



By Cindy Ladage

Brian Kestel and the Wedding Red Baby

One of the first things I spied at the Red Power Round Up turned out to be one of my favorites. The day before the show opened I saw this beautiful, romantic truck that has a love story behind it. The truck was Brian Kestel's Red Baby! "This is a 1922 International Harvester Speed Truck," Brian said. "I talked to Wendell Kelch, a well-known International Harvester enthusiast, regarding the authenticity of the truck. Everything he had me look at pointed towards it being a Red Baby."

The beautiful Red Baby is still a work in progress. Brian thinks someone took off the original bed and replaced it with a stake bed. Brian's truck has a four-cylinder Lycoming engine. "I bought this in Pontiac, Illinois in 2019," Brian said adding, "I was getting married in September of 2020. I was engaged (to Colleen O'Sullivan) at the time, and I thought it would be cool to use it at the wedding."

"My goal was for her to see it coming out with her wedding dress," Brian said. While it didn't quite work out that way, the way he did it was just as special. "I gave her a Buddy L scale model of the truck and told her to look outside."

"Colleen likes trucks and tractors too. We met eight years ago, and we started going to shows two years after that."

Brian Kestel married Colleen O'Sullivan and after the wedding, they toured in this beautiful truck. "There is a lot to it," he said of their wedding story. "The wedding was at St. Joe's on September 19, 2020. We had a reception at the farm in Manhattan, Illinois."





Everything turned out just right for this wedding that was held during crazy times. "We'd always planned to have our wedding at the farm outside and it was unbelievable, it was a picture-perfect day," Brian said about their special wedding.

After the wedding, Brian said, "I drove her home to our farm where we live. It had 'Just Married' on the back."

The Just Married sign was attached to the stake bed and flowers adorned the bed as well. There were also cans attached to the back. What a perfect ride for a bride! On the side of the truck is a sign "Kestel Farm". The couple have a picture of Colleen in her wedding dress inside the beautiful cab.



The truck was the perfect wedding getaway vehicle!

Next Brian said that he plans to restore his Red Baby back to original. One of the things he has in mind is to make it appear like an ad he saw. "Some ads had a hit and miss Mogul engine in the back. I have one that was my dad's," Brian added.

That would give this a sentimental twist that would add to their already beautiful family story of using the truck in their wedding. "My dad, Kenneth "Kenny" passed."





Putting the mogul on the truck would be a fitting tribute to Brian's late father. Brian and his dad are not the only Kestels involved in antique tractor and engine history. "My grandfather, Ray Kestel started the Will County Thresherman's Association show," Brian said.

Brian mentioned that each year he has a fund raiser Kes Fest and after his mother Madonna passed away

from pancreatic cancer, they supported a fund for this devastating disease. The fundraiser for 2021 is concentrating on veteran's and Gary Sinise's charity.



WEDDING RED BABY

Even before the wedding, Brian's beautiful Red Baby already had a bit of work done on her. "The carburetor was not correct, or the drive shaft. I found the proper ones and Karl Jansen went through the motor. It was running and driving in no time," Brian said praising the work of the Jansens. Jansen Bros Garage, Inc. is in Sigel, Illinois and this family business works on cars and rare tractors!

About the time we were admiring the Red Baby, Kent Jansen rode by on the tail gate of a truck with his brother Curt. They helped with the threshing during the Red Power Round Up. It would have been interesting to learn just how many of the machines there had been touched by a Jansen.

As far as being all International Harvester, Brian said, "I don't discriminate on brands, just the older the better. We're into steel wheel tractors. We just got an all original (McCormick Deering) 10-20 on steel. It is rusty but we can still see the original decals. We also have a W-4 and a restored Cub, as well as an original Farmall M with a hand clutch."

The Kestel's have memories galore with their wedding ride and the restoration to come. The Red Baby was an eye catcher at this year's Red Power Round Up. Time will only tell what the Red Baby will be involved with in the future! 🚜



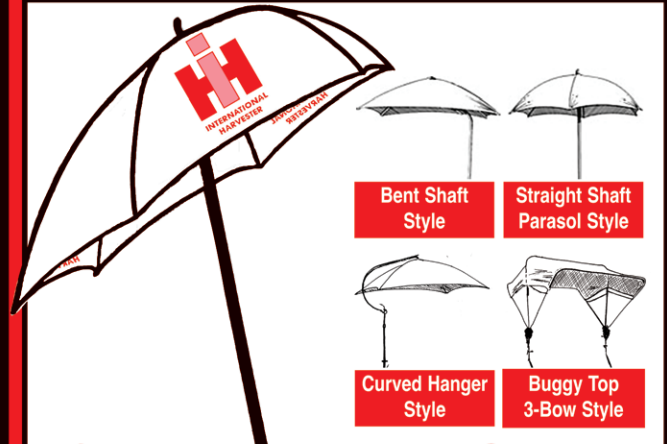
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