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NOVEMBER 2002 • VOLUME 42, NO. 11
\$3.99 • \$4.99 in Canada



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By Cameron Evans

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BO BERTILSSON

Things in the hot rodding world are once again looking familiar. We went through a great period of growth and creativity over the past few years, including a resurgence of the Tri-Five Chevy and a new focus on performance. However, take a cruise around the hot rod shows and things are starting to look familiar.

Enter Scott Tedro and his '56 Ford Sunliner convertible. With a love for Fords passed on by his father (particularly for this year and model), Tedro brought his project down to an up-and-coming group, Wheeler's Rod Shop in Huntington Beach, California, for a few tweaks. The resurgence of true hot rod shops like Wheeler's is providing a service to customers who don't have the time or skills to nail down the details. In this case, Tedro brought in his Ford to tune up many of the projects under the hood. Like it often does, one job turned into another, and the shop was given the job of "restifying" this entire car! The results are solid and in reach of the average enthusiast.

First off, this car is cool. Though we have nothing against the numerous First-Gen GM F-Bodies and the Tri-Five Chevys that appear on these pages, a car that you don't see every day gets big style points. Big-blocks are cool, but small-blocks make particular sense these days, especially when an already heavy ride gets the additional mass of a blower project. Finally, airbag systems aren't for everyone because they're not particularly performance items, but they are a great match for this big Ford. This big convertible is never going to be a particularly effective drag car or a handling ace—you might as well make it sit right and ride well.

The engine was a big focus of this project. Scott chose a 351 Windsor for his ride, leaning on Santa



POPULAR
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Time for a Change

Scott Tedro's '56 Ford Sunliner







Ana, California's B.E.P. Engine Shop for the machine work that would take it to 392 ci. The Mustang drag market has made quality parts available for the right price, so he went with a set of aluminum Dart heads, forged steel H-beam rods, a custom JE piston designed for 8:1 compression, a COMP hydraulic roller valvetrain, and a complete Mallory electronic ignition system. That compression was engineered into the combo to take advantage of a custom, Mert Littlefield-built 6-71 huffer, an addition that helps belt out 700 lb-ft of torque at 4,500 rpm and 620 hp at 6,000 rpm. That's serious power that can be made available for a reasonable price—there's nothing exotic in this combination. Utilizing a Ford AOD transmission was a key to having fun with this car, too. Its overdrive allows for a reasonable cruising speed while maintaining aggressive ratios down low. It allows for picking the perfect wheel-and-tire combo for both looks and traction without sacrificing anything in the powerband.

The suspension system in use is relatively simple. Scott worked with Wheeler's to install a four-link rear suspension that would aid proper pinion angle and ride once the airbag system was installed. The front suspension is stock, with the exception of using a

2-inch dropped spindle that meant the killer ride height wouldn't have to come with a deflated bag. Since it's a California car, it cruises on smooth roads (compared to what the East Coast rodders are forced to deal with); this is a slick setup.

Many of the parts commonly found in the mail-order biz are in place here, as it's an affordable way to have a clean ride. Its disc brake kit has been upgraded with stainless lines for a better feel through the pedal, a LeCarra steering wheel makes for both style and function, and a B&M shifter makes manipulating that AOD tranny an easy deal. Combine the the red-and-white paint theme from Silva's Auto Body (Huntington Beach, California) with those recovered Lexus buckets in a two-tone interior, and this is a sensible award winner.

Let's see more like it in the next few years. We doubt that anyone will get tired of them. **PNR**



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