

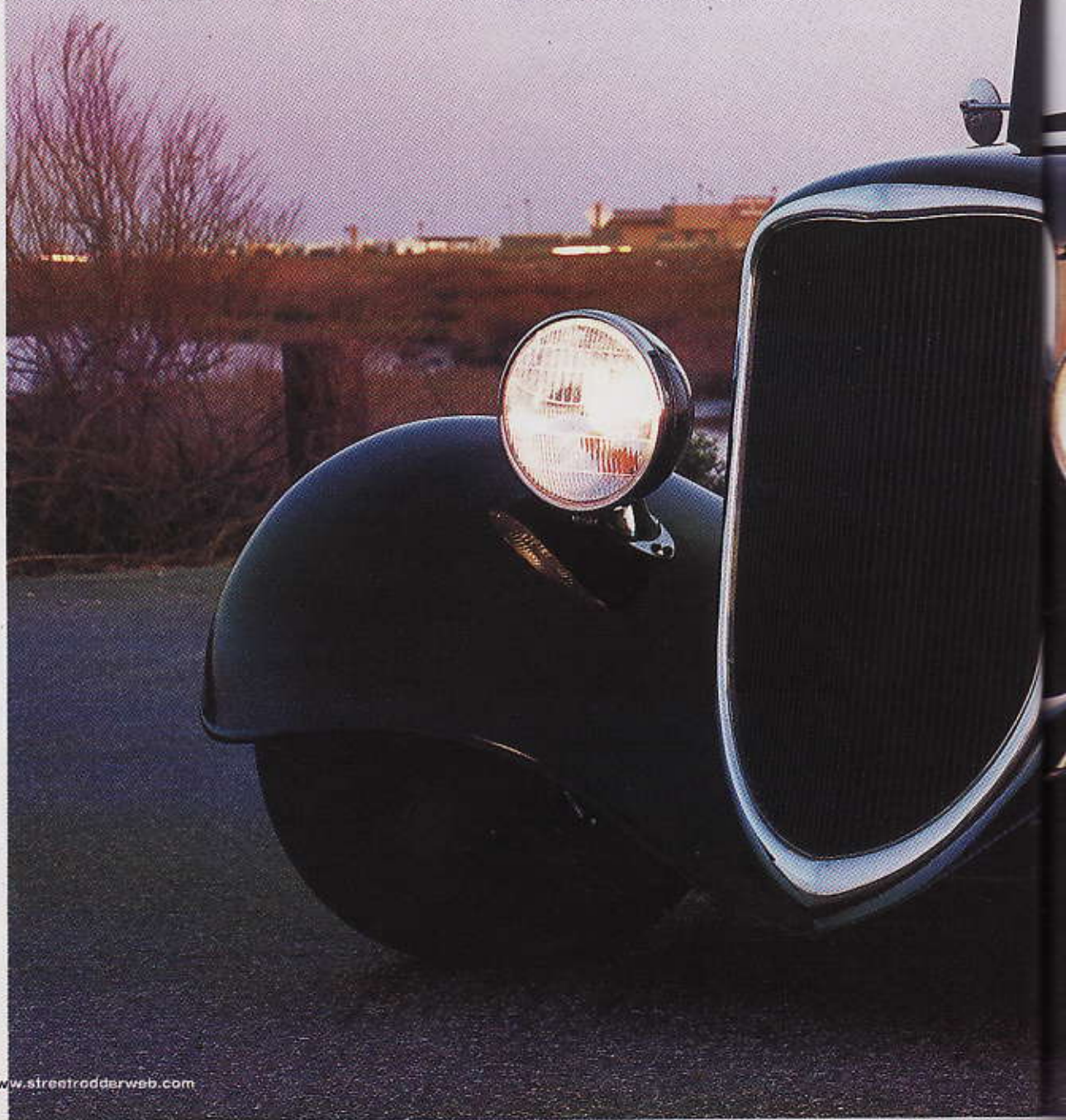
THE TIMBER TALE

Jerry Soderstrom's '34 Woodie

BY CHRIS SHELTON

Oftentimes the apocalyptic stories prove so entertaining. Stories like wheels letting loose at speed or the burnout at the drive-in that prompted a ticket invariably leave the pitiable subject stranded or humiliated and the listener well entertained. Whether we call it tragedy, Schadenfreude, or just plain ol' entertainment, we humans like our conflict—provided it's someone else's that is.

But every once in a while a silver-tinged story slips through the cracks. Jerry Soderstrom started to indulge a dream: He wanted a Ford woodie. So he and Wheeler's Speed Shop's Bryan Wheeler cooked up a plan. Acquiring and building one wasn't the problem; Hercules Motor Car Company makes a tin-and-wood Model 40. Getting it to Wheeler's, on the other hand, was a problem. There's a lot of flatland between Hercules' Tampa, Florida, location and Huntington Beach and the trip required a rather lofty shipping bill. As the charges accrued, the dream started looking eerily nightmarish.





**STREET
RODDER**



But while standing at the crossroads an interesting lead panned out: a local builder had a customer with, of all things, a Hercules car. Not only that, said customer got in *way* over his head. He'd hemorrhaged money to that point and he wanted out ... like *now*. So Brian facilitated the deal and Jerry snapped up the woodie. Call them opportunist, but we tend to think of the transaction as mutually beneficial: everybody got what they wanted. Right?

But the prior owner's charted course didn't exactly jive with Jerry's direction. He commissioned Brian to tear the entire car apart. The car had good bones: a solid frame, a Total Cost Involved IFS, and a Chevy running gear, so Brian's crew addressed mostly aesthetic things. They dolled the mill in copper paint, topped it with an Offenhauser manifold, and three SMI-prepped Rochester 2G carburetors.

Wheeler's Speed Shop cleverly flush-mounted a set of Auto Meter gauges in the Hercules aluminum dash. We chronicled the treatment in the October 2003 issue ("Dashing ... Just Dashing"). Ron Eagleton at Eagleton's Custom Auto Body applied the black PPG urethane.

Wood 'N Carr's Doug Carr treated the maple body in a clear urethane. Wheeler's crew sorted a few more items like the wiring and the armrest-mounted Custom Autosound radio. Once finished, they sent the woodie over to Westminster Auto Upholstery where Pete Engel's crew clad the Wise Guys seats in black leather and blanketed the floor in salt-and-pepper German square-weave carpet.

Wheeler's Speed Shop reassembled the car with a mix of original-style parts ('34 headlights, '37 taillights, Model A rearview mirror) and retro-themed modern

parts (Whitewall Candy Store radials on Wheelsmith-painted smoothies). The finished product straddles a car with all the amenities of a contemporary driver.

And the best part of the car: its charm—and the fact that Jerry fulfilled a dream without breaking the bank truly ices the cake. **SR**

Wheeler shares shop space with Sean Murphy, so it stands to reason the standard-issue Chevy sports a SMI-prepped carburetor trio. Other goodies include Moon valve covers and an Offenhauser manifold. The engine mates to a Tim Deal-prepped automatic overdrive unit.





ff) Clad an interior in all black and you'll usually wind up with a coffin-like place. However, there's enough space and honey-colored wood to offset the Westminster Auto Upholstery-fathed cabin. Jerry based the interior on Wise Guys seats and plenty of Doug Carr's finish work.



These details really make this woodie stand out. Wheeler's machined aluminum rings and rounded them to the dash. He then sunk the cream-colored Auto Meter gauges into the recesses for the very distinctive and factory appearing look. The Wise Guys seat's armrest mounts conceal the Custom Autosound head unit once retracted.



Instead of littering the Hercules wood with any ordinary mirror, Wheeler's crew stripped a Model A post mirror of its mount and welded it to a flat tab. The finished weld gives the mirror a manufactured look. The woodie's cargo area hides the car's necessities like the electrical system within accessible slide-out storage compartments. Doug Carr's headliner woodwork surpasses most furniture finisher's quality.



This woodie's refined and rather classy theme pretty much precludes ricky-tick elements like early '30s taillights, so Wheeler culled a set of elegant Deco-inspired '37 taillights for the project. From stem to stern, this is one classy ride.

FACTS & FIGURES

Jerry Soderstrom

Huntington Beach, California

1934 Ford wagon

CHASSIS

Frame	Ford Motor Co.
Chassis plumbing	stainless
Rearend / Ratio	Ford 8" / 3.50:1
Rear suspension	triangulated four-link
Rear brakes	Ford drum
Front suspension	Total Cost Involved (Ontario, CA) IFS, tubular control arms
Front brakes	GM intermediate disc
Master cylinder	Corvette with booster
Steering box	r&p
Front wheel make, size	Wheelsmith (Santa Ana, CA) smoothie, 15x7
Rear wheel make, size	Wheelsmith (Santa Ana, CA) smoothie, 15x8
Front tire make, size	Whitewall Candy Store (Garden Grove, CA), 195/70R-15
Rear tire make, size	Whitewall Candy Store (Garden Grove, CA), 245/70R-15
Gas tank	18-gallon stainless

ENGINE

Make	1906 Chevrolet (Detroit, MI)
Displacement	355ci
Water pump	Edelbrock aluminum (Torrance, CA)
Cooling fan	Cooling Components (Proctor, AR)
Radiator	Walker radiator (Memphis, TN)
Heads	GM cast iron (Detroit, MI)
Valve covers	Zoops Products (Banning, CA)
Manifold / Induction	Offenhauser / Rochester 26 prepped by (SMI), Huntington Beach, CA)
Ignition / Wires	Pertronix (San Dimas, CA) Ignitor / Taylor
Headers	Sanderson Headers (South San Francisco, CA) 1 5/8", coated
Exhaust / Mufflers	steel 2 1/2" by Wheeler's Speed Shop (Huntington Beach, CA)
Other engine facts	All brackets and components by Zoops Products Inc. (Banning, CA)

TRANSMISSION

Make	GM 700-R4
Assembly	Tim Deal Transmissions (Huntington Beach, CA)
Converter	stock GM
Shifter	Lokar (Knoxville, TN)
Driveshaft	Drivelines Unlimited (Irvine, CA)

BODY

Body style / Material	woodie wagon / steel and wood
Body manufacturer	Hercules Motor Car Company (Tampa, FL)
Hood	three-piece Roodlieb, (Turlock, CA)
Grille	Dan Fink Metalworks (Huntington Beach, CA)
Bodywork	Eagleton's Custom Auto Body (Huntington Beach, CA)
Paint	PPG black by Ron Eagleton (Huntington Beach, CA)
Wood finishing	Doug Carr, Wood'n Carr (Long Beach, CA)
Headlights / Taillights	'34 Ford / '37 Ford
Outside mirror	late Ford Model A (Dearborn, MI)
Other body items	glazing by Chuck's Glass Service (Huntington Beach, CA)

INTERIOR

Dashboard	aluminum modified by Wheeler's Speed Shop (Huntington Beach, CA)
Insert / Gauges	bonded rings by Wheeler's Speed Shop (Huntington Beach, CA) / Auto Meter (Sycamore, IL)
Audio	Custom Autosound (Fullerton, CA) receiver in armrest
Air conditioning	Vintage Air (San Antonio, TX)
Wiring	Ron Francis (Chester, PA) by Wheeler's Speed Shop (Huntington Beach, CA)
Steering wheel	Lecarra (Oneida, TN)
Steering column	ididit (Tecumseh, MI)
Seats	Guys (Bristol, TN)
Upholsterer	Westminster Auto Upholstery (Anaheim, CA)
Material / Color	leather / black
Carpet	German square-weave wool
Seatbelts	Truck Shop