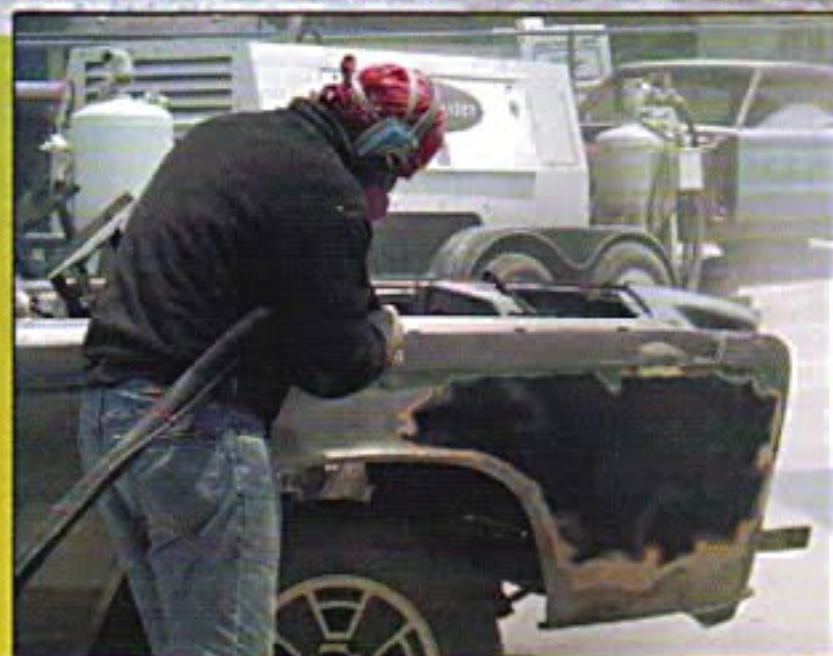


UNDER CONSTRUCTION



MAKING THE GREEN HORNET'S RIDE BEAUTIFUL AGAIN!



Through the years, we've come to know Karl Kirchner of Inman, South Carolina as the world's foremost authority on the Green Hornet "Black Beauty" Imperial, as well as a number of other vintage television and movie cars. Karl's extreme knowledge of the famed 1966 Black Beauty Imperial is logical enough, as he located one of the two original Dean Jeffries built Black

Beauties. Despite what you may read elsewhere, only two of these cars were built for the television series back in 1966. The others out there are rather slipshod built copies done later for auto show use by persons other than Dean Jeffries. We'll have a full story on Karl's piece of Mopar entertainment history after he completes its renovation, but in order for you to understand the magnitude of this project, a little history

will be covered here as well. Special effects were not an exact science in 1966, so the studios wanted a car that could do all its own stunts. Thus, Dean Jeffries built two of these Imperials, reportedly costing the production company around \$50K each! That was a serious pile of money in 1966.

As the crime fighting Green Hornet's main machine, the Black Beauty sports an insane assortment of gadgets and weaponry. There are rocket launchers front and rear (functional, by the way), nozzles which spray oil behind the car to get rid of anyone in pursuit, machine guns, a radar screen and a lot of fancy lighted gadgets in the back seat area, state-of-the-art communications systems (for 1966 anyway), and our favorite



gadget, little brooms which come down behind the rear tires to erase the car's tire tracks when it's on dirt roads! Unlike a lot of movie or television cars, all this stuff actually works on this one.

Karl obtained the Black Beauty in 2001, purchasing it from the estate of an eighty-seven-year-old lady who had owned it for over a decade! Yes, there's a story there, but you'll have to wait for that one. Completely intact, the Black Beauty was in decent original shape and showing just over 10,000 miles on the clock. Still, thanks to years of sitting idle, the car was tired and needed attention. After speaking with Jeffries about the car many times, and finally meeting with him in person, Karl felt he was as prepared as he would ever be to embark on returning the car to

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all its former glory.

Karl had been warned that due to the extraordinary amount of electronics, there was a mile of wiring in the car. As the Imperial came apart, Karl realized this may have been an exaggeration - there probably was no less than half a mile of wiring in the Imperial! Due to the daunting nature of this car, no restoration shops were eager to tackle the project, for who knew what lay under the old black paint

and nobody wanted to be responsible for screwing up any of the wiring or the unique movie-prop gadgets located inside and out.

This left Karl to take the car apart himself, taking careful notes as he went. The bare body was sent to a local shop where it was soda blasted to remove the paint. Soda blasting allowed for the paint to come off without messing up any of the original custom body work. Jeffries used hand fab-

ricated sheet metal panels welded onto the Imperial, then covered each seam with a light coat of putty. Since the car was gleaming black, all those seams had to be perfectly done, and they were. Great pains were taken not to alter anything done by Dean and his crew when this one was new. A nerve wracking restoration, if any of the unique components on this one are damaged, it's going to require the fabrication of replacement pieces. Since the car is well-known to sci-fi guys and Mopar guys alike, Karl feels a sense of responsibility to get this one right. The other original Black Beauty still exists today in the Peterson Museum in Los Angeles. While gorgeous, it's not restored back to original "as seen on tv" specs. That's what Karl is going for.

Look for the reborn '66 Black Beauty Imperial at Mopar shows, perhaps as early as the summer of 2007. Good luck to Karl, and if anyone wants to spend a few hours sorting out wiring, we know a guy who could use some help! ☺