

WOODIE TIMES



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Winner

*By Dave Westrate
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My wife, Barbara, and I saw the 1939 Ford Standard station wagon on a small car lot in Leesburg, Virginia, in 1995. Before we realized what was going on, we owned it! The next six years were the most interesting and rewarding that I could imagine. Never having owned an antique car, much less having restored one, my enthusiasm was based on blind faith and the allure of these wooden automobiles. I had no idea of the challenge that lay ahead.

There were enough good pieces of wood on one side or the other to use for patterns, but I was afraid to take it completely apart and lose the relationships of the parts. Therefore, I built a jig of 1x2s completely around the car and screwed it into the old pieces. Then I was able to

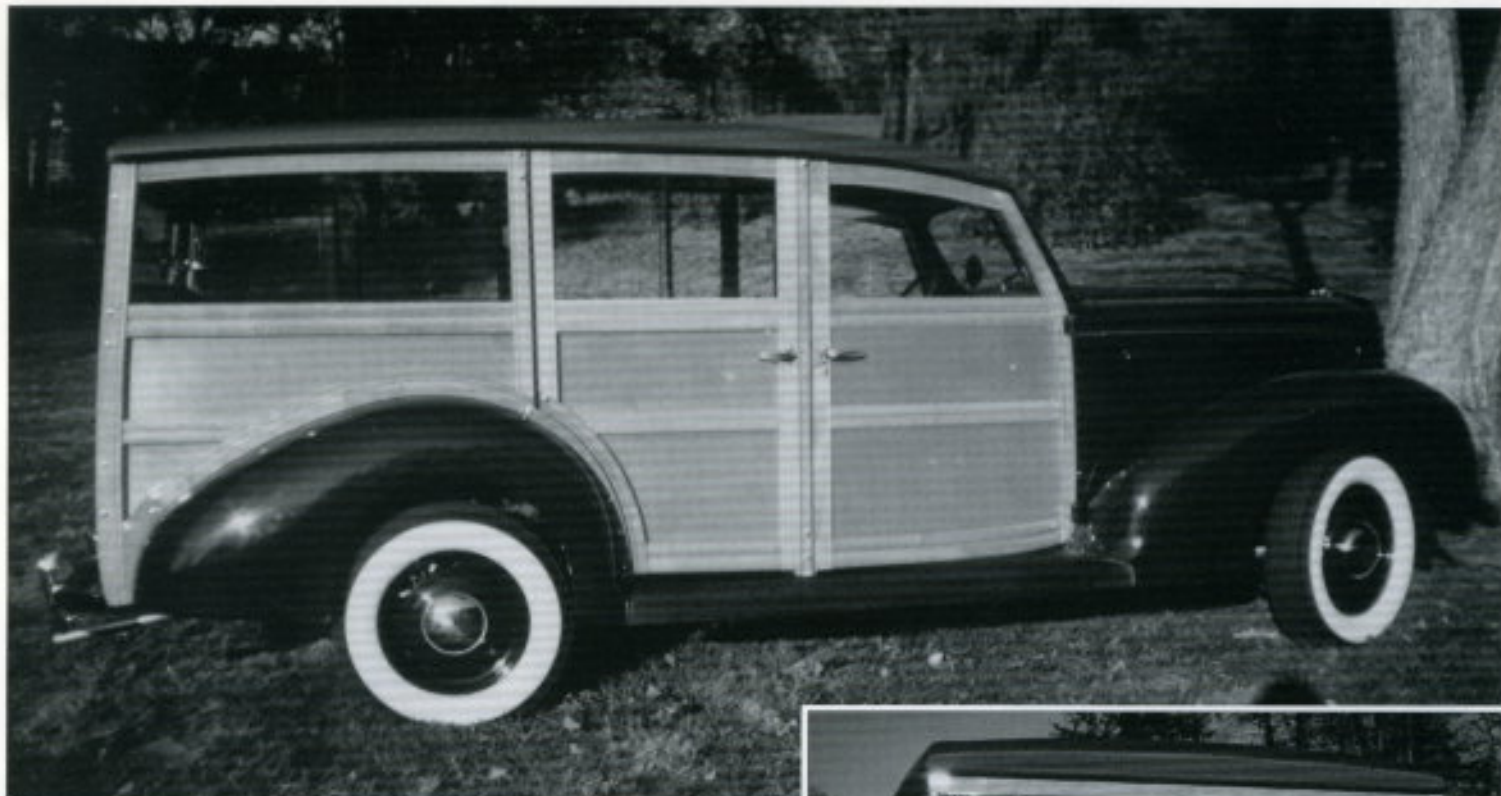
Front cover photo by Andrew Kist

remove a piece or section at a time and duplicate it. The only part of the body that could be salvaged was the roof crossmembers and basswood slats. From the side beams and front and rear headers on down, the body was rebuilt from hard maple. We used birch panels and hand-brushed eight coats of marine spar varnish on the body.

Needless to say, the finger joints were a world-class challenge, as you can see from the story in the March, 2002, *WOODIE TIMES*. Building, gluing and fitting the front doors was perhaps the most difficult project I have ever done.

Even though we had taken great care at every step, the top front corner of the driver's door stood 1/4 inch outside of the rain gutter on the cowl as we were doing the final fitting. No adjustments could be made that did not cause worse problems. To correct this, we had to disassemble the door, cut the top of the front door post off at the finger joint,

on the first try



mill out the joint and glue in a block of wood. With adjustments to the top rail of the door and shaping the block, we were able to get a correct fit with proper alignment and a window that worked. With a lot of patience and hard work, all turned out well.

During the six years I worked on the body, my son-in-law, Eric Sumner, and I completely disassembled and restored the rest of the car. With the exception of the machine shop work on the engine, the wood-grain on the dash, the re-chroming and final paint, we did all of the work ourselves.

Our first time out last spring we

won a Dearborn Award in the Eastern National Meet of the Early Ford V-8 Club, receiving 964 out of 1,000 points.

While awards and trophies are nice, the biggest reward has been the wonderful and helpful people we have met in this hobby, in the Woodie Club and the Early Ford V-8 Club. Believe it or not, we have a 1939 Ford Deluxe wagon in the garage also ready for a full restoration. We hope to start on this one this year. When finished, we'll have a matched set of 1939 Ford wagons. I will keep you posted on our progress.



Dave showed how he used turnbuckles to adjust the doors in the May, 2001 WOODIE TIMES.

Cutting these finger joints was the subject of an article in the March, 2002 WOODIE TIMES.



LEFT -- The top slats and cross-members were the only wooden parts reused in the restoration.

RIGHT -- Outside and inside views of newly constructed rear doors.



SPECIFICATIONS

1939 Ford Standard Model 922A 4-door Station Wagon

1939 Ford station wagons were available in both Standard and Deluxe series. Standard models carried over the general styling of the 1938 Deluxe Fords. The grille is sharply V'd with horizontal bars. Teardrop-shaped headlights were mounted inboard of the fenders, and there are louver vents near the rear of the hood sides. All 1939 models were equipped with hydraulic brakes for the first time.

ENGINE: L-head V-8, cast iron block
Displacement: 221 cu. in.
Brake hp.: 85 @ 3800 rpm.
Main bearings: 3
Valve lifters: mechanical
Carburetor: Stromberg 2-bbl. downdraft
Transmission: 3-speed, sliding gear, floor shift
Rear end: 3/4 floating axles, 4.33:1 ratio.

CHASSIS:

Wheelbase: 112 in.
Overall length: 179.5 in.
Height: 68.625 in.
Front/rear tread: 55.5 in. / 58.25 in.
Tires: 6.00 x 16
Brakes: Lockheed hydraulic on all four wheels
Weight: 3080 lbs.
Factory price: \$840
Production: 3277

OPTIONS (on this car): sideview mirror; white sidewall tires.

HISTORICAL: The 1939 Fords were introduced November 4, 1938. Edsel Ford was the president of Ford Motor Company.

SOURCE: *Standard Catalog of American Cars, 1805-1942*, Krause Publications.



The original car was complete enough to provide Dave with patterns to duplicate the wood.



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