

Restoration of My 1964 356SC

by Jim Farrell

My first Porsche was a 1955 Speedster which I bought in 1968 from a local garage in Massena, NY. The car was in pretty rough shape and needed a paint job, floor pans and a new top. The owner was going to scrap the car and use the engine in his VW bus. I talked him into selling it for \$200. The next several months, I put in new floor pans, painted the car and replaced the top. The Speedster was a lot of fun to drive, especially going around corners. I drove it year-round through snow and ice for a few years. One weekend, we drove to Watkins Glen for a very memorable weekend of watching races and camping. In 1970, I was transferred to Texas and unfortunately had to leave the car behind.

I have always wanted another 356 and a friend from Florence had a 1964 356SC and was interested in selling. I had only seen pictures of the car because it was in New Haven, Connecticut, where he was teaching at Yale University. We made a deal and I drove up to Connecticut and brought the car home on a tow dolly. It was red at the time and looked pretty good. It seemed to need rust repair here and there, a paint job and a lot of TLC.



This is what I started with.

After getting the car home, I started taking things apart and found more and more rust. The more undercoat and interior I removed, the rust got worse and the holes bigger. It was going to require a total restoration to get the 356 back on the road. Since I had worked in auto body shops during the summer while in high school and college and had a shop in my basement, I decided to tackle the restoration. I found two excellent books which were essential in the process. They are *Restored by*

Hand by Ron Rolland and the *356 Guide to Do-It-Yourself Restoration* by Jim Kellogg.

The work was started in September 2012, about a month after getting the car home. One of the first things I purchased was a rotisserie which connects to the car at the bumper support points. The car could then be rotated a full 360 degrees for a quality restoration. For the first 6 months, progress was very slow. The work consisted of mostly tearing things apart, removing rusted metal and a lot of scraping, grinding, and sand blasting.



On the rotisserie.

Once all the rusty metal was removed and the initial sandblasting was completed, the work became more enjoyable as the 356 was starting to go back together again. New parts were fitted and the welding process began. The work proceeded in stages, starting with the front battery box. This was necessary in order to mount the front of the car to the rotisserie. Next, the floor pans were installed. Then the door bottoms were installed and the doors were fitted to the existing body. The body around the doors was then cut out and the doors remounted. The body was then reconstructed and aligned to match the doors, which was a long and difficult process. Once this was completed, the other miscellaneous panels were installed.

At this point, I moved the car outside for the final sandblasting. It was then time for the body filling and smoothing. The project was making steady progress and was getting more enjoyable. The priming and painting were the next steps. The various suspension parts, bumper brackets and miscellaneous parts were painted

first. Then the hood, doors, bumpers and engine cover were painted. Finally, the body of the car was painted back to the original factory ivory color.



Primed and ready.

With the painting completed, the real fun started with the reassembly. First, the sound deadening, interior, glass, and headliner were installed. Then I moved to the installation of the wiring, gas tank, lighting, suspension, engine, and transmission. Finally, the doors, hood, rear deck lid, and bumpers were installed.

Today, the 356 now leads a pampered and sheltered life. We only drive it on nice days and on special occasions. We have driven it to several PCA outings in Huntsville and Chattanooga. Occasionally, when my sons are in town, they like to take it for a drive.

The restoration took about 2 years to complete with a total of about 1800 hours of work time. It was a much greater challenge than I had anticipated. The project had its highs and lows at various stages. I am happy and satisfied to have been able to complete the ground-up restoration. Would I do it again? I think not – once is enough, but ask me in a year or so and I may change my mind.



All done!