the old headers and a rear spoiler was added. The rear windows were tinted and a fake NACA duct was cut into the hood (due to a fascination with the Porsche 924 turbo that I was experiencing at the time). Gone was the front bumper due to repeated scraping on speed bumps and driveways. The interior and dash were redone with new upholstery, switches, carpeting and wood. The most obvious change was the new paint job in silver and black with a more subdued striping scheme.

(con't on page 7)

THE ALPHA VERSION



THE BETA VERSION

By 1979 all the parts had been assembled into a functioning car. The wiring, interior pieces, carpet, seats and upholstery had all been finished and the car was ready to go to the painter.

The glass and weatherstripping still needed to be installed along with what were termed “bumpers”, but only in a cosmetic sense.

It had taken over a year and considerably more than the 120 hours listed in the brochure, but my car was almost ready to hit the street.

Little did I realize that this was not only the end of one project, but rather the start of another one.

I learned not to travel without a toolbox, and over the next 25 years practically every aspect of the car would undergo some degree of modification.



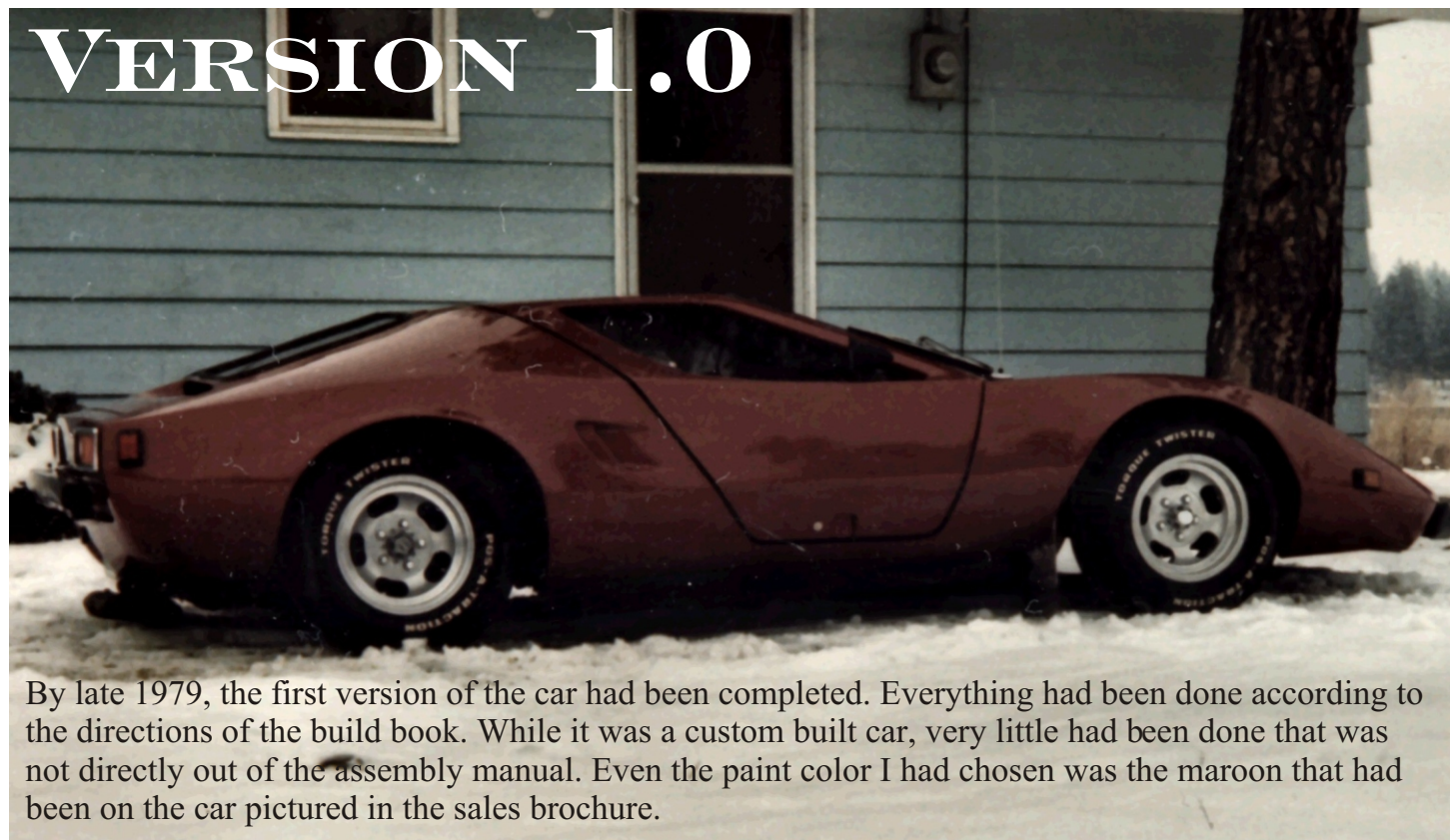
At this point, many of the shortcomings of the kit that would later become apparent had not shown up yet. Most of the work involved fine-tuning and tweaking various parts of the car that seemed to continuously be needing attention.

But basically, the novelty of the car made it a lot of fun and its deficiencies were more easily overlooked than would be the case later on. I thought that I was finally done, but ideas about what I could and/or should have done to improve on the basic kit were beginning to pop into my head.

It didn't take me long to start adding my own customizing touches. Admittedly I went a little overboard applying graphics and pinstriping to the car. I had custom headers made and added driving lights to the front. Amore Cars wanted a completed example of their kit to be in a major car show in San Francisco.

In spite of the distance from Spokane, it appeared that my car was the closest finished example available, so they paid to get my car in the show. It was my first (and only) show until version 3.0. Mount St. Helens erupted that weekend, so I took the car down to LA for a week.

VERSION 1.0



By late 1979, the first version of the car had been completed. Everything had been done according to the directions of the build book. While it was a custom built car, very little had been done that was not directly out of the assembly manual. Even the paint color I had chosen was the maroon that had been on the car pictured in the sales brochure.

VERSION 1.25

