

1968 Buick Skylark Custom



Now for the car many of you have been asking about: the 1968 ½ Buick Skylark Custom! As some of you know, this was my primary set of wheels through most of high school and a bit afterwards. I bought it from an old lady who had it sitting in her garage for about 15 years – asking price \$450. I learned many things about cars that have set for a long time: 1) The brake lines will fail one at a time, resulting in some corners being necessarily taken at 50 or 60 mph; 2) Removal of the brake drums requires three dudes and a sledge hammer; 3) Every single wheel bearing will be bone dry, reaching a temperature the equivalent of the sun’s surface in only a few miles; 4) Eventually, every single wheel lug will snap off while turning.

Many of you will remember many a’ shenanigan with this car – too many to list here. (I’m also not sure about the statute of limitations on some things.) I, however, remember it as a learning car. Here is a top 10 of the important things I learned:

- 1) If a union guy at your place of employment knows you are a non-union guy, his loosening of the distributor nut will lead to an engine fire in about 40 miles
- 2) Engine fires will burn through the wiring harness
- 3) Four-wheel drum brakes with no power assist is a very, very bad design concept
- 4) Distributors mounted on the front of the engine block will cause the car to stop running the moment a snowflake falls on the hood

5) If the intake manifold is not seated exactly on the two alignment pegs before tightening down, coolant will pump into your block causing your oil dipstick to shoot out like a water rocket

6) Breaking bolts off in the block all the time will make you good with a drill, tap, and die

7) A 350 engine is strong enough to push Corey Espich's car sideways across a parking lot (seriously sorry, man)

8) A 9mm round fired at a shallow angle will bounce off the hood of a Buick

9) A double 360 reversing into a 180 in the opposite direction on ice is perfectly recoverable

10) When the oil pump's failover valve trips, the oil pressure will drop instantly to zero and your front cam bearing will seize, killing your engine

Along with the all-around drum brakes with no power assist, my car featured water injection, a turning radius tighter than that of a child's tricycle, a trailing arm rear suspension that caused the body to raise up when getting on it from the start, enough strength to bounce off a stone pillar at 30 mph, and a top speed somewhere just over 130 mph. What a great car!