

Australian **Hot Rodder**

Number Four
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Dedicated to Australia's Hot Rod Heritage



Class A Tub: Bob Bowman's Model A

Warren Wilkie: True to Tradition

Deuce Daze: Peter Leech's '32 Roadster

Hot Rod Heaven: Narrandera Nationals

Australian Hot Rodder

Number Four

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CLASS A TUB

Bob Bowman used whatever he had in his shed to build his ultimate hot rod.

*By Graham Smith
Photography by Mark Bean*



What do you do when you find yourself with a shed full of cool bits and pieces accumulated over a lifetime in hot rodding? You could load them all on a trailer and take them to a swap meet, you could sell them on eBay, or, as Bob Bowman did, you could build your ultimate hot rod.

When Bowman looked around his shed he found an old Chevrolet chassis, there was also a fibreglass two-door Model A phaeton body he and Bob Cain had moulded back in the days he ran Street Rod Accessories in Sydney, and a small-block Chevrolet V8 that had once powered the bus he and his team travelled in when on their annual pilgrimage to Lake Gairdner for the salt racing. As well as that he found a genuine Halibrand quick-change rear axle he'd bought on a Valla Rod Run many years earlier, and a set of Kelsey Hayes wire wheels, and heaps more, including a cool old Oldsmobile instrument panel.

Assembled in his mind they formed a picture of a very cool car, one, with the urging of his wife, Sandra, he decided to build.

The picture in his mind's eye was of a '29 Model A Deluxe Phaeton, much like the one Ford had built in 1930, but updated with modern technology and given a 1960s hot rod treatment.

Ford's original '30 Deluxe Phaeton was a sporty two-door model with a touch of luxury. It sported a lower windscreen than the Standard model, and had luxury features like leather upholstery, a folding front seat and a rear bench seat with armrests.

But Bowman's car would have luxuries that Ford never thought of, things like roll-up windows, a heater-demister, and lockable doors that would make his Deluxe Phaeton a comfortable and secure long-distance cruiser with all the amenities of a closed car.

The build began in 2008, but it wasn't until 2011 that he really got cracking on it, and he spent the next two-and-a-half years completing it.

To most weekend hot rodders two-and-a-half years might not seem like a long time to build a car, but Bob says it was one of the slowest he's ever done.

"It was out of the box, different," he explained. "It wasn't straightforward, there was a lot of intricate stuff in it that needed working through."

One of his first steps was to set down the basic parameters of the car. He decided the wheelbase would be 103.5 inches, the same as the Model A, but the proportions would be dramatically different to create a longer, more elegant look befitting a high-class car of the period.

To achieve his desired look he added four inches to the length of the hood, the hood was then the same length as a '32 hood, and he shortened the tub by an equivalent amount and narrowed it two-and-a-half inches at the rear for a smoother, curved shape.

Further, he decided that the doors would be the same length as those of a Model A Tudor.

On Sandra's instructions it had to have the comfort of wind-up windows.

The need for the windows to be able to be wound up and down meant it couldn't have rear wheel arches; they would have impeded the movement of the windows.

Bob's plan at the outset was to use the fibreglass body and a 'glass grille shell he already had. The only steel panel he planned to use was going to be the hood, simply because that had to be made of steel for strength and stiffness.

But modifying the cowl of the 'glass body so it resembled a '32 inside proved difficult and more than a little tiresome, and one thing led to another and before he knew it he'd decided to build the whole thing in steel.

The switch from 'glass to steel began when he bought a smoothed Model A cowl top and sides from Brookville Roadster, he then bought a steel '32 grille shell, and then having those panels in steel it wasn't such a stretch to the decision to build the rest of the body in steel as well. Before he knew it there was a pile of flat sheet steel in his workshop and he was at work forming them into the panels he needed.

There are 36 panels in total, including the hood and the doors, the tub sides and rear, and the belly pan that encloses the underside of the car from the front to the rear.

The elegant proportions and low-slung lines of Bowman's hand-built Deluxe tub are more in tune with the '30s than the '20s when the original Model A was conceived.





TRUE TO TRADITION

With cars like his '36 three-window coupe Warren Wilkie is helping to keep the tradition of hot rodding alive. *By Graham Smith*

In the years that Warren Wilkie has been around hot rodding he's seen plenty of fads come and go, from resto to rat and plenty in between, but for him nothing beats a traditional hot rod.

Warren is today one of Australia's foremost hot rod builders, he's renowned for the cool traditional style hot rods that come out of his Toowoomba shop.

"We've built a lot of traditional hot rods," he told *AHR* when we dropped into his shop, "and that's what I'd like the shop to be known for."

When Warren talks tradition he's talking about the cars built in the '50s, '60s and '70s with lots of genuine early Ford parts, dropped axles, chopped roofs, and flathead, small-block Chevrolet or Hemi engines.

That doesn't mean that he's stuck in the past and building cars the same way they were built back then.

"It has to look right," he says. "The key to that is to select the right parts to start with."

"It also takes skill and passion, and a lot of hard work."

Warren has always had an innate ability to pick the right

parts to make a killer hot rod, as anyone who saw his 1930 Model A roadster at the 1st Street Rod Nationals at Narrandera in 1973 would attest.

By the early 1970s the era of the channelled hot rod was coming to an end and hot rodders were turning their attention to stock-bodied rods. Warren's immaculate Model A was one of the first, and it was stunning.

Not only was it complete with all its fenders, it also had all of its original jewellery, from its stock bumpers and rear luggage rack to its genuine taillights and cowl lamps, there was even an old winged Motometer temperature gauge on the radiator cap.

Such was its impact at the Nationals that Warren left Narrandera weighed down with the prized hardware that came with the Rodders' Choice award for the top hot rod on the run. If that wasn't enough he went back to Narrandera in 1975 for the 2nd Nationals and repeated his success.

"Warren's car was a real game changer," says Peter Leech, the builder of a well known channelled '32 roadster in the 1960s who remembers seeing the roadster at Narrandera.

"Before Warren came along we thought guys who drove full-fendered cars were just too lazy to take the fenders off their hot rods, but he showed us how good a full-fendered car could look."

"It started a new trend and everyone started building full-fendered cars."

From time immemorial hot rodders have mostly learnt about hot rodding through hot rod magazines and Warren was no different. For him it happened in the late-1960s when he was still a teenager attending high school in Toowoomba.

By his own admission he probably spent too much time reading magazines in class.

He would flick through the Australian magazines, but he preferred the American ones, particularly *Rod & Custom*, which featured more of the hot rods he liked.

In particular he remembers a 1929 Model A roadster that was featured on the front cover of the June 1969 issue of *Rod & Custom* and described by the magazine's editors as "the cleanest '29 Ford of them all!"

"It was Candy Red with white walls and Mercury wheel caps," Warren clearly recalls.

So taken with it was he that he decided to build his own hot rod in a similar style.

He was just 16 years old at the time and starting a panel beating apprenticeship at the local Ford dealership in Toowoomba when he saw an advertisement for a 1930 Model A Ford roadster in the local newspaper.

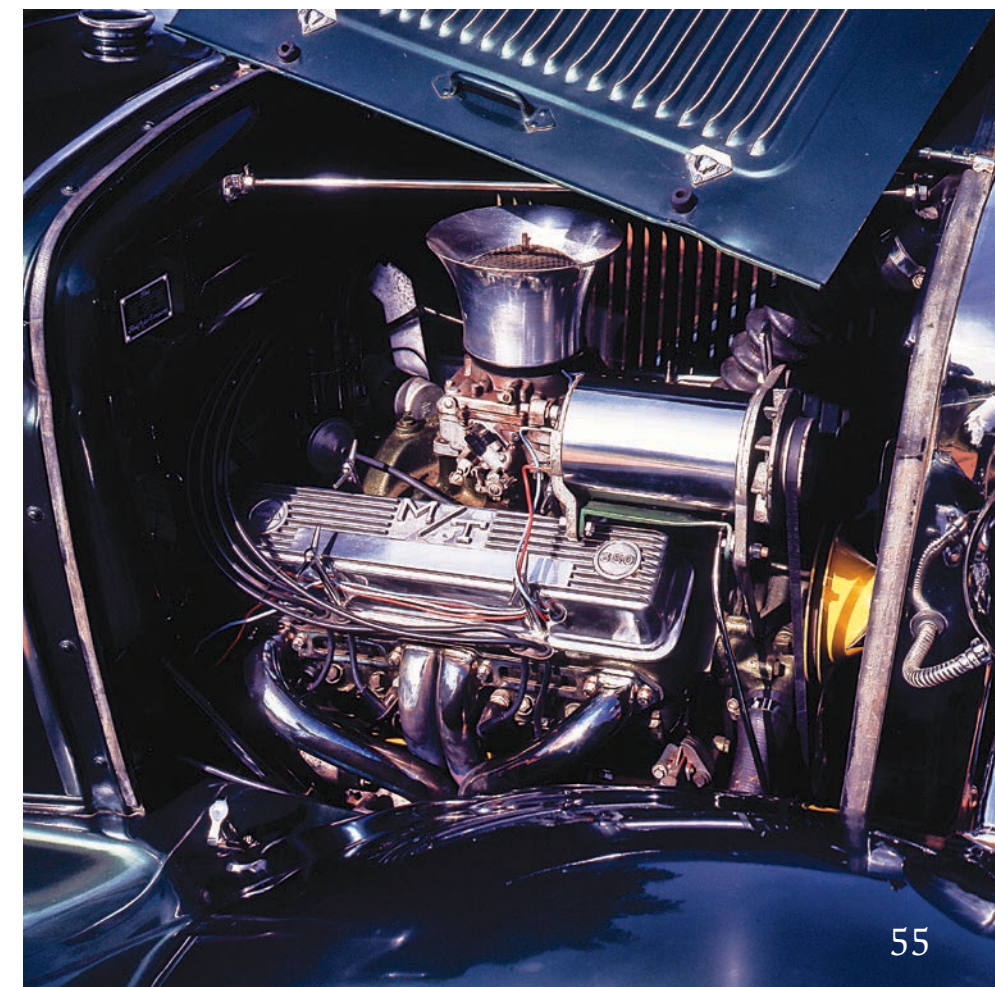
In those days it was common for advertisers to include their address in their advertisements as well as their phone number.

Too young to hold a driver's licence, Warren mounted his bike and pedalled across town to the address in the advertisement, but left disappointed when he found no one was home. When further attempts also proved fruitless he decided he'd probably missed the boat.

But a few weeks later at technical college when telling his good friend Les Winter that he'd missed out on a Model A roadster, Les owned up and told Warren that he'd actually bought the car himself.



Warren Wilkie set the rodding world on fire in the 1970s with his resto-rod styled, small-block Chev-powered '30 Model A Ford.



ROADS TO GLORY

Against the odds a humble Ford V8 beat the best that road racing had to offer in 1934 to win the Victorian Centenary Grand Prix.



By Graham Smith
Thanks to Kevin Oates for his inspiration
and help in researching this story.

It was 1934 and Victoria was in party mode as it celebrated a centenary of European settlement.

Prince Henry, the Duke of Gloucester, dropped in for a look around and was welcomed by a crowd half a million strong, Bairnsdale's Ted Stubenrauch overcame a shattered shoulder and a star-studded field that included the legendary Sir Hubert Opperman to win the 1100-mile Centenary 1000 cycling road race, C.W.A. Scott and T Campbell Black flew for 71 hours from Mildenhall aerodrome near London in England to Melbourne to win the Centenary Air Race in their single-engined de Havilland 88 Comet, 90,000 turned out at Flemington to see Darby Munro ride top-weight Peter Pan to an easy win in the Centenary Melbourne Cup, kids ran and jumped, bands played, choirs sang, and a couple of complete unknowns won the Centenary Grand Prix driving a humble Ford roadster.

The win by rookie racer, Mick Smith, and his best mate, Lindsay Terry, rocked the motor racing establishment of the day to its very core.

Rubbing salt into the wound was the knowledge that it was not only Smith's first ever race, but the roadster was

his parents' regular road and car he'd borrowed for the day.

Just days before the race at Phillip Island on October 27, 1934 the car had been a stock standard 1934 Ford V8 De Luxe roadster like any other.

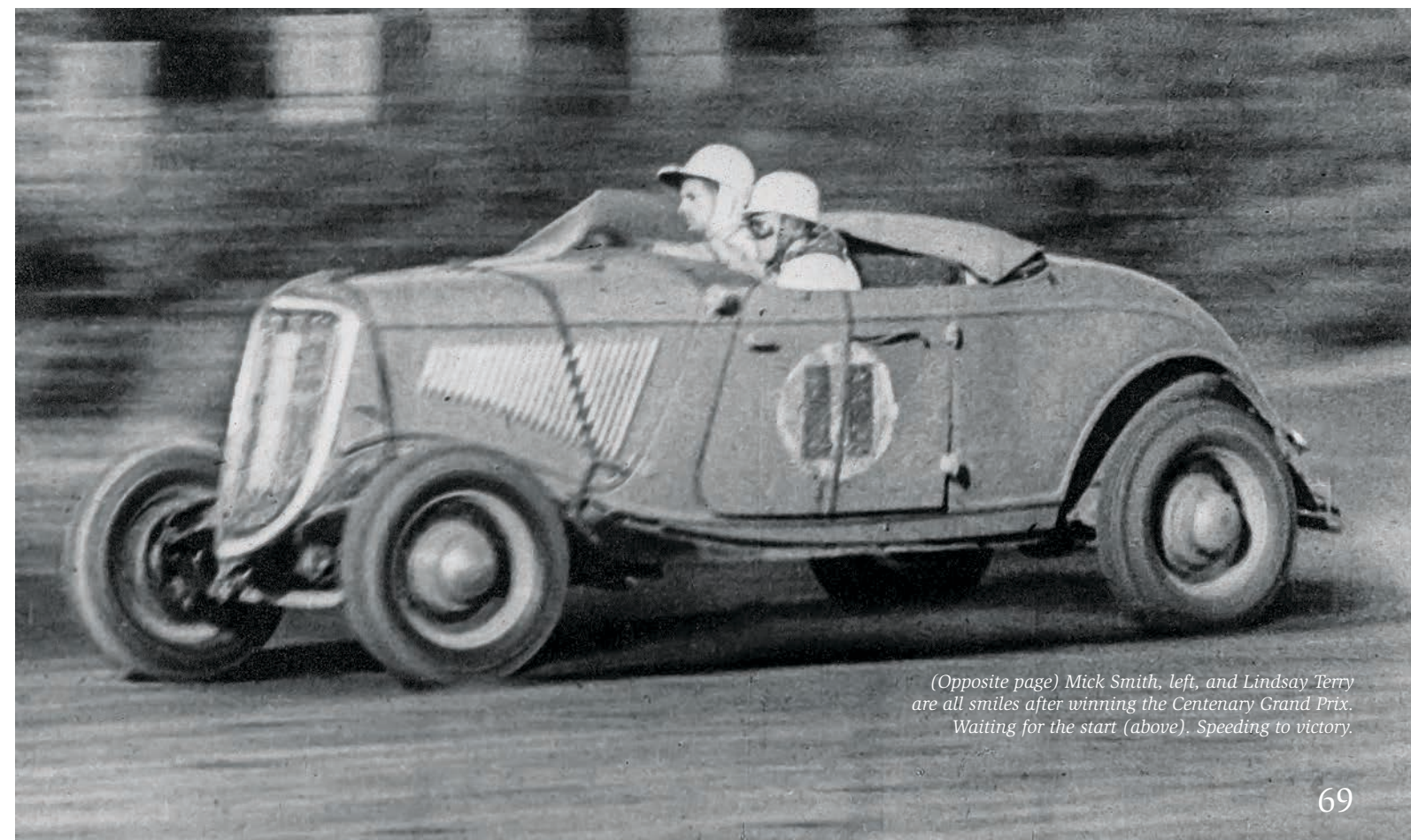
But after being stripped of its mudguards, running boards, windscreen, roof, bumpers, rear-mounted spare wheel, rumble seat, headlights and taillights it was transformed into a race winner.

The Victorian Centenary Grand Prix was an official event on the centenary program commemorating the landing of the Henty family who crossed from Tasmania and settled at Portland in the state's west in 1834 becoming Victoria's first settlers.

It was a one-off race, not to be confused with the Australian Grand Prix, which was an annual race also run at Phillip Island from 1928 to 1935.

Run over 35 laps of the same rough and rutted 6 ½-mile (10.5 km) rectangular public road circuit as the Australian Grand Prix, a total distance of 235 miles (378 km), the race was 35 miles or 5 ½ laps longer than the AGP, which made it the longest and toughest road race in Australia.

The win by Mick Smith and Lindsay Terry rocked the motor racing establishment to its very core.



(Opposite page) Mick Smith, left, and Lindsay Terry are all smiles after winning the Centenary Grand Prix. Waiting for the start (above). Speeding to victory.

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Rare Metal Beauty:
Mark Koster's '34 Plymouth Coupe

Deuce of Hearts:
Steven and Kathleen Alldrick's '32 Tudor

Eddie Ford:
Rod Father



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DEPARTMENTS

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Before the arrival of the digital age hot rodders in the 1950s and '60s corresponded with letters.

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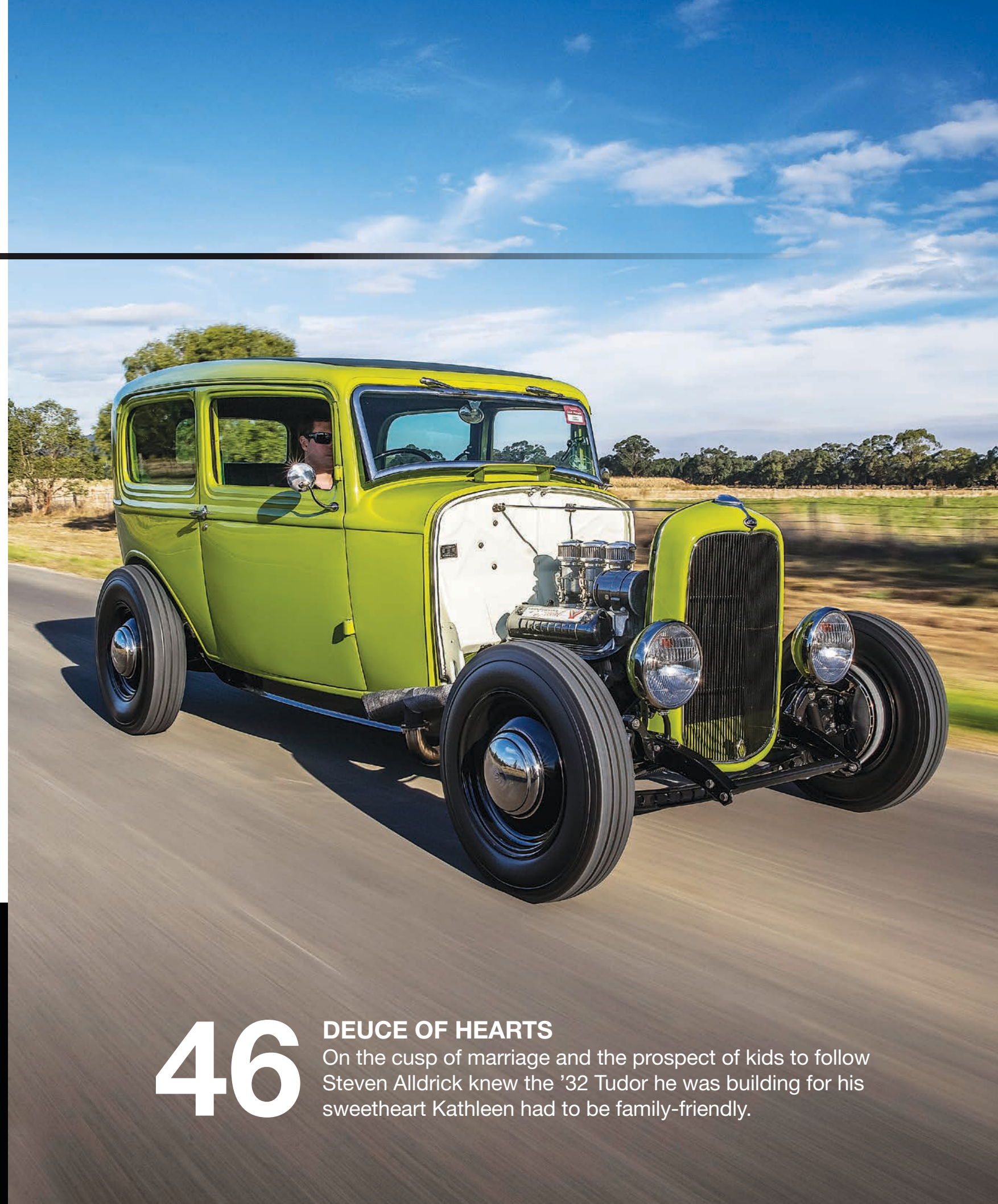
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DEUCE OF HEARTS

On the cusp of marriage and the prospect of kids to follow Steven Alldrick knew the '32 Tudor he was building for his sweetheart Kathleen had to be family-friendly.

RARE METAL BEAUTY

Some might think Mark Koster's '34 Plymouth isn't finished, others reckon it's perfectly finished.

*By Graham Smith
Photography by EDP*



People regularly ask Mark Koster when he's going to paint his coupe. The short answer is that he isn't, the longer one is that he might ... well, maybe ... perhaps ... one day.

It was never his intention to leave the rare '34 Plymouth three-window coupe in bare metal, he was going to finish it in gold metalflake like a '60s show car, but it looked so good when the bodywork was done that he just couldn't bring himself to cover it up.

And why would you when you and your mates have just spent months painstakingly massaging and smoothing virtually every panel, transforming it into a stunning beauty.

The Holden-bodied PE Plymouth first appeared on the 45-year-old building contractor's radar in 2010 when he saw it advertised for sale in *Just Cars* magazine. He liked '34 coupes, both Ford and Chevrolet, but the Plymouth was different, and that appealed to him.

"I loved the ZZ Top Eliminator coupe when I was a teenager and I was looking for a '34," he told *AHR*. "But '34 Fords were common, and there were lots of '34 Chevs as well."

In contrast, the '34 Plymouth was rare, particularly the three-window Deluxe coupe, which was only made here in Australia. Not even the Americans had them; they had to make do with a five-window coupe.

Adding to its appeal was the knowledge that only 94 of them were originally made. Koster has only been able to locate one other restored car in Victoria, and he believes there could as few as three or four left in total. In hot rodding terms it appears his is unique.

A previous owner had hot rodged it back in the 1980s, but it was never finished and when Mark went to look at it in Hastings on the Mornington Peninsula near Melbourne it was in bits and pieces.

It had a 350 small-block Chev V8 and THM400 auto transmission, the chassis had been modified to suit, and the suspension was a mix of Holden front-end and Jaguar rear.

It was all there, Koster was told, and all he had to do was to put it back together. "I thought I was onto a rare thing, so I thought I'd give it a go," he said.

Subsequent research told him that it had once been cut down into a ute and used as a farm workhorse before Melbourne hot rodder John Bacon bought it and began rebuilding it into a hot rod.

Bacon happened to live near Koster's factory in Melbourne's north, and he couldn't believe his eyes when he saw his old coupe for the first time in more than 20 years after the two met.

Not only was Bacon able to tell the Plymouth's new owner that he was the one who had fitted the small-block, auto, and Holden and Jaguar suspensions, but he was also able to give him a couple of photos of the car taken at the 1986 Victorian Hot Rod Show when he had shown it unfinished.

After the show Bacon pulled it apart again and painted and detailed the chassis, but before he got it finished he swapped it for another car and it disappeared off the radar for a number of years before resurfacing in *Just Cars* magazine.

The new owner did little on it in the 10 years he owned it before putting it up for sale.

Unfortunately, his claim that it only needed putting back together fell well short of reality as Koster soon discovered when he began pulling it down.

"I really learned a valuable lesson about buying someone else's project," he said. "Other people never do things the way you would do them yourself."

There was no option, he soon realised, but to start again and do it his way.

Although he'd never owned a hot rod before, Koster wasn't a rookie when it comes to hot cars.

As a kid he'd dreamt of having a T-bucket like those he'd seen in TV shows like *The Munsters*.

"The T-bucket was my idea of a hot rod when I was a kid," he said. "I was always drawing them and wanted to do one when I was old enough."

By the time he reached driving age the '56 Customline had replaced the T-bucket as his dream car, but his father thought it foolish to sink money into old cars and instead encouraged him to buy something more modern, something 'sensible' like a HZ Holden Premier wagon.

After a general clean up, an engine rebuild, and a new paint job the HZ was a nice tidy cruiser.

Next came a street driven turbocharged Holden Gemini coupe that turned 11-second quarters and regularly thrashed V8s when he came up against them.

"It was a quick car," he said. "No one believed that a four-cylinder car could smash a V8, but it did."

A hopped-up EK Holden wagon followed the Gemini, but when family became his priority after the EK was sold he had to sideline his interest in cars.

Just 94
three-window
'34 Plymouth
Deluxe
coupes were
made in total.



Bare metal finish is carried over to interior where it's complemented with black trim, cool shift lever and original Art Deco Plymouth dials.



The only engine that could adequately fill the Plymouth's huge engine bay was a Hemi.

Original Enderle stack fuel-injection gives the 392 Hemi the vintage look Koster wanted, while electronic conversion gives it modern convenience. Mickey Thompson rocker covers add to the old-time appeal.

ROD FATHER

In Part One of our
Eddie Ford story we
look at his start in hot
rodding and two of his
early hot rods.

*By Graham Smith
Photography by EDP, Eddie Ford collection*



local wrecking yard and brackets were used to attach it to the wooden body frame.

The cowl was smoothed and extended and the cowl sides were filled, and a new, flat firewall was fitted.

A '32 grille was considered essential for any hot rod, but they weren't easy to find then and it took Eddie three years to track one down. Having found one he took a slice out of it to match the coupe's low profile and filled it with a custom grille made up of fine horizontal bars and a '58 Edsel grille.

Fred Steele, an American hot rodder Eddie corresponded with sent it out as a joke, but it looked so unique when it was hung in front of the grille it was decided to adapt it to fit.

Small Jeep headlamps fitted with 5-inch sealed beams were mounted on the front shock absorber brackets and a short nerf bar was run across the front of the car.

A couple of '58 Chevrolet taillights were mounted on the rear and the registration plate was set into the panel between them.

After having problems with the Kelly Green metalflake following the first attempt at painting it John Norton was enlisted to successfully paint it at the second attempt.

The steel wheels were reversed and chromed. They were

13-inch at the front and 14-inch at the rear with 6.40 x 13 and 7.50 x 14 whitewall conventional tyres respectively, and fitted with baby Moon caps.

Cycle guards were mounted at the front and the rear guards were new trailer units modified to fit.

Inside, a '54 Customline dash and dials were set into the original '34 panel and the panel was chromed, the trim was done in rolled and pleated white doehide vinyl, the floor covering was gold nylon carpet, and the roof opening was filled with green tinted plexiglass.

The coupe was essentially ready for the road in mid-1966, but registration was put on hold while Eddie and his mates, Peter Swift and Barry Fletcher, went on an extended six-month tour of America.

When he returned early in January 1967 he brought with him a Thunderbird four-barrel manifold and carburettor and they were fitted to the Y-block, along with a bug catcher air cleaner, and custom exhaust headers.

The coupe was registered later that year, but just three years later it was sold when Eddie needed cash to help fund the purchase of an adjoining farm with his brother.

THE AMERICAN CONNECTION

In the 1950s you had to go to specialist bookshops like the Technical Book & Magazine Company's store in Melbourne to buy hot magazines, but by the early-'60s they were more widely available through newsagents and Eddie was eagerly devouring every issue as they appeared at his local store.

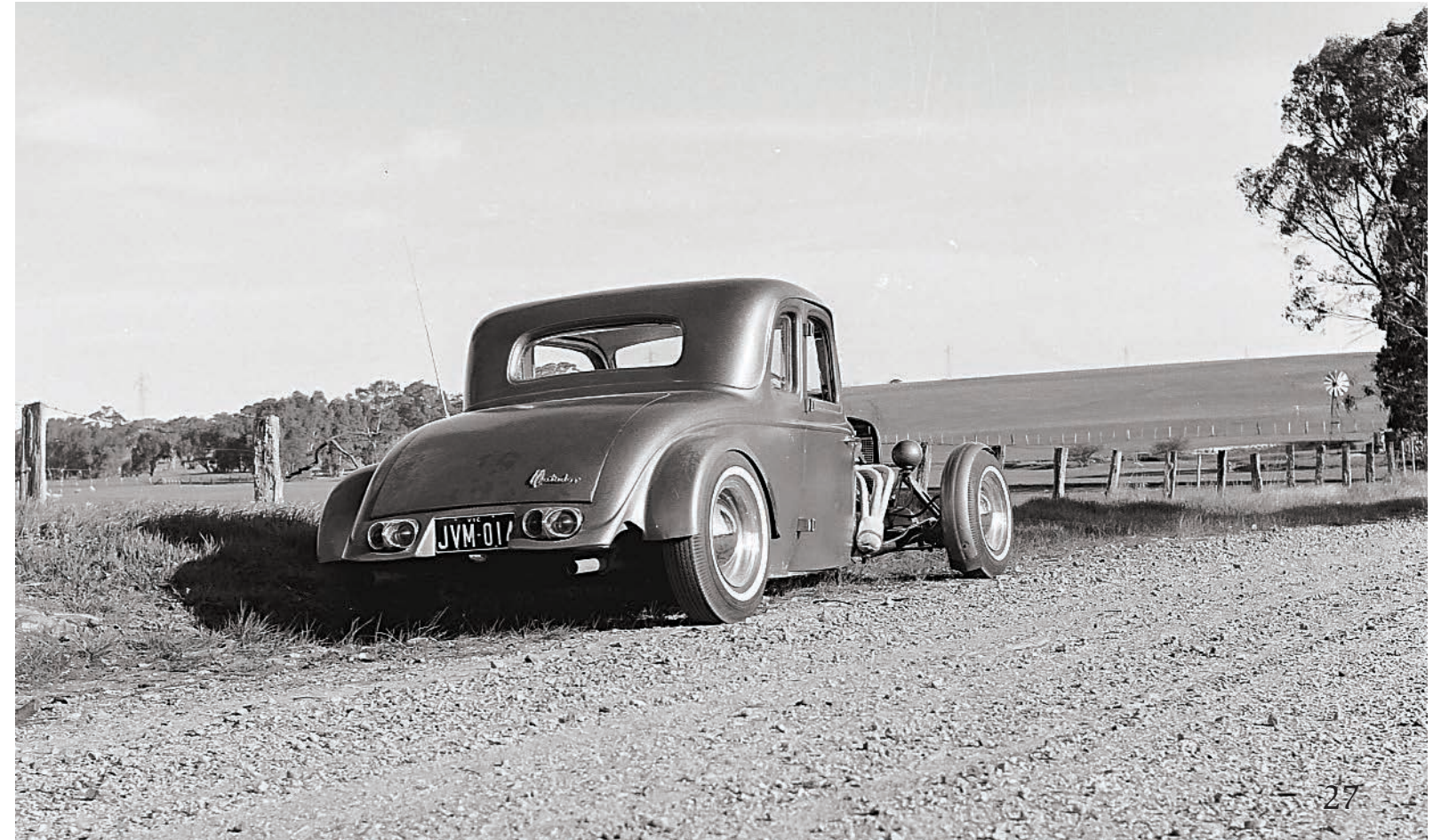
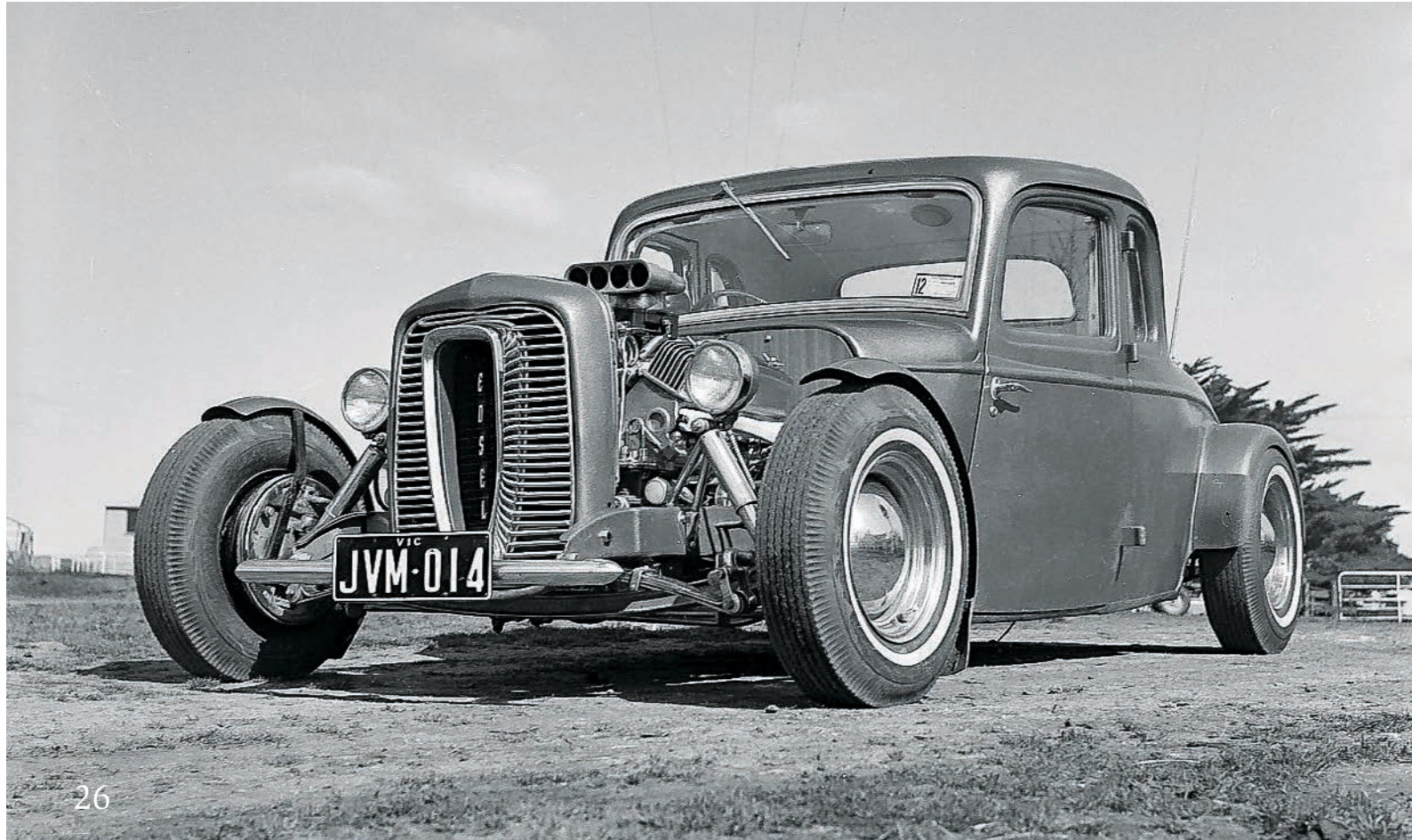
But while the magazines were good they didn't show the sort of detail Eddie wanted to see, the sort of detail that showed him how Americans built their cars and what they used to do it.

A new magazine titled *Popular Hot Rodding* arrived in 1962 and gave him an idea. The photographs in the magazine, particularly the colour shots on the cover, were much clearer and showed the cars in much greater detail than any other magazine at the time, which gave Eddie the idea of finding an American hot rodder who would be willing to swap colour slides with him.

"You could project colour slides really large on the wall and you could see incredible detail," he said.

From the moment he saw his first hot rod magazine in 1957 Eddie wanted a '32 coupe.

The '34 coupe shortly after it was registered. Note the Edsel grille (opp. page) that was fitted as a joke, and the '58 Chev taillights.



DEUCE OF HEARTS

Steven and Kathleen Alldrick were looking to the future when they decided to build their family-friendly Tudor.

*By Graham Smith
Photography by EDP*



His mother, Barb, came to his aid and helped out with the bond on his factory and paid the first two months rent, and friends gave him work to get started.

That was 2010 and the Deluxe Rod Shop was born in a small factory in Lilydale.

At first he was totally focused on building the business and repaying his mother, working long hours and weekends building hot rods for customers, but in 2011 he decided it was time to build Kathleen's dream car.

His plan was to have it finished within a year, which would have seen it on the road by the end of 2012, but with more and more paying customer work arriving at his shop, and a move to new, larger premises, work on the Tudor stalled and it became clear that he wouldn't meet his self-imposed deadline.

Feeling like he was letting Kathleen down he made a new vow to have the car ready in time for their wedding, then only a few months away in the following April.

At that time the car was little more than a rolling chassis, there was no engine, and the body was sitting in the corner of the shop in primer.

"I told myself I had to get it done, no matter what," he said. "So for the next few months we didn't go on any rod runs or swap meets, we just stayed at home and spent every spare minute working on the car."

The weeks leading up to the wedding became frantic, and friends and family pitched in to help get it finished in time. Everything was looking good, until he went to start the engine for the first time and discovered it was terminally unwell.

It turned out that there were problems with the machining of the engine and it locked up. If that wasn't enough to ruin his day the screws securing the butterfly in one of the carburettors came loose and the butterfly and screws all dropped into the engine, damaging the heads.

Steven was gutted, his dream of Kathleen being driven to the wedding in the car and stepping out in her wedding dress was apparently in tatters, and he eased up on the build.

"I told the boys just to put it together so it looked right instead of trying to make it a driver," he said.

But all was not lost and while Kathleen arrived in Steven's '34 roadster, the Tudor was there too, sitting silently in the background.

While he might be the son of a gun hot rod builder and the proprietor of one of the hottest new rod shops in the land with a growing reputation for building award-winning cars, it doesn't mean Steven has money to burn on his own cars. Building the Tudor was a labour of love and had to be done on a shoestring budget and out of shop hours so it didn't impact on the business.

There was no money to spend up big on new repro parts or splash out on cool bits and pieces on eBay, he had to spend his money wisely on parts he could afford, or sell or trade parts for those he wanted.

The concept of the Tudor was simple, it had to look and sound like a hot rod, but with an underlying old-time theme.

It was also important to him that it was seen as genuine factory steel, that it couldn't be mistaken for a repro.

To achieve that it had to be as true as possible to what would have come from the Ford factory in 1932, and things like chassis rivets, visible spot welds, body joins, swages, and drip gutters all had to be there to be seen.

"People ask me why I didn't bog up the joins in the sills," he said. "I purposely left them in because that's the way Ford did it."

It's pretty obvious that the doors aren't a perfect fit, but that's not because of shoddy work, it's because he was happy for them to reflect the factory fit.

"I wanted all the unevenness that it would have originally had," he said.

The end result is that some might dismiss the car as less than perfect, but those who know understand the thinking behind it. Its flaws give it an appealing authenticity. "I was hell-bent on keeping it Henry Ford," he said.

The body was in such bad shape when he got it that few thought it could be fixed when they saw it.

"When Dean (Bassett) picked it up with a forklift to load it on the trailer it was flopping all over the place," he said. "Even Kathleen doubted I would be able to fix it."

To the surprise of many the body was soon taking shape; the floor was fitted, so too were the wheel arches, new inner sills were bought and fitted, the crushed rain gutters were repaired, new door skins were wheeled up, new bottoms were made for the doors, the right-hand side of the cowl was replaced, and a new reproduction stock firewall was in place.

The body had to appear stock, so there was no thought of

**"Everyone
sells their
roadsters
or coupes
when they
have kids."**

Steven Alldrick



Late model 5.0-litre V8 has cool old-timey look with Edelbrock alloy heads, a trio of Edelbrock 94 carbs on an Edelbrock manifold, wrapped headers, and look-alike Y-block rocker covers.

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Ace Of Tubs: Peter Ingram's Deuce Tourer

Swift Tee: Peter Swift's Classic Bucket

Ross Supple: A Quiet Achiever

Eddie Ford: Custom Rodder

Australian Hot Rodder

Number Six

118

OLD SCHOOL COOL

'glass is fine for some folks, but when Leigh Priggen set out to build his old school Deuce coupe it just had to be genuine Henry Ford steel.

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SWIFT TEE

In Australia in the mid-'60s there was no finer example of the hot rodder's craft than Peter Swift's T-bucket.

*By Graham Smith
Photography by EDP, Eddie Ford collection*

inside of the tub was done in the same colour and pattern, and red carpet covered the floor.

A white-rimmed Covico steering wheel was bought from Bill Warner's Sydney speed shop and mounted on the '38 Chevrolet steering column.

An array of dials – ammeter, coolant temperature, oil temperature, oil pressure, vacuum, speedo and tacho – was spread across the woodgrain-veneered plywood fascia. Had he been able to afford them they would have been Stewart Warner gauges, but he had to settle for a mix of Smiths and VDO dials.

The '39 shift lever snakes up out of the floor and back towards the driver, and it's topped with a knob in the form of a clenched fist that came off a slow combustion stove on a neighbouring farm to Ford's.

With the car close to being finished it was time to start and tune the engine, but apart from once when they did manage to get it running when they towed it around the Ford farm no amount of trying could coax it into life again.

Even though it wasn't a runner, and the clutch and brakes weren't working, it was still judged the Top Roadster and the Best Engineered hot rod in the 1965 Victorian Hot Rod Show.

With its slick black paint, white pin striping, extensive use of chrome, brilliant red trim, and Dodge engine it was a cut above the regular hot rod of the day.

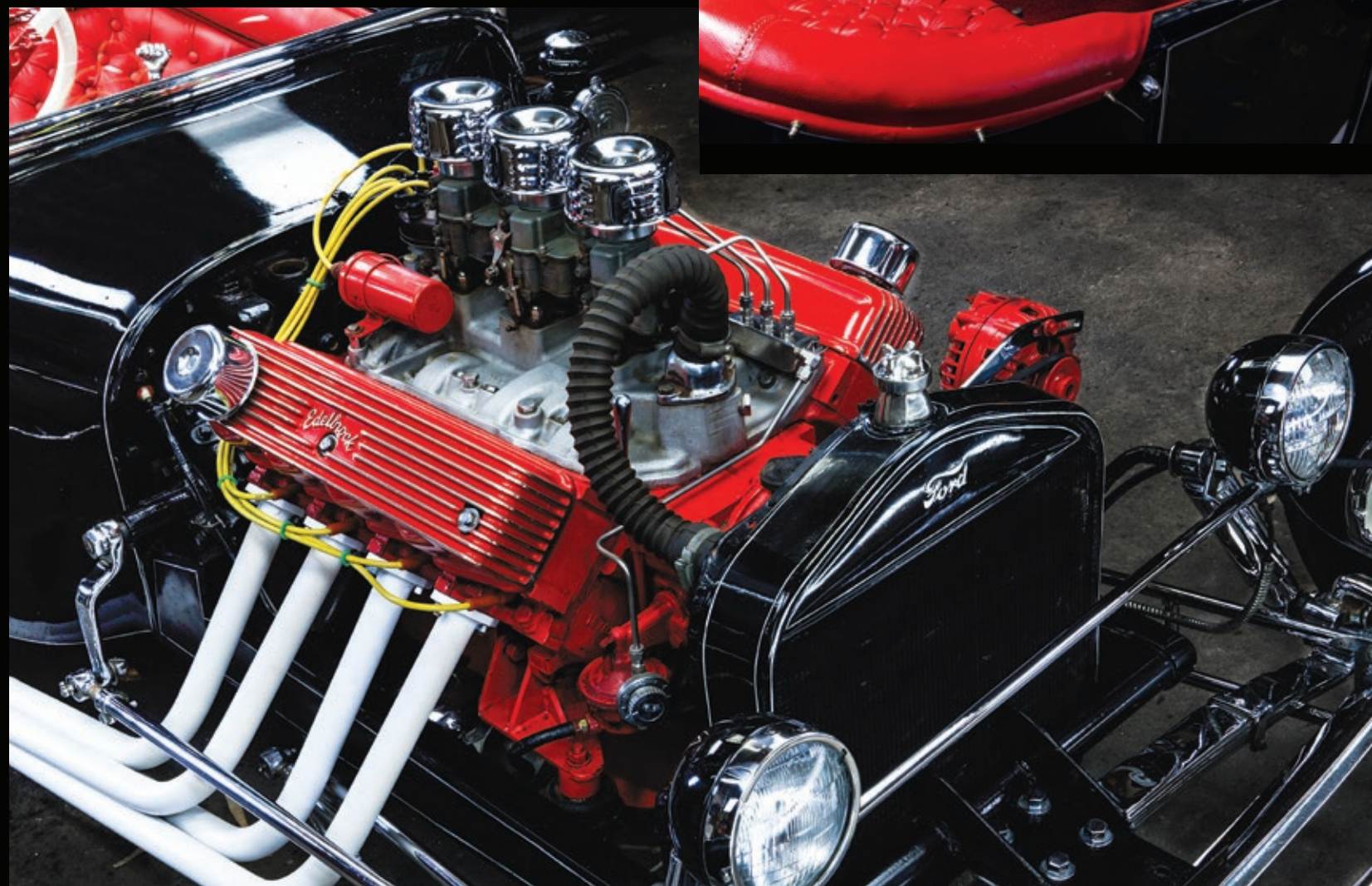
But it wasn't until he got to America in 1966 when he, Eddie and Barry Fletcher went on a six-month journey of discovery to see hot rodding in its heartland that he realised just how good the bucket was.

Believing the cars featured in the American hot rodding magazines were just regular, everyday hot rods Eddie and Swifty set out to build their cars to the same standard, but little did they know until they got there that they were actually the top hot rods of the day, that the average American hot rod was much rougher.

"We were striving to build cars like those we saw in the American magazines," Swifty said. "When we got to America we realised they were the cream of the crop,"

Before leaving on their trip in the middle of 1966 the bucket was moved into the garage at his parents' home and it remained there until his return early in 1967.

Having an overhead valve engine like the tri-carb Chrysler V8 was rare for a cash-strapped hot rodder in the 1960s.



"Eddie (Ford) and I were striving to build cars like those we saw in the American magazines."

Peter Swift



When he did return home he brought with him an intake manifold Phil Weiland had given to him, an Autolite four-barrel carburettor, Cal Custom scoop, and a W&H Du-Coil dual-coil distributor he also got from Weiland.

Off came the Edelbrock manifold, triple 97s and progressive linkage and they were sold, on in their place went the Weiland manifold and Autolite carburettor.

The original Mopar distributor also came out and was replaced by the Du-Coil distributor. Again he attempted to start the engine, but again it refused to fire.

"We towed it all around Castlemaine behind a mate's HD Holden Premier, but we couldn't get it going," he said.

It was decided then to take the heads off, when to his horror he discovered a hole in the top of one of the pistons. The engine had clearly been hammered in the truck, it was very tired and a rebuild was in order.

A call was made to Fred Steele, a hot rodder Swifty and the crew met on their American trip, asking him to help find a set of replacement pistons and rings.

Peter tried to order them direct from JC Witney, a well-known auto parts and accessories supplier in the USA, but they wouldn't ship to an address outside America. The solution was to have them shipped to Steele in Massachusetts and then somehow get them sent to Australia.

That problem was solved when Peter's father, Bob, also a Thompson's employee, went to the USA on a fact-finding mission for his employer and was able to pick them up from Steele and bring them home in his luggage.

The pistons were stock for a 318 poly head V8 bought with the idea of boring it out to 318 cubic inches in the rebuild.

A mate, Geoff Randall, was working at Motor Improvements in Melbourne, and he took the block, crank and heads to work with him where he rebored the block to 318 cubic inches, ground the crank and refurbished the heads.

But even with all that done little progress was made on



ACE OF TUBS

It is hard to imagine a more perfect expression of the hot rodder's art than Peter Ingram's Deuce tub.

*By Graham Smith
Photography by EDP*



HQ Holden steering box and Rod City linkage.

The rolling stock consisted of 15-inch LTD steel wheels painted red and wrapped in whitewalls, and finished with chrome Moon spinner caps.

The tourer's body was in pretty decent shape considering its age, but there was a little rust at the bottom of the centre pillars, and the lower sections of most of the panels were peppered with tiny rust holes.

Deuce Custom's Ken Brownlee was given the task of doing the bodywork. Ken was just starting out making fibreglass bodies at the time and was steeling them out, so it seemed logical that he should steel out the tub body and do what repairs and modifications were required.

Peter's guiding image throughout the build was the Doane Spencer highboy roadster, but being a tourer he reckoned the body had to be channelled to get a low-line look and stance similar to Spencer's car.

Consequently it was channelled 2 ¼ inches at the firewall and 1 ¾ inches at the rear of the tub, but channelling it wasn't simply a question of lowering the body over the chassis until it was at the height that gave him the look he wanted.

Once it was lowered the lower swages that ran around the bottom edge of the body had to be reworked or remade so they all lined up again.

The swage over the fuel tank across the rear of the tub, for instance, disappeared altogether and had to be remade. Then the swages around the rear wheel arches had to be remade higher so they mated with the new swage on the rear.

It was a similar deal at the front where the original '32 grille shell was cut away at the sides so it could be lowered to match the new lower profile of the body.

Then the bonnet sides had to be pie-cut to suit the new body profile, but that raised the swages along the lower edges of the bonnet sides, causing a mismatch with the swages on the lower edges of the cowl. To fix that the cowl swages were kicked up so they lined up with the swages on the bonnet.

A DuVall windscreen was a fundamental part of the build, Doane Spencer's roadster had one and it was one of the things that grabbed his attention when he saw the Vicky in the magazine that inspired him to build the tub.

Major surgery was required on the cowl to fit the DuVall



windscreen. It had to be filled, the swage across the top where the original windscreen butted up against it also had to be taken out, so too did the mounting pads for the windscreen posts.

It was one of the first, if not the very first, hot rod in Australia to have a DuVall windscreen. It was so rare at the time that people thought it was a speedboat windscreen.

The doors were also smoothed and the original handles removed.

There are two floors, the main floor panel that sits on top of the support framing, and a false one between the floor frame and the chassis that hides the frame from view, and the gap between the floors is filled with insulation.

With the chassis and bodywork completed the tub was returned to Albury where it went to the late Alex Maric to complete the build.

While he'd built plenty of cars in the past Peter felt that the tub warranted a more professional finish than he could achieve.

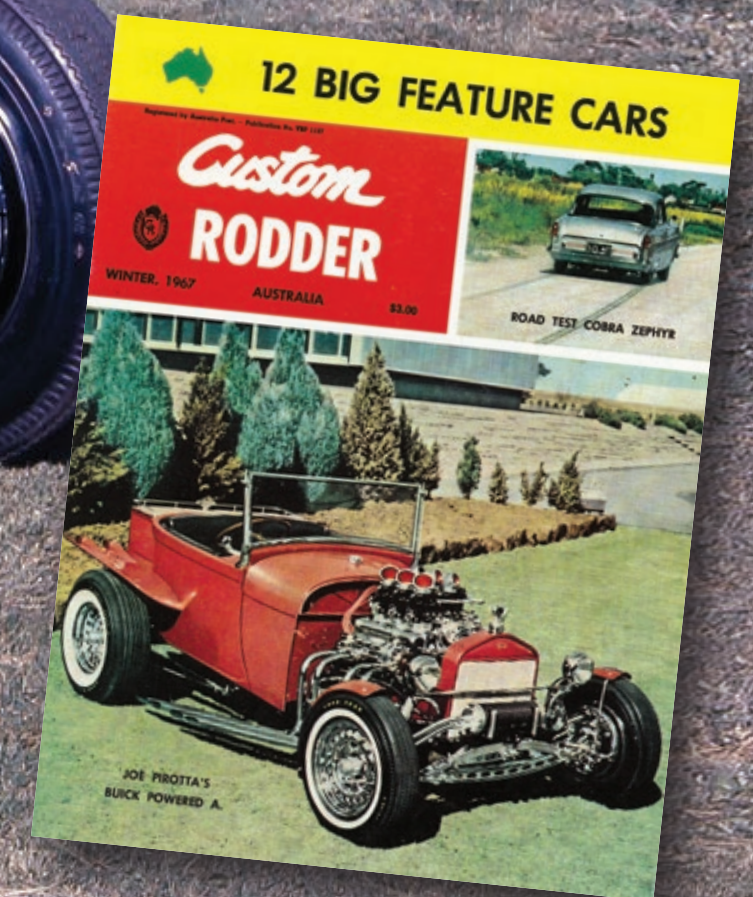
"My level of hot rodding was angle iron and stick welding," he said. "I did what I could do, but with this being the car of my dreams I thought it needed something better, and Alex

Everything on the tub blends harmoniously into a perfectly balanced whole with nothing out of place.

CUSTOM RODDER

Writer, photographer, illustrator, cartoonist, hot rodder, Eddie Ford was perfectly qualified to publish a hot rodding magazine.

*By Graham Smith
Photography by EDP, Mark Bean, Eddie Ford collection*



cartoons, illustrations, and feature reports on hot rods and drag racing in Victoria. He and Swifty also began selling the magazine at Riverside when the drags were on.

While he credits Crouch with giving him his start in magazines, he lost interest in the *Digest* when it became clear to him that it was more focussed on speedway than hot rodding.

“I was more interested in hot rodding, so I didn’t think there was much future in it for me,” he said.

When *Australian Hot Rod* magazine appeared on newsstands in May 1964 Eddie was named as its Victorian representative, but he soon lost interest in that too.

“I worked for them for a couple of years, doing cartoons and sending them features on the drags, but I never got paid for anything,” he said.

After the disappointments of *Australian Hot Rod Digest* and *Australian Hot Rod* Eddie thought he’d finally struck gold when Jeff Dellow told him of a printer in Sydney who was keen to start a hot rod magazine, and that he could be the editor if wanted to be. Even better, he was told, he would be paid for his efforts.

The magazine was *Australian Rodding World*, but unfortunately it was a similar tale of all work and no pay.

“It sounded better, but it was the same old story,” he said.

Meanwhile, in Melbourne a car enthusiast named Craig Milne was equally frustrated with the standard of the magazines being produced here and was keen to do something himself.

He’d gone so far as to make a mock-up of the magazine he planned to call *Australian Rodder* using a story he’d written about Neil ‘Ned’ Kelly’s ’35 Ford coupe as a sample.

Having seen Eddie’s name in *Australian Hot Rod* Milne thought he might be interested in getting involved in the project. Eddie didn’t know Milne, or anything about him, he even now doubts that he was a genuine hot rodder, but what Milne had to say interested him.

“Hot rodders switched to us because the other magazines weren’t giving them what they wanted.”

Eddie Ford

“He called in to see me at the farm one day and said the other magazines weren’t doing it right,” said Eddie. “He said that we should do a magazine ourselves, and that I could be the editor.”

It sounded good to Eddie, but with one stipulation, it had to be modelled on the American hot rodding bible *HOT ROD Magazine*, even down to using the green coloured pages in the middle of the magazine.

As well as that, he told Milne he was about to leave on a six-month trip to America and it would have to wait until he got back.

“I couldn’t do anything immediately because I was going away,” he said. “Besides I knew I’d learn a whole lot in America, which would be invaluable when I got back.”

Eddie was well placed to learn about publishing hot rodding magazines. A couple of years earlier he had made contact with Dick Scritchfield, a Los Angeles hot rodder and founder of the L.A. Roadsters who worked at Petersen Publishing, the company that published *HOT ROD Magazine* and regularly corresponded with him. When Scritchfield heard Eddie and his mates, Swifty and Barry Fletcher, a member of the Melbourne Thunderbirds Rod & Custom Club,

were coming to California he invited them to come and stay with him.

When Eddie called in at the *HOT ROD Magazine* offices he was somewhat taken aback. Far from the grand operation he expected to find each of the many Petersen publications were contained in tiny cubicles within the large Petersen Building, with little more than a typewriter and a filing cabinet, and the staff shared the photographic darkroom with every other magazine in the group.

Visiting the companies that were advertising in Petersen’s publications further served to put it all into perspective for him.

“Many of the companies that ran large advertisements in the Petersen publications were little more than a hole in the wall when you called in at their premises,” he said.

With what he saw at Petersen’s and their advertisers he figured he could do something similar in a spare bedroom in the farmhouse on the family’s farm back home at South

Muckleford. In fact he reckoned he would have more room than the guys working on *HOT ROD Magazine*.

After six months touring America Eddie was all keyed-up to get going on the magazine when he landed back home in January 1967.

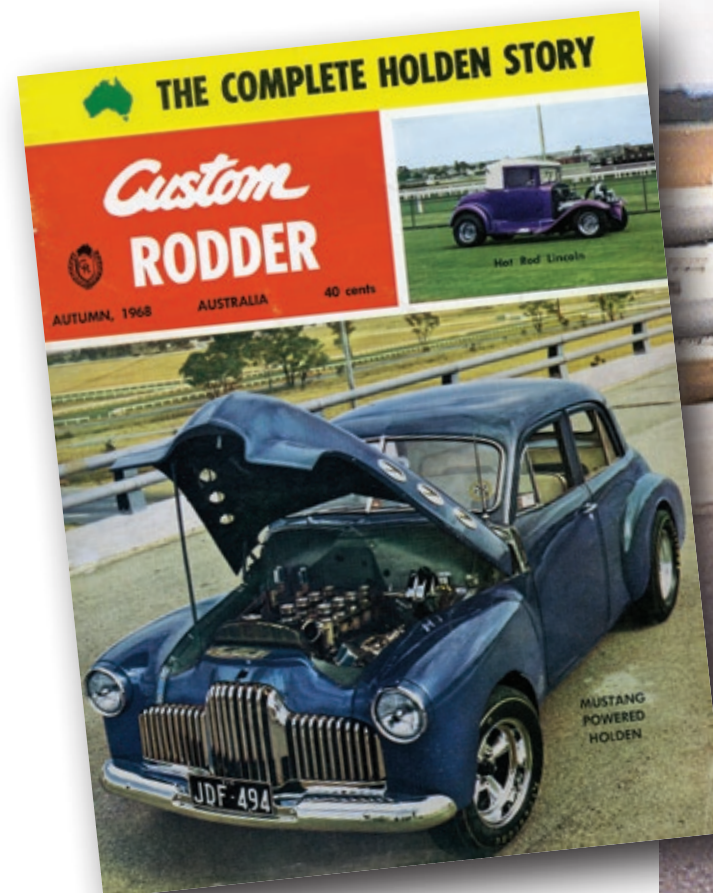
Unfortunately, he found he was on his own. Craig Milne, his partner-to-be had vanished and to this day Eddie doesn’t know what happened to him.

Peter Swift was initially interested in getting involved, but he wanted to buy a farm and didn’t have enough cash to do both, so he settled on the farm.

Jeff Dellow was also keen to come on board, and even better his father, Les, would help out by loaning them the money to pay for the first couple of issues, and they could pay it back as and when they could.

With the backing needed they went ahead with the first issue of what would be a called *Custom Rodder*.

Sales of Custom Rodder soared when the V8 Holden of Joe Pirotta and Charlie Caruana appeared on the cover of Issue #4 in 1968.



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