

# FAST but not forgotten

THE DOS PALMAS MACHINE SPECIAL

**IN A RECENT** episode of my show *AmeriCarna* called "Hot Rod Holy Grail," we looked at the ultra-rare Ardun overhead-conversion cylinder heads for Ford flathead engines.

The centerpiece for that story was legendary Bonneville racer and hot rodder "Wasted" Willy Glass. Willy loved flatheads and was a master of getting the Ardun heads to make big horsepower. He even took an Ardun flathead to Bonneville and set a land speed record of over 200 mph when he was well into his 70s.

As I was hunting around in one of Willy's old cinder-block garages, a neat metallic blue dragster covered with dust caught my eye. There was just something about this little gas dragster that said, "I'm the real deal." The body had a real West Coast look that blended per-

fectly into a hand-formed aluminum tub with an enclosed parachute tunnel. This car had a story and I wanted to find it.

Like most of my *AmeriCarna* trips, I had already spent too much, but I had to make an offer on that dragster. Glass accepted, and after it had been sitting in the middle of my shop for a couple of weeks, one of my guys saw a post on a hot rod site searching for what turned out to be the Dos Palmas Machine Special built by Tommy Ivo and driven by Bob Keith. It was part of the 1964 U.S. drag race team and was the first U.S. dragster to make a pass in England.

Keith and crew had been searching for this car for several years, so when I called and told him we had it he literally broke into tears. Bob has been fighting some health issues and finding this car was really important to him.

Not only did we find Bob Keith, but the whole crew of guys who helped on the car still hang out together, including the original engine builder, Arnold Chaves of Dos Palmas Machine.

Bob and I spoke several times before we decided the best thing to do was send it to the original crew in San Jose and let them restore it. Who better to bring it back to life than the guys who maintained it 50 years ago? So off to the West Coast we went.

In a future *AmeriCarna* episode we'll explore a story of dedication and friendship that started in the early days of the NHRA and continues today. It's the kind of story that makes me really proud to be a car guy. //

The classic, front-engine Dos Palmas Machine Special was state-of-the-art in its glory days back in the 1960s.

