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THE DRAG RACING ISSUE

John Vicker's (#245) LAW MAN

THE SEARCH FOR THE LAWMAN



Written by Mike Knight
Photos by Julia & John Aschenberg

How could John Vickers have anything but Tri-Fives running in his blood? John was born in 1956 and was introduced to his first '55 when he was five years old. His father even built a '55 for John's brother.

As a teen John purchased his first '55. With a small block and a 4 on the floor he was excited to get it to the track. John's first trek to the drag strip proved to be short lived as the motor ended up letting go and his car ended up needing a tow to get her home.

This didn't discourage John, it fueled a desire that years later he and his wife would share. John and his wife Cathy have spent many years building and selling hot rods. As the years rolled on, so did the cars in and out of their possession... until the year they attended Cruisin' the Coast. There John laid eyes on a '55 gasser called "Law Man". He thought it was the nicest '55 he'd ever laid eyes on. So nice in fact that the pictures he took at the show ended up hanging in his garage.

John began looking for a gasser and received a lead on a few cars being boarded in a warehouse that may be for sale. Here they came across a 55' gasser named "Enforcer". This hot rod was already loaded. Roll bar,

racing seats, straight front axle... The Enforcer was built to be driven and the Vickers found her sitting in storage. John was doing this car a favor by freeing from captivity. Fast forward a few years down the road. John drove the Enforcer down to Crowley, LA to attend the 2013 Great Race. No sooner had they pulled into the show, John was receiving offers for the car. It wasn't his intent to sell but it wasn't long before a deal came along that was too good to pass up. The deal was struck and the Enforcer changed hands once again, this time to a private museum in Youngsville, Louisiana.

Several months went by and John had nothing to replace the Enforcer. At one point he actually reached out to the museum he'd just sold it to just to see if they were still happy with their new exhibit. As you can imagine they were in no hurry to let go of their new piece. It was worth a try. John was determined to find another gasser, just as nice as the car he'd just sold to a museum. Sounds easy right?

John remembered the warehouse that used to house the Enforcer had a few more 55' gassers lurking inside. After reaching back out to the warehouse, John made the trek and couldn't believe what he saw inside. The Lawman. The car he'd taken photos of years earlier. Photos that still hung on the walls of his garage. The car belonged to

a Sheriff's deputy and had been sitting in that warehouse for 2 years. John reached out and persuaded the deputy to let go of the '55.

Once the Lawman had made its journey back to the Vickers home, John found the LT1 under the hood had seen better days. He barely limped it into his garage. After a total tear down and rebuild the motor was still a lump. John's wife Cathy, who fully supports John's car hobby / addiction / problem, surprised him a brand spanking new, Smeding 383 stroker crate motor.

The new power plant features a four bolt main, forged crank and rods, hyper-eutectic aluminum pistons, a custom hydraulic roller cam, and aluminum heads. She breathes through a Performer EPS dual plane intake and delivers by way of a Quick Fuel 680 carburetor with 8-inch K&N velocity stacks. Spent fumes exit through

a set of ceramic coated fenderwell headers from Doug's Headers, coated 3-inch pipes from Jet Hot and a pair of Super 10 Series mufflers from Flowmaster.

All of this power is delivered through a Hurst shifted Muncie M20 four-speed linked by a Centerforce Clutch. Keeping everything cool is a 4-row aluminum radiator boasting an engine-driven flex fan and an electric pull dual fan setup.

"I had no idea the car would win TOP 25", John said about driving his car into the Tri-Five Nationals. As you can see though, there was good reason for the award. This gasser is head turner for sure.

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Owners John & Cathy Vickers
American Tri-Five Association Member #245

Note: After purchasing "Lawman", John found a car on the internet that looked spot on his car but read "Frost Bite" on the quarter panels. After finding that car was built by Classics Plus Ltd. in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, John decided to reach out to the shop. Classics Plus owner Mike Freund (#947) told John that his shop had finished that car in 2010 for a man in Wisconsin. The '55 was redubbed "Law Man" when it was sold to the Louisiana Sheriff's Deputy. **ATP**



MEET THE BUILDERS

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