



MAXIMUM OVERTIME

**Anthony
Pittari's 1972
Ventura Looks
Vintage But
Runs Modern**

The art of the auto is something Anthony Pittari understands perhaps a little bit more than most of us, or at least with an uncommon perspective. The cancer survivor puts a special appreciation and passion into his life's work, welding a love of art with a lust for life. The result is custom cars built with indefatigable inspiration.

In 1998 Anthony was just 21 when

he beat Hodgkin's lymphoma and celebrated by building his first hot rod, a 1968 Chevelle, which got some glossy press. That car launched his home auto shop, which focused mainly on general repairs and maintenance.

Anthony was sick for two years, and for a long time it wasn't looking good. His doctors wanted him to focus on a reason to beat cancer, to have a



positive goal besides surviving the next chemotherapy and radiation treatment. "For me," said the ebullient builder, "my upbeat mindset, my reason for living was to finish what I started—to get the Chevelle done. That car was an inspiration to get better, but it's obviously different things for different people. It's what you want to live for, what you want out of life. Got to have a goal, this was my goal." In summary, he added this perspective: "Cancer was the worst, and best, thing to happen to me. If you can beat it, you have this zest for life you might never have had, a feeling for what life is truly about, a need to go out and live. I don't think I would have been the man I am, have the passion I have, without getting sick."

There is, however, no cure for custom; once it gets in your blood, it will never go away. Anthony took that drive and determination and turned it into

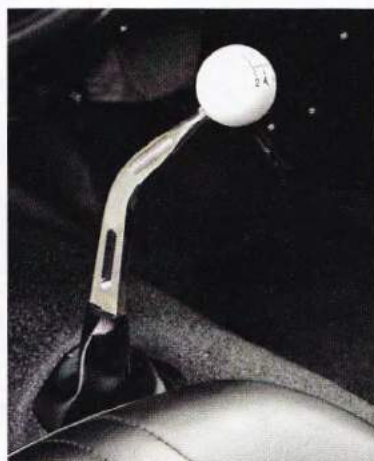
exacting attention to detail—fidelity to what he called the car's "spirit," and an unflinching pursuit of a job well done. He applied this creed to everything he does, including this sweet 1972 Pontiac Ventura. "I wanted a project, something special. I had done some hop-up work here and there, but I needed a custom job," said Anthony. "I didn't want to do another Camaro or Nova, but something different, something like a '77 Buick Century." And so the wrench from Staten Island started down a divergent road that would set him apart from the oily ordinary. The Century sold at Barrett-Jackson. More builds followed.

Today's feature car began, in a manner of speaking, with that 1977 Century. "I liked the idea of making something no one else was making. In fact, the response has been great, so I knew I was on the right track." Anthony had found his niche. Next up was the

Ventura, a Detroit car he found online and bought with the money made from the Century.

Venturas don't typically turn up at car shows—or pretty much anywhere else. But that's the hook Anthony used to draw people in, show them what could be done when imagination, devotion, and what he calls "the love of it all" come together.

The theme, he said, was vintage Trans Am racing, but then proceeded to build more of a street car. The idea, Anthony added, "was to look vintage, but feel modern. I think I nailed it, and from the reaction I get, other people think so too." Most comments praised the Ventura's electric-blue color. But that's not why he chose it. In a stroke of publishing genius, he used this specific blue because he knew it would pop off the printed page. "I paid close attention to the colors that look best in magazines, the ones that pop. I saw



TECH NOTES

Who: Anthony Pittari

What: 1972 Pontiac Ventura

Where: Staten Island, NY

Engine/Transmission: Anthony was building no grocery hauler here. He pulled out the stock 350 and installed a Pontiac 400, stroked to 455 ci, with a mild cam upgrade, and compression bumped to 10:1. Ram Air IV exhaust manifolds and a NASCAR carbon-fiber air cleaner adapted for cowl induction were added for better breathing. A Legend LG700 five-speed tranny carries the power to the rear wheels. Exhaust exits via NASCAR-inspired side duals using Magnaflow mufflers and 3-inch oval pipes.

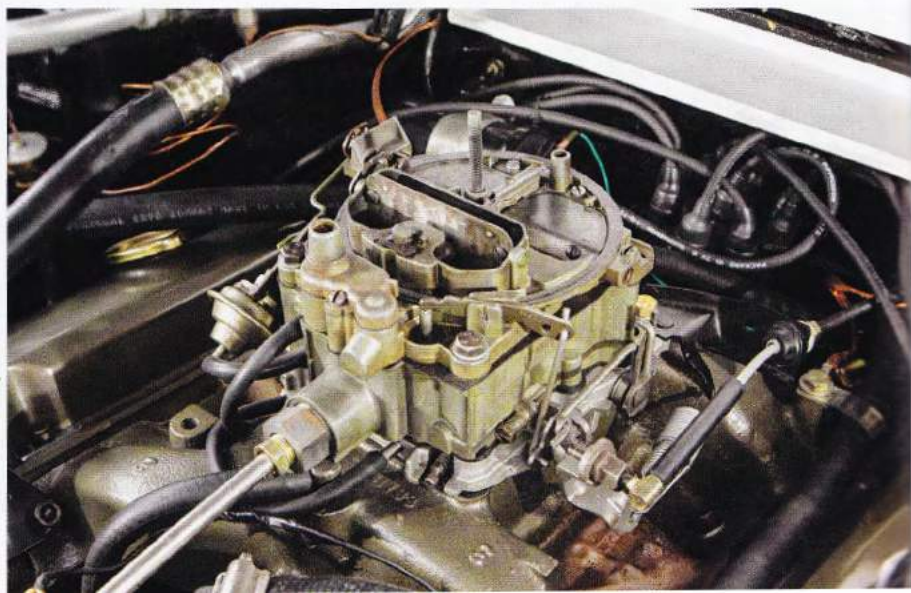
Body: Anthony made the front splitter and aluminum rear spoiler by hand. For a cleaner look, he removed all trim and marker lights, roof drip rail, exterior mirrors, door vent windows, and manual door locks, which were converted to electric locks. The vent windows were replaced with one-piece glass from a 1973 Nova. Taillamps came off a 1968 Firebird just because they were cool and built flush into the back of the car. A custom Nomex fire-retardant hood blanket was added to keep the big-block warm and cozy. The car was painted with 2006 Toyota Voodoo Blue.

Interior: The Ventura's interior remains largely stock, except for front bucket seats from Scat Procar. The rear seat was hand-stitched to match the front

buckets. While the door panels are original, the carpet was replaced with a rubber mat. The builder dug deeper into his ingenuity bag, slicing up a Hurst automatic shifter, removed the brand name, cutting windows into the shifter, and creating a new piece of Pit-tari original equipment. Although this Ventura is built for speed, Anthony didn't want a rollcage, opting instead for a five-point harness to keep him planted firmly in the driver seat. The radio was deleted in favor of that sweet tune of pure engine rumble.

Chassis/Suspension: Anthony installed tubular upper/lower control arms and 1 1/8-inch sway bar to better manage this beast. QA1 four-wheel coilovers and CPP four-wheel disc brakes (12-inch up front, 11-inch in the rear) haul in the Ventura with ease. A GM 10-bolt axle houses 3.23:1 gears on an Eaton Posi differential. It's modulated by a Detroit Speed Quadralink rear suspension.

Wheels/Tires: Centerline Telstar 17x9 wheels were powdercoated flat poly-gold by GSD Coatings in New Jersey, finished with center caps made by Anthony on a CNC machine. He wrapped the eye-popping wheels in 245/45/17 BF Goodrich G-Force Comp 2 rubber with shaved sidewalls. For what he called "hidden style," Anthony drilled out the wheel's valve-stem holes so he could install motorcycle valve-stem caps flush with the rim. 🏁





some trends and figured I had more of a chance of getting the Ventura featured if I picked a color that worked best for the magazine." He was right and we were impressed with Anthony's cleverness; it's rare for a builder of bike or boat or beast (or anything that moved) to notice and act upon such a motivation.

The boutique builder didn't pause to gloat, he just continued to his next proud feature: "The wheels are a bold statement, powdercoated in flat gold and [punctuated] with my own center cap and 4-inch, open-wheel-style studs, and motorcycle wheel valve caps, which run flush with the wheel. It really changes the look."

Above the wheels and under the paint is a Pontiac powerplant. "I put it all together in my little 1½-car garage. Most people think this is too small a space to do this kind of work, but I just think they aren't trying hard enough." Anthony nicknamed the Ventura "Overtime" for all the extra hours he put into it. Some three years of wrenching into late nights and early mornings, his labor of love is ready to rip.

Anthony is teaming up with Ripp Superchargers for his next secret project. We'll be waiting, and watching.