

BACK IN BLACK

Larry Castaneda
Never Wanted a
'67 Nova in the
First Place

Larry Castaneda's '67 Nova story starts off like a lot of other classic car stories. "There was an old lady who had the car sitting in her backyard. A friend of my uncle knew it was there, and one day in 1991, he bought it off the old lady and began cruising it around. Around the same time, I had gotten my driver's permit and was looking for a car, but I wasn't looking for an old beat-up '67 Nova," Castaneda says.



"So one day at school, I received a note from my uncle Art saying that he had found me a car and to go see it after school. Well, all day I was imagining a brand-new truck, car or something pretty new. Boy was I wrong. When I arrived, I was shocked to see this '67 Nova, but after a while the shock wore off, and my uncle told me he would fix it up. At least I had some wheels. So, I enlisted a friend to start working on it in his spare time, but that didn't go anywhere. Later that summer, we found a shop to do the bodywork and paint, and the upholstery was done, too. I became known as the guy with the blue Nova. This was an instant

popularity boost," Castaneda says.

He drove the car through his high school years, junior college and to all the baseball games near and far. It was a very reliable car, and he trusted it more than a new car. Eventually, however, wear and tear took their toll. He needed to drive the car less or park it. He ended up moving to Hawaii for two years, and when he returned, the first thing he did was get the Nova running again with the idea that someday he'd have to do more work on it. That day came in 2002, when he parked it with the idea that he wouldn't drive it again until he was ready to really fix it up. Four years passed with a lot of

looking at magazines and dreaming about what the car would be like. In 2006, Castaneda found Marcus Geisler and all the guys at Auto Image Restorations and Customs in Camarillo, California, and he embarked on the yearlong process of building the car to the way you see it today.

"It was an experience of a lifetime," Castaneda says. "I couldn't have done it alone, and I have to thank my uncle Art and my wife, Korina. If you need to find me, I'll be flying down the Pacific Coast Highway. Ooooooh.... goosebumps, can you feel them?"

Back in 2006, Castaneda met with

Geisler at Auto Image (805/445-8087) to discuss the building of a supercar that turned out to be "Back in Black." Castaneda immediately knew he had come to the right place after going to several other shops and having everyone tell him it couldn't be done in a Nova. Geisler told him yes, but he wanted to make some changes to the 1/24-scale model they were using as a rendering. "Though I was unsure at the time," Castaneda says, "his mods became phenomenal and helped to truly set the car apart."

After agreeing to give creative control of his dream to Auto Image, they began

work immediately. The company tore the car down to nothing and then soda-blasted the body, revealing that what Castaneda thought was nice really wasn't. Geisler offered his sage advice to Castaneda, "Don't worry, they look real ugly before they look pretty. It's just part of the process."

The turnkey car sports a Kenne Bell twin-screw supercharged and intercooled LS2 engine from Turn Key Engine Supply. The engine now cranks out 700 hp and 680 lb-ft of torque using custom headers and a polished stainless steel exhaust built by Bryant Fabrication. Backing up the engine is a 4L80E trans-

mission from Phoenix Transmissions that was built to handle 1,000 hp. The trans uses a billet input shaft, billet converter with 3,000-rpm stall, Compushift controller, Shiftworks linkage and the stock shifter.

The rearend is built to handle the horsepower, too. A Chris Alston's Chassisworks 9-inch housing uses Strange Engineering components, including 40-spline axles, 3.70 gears and a locker. The rearend is Jet Hot-coated. Of course, the chassis had to be beefed up as well, and that was also done with some of Chris Alston's Chassisworks parts. The front clip was Jet Hot-coated,



and the rearend is connected with a four-link suspension system using custom sub-frame connectors and tubs. The air suspension is an Air Ride Technologies unit, and a custom stainless steel gas tank was built by Bryant Fabrication.

Wilwood 13-inch rotors were installed in the front, while 12-inch rotors were attached to the back. Four-piston calipers clamp down the pads for secure stopping. Asanti AF 120 wheels (20 inches in the rear and 19 inches in the front) have just the right look for a modern classic.

The crew at Auto Image really had

their work cut out for them on the body of the '67. Not only did they fix all the rust and usual years of damage, but they also did a lot of custom work. The drip rails were softened, all moldings, handles and locks were shaved, and the seams were filled. A lot of fabrication was done by Auto Image, including a custom firewall, transmission and driveshaft tunnel and wheel tubs, and the floor was reshaped to fit the contours of the custom stainless fuel tank. A custom full-length Borla exhaust system snakes its way through the chassis and around the fuel tank.

A set of '06 AutoNik headlights and blinkers were installed, and the bumpers were smoothed. Custom one-piece door glass was installed, and front and back glass with no trim was added. When everything was done, Auto Image sprayed Sherwin-Williams Ultra 7000 Pure Black (no tone) on the car. Once the body was done, the interior was attacked. Maserati leather in black and white was used by JB Customs in Camarillo to cover the modified factory seats. The dash was modified, and custom rod gauges were installed. A Ron Francis wiring harness was installed, but

the Budnik black-wrapped billet steering wheel gets all of the attention. To keep the passengers entertained, Castaneda installed a complete Pioneer system with a touch-screen, Eclipse speakers, amp, navigation system with voice recognition and more.

However, it's the sound of the LS2 engine and the overall great looks of this super car that really entertain everyone. And to think, at one point Castaneda wasn't the least bit interested in this Nova. Funny how some things change.

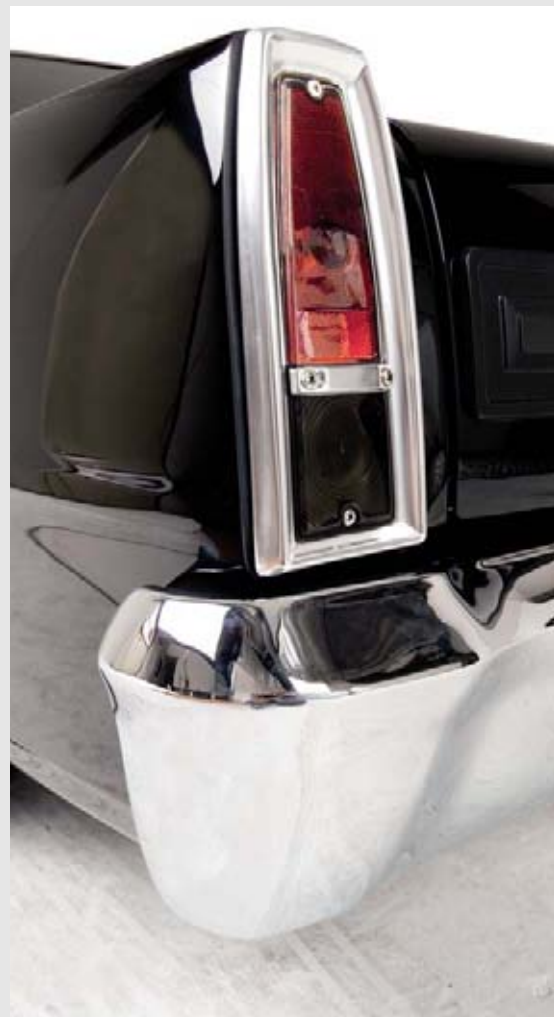
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The Maserati leather interior is spectacular. The seats are modified factory units.



An LS2 with a Kenne Bell supercharger pumps out 700 hp. An intercooler is located below the radiator.



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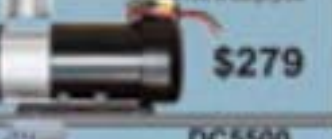
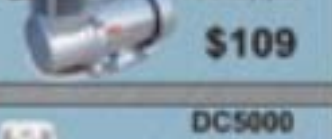
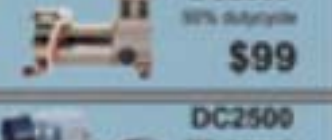
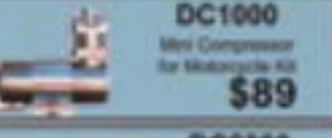
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