

Classy Chassis

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BOREDOM STRIKES – WIFE INSISTS I BUY ANOTHER CAR

It was early November 2020, and all the cars in the barn were running well. Tom Link and I had just gotten his SPARE 1953 218 CID Plymouth Flat Head 6 cylinder running after it had sat in his garage for close to 30 years. I was running out of things to do and my wife Pat kept urging me to buy another car to help maintain our sanity. Being mindful of the fact that I had just purchased a 1964 Plymouth Valiant in the spring, I started looking for another project, possibly one that the 218 engine could fit in. As luck would have it I found a 1948 Plymouth 2 Door Special Coupe on-line and so the story begins. I called the seller and found out that the engine in the car was stuck. It had been in storage for the last 20 years. The ad claimed the car had been at a car show and won cruiser of the night. It was driven home and pulled into his storage warehouse where it sat for the next 20 years. The story continues that they decided to sell the car, but when they went to get it started, it wouldn't turn over. Photos showed the interior and undercarriage to be very good, with a lot of recently replaced items like springs, shocks, and carburetor rebuild, and the owner claims to have rebuilt the engine a short time before he parked it. Oh, did I mention it has an overdrive worth \$\$\$\$. Chrome

looked very good and the price was in the ballpark for a project. The only real downside besides the engine was the car was painted PINK. Negotiations continued



The Arrival

for about 2 weeks and eventually I was able to purchase the car for 80% of asking, which was low to begin with.

On November 27, 2020, Tom Link, Merrill Moone and I began our journey to Maple Shade, NJ, with car trailer in tow to pick up the car. We left at 4:00 AM and arrived in



Rolling into the garage

NJ by 10:00 AM. An hour or so to pay for and load the car (lot of pushing) onto the trailer, we were back on the road again. Little slower driving home, but we arrived in Green Hill before dark. With a little help from a neighbor, we were able to roll Pinky into the garage.



Nice Interior

Tom had been pretty confident that we could break the engine free, if everything we were told was true. Unfortunately that was not the case. After 2 weeks of soaking

the engine with everything from Kroil to



Engine upon arrival – STUCK

Marvel Mystery Oil, and rocking the car to no avail, we decided that we had to pull the head. Once the head was off, we discovered that there were marks in the pistons from a star washer, and one piston was cracked down to the ring. We pulled the pan down and disconnected the rod bearings. The oil was so black and thick that I had to use a putty knife to remove the oil. The crank turned freely and the head itself looked good. Then the tapping of the



Finished Engine

pistons began. More soaking including the secret ingredient Home Made Vinegar and tapping!! Eventually we were able to get a 5 of the 6 pistons out, but the last piston took a 10 pound sledge hammer to remove. Fortunately all the piston walls were still in original spec, so a new set of pistons, new rings and push rod bearings and one new

valve, and we were able to put the engine back together without taking it out of the car. We pushed it out to the door, and turned over the engine. After 3 or 4 tries, it started. Billowing smoke from all the fluids we put down the exhaust pipes, it took about 5 or 10 minutes, and it cleared up, purring like a kitten.



We since have gotten all the minor issues corrected, including wiring the overdrive, universal joint boots, new seat tracks, and RF brake backing plate. The car is ready for summer cruising. **Dave Calabrese**



Ready for Cruising

A Good Year with Good Progress: 1901 Orient

The best way for me to bring you up to date is to start with setbacks and progress we had near late last year. The first problem was when I found that I was missing two gears from the transmission. It is a planetary transmission so there are many gears. The two ones missing were two of three originals that did the same job.

I needed to have new gears made so I had three done so all of them would be identical. I have a friend who owns a gear company in Yalesville, CT. ([JoVal Machine Shop](#)). He is an old car guy who's newest car is a 1909. I knew that he was the right man for the job. His company expected the machining of the gears take three weeks. Covid nearly closed them but they were able to work some hours on four days a week. They did a high quality job but it took three months.



Planetary Gears

The new gears are the shiny ones. There is a set of three gears that are in contact with the large, inner-facing drum gear on the forward direction.

This is a pretty complex planetary transmission. The gear in the center, with the keyway in it, is the sun gear. Outside of that are the three planet gears. Outside of the planet gears are the three moon gears. They are also inside of the drum gear as mentioned before.

Another part that experienced a very long period of work was the flywheels and shafts for the engine. I wanted to have the flywheels balanced and the shafts aligned. The best place to have this done was a motorcycle shop. I found one in Branford that has machinery of the proper size to do my requested work.

The first step was to balance the two flywheels. One of the major reasons for the balance changes was the fact that we made a new connecting rod of aluminum and installed a new Harley-Davidson aluminum piston. The balancing went well although it took a lot of holes to get it done.

When the shop began to ensure that the rotation of the three shafts attached to the flywheels was straight they found that the pinion shaft and crank pin were fine but the long shaft that runs from the flywheel through the transmission was bent .005 inches. Even though we had replaced this shaft the material we used was not within tolerance.

I purchased a new shaft made of chrome-moly steel in an oversize diameter. The motorcycle shop machined it and I then brought it to a precision grinder that I have used for years. They did a wonderful job and the shop got the whole thing put together well within tolerances.

Below is the engine in the car. You can see the flywheels with the connecting rod between the



two of them. The small, black gear on the near end of the crankcase is the pinion gear on the short pinion shaft. You can also see the long transmission shaft on the back side of the engine. The engine has now been totally assembled (**below, left**) and we are preparing it for the upcoming test run. I do not have enough room here to tell of the work we have accomplished on all the little parts. However, I do want to send you one photo from last fall that

shows our progress to that point. This is the completed body of the 1901 Orient. The new wheels are complete as is the original wooden body. The original seat was reupholstered in New York. At the time this photo was taken, the transmission and engine were out being worked on but it still makes a nice photo.

George King III



Assembled Engine



Completed Body and New Wheels

Events and Internet Links

Gerry Lynn

[Klingberg](#) Drive-Thru Father's Day Event, June 19, 2021

[Audrain Motorsport](#) Olde World – New England 165, Sunday, April 11, 2021 and the [Audrain Newport Concours & Motor Week](#), Thursday, Sept. 30-Sunday, Oct. 3, 2021.

[Audrain video](#), 1904 Curved Dash Olds

[Audrain video series](#), Leno and Osborne in Audrain Mansions & Motorcars, 5 episodes.

[Art Deco Cars That Are Still Beautiful Today](#) in Brake For It. (multiple screen clicks required)

Submitted Photos: Vickie VanHorn's mom



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Vickie VanHorn's Dad