

# SPECIAL FEATURE!

## Fiero "SPEED RACER"

Rich Warber's Incredible "Chopped Top" 450HP V8 GT

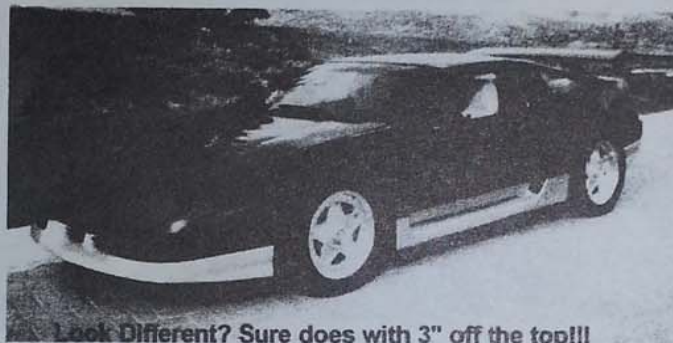
by Paul Vargyas

What happens when speed, horsepower, cubic inches, and torque are in your blood? What happens when your racing days are over, you have family responsibilities, but now you want a fast street machine ..., and you were enamored with the Fiero ever since it was introduced. In the case of Rich Warber, Geneva, IL., (a western suburb of Chicago), you build up a 350 corvette block to produce 450 horsepower, do a custom install in a Fiero, then change the exterior appearance by chopping the top 3 inches!!!!

The need for speed in Rich's blood started back in 1959. As the owner of a machine shop, Rich built a Crosley station wagon with a Chevy V8 in the driver's compartment. The car was driven from the rear seat area! Then it was on to building a "B" dragster in 1960, a "A" gas dragster in 1961, a "C" Fuelie in 1962, and a "AA" fuelie in 1965. Rich held many local, regional, and national records. The "B" dragster held a national record for 5 years with a 9.40, 143 mph in the 1/4 mile. The "C" fuelie car did a record 7.42 and 240 mph in the 1/4!! All of these cars were sponsored by Al's Speed Shop in Aurora, IL.

After selling the "AA" dragster in 1966, Rich drove for other car owners and subsequently left racing in 1968 when the usual pressure of kids, house, etc. made it necessary to get caught up in the

reality of everyday life. For a number of years, he raced model boats (100 mph!) and owned an Excalibur in the early 80s, but never forgot the thrills of going *really* fast.



Look Different? Sure does with 3" off the top!!!

His first Fiero was a 87GT he bought from his son, but then traded it in on a "pickem up" truck. He then bought his 86 Black GT in 1993 with 16,300 miles. It was a well maintained and cared for car and was equipped with the Muncie 4 speed. In 1994, Rich and his wife, Jeanette, bought a 85 Red GT to use as a daily driver. It is still a daily driver today with over



89,000 miles on the odometer. Rich attended the Pigeon Forge, TN., National Fiero Convention in 1991. During the convention he ran into (just a figure of speech!)

V8 Archie who gave Rich a ride in one of his V8 powered Fieros. Rich was hooked on making his Fiero *Fast!* In the winter of 1993, the Fiero 2.8 140hp V6 engine came out and "The Project" began.

Rich decided on a 1970 Corvette 350 block which was rated at about 300 hp in 1970. He started by boring it out by .030 over, added 6 inch Crower rods, a Crower cam (280° duration dual pattern), roller rockers, Weisco forged pistons,

MSP ignition, fluidamper balance, air flow research aluminum heads, all chromed tuned port injection (by Street and Performance), Sandeison ceramic coated headers, NASCAR aluminum radiator, and then used a V8 mounting kit by Gary Zumwalt to set it up in the Fiero engine bay. The battery was relocated to the right rear of the luggage

compartment in an upholstered enclosure. With the overbore, Rich now had a 355 cubic inch fuel injected engine putting out 450hp! Mated with the bulletproof Muncie 4 speed, plenty of torque and power are always available.

To keep the car street legal and emissions compliant, Rich added dual catalytic converters and dual glass packs.

# OR GOING REALLY FAST

## FIERO SPEED RACER CONT'D

*How long to build up this engine and install? All Rich can say is over 100 hours!. What about results? How about 0-60 in 3.70 seconds?*

In 1995/96 Rich added the IRM ground effects package, Compomotive TS16 inch wheels, Goodyear Eagle GT tires, P205/55R16 fronts and P225/50R16 rear, cut the springs by about 1 ¼ coil to lower the car, and raised the rear wing 2 ½ inches.

In 1996, the car won numerous awards at all the various Pontiac and Fiero car shows.

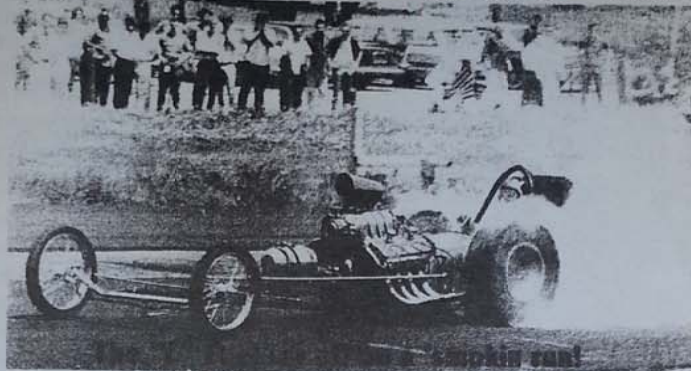
Most of us would stop there. Great looking car, really fast, show winner, etc. But not Rich. In the winter of 1996, he decided to cut the top off! He changed the rake of the windshield "A" pillars, so the original Windshield would lay back 1 3/8 inches lower than the factory height. This created interesting problems for the inner trim panels, the rear windows, and GT quarter glass panels. The rear window was cut down 3 inches, the inner sail panels

Were replaced with 1985 trim (no speaker in the trim panels), and Rich spent numerous hours designing and molding acrylic GT sail panels. Instead of GT, the sail panels now say RW (in script)!

The remaining engineering left to be accomplished is providing proper windows for the doors. Since the rake is changed, the original door glass will not meet the new roof line properly. Currently, Rich uses acrylic snap-in-panels for side windows while he is designing and building custom

acrylic side windows. Also added was a functional cowl induction scoop, facing rearward over the engine compartment. This was a custom modification of a 1968 Camaro hood scoop.

The "Coming out" was in spring



1997. The chopped top looks.....well I guess the best word is exotic. Since the original sunroof is



retained, there is enough head room for most folks, obviously, enough for Rich and Jeanette. How long did this chop top project



take? Again, Rich says in excess of 100 hours! Certainly a labor of love. All the work on this car was done by Rich himself in his spare time.

Rich and Jeanette are owners of Warbers Miniatures, a home based business where they create and handmake doll house decor and doll house accessories. They have been in this business for over 21 years and have clients/outlets who sell their creations all over the world.

*How do you go from drag racing to doll house creations to a 450hp Fiero? "Its easy" said Rich and Jeanette. The particular*

*attention we give to our products carries over to the detail in creating this one-of-a-kind speed and dream machine! A True FIERO SPEED RACER.*

*A word to the wise: If you ever pull up to a Black GT with RW on the quarter panel, don't smile and rev up your engine at the red light,*

*even if you are in your new C5 Corvette! (unless you want to check out this cars rear induction scoop).*

Rich and Jeanette can be reached @ 626 East State Street, Geneva, IL, 60134.