

# The joys of six (cylinder, that is)

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Special to The IFP

No, I haven't gone all perverted and adopted a swinger lifestyle. The above headline refers to the simpler pleasures in automotive hobby. I'm talking about inline six banger automobiles.

It's true the magazine trade gives short shrift to the base engine cars and trucks. The exceptions are the British or European mags where the punitive cubic displacement tax enforced an efficient small engine culture for decades. Mercedes Benz came up with the indestructible inline fours used in their SL 280s and Jaguar dreamed up the magnificent 3.8 liter which became famous in their stunning E Type. That is what I call making first class lemonade from one lemon of a law.

The North Americans had some great six cylinders as well. The Chevrolet 'stove bolt' engine powered it all from half ton pick ups to Novas. Ford had a tough little 200 cubic incher throughout the 1960s that became a bigger 250 cube inline used in the 1970s. I had personal experience with both these engines. The 250 banger was in my 1971 Mustang fastback paired to an FMX automatic. It produced prodigious amounts of torque without provocation and was forever lighting up my poor right rear tire. It would have been happier in a truck, pulling out fence posts or lugging vats of liquid fertilizer to be sprayed over fields. The big Ford six always searched for the perfect gear ratio but never found one when stuck with a lazy three speed automatic. I'm sure it would've been a different horse with a manual box.

The Chrysler slant six is world famous for tall tales of stingy fuel use, ample pulling power and reliability. Like so many engines,



Polishing up a 1966 Mustang.

they had their peculiarities. Chrysler was fanatical about using dreadful carburetors called Ball & Ball on the six and 2 barrel 318s as well. You were assured of terrible cold starting manners. Your best bet was to have the car in your driveway pointed nose out, pump it three times, ignite it and pop it in first while on the pedal. B&B carbs worked in concert with the manifold to extract any water from the fuel and dump it down the manifold first. A winter time specialty that left you pattering along in second while your engine tried to combust water. I must say though when running right they were great for acceleration. One other problem the slant six had was cracking exhaust manifolds. Overall, slant sixes were legendary for a reason.

I also owned a nice 2.8 liter German built six banger Mustang. This was a superb engine. It was easy to work on, reliable and pretty good on gas. That car had automatic

trans, air conditioning, deluxe interior, hatchback and the engine's solid cam made enough torque to spin me sideways through an intersection. It handled a five hour trip on the 401 fully loaded, including my very big Irish Setter on less than one tank of gas. A marvelous car.

As good as that was, I think my ultimate six experience is coming. It may be next year or next week if gas prices keep their upward spiral.

However you can get a head start on the six experience just by attending the Classic Against Cancer Father's Day car show. There are always a number of great machines ranging from the humble Falcon or Valiant to the sporty MGB, Spitfire or Jaguar XE type. The owners are knowledgeable and eager to share their experience with fellow enthusiasts. You'd be surprised how affordable and fun the car hobby can be.

# Chevy set a new standard with the LS-6

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brawlers. It handled well, it went like a scalded ape and was considered one of the best cars then and is highly revered today.

The LS-6 was a one year only deal. Lower compression ratios and the threat of unleaded gas placed it in the coffin.

This pristine example belongs to Luch Delry of Hamilton, Ontario. He restored the car in his garage during his spare time. He bought the car from Norval native, Dave Tucker, as a rolling project car. It was black with gold stripes and a hairy looking 427 in the bay. The car had seen drag strip duty and was ready for restoration. Luch put it back to factory original and rebuilt the Muncie crashbox. Since he lived at the top of Hamilton Mountain and wanted his wife to be able to pilot the car, he installed an automatic for easier driving.

Otherwise, it's stock and nice enough to nab awards at Performance World 2001.

It's a basic super car circa 1970 inside with console, AM radio, complete SS gauges and black strato bucket seats. Outside she's draped in metallic silver livery with black stripes, cowl induction hood and five spoke SS mag wheels.

Recently Chevelle LS-6 cars have sold for as high as \$1 million on eBay Motors for clean number matching examples in perfect condition.

Don't you wish you'd kept that Malibu a little while longer?

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