

1956 Belair Wagon Customized Built for Travel

Embarking on an exhilarating Rodding adventure, let me introduce you to a stunning 1956 Belair Wagon that has undergone a meticulous transformation, leaving no stone unturned—from its marvelous custom body to its highly engineered chassis and suspension. Prepare to be captivated as we delve into the remarkable story of Tim and Cheryl, intrepid souls from the charming city of St. George, Utah, who embarked on a quest to create a customized Wagon tailored to their travel aspirations. Guided by their unwavering passion for exploration, they sought out the expertise of the master craftsmen at JRW Rods and Customs, led by the visionary Wayne Glasgow. Together, they set out to build a sanctuary on wheels—a haven of relaxation and discovery perfectly suited for their dreams of leisurely driving tours along the breathtaking East Coast and the rest of America.

At first glance, skeptics may raise an eyebrow, questioning the audacity of undertaking a cross-country voyage in a fully customized, nearly seven-decade-old automobile. Doubts may creep in, casting shadows upon the feasibility of such an adventurous journey. However, let me unveil the underlying reasons why this voyager, in all its magnificent glory, stands as an unwavering testament to automotive excellence—a testament forged in the crucible of meticulous customization, transforming an antiquated artifact into a haven of unrivaled comfort and performance.

An undertaking of this magnitude necessitates a well-made and precisely constructed foundation, upon which dreams are built and memories are forged. In the realm of automotive artistry, Glasgow turned to the determined expertise of Speedtech Performance—a trusted supplier known for their staunch commitment to the quality of the driving experience. Glasgow handpicked the ExtReme Tri5 Chassis with a Torque Arm Rear Suspension—a testament to his discerning eye and pursuit of perfection. The ExtReme Chassis, a technological marvel in its own right, offers a litany of performance benefits to the Belair Wagon. The meticulous engineering behind this impressive chassis manifests itself in the realm of driving dynamics, where imperfections are defeated, and a harmonious symphony of mechanical precision is unleashed. Bump steer, that perennial bane of vehicular instability, is all but eliminated, reduced to just .005" over the entire range of travel. The ExtReme Chassis displays a stance and surefootedness befitting a true champion. Ackerman, that elusive quality that defines the precise and predictable nature of steering, is meticulously honed to perfection, a testament to the engineering prowess behind the ExtReme Tri5. Scrub radius, a term foreign to those unacquainted with the intricacies of automotive engineering, finds itself in an optimal position—a testament to the dedication and expertise that underpin every aspect of the ExtReme Chassis. While these technical intricacies may not be commonplace in everyday conversations, their presence denotes the commitment to the success of the mission, providing the classic Wagon with modern driving character and a blend of classic aesthetics with contemporary engineering.

Complementing the foundation of this project is the Wilwood 12" brakes with 6-piston calipers, painted to match the body color, providing abundant stopping power. With the ExtReme

Chassis, an extremely wide wheel and tire package is possible. Remarkably, the 18X10 Vision American Muscle 55 wheels are conservative for this chassis with stock body panels. JRW Rods and Customs selected these for all four corners, wrapped in 275/45/18 Michelin Pilot Sport 4 tires, based on the customer's plans for using the car on the open road. The 45 series tires will provide a smoother ride than a shorter tire and transmit less NVH throughout the car, making them just right for cruising across America. With all four wheels and tires being the same size and offset, they can easily be rotated around the car, extending the life of the tire set.

With an extremely solid foundation in place, fortified by a commitment to excellence and with the perfect powertrain, the Belair Wagon is ready to conquer both time and space. The impressive powertrain, methodically selected, a LS3 Connect and Cruise from Gm Performance coupled with a 6L80 automatic transmission. This unparalleled combination of performance and convenience elevates the car's performance further. This symphony of mechanical prowess is further elevated by the inclusion of a Ford-style 9" rear end housing (standard Issue in the ExtReme Chassis), geared with a 3.55 ratio, perfectly complementing the power of the engine and gear ratios of the transmission to deliver an unrivaled driving experience. The engine, dressed with aftermarket coil covers is reminiscent of the classic small block valve covers, finds itself intricately entwined with the overarching aesthetic narrative of the custom hot rod. Painted in body colors, the custom intake manifold and various components seamlessly merge with the vehicle's captivating exterior, providing a visual treat for the discerning connoisseur. 1-7/8" cast iron exhaust headers and a custom exhaust using Vibrant Performance silencers help the LS3 breathe life into the Wagon's performance. The exhaust note is an intoxicating symphony that dances with the wind as it cuts through the open road. The tone of the car is perfected via the fabricated 3" exhaust system that is a flawless combination of engineering precision and aesthetic brilliance. It is within these seemingly minor intricacies that the '56 Belair truly becomes distinct. It's performance and elegance beckon the intrepid traveler to embark on an unforgettable crusade.

No great transformation is complete without a steadfast commitment to the structural integrity of the body. The craftsmen at JRW Rods and Customs embarked upon a journey of meticulous inspection, uncovering the imperfections that time had wrought upon the Belair Wagon. It was evident that the passenger side had experienced some minor collision, necessitating the replacement of the A-pillar—a task not for the faint of heart. This essential repair called for skillful precision, as the craftsmen delicately exchanged the damaged A-pillar for a new one. Further examination unveiled corrosion and the need for wide-ranging metalwork, including the replacement of both the inner and outer cowl, the inner and outer rockers, and the entire floor—a grueling labor of love that put the body right so the real work could begin. Mindful of preserving the authenticity of the Belair's core, Wayne and his team meticulously sourced original replacement parts, ensuring that the essence of its 1956 heritage remained intact. However, it was the addition of a custom-made smooth firewall and a carefully crafted tunnel that served as noteworthy achievements—a testament to the commitment to the quality and personalization of the project. The tunnel work was needed to accommodate the modern powertrain and a correct driveline angle, set to 1.5°, effectively suppressing any unwelcome vibrations from the driveshaft—an important consideration for any custom build, especially one

that will see a lot of interstate miles. As these crucial and often underappreciated repairs unfolded, an opportunity for one of the many custom touches revealed itself to Wayne and the team. The exposed body section of the B-pillar was skillfully removed, leaving a void eagerly awaiting its transformation. With determination, the craftsmen extended the front door, ingeniously bridging the gap, while the rear door underwent a subtle metamorphosis, gracefully reimagining its lower contour. A casual observer, glancing quickly at the Wagon, might easily mistake it for the ever-elusive Nomad—a testament to the ingenuity that defines this stunning vehicle. Flush door handles, gracefully integrated into the front doors, elevate the aesthetic, exemplifying the marriage of form and function. The pièce de résistance that resides within the recesses of the custom-tailored clamshell tailgate—a frenched-in Flying V taillight that commands attention, accentuated by the subtle substitution of the chrome T-handle with a period-correct flush pop-out handle. Notably, the thoughtfully chosen second-generation Camaro door mirrors further elevate the vehicle's exterior changes, a testament to the discerning eye of its creators. Every chrome accent and luminous fixture adorning this voyager's exterior was painstakingly aligned to perfection. The hues of House Of Kolor's Candy Brandy and JRW Cream wrap the exterior canvas, seamlessly combining with the vehicle's classic styling. This is a visual masterpiece that arrests the gaze of onlookers. An additional touch of modernity is unveiled in the integration of LED lighting, with this project boasting only LED illumination, which further enhances the Wagon's exterior appearance and is a nod to the marriage of innovation and tradition.

A vehicle built for exploration and adventure must not only possess unyielding mechanical fortitude but also envelop its occupants in a cocoon of unrivaled comfort. The craftsmen at JRW Rods and Customs understood this truth implicitly and embarked on an endeavor to create an interior space that mesmerizes the senses, with help from Benchmark Upholstery. They have created a haven of relaxation and luxury that elevates the Belair beyond the realm of ordinary Wagons. The seating surfaces, swathed in supple, Tan, Ultra Leather, cradle the weary traveler and offer full power seat adjustments to ensure one's comfort. The seats are customized power seats sourced from a 2005 Cadillac CTSV. A fiberglass TMI center console that has been fitted with an Alpine 6.5-inch screen navigation and satellite radio serves as a modern convenience nestled within the embrace of timeless aesthetics. Conveniently placed near the shifter, you can find the controls for the Resto Mod air conditioning system. Mounted behind the shifter in the front armrest are the power window switches. The interior is a sanctuary where the occupants can revel in the blissful union of technology and luxury. The dashboard captures the essence of 1956, preserving the Belair's heritage while skillfully incorporating modern instrumentation from Dakota Digital. It demonstrates the harmonious coexistence of tradition and innovation. The rear seat was removed to make way for a custom compartment housing the battery, fuse panel, spare tire, and tool kit. The extended rear deck of the Wagon features a modified pickup truck wood bed kit to finish it off in style. The headliner is finished with suede matching suede inserts in the seats and door panels, completing the luxurious ambiance. The billet custom pedals and German Square Weave carpet round out the interior. The attention to detail is evident in every stitch, every contour, as the artisans painstakingly labor to manifest their vision of automotive grandeur. The Wagon's interior is a testament to the enduring pursuit of perfection.

As this luxury grand tourer prepares to embark on its maiden voyage, the countless hours of unyielding dedication culminate in modern driving character and reliability. Tim and Cheryl, now guardians of this automotive masterpiece, are poised to embark on a journey that will undoubtedly etch indelible memories into the fabric of their lives. With Sheila, their faithful Corgi Shepard Mix, by their side, they are prepared to conquer the open road, immersing themselves in the awe-inspiring vistas that await. Their custom Belair, a testament to the power of dreams transformed into reality by all those involved in the project.

The 1956 Belair Wagon meticulously customized by the master craftsmen at JRW Rods and Customs, transforms the open road into an infinite canvas upon which dreams will be painted on to. The car boasts modern luxury and performance, with all the reliability of fresh components including the chassis, engine, transmission, and wire harness. Tim, Cheryl, and Sheila can have total confidence in the car to get out on the open road and create lasting memories. As the voyager cruises into the sunset, it leaves a trail of awe-inspired admirers in its wake, beckoning them to embrace their own journeys of discovery.