

Project Nova In Motion – Well, Almost

In Part I of this three-part series, I outlined the thought process and plan behind the build of this '70 Chevy Nova. Its owner, Bob Gonier, is a high school auto-body, vocational-school instructor who plans to compete at bracket races and in NHRA's Super Street class. Bob began working on the Chevy a few months back, starting with a rolling chassis that he picked up affordably. It already had a legit roll cage but needed just about every other component.

For this second installment, Bob and his crew made serious progress. They have marched past the 50-yard line and have the finish line in sight.

As I covered in Part I, the Nova was first sanded, straightened, primed, and painted. Next, an Aeromotive fuel system was installed, along with an infrastructure of wiring to link essentials, such as the MSD ignition box, Auto Meter gauges, and Painless Wiring switch panel. They laid in a rug, race seats, and even a classic GM steering wheel.

Bob took his time when installing the seat, switch panel, and shifter because it's important to be comfortable and in control when the heat is on. One thing you don't want is to be reaching uncomfortably for your shifter or panel switches once strapped in. Bob thought all this out before making any final installs.

Though he has owned other muscle cars, Bob is a hard-core Chevy guy, so, naturally, a big-block was the engine of choice. He already owned a .030-inch-over 454 big-block that powered his '69 Firebird bracket car, but after 10 years of service, he thought a rebuild was in order. Bob worked with Nick's Machine in South River, N.J., which opened the bores to .060-inch over stock and then installed new rings and bearings to the existing rotating assembly.

The heads are aluminum Merlin casts from World Products with 2.30/1.88-inch valves. A Comp Cams roller was slipped in with .695-inch lift and duration of 254/262 at .050-inch lift. It has 12:1 compression and is topped with a Victor Jr. intake and a Holley 950.

Once assembled, Bob slipped it between the rails, along with all of the necessary pieces to make it run. The New Jersey-based teacher likes the street look, so the car has retained a small cowl-induction hood, rear seat, and mufflers.

Stay tuned to *National DRAGSTER* because some finishing touches are all that separates this Nova from the track. By my next column, Nova In Motion will be on the track and shooting the nose to the sky. Hopefully, Bob will have a few passes under his belt and some round-wins, too. **ND**

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Built from scratch, Bob Gonier's '70 Nova utilizes common aftermarket parts and should be a player in the local brackets. With a throttle stop and delay box, he'll compete in NHRA's Super Street class.



A punched-out 454 (.060-inch over) will power the Nova (hopefully into the high nines).



A Moroso pan will hold the oil and cover up the billet Moroso pump.

Sources

Hooker
662-369-6153
Holley.com

Mark Williams
866-508-6394
MarkWilliams.com

Moroso
203-453-6571
Moroso.com

MSD
915-855-7123
MSDignition.com

NitroPlate
615-826-4914
NitroPlate.com

Painless Wiring
817-244-6212
PainlessWiring.com

S&W Race Cars
800-523-3353
SWRaceCars.com

Weld Racing
800-788-9353
WeldRacing.com



JE pistons will give the big-block 12:1 compression.

Aluminum Merlin heads from World Products top the iron block. The valvetrain is from Jesel, and Gonier says his target rpm for power is about 7,000.



The transmission is a two-speed Powerglide with a 1.76 low gear.



Notice some of the show-car details, such as the smooth firewall and the carbon-fiber look on the fiberglass inner fenders.



A proper exhaust is essential to maximizing power. Gonier went with 2-inch Hooker headers that were coated by NitroPlate.



The 2-inch Hooker headers make for a tight fit with the big-block but slipped in nicely.



The headers feed a pair of 3-inch Spintech mufflers.



Stopping is pretty important, and hauling the 3,000-pound-plus Nova from speed are manual brakes with a modern master cylinder and new lines.

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Mark Williams brakes reduce weight and will provide excellent stopping power.



Hidden are these forward stiffening bars that tie into the roll cage and the front of the chassis.

Weld's latest RT-S wheels feature a three-piece modular design that have both a forged billet center and a cold-forged rim shell. They are also street legal, all while offering lightweight and attractive styling. According to Weld, they surpass SFI Spec 15.1 drag wheel specifications (in the 15-inch-diameter models) and aftermarket SAE J2530 standards. A wide variety of sizes and lug patterns are available.



(Left) The front-end limiters are from S&W and will help control the Nova during launch. (Below) Bob's '70 Nova has a tough stance and is ready for action.

A 4-inch aluminum driveshaft was ordered from Inland Empire Driveline. It uses a 1350 billet yoke.

