

THE STORY OF OUR 1962 GRAN TURISMO HAWK

By Frank and Elizabeth van Doorn

Back in 1991 I got the itch to own another Studebaker after having been away from them since the late 60's when they were daily drivers. I had joined the SDC a couple of months before and really liked the black 1962 GT Hawk one of the Husker Chapter members had. Looking through various car publications I saw a black 1962 Hawk for sale and called the guy and decided to go and have a look. It was located in Wichita, Kansas, which was a six hour drive one way for us. We viewed and drove the car which needed extensive rust repair, it ran good though. We made a deal for less than the asking price and a week later we returned with a trailer and took it home.

After driving it for a season we decided to restore it. While mechanically it was in fairly good condition, the body, floors, trunk and torque boxes were a different story. The car originally sold new in the deep south, namely Alabama, but still holes were everywhere. Having been a mechanic the better part of my life I figured I could deal with it as welding and fabricating was something I knew how to do. After a couple of northern winters of welding in patch panels, torque boxes, hanging new doors and a couple of fenders it was ready for paint and upholstery. The painting was farmed out and the upholstery was bought as a kit from what is now Southeast Studebaker. Around 1995 it was finished and we jumped in and drove it to Manitoba, Canada for a Zone meet, a 1500 mile round trip, and had no problems.

So here it is 24 years later and the Hawk is still with us and performing well, although it is starting to use oil. Looking back I should have settled for a better car but I was naïve. I spent more than I should have but enjoyed working on it and learning the restoration process along the way. The GT was awarded with several SDC National first places during our ownership and still does well at shows even though it has the usual road rash on it from the 25000 miles we have driven it.

Since the GT was finished we have acquired three more orphans that needed a home. They are a 1963 Lark Daytona, also restored by us. A 1941 Champion with an Avanti R-2 super-charged engine we installed and a 1952 Commander hardtop which has underwent extensive refurbishment during our current ownership.

