



Photos & Story by Terry Denomme

Low mileage, survivor W31 Oldsmobile

Rust is an apex predator and when it gets its claws into a muscle car its often the beginning of the end.

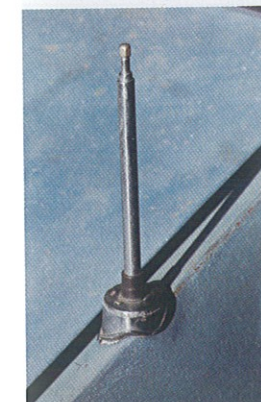
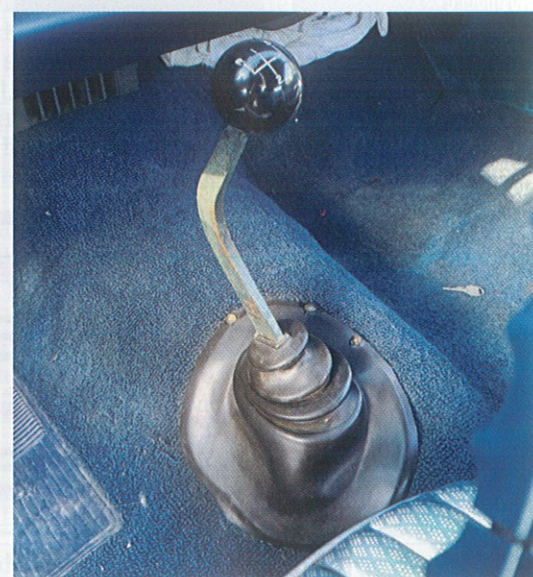
In most parts of Canada, death by rust is the most common reason for a vehicle's demise. Not so in California, where an arid climate and a lack of salt-laced winter roads makes it the mecca of rust-free survivor muscle cars. No surprise that this issue's Barn Find/Bone Yard Rescue grew up in California...Marysville, CA to be precise.

The original owners ordered this Nassau Blue 1969 4-speed, W31 Olds Cutlass S (born at GM's Lansing, MI plant) from Marysville's Wheeler Oldsmobile/Cadillac.

The couple drove it sparingly and though it had some dints and dings — both front fenders were repainted at some point in its past — it was still in very solid shape when in the late 1980s the husband passed away. The widow decided the mechanic who had taken care of the car for many years should be the next owner. In 1988 she sold it to him but with the proviso he not sell it until she passed away. The mechanic drove it a few thousands miles in the next year and a bit but in 1989 parked it in a shed with just under 38,000 miles on the odometer. He kept his promise and held on to the car until the original owner passed away, selling the car in 2019 to Sam Grewal, an Olds W-car collector in Ontario. A year later, Grewal decided to move on from the car and sold it to Vancouver



That's the original carpet and Hurst 4-speed shifter. Check out the towel stuffed under the heater. We don't know how long it's been there but failed heater cores are common when an old muscle car sits for long periods.



The Nassau Blue lacquer paint resembles the surface of a dry lake bed on portions of the trunk, roof and other areas of the car. Wray doesn't plan to repaint the car. The passenger-side quarterpanel mounted power antennae is a very rare option. It works.



Island's Gene Wray. Wray plans to correct some aftermarket part add-ons and make it mechanically sound but otherwise enjoy it for the time capsule it is.

He doesn't plan to baby it though. These W31's were built for abuse and their 350 engines were factory blue-printed and included such goodies as 10.5:1 compression flat top pistons, heads with bigger valves (2" intake, 1.625" exhaust), matching heavy duty valve springs, a 6-blade fan with a fan clutch, special recalibrated Rochester Quadrajet 4bbl carb, larger harmonic balancer and a raunchy 308 degree duration cam with .474" lift. Of course

forced air induction was the main W31 attribute. In 1968/69 cars the forced air was courtesy under-bumper air ducts.

The first year of the W31 moniker (the Ram Air 350 Olds debut as the Ram Rod in 1968) saw an overall production of 913 cars with 569 being Cutlass S Holiday Coupes like our feature car. (There were also 29 rag tops with 1969 being the only year you could order a drop top W31.)

This car is numbers matching and the frame is so clean that it only took a few swipes of a finger to reveal the VIN digits stamped on the driver's side frame rail.



The original Super Stock wheels are in the trunk. It's currently rolling on mid-'80s versions but Wray's already refurbishing the originals and will have them back on by spring 2021. The remote operated antenna switch is mounted above AM radio.