





# SEVENTH (GRADE) HEAVEN

RIDES

Harry Funke built his Impala to impress a most-important 12-year-old: the one inside him that never quite grew up

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**\*You never forget** your first time. Harry Funke remembers his. The goosebumps. That tingling sensation. Butterflies in his belly. The whoosh of adrenaline as things got going hot and heavy. How could he forget that ride in his neighbor's '61 409 Impala?

"It was 1963 and I was in the seventh grade," he fondly recalls. "Been a car junkie ever since."

But it's an addiction that's done Harry well. It inspired him to go into business for himself (he owns Morgan-Bulleigh Inc., a trim shop in Wichita, Kansas). And he's fed his addiction over the years with various projects, like his long-term '57 Chevy.

And it was in the storage space for the '57 that this story begins. Something caught Harry's eye. It was a '62 Impala, a car not all that different than the one that got his ball rolling as a kid. And it belonged to the son of the original owner.



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The car arrived to the space in 2003. It had the goods: at one point it went from white to silver and the interior got dyed black. Though born a 283/three-speed, it currently had a 327 and a four-speed. And as the story went, it even had a 409 for a while. This car, it was a hot rod.

Later, Harry noticed something else. The car sat. And sat. And sat some more. "Luckily, I started making inquiries," Harry says. Lucky because the owner was getting ready for another change, this time a change of scenery. He was going back to Nashville. "Stars lined up and I bought the car," he says. "The rest is history."

Harry teamed up with Eric Sorenson to put the car back right. They basically restored the car sort of in the likeness of a hot car from the time



when Harry was a kid. Typical for that time period, they had Howard Van Slyke update the exterior color. For the interior, everything but the seat came from C.A.R.S. Inc. For the seat, Kevin Dicus made a cover in '60's-period narrow (half-inch) pleats using restoration-grade turquoise and black vinyl from C.A.R.S.

Jack Gibbs built another 409 for the car, this time with a significant update (as a stroker no less). And rather than four, the transmission now has five forward gears, the last one an overdrive to make the deep-geared Currie 9+ rearend more highway friendly. This time around the car got a complete climate-control system, only it does everything from behind the dash. Four-wheel discs make it stop better than it ever could've imagined possible when new.

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One could argue that Harry Funke modified his car to make it safe on modern roads and keep up with traffic. That's true. But I'm not willing to accept that's the only reason this car is this way. It's too logical. And logical is boring.

I propose at least one more reason. Remember the '61 409 that belonged to the neighbor? That thing was the rowdiest car in the world, at least to Harry the seventh grader.

But y'know what'll dust off a '61 409? Most secondhand cars nowadays.

Asking a car to fulfill the promise made by a seventh-grader's memory is a tall order. But I have a feeling that Harry may have done just that. You can call it a restomod or whatever, but I'd just as soon call it a hot rod time machine. And I think he'd agree.

### TECH CHECK

Owner: Harry and Judy Funke, Towanda, Kansas  
Vehicle: 1962 Impala Sport Coupe

#### Engine

- **Type:** 409
- **Displacement:** 473 ci
- **Compression Ratio:** 10.5:1
- **Bore:** 4.3425 inches
- **Stroke:** 4.0000 inches
- **Rotating Assembly:** Eagle crankshaft, Scat 6.135-inch connecting rods
- **Valvetrain:** Comp Cams XR294HR cam and rockers (PN 1620-16)
- **Induction:** Factory dual-quad manifold, Edelbrock AVS Thunder 1803/4 500-cfm carburetor
- **Exhaust:** Factory 409 manifolds with 2 1/2-inch pipes; MagnaFlow mufflers
- **Ancillaries:** US Radiator copper/brass radiator, PML rocker covers, Billet Specialties Tru Trac serpentine system
- **Output:** 512 lb-ft at 4,300 rpm, 487 hp at 5,600 rpm

#### Drivetrain

- **Transmission:** TREMEC T-56
- **Rear Axle:** Currie 9+ with 3.73:1 gears, Eaton limited-slip, Currie shafts

#### Chassis

- **Steering:** Saginaw 605 power-assist
- **Front Suspension:** Classic Performance Products spindles and antiroll bar
- **Rear Suspension:** Classic Performance Products antiroll bar and Panhard bar
- **Brakes:** GM-style with single-piston floating calipers

#### Wheels & Tires

- **Wheels:** American Racing Torq-Thrust D 15x7 front, 15x8 rear
- **Tires:** BFGoodrich Radial T/A 215/70 front, 255/60 rear

#### Interior

- **Seats:** Stock frames with covers handmade by Kevin Dicus from C.A.R.S. restoration-grade vinyl (turquoise and black)
- **Upholsterer:** Morgan-Bulleigh (Wichita, KS)
- **Audio:** Stock head unit with Antique Auto Radio conversion, 43-2201-B
- **Instrumentation:** Stock with Sun tachometer
- **HVAC:** Vintage Air
- **Insulation:** Roadkill
- **Steering Wheel:** Classic Industries 15-inch reproduction
- **Carpet:** C.A.R.S. tuxedo weave
- **Shifter:** Stock shift stalk on TREMEC base

#### Exterior

- **Prep/Bodywork:** Howard Van Slyke, Van Slyke Body Shop (Pratt, KS)
- **Paint:** PPG DBC base/clear (4716); GM WA9794 Bright Teal