

Nutz N' Boltz News

Fordnutz Cougar club is dedicated to the preservation of all Cougars and "Orphan" Ford and Mercury Vehicles

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Fordnutz is affiliated with the
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Please send your articles for the Nutz Letter C/O the club address.
NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE IS: December 15th, 2002



Above, Ray's Burnt Orange 69 XR-7. It sure looks great for a car that was a mud bound basket case a few years ago, no doubt because it was lovingly "Raystored".

"Raystored" Ray's 1969 Cougar XR-7 S Code

Story and photos by Ray Harwood

This 1969 Mercury Cougar XR7 with Improved Performance 390 V8 C6 PS PDB probably lived most its early lives out in the lower mainland. It went thru a few by the time I found it in 1997 sunk up to its axles in mud rotting under a tree, being stripped for parts on Saltspring Island I was offered this gem for \$600 but turned it down and waited. A brief while later I was again offered the car for \$300. It was badly in need of a paint job and also was missing it's distributor, water, fuel and power steering pumps, a carburetor, carb brackets, radi-

tor and most of the interior were all gone as were the disc brakes tires etc. Ironically the only three interior pieces left in this cat were the three pieces I needed to finish my Purple Cat's interior, half of the rear seat, one door panel and one 1/4 trim. I parted with my \$300 and hooked er up to my 72 Ford Wrecker towing my "new" cat home, making it number four.

Being this is the Pacific Northwest there was some rust, not too bad and I set out 100 hrs of welding time into

the various areas seconded by the body work. Another 100 hours till I lost my storage facility and had to move the cat a few hundred yards. Not knowing if the engine was good or not I used old spare parts and got it running. Two years later I had moved the cat several times in my yard but apparently never bothered to look at the oil pressure. One day it clicked, "I have no oil pump drive". Sure enough as the dist was missing when I bought it, I did not check to make sure it had the oil pump drive

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Below, a rear shot of Ray's awesome looking cat.



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when I put in the other distributor, so I set out to find another one. The car had no exhaust so was hard to hear any noises other than the open exhaust. Low and behold the oil pump drive is the same as for a 289 and I had several lying around. I installed one and miraculously I now had oil pressure. I finally finished up the body and paint here in my yard 2000 and outfit the car with a "spare" black 70 XR-7 interior and new black vinyl roof. Next I hit the exhaust shop, parted with \$700 and this XR-7 was alive and on the street again.

During its early life this car must have seen some "Dukes of Hazard" type driving. The right front frame rail has been bent upwards and the cat showed signs of previous accident damage. The repairs were poor and eventually a water leak developed on the pass side floor. Too late to turn back I effected a repair to the cowl.

Eventually I located enough bits and pieces to replace the white leather in Purple Cat with new reproduction so I moved the correct old white interior to this Burnt Orange Cat and woke up the look considerably. Eventually 69 Mach one rims and GT caps made it onto the car in 2001 finishing off "the look". Recent upgrades have been to repaint the car base coat clear coat, new chromed centre grille, door handles, gas door trims, intake resealed, AM-8 track hooked to 300 watt amplifier and speakers, new carpet and door sills, trunk liner with correct cardboard protectors, under hood pad, 72 XR-7 seats, headliner, clock repaired and re-lensed, XR-7 and gas door emblems Rastored back to new-like condition, factory pulse windshield wiper set-up, power ventilation, also known as comfort stream ventilation, transmission rebuilt 5 miles ago (case was broken at the torque converter from a probable accident in the 70's), new starter alternator and flex plate, new correct shackles, shocks and upper inner shaft. Still to go on a never ending list, I would like to get new tires and replace or repair my rear leaf springs. One is still damaged from the accident. Also a little more front end work after a pull on a frame machine.

I think third time lucky so I am again going to repaint. This time I really want the correct colour. This recent paint, while its a nice colour is not as perfect as I would like for this machine.

This cat has really grown on me and has been my winter daily driver for the past two years. Odometer reads 60064 so I guess it has at least 160,000 and maybe even 260,000 miles. The seats and interior were gone when I bought it so it is hard to judge. The engine was rebuilt at some point in the 70's, I suspect, as the entire 390 was painted red. It does however have the correct serial number stamped into the rear of the driver side of the engine.

Despite my efforts to ruin the engine with no oil pressure it does not tick or burn a drop of oil and gets the best gas mileage I have ever seen in a 390 Cougar with 31 spline, 2.79:1 open differential. I go about 200 miles to a tank of regular unleaded.

Dependable and quiet 390 Cougar XR-7, what more could a cat ask?



Above, that striking white interior that brings this cat to life.



Above, Ford 390-4V power is the beating heart of this beast..