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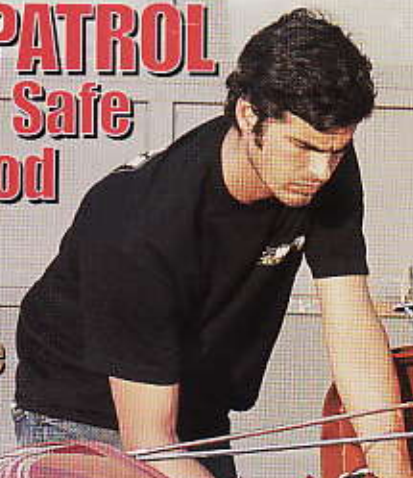
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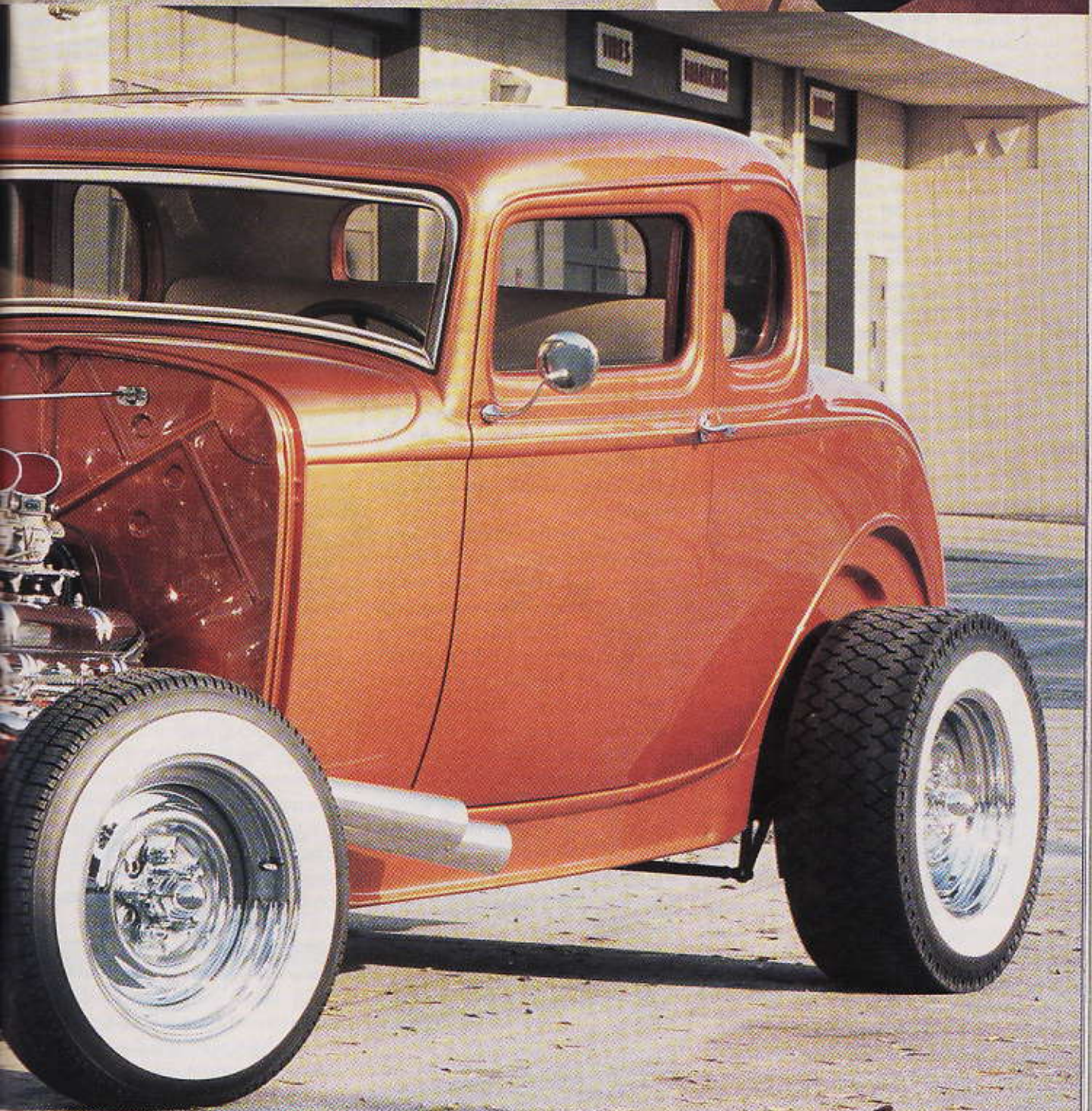
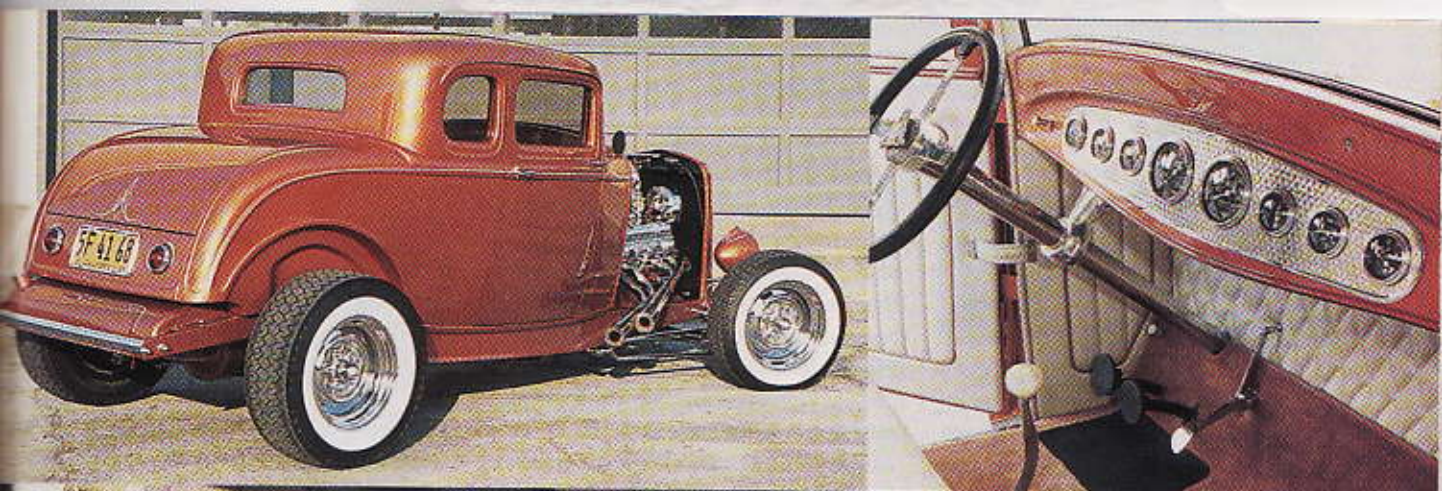
It's pretty cool to think that some of rodding's most influential cars were built by guys in their teens and twenties. Ed Iskenderian crafted his T roadster as a high school senior. Doane Spencer was in his early twenties when his Deuce was turning heads on the SoCal streets and dry lakes. Likewise, Norm Grabowski was fresh out of the military when he whipped together the "Kookie Kar" T.

Today, it seems like most young folks lack such vision and ambition, seeking instead to measure accomplishment by beating their friends at Gran Turismo 4, flawlessly installing stickers on their Hondas. Not Bryan Wheeler. At 26, he recently put the finishing touches on the stellar Deuce five-window. That alone is pretty darn impressive but even more eye-opening when you discover that the coupe is a calling card for Bryan

Bryan Wheeler's Tasty Deuce Five-Window

By Damon Lee





Bryan Wheeler
Huntington Beach, California
'32 Ford Coupe

DRIVETRAIN: Few engines are as pretty as a Buick nailhead, especially when it's decked out in chrome and topped off with six Holley carbs on an Edelbrock intake. The 322ci engine is rebuilt to essentially stock specs, with the exception of the induction system, a Chet Herbert cam, and a Joe Hunt distributor. Bryan crafted his own headers, stuffing them with VW baffles before having California Brightworks (in Murrieta) dip them in chrome. A Hurst shifter controls the Muncie four-speed.

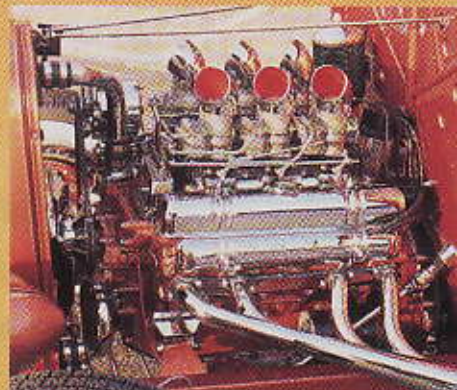
CHASSIS: In addition to the body, Bryan got the frame from GMT Quality Metalwork & Fabrication then built it into a roller himself. It's set up with a 9-inch Ford rearend and a ladder bar/coilover system from So-Cal Speed Shop. The front suspension consists of a drilled Super Bell axle, mono-leaf spring, So-Cal hairpins, and Pete & Jake's shocks. A LimeWorks column and

Vega box keep the coupe between the lines, while Buick drums bring it to a halt.

WHEELS & TIRES: Bryan went for the John Milner look by bolting on 15x7- and 15x8-inch chrome reverse rollers from Wheel Vintiques, along with Moon spider caps. The radial cheater slicks and whitewalls came from The Whitewall Candy Store in Garden Grove, California.

BODY & PAINT: The Deuce Customs fiberglass body came out of the mold with a 3-inch top chop, so it only needed basic prep before Silva's Custom Paint squirted the House of Kolor Cinnamon Pearl hue. Guide headlights and Pontiac taillights, along with some Steve VanDamon pinstriping, lend an appropriate period feel.

INTERIOR: Westminster Auto Upholstery (Anaheim, CA) gets credit for the pearl white pleats with copper piping and carpet. The diamond-pleated firewall cover is a perfect touch. Other neat elements include Stewart-Warner instruments and a LimeWorks wheel topped with a trick knock-off center. All the electrical juice flows through a Ron Francis wiring panel.



components—So-Cal hairpins, drilled Super Bell axle, Buick drums—to make it rock solid and traditional looking.

Even with all the "right" parts, this could easily be another cookie-cutter coupe if it weren't for the nailhead mill resting between the rails. The '55-vintage, 322ci Buick V-8 sports a Chet Herbert cam and enough induction to make yer liver quiver—six Holleys on an Edelbrock intake. Bryan confesses that only the middle two carbs are functional (it simply runs better that way), but you can't beat the visual impact. A Joe Hunt distributor disguised as a magneto provides even more deception, while Bryan's handmade headers add a splash of chrome and a healthy bark. The Muncie four-speed leaves little doubt that this rod will run.

Of course, the finishing touches are what make or break a car. Bryan got those right, too. The House of Kolor Cinnamon Pearl finish, applied by Silva's Custom Paint, sets a perfect '60s tone. Ditto for the whitewall cheater slicks wrapped around the chrome reverse wheels. Period pinstriping and pearl white threads by Westminster Auto Upholstery put the final twists on this tasty time warp.

It's doubtful that any car built today could have the same influence as those crafted by rodding's forefathers. Still, we'd like to think a coupe this cool might inspire a few folks. That's just us, though; as far as we can tell, Bryan doesn't much care. He's just a young guy who built a cool car exactly the way he wanted. Isn't that what rodding and customizing is all about? **R&C**



Huntington Beach, California-based hot rod business, Wheeler's Speed Shop.

Though the shop has been up and running for more than eight years, until now Bryan has suffered the fate of the cobbler's kids—no hot rod of his own because he was too busy working on customer cars. Several personal projects were started over the years, but they were all set aside or sold before completion. Not so with the coupe.

"It was the first time I had a chance to build a car exactly the way I wanted," Bryan says. And what way was

that? Sixties style, of course. "I've always liked cars from the late '50s and early '60s," Bryan says, "the whitewalls, candy paints, and all that chrome."

Naturally, the five-window has those elements, plus many more that give it a period feel. However, the vintage look was created using predominantly new parts. The body is 'glass—a Deuce Customs item Bryan bought from Geoff Mitford Taylor, whose GMT Quality Metalwork & Fabrication is just down the street from Wheeler's. Made in Australia, the coupe body comes ready to go with pre-hung doors and a just-right 3-inch top chop. The car's frame also came from GMT and uses carefully selected

