



Tech Articles

The Making of A Dream

by Lothar Bacher

Man will never out-grow his search for new toys. As we get older, our toys become more sophisticated and most likely, more expensive. Here is my example:

At first there was the bicycle, then the motorcycle, and later, the first car. Nothing fancy, everything used and cheap! But the fun was to spend endless hours upgrading, polishing, painting, and then showing it off to others. It was quite an accomplishment the "rich kids" never experienced. Like many others, my dream was someday to own a real sports car. Unfortunately, raising a family does not allow such dreams to fit into the household budget. Nobody I know can support a family and, as a hobby, own a Ferrari on the side.

Then came 1984. A dream came true. A new car by Pontiac, called Fiero - Italian meaning "very proud". Four cylinder, mid engine with stick shift, only two seats, under \$10,000, and good on gas. With a sunroof, you needed no air conditioning, and with built in speakers in the headrests^¼. what a car! I ordered one in silver. The consumer reports claimed that I was not a good purchase and that ice cream would melt if you put it in the trunk. I was hooked on its shape and who cares about the ice cream!

Two years later, I traded it for a brand new 1987 GT model. Six cylinder, five speed shifter^¼ I finally had what I always wanted, or so I thought^¼

Several years went by until I became aware of Fiero clubs and aftermarket parts, and this is where it all started over again. Meeting other club members, exchanging ideas, going to car shows, meeting friendly people in a close environment rekindled that old dream again - nothing is good enough, everything can be made better.

I upgraded my '87 GT Fiero one step closer to the Ferrari. I added different body panels, wire wheels, a redesigned exhaust system, new suspension components, and oversized brakes. At many car shows, I was given recognition by others for the work I had done. I sure had a good feeling inside of me because of this, especially since I had done all of the work myself in my own garage. I was very happy with my toy and I thought I had reached my final goal.

In January of 1997 I showed my car at the *World Of Wheels* custom car show in Chicago and met my competition. It was also called an American sports car, two seater, and goes by the name of Corvette! An overpriced assembly of painted fiberglass. About all you can do at a show is keep dust of its paint! There is nothing to show off on this car, since everything is already factory installed.

In the days following this car show experience, a little voice told me that I can do better. More changes on my car would be required to make it even more outstanding. But I felt everything was already done, except for the powerplant¼

I made many phone calls nationwide to other club members and other Fiero owners - including calls to our own magician, Elmer Schild. What powerplant would be suitable to make my Fiero the ultimate sports car? I knew I wanted it to be a GM product. Suggestions came as far away as Texas and Florida. Suggestions like a 3.4 Litre, a 3.8Litre with a supercharger - both of which would need a lot of modification and a lot of hours of work to complete, as would any project of this magnitude.

I continued searching for the ultimate, to do the best I can. The real dream is finally coming true.

Location: my garage. Presently my Fiero is jacked up in the air. A lot of changes are being done in the engine compartment. I visited John Norman in Indiana - owner of the world famous *OBSESSION* Fiero - and listened to his advice. I also discussed my desires with Gary Zumalt - another noted V-8 expert. The decision was made, Gary will be installing the 4.6Litre V-8, 300HP, 32 valve *Northstar* engine in my Fiero.

Without knowing our Fiero organization, its members and affiliates, I would never have come this far towards reaching my dream. My advice to you is to join in, become active, regardless of your goals or ambitions on upgrading your car, or just going for a Sunday drive, or a picnic, or a car show - it's all a lot of fun. Our goal is to bring people together and even for a short while, forget about the hassles of everyday life!