

Working Class Heroes

When your house
drives you buggy

text Jon Pearson
photography Shelly Sukstorf & the author



We made cutouts in several walls, the most notable in the tiki room, a former small bedroom. Standing in front of the wall that divided it from the dining room, I agonized over whether to tear it out and lose a bedroom, thinking about hurting resale value; it was one of the best moves in the remodel.



Several years ago, I was playing harmonica on stage at a local barbecue joint in Omaha with some friends from Oklahoma City. After one of the sets, drummer Michael Newberry (formerly with Watermelon Slim and the Workers), decked out like a rainbow trout in a metallic blue sharkskin suit, pointed at my Birkenstocks and said, “You sound like a bluesman, but you sure don’t dress like one.”

Mike took me aside and introduced me to the hip world of vintage clothes. This truly was a milestone moment that led to collecting midcentury artifacts of all kinds. I already felt a kindred connection with music from that era, so it made sense for me to channel it into other areas of my life. Within a week I had scored a pair of vented 1940s Florsheim dress shoes at a local estate sale, and nearly a decade later I’m still hooked.