

Find a car on the internet Buy the car in Connecticut Ship to a restorer in Texas Wait 18 months, then... See the car for the very first time. Shane Balkowitsch is enthusiastic, determined, idealistic and maybe a little crazy. And his Outlaw C Coupe is a Knockout.



Shane Balkowitsch is rightly proud of his “new” 356. In January he drove it for the first time, just moments after laying eyes on it for the first time. For him it was a single day filled with excitement, but that day had been preceeded by some 18 months of other days of planning and arranging its restoration from a distance. In fact, that January day was the culmination of a goal that had been many years in developing. Shane may have taken an unusual route, but he now has the car of his dreams.

“I always knew I did not want a modern car,” he says. “My thought was anyone can go to a car lot and buy a car right off the lot if you have enough money, but that did not appeal to me. So I started looking into the early 1970 911 cars and what I found was the granddaddy of all things Porsche, the original model that started it all, the 356. I think it was the history that surrounded these cars that made me quickly realize that this was the model for me.”

But what kind of 356? Shane admits the model was not as important as the requirement it should reflect his own ideas. He explains, “I started looking at hundreds and hundreds of images of 356 cars and I just gravitated towards the Outlaws. Not that the stock cars are not nice, but if I was going to go through the trouble of building a car from scratch, why not make it my own. With a stock car everything is already laid out for you, the decisions have been made, with an Outlaw the sky is the limit and that is what I wanted. I kept saving images of cars and details that I liked about the early Porsche model and these images inevitably were of Outlaw cars.”

Looking for advice, Shane searched online. “I googled Porsche 356 Restorer and found Bill Hamilton on the internet. I picked up the phone and called him. Bill must have quickly realized that this guy on the phone did not even own a 356 at the time. So why would he spend an hour with me talking about these cars? The answer is that this is what he does, he loves these cars. We had many phone calls over the span of weeks before we even found a car for me. Bill had no guarantee that I would ever purchase a 356 and if I did, that I would bring it to him after all his help.”

For his part, Bill did feel Shane was serious about the pursuit.

“I had no idea about the difference between an A car, a B car or a C car, for all I knew there was a Z car in the lineup,” Shane says of his first conversations with Bill. “But Bill continued to humor me and teach me the differences and what we should look for. All I did know is that I wanted an Outlaw.” The whole range of 356s was considered, but in the end, the idea of having a driver rather than a trailer queen narrowed the field.

“This decision was not based on price,” Shane admits. “We talked about the early cars and Bill gave me the pros and cons of each and we went through the mental exercise about what we wanted from this car. The one factor that stuck out is that even though we were restoring the car to a high level, at the end of the day the car was going to be on the road and driven. No trailer queen for me. A later C car, the evolution of 15 years of improvements, and with disc brakes made sense for our project.” At that point, the search for a solid C car was on.

On the Fourth of July, 2009 Shane bought a C Coupe in Connecticut, some 1500 miles from his North Dakota home. He describes the find: “A former owner blew up the original motor and the car was towed to Pray Porsche where it was put up for sale without a motor. The next owner purchased the car from Pray and a spare motor (the motor presently in the car) with the intentions of completely restoring it with his son. Their progress amounted to a complete strip-down and disassembly, and there it sat for over two decades. This is where I come into the picture. The owner was going to move, so they put it on eBay, where I found it. There was only the photo and little interest in it because of the condition of the car. I ever bought this would have a big chore getting it back on the road and I


was the only guy to show some interest. Bill called him, asked all the right questions to make sure we had a complete car and I overnighted him a money order. I was the proud owner of a complete basket case Porsche 356! However, I had now met one of my goals that I set for myself as a kid. I always wanted to own a Porsche by the time I was 40, and here I was at that ripe old age sending money to Connecticut, buying a car that I had never seen.”

The car was shipped to Bill’s shop in Martindale, Texas and before work began, the first of many discussions took place. “He was very supportive,” Shane says of Bill, “and he said that if we were going to do an Outlaw there is a right way and a wrong way to do one and that he would show me the way.” A key launching point was Shane’s attitude about his investment - one that differed from most owners. “I never plan on selling this car unless for some reason I cannot feed my family. The car will be with me for the rest of my life and I am not worried about resale value. With that concept I am set free to not worry about things other people would worry about, like welding up bumper holes or removing the ashtray.”

Like a long-distance romance, a restoration project can be fraught with peril. This collaboration, however, was successful - with both parties bringing value to the table. “I had never seen the car in person and I knew I would not get down to see it until it was finished,” Shane explains, “so the only thing I could bring to the project was the thought process and ideas for the build. Bill handled all the technical aspects and knew what parts he needed and made sure we got it. I was able to order many parts myself and I really enjoyed this part, but I stuck to things where I could not get into trouble. I ordered the wheels and seats and if I did order something that was more technical, Bill gave me the go-ahead and made sure I got what we needed. Bill always viewed this as my car, and even if he did not like something he would be honest about it: he knew I would have to live with my decisions. His feelings and my feelings were never hurt in this process. It was a joint effort; we both knew our role and I could not have asked for a better teammate.”

An Outlaw driver deserves a serious motor and that’s what Bill built for the car. The 1883cc powerplant should put out about 150 hp using a Scat racing crank, Carrillo rods, Nickies cylinders with JE lightweight pistons, an LN Engineering performer camshaft and heads, and Stebro Stainless quad slant tip exhaust. Competition Engineering did the machine work. The suspension was tweaked and lowered 1.5 inches and the car wears 5.5 inch Minilites. The other outer touches are a special silver paint with a subtle white stripe. The silver formula came from Jens Torner at the Porsche archives, replicating the exact color of Porsche 356-01. Bumpers and rocker trim were deleted, although all window brightwork was re-chromed. Iron Cross torsion bar covers (homage to Dean Jeffries), racing tow hooks, a Spyder mirror and SC rear badge are the only decorations.

Inside, there are Speedster seats in leather with Deist racing seat belts, gray square weave carpet and a special Emory Outlaw Eagle shift knob. The ashtray was removed because, as Shane says, “It looked like an afterthought to me and being an Oncology Nurse, I am not a smoker. What do I need an ash tray for?” Everything else that is visible and not visible was rebuilt, resulting in a car that is pretty close to new - and pretty unique.

“I think we made all the right decisions to make it everything it could be. Bill has allowed me to make this car mine in every way and I am thankful for that,” Shane proudly states. “The only plan I have for the car is to drive it. This is not a trailer car or a show car. It was put together by Bill to be driven and enjoyed. I understand my role as the caretaker of this wonderful car for years to come and I hope someday my kids look back at the car and the process, and even scratches and maybe dents and say, ‘Dad did that’.” **GM** 



Special leather Speedster seats, dynamat insulation, a few Outlaw touches and serious motor. Below: Derrington wheel, sewn dash cover, drilled pedals and rebuilt gauges. Bottom: Shane on the day he “met” his new car.

