On one occasion, my parents and I drove to Indianapolis in the R2 Hawk. Cousin Bob Palma joined us on the trip back to the Chicago area; he lived with his parents in Indianapolis, but it was summertime, school was out, and he came to our house for a visit. Bob and I were in the back seat on that trip. I still remember Dad accelerating from a stop light at full throttle; Bob didn't say anything, but he nudged me with his elbow and we exchanged grins. Dad liked high performance!

Sadly, by 1970, the salty Chicago-area streets had taken their toll, and the body of the Hawk began showing serious rust. Dad found and purchased a pair of Turquoise 1963 Avanti's, one of which he used for transportation. But that's another story.

In the early 1970s, the R2 Hawk was sold to a young friend who had a family. He was not especially hard on the car, but continued use took its toll. It was finally retired and sold for parts to another Chicago-area SDC member.

*** I'm very happy that Doug Crall has done such a magnificent job of restoration of 9251...Congratulations, Doug!*

Restoration of 9251, Doug & Carolyn Crall,

Without going into her early history, George Krem is the expert there. In her early life 9251 was exposed to the harsh winter weather and the salty roads of Illinois. Many years later she was deemed undriveable and was parted out. I was very fortunate to acquire the salvage rights from a previous owner and after a very long time, I am very pleased to say, 9251, my Full Package 1964 R2 Hawk, is finished.

After endless nationwide searches I located a replacement rust-free/accident-free frame and a replacement rust free/accident-free rear body shell. We had a long list of body panels, drive train and interior parts also needed to complete the restoration which took many, many more years of nationwide searching. There is no way of knowing how many donor cars, she has parts from Hawaii to Maine.

The body was trailered to a shop in Pennsylvania and left to their craftsman for a few years. As my job required, I had to move from town to town, at one point, I was just too far from the shop in Pennsylvania and the decision was made to retrieve her and keep her in storage until we were able to re-commit to the project.

A few years ago, as my wife and I were planning for our future retirement, I mentioned to her we either needed to finish the restoration on the Hawk or part her out. She quickly responded … Lets Finish Her! My local Studebaker club had a preferred body and paint shop that specialized in this level of project and would paint the body & panels and let me assemble the car so that I could be sure it only had Studebaker parts and hardware used. The body shop only had one condition, that when she returned for final body panel fit and final paint that the car be drivable.

I called Bob Palma one day asking a few questions about the car not knowing he was George Krem's cousin and had ridden in this car many times. When Bob asked what my intensions were for a color, I told him I wanted to paint her Jet Green. Bob immediately stopped me and said they only made eight 1964 R2 Super Hawks with powershift in Bordeaux Red and he only knew of two survivors. Therefore, I had no choice, this car had to be painted the original Bordeaux Red.

The body shell and panels were again re-media blasted to bare metal, minor repairs made then primered and painted with single stage Nason paint. I brought everything home and spread it out in a horse corral leaving it to cure for the next 4 to 5 weeks in the hot summer Georgia sun. After the long wait, I slowly carried one panel at a time into my shop area and start assembling.

The interior was not going well at all. We had arranged for Phantom Auto Works in Tennessee to handle the seats, door panels, headliner and carpeting. Two years into our commitment with Rene, he passed away leaving us with nearly nothing. After many calls we found a shop in St Louis, MO with a great reputation in custom car work that promised they could handle the project. After a long wait for the custom-made pleated seat material, while working on my project the shop owner suffered a stroke and passed away the following day. Unfortunately, once again we were left without an upholstery shop. A third shop was located in Gainesville FL that took on the project and completed the work in record time.

Meanwhile, with a great deal of work on the car and a bright yellow seat off my John Deere riding mower bolted to the front floor, the partially complete body was trailered to the body shop for final panel fit and the two-stage paint. She returned home on the trailer a few weeks later and the long-awaited final assembly began.