

'I've gotta go fast,' says Tim Baker of Tim's Garage

Twenty-five years ago, Tim Baker wasn't hard to find on a Friday night.

"I got my start in street racing in Palmersville," the owner of Tim's Garage in Dresden explained. "Everybody who reads that will know what I'm talking about because they were probably right there beside me."

Even though he's now been in the garage business for two decades, is married and has two teenagers, Baker's "need for speed" hasn't slowed down. In fact, now it's Saturday nights that are his dates with drag racing at least a couple of times each month. But his 1978 Vega GT taking on the Jackson Dragway and the Beacon in Paducah is a legal form of an adrenaline rush. And the nights away have been family affairs, as wife Trinetta comes when she can and son Jericho, 17, and daughter, Kiara, 15 were junior dragsters.

Though Baker says the appeal of drag racing is the "high horsepower fast cars, tires smoking and lots of noise," he also underscores that he is on "a straight path with ambulances around."

He's also in a car that he has customized. His shop just off the Court Square in the County seat is surrounded by cars in transition. Two hold the places of distinction inside as he is currently working on a 1967 Fastback Mustang (think "Gone in 60 Seconds" he explains) and a 1965 Coupe Mustang.

But the one that brings a chrome-like shine to his eyes is his Opal GT that would do 1/8th of a mile in 6.2 seconds. His current car does it in 8.2. The GT weighed only 2180 pounds with him in it, what he calls "a beer can on wheels."

He drove the GT when he was drag racing in



Tim Baker of Tim's Garage in Dresden enjoys time on the dragway in his 1978 Vega GT and in his shop working on cars like this 1967 Fastback Mustang. (Above) He also works on other car lovers' beauties like this '65 Mustang.

Gleason. When that track closed and racing opportunities became fewer, he tried shifting to fixing up hot rods for the street. But they couldn't hold his at-

tention.

"I've got to go fast," he said. "To be honest, if you ever do it, it's an adrenaline rush."

In all his years of build-

ing and driving fast cars, he's never had a wreck. But he is keenly aware of what could happen even when speed is not a factor. His son, Jericho, had a "re-

ally fast car" that he drove one month before he hit a wet spot in the road at only 25 miles per hour, the tires broke loose, and "put it into a tree."

"Most kids think 'I have to go fast to get hurt,'" he noted. "You don't. Kids need to be careful. With horsepower comes responsibility."