



# RECOUPED COUPE

## ► Malibu SS Second Chance Romance

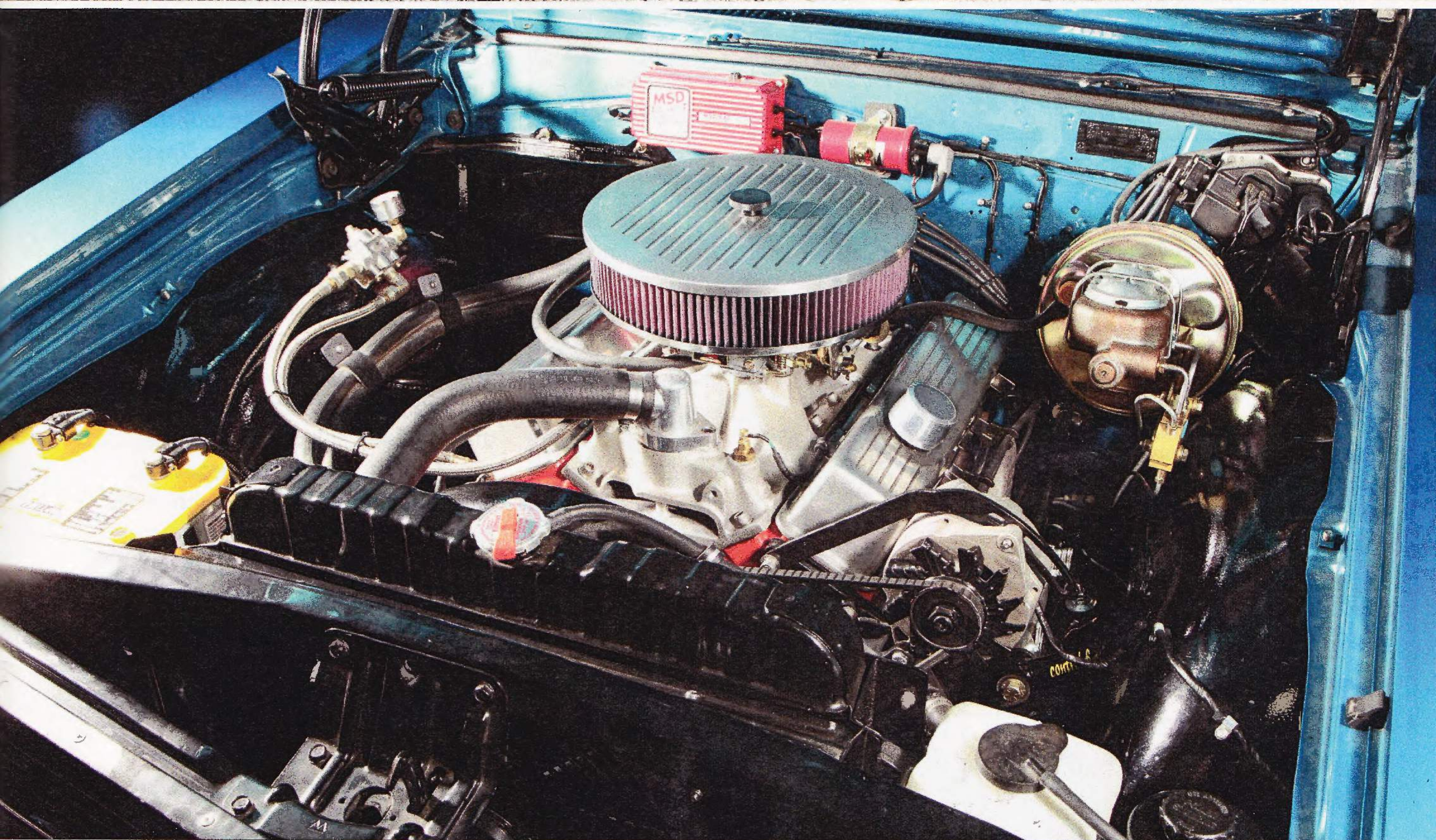
**TEXT** CHRIS SHELTON  
**PHOTOS** BY THE AUTHOR

**OK,** so the 1965 Chevelle Malibu SS featured isn't a coupe, it's a two-door hardtop, but you get the picture. It was Mike Petramalo's first car and then he let it get away. Mike's first time around with his 1965 Chevelle Malibu SS was usually spent 1,320 feet at a time running in the low 12s, but the 4.11 rearend with a beefed TH350 and full race 327 was starting to wear thin as a daily driver.

Mike drove his trusty '65 SS to Jet Chevrolet in











Federal Way, Washington, and traded it in for a more sedate Chevy S-10 pickup. Naturally, Mike lamented the one that got away.

Then one day a curiously familiar 1965 Chevelle Malibu SS turned up at a custom car show in Graham, Washington. Not *in* the show but in the *parking lot*. It had no cage. It was set up as a street driver. It was even a different color. In fact, it was largely restored. But just as a mother can identify her baby by smell, Mike noticed something familiar about this one. This one smelled like ... *his*.

Mike left a note on it. The owner called. As it turned out, Jet wholesaled the Chevelle to a classic car lot that sold it to a guy named Fred Levering, the guy who basically restored the car, the guy who took the car to the car show in Graham. They struck a deal.

The years the Chevelle spent away were actually good for it. Fred tamed the 327. It still wears a drag-biased Victor Jr. manifold but a more street-friendly 570-cfm Holley Street Avenger feeds it. The car's a lot more friendly on the road now that a 700-R4 replaced the three-speed automatic. The car acquired even greater road manners with 3.73:1 gears.

"From there I started working on whatever I could afford," Mike says. He converted it to four-wheel discs, power brakes, and power steering with Classic Performance Products kits. "Next it was stance and wheels," he adds. The CPP brake conversion came with dropped spindles and he





and 255/35R19 Toyo Proxes hides. If you look closely you can spot the 12- and 13-inch Classic Performance rotors and four-pot calipers among the spokes.

It isn't typical for an enthusiast to have a cool first car. Rarer yet is the one who owns their first decades after. And rarest of all is the lucky character who reunites with a first after setting it free.

added to those with Speed Freaks tubular control arms, antiroll bars, and Viking Performance double-adjustable coilovers.

A non-stock blue-green finish gives the car a slightly more genteel personality, but ultra-subtle, white-pearl flames kind of hint that it's not just another restored car. Mike brought the interior to the new standard by delivering the car to Icon Audio in Gig Harbor. The shop sculpted an elaborate set of door and rear panels as well as a package tray panel. They exist for more than just style; they conceal a Rockford Fosgate audio system. That consists of Power Series gear like 6.5-inch component sets in the doors and 6x9s in the package tray. The system uses Mike's smartphone as a head unit by way of a Rockford Fosgate Bluetooth module in the center console. Icon made that, too. The shop also trimmed the new interior. It used a combination of black leather and perforated-suede inserts.

The stock dash remains but a Classic Dash insert houses a set of Auto Meter Cobalt-series gauges. A Billet Specialties Split Spoke steering wheel perches atop the stock column. A B&M Hammer shifter topped with a more conventional ball sprouts through a Lokar garnish in the center console. Though hidden, a Painless harness feeds the electrical components.

Mike worked with his pal Jason Rushforth to come up with the Rushforth Night Trains. They measure 18x8.5 and 19x9 and wear 225/40R18