



"1972 Datsun 510 – notice the Ontario Z Car sticker on the front fender!"

You Don't Have to Be a Millionaire...

Sometimes all it takes is a hard work, dedication and a lot of resourcefulness to be a hopeful competitor in motorsports activities. Case in point? The Kumho Tires Grassroots Motorsports \$2005 Challenge, an event held every year – this past spring on April 1,2 at Gainesville Raceway in Central Florida. The brainchild of publisher Tim Suddard (Grassroots Motorsports magazine), the event started out as a motorsports triathlon competition featuring autocross, drag races and concours judging. The catch is that competitors can't spend more than the year in dollars (e.g. \$2005 for this year) to buy, build and prepare their cars.



"The Datsun mounts some serious tires and prepares for the 1/4 mile."

Sounds easy huh? After watching my car-shop-storage neighbours trying to meet this challenge over the last couple of winters I'm amazed at what it takes to actually



"The Datsun 510 being restored for the Grassroots Motorsports \$2005 Challenge"

by Diane Dale

do this! Entrants must present an itemized budget for every dollar spent. While barter and freebies are allowed, they must be accounted for in the budget at fair market value. Resale of unused parts and pieces of the original car is acceptable, but only up to the purchased price of the junk car (which can be anything up to \$2005) or \$1002, whichever is less. The whole concept of this competition is to be the most mechanically and restoratively creative and truly – to develop the coolest car.

The competition itself is straightforward. Autocross – be the fastest while not hitting cones; Drag Racing – the fastest car wins; Concours – impress the judges with the engine, interior, exterior and overall appearance of the car. And have a whole lot of fun in the process.

And what do you win? Bragging rights, admiration and perhaps a cool trophy. Besides the basic competitions, trophies are awarded for fun feats like most spectacular breakdown, the best (and worst) attempt to persuade the concours judges, the farthest travelled, the best placing classic car, challenger's choice, spirit of the event, the best placing car for under \$1000 and the person who hit the most cones.

And of course – high up in the challenge's pack was Small Bucks Racing/Rust Bucket Racing with their #44, 1972 Datsun 510.



"Small Bucks/Rust Buckets team – Sam Turner, Roger Calmano, Barry Brown, Sherry Brown, Barney Brown, Jeff Benson"

(Remember Barry Brown from Riter Restoration who we interviewed last winter? See Zedline December 2004.) Barry's team won 2nd place in the Concours, 10th place in the Drag Race, 14th overall (out of 62) and Honorable Mentions in the Editors' Choice and Best Visual Package categories. (By the way the best attempt to persuade/bribe the

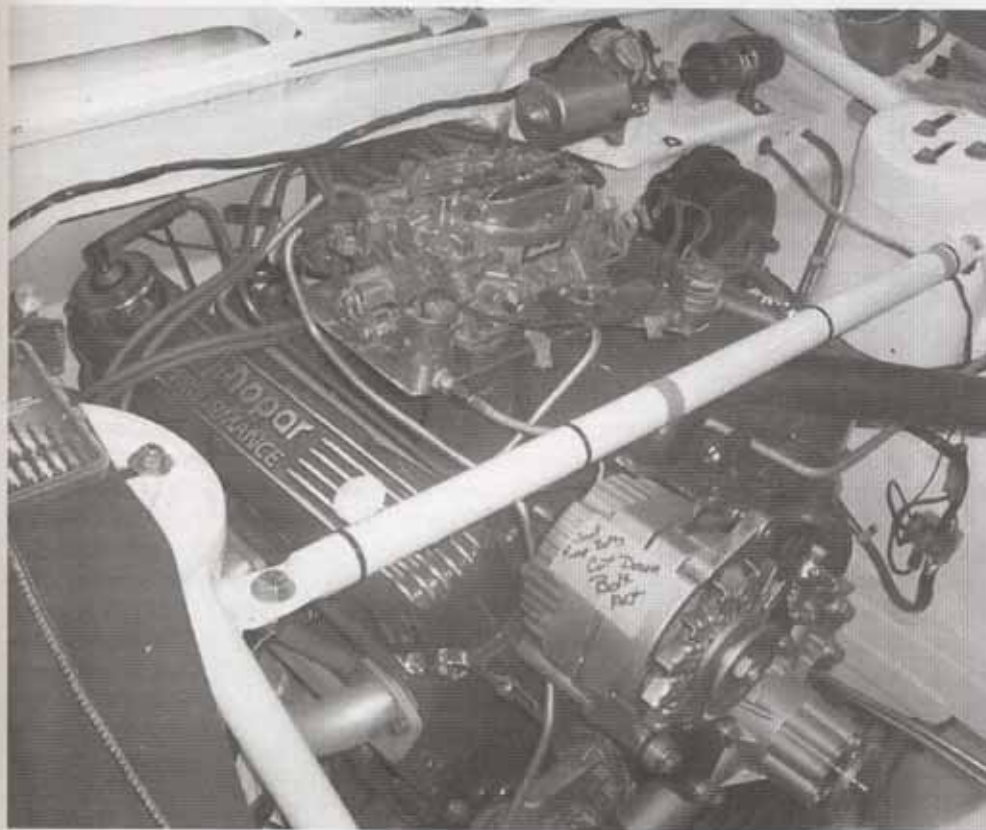
judges was won by Dave Melton in his #13, 1971 Datsun 240z. Dave brought bottles of Maker's Mark Kentucky Straight Bourbon whiskey and a Louisville Slugger baseball bat engraved with Grassroots Motorsports from his home town of Louisville, Kentucky. Way to go Dave!)

Barry and his team(s) are notorious for turning old rust buckets into beautiful restored cars (hence the popularity and livelihood of Barry's passion and work at Riter Restorations, www.riterrestorations.com). Their winning 2005 Grassroots Challenge car had a Dodge 360 engine and transmission bought from Brock Yates (it once powered his Cannonball car) and a 280z suspension. The purchase price of the 510 was \$500 and the total budget spent was \$1984.39. Next year Small Bucks Racing and Rust Bucket Racing plan on continuing their partnership and are building a 1983 280zx with a big block 464 for the competition.

Other interesting Datsun/Nissan entrants were a 1984 Nissan 343 Coop (pun intended) for \$979.77, a 1991 Nissan 240sx for \$1744, a 1990 Nissan 240sx SeVilya for \$1054.23, a 1972 Datsun 240z for \$983.05.

The next Grassroots Motorsports Challenge is tentatively set for October 26-28 at Gainesville Raceway. For more info check out www.grassrootsmotorsports.com.

By Diane Dale



The Datsun's small block"