

B23E POWER

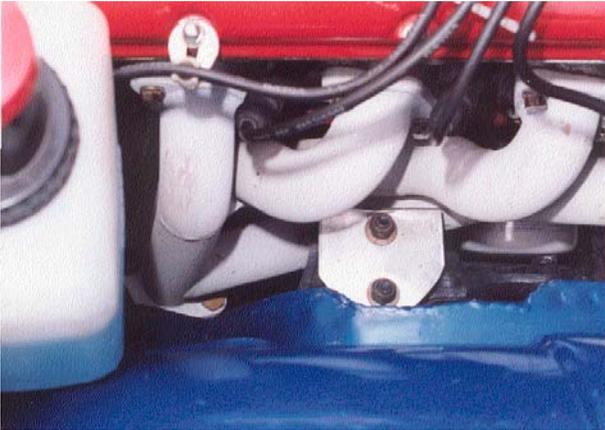
It all started in the summer of 91, I turned 16 and got my driver's license. Like every teenager who gets his license, I wanted my own car. So I started thinking about fixing up the old rusted out '71 1800 in the backyard. At the same time, Tony, a friend visiting from England, was over. Since he did body work, I asked him what he thought about the car. He taught that I was crazy for even thinking about it. About a week after that, another friend, Bob McDonald, heard from a friend of his that someone had two 1800s (which were sitting out in the woods for about 15 years) and would sell them for \$200, which was a STEAL! Tony and Bob went to pick them up and it took them a whole day just to get one of them out of the woods! When they got the car to Bob's house, my dad and I went straight over to see it. When we got there and saw the shape the car was in, we could not believe it. So I decided that this car from the woods would be the car that I was to going to fix up. It took a few days to convince Bob to sell it to me, but I did!



The first project in line was to strip the car down bare. In a few days, Tony and I had the car stripped (always the easy part). Then it was time for Tony to work his magic. The floor did not need welding at all, but new front fenders and a front nose were in order, as well as front jacking struts. When I found out the price from all of that, it was time to sell my dirt bike. Believe it or not, those were the only major things that needed to be done-the rest of the car was in good shape. We flipped the car on its side and started scraping the undercoating off. Finally, the fenders and nose pieces came in, and it was time to put them on. After all of that great work that Tony did, it was time for him to go back home to England, and my dad to took over helping me.

Then, I was not quite sure which motor to use. Like almost every teen, I wanted one with lots of HP, so we decided to go with the B23E engine that has high compression and easily available in Canada. I would have loved to put a turbo in it, and it would have been, if there was enough room to put the turbo in without cutting the wheel wells and making other radical modifications. First, we tried to put the engine in from that old rust bucket 1800 in the backyard. The motor did not go in as easily as we expected. We tried to put it in without the trans in first, and it was not sitting in very well. The problem was that the hump from the oil pan where the oil sits was in the way. So my dad and I took the pan and pump off and tried to put it back in again. This time the motor was sitting in a better position than before. Now we had to figure out a way to put the trans and oil pans on. To fix the oil pan problem, a friend of mine, John Rotermann, took a piece out of the crossmember and then welded a new piece in to give it some strength. Now my dad and I could get the motor in with the oil pan on, as well as the trans. Then next obstacle was to take out the transmission which meant we had to take the engine out with the trans on it. Next we started to rebuild the entire engine and give it all the new parts that it needed. We did not do any mods to the engine, it is all stock. Motor mounts needed to be made, and we knew just the man for the job. Rick Guy made the side skirts for my dad's Bertone, and was assigned to this project as well. Since we wanted to stay original, we had Rick make some brackets that connect the motor to the original Volvo mounts. The trans mount was a different story, of course. It is the only part on my car that is non-Volvo, manufactured by GM!

Now that the engine was seated, it was time to get an exhaust manifold made up, another job for John Rotermann. Making this manifold took a lot of time, most of which was thinking how to get it to fit in that little space we had to work with. John also had to change the angle of the air intake. In the meantime my dad and I were trying to get all of the wiring hooked up, so that when the manifold was finished and we could fire the engine up. Did it ever sound good, and it felt great when it was running! After half a year's work, things were starting to shape up.



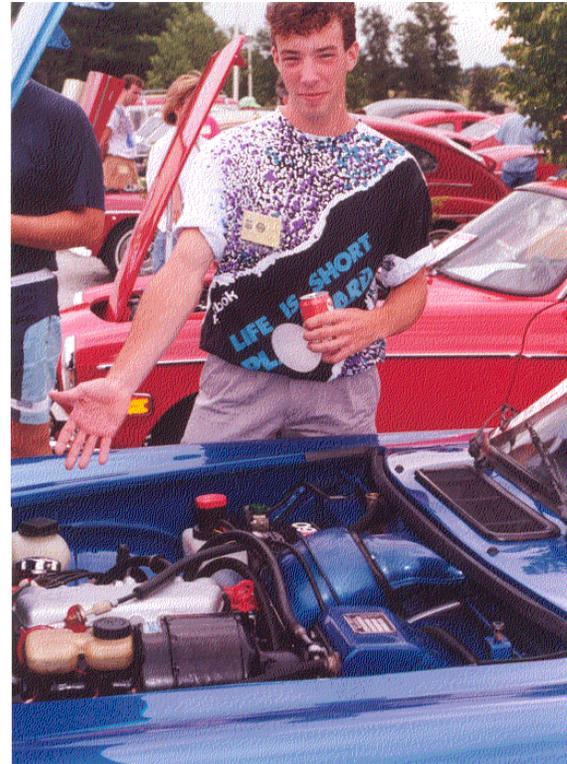
Even though it was running, I still could not drive it because there was no driveshaft or radiator. These were the next big problems to tackle. The driveshaft job was designated once again to John, who just had to shorten the original shaft. The radiator we used is a 240 rad, and since they are bigger, there was no way that the original fan was going to work, because there is only about 1" between the pump and rad. So we had to put an electric fan in front of the rad. We also had to find a place to stick the alternator. To correct this problem I used a bracket from a 700 series and modified it a bit so that the alternator sits up high on the air intake side. These were most of the major problems I had, and there was still were lots more along the way, like getting the original tach to work with the newer motor and making rad hoses to fit, for example. After all of this work, it was time for me to take it out for a spin in the backyard where we have a dirt track to race around old junky Volvos. It felt great to drive my 1800 after working on it for over a year.

Modifications were then made to the outside of the car. This was not hard since all I did was take off the bumpers and fill in the holes, and the same goes for some moldings I took off, to make them look simpler and newer. I also had all of the chrome blackened out. The biggest modification to the outside was the front spoiler that I had Rick Guy make up.



The next project was to get the bare body to the paint shop where it would be dressed in Electric Blue! After a few months, it was finally coming to the weekend when my dad and I were planning to pick it up. But one day after school before the weekend came my mom told me to look in the garage. There it was my beauty—thanks to Bob for bringing it home! Did they ever do a beautiful job on the paint and body! It was better than all of my dad's cars! Now I only had three months to put the whole car back together. I started with the interior and some of the outside moldings, like on the wings. When I finally graduated and finished high school, I had all the time to work on it before the show and that is what I did. From about the middle of June to the end of July I must have worked on it six hours almost everyday to try and get it done for the shows that summer. But that was not what my dad had in mind. He did not think that my car would make it to the show because a week before the trip, the car was still not running right. But then we fixed it, and 200 miles later, with a ton of help from Bob McDonald and Al Gordon, we all finally convinced my dad that I would be taking my car to the show.

On the way to the show I did not have any problems with my car, which was great. When we got there Thursday night everyone seemed to like my car. Most of them didn't know what type of engine I had in. But the only thing that I was thinking about was the race track the next day. Boy was that ever a fun day! One of the things that I liked the best was the skid pad. The only thing that I didn't like about it was that we only got one turn on it. The rest of the afternoon I went around the track with an instructor who taught me the fastest way through the corners. Then it was time laps and I was the second to the last one to go. The reason I was at the end of the line was because during the laps, I went with an instructor and my brakes were starting to fade big time, and I needed to them cool down.



At the end, nobody would tell me how I did, but they all said that I did really well. I did not think that because the first thing that I said to my dad when I got out of the car was that I had a bad lap. I did not realize that I was the fastest on the track and the second-place car was from the modified sedan class, and I was more than a second faster than him, and the second place person in my class was about 7 seconds behind me! I guess all of that backyard racing finally paid off. The next day at the show everyone seemed to like my car, especially the engine. I even caught one person laying down on the ground taking pictures from under the front spoiler (which I wish I had on video). The show was great and a big thanks goes out to everyone who was involved!

Now my car is in the barn for the winter, along with the rest of my dad's cars. Since I did not have that much time before the show to get my car really ready, I am planning to do a few things to it this winter. The biggest thing that I want to do is the truck. Since I only had one day to put it together before the show, I would like to redo the whole thing to make it close to perfect. The same goes with the engines, except I'm not planning to entirely redo them, just those things that need to be done to make it better looking and faster. The suspension is another thing that needs a lot of work, since all I did to it so far was change the shocks. With the great power I am getting from the B23, there is a problem with the rear end. When I take off quick, the back tires seem to jump up and down, and I am not getting very good traction. So that's another problem that I'd like to tackle during the winter. Some electronic goodies are on the wish list too.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who worked on my car-especially my dad, Tony and my mom how made all of my leather interior. Without their help, and the three jobs I had needed to pay for everything, I would have never been the owner of such a beautiful car, and I can't wait till the next show where we all can get together again - SEE YOU AT INDY.

FRANK DERKS
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