



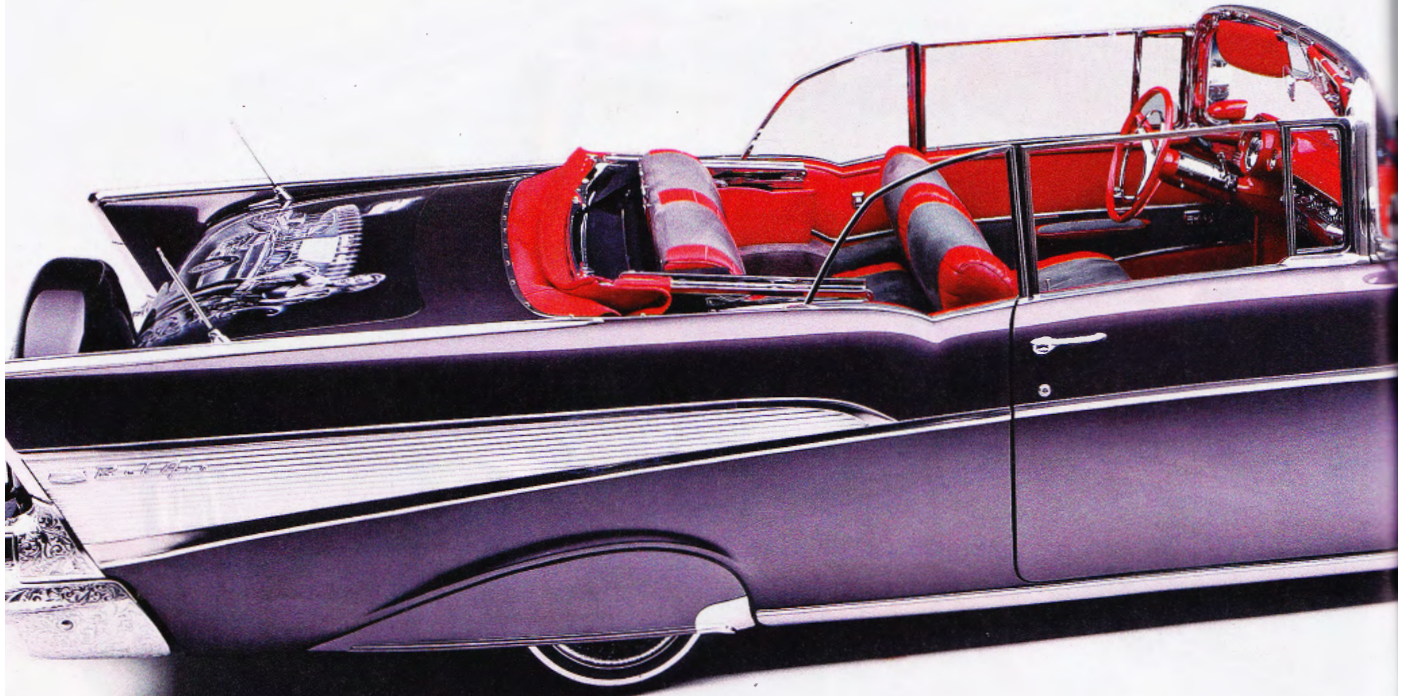


LIFE'S TEMPTATIONS

HOW A CHANCE ENCOUNTER CREATED THIS SULTRY '57

STORY & PHOTOS BY BETO MENDOZA

"[TWEET] ROLLED UP IN HIS '57 RAG JAMMING TO THE TEMPTATIONS AND I WAS INSTANTLY HOOKED. I KNEW RIGHT THEN AND THERE THAT I HAD TO BUILD ONE."



In life, every second brings about another opportunity to influence history. Some will do it by choice, others will do it by chance, but our next featured guest, Robert Ramos, was influenced by a chance encounter that would forever rewrite his own lowriding legacy.

A few years back he made a trip out to Los Angeles to have his '61 Impala convertible photographed in the *Lowrider* magazine studio. To make the most of the trip, he also planned to attend the Majestics New Year's picnic—which he did—but after the show he parked his car in storage at the Hop Shop and that's

when he ran into Tweet (Professionals Car Club). At the time, it seemed like nothing more than a casual encounter, but as Robert goes on to explain, the meeting turned out to be one that inspired his next build. "[Tweet] rolled up in his '57 rag jamming to the Temptations and I was instantly hooked. I knew right then and there that I had to build one." With a number of builds already under his belt Tweet's '57 left a lasting impression on him, leaving him no other choice than to build one for himself.

Wasting no time, he set out to find the right '57 rag to build and

This LS-equipped '57 Rag is a show, go, and low exclusive.

after a few months of searching he found one in Dallas at the Accel Auto Group. It was an older restoration that was done in the '70s but the car was complete and the perfect candidate for a complete overhaul. With the deal sealed, and the car in his possession, the brainstorming began and so did the build.

For starters, Last Minute Customs dropped a fully tricked-out LS2 into the frame that Shane Bernhardt had fully reinforced. Additional amenities include the Billet Specialties kit, Fast LSXR intake, and Hooker headers that seem to take center stage as the shaved firewall helps clean up the

1957 CHEVROLET BEL AIR

VEHICLE NICKNAME

Fifties Heven

OWNER

Robert Ramos

CITY/STATE

Pasadena, TX

CLUB

Latin Kustoms

SOUND SYSTEM

Retrosound head unit, DB Drive amplifier and mids, and four JL Audio 10-inch subs

BODY/PAINT

Lesonal charcoal gray

WHEELS/TIRES

All engraved 13x7 Zenith with Premium Sportways 5.20s

INTERIOR

Red leather and gray suede was used in the original factory look. And ididit chrome steering column and Dakota Digital VHX gauges finished off the interior

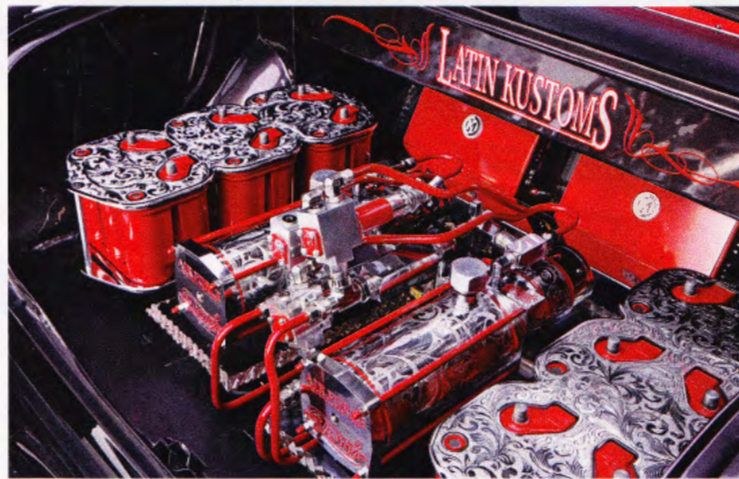
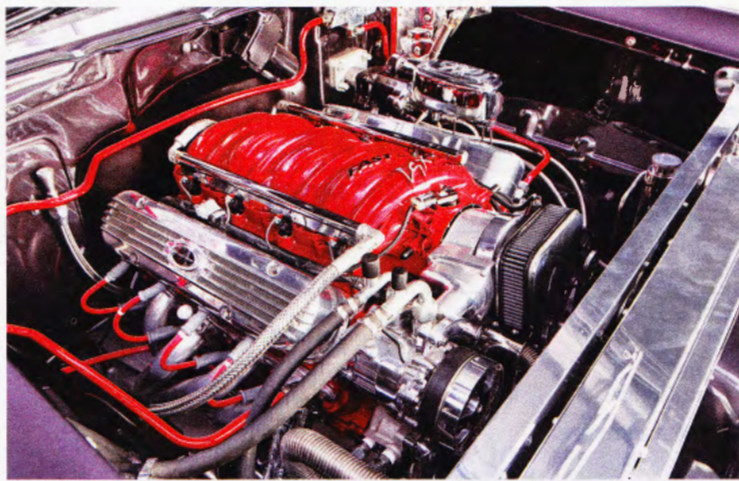
ENGINE

LS2 with Billet Specialties valve covers/engine dress-up kit, Street Performance air cleaner, Edelbrock water pump, Mattson radiator, Powermaster alternator/starter, Fast LSXR intake manifold, Hooker headers, MSD wires, and Flowmaster exhaust

SUSPENSION

CPP brakes/master cylinder/booster and fully reinforced frame. The setup consists of two Shorty Hydraulics bladder pumps with three Adex dumps, Accumax solenoids, and six Optima batteries.





The locked and loaded look of hood rockets and front bumper bullets make this all-time beauty a boulevard killer.



perimeter of the engine bay. From there, Ricks Hot Rods eliminated the spare tire compartment in order to fit a larger, 20-gallon stainless steel gas tank, while George Gonzalez took care of the bodywork before Shane Ely laid down the charcoal gray paintjob. To add a little kick to the paintjob, Verrick Falcon airbrushed a classic diner scene with a pair of '57 rags on the trunklid, all the while

Clearwater Customs was having fun dropping in a pair of Shorty Hydraulic pumps with six Optima batteries. In the end, it's easy to summarize a list of the mods, but in total the car only took a year to build, with receipts totaling some \$200,000.

A hefty investment, to say the least, Robert can recall the first time he took it out to a local car show. He can still remember the

*Latin
Kustoms
Bel Air from
Pasadena,
Texas.*

crowd it drew, the eyes that were taking in every single detail, and the stares of excitement and joy that came along with it. He still remembers sitting back and soaking up the experience, and it gave him a feeling of accomplishment. And while he's built plenty of cars, this one is an iconic build that he's extremely proud of. ●