

Holy Grail in Hibernation

Stefano Bimbi, proprietor of Nickey Performance, maintains an impressive Oldsmobile collection. The crown jewel is this Matador Red 1970 Olds 4-4-2 W-30 convertible, one of 96 four-speed convertible W-30 cars produced.

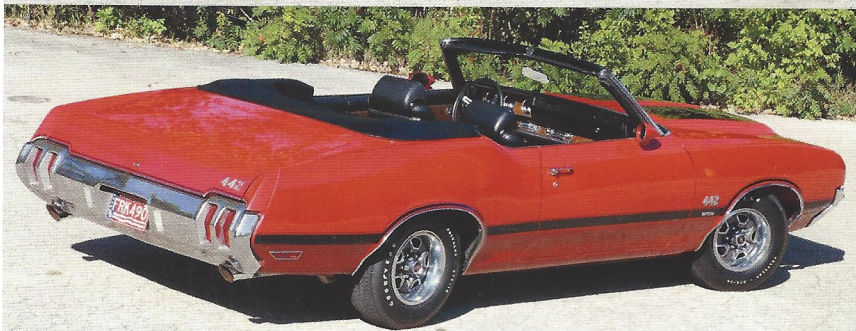
"Of the 96 produced, it is believed there are approximately 30 documented examples in existence," says Bimbi. "Of those 30, less than half have the original factory documentation. Of those with proper documentation and in original, unrestored condition, only two have their born-with drivetrain. This car is one of those two."

The W-30 performance option first appeared on the 4-4-2 in 1966. By 1970, the package—which consisted of a fiberglass Outside Air Induction (OAI) hood, a performance-tuned Rochester Quadrajet carburetor on an aluminum intake manifold, a special high-performance distributor, special F-code cylinder heads, and a camshaft matched to transmission choice—was good for 370 hp.

The original owner purchased the car from Key Oldsmobile in Warren, Michigan, a performance Oldsmobile dealership active in sponsoring Oldsmobile drag cars. He sold the W-30 convertible in 1973 with about 24,000 miles on the odometer, as he recalls. The story goes that the second owner moved into a new home and parked the car in his barn in 1976 after racking up just 15,000 more miles. The car did not see the light of day again until 2004, when it was rolled out on its original Uniroyal Tiger Paws.

A local police officer and a partner purchased the car, and then sold it to a well-known muscle car collector. He delivered the W-30 to the foremost 1968-1972 Oldsmobile restoration and documentation expert, Steve Minore, for cleanup and mechanical work.

Prior to Bimbi's purchase of the car, this particular W-30 had been dubbed the Holy Grail by 4-4-2/W-30 collectors because of its originality and strong documentation. Minore confirmed that, in his opinion, the



■ In 1970, 264 W-30 convertibles were built, and only 96 of them were four-speed cars.

■ The W-30 455ci engine was rated at 370 hp and 500 lb-ft of torque. The W-30 engines were hand-assembled using the Select Fit process that matched engine components by weight and size. Note the W-30 red fenderwells.

■ The W-30 package included the W-25 OAI hood with corresponding air cleaner assembly. Note the original air cleaner top with the original Oldsmobile logo, vacuum valve, flapper door, and weathered foam.

■ The interior in Stefano Bimbi's W-30 is all original, right down to the 39,833 miles on the odometer. The instrument cluster features the optional Rally Pac gauges.

■ Here is the W-30 4-4-2 in 2004 being pulled from the second owner's barn after being parked there in 1976. Note the original tires, 1976 license plate, dirt, and obvious lack of attention.

AT A GLANCE

1970 4-4-2 W-30 CONVERTIBLE

Owned by: Stefano Bimbi, St. Charles, IL

Engine: 455ci/370hp W-30 V-8

Transmission: Muncie M21 4-speed manual

Rearend: Oldsmobile 12-bolt with 3.91 gears and positraction

Interior: Black vinyl bucket seat

Wheels: 14x7 Super Stock II

Tires: G70-14 Goodyear Polyglas

drivetrain had never been tampered with. Minore also discovered the broadcast card with the elusive W-30 designation. For some unknown reason, early 1970 W-30 convertibles did not receive the W-30 designation on the broadcast card—a problem for some owners seeking documentation. However, Bimbi's W-30 is not an early build

and does possess the designation.

During the cleanup, Minore also discovered an assembly line sheet—a handwritten document from a line worker or inspector—that had both the "W-30" and "4 speed" designations. To Bimbi's knowledge, there has never been a similar sheet discovered in a '70 W-30.