

Meet Ken Windisch

“It Started With an Indy Pace Car”



Ken and daughter Jackie at the CNCC Breakfast Run to Millie's

“I’ve always had an addiction to cars,” says Ken Windisch, who has had a Corvette in his life since 1979. He remembers looking at Chevy Blazers in the fall of 1978 with the idea of buying a new vehicle. When a dealer had a 1978 Pace Car on the showroom floor, he quickly lost interest in Blazers. “I researched Corvettes and in January of 1979 ordered a new dark brown L-82, four speed, with leather interior. The price was an outrageous \$14,000.”

Once the car was delivered in March, he had it pinstriped and later detailed the engine compartment. “After removing anything that wasn’t needed, I repainted the block and sent all the brackets and bolts out to be chromed plated. None of the emission system was reinstalled.

“In the spring of 1982, on the first day the car was out of storage, I was in an accident and the car was hit in the front end. It took four months of arguing with the insurance company to finally have the car repaired correctly. After getting the car back, with all the aggravation from the insurance company, I decided to sell it. Everyone said I was crazy.”

Ken sold the car in 1982 to the wife of a colleague, who drove it only in the summer. Three years and 11,000 miles later, he had a chance to buy the '79

bought a 350 TPI engine that had been in a 1992 Trans Am. I researched how to install TPI and then bought everything necessary to install it.

The next year I upgraded the entire suspension and steering system and rebuilt them. I used polyurethane to replace the rubber bushings. While the car was in the air, I replaced the exhaust with a dual exhaust.”

In the winter of 2000 Ken decided to overhaul the body and stripped the car (the paint was stripped to the bare glass) and gutted the interior. He refitted the front end with a Daytona Bumper, fitted a twin turbo hood, new ground effects, and a Green-

wood whale tail bumper. “This was the first time I did fiberglass or paint work. By this time it had been driven 29,000 miles. In the fall of 1987 a friend repainted the 1986 Corvette Flame Red.

“I also installed side ground effects and gold Enkie wheels. When Chevy came out with the Tuned Port Injection in 1985, it caught my interest so in 1996 I

bought a 350 TPI engine that had been in a 1992 Trans Am. I researched how to install TPI and then bought everything necessary to install it.

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wood whale tail bumper. “This was the first time I did fiberglass or paint work. To get started I read books, picked people’s brains, and used the internet to teach myself. After five months of work, I painted the car with 2000 Saturn Yellow. Two months later I was back on the road. In the winter of 2001 I restored the interior of the car, replacing everything and repainting all but the seats.

“I have added Z06 chrome wheels, chrome master cylinder, power booster, and slotted and drilled rotors. The rear bumper was replaced with a ZR-1 style with rear ground effects. As of today the list of things to do is getting shorter but I hope to upgrade the induction system and the cam.”

Ken says he is lucky because his wife Pam supports his car addiction. Over the years he has owned a 1968 Camaro RS, 1989 Chevy Stepside Pickup customized with a flame paint job, and a Honda CBX 6 cylinder motorcycle. He currently owns a 1999 Harley FLHTCUI and is in the market to buy a ZR-1 Corvette.

“The best time I had with the car was the day I took delivery of it. The salesman and I drove to Mequon, Wisconsin to get it. I was 18 years old and getting my first new car — a new Corvette. I thought it could never be topped.”

No doubt, most Corvette drivers share the same feeling. ●

Ken received first prize in Class N for his '79 Corvette at CNCC's 2007 All-Corvette Show, August 5

