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Viewpoint

The terms “restomod” and “restored” are common. Maybe it’s time for a new one.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

BY LARRY JEWETT

Ever since the word “restomod” came into the automotive hobby, people have struggled with it. For many, it was either restored or it was not. In some cases, it was either modified or it was not. No shades of gray in that argument.

Restomod became more familiar, but the argument goes on about just how much modification is done with a restomod and how much is necessary. There are places where a car can be considered “stock” even if there have been up to “X” number of changes done on it. When it comes to safety or certain modernizing aspects, those who categorize will look the other way and allow certain modifications as if they didn’t really occur.

As we were ogling John Marques’ 1957 Corvette that is on the cover and featured later in this issue, the question of classification came up. This car is hard to pin down. How many times we have walked through the show field where hundreds of cars gather and had the same thought?

Without giving away the story, John’s car has parts that were not available when the car was built. There are some things that are not obvious and some things that are not what they seem.

Since it is not really a restoration

and doesn’t really meet all of the definitions of restomod, it eludes being placed in the box of easy to understand.

My thoughts drifted away from the automotive realm and how many a homeowner has routinely made changes to their place of living. It’s called “remodeling” and it may have a place in the automotive vernacular. We’re going call a car like John’s a “remod.”

If you think about it, it makes a little sense. The whole idea was to take a scale model and make the real thing, i.e., remodeling a model. The process was more about finding the compatible elements to get the improvement desired while paying respect to the foundation. Restoration wasn’t a goal, so originality took a hit with the Corvette. Modification wasn’t necessarily the driving force behind it, either. It was simply a remodel.

Many years ago, “restomod” didn’t exist (We actually got letters telling us it wasn’t a word). We’re not sure if “remod” is going to catch on or not, but it becomes a better way to allow someone to understand the rationale behind the project. Judge for yourself after you see the story. **BT**



SCALED-UP SPO

FUNCTIONAL FACTORY

BY ANDY BOLIG

Many enthusiasts can think back to when a certain car seated itself into their heart and mind. Maybe it was when they walked into a showroom or on a show-floor and they saw their sparkling destiny for the first time, when it indelibly sank the hook deep into their desires. John Marques knew exactly what he wanted, because it sat on his desk for years. It was a scaled-down model of an early '57 Corvette in the exact

color combination that he'd choose, if he were putting check marks in boxes way back when. In the midst of doing business throughout the day at his stainless repair and chrome plating shop, he would break the pace of prettying up everyone else's pride and joys to secretly pine for a day when he might realize his dream in full-scale.

One of the companies that employed

John's services at J&M Stainless Steel Repair (www.jmrestorations.com), was in fact J&M Enterprizes (www.jmenterprizesinc.com), a company that restores and rebuilds Corvettes. John Ames, at J&M Enterprizes, was delivering some parts to be refinished by John Marques, who began explaining to Ames about the pint-sized Corvette that resided on his desk and the full-sized version that, so far, he held only in his



RTS CAR

heart. The two spoke about opportunities and on one fateful trip, Marques confided that “it was time” to make the dream become reality and both men began searching for a suitable “kit” on which to begin.

Ultimately, they started with a boxed-up, early-production '57 that was

partially completed by a previous owner. Since the Silver Blue paint didn't match the one in John's mind, the car was stripped back down so that each nut and bolt would ultimately match the die-cast build manual that John had stared at lovingly for so long. That provided opportunity for



SCALED-UP SPORTS CAR



1 The four-speed was a factory option for John's '57, but the A/C took a little fabrication skills from the folks at J&M Enterprises to make you wonder if it wasn't. **2** The Vintage Air unit for '58-'62 Corvettes was adapted to work under the dash of the '57 and keen-eyed readers will note the AUX plug nearby for the MP3 player to adapt to the factory-appearing radio. **3** The engine bay is a nice touch between functional and factory. The Sanden compressor is highly efficient at cooling and the dual-fours keep the heat on when all barrels are pulled into use. **4** The blend between sediment-bowl filter and electric choke works seamlessly to allow the car to run reliably and properly. Originally, the car had a choke stove pipe that would reach down to the passenger's side exhaust manifold to operate the choke assembly.

J&M AND J&M to work together to build the perfect example that you see here.

The car was originally a dual-four with a three-speed, but it had a single-four when it arrived at J&M. In the process of putting the pieces back together again, a four-speed was swapped in and an original duo of carbs was once again placed atop the high-winding 283. Since Venetian Red was the color Chevrolet used for that year, that hue was used on this car, and like the color, many of the

original items were either restored or sourced to make this build as complete as any "nut-and-bolt" restoration. Of course, over the years, John had some time to think about things such as enjoying his Corvette in the Florida sun. Even though air-conditioning might not have been an option on this car, it was non-negotiable so far as he was concerned. A Vintage Air unit, originally designed for '58-'62 Corvettes, was modified to mount between the '57's dash and radiator support and

the folks at J&M modified the under-dash vent pod to blend more cleanly into the interior of the car. Underhood, a new Sanden compressor keeps the cooling gasses moving as needed and out front, an aluminum DeWitt's Direct-Fit radiator and cooling fan joins old and new by stashing the electric fan deep within the factory fan shroud. The DeWitt's unit has two different cfm ratings. Customers who wish to keep their factory generator (which also drives the tachometer), can opt for



5 The DeWitt's radiator and fan work together to keep the vintage-ness of the car while allowing the A/C to work to its full potential. Offering two different fans (for those with either generators or alternators) and that the factory fan shroud bolts in place to help disguise the fan, just shows how much thought went into designing the system. **6** The factory filter assembly still holds vigil under the engine, keeping true to the vintage feel of the '57. **7** There's more "resto" than "mod" with John's '57 and the NCRS publications still came in handy to make sure that the proper marks and materials were used throughout the project. **8** John had this die-cast Corvette in his office for years before he finally had one in his garage. This gave him opportunity to conjure up exactly what the real version would be and now he's able to realize how sweet his dreams really were. (Photo: Tim Ames)



the lower 1600cfm fan while those who upgrade to a higher-amperage alternator can go full-cool with a fan that churns out 2,360cfm.

Other upgrades within the build were made to perfect the driver status that John had dreamed about for so long. The front brakes were upgraded to discs, the distributor now relies on a PerTronix Ignitor II ignition system to keep the fires lit and a full complement of Coker wide-

whitewall radials were slipped over those 15-inch rims to make the car ride as good as John had dreamed.

While not considered a restomod, John's '57 makes use of some technology that surely would have been included in the original package, had GM had the means at the time the car was originally constructed. With tasteful restraint, the car also still carries all of the traits that endeared him to the little red Corvette that

resided in his office for so long. Had he wanted a techno-laden late-model Corvette with all the bells and whistles, he surely could have found one on many car lots. Conducting a total makeover project such as this, and adding to the overall package without removing any of its vintage appeal, takes a lot of consideration and thought. And that's exactly what John did before he finally got his scaled-up version of his perfect Corvette. *BP*