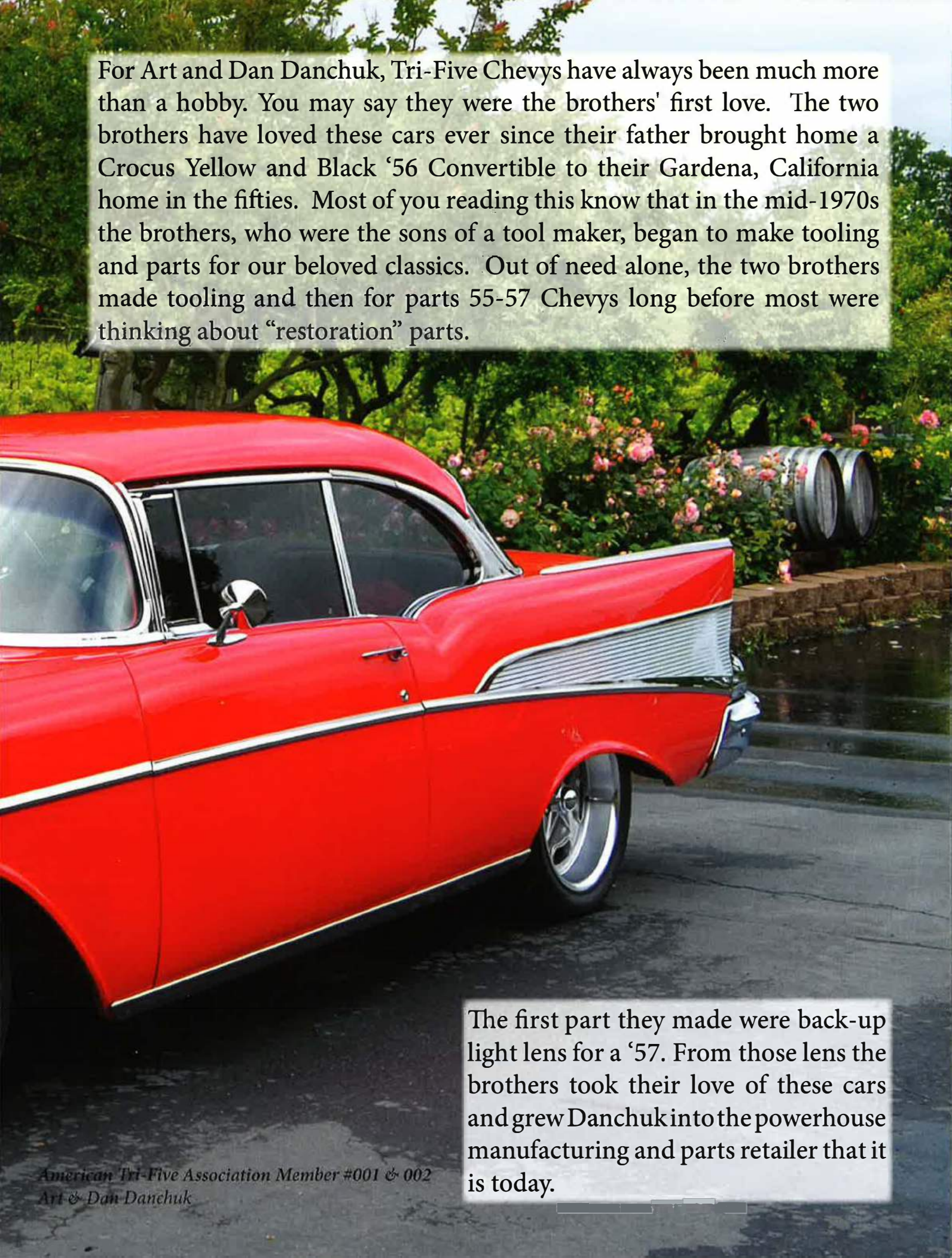


1957 Hardtop

Aged to Perfection

Words by Christopher Sondles
Pictures by Christopher Sondles & Danchuk





For Art and Dan Danchuk, Tri-Five Chevys have always been much more than a hobby. You may say they were the brothers' first love. The two brothers have loved these cars ever since their father brought home a Crocus Yellow and Black '56 Convertible to their Gardena, California home in the fifties. Most of you reading this know that in the mid-1970s the brothers, who were the sons of a tool maker, began to make tooling and parts for our beloved classics. Out of need alone, the two brothers made tooling and then for parts 55-57 Chevys long before most were thinking about "restoration" parts.

The first part they made were back-up light lens for a '57. From those lens the brothers took their love of these cars and grew Danchuk into the powerhouse manufacturing and parts retailer that it is today.



The brothers never lost their love of cars and collectively have owned more classic cars than they can remember. They have always leaned towards the more original restored cars than anything modified. Although both Art and Dan have owned and built their share of drag cars and fun street cars alike, over the years they clearly have a love for the more original breed of classics.



As the 1990s restoration craze began to drift into more and more modified cars being built in the early 2000, the demand was on Danchuk to stay in line with the current trends of the day. The brothers began to look for a car to build that they could use as a marketing tool. Their idea was simple, find a good donor car that could be built using the products found in the Danchuk catalog and build it without any major modifications that would prohibit the car from being transformed back to its OE form if the notion to do so ever became their desire. This meant no cutting of the body, no smooth firewall, no mini-tubs, no sheet metal mods.



The donor car that was found was a solid SoCal Bel Air Sports Coupe that had been hot rodded back in the '70s. It had a shaved hood and deck lid and many of the bolt-on hot rod parts you would expect to see from the era. After the car was disassembled, the body was sent out and stripped to bare metal before D&P Chevy began bringing the car back to life in the fashion the Danchuk brothers had in mind.

The original goal was to have the car completed for the 50th anniversary of the 1957 Chevy in 2007. The crew at D&P, along with help from Danchuk's team, completely built



the car in roughly one year using only parts that could be bought straight out of the company's catalog. The foundation for the build began by replacing the worn, stock chassis with a new Art Morrison GT55 chassis. Morrison chassis were relatively new to the market when this car was built originally. The chassis has stood the test of time and has been altered only slightly since they were first introduced. This is a real testament to the design and the company that makes them.



The chassis is outfitted with all the standard fare Morrison accouterments such as Wilwood four wheel disc brakes, a Strange 9" rear and Strange coil over shocks. With the old chassis slid out and the new Morrison slid under the hardtop, the stock stance immediately dropped close to 5" all the way around for a very aggressive and more modern look. Along with the look the Morrison chassis gave the hardtop, an award winning cornering and performance chassis

that has set the bar for many others to follow over the years since.

To enhance the performance further, the Danchuks chose to power their hot rod with a name synonymous with hot rodding by opting for an Edelbrock crate engine. The Edelbrock Gen-1 small block is much more than your standard 350. It features all that Edelbrock offered at the time including their E-Tec aluminum heads, .539 lift cam, roller rockers, and of course a classic Edelbrock aluminum intake. When it was first built in 2007, the engine was topped with an Edelbrock carb but recently that was changed to their new Pro-Flo 4 EFI system. The small block is cooled by a Be Cool radiator and breaths through a full Flowmaster 2.5" exhaust system. The roughly 450 horse mouse motor sounds mighty throaty thanks to the Flowmaster Delta 50 mufflers. The transmission that handles the power is a TH-200 built by California Performance Transmissions that features a 2800 stall speed converter. Keeping in mind that they wanted to use this car as a rolling spokes model for their company, the Danchuk brothers wanted to make sure that the color popped!

Eddie Meeks painted the hardtop using all PPG products and laid down the flawless GM Torch Red base coat. Once cleared, sanded and buffed, this car was a show stopper when it was built 12 years ago, and it still is today.

Much of what you see in these pictures is the result of continually re-imagining the car over the past dozen years. After it was completed in '07, it became very much the calling card of the classic parts giant. It has appeared in their ads and in their catalog for years, it was at SEMA and was featured on the cover of *Super Chevy*. As with anything, time took its toll on the car over the years. In an effort to keep the car fresh and relevant the brothers sent the car to Orange County Hot Rods in early 2019 for some needed updates.

Aaron Hamusek and his team at Orange County Hot Rods updated the look and the performance of the Danchuk's hot rod. As was mentioned, they changed it over to EFI and while doing so cleaned up the engine bay with a variety of Billet Specialties dress items, Eddie Motorsport hinges and redid the Vintage Air system.



All of the wiring is hidden, and the very clean engine bay is now ready for the next dozen years. The brakes were updated by adding a Wilwood Hydroboost brake master cylinder and booster combo.

Recent upgrades also included a new set of 18" American Legend Racer wheels wrapped with Nitto tires. Perhaps the most noticeable new upgrade this past year was the complete TMI interior. The Sport FXR design in Raisin and Black complements the Torch Red exterior very well. We have spoken the praises of these TMI interiors since they debuted at SEMA in 2017 for a reason, they are an excellent and affordable way to dramatically upgrade your interior as witness here. Topping off the interior upgrades Orange County Hot Rods installed a new Custom Autosound USA-740 head unit that pushes the tunes through a pile of Alpine speakers. A new set of Dakota Digital RTX gauges were also added to the cockpit of Danchuk's hot rod.

Naturally there is a ton of Danchuk trim items on this beautiful red ride including the custom, one-piece smoothie front bumper and accompanying custom

grille. Danchuk is committed to making quality, USA made parts and every piece of trim on this hardtop is a testament to this commitment.

Those who live near Santa Ana or have traveled down the 55 freeway have most likely seen the Danchuk '57 sitting proudly out in front of the company's headquarters where it spends a great deal of its time. However, it isn't just a static display. This past May long time Danchuk purchasing agent Mike Martin and his wife Sharon drove the hardtop north about 450 miles to join the American Tri-Five Association's California Dreaming Road Trip. The trip took them back down the Pacific Coast Highway with a couple dozen other Tri-Fives on a week long trip that won't be forgotten by any of those who participated any time soon.

This awesome car is a tribute to an ever changing hobby and is proof that the brothers Danchuk very much have their fingers on the pulse of our hobby well over 40 years after they started their business.

We expect that this car will continue to evolve in the years to come, and you can trust that we will follow the changes.

