

Australian **Hot Rodder**

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Dedicated to Australia's Hot Rod Heritage



Tudor King: Jeff Cooper's Model A

Thrills and Spills: Graham Withers

The Deluxe Roadster: David Murphy's Deuce

THE DELUXE ROADSTER

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DELUXE
TREATMENT



The Deluxe treatment turned David Murphy's retro '32 roadster into an eye-popping showstopper.

*By Graham Smith
Photography by EDP*

Hot rodders were milling around David Murphy's yet-to-be-finished retro-styled '32 Ford roadster all weekend when it first broke cover in bare metal at the 2016 Victorian Hot Rod Show, they couldn't get enough of it.

They looked, pointed, took selfies with it, whispered to their mates about it, but most of all they soaked up the stunning detail and superb craftsmanship of the work of Steven Alldrick and the team at the Deluxe Rod Shop.

Even in its unfinished state it was clear the roadster would be something special, but fast-forward 12 months to the 2017 Melbourne show when the completed rolling

chassis was on view and the excitement was even greater.

"It's too good to put a body on," was the commonly heard reaction upon seeing it.

The painted and trimmed body was sitting back at the Deluxe shop in Yea, they'd simply run out of time to mount it on the chassis and get the car ready for its intended unveiling at the show.

That treat was left for those at the ASRF Nationals at Bendigo over Easter where it made a somewhat low-key first-up appearance in the traders' hall.

Despite the lack of fanfare rodders were soon flocking around to see it once the word spread it was there.

Sadly, with the body on they couldn't see the fabulous detail that was then hidden beneath it, but that didn't stop the rave reviews coming.

One rodder best summed it up by declaring it a "rodder's" rod.

It didn't end there though; there were more accolades when Sydney hot rodders got the chance to see it at the Hot Rod and Custom Auto Expo in May when the finished roadster next appeared.

The judges at the Sydney show happened to agree with the general sentiment that the roadster was an example of Australian hot rodding at its finest and they

judged it the Best Roadster in the show.

A month later it popped up at the Brisbane Hot Rod Show where it received even more praise and was again judged Top Roadster at the show and this time it got an invitation to appear at the prestigious Motorex show in Sydney.

It was just reward for Steven and the Deluxe Rod Shop crew, Mick McCallum and Jim Wolstencroft, who along with Brendan Watts, the trimmer, and Murphy's good mate Ron Mills, who put in heaps of hours polishing, sanding, buffing and fitting things, took Murphy's vision of a traditional roadster and over two years crafted a superb hot rod that exceeded even its owner's wildest dreams.



The roadster reflects Murphy's newfound love of early hot rods.



Seen here shortly after work on the body was completed it was clear the roadster would be special.

TUDOR KING



While others were paying lip service to tradition Jeff Cooper went all the way with his Model A Tudor.

*By Graham Smith
Photography by EDP*

the rockabilly belted out by bands like the Straight 8s – his favourite – the Roadsters, Black Slacks and the Vincents, it was the people and the hot rods that seemed to go along with it.

“I was comfortable and fitted in,” he said.

He didn't have the money for a rod of his own at that time, but there were plenty of other people who were willing to give him a ride to rod runs.

A low-mileage, one-owner XP Falcon he bought and rebuilt with a hot 302 Windsor was old enough to be accepted on rod runs, and also satisfied his inner racer.

The Falcon served him well for a number of years, until the need to have a real rod became too hard to resist.

It was then, in the late-'80s, that he started to think of building a traditional hot rod.

At the time Jeff was knocking around with a group of hot rodders who were into the traditional look, but tradition for them only went skin deep.

Looks alone weren't enough for Jeff, he wanted a car that really was traditional, something like the highboy Model A Tudor he saw featured in the American magazine, *Street Rodder* that was one of his inspirations.

It was a Model A body on '32 rails, had a flathead, a quick-change, and early suspension, all the things Jeff wanted.

Another car he recalls seeing was in *American Rodder* magazine. It was a black '31 Model A highboy roadster, also on Deuce rails, with red trim, red wheels, whitewalls, and heaps of red-painted bits and pieces. It was that car that gave him his colour scheme.

Rather than a Model A roadster or Tudor, Jeff yearned for a '32 five-window coupe like the *American Graffiti* car, but his budget wouldn't stretch that far.

The next best thing was an Improved Model A five-window coupe. They were similar to a '32, he reasoned, and were much more affordable.

His search for a body took him to Select Auto Imports in Melbourne. They were importing cars and parts back then, but they couldn't help him with a coupe. All they could offer him were a couple of Model A Tudor bodies.

The idea of a Tudor didn't appeal at first, but Heather convinced him that it would be a good thing to do.

“She pointed out that I'd be the first kid on the block with a highboy Tudor,” he told *AHR*. “She was right.”

His delay in deciding cost him the better of the two Tudor bodies Select Auto Imports had, leaving him with little option but to buy the remaining one, a 1930 model.

It was weather-beaten and there was a little rust in the roof, but overall it was a good solid body. The downside was that the rear panel had been damaged in shipping from Canada, but the upside to that was that the price was a little lower to compensate for it.

The body was acquired in 1994, which effectively marked the start of the build proper, but he'd been collecting parts for the project for a year or two before that.

Among his collection of bits and pieces was a pair of Deuce chassis rails, although calling them rails was a bit of a stretch, as they'd been severely cut down so that only the centre sections remained.

“They'd been cut off at the beauty line at the front, and almost to the top of the wheel arch at the back,” he said. “It looked like they might have been used as a work bench.”

So severely had they been cut back they were little more than scrap and he wasn't sure they could be repaired, but despite his doubts he gave them to Ken Clark at Bent Steel Chassis Engineering at Delacombe Heights near Ballarat to restore. In what could only be described as a minor miracle, Clark restored them to the point of being useable with a new front section, and a new rear section bobbed to suit the Model A body.

At the time Jeff was working at The Australian Woodworks Company where his boss, Clive Saultry, also a hot rodder, gave him space in his factory to work on the car.

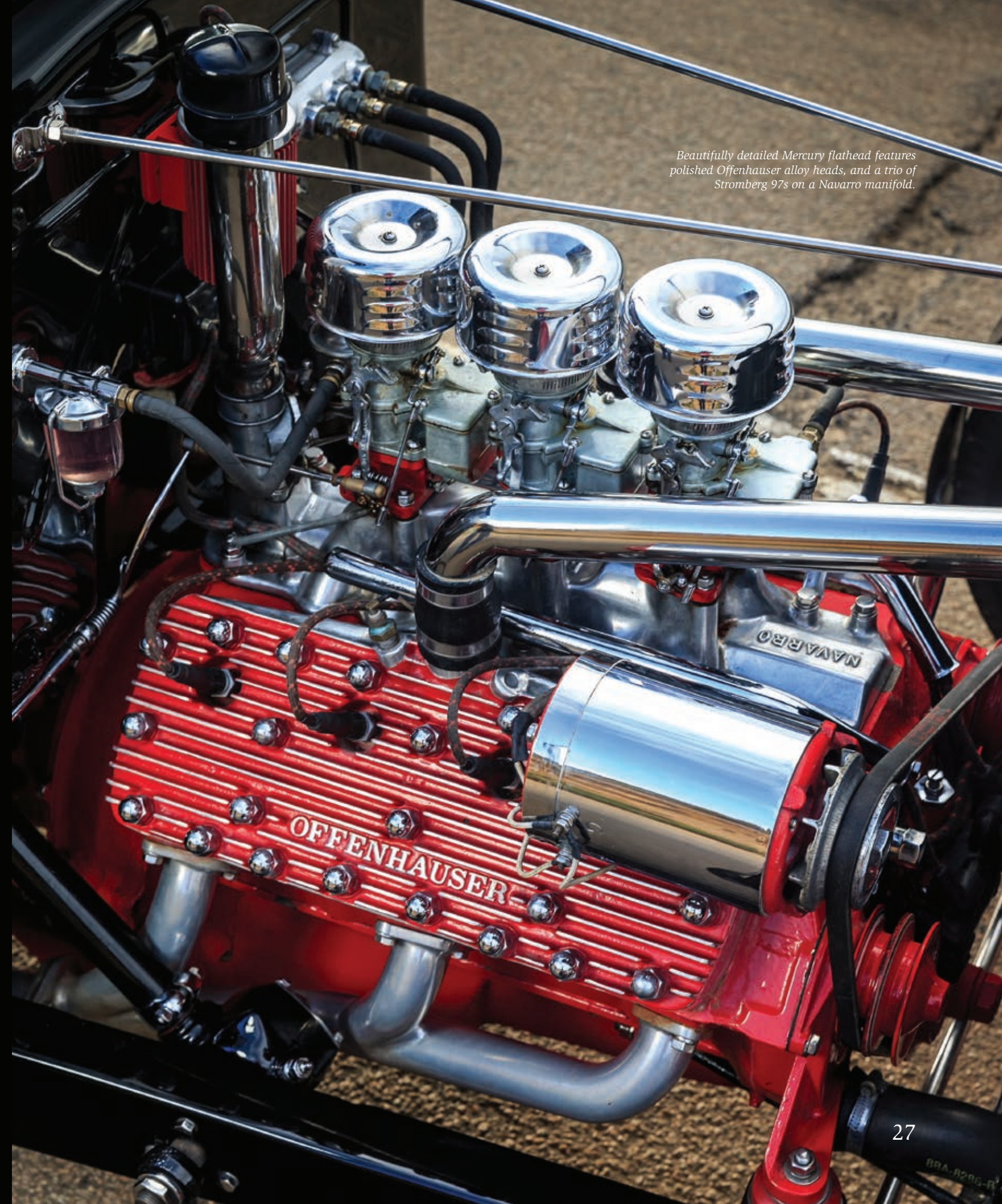
For the first three years or so of the build, until he left Saultry to go to work at Select Auto Imports and moved the car to a new garage at home, he would work on the car in between making solid timber kitchen benches and cupboard doors.

“Whenever I had a few minutes to spare I'd work on it,” he said. “I worked on it in tea breaks, the lunch break, after hours and on weekends.”

He began by mocking the chassis up with Model A front and rear crossmembers, and a '32 centre K-member, all bolted in, as were flathead engine mounting brackets a neighbouring engineering shop fabricated to wooden patterns he supplied them.

Jeff went to great lengths to build an early style car using original parts.

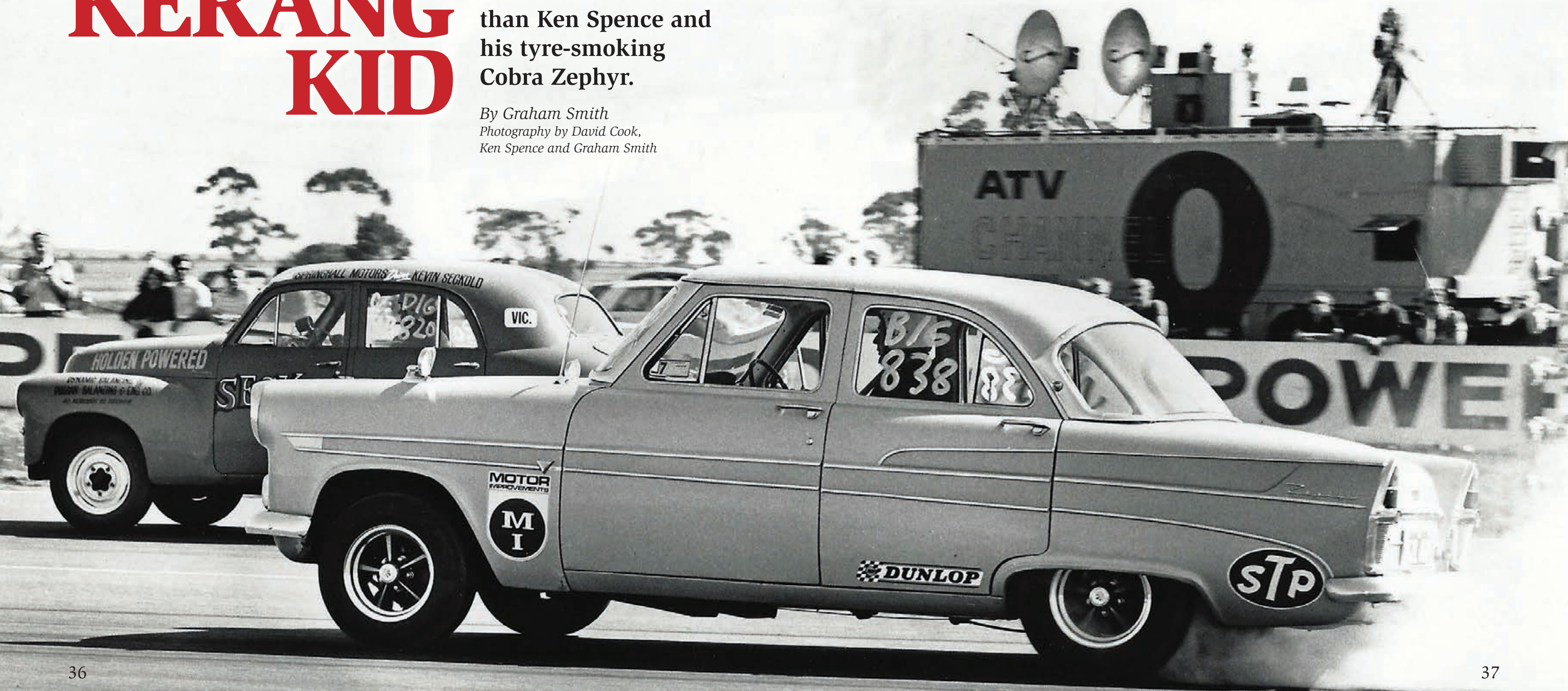
Beautifully detailed Mercury flathead features polished Offenhauser alloy heads, and a trio of Stromberg 97s on a Navarro manifold.



THE KERANG KID

There were few more popular, or spectacular, drag racers in the 1960s than Ken Spence and his tyre-smoking Cobra Zephyr.

*By Graham Smith
Photography by David Cook,
Ken Spence and Graham Smith*



BLUE MEANIE

As beautiful as it is Phil Taylor's stunning '35 Ford coupe looks like it belongs on the drag strip.

*By Graham Smith
Photography by EDP*



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