

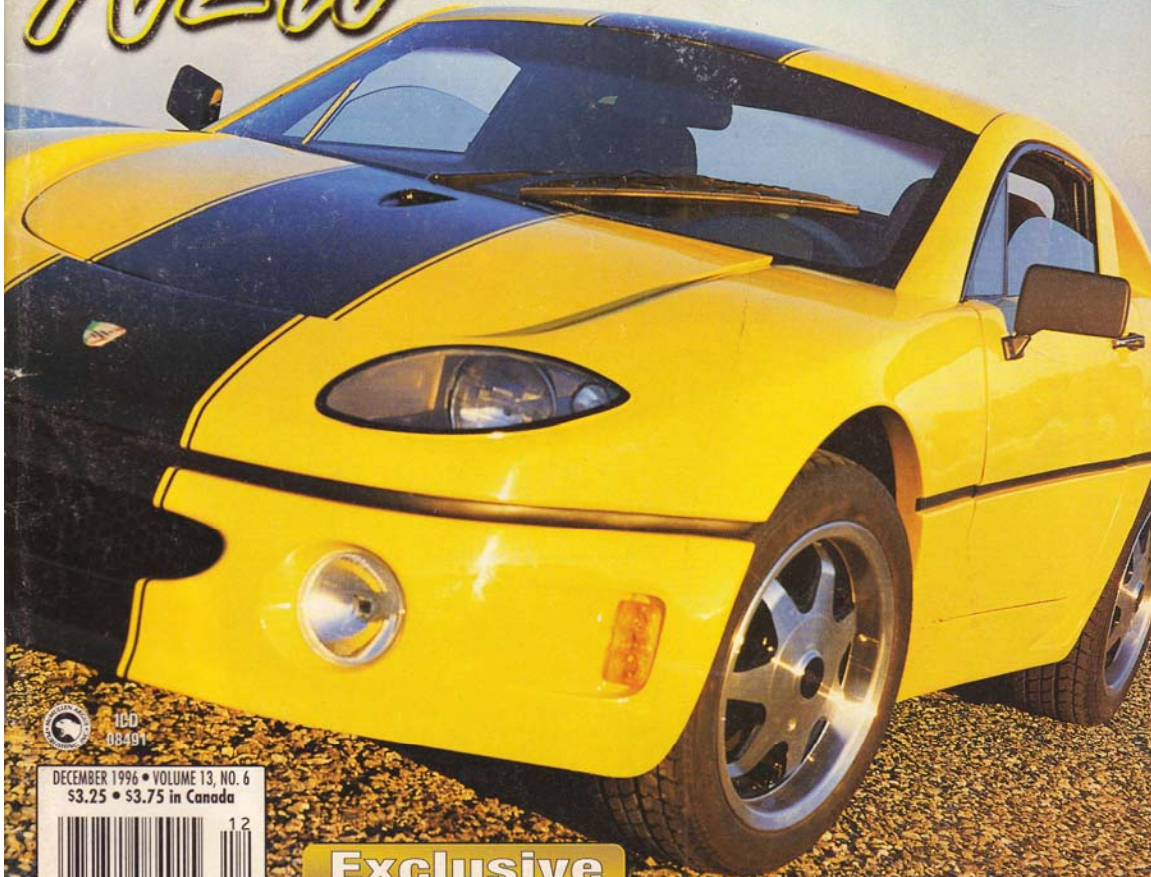
FULL RUN AND GUN '96 COVERAGE

KIT CAR

ILLUSTRATED

THE LEADING MAGAZINE FOR COMPONENT CAR ENTHUSIASTS

NEW The VW-based MASTRETТА



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Exclusive
Prowler Design Contest



The NHRA had banned nitro at that time.” Then, after 1966, Chuck concentrated on raising a family and running his 150-truck business (“We collect garbage.”). In the last couple of years, Chuck has found time to once again indulge his love for speed. He ran a 10.716-second, 126.26-mph qualifying run to blow everyone else away.

Still, he felt comfortable with the Run And Gunners. “I felt very honored just to get invited,” said Chuck. “I wasn’t sure how we would mix with the kit car people, but I’ve discovered that car people are car people!”

Unfortunately, we didn’t feel comfortable with *him* because the steel body was made by Ford, and as far as we were concerned, steel always comes in second to fiberglass when we’re supposed to be running kit cars. As a consequence, we created a special trophy for Chuck — Street Rod Dominator.

Without question, Walbridge had absolutely the fastest car on the drag strip. His run down the quarter-mile was a full 2.76 mph, and .577 second faster than the closest competitor, Wayne Turpin’s Contemporary Cobra.

Turpin, as a consequence of our rule adjustment regarding Walbridge, won Top Dog Drag Racing laurels which went to the fastest car in qualifying runs.

Wayne was one of the key figures not only in the Run And Gun portion of our stay at Norwalk Raceway Park, but he also finished second to Keith Rohrer’s E.R.A. Snake in our winner-take-all, heads-up Cobra Shootout, held over the weekend. For that event, 12 drivers threw \$100 into the pot, with \$65 going as the entry fee. As a consequence, we felt the winner would take away \$420. What we didn’t realize was that the track would also contribute part of the \$65 to the cash prize.

And neither did the three drivers who made it to the semifinal round of the Cobra Shootout — Turpin, Rohrer and Rich Pickles, who was driving yet another Contemporary Snake. They agreed, before running the semis, that they’d split the money and go into a local bar, Dick’s Place, and put the money down and eat, drink and be merry until it was gone. But on Sunday night, Dick’s was closed, and that proved a bonus for everyone attending Run And Gun ’96.

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This is our eight-car lineup for the King-Of-The-Hill portion of the drag racing.



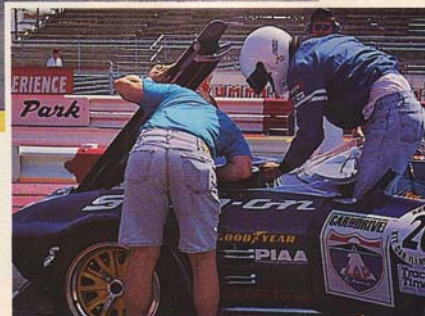
Chuck Walbridge and Wayne Turpin do a bit of arm wrestling on the top of Walbridge’s three-window coupe. Minutes later, Walbridge won his bracket.



Bruce Howard lines up in E.R.A.’s new 289 FIA car, while Jackie Nittler and his Midstates Cobra mans the far lane.



When smoke started pouring from his engine compartment . . .



. . . it was time for Chuck King to shut the engine off, and take a look! Fortunately, it was merely paint burning off.



R&G Drag Racing Qualifying Runs

(38 cars)

Quarter-Mile

Elapsed Time, Top Speed.

1. Chuck Walbridge , 3-Window Coupe.....	10.716 sec	126.26 mph
2. Wayne Turpin , Contemporary Cobra.....	11.393	123.50
3. Jim McCann , Contemporary Cobra.....	11.393	121.03
4. John Ciacchi , Contemporary Cobra.....	11.571	119.04
5. Keith Rohrer , E.R.A. Cobra.....	11.766	122.29
6. Bob Self , Contemporary Cobra.....	11.860	114.25
7. Bob Turpin , Contemporary Cobra.....	11.912	114.50
8. John Spina , Everett-Morrison Cobra.....	11.934	112.98
9. Jim Scalchas , Everett-Morrison Cobra.....	11.955	117.72
10. Rich Pickles , Contemporary Cobra.....	11.976	115.47

11. Gerry Grupe, 12.044, 115.11; 12. George Anderson, 12.157, 112.65; 13. Bob Williams, 12.262, 114.98; 14. Dennis Olthoff, 12.339, 114.79; 15. Reg Noble, 12.342, 108.42; 16. (no number, blue), 12.368, 110.72; 17. Jim Waters, 12.439, 109.67; 18. Dean Hoskins, 12.493, 111.99; 19. (no number), 12.529, 114.73; 20. Bill Johnson, 12.825, 107.65; 21. Aaron Quine, 12.859, 110.90; 22. Dave Craig, 12.894, 109.23; 23. Ted Brine, 13.054, 104.25; 24. Bruce Howard, 13.120, 106.34; 25. Rick Long, 13.175, 101.93; 26. Jackie Nittler, 13.201, 103.12; 27. (no number, yellow), 13.215, 103.69; 28. Bill Johnson, 13.454, 103.18; 29. Fred Eckhauser, 13.518, 102.15; 30. Tim Lewis, 13.618, 103.23; 31. Jack Selby, 13.662, 101.02; 32. Gayle Marlowe, 13.794, 100.06; 33. (no number, red), 13.817, 98.43; 34. Don Smutzer, 13.889, 101.04; 35. Matt Blakney, 13.961, 96.92; 36. Jeff Malcomb, 14.144, 99.67; 37. John Hinckley, 14.461, 100.22; 38. John Bossolt, 14.573, 94.40.

On Monday morning, John Ciacchi arrived with red eyes. The super human effort to get the car completed (at 3 a.m.!) had left him a hulking, sleep-walking husk of a man. Yet on its first time down the track, John's Cobra turned an impressive 11.586 at 117.43 mph.

Ciacchi was immediately on a collision course with Chuck Walbridge in the finals of the bracket 1 competition. If you were taking bets, the sound money was on Walbridge. Depending on your point of view, Ciacchi either psyched Walbridge out, or fortune smiled upon John in a most preposterous way.

Year after year, John Leliever of Johnex Motorsports has always given John a huge cigar from his collection of stogies. Ciacchi has always clamped it in his teeth, and held it, *unlit*, for every run down the track. When it was time to run Walbridge, the cigar was not in place. It was at that point that John's son stepped to the side of the car, moments before he would have staged.

Understand that the moment is foggy. Ciacchi himself isn't completely sure what happened. We do know that John's son approached the side of the car, and the public

address announcer said, "One of Ciacchi's crewmen is making some kind of adjustment." Ciacchi feels the son asked if he wanted to change the shift-point on the automatic transmission he was using. Ciacchi does recall him asking, "Where's your cigar? Hey, your cigar's not in your mouth."

The cigar was sitting on the passenger seat, and the son reached into the car and placed the cigar in his dad's mouth. It didn't stay there, though. It fell out, and Ciacchi looked down to find it. With his arm restraints in place, John couldn't reach it. When he looked up, the car had been staged and the lights were moving down the tree.

Speaking of Walbridge, John says, "He was antsy. I'd let him stage first. That's part of the game. My philosophy is you always stage last and let them think about it."

Normally, the 58-year-old Ciacchi uses his age as a truncheon to beat back the competition. And while Walbridge may know a bit about old age and teachery, Ciacchi has it down to a science.

Anxious, Chuck stepped into it too early, and red-lighted. Ciacchi, with a sluggish .920 reaction time, ran the quarter-mile in 11.702 seconds at 116.29 mph. Even though



Jim McCann's Contemporary Cobra had not only great looks, but great acceleration on the dragstrip and super handling on our autocross circuit.



This merely captures a bit of the drag racing's flavor, pent up fury, all in motion.

Sunday Car Show Winners:

Editor's Choice

Gerry Grupe Beck Development
Lister Chevrolet.

KCI Best Paint

Larry Villeneuve, Porsche
Speedster

KCI Best Interior

Greg Cohan, Classic Roadsters
Sebring/MX

KCI Best Engine

Gerry Grupe, Willys

Walbridge's run would not count, he ran a 10.834, with a top speed of 125.19 mph.

Ciacchi maintains, though, that if he'd had the extra day to fine-tune his new Contemporary with its 458-cubic inch, all-aluminum high-riser engine that produces 750 horsepower, he would have beaten everyone, even Stormin' Norman. "We had no time," says John, "to run it before the time trails. That car would definitely have been in the nines!"

But, without help from his son and other friends — including Jerry's House of Color, Len Varga and Larry Sikora — Ciacchi wouldn't have even gotten the car out of the garage.