

The Marlin II Prototype

While researching Marlin History I came across a picture of the Marlin II prototype built on a 1965 Ambassador chassis for Dick Teague. Later I got hold of a name and email address of Pete Wilber who claimed to be the owner of the Marlin II prototype. His reply to my email is below. Editor



I am the owner of what you call the Marlin 2.

Probably 20 years ago I was looking for another Marlin for myself and one for my son Doug. I was living in Cazenovia New York and I found a man that had some Marlins that he wanted to sell now since he was dying of cancer. My son and I both drove down to the lower end of PA with trailers and cash in hand. When we got there he had 3 to choose from. One was a 6 cylinder that was all dented up so we passed on it. The other two were 327s so we said we wanted those two. We looked at the one for my son and we bought it. The other was in a lower locked garage, He told me it was in nice shape. He had bought it from a bone yard when he was in the Navy. It had been a loaded car that had many parts removed like the power windows etc. (I had never heard or seen one with power windows). It had a small dent in the front so it would be only \$800 cash.

I said I needed to look at it first. He said he could not walk that far and I had to pay right now. He said it was as good as the one I got for my son but had a little dent. We could not go down there until it was paid for. We decided I would gamble and I paid him. He then told me to start up his mowers and mow a path to the garage since the grass was 5 feet high. We mowed and mowed and finally found the lower garage and unlocked it. What I found was a garage filled to the ceiling with clothes and junk we could not even step inside. I went back up to him and said, "I do not even see a car and I cannot get inside". He said the car is there you need to just move the stuff out and I will find it. I told him just give me my money back. He said a deal is a deal. We talked it over then went back and started pulling stuff out.

Within 3 minutes of pulling stuff out I had mice running over my arms. I was not happy and then due to the dust started sneezing and so did my son. After 1/2 hour we saw a bumper. After another 1/2 hour we saw the rear quarter panels. After another 1/2 hour we saw the doors. Another 1/2 hour we saw bent fenders. At this point I am really not happy and again tell the man that I want my money back since the car is damaged which he did not tell me about. He said no money back. In another 1/2 hour we got to the front of the car and we both looked at each other and said, what the hell is this?

Again after walking back up the hill and wanting my money back he said NO. He is mad at me and I am mad about this whole deal. We pulled the car out so that we could see it in the light of day. Front end is weird and smashed and so is the front under carriage. There are parts inside but so much dust and nasty stuff that I will not even open the door afraid of what might come out. We see some Mag 500 rims off to the side and figure they go with the car. One is bent real bad the other three are good. I go up and say, "Hey this car is wrecked and I do not want it". He told us we had 45 minutes to load up both cars and get off his land before he called the cops and

that special set of rims he took off that car were going to cost me \$300 more. I will not tell you what I told him but those rims are still there.



We loaded up and he threw two titles at me and said you have two minutes left. We went down the road with huge dust clouds coming off the cars as we drove down the road and layers coming off my wrecked car (Marlin 2). We pulled into the nearest car wash which was 20 miles away and got to the do-it-yourself wash and went to town. Mine took 5 cycles and his took 3. Mine had baby mice coming out too. We talked about using my car as a parts car on the 6 hour trip home. Our walkie talkies were busy the

6 hour trip home. I got home late at night and my wife did not see it till the next day. She told me to hide it right away. I got a place inside my 6 car garage and covered it up. I took a photo of it and went to the PA car show where I tried to find out information about this Marlin.

I had people tell me the photo was a fake and I was a fraud, etc. I did not talk to anyone else for years because they made me feel so bad. I had my son put it on a frame machine and we pulled the front. I being an idiot said I will just remove all of these front pieces and put other ones from another marlin on it. He had installed a 4 speed in it so I figured I would drive it. After throwing away the steering column, complete front suspension fenders hood bumpers etc., I bought another Marlin with a good front end and good door panels etc. I removed and tried to get them to fit. You got it - nothing worked. It took me years later to find out that only Ambassador parts would work and only 1965 Ambassador trim would work.

I moved to Sanford NC and yes I hauled the car down here. After seeing an article about the Marlin 2, I did realize that I had it. I asked a few people if they made more than one but they say only one was made. One guy had me measure everything up on this car since he was going to make a clone. He emailed me a number of times about other measurements and I told him what I found out over the years with chrome etc. I bought a 1966 Ambassador years later for the



fenders once I figured out what was going on with this car only to find it needed 1965 chrome. I REALIZED TOO LATE WHAT A FOOL I WAS FOR THROWING AWAY ALL OF THE FRONT SHEET METAL LIKE FENDERS ETC.

I have put it on the back burner for years but am slowly getting back to it. It has 4 layers of paint on it one looks like a dark blue, red, black, black. The top has two layers that I see black and white. I will strip it this fall and go back to the red and not sure if I will go with a black top or a white top. So far this car has been nothing less than a bad dream and a money pit. One day hopefully it will change to a good dream.

Pete W