



## Junk Bonds

### Gold Member David Cornell devoted 18 years to restoring a rare gem – with remarkable results!

When David Cornell brought a dilapidated Durant roadster home on his trailer, his wife took one look at it and told him to take it straight to the tip!

Her reaction was understandable the wire-wheeled roadster, named after General Motors founder William Crapo "Billy" Durant, had seen better days. Since its original purchase in 1930, it'd been used by a rabbit trapper, driven over bumpy paddocks, and had various parts sold off for scrap. By the time it came up for sale in David's home town of Albury, NSW it was a mish-mash of two separate cars, with lots of bits missing.

Though he's a diesel mechanic by trade, David admits that "some of the engine's obscure brackets and small parts had me completely tricked." Fortunately, a fellow member of his car club had a similar vintage Durant tourer, so he was able to figure out "where all the bits went."

And thus began an 18-year labour

of love to restore the car to its former glory. David worked on it on and off for 16 years, before taking two years full-time to finish it off. The job involved removing the less-than-pristine chassis and sandblasting, undercoating and painting it, repairing rust holes in the body, replacing door bottoms rotted by water, making replacements for the unobtainable Durant hubcaps and adapting it so it would run on unleaded fuel.

Admitting he's not much of a panel beater, David received plenty of help from relatives, professionals and local car enthusiasts, some of whom even fought over the privilege of painting it!

"The young son of a friend who is a panel beater and spray painter did much of the preparation work for me," says David. "He spent weeks on it and never charged me a penny - but nearly sent me broke in grog!" But all the hard work eventually paid off when at last David was able to

The Durant had seen better days, but David saw its possibilities, not its flaws



Continental Red Seal Motor. Six-Cylinder, side valve engine

take his wreck-turned-roadster for a spin. On its first major trip from Albury to the Bay to Birdwood and back, he says it "never missed a beat." It cruises along at around 70-80km/hr, but has been known to get up to 100km/hr.

"The roadster is a nice, quiet car. It's also very reliable and rides well," says David. The only negative? "It's a bit cramped inside – they weren't really built for taller people."